

## Letter of Appreciation to Iwuy Village

On behalf of the families who are descendants of the WW1 Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) veterans that contributed to the liberation of Iwuy on 10-11 Oct 1918, **we wish to publically thank** Michel and Emily, Iwuy'Stoire Organizing Association, Harmonie Municipale, Mayor Daniel Poteau and his council, the volunteers and the generous people of Iwuy for an incredible Commemoration Service.

In an attempt to summarise the families perspective on 13 Oct 2018 (which was a beautiful sunny French day), I wish to share the following. The family members who are descendants of CEF combatants were first warmly welcomed into your community and immediately made to feel comfortable at the morning reception. Then at the church service, we were welcomed again and enjoyed the spectacle of the band and flag bearers playing and parading within your beautiful town church. It was here that the finer detail of commemorative planning revealed itself when the church service was communicated in four languages to cater for all guests. With some time to reflect on the incredible spectacle that was unfolding before us in the church, our emotions started to surface and tears welled in our eyes.

The lovely church service was followed by a service in the town square where we were amazed at the breadth of all the contributing agencies (light horse, Germany, French, Canadian parading soldiers, school children, fire brigade, cyclists and fellow dignities etc). The unveiling of the plaque, release of balloons by the school children, songs and speeches provided a poignant service of remembrance. Then forming up in a large parade with a splendid march in the warm sun to the cemetery through your picturesque village and crossing the battlefield, allowed us the time to put things more into perspective around the scope and depth which Iwuy has undertaken in the planning and execution on the day.

The military service at the Iwuy Cemetery including remembrance speeches and laying of the wreaths in the beautifully kept Commonwealth Cemetery produced further raw emotion within us. We felt a warm connection to your community and a special bond grew within the family members as we stood together and started to understand the significance of Iwuy's history. This included the final charge of the CEF's South Alberta Light Horse Cavalry and the last German tank battle. Again the lovely walk back and civic parade with rallying national songs and release of the pigeons stirred our emotions further, creating more tears in our eyes.

It was therefore a relief to get out of the sun and enter the reception hall to relax and start meeting people of your community who had given so much time and effort into Iwuy's Commemoration. The Biere La Choulette was very quenching and a tribute to Alain, the brewer. The 2-3hours spent in the hall meeting, greeting and sharing our stories again allowed us to feel the warmth of your community and made us feel like family.

Just when you thought it could not get any better, we moved to the Sports Stadium to witness your exquisite concert, which illustrated to the audience how much time and effort everyone has put into this commemoration. The band played beautifully! The bilingual historic readings and choreographing of the music to a slideshow was well thought out and very entertaining. Even the choreographed music with your local artist painting the portrait was truly unique.

From someone who understands event planning, the level of detail did not go unnoticed and the committees planning, coordination and execution on the day was impeccable. We could tell that a

mammoth amount of time and effort by the committee members and volunteers has been undertaken by passionate people of Iwuy's WW1 history. The success of the day and the overwhelming feelings of pride generated in us is the true testament of a very successful commemoration.

**In summary,** your devotion and passion to commemorate Iwuy's history was clearly illustrated through this remarkable and very successful commemoration. On a personal note, I have attended many parades and commemorations from big to small, local to international, formal to informal in my 27yrs in the military. Without doubt, the Iwuy Commemoration Day exceeds them across all facets of protocol, uniqueness and visual spectacle. Your passion, devotion and effort has clearly shown through....

On behalf of the families representing CEF soldiers who helped liberate Iwuy, we commend Iwuy Village on a fantastic commemoration and thank you most humbly...

Very sincerely, from your friends of the following families;

- Barraclough
- Brettingham
- Hambley
- Hayes
- Henry
- Morrison
- Wilson
- Smith

Squadron Leader Carl Smith (Royal New Zealand Air Force, NZ)