

Sir Arthur Currie

Victoria, WWI and McGill



Boys Central School 1899, Victoria, BC
E-05196, Courtesy of the Royal BC
Museum and Archives

Born and raised in Middlesex County, Ontario, **Arthur Currie** (1875-1933) moved to Vancouver Island in his early twenties.

He was a school teacher, first at a tiny Sidney School, then at the Victoria Boys Central School. A photograph from 1899 shows the young teacher with a group of boys (above), many destined to become soldiers in the First World War.

Currie himself was a part-time soldier who quickly rose to command a local militia unit. After his teaching days he became a realtor, earning a living as an agent for buyers and sellers of real estate.

When war erupted in 1914, he was given command of an infantry brigade, then became the Commander of the First Canadian Division. By April 1917 he was a key player in the planning and execution of the great Canadian

victory at Vimy Ridge. Following that success Currie was given command of the entire Canada Corps and he led Canadian forces in France and Belgium for the final eighteen months of the war, including the momentous Last Hundred Days.

As a senior general Currie emphasized fastidious planning and preparation. He was highly regarded not just for his effectiveness in battle but also for his care and concern in minimizing casualties. The British prime minister, David Lloyd George, was among those having a high regard for Currie. In his post-war memoirs Lloyd George wrote that had the war extended into 1919 he would have given Currie command of the entire British Expeditionary Force. Currie was knighted by King George V in 1918.

In 1920, Currie became the principal and vice- chancellor of McGill University, and served in this post until his death in 1933.

Arthur Currie returned to Victoria in 1931; he planted a copper beech in Mayor's Grove, Beacon Hill Park. The tree flourishes to this day.

Canadian Army Procession in London, Includes Arthur Currie 1919
Courtesy of McGill University Archives, Wade Studio PR 000352



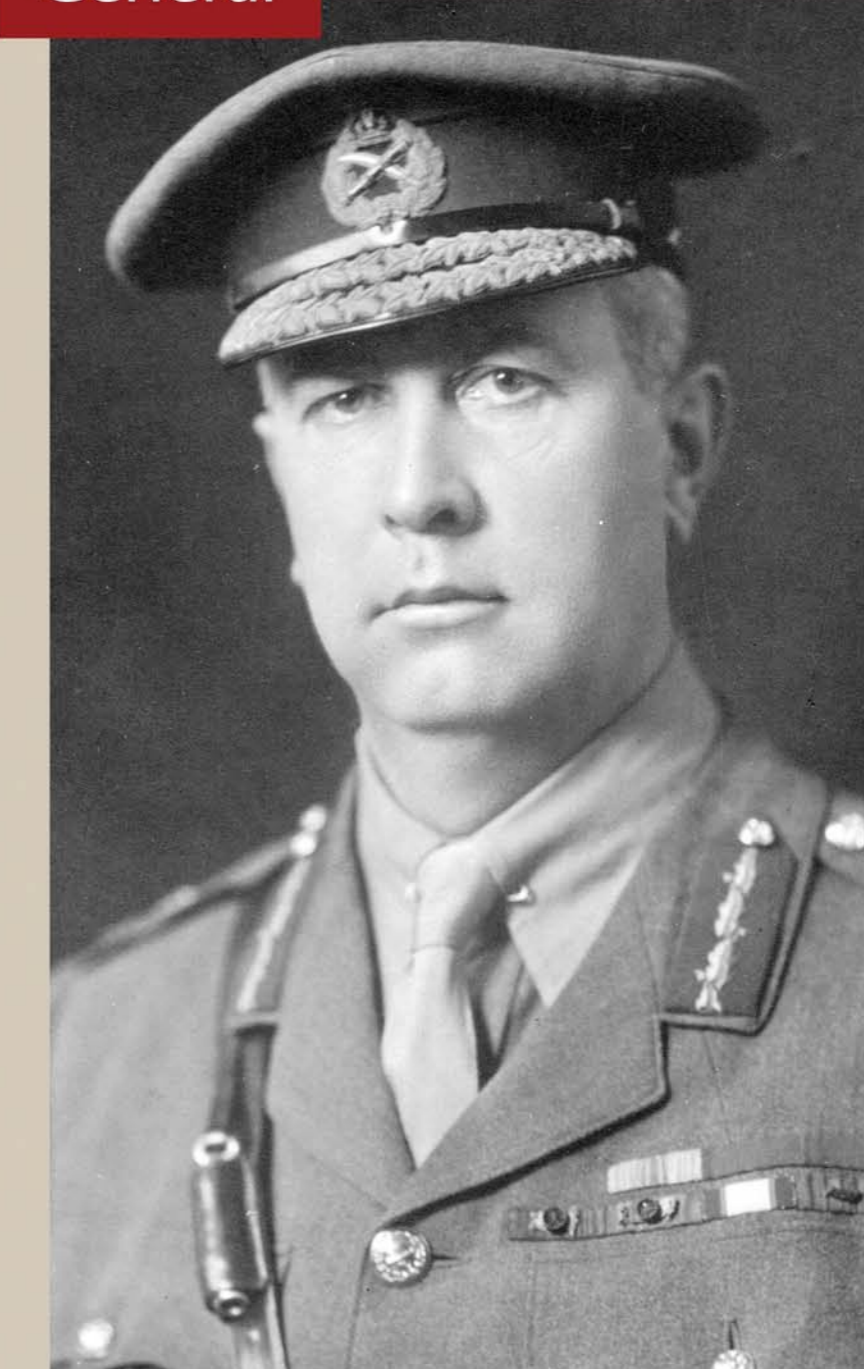
Currie Beech tree, Mayor's Grove - Beacon Hill Park, Victoria BC, Courtesy of Alan Livingstone MacLeod

Lieutenant-Colonel



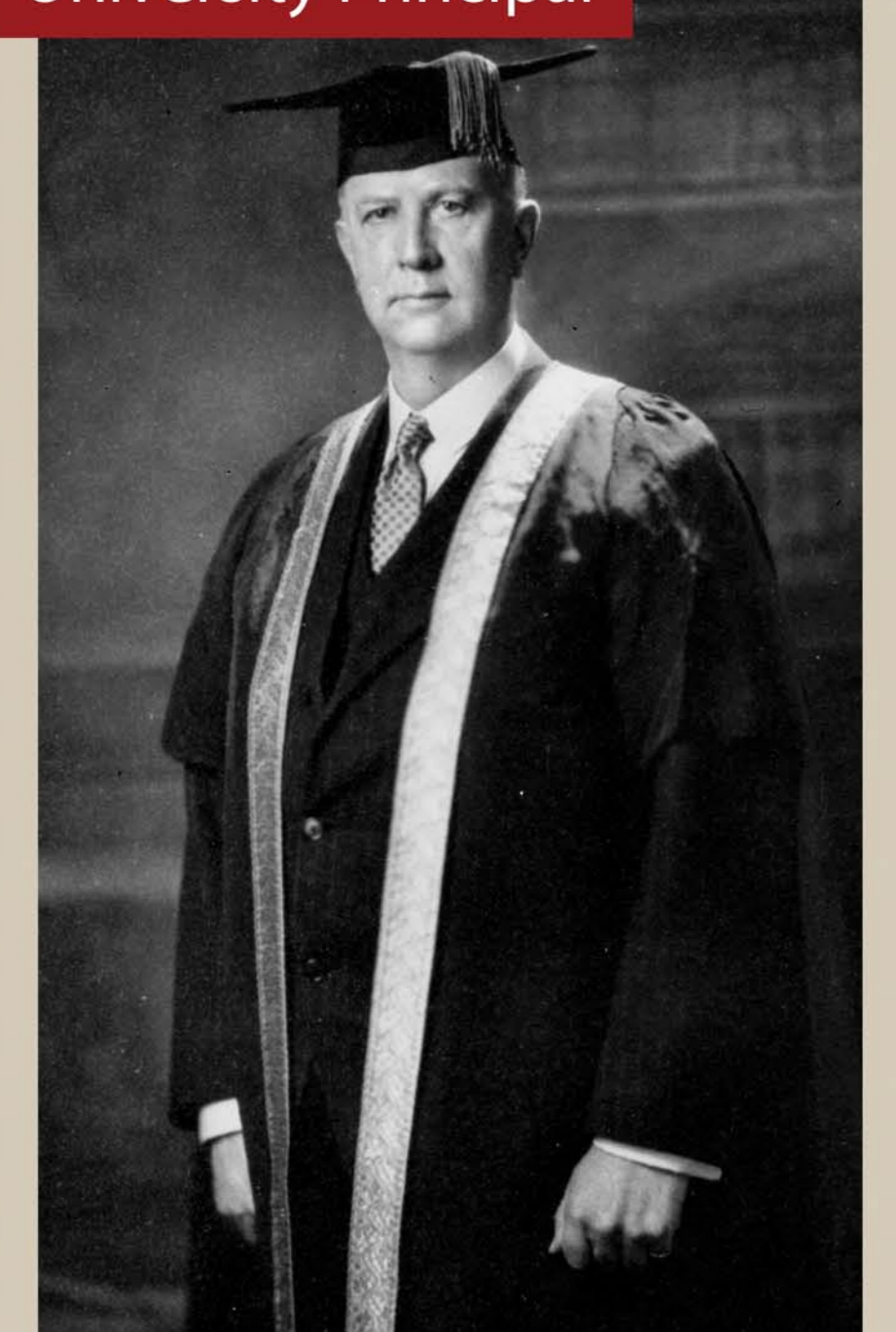
Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Currie, 1909
Courtesy of the 5th BC Field Artillery Regiment Museum, Victoria BC

General



General Sir Arthur Currie, Notman & Son Co.
Courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives, LP 13.2

University Principal



Arthur Currie Principal McGill University 1920-1933. Photo by Rice circa 1930. Courtesy of McGill University Archives PN010537



General Arthur Currie shakes hands with some of the soldiers he had led during the long and costly war.
Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum CWM 19680113-001_p25, Photograph Albums of Colonel Henry Willis-O'Connor

