



## President's Message

For Christmas 2020, Isabel and I bought ourselves a smart TV. Using YouTube on it, the amount of knowledge about military history and technology that is available is truly astounding. Our next in-person OMMC History Quiz will be all the more richer because of it.

Some of the programming that we are enjoying are British shows about restoring or adapting old buildings to be used as homes. Because it is British, some of the buildings are of an age unimaginable in Canada, and are protected by various conservation hierarchies that are also unimaginable in Canada. Some of these hierarchies have regulations that can make life very interesting for the restorers but it is plain to see that they are based on a national desire to protect and celebrate British architectural history.

This desire to honour the past also extends to their military history. The nation is full of military museums and historical sites.

I realize that Canada simply does not have the same depth of military history, but we in OMMC have the same national desire to protect and celebrate our history. Let us hope that in the future, we are all able to have well-designed museum spaces and ample support so that we can share the memories of the men and women who have fought and died to keep us free.

## Commentaires du président

Pour Noël 2020, Isabel et moi nous sommes achetés une smart TV. Avec YouTube, la quantité de connaissances sur l'histoire et la technologie militaires disponibles pour apprendre et apprécier est vraiment stupéfiante. Notre prochain quiz d'histoire OMMC en personne sera d'autant plus riche à cause de cela.

Certains des programmes que nous apprécions sont des émissions britanniques sur des personnes qui restaurent ou adaptent de vieux bâtiments pour en faire leurs maisons. Parce qu'ils sont britanniques, certains des bâtiments sont d'un âge imaginable au Canada. Aussi parce qu'ils sont britanniques, la plupart de ces vieux bâtiments sont protégés par diverses hiérarchies de conservation qui sont également imaginables au Canada. Certaines de ces hiérarchies ont des réglementations qui peuvent rendre la vie très intéressante pour les restaurateurs mais il est clair qu'elles reposent sur une volonté nationale de protéger et de célébrer l'histoire architecturale britannique.

Cette volonté d'honorer le passé s'étend également à leur histoire militaire. La nation regorge de musées militaires et de sites historiques.

Je me rends compte que le Canada n'a tout simplement pas la même profondeur d'histoire militaire, mais nous, à l'OMMC, avons le même désir national de protéger et de célébrer notre histoire. Espérons qu'à l'avenir, nous pourrions tous disposer d'espaces muséaux bien conçus et d'un soutien suffisant pour partager les souvenirs des hommes et des femmes qui se sont battus et sont morts pour nous garder libres.

# Black Military History of Niagara Traveling Exhibit

By Jim Doherty, President, Niagara Military Museum

The Niagara Military Museum opened their exhibit, "Black Military History of Niagara", on February 29, 2020, prior to the restrictions we came to know due to COVID-19.

Niagara Military Museum in collaboration with Pastor Lois Dix, Nathaniel Dett Chapel and local Black historian Wilma Morrison, created a military history exhibit featuring Black servicemen and women of the Niagara Peninsula.

The Museum knew that they had to take steps to bring the exhibit to a wider audience. Produced with funding by Veterans Affairs Canada's Commemorative Partnership Program, a traveling exhibition was developed to offer circulation of a gallery exhibition to schools and other organizations interested in presenting Black military history.

The traveling exhibit consists of eight free-standing, bilingual, 2.13 m tall display banners, a tabletop display of eight 58.5 cm x 89 cm (23" x 35") vinyl prints, four on each side, available in separate French and English sets and a resource book.

The traveling exhibit launched during the week of Remembrance Day going first to Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired), (Ryan) Smid MMM, MB, CD, Headmaster, Robert Land Academy simultaneously with Major Scott Moody, Principal, Williams Parkway School in Peel district. It has been circulating in Peel District and then to Centre Dufferin District High School for circulation in the Upper Grand District School Board. Unfortunately, COVID-19 put a halt on distribution which was to go to Hamilton Wentworth District School Board next.

The museum continued with their mission to preserve and share the military history of the Niagara Peninsula as schools embraced new ways of teaching and the need for remote learning resources grew.

To answer the call, the Museum developed an online resource book and presentation in response to the changing needs under COVID-19 restrictions.



Primary students, Red Willow Public School, Brampton, Ontario.

Most recently Brent Bell, Senior Communications Officer with Veterans Affairs, published the following article on the travelling exhibit in promotion of Black History Month: [www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/art-hub/niagara-military-museum](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/art-hub/niagara-military-museum).

The logistical issues from the impact of COVID-19 on distribution and planning the exhibit through a pandemic is of concern to all. The exhibit offers a contact-free activity that supports physical distance measures, is lower-risk than face-to-face learning, allows controlled viewing capacity with designated routes, has no shared equipment and is readily adaptable to the venue's health and safety protocols.

The dedicated service of African Canadian veterans is remembered and celebrated as a proud tradition of Black military history.

Further information is available by contacting the Niagara Military Museum at 905-358-1949 or via email [niamilmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:niamilmuseum@gmail.com).

## Operations in a Time of COVID-19: Observations from the CME Museum

By Sandra Johnson Penney, Curator

The Canadian Military Engineers (CME) Museum sits in a unique position in that we are a fully-integrated teaching resource of the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering (CFSME). The Museum is one sub-section of the School's Training Resource Centre (TRC) and is housed inside the headquarters building of the School's extended facilities. In addition to the Museum, the TRC is the professional development library that provides book circulation service to staff and students of the School, and access to archived teaching materials for course writing boards. The Museum itself serves as an interactive lecture venue for students in all phases of training with instruction conducted in the galleries with an instructor specialising in Branch Culture and Heritage.



Sgt Jean Maillet sits in the Second World War gallery where he can easily see the *sturmboot* motor while he designs its new exhibit cradle. In addition to being the Instructor for Culture and Heritage, the TRC NCO, and a Combat Engineer, Sgt Maillet is also a civil engineering technologist with excellent design, drafting and fabrication skills.

DND/CME Museum/photograph by Sandra Johnson Penney.

In March 2020, when the School went into a short hiatus from teaching, museum staff took home a large amount of paperwork to keep them busy until working on-site under COVID-19 protocols could be co-ordinated. By Victoria Day, staff were working out of the office again and preparing to receive students.

For many, COVID-19 closures have been an unprecedented situation, but for us, it was a continuation of the temporary closure caused by construction in the galleries, storage areas and offices. The CME Museum has not been under “normal” operating conditions since the end of November 2019 when we began preparations for construction.

Training at CFSME is at a slower tempo that it has been for many years, and the Museum still provides all its usual service to the School. It has been able to use this slower pace to catch up on tasks that had been shuffled-down the priority list so that staff could concentrate on meeting teaching needs. Staff have been working behind closed doors on improvements to the gallery space and to improve collection management and arrangement.

Once we are able to welcome visitors again, there will be work to re-establish ourselves in the local schools as a diverse and worthwhile destination for field-trip and in-class programming, but that will not be insurmountable. The quiet time until then is giving us the opportunity to develop more programs and to improve those we have been offering.

Rather than looking at this situation as an obstacle, we have been tackling it as an opportunity to regroup and to evaluate what we are doing well and how we can improve how we serve our supporting community. It has given us the opportunity to look at ourselves and to figure out how we can continue to meet our benchmark of superior service to the School and greater CME community while balancing the need to maintain staff equilibrium, to make sure that we are also looking after our own mental and physical well-being.

This period of uncertainty and changing modes of operation are being used to create a new mindset bringing in more clarity about how staff need to include themselves on the list of operational priorities to meet our mandate.



## The M777 Howitzer Fragment

By Andrew Oakden, Director

On Friday, 29 January 2021, the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum in Shilo, Manitoba, received a jagged, post-detonation, 23-inches by 5-inches, M777 Howitzer barrel fragment from the 5th Regiment in Quebec. In February 2020, during a field exercise, Gunners with the 5th Regiment got a live 155mm shell stuck in an M777 Howitzer barrel, which they could not extricate. Technicians tried to remove it with a hydraulic press and other equipment but to no avail. After exhausting all options, the order came to destroy the barrel. The 5th Regiment dismantled and transported the barrel to the Trois-Rivieres shooting range.

On Monday, 10 February 2020, they detonated the barrel with 36 blocks of C4 plastic explosive, neutralizing the shell and obliterating the barrel into jagged fragments. They sent this metal fragment to immortalize the unusual and unfortunate event. We will make arrangements to display this unique artillery artifact in the museum.



The photo above shows the M777 barrel fragment donated to the RCA Museum.



Note the M777 barrel loaded with explosives above and a large piece of barrel post-detonation below.



## Valour Canada Update

By Aaron Curtis, Lead Educator

Hello everyone. As you would have guessed, our museum program, the Character of Canadian Military History program (CCMH), is on hold until late October in the hopes that the virus situation will have stabilized by then. In the meantime, we have been busy developing new partnerships and building new virtual tours.

### Virtual Tours: Battlefields, Assets, Monuments, and Museums

We have launched two new virtual tours, one of the Calgary Soldiers' Memorial, and the other, showing the Field of Crosses at Mount Royal University. In addition, we have added an educational package for each of the Lancaster FM159, HMCS Haida, and Dieppe tours. We have also started to build virtual museum and regimental history tours! Watch for the King's Own Calgary Regimental History tour to launch on the regiment's birthday on 1 April and a virtual tour of the Calgary Highlanders' gallery to follow soon after. To experience our virtual tours, please visit our website [valourcanada.ca/virtual-reality/](http://valourcanada.ca/virtual-reality/).



### At War, with Andy Robertshaw: Educational videos on YouTube

Valour Canada has partnered with battlefield archaeologist Andy Robertshaw to produce a 12-video series of short educational vignettes that will inform young Canadians about trench warfare on the Western Front during the First World War. As of 1 March, the following videos have been released: "Trench Tour", "24 Hours in a Trench", "Trench Construction", and "Weapons of Trench Warfare" (shown above), and can be viewed on our YouTube channel's "[Valour Canada at War](#)" playlist.

### History & Heritage Scholarship Contest 2021: Now Open

The aim of Valour Canada's History and Heritage Scholarship (VCHHS) is to support Canadian high-school students in their college or university pursuits by providing an engaging, thought-provoking, and memorable scholarship contest. Eligible entrants have until June 16th to create the best essay and video response to the question: "Visit a local Canadian war memorial or monument and analyze its historical context, significance, and current meaning. Finish with a brief discussion about the role of Canadian war memorials in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

The first-place winner will be awarded \$1,500; second place will receive \$750. Visit our [scholarship page](#) for the rules and regulations. Last year's award-winning student videos can be viewed [here](#).



# Flag Raising in Honour of the Battle of Hong Kong

By Gene M. Labiuk, Niagara Military Museum



The HKVCA flag being flown at full mast.

On 7 December 2020, at 10:00 a.m., over 20 members of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, Royal Canadian Naval Association (Niagara Chapter) and the Niagara Military Museum gathered for a flag raising of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemoration Association (NHKVCA). On this date in 1941, Japan attacked Hong Kong as well as other countries throughout the Far East and brought the Second World War to Asia and the Pacific.

Just under 2,000 Canadian soldiers and two nursing sisters were sent to the defence of Hong Kong. The Battle of Hong Kong began on 7 December (8 December local time zone), and during the conflict 290 Canadians were killed in the fighting. On 25 December, the Governor of Hong Kong surrendered the Territory to the Japanese attackers, the British Commonwealth defenders laid down their arms and spent the next 44 months in Japanese POW camps.

To commemorate this event, the Niagara Military Museum raised the flag of the Hong Kong Veterans Association where it was flown at full mast until 25 December when the flag was lowered to half-mast in honour of those who lost their lives in the battle and those who died at the hands of the Japanese in the POW camps. The flag remained at half-mast until the end of the year. This is intended to be a yearly event to show our gratitude to the brave men and women that went overseas.

Jim Doherty, President of the Niagara Military Museum, opened the occasion with a short introduction which was then followed by LCol Bernard Nehring (Ret'd) who continued as the emcee and then Mike Babbins, President of the HKVCA, expressed his thanks to the museum for their dedication and thoughtfulness.

The Niagara Military Museum would like to thank Delta Bingo for their charitable support for the exhibit, "C" Force, The Hong Kong Story".



LCol Bernard Nehring (Ret'd) was the emcee of this event. Also shown is Jim Doherty, President of the Niagara Military Museum and two members of the Royal Canadian Naval Association (Niagara Association).

## Education Bursaries!

OMMC has education bursaries of up to \$500! For application forms, see the website. So far, applications for 2021 have been slow – we'd love to see more! If you're concerned about in-person learning because of COVID-19, there are plenty of online opportunities. The Northern States Conservation Center and the University of Victoria both have great online museological courses, and many conferences are still happening virtually. In fact, you can even work towards a diploma or a certificate from the University of Victoria. Think outside the box, too – there are appraiser certification courses, management courses, financial management courses and more, all of which have strong application for what many of us do in our museums. You've already completed one of our bursaries? Consider writing an article for the Bulletin! Share what you've learned and inspire others to adding to our collective "knowledge pool". Support the team!

## Des bourses éducatifs!

L'OMMC a des bourses d'études allant jusqu'à 500 \$? Pour les formulaires de demande, consultez le site Web. Jusqu'à présent, les candidatures pour 2021 ont été lentes - nous aimerions en voir plus! Si vous êtes préoccupé par l'apprentissage en personne à cause de COVID-19, il existe de nombreuses opportunités en ligne. Le Northern States Conservation Center et l'Université de Victoria proposent tous deux d'excellents cours de muséologie en ligne et de nombreuses conférences se déroulent encore virtuellement. En fait, vous pouvez même travailler vers un diplôme ou un certificat de l'Université de Victoria. Sortez également des sentiers battus - il existe des cours de certification des évaluateurs, des cours de gestion, des cours de gestion financière et plus encore, qui ont tous une forte application pour ce que beaucoup d'entre nous font dans nos musées. Vous avez déjà terminé l'une de nos bourses? Pensez à rédiger un article pour le Bulletin! Partagez ce que vous avez appris et incitez les autres à ajouter à notre «bassin de connaissances» collectif. Soutenez l'équipe!

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