



War Posters

**Curriculum Connections:
Grade 10 Canada and World Studies
Historical Inquiry and Skill Development**

Canadians have defended freedom in every major conflict since 1900.

As part of the British Empire, Canada was automatically at war when Great Britain declared war on Germany in August of 1914. Throughout World War I, or “The Great War” (1914-1918), more than 650,000 Canadians served in the Canadian armed forces, including over 1700 residents of Peel.

When World War II was declared in 1939, the world was split between the Allies (including the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China) and the Axis powers (including Germany, Italy and Japan). Over 2900 Peel residents volunteered to serve.

Viewing the Exhibition

PAMA’s virtual exhibition, [Stories of Service and Sacrifice](#), are just some of the stories of the local men and women who served on the front lines, and their friends and family who served at home.

This Learning Resource will focus on the Region of Peel Archives, [Ivan Melhuish](#) war poster collection.



Curriculum Connections

Grade 10 – Academic

HISTORICAL INQUIRY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A1. Historical Inquiry

A1.1 formulate different types of questions to guide investigations into issues, events, and/or developments in Canadian history since 1914

A1.2 select and organize relevant evidence and information on aspects of Canadian history since 1914 from a variety of primary and secondary sources

- Sample questions: “Why is it important to gather evidence from primary sources when investigating past developments and events?” “What are some sources you might consult to try to identify voices that may be missing from the official version of an event?”

A1.3 assess the credibility of sources and information relevant to their investigations

A1.4 interpret and analyse evidence and information relevant to their investigations, using various tools, strategies, and approaches appropriate for historical inquiry

A1.5 use the concepts of historical thinking (i.e., historical significance, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and historical perspective) when analysing, evaluating evidence about, and formulating conclusions and/or judgements regarding historical issues, events, and/or developments in Canada since 1914

A1.6 evaluate and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make informed judgements or predictions about the issues, events, and/or developments they are investigating

A1.7 communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions using various formats and styles, as appropriate for the audience and purpose

Let's Get Started

The Melhuish Collection of Second World War Canadian, British and American propaganda posters are housed in the Region of Peel Archives. They highlight the issues of war as expressed on the home front and are studied for both their artistic and political designs. These posters provide us with some insight into what war time advertisements and messaging was like.

[The Ivan Melhuish Collection of WWII Posters](#)

When World War Two broke out, Ivan Melhuish was employed by Canada Packers, Ltd. in Toronto. Certified as medically unfit for enlistment, he was very interested in the progression of the war. A self-confessed pack-rat, he collected newspaper clippings, magazines, programs, letters and other items connected to the war effort in Canada, his native England and beyond. His first poster came from the bulletin board at Canada Packers, and was joined by 295 others, many sent to him from friends overseas and by groups with which Melhuish corresponded.

Regarding Brampton during the war years, Melhuish recalled:

"The whole town was a noise of excitement. Residents were all involved in one way or another with the war effort, through volunteer work with the Red Cross, or at the Maple Leaf Club, in Victory Bond Drives, or by working in essential war industries."

Melhuish continued to work for Canada Packers, a major supplier of meat to the armed forces, and also became a member of the Civil Defence Corps for Brampton. In later years, Melhuish considered his collection as a small contribution to the war, and in 1979, he donated it to the Region of Peel Archives. Ivan Melhuish died in the early 1990s.

Watch PAMA's Regional Archivist talk about one of the posters in the collection.

[Behind the Scenes in the Archives: War Posters - YouTube](#)

Closer Look

Explore these pages for more in-depth information on the war posters.

[Development of the Poster](#)

[Posters and Propaganda](#)

[Delivering the Message](#)

[Understanding the Posters](#)

Take a closer look at some of the poster was have in the collection.

- [Poster 25](#)
- [Poster 69](#)
- [Poster 120](#)
- [Poster 122](#)
- [Poster 137](#)

Use the following questions as a guide when interpreting the above posters:

(You can download all the posters in one file [here.](#))

- What is the poster trying to say? What is its main message?
- What emotions or feelings is the poster trying to provoke?
- What techniques are used in the poster to reinforce an idea or value?
- To what extent do you think the poster would be successful?
- How does the poster depict the enemy? The home nation and its allies?
- How would an enemy nation have illustrated a negative message about Canada or Canadians?
- How is propaganda different from information?

Other PAMA Resources:

Learning Resource: [First World War: Personal Stories](#) Grade 10 History

Videos : [Snapshots from England: the Second World War as seen by Sam Charters - YouTube](#)

[At Rest, Soldier: Second World War photos - YouTube](#)

