



Government of Canada

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The National Battlefields
Commission

Commission des champs
de bataille nationaux

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Plains of Abraham Educational Activities Teachers Acquiring Additional Expertise, Students Experiencing History

Quebec City, February 25, 2009 – As a result of comments in recent days, the National Battlefields Commission (NBC) would like to set the record straight regarding its group activity program for young people. Since 1992, more than 180,000 elementary and high school students, along with their parents and teachers, have explored the history of the battles of 1759 and 1760 through experiential and interactive learning activities in keeping with the curriculum of the Quebec Department of Education, Recreation and Sports. Teachers gain additional instructional expertise, while their students experience history first hand.

The NBC's educational program has in no way been created or modified for the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Quebec. It is part of the regular program, which has been offered for 17 years. In 2008, more than 75,000 young people and adults took part in at least one of the 36 activities on themes related to the Plains of Abraham (Archeology, the Martello Towers, the Battles of Quebec, etc). All activities are subject to teacher evaluation, and the Commission is proud of its 99.2% satisfaction rate.

There are three main activities related to the Seven Years' War. There is no re-enactment of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, and the contribution of militiamen and Aboriginal people is always addressed. At their request, the *New France Militiamen* presentation was proposed to Grade 3 and 4 teachers. It walks students through the difficult lives of soldiers of the day with military drills, the loading of a cannon, and a history quiz. The *Military* (at the Discovery Pavilion of the Plains of Abraham) and *Wolfe and Montcalm* (in class) invite Grade 5, 6 and high school students to experience the battle context (including shelling and fires on the south slope). Depending on the grade level, there are military strategies with a wall map, typical period military manoeuvres, demonstrations of gun and cannon loading, handling of artifacts, a demonstration of caring for the injured, a history quiz, etc.

During the military manoeuvre activity for Grade 5 and 6 students, chaperones, teachers and parents judge the students' efforts and decide which troops are victorious. The same

process is used for both English-speaking and French-speaking groups. The activities in no way promote war. The objective is to have students experience history by reliving a historical event.

All these activities comply with the educational renewal requirements (Educational Reform) of the Quebec Department of Education, Recreation and Sports. Activities are optional, and admission fees are charged based on the number of students and the activity. Teachers from Quebec, Ontario, the United States and elsewhere can therefore decide whether to add this interactive activity to their program. A number of federal, provincial and municipal institutions also offer schools this type of activity, in their own fields of expertise.

The NBC advocates experiential learning. This is why students find themselves at centre stage, playing an active role in the staging of events. NBC's experienced guides breathe life into the content. Flags, drums, vests and other historical artifacts are part of the educational aids used to get students involved.

The NBC was created in 1908 with the mandate of preserving the great battlefields of Quebec and promoting our history. This area is one of the most important historical sites in Canada. One of the fundamental components of the NBC's mission is to have the public learn the historical facts of this site as accurately as possible, in addition to gaining an appreciation for it.

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