

“Izzy Doll Mama” Is Presented the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation

On 24 June 2019 Mrs Shirley O’Connell, the “Izzy Doll Mama” was presented the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation by Minister Lawrence MacAulay. This commendation is awarded annually to deserving recipients who have performed commendable service to the Veteran community and/or individuals who represent commendable role models for their fellow Veterans."

The Citation reads:

“ Mrs. Shirley O’Connell, better known as the “Izzy Doll Mama”, has been volunteering for many years devoting her talents and energy to a remembrance cause touching the lives of thousands of children in war-torn countries across the world. Izzy Dolls continue to be made in honour of the late Master Corporal Mark “Izzy” Isfeld, a soldier who died while removing land mines in Croatia. He was known for distributing the dolls his mother crocheted to the children he came across.

Mrs. O’Connell has taken command of the operation since the death of Carol Isfeld in 2007. She has made countless presentations at schools, women’s groups, and senior care facilities. She oversees the logistics of pickup and coordinates with military groups that deliver the dolls overseas, and she leads workshops where teens learn about the dolls and make some of their own.

Under Mrs. O’Connell’s leadership, Canadian women and students have contributed thousands of dolls to the program. Other charitable organizations have also collected and distributed large numbers of dolls.



The Izzy Dolls program has become a great Canadian humanitarian tradition and a fitting tribute to peacekeepers like the late Master Corporal Isfeld. ”

The presentation took place in Ottawa along with five other Ottawa-area most worthy recipients. After the formalities, Mrs O’Connell presented Minister MacAulay with an Izzy Doll that she had personally knitted as well as a copy of Phyllis Wheaton’s book: [“In the Mood for Peace; the Story of the Izzy Doll.”](#)