

FACT SHEET

Remembering Winnie - The World's Most Famous Bear turns 100

- **On August 24, 1914**, a Canadian soldier and veterinarian named (Captain) Harry Colebourn made a pit stop at the train station in White River, Ontario where he bought a bear cub and named her 'Winnie' after his hometown of Winnipeg.
- The real Winnie was a female American black bear.
- Winnie the bear cub was purchased for **\$20**. According to inflation, that would be **\$466** in today's money.
- Winnie traveled overseas with Colebourn's regiment, becoming a proud mascot for the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade and beloved friend to the other soldiers.
- Female American black bears weigh an average of **150 lbs.** fully grown.
- When he was deployed to France in December 1919, Colebourn loaned Winnie to the London Zoo. Colebourn later donated Winnie to the Zoo after the war was over.
- Winnie the bear died in 1934 and was **20 years old**. The average age for an American Black bear in the wild is **18 years old**.
- The real bear Winnie became the inspiration for author A.A.Milne's character Winnie-the-Pooh after his son, Christopher Robin, renamed his teddy bear "Winnie".
- Milne's fictional Winnie-the-Pooh made his literary debut on Christmas Eve 1925 in the children's Christmas story *The Wrong Sort of Bees*, commissioned by the London Newspaper *The Evening News* and then in the collection of children's stories published in 1926, *Winnie-the-Pooh*.
- The **four** Pooh books are *When We Were Very Young*, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Now We Are Six* and *The House at Pooh Corner*.
- *Winnie the Pooh* has been translated into at least **46 languages** – including Frisian, Mongolian and Esperanto, and the collection of books has sold more than **20 million copies** worldwide.
- In 1960, Alexander Lenard's Latin translation *Winnie ille Pu* became the only Latin book ever to have been featured on the New York Times Best Seller List.
- Disney acquired the film and merchandising rights to the Winnie-the-Pooh franchise in 1961.
- The books have gone on to be adapted into **10 film features and featurettes**, as well as numerous television shows and direct to video features.

- Today, Winnie the Pooh has his own place on Hollywood's Pavement Of The Stars and lives in a glass case at the New York Public Library where **750,000 people visit him every year**.
- Forbes Magazine ranks Winnie the Pooh as the **second most valuable character** after Mickey Mouse.
- Winnie-the-Pooh is said to be the 'patron saint of teddy bears.'
- To explore the remarkable true story of Winnie, Ryerson University will unveil a new exhibition, ***Remembering the Real Winnie: The World's Most Famous Bear Turns 100*** to the public on **November 6, 2014** and will appear until **December 7, 2014**.
- In 2015, the history of Harry and Winnie will be explored in an upcoming children's book penned by Harry Colebourn's great granddaughter Lindsay Mattick. Little Brown in the U.S. and Harper Collins in Canada will release the book while Hollywood production company RatPac Entertainment has acquired the film rights to the book.

Harry Colebourn (Brief Bio)

- Harry Colebourn was born in Birmingham in 1887 and came to Canada in 1905 when he was 18 years of age. He settled in Toronto initially and, in order to finance his university education, he worked jobs such as selling fruit from door to door on the streets in Toronto and as a deckhand on commercial vessels plying the Great Lakes.
- In 1908, he enrolled at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph, Ontario. On the 25th of April, 1911, he received his degree as a Veterinary Surgeon and following his graduation, he returned to Dewsbury, England to re-unite with his family.
- Following a short stay, he returned to Canada. On July 3, 1911, he accepted a veterinary appointment with the Department of Agriculture, Health of Animals Branch, in Winnipeg. In the same year he joined the 18th Mounted Rifles as a Militia Officer and then was seconded to the 34th Regiment of Cavalry, (later named the 34th Fort Garry Horse), on May 15, 1912. He was one of the original officers of the 34th Fort Garry Horse.
- While enroute to Valcartier, Colebourn was detached from the 34th Fort Garry Horse and transferred to the Canadian Army Veterinary Corps. (C.A.V.C.) On September 12th 1914, he was taken on strength of the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade Headquarters under the command of Lt. Colonel Arthur W. Currie who later on became the commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.
- When the war ended in 1918, Colebourn remained in England temporarily and in 1919, he reversed his original intentions to bring Winnie home to Winnipeg. Instead, he donated her to the London Zoo as a gesture of his appreciation for the Zoo's efforts in caring for her during those four war years. It was to be noted that Winnie had also become a feature attraction for the many thousands of visitors and especially young children.