

Hanna Smyth was born in Vancouver and earned her BA in Classical Archeology and History at the University of British Columbia. She then crossed the pond to the UK where she earned her MA in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. Hanna is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Oxford's renowned Faculty of History. Her thesis explores the important story of the material culture of WWI imperial remembrance and identity.

When Canada's ninth Prime Minister Arthur Meighen vowed in 1921, "*across the Atlantic the heart-strings of our Canadian nation will reach through all time to these graves in France*" he articulated two important relationships: the spatial relationship of grief at a distance and the temporal relationship between the creation of the memorials and cemeteries of the First World War in France and that of contemporary memory.

The fact that both relationships are conditional upon and anchored by place, namely the war graves in France, forms the crux of Hanna's PhD thesis, which focuses on the Imperial War Graves Commission (now known as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) sites in France and Belgium that commemorate the dead soldiers of Canada,

South Africa, India and Australia, how this was represented in stone, why it mattered and who made these decisions. As Hanna so eloquently states, "*They are collective, yet individual; political, yet personal; representative of the dead, yet also of the living... They attempted to give form to a massive loss that no amount of stone could fill.*"



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Hanna was awarded the prestigious Beaverbrook Vimy Prize in 2008 and in 2016 became the UK Coordinator of this educational program and the lead chaperone for the Vimy Pilgrimage Award program. In these roles she spent the past two years interpreting her research and sharing her insight and passion with teenage students while leading these Vimy Foundation battlefield educational programs in northern France. This entailed leading and teaching high school students from five countries and inspiring them to want to learn more about Canada and the world.

Hanna's passion lies in interpreting research and knowledge in dynamic, engaging, innovative and socially responsible ways. Following her graduation from Oxford she plans to pursue a museums or public engagement role in Canada or the UK.