

Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association

Calgary Office, 48 Woodcrest Close SW, Calgary, Alberta T2W 3P9 Tel: (403) 251 5594/Fax: (403) 238 4546 email: sydorukb@cadvision.com

MEDIA RELEASE

CANADIAN WAR HERO'S SCULPTURE UNVEILED IN UKRAINE

For Immediate Release, 30 August 2000 (Calgary/Toronto/Sudbury)

Well over one thousand people witnessed the unveiling of a trilingual plaque and sculpture honouring Ukrainian Canadian hero, **Filip Konowal**, in his home village of Kutkiw, Ukraine, on Monday, 21 August 2000.

Organized by Branch 360 of The Royal Canadian Legion, in co-operation with the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the unveiling and blessing of this sculpture marks the end of several years of efforts on the part of the Ukrainian Canadian community to recall the valour of Canada's only Ukrainian recipient of the British Empire's highest military distinction, the **Victoria Cross**. Corporal Konowal received this medal personally from His Majesty King George V in recognition of his courage during the battle for Hill 70, near Lens, France on 21 August 1917.

As well as unveiling the statue, Branch 360 arranged for the preparation and distribution throughout Ukraine of copies of a trilingual booklet **Konowal: A Canadian Hero** (Kashtan Press, 2000), co-authored by Lubomyr Luciuk and Ron Sorobey, as well as a commemorative pin. A delegation from the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv, headed by the *charge d'affaires*, Emil Baran, planted a Canadian maple leaf tree at the site. The principal guest of honour at the event was Hannah Konowal, the grand-daughter of Filip Konowal. In Ukraine a commemorative postal envelope was released and plans are being made for an official Ukrainian postage stamp honouring Konowal. Meanwhile, in Canada, a parallel commemorative service was held in Ottawa on 21 August.

Commenting on these events the president of Branch 360 of The Royal Canadian Legion, Mr John B Gregorovich, said:

"Although we regret that the Canadian government saw our project as being a private matter, undeserving of any significant support, we are pleased at the overall success of our efforts. The Kutkiw event was widely reported upon in Ukraine and in both of Canada's national newspapers. And we have placed 4 trilingual plaques recalling Konowal's valour across Canada. In Ukraine we were able not only to help the residents of Kutkiw honour their own local hero but reminded them of how Konowal, even though he was cut off from his family and Ukraine, never forgot who he was, living out his life as a proud Ukrainian Canadian and veteran. We still hope to institute a Konowal Fellowship that would assist members of Ukraine's military to pursue post-graduate studies alongside their counterparts in the Canadian forces."

For More Information Please Contact:

Mr J B Gregorovich, President, Branch 360, Royal Canadian Legion, 519 323-9349

Dr L Luciuk, Director of Research, UCCLA, 613 546-8364

please visit www.infoukes.com/uccla