



## DEFINITION

Canadian **official war art** during the First World War was military art in any medium (e.g. oil, watercolour, pencil) that was collected by the Canadian War Memorials Fund.

This painting is an example of official war art. Titled *The Stretcher Bearer Party*, it was painted around 1918 by Cyril Barraud.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Canadian War Museum has 13,000 artworks in its collection covering 250 years of Canadian military history, including 2,500 artworks from the First World War. These include oil paintings, watercolours, drawings, prints, and sculptures.

In the Canadian War Museum's collection of official war art, the smallest painting is 7.5 x 10.9 cm and the biggest painting is 3.7 x 12.0 m (370 x 1,200 cm).

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Canadian War Memorials Fund was the brainchild of Sir Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook. Born in Canada in 1879, he made a fortune as a businessman. He moved to Britain, and bought the *Daily Express* newspaper in 1916, using it as a vehicle for his ideas and to extend his influence.

Always a Canadian at heart, Beaverbrook's nationalist fervour contributed to his decision

in 1916 to initiate and take personal responsibility for a project to record the war from Canada's point of view. The result was the creation of the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO). The CWRO documented the war in film, photograph and print. The horrific German gas attack on the Canadians during the Second Battle of Ypres in April and May 1915 convinced Beaverbrook that the war should also be documented by art.

## EVOLUTION/DEVELOPMENT

During the First World War, both official war artists and soldier-artists portrayed Canadian military personnel as well as men and women working on the Home Front to produce the ammunition and equipment for the fighting forces.

In this painting, stretcher-bearers of the 43rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, carry an injured man away from the battle. Behind them, we see the walking wounded

and a German prisoner. Artist Cyril Barraud enlisted with the 43rd Battalion in 1915. For him, a pen and sketchbook were as much a part of his kit as a rifle and bullets. Wounded in early 1917, Barraud was subsequently employed by the Canadian War Memorials Fund.