



****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
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***“Dawn was now breaking, but night had sealed my eyes”*:
Canada’s War-Blinded Veterans Find their Place in History**

Toronto – “We know more about our war dead than we do about our disabled veterans,” comments Serge Marc Durflinger whose major new book, ***Veterans with a Vision: Canada’s War Blinded in Peace and War*** sets about changing this fact.

The story of Canada’s war-blinded veterans is one of poignant loss, of shared vision, and of remarkable tenacity. In 1918, some of the nearly 200 Canadian blinded servicemen from the First World War were the driving force behind the creation of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. In 1922, they formed their own advocacy group, the Sir Arthur Pearson Association of War Blinded (SAPA), closely linked to CNIB, to ensure that their special needs as pensioned veterans and as newly blinded Canadians were taken into account by a government—and civic culture—that didn’t see a societal role for men whose time at war had resulted in the loss of their sight. By the end of the First World War, the federal government had assumed responsibility for its disabled soldiers and the opening of CNIB’s government-funded retraining facility gave the country’s war blinded an opportunity to reintegrate into Canadian life, find stable employment, and regain a strong measure of independence.

Joined by 150 war-blinded Canadian veterans following the Second World War, SAPA continued to fight for improved pensions and social legislation. Its members’ spirit of perseverance and achievements made the war blinded significant advocates not only for their own cause, but for all Canadian veterans and all blind citizens.

Published by UBC Press in conjunction with the Canadian War Museum, The Sir Arthur Pearson Association, and CNIB, ***Veterans with a Vision*** fills a gap in Canadian military history that hitherto has been “shockingly sparse...” according to international scholar David Gerber, who continues “...disabled veterans are neglected figures in the histories of war and peace.” Author, Serge Marc Durflinger gives this very human history a vibrant life.

*James Rawlinson, blinded at Vimy 1917

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Veterans with a Vision is being launched on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm in Toronto at the CNIB Centre. The author will be in attendance. If you would like to attend the launch, receive a review copy, or schedule an interview, please contact Kerry Kilmartin at 604.822.8244 or kilmartin@ubcpres.ca

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