

# Walking in their footsteps

BY JILLIAN AUSTIN

Civilians had the chance to walk through the historical trenches that some 30,000 soldiers used for training in 1916.

Yesterday marked the second annual Camp Hughes Heritage Day, complete with tours, re-enactments and artifact displays.

Many visitors remembered their own family members who were stationed there prior to fighting in the First World War.

"It's pretty powerful for someone to walk in the exact same footsteps as their relatives," said Marc George, director of the RCA Museum in Shilo.

Julie Duncan's father and uncle both trained at the site before fighting in the First World War.

"My father fought in Vimy Ridge for 13 months," she said. "He lived ... but he saw terrible things and had to do terrible things."

Duncan said it is important to educate the younger generations about the local involvement in the First World War.

"They should bring school kids out here," she said. "They have to be taught about the past."

Roughly 10 kilometres of trenches were



**Jason Darling takes up a position with a Lee-Enfield rifle complete with a sword pattern bayonet in a trench during a demonstration of the First World War training undertaken by more than 30,000 troops at Camp Hughes west of Carberry during the Camp Hughes Heritage Day on Sunday. (Tim Smith/Brandon Sun)**

designed and developed by Canadian militia who returned from the Western Front in 1915. They are longer than those at the Vimy Ridge memorial in France.

"There isn't a better place in the world to understand the trench system than in our own backyard," George said.

Guns, trenching tools and bayonets were some of the artifacts on display.

"We're being the voices of those who no longer can speak," said Edward James who donned the woolen uniform of a First World War staff sergeant.

Hosted by Friends of Camp Hughes, the

goal of the event is to promote the area, which has been named a provincial heritage site.

Organizers hope to eventually see the area named national heritage site.

Originally Sewell Camp, the site was renamed in 1915, after Maj.-Gen. Sam Hughes, Canada's minister of militia and defence.

Camp Hughes is located about 30 km east of Brandon, south of the junction of the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 351.

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# Group showing off trench system at Camp Hughes

BY COLLEEN COSGROVE

History buffs can get a glimpse at life in the trenches for soldiers in the First World War at the second annual Camp Hughes Heritage Day tomorrow.

Hosted by Friends of Camp Hughes, the event aims to educate visitors about the site, given Provincial Heritage status in 1994.

More than 30,000 soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force trained in the camp's 10 kilometres of trenches before departing for overseas to serve in the First World War in 1916.

Camp Hughes was deemed a "rare" and "unique" site by Manitoba Heritage.

Military History Society of Manitoba president Bruce Tascona says the site is not just historical, but also archeologically significant.

"(Visitors) will be able to catch a glimpse into what was happening on the Western Front and trench warfare," Tascona said. "The legacy is important and there's still lots of artifacts that were left behind as scrap in the pastures near."

Throughout Heritage Day, students and volunteers will man static displays and artifact exhibits of items found at the site, depicting what life was like training for war in southwestern Manitoba.

"What's important about Camp Hughes is it's probably the only existing training trenches of the WWI anywhere within the British Commonwealth," Tascona said.

"I think for the price of a tank of gas people can go out



**A trench at Camp Hughes has trees growing in it, but you can still see the depression where the trench was.**  
*(File photo)*

there and ... study tactics and life in the trenches during the First World War. And these are the only ones left in the country."

The trenches were designed and developed by Canadian militia who returned from the Western Front during the First World War in 1915. The site was a training ground for soldiers from Manitoba and Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1933. Trenches at the training ground are longer than those at Vimy Ridge National Park in France.

Guided tours run from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. and admission is free.

Camp Hughes is located about 30 km east of Brandon, south of the junction of the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 351.

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