**Title:** Killing time: The experiences of Canadian Expeditionary Force soldiers on leave in Britain, 1914-1919  

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**Abstract:** When Canada's entry into the First World War was announced on 4 August 1914, thousands of men rushed to volunteer. From October 1914 to late 1919 tens of thousands of Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) soldiers travelled overseas to Britain to await deployment to the Western Front. Dozens of camps were established, predominantly in southern England, where men spent time training for battle. During this time, leave was much sought after by soldiers who were eager to escape the tedium of camp life. Extended leave passes as well as weekend passes allowed men to frequent the local village and also travel to more remote locations. Men at the front were also eager to return to England, often wishing to earn a 'Blighty' in order to escape the fighting on the Western Front. Unable to journey back to Canada, for all of these men Britain became their 'home away from home.' Despite this isolation, neither the Canadian federal government nor the military authorities involved themselves in the men's off-duty time. It was left up to Canadian volunteers to help support the men. It was in this spirit that the King George and Queen Mary Maple Leaf Club was established. Founded by Lady Julia Drummond, a
Montreal philanthropist, the Canadian-only Maple Leaf Club catered to the men's many social and recreational needs. Founded upon middle-class moral standards, and promoting the virtues of Canadian nationalism and British imperialism, this, and other privately funded clubs, embodied the notion of public patriotism of the time. As such, these social clubs also symbolize elements of early twentieth-century Canadian social and political culture. Soldiers' leave time also allowed some men an opportunity to reconnect with distant relatives. As a large percentage of CEF soldiers were of British ancestry, quite a number of men were able to visit family still residing in Britain. For others, leave was an occasion to travel the country as tourists. These soldier-tourists journeyed throughout the British Isles, visiting as many tourist sites and popular landmarks as possible, often returning to camp exhausted from their adventures. This off-duty time helped shape Canadian soldiers' experiences of the First World War, yet these experiences are overlooked in the Canadian historiography. Seeking to fill this void, this thesis aims to contribute to a more thorough understanding of the CEF men's time overseas.

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