



THE LE BULLETIN

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Welcome to 2012! May it be healthy, happy and prosperous for you and yours.

Planning is now underway for the 2012 Museum Studies Programme to be held in Montreal, Quebec. Attendees will be staying at the Opus Hotel in the downtown area. It is very modern, something a bit different than the mainstream hotels, but it is centrally located in the downtown core. The dates are 27 May to 2 June 2012. Every effort will be made to keep the cost reasonable and in line with previous years.

In addition to the host military museums, attendees will be visiting other museums, and participating in interesting lectures and workshops. Unfortunately, attendees will be in for a bit of a long slog administratively, as we will have a few new things to do. For racing fans, staying after the programme, NASCAR is returning to Montreal the following week.

Montreal, Charlottetown and Sydney mark a new milestone on OMMC's road to self-sufficiency. Since 1967, OMMC has grown from total dependency on the Canadian Forces, to university/college residences to popular hotels, with additional support migrating from CF bases to local reserve units. The use of hotels has provided more versatility with regard to locations for the museum studies programme. Any volunteers to host a future programme? Please email ommcinc@gmail.com if you are interested.

Charlottetown was a great success with a variety of tours and lectures. Greg Gallant was of invaluable assistance, as he was: a colleague of, same street dweller as, or related to everyone that I dealt with. One of the perks with a small city! Also, it helps to be a member of the second largest family on the island.

At the AGM, it was agreed that the Bulletin was a valuable tool for the dissemination of news and information, and members volunteered to produce article of historical note or new ideas and techniques. This issue is truly a members' production. Please keep up the good work, and help Arlene produce a well-rounded Bulletin.

Membership renewals are now due, \$65.00 for institution and \$45.00 for individual. After 31 March, there will be an additional \$20.00 administrative fee. Be financially sound and renew early!

Please mark 27 May to 2 June, on your calendar for OMMC and I will see you in Montreal.

Marilyn Gurney
President

WHO WOULD HAVE BELIEVED A MILITARY MUSEUM IN A MALL??

Contributed by Brian McFadden, Vice President, Vancouver Island Military Museum

In 1986, the Vancouver Island Military Museum began life in a small empty storefront located in a local mall. The museum owes its existence to a group of dedicated veterans determined to preserve and protect a vital facet of Canadian history and also Canada's proud military traditions. The museum has expanded in the mall three times in the ensuing years to house what has now become a truly impressive collection of military memorabilia and artifacts from The Navy Army, Air Force, Merchant Navy, and RCMP. So much has been donated over the years by the residents of central Vancouver Island that the museum has needed to seek off-site storage to house, what can only be described as, treasured family memories.

On the occasion of our 25th Anniversary the City of Nanaimo licensed the Vancouver Island Military Museum to occupy the Centennial Museum Building, built in 1967 as part of the country's Centennial Celebrations and paid for by Federal Funds. The building had, until recently, been home to the Nanaimo and District Museum which moved to a larger facility close by. The Centennial Museum Building which will now be the new home of the Vancouver Island Military Museum is listed on the City's Heritage Registry. The building is located in historic Piper Park which also includes in its grounds a First Nations' Petroglyph display as well as other local historic exhibits.

The relocation of the Vancouver Island Military Museum to Piper Park has some very significant advantages. Not only does it provide almost 5000 square feet of display area) but puts the museum at the heart of the downtown core close to the Nanaimo and District Museum, the Nanaimo Conference Centre, Tourism Offices, the new Cruise Ship Facility, Inner Harbour, the Hudson Bay Bastion Historic Site, and several major hotels.

The City of Nanaimo, by granting use of this important, historic building to the Vancouver Island Military Museum, has illustrated the importance the city places on Canada's Military History. It is a fitting tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by veterans past and present.

TRANSPORTATION CANADIAN STYLE

Contributed by Don Manley

We have all heard about deportation of convicts to Australia by the British in the 18th to 19th century but little is known about the British deportation of Canadians and Americans to Australia.

Following poor harvests, a financial & commercial crisis resulted in the collapse of banks in both England & America. Arising from this crisis was the Patriote movement and with Papineau as its leader, they pursued the republican and nationalist ideas forcibly and this resulted in the Rebellion of Lower Canada.

A similar rebellion in Upper Canada, led by William Lyon Mackenzie occurred. Both rebellions were crushed by the government and many of the participants were rounded up & charged. The verdict of the trials was that 82 Americans, 58 French Canadians & 5 civil prisoners were to be transported to Australia.

So, on 28 September, 1839, HMS Buffalo sailed from Quebec transporting the prisoners. On 11 February, 1840, HMS Buffalo arrived off Hobart in Tasmania where the Americans were disembarked. It then sailed to Sydney to disembark the 58 French Canadians and the 5 political prisoners.

They were interred near the present day Concord resulting in the naming of Canada Bay, French Bay & Exile Bay. These prisoners were not in the same category as the British who have been transported. Most were farmers with a few tradesmen and a surgeon.

At the request of the local catholic bishop they were brought to Sydney and impressed at Longbottom Stockade where they were used to break stone for the Paramatta Road & also collected oyster shells for making lime.

In 1842, they were allowed to work outside the prison & between 1843 and 1844 they all received pardons and except for Joseph Marceau, a farmer/weaver who settled in Dapto, and two people who died, the rest all returned to Canada.

FALLEN SOLDIERS COMMEMORATIVE PROJECT SEEKS VENUES

I am a Canadian weaver currently teaching at NC State University. Rick Sanderson from the Maritime Command Museum in Halifax gave me your e-mail. He saw an exhibition that I mounted at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design last spring and has suggested I contact you about it.

At the time, the exhibition was comprised of approximately 125 woven panels of the eyes of Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan and a similar number (only about 2%) of US soldiers who have died in Iraq & Afghanistan. For Veterans Day, I exhibited all of the Canadian soldiers who have died and 160 US soldiers at the College of Design at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. I attach a link to the NC Arts Blog that covered the exhibition: <http://ncartblog.org/?p=3232>

Fallen Soldiers is an ongoing project that commemorates the thousands of soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan and all soldiers who have fought and died in service to their country. The 300 ghostly portraits remind us that war is not only measured by the words democracy and freedom but also by all the lives that were and could have been... this is the true cost of war. Each panel shows the eyes of the soldier and their initials. A key to the exhibition provides the full name, rank, place of birth, and date of death.

This work is dedicated to the memory of Captain Jefferson Francis who was killed in Afghanistan in 2007 by an improvised explosive device. He was a young man of 36, with a six-month old baby, who dropped out of PhD program to become an unlikely soldier.

This piece is woven in memory of all soldiers who have given their lives fighting wars and to their families and friends for the tears they have shed.

My website is: <http://vitaplume.com/>. You can read my resume and see other work I have produced. I am looking for other venues in Canada to show the work. I am willing to show the Canadians alone or the two components together. Would you be willing to send this notice to all OMMC members, in hopes they might be interested in displaying it. Please let me know if you have any questions, or if I can provide any further information. I thank you for any help you can provide.

Your truly,

Vita Plume, Associate Professor, Art & Design
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
919-513-4466



Photo credit: Vallyn Murphy

DISCOVERING DALGAS

By Greg Nesteroff of the Nelson Star

This summer, retired Major Ian Newby passed through Nelson as part of a tour by the Military Vehicle Preservation Association and appeared in a front-page photo in the *Star*. Not long after, at an auction house in Aldergrove, he discovered at the bottom of a box of junk a World War I officer's leather mapcase with the hand-lettered inscription:

Orderly Room Outfit
Captain A.E. Dalgas, RE
3 Section
177 T Company RE
(RE stood for Royal Engineers and T for Tunneling.)



Dalgas' mapcase



Agner Dalgas

Newby bought the mapcase and started looking into Agner Emile Dalgas, whom he soon learned had lived in Nelson. According to Sylvia Crooks' *Homefront and Battlefront: Nelson BC in World War II*, Dalgas was born and raised in Denmark, where he graduated from officers' training school at 19. He then served in the Danish army for five years before coming to Canada with his family in 1910 and settling at Crescent Valley.

Capt. Dalgas worked as a civil engineer until World War I began, then went overseas with the 7th Battalion and transferred to the Royal Engineers of London, where he became commander of the 177th Tunneling Company. He received the Military Cross and Italian Silver Medal for valour in the field.

Afterward, Dalgas and his wife lived in Nelson and he worked as an engineer for the BC Department of Public Works. In the 1930s, Crooks writes, he "ardently advocated revival of the organized militia and formed a military institute of former officers who met regularly."

When World War II began, Capt. Dalgas was promoted to major and commanded the 111th (Nelson) Field Battery, overseeing its recruitment and training. The 111th was among the first contingents to go overseas, and Dalgas, "pointing to two flags on the wall, one representing the Legion and one the 111th, declared that one was already covered with honours, and the 111th would follow in that tradition."

Dalgas accompanied his men to Edmonton where he was assigned to training duties, but was determined to go overseas himself. Told he was too old, he waived rank, travelled to Ottawa, lied about his age and joined the 4th Field Artillery as a gunner. Once in England, the army learned his real age, so he was promoted from private to sergeant and made an instructor with the Canadian School of Artillery.

Many men who served under him in Nelson before the war and during its early days made a point of looking him up, Crooks says. One wrote: "There never was a finer man than he, and I am filled with admiration for his indomitable spirit and moral courage and determination." He added his hope that Dalgas would return to Nelson with his old rank of major. Dalgas did become a captain again before finally reaching the front in early April 1945. However, nine days before the war in Europe ended, as the Canadian 2nd Corps advanced into northern Germany, Dalgas' jeep ran over a mine. He died aged 57. His wife Alicia learned of his death on the same day she received a letter from him, in which he told her he was "way past the Rhine." Dalgas was buried

in Holten Canadian War Cemetery in Holland.

The story doesn't end there. Newby, who acquired Dalgas' mapcase, had "one of those experiences that literally raises the hair on the back of the neck." He knew he'd heard Dalgas' name somewhere before, and remembered an instructor at artillery school in Shilo, Manitoba who taught him a trick handed down from World War II. "We had a plotting board which was essential for the accurate shooting of our guns, and which had to be kept dry and legible despite weather or environmental conditions," he says.

Over these plywood boards they placed paper targets marked with grid squares, and on top of this clear cellophane covers sealed around the edges with tape. "We then were supposed to pin a pivot and range arm with large tacks, which of course resulted in many holes which let in water and ruined the paper beneath. We were told to file off the points and use adhesive tape, which preserved the integrity of the waterproofing." The invention was credited to Agner Dalgas of the Canadian School of Artillery in England.

Newby has since spoken to Dalgas' granddaughter Corinne, an instructor at BCIT. She didn't know about her grandfather's illustrious history, but when she cleaned out the basement of the family home in Nelson, she found his medals and uniform, and still has them.

A couple of summers ago, Sylvia Crooks also discovered Dalgas' World War I diary in the Touchstones archives, part of the H.H. Currie fonds. "It's very interesting," she says. "It's a diary from the 7th Battalion, which was the first contingent of men that left Nelson in August 1914. They were among [the victims of] the first gas attacks. Something like 17 of them lost their lives." The diary also mentions Dalgas' transfer to the 177th Tunnelling Company: "He recorded how sad he was to leave the 7th, and the men he'd been with." It's not clear how the diary found its way to the archives, although the Currie fonds are a collection of World War I items, and Crooks speculates Dalgas' widow donated it. Nor is it clear how the mapcase ended up in the auction house. Newby has also been in touch with English author Iain McHenry, who is completing a book about

the 177th. He sent McHenry a copy of Crooks' book, pages from Dalgas' diary, and other information.



Nelson's Agner Dalgas (centre, pointing) in the field with Major-General A.G. McNaughton, commander of the 1st Canadian Division, to his right.

Courtesy Corinne Dalgas

An archaeological group known as the La Boisselle Project has been excavating tunnels left untouched since 1918, and just last week Newby watched a TV special called *The First World War From Above*. "Amazingly, there was major coverage of the tunneling war and the La Boisselle crater in particular," he says. In one shot, you could see a memorial to Dalgas' 177th. The original was knocked down during the final German offensive in 1918, so Dalgas made an impassioned plea for permission to return after the armistice and rebuild it. This was granted and the new memorial stood until it was replaced by a permanent stone marker in the 1920s. A wooden plaque and copper plate inscribed with the names of the tunnelers hung in a London church until recently, when it was moved to the Royal Engineers' Museum.

<http://www.nelsonstar.com/news/133492918.html>

CAN THE MEDIA HELP YOUR MUSEUM?

Contributed by Bruce Tascona, Legion House Museum (The Museum of the Military History Society of Manitoba).

The day I arrived home from the OMMC Conference in 2011, I had a message to contact the Legion Branch that houses our Museum because someone had anonymously dropped off a uniform from the Great War. The Legion Staff had no clue who the donor was. It was quite a donation; there was a cap, tunic, water bottle and

medals both German and Canadian. The dilemma we had was who the donor

was—we were able to gather enough information about the soldier from the identity discs and medal. We could have been satisfied with the donation and put it into our collection but we thought perhaps we could gain more exposure of the Museum by contacting the Media. What happened then was that the local media was able to tell our story. The spin-offs of the article were more than we had anticipated. Not only did we make contact with the anonymous donor but we became flooded with donations. As a result of the media attention this spawned a spate of donations. We received two dress sabres to members of the RCASC—one of whom was killed in an air show in June 1956 at RCAF Station Winnipeg. They are both unusual—they have the “EII” Cypher with King’s Crown. We also received two Second World War RCAF uniforms, and a donation of two Lt/Col uniforms to a member of 402 Squadron.

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Military museum seeks mysterious benefactor

Director hopes to thank donor of First World War uniform

St. Boniface

BY ARIELLE GODBOUNT
STAFF REPORTER
arielle.godbout@carletonplace.com

Bruce Tascona has a military mystery on his hands.

Tascona, director of the Legion House Museum in St. Boniface, is looking for the man who anonymously donated a First World War uniform and other artifacts to the museum.

The museum—opened in 2005 by the Military History Society of Manitoba—has a mandate to commemorate Manitoba's contributions to Canada's military heritage, from the fur trade to the war in Afghanistan.

The First World War uniform was left with a bartender at the Royal Canadian Legion (Newman/St. Boniface Branch No. 43 on Marston Street about five weeks ago. The branch donated it upper floor to the museum.

Tascona said the benefactor left no name or contact information.

"He said it was his grandfather's. That's all I know."

That's not exactly true—so an expert on Canadian military history, Tascona has been able to stitch together bits and pieces of information about the man who originally owned the uniform.

His identification tags and the inscription on his Victory Medal identify the man as Frank Stanley Dudenboffer.

Tascona accessed military records and found Dudenboffer's recruitment papers, which show he was enlisted on Jan. 15, 1918 in Orillia, Ont.

Records also show Dudenboffer had relatives in St. Boniface and Tascona is guessing he likely joined them in the province shortly after the war.

The uniform also provides clues, with a shoulder badge identifying Dudenboffer as a member of the 10th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Canadian Division.

"This is nice because it fits. We have exhibit on the Winnipeg Light Infantry, and this battalion was part of the Winnipeg Light Infantry," Tascona said.

An insignia of crossed rifles on the sleeve signifies an expert marksman, Tascona added, while a brass bar attached just below indicates he was wounded.

Despite this detective work, Tascona said he would still like to speak to the grandson who donated the uniform—to thank him, to issue him a receipt for the donation, and to pick his brain about his grandfather.

Tascona is specifically curious about the timeline—if Dudenboffer didn't enlist until January 1918, and it typically took six to nine months for a soldier to train and be sent overseas, he likely did not see much action before the war ended on Nov. 11, 1918.

"I suspect he was one of the last casualties," said Tascona, referring to the brass bar that indicates Dudenboffer was wounded. "My questions would be, if I could talk to the grandson, just to get an idea of where he arrived (at the Western Front)."

While the museum has a number of other uniforms on display—including three others from the First World War—Dudenboffer's is special, Tascona said, since not much is known about the people who wore most of the other uniforms.

The chance to learn more about Dudenboffer is also a chance to help visitors to the museum connect with a First World War soldier on a more personal level.

"It's a good piece of military history for Manitoba," he said.

The donor of the uniform may contact Tascona at 255-3907 or tasconab@mts.net. For more information about the Legion House Museum, visit www.lhm.ca.

PHOTO BY ARIELLE GODBOUNT
Donated to the Legion House Museum in St. Boniface.



Another donation of note is a very interesting and unusual set of medals awarded to Staff Sgt Stowell, MC (pictured at right), covering two wars and involving three Canadian Highland Regiments. The First War portion includes a Military Cross won by the recipient while attached to the 13th BN CEF. The recipient after the war moved to Winnipeg and was a member of the Queen's own Cameron Highlanders of Canada until 1938 when he moved to Toronto. At the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted as an other rank with the 48th Highlanders of Canada. He is the recipient of the 1939-45 Campaign Star along with his other campaign medals. He was forty five years of age-- far too old to serve as an infanteer but served in France in June of 1940, explaining why he received that campaign star. He remained in England for the duration of the war. The media attention resulted in other donations including War Bond and Saving Stamps which help in enhancing in what was happening on the homefront in Manitoba. A 1910 Ross Rifle MkIII Sniper Rifle was donated to the collection as well as two RCAF WWII airman's uniforms.



The common thread with each and every one of the donations received was that the donors were grateful that there was a place within their community that they could donate items to. They valued the items but did not want to just get rid of them. When they realized a place within their neighbourhood existed and above all else would value them they stepped forward and gave freely (especially in this day and age of E-Bay).

The derived benefit of culturing the media is that they will call upon you for their “Remembrance Day” features which will again bring on more donations. This was again our experience this past November and has been for several years. My final remarks on this matter are to use your collection to enhance your Museum’s exposure to the community. You do not need a Victoria Cross or a vast famous’s military figure to gain public attention it could be as simple as a uniform.

NORTH BAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS PULL MUSEUM INTO SPOTLIGHT

Contributed by Bethany Aitchison, Acting Curator, Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence

As it happens, 2011 was a most advantageous time for the Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence (CFMAD) to be reinstated. After an almost two-and-a-half-year closure, the museum reopened in July to take part in one of the most significant years in CFB North Bay/22 Wing history. 2011 marked the 60th anniversary of continuous operation of the wing, and numerous celebrations took place. CFMAD was fortunate to be a major participant in the proceedings, and they provided some of the greatest exposure the museum has ever experienced.

The main events began in the summer with a local festival called "Summer in the Park" held during the August civic holiday weekend. Summer in the Park is a midway, concert series and showcase for local groups, all wrapped up in one exciting package. Thousands of people visited this event, and the museum had its own booth alongside 22 Wing's presentation, which included a CF-18 cockpit and swag table.

August was the busiest month for the anniversary celebrations, beginning with a weekend stint at Northgate Mall. This consisted of a huge set-up that included flight simulators, "Support our Troops" paraphernalia, audio/visual displays and a museum exhibit with activities. This was in fact a promotional event for the merriment the following weekend.

This weekend included a reunion that was held in the mess hall and a gala dinner that transformed the gymnasium into a dazzling spectacle. The museum provided some themed decor for the reunion and provided photos and video projected onto large screens around the hall highlighting the wing's 60-year history. The climax, however, was the open house. Since the closure of the famous Underground Complex and the move into the new Above Ground Complex (AGC), the public had

never been allowed access to the new facility.

The open house was the first opportunity to tour the new secure AGC. Conveniently, the museum is located across the parking lot from the AGC's main entrance, and the museum welcomed more visitors that day than it did during the entire summer - 225 visitors in a single day. Museum staff even collected a few artifacts that local retirees generously brought in for the public's enjoyment.

Lastly, the museum played a key role in an annual tradition at 22 Wing - the 22 Wing Volunteer Concert Band musical tribute, the theme of which was the anniversary of the Wing. Complementing the evening was an exhibit comprised of numerous artifacts and images from the museum's collection that the audience enjoyed before the performance and during the intermission.

It is undeniable that the 22 Wing 60th Anniversary festivities provided CFMAD with increased exposure and enhanced media coverage. Teaming up with Public Affairs and the Anniversary Committee undoubtedly boosted the museum's popularity in the community, solidifying its involvement in future events. Happy Anniversary, 22 Wing!



QUILT AID: THE 1917 WASKATENAU RED CROSS SIGNATURE QUILT

Contributed by Sean Moir, Curator, Military & Political History, Royal Alberta Museum

Wars are fought and won on many fronts, including the Home Front.

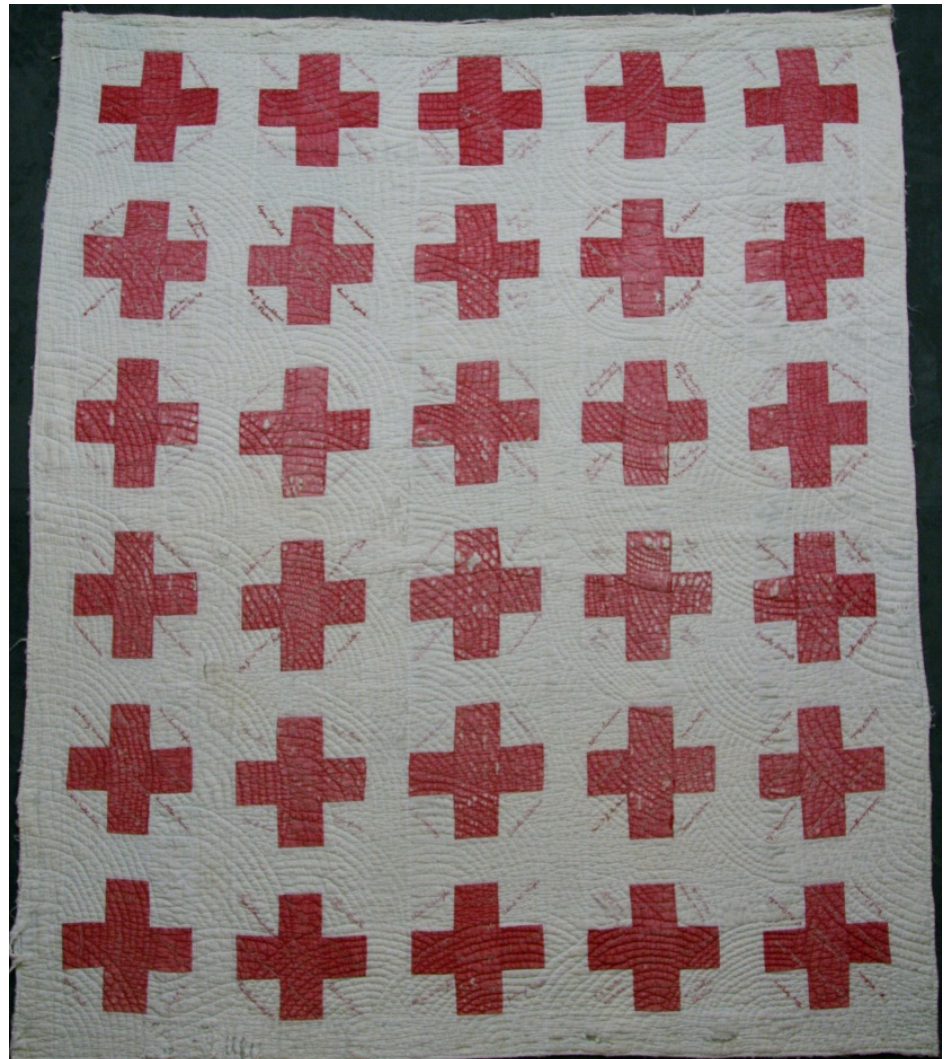
During the summer of 1917 the citizens of the small Alberta community of Waskatenau (pronounced Was – et – na), located approximately 100 Kms north-east of Edmonton, organized a picnic to raise funds for the Red Cross. The money was used to assemble comfort packages for Canadian soldiers serving along the frontline in France and Belgium.

Key to the fundraising effort was the production of a signature quilt made from thirty blocks of white cotton fabric, each adorned with a large red cross.

Members of the community paid a modest sum to have their names, and/or those of loved ones serving abroad, embroidered on the quilt. The quilt bears the names of 300 individuals, including 28 service personnel. Once completed, the quilt was raffled off among those who contributed to the cause.

William Cherrington, winner of the quilt raffle, was just 17 years of age at the time and serving in the navy. His parents kept the quilt and presented it to him and his bride Jean on their wedding day in 1923.

The Cherringtons used the quilt regularly for many years before they passed it to their daughter Helen in



Front of Quilt
Courtesy Royal Alberta Museum



The quilt backing bears a clamshell design and is made from a single piece of open weave cotton.

Courtesy Royal Alberta Museum



Red Cross volunteers who made the signature quilt, Waskatenau, Alberta, 1917. **Front row, L to R:** Mrs. Elsie Scott, Mrs. Mary Barron, Mrs. Elsie Carefoot, Mrs. Carrie Lunn, Mrs. Mary Ann New, Mrs. Polly Melbourne, Mrs. Ellen Lunn. **Back row, L to R:** Mrs. Josephine West, Mrs. Erickson, Mrs. Phoebe Woodward, Mrs. Lottie McCartney, Mrs. Bertha Cherrington, Miss Lena Ongena, Mrs. Annie New, Mrs. Klazina Van Manen, Mrs. Lizzie Brown, Mrs. Jane Whale, Mrs. Malissa Vance.

Courtesy Royal Alberta Museum

1978. Helen and her family gave the quilt to the Waskatenau Seniors Association in 1990, where it remained until it was donated to the Royal Alberta Museum in 2009.

The quilt is showing the effects of use, laundering and exposure to light. The “red” fabric and thread used to construct the crosses and to embroider the names has faded to a pale pink hue. The worn, fragile cotton fabrics make the quilt difficult to handle without causing further damage. Protruding cotton batting around the edges will be stabilized by applying fine white netting; similarly, pink silk netting cut to the shape of the crosses will be applied. Those areas bearing small tears will be couched down with hair silk. Fortunately, the backing remains intact. The quilt will be rolled for storage.

I have undertaken a cursory survey of Alberta institutions to try to determine the rarity of this type of object – 1st WW signature quilt. My sense is these are not common. I would be grateful to hear from the readership of the Bulletin regarding the existence of similar quilts. Contact information below:

Sean.moir@gov.ab.ca

780-453-9184 – phone

12845-102 Avenue, NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 0M6



William Cherrington (ca. 1917.
Courtesy Royal Alberta Museum

Some Random Thoughts Re the First World War

Contributed by Neil Smith, Curator, Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment Military Museum

In two years' time we will be beginning the 100th anniversary of the First World War. In most if not all of the museums we have visited over the past years I do not recall seeing any display or explanation of the problems for the Canadian Army and development for Canada that came out of The First World War. (Mine included) It is in our mandate and I feel we need to do this and much more honestly.

One of the most common and persistent complaints from the military itself and from military historians is that 'the military mind' is too set in their way of thinking and do not accept or adopt change easily if at all. I find that very common with many people in all public presentations. Perhaps it will occur here too?

Establishing the truth about an event regardless of when it occurs is very difficult. It is even more so when that event is 100 years old. Too much accretion prevents the truth from peeking out and the mindset is just that, the mind is set. Most of our original information comes from the politicians and their attendant media. The political figures will never say in public that any ideas or act, regardless of its true worth, by the opposite party is of any value. That is as true today as it was 100 years ago. We just acquired a copy of "The History of The Great World War", published 1915! All too often, authors tend to be somewhat lazy and they read other authors and rely on their information as being true. Thus errors, misinterpretations or deliberate biases creep in and continue down through time. Jack Verney in his book "The Good Regiment" shows just how bad this practice can be. The main effort and affect of the politicians was to dishearten the military men and ruin their moral simply to gain political 'superiority' over the opposition. They could not have cared less about the PBI. (Poor Bloody Infantry)

The Conservatives early in 1900, being more in tune with Britain, wanted a factory built in Canada to produce the Lee Enfield for Canadian use. Britain refused, continuing their policy of sending to 'the colonies' their outmoded equipment, often in poor condition. Some militia units did not upgrade to the breech loading Snider, still a second generation removed, until after the introduction of the Lee Metford in 1888. They still had to wait to get issued with the Martini. Ross, having just come from the USA with a new rifle design took advantage of the opportunity and promised to build a factory in Canada to produce it. Borden was impressed and agreed to this in 1902. By 1905 the plant was in production but mainly as an assembly plant with US made parts, and of course Borden was out of power by then, so the criticism from their side began. Ross was a Conservative and had been given the contract by them, so the Liberals under Laurier immediately began their attacks. With both parties now against him, Ross stood no chance. It is interesting to note that all the criticisms and failures published year after year, and continuing to this day, all happened prior to 1906 and did not happen at all during 1906 to 1915. The bolt blowing back and breech failure did not happen to the MK II. The bolt weakness in the MKIII would not appear until the rifle had sustained many thousands of rounds fired thoroughly it.

As Hughes was a supporter of Ross and because he did not cower to Laurier he had to go to also. It was Hughes that made it possible for the Canadian Command structure to be created with officers in all levels up to, and including, the British War Department, Whitehall etc. We fail to show how his creating the hated 'Numbered' CEF Battalions leads to our being accepted as more than 'just a colony' of England. If he had not done this our existing regiments would have immediately been absorbed into the British army with British officers. Thus at Vimi Ridge we see The Canadian Army fighting together as a whole army under their own officers and command for the first time in our history.

Having met with a number of community groups as well as teachers and students who are preparing for their trip to Vimi next year, I have become painfully aware that most people have no idea about the real significance of that event. Most clearly feel that Canada became recognised "because we captured the hill which the British and French armies had failed to do".

I am going to raise some issues about the Ross Rifle which are still found in news articles to this day. First there is no way 'the bolt can be inserted 'incorrectly'. If you do not believe this please take your Ross out of storage or the display case and prove to me you can do this. The bolt head can only be in one of two positions, at rest against the bolt body or turned out (forward) to be inserted. If the head is in the 'rest' (vertical) position the bolt will not go in.

One general condemning the Ross is quoted as saying; "They need eight men to take care of a Ross". He must have been familiar with public works or worked for the government. Another frequent complaint is that the soldier, when under stress, will find it too complicated or impossible to insert the bolt. Why is the soldier standing or running around with the bolt out? Just as any soldier of any era this is one of the first basic skills he learns to do with his rifle even in the dark. The rifle failed too often because of mud jamming the bolt. The holiest of cardinal rules is that a soldier must keep his rifle clean at all times. Often punishment was levied for the smallest grain of sand in the bore. How did mud get into a closed weapon? Or why was a rifle left sitting around with an open bolt? I have had Canadian military rifles and pistols, from the 42 in. Long Land Pattern musket to the C1 for about 65 years. I still have four Ross rifles in three different Marks. I have fired all of the types of ignition as well as a Lewis and Bren. I was a Range Safety Officer. If anyone can show me that they are willing to fill with mud, the breech of a Lee Enfield of any age, and fire it safely let me know as I would take out an insurance policy on them. If the Lee Enfield was so 'safe' from dust, dirt, and mud why were the first bolts issued with metal covers and why did a canvas breech cover for it become standard issue? That it is much more difficult to clean the breech of a Ross I will not dispute. NO firearm is safe to fire with a breech full of mud which cannot be prevented from creeping into the chamber. A Drill Sergeant complained that sometimes the bolt would open when the rifle butt was slammed to the ground during drill. Strange, I am sure we all have rifles with the butt plate almost totally gone and butts cracked by repeated slamming into the pavement. A soldier would be charged and fined the cost at least if he 'damaged' a rifle but not a drill sergeant. Another complaint is that the bayonet would fall off with repeated firing. I wonder why the officer ordered bayonets fixed during long term firing. The bayonet lug and locking spring of the Ross are as sound as that on the Lee Enfield.

Another complaint is that the bolt blew back often. Why did the Battalion Officers or Medical Corps issue no reports of significant number of deaths from the Ross usage? Strange that 300,000 of this 'feared and deadly', to its user, weapon was purchased by the British for use, obviously only at home, for training purposes. Why were there no reported injuries there? We only had about 100,000 in use.

That the Ross rifle experienced frozen/jammed bolts due to the oversized British ammunition is not in question. It did occur too often and, in some cases, caused death to the soldier unable to defend himself. If this 'jamming' occurred in the trench line warding off a German attack I think that the soldier with the malfunction would not likely have died. If he died during an advance there is no specific justification to blame that on his rifle. If he died in his own trench line, or in a German one, in face to face combat then the probability is stronger. But I would suspect that firing a rifle along a trench line would endanger your own troops as much as the enemy. Wasn't that why the entrenching spade or mace/club was reputed to be their favorite weapon of choice? As RSO I had occasion to return a No 7 as the wear of opening and closing the bolt against the receiver and the large number of firing even with a .22 had made the headspace too excessive and dangerous to the user. Ever wonder what those two little holes in the barrel just forward of the breech were for? To let escaping gas from a ruptured casing vent "safely" to the upper right. Ruptured cases happen to any firearm after excessive use, not just to a Ross. The new super strong hard metals mean that it will just take longer for the wear to happen. We know that by this time the British tool and die makers were among some of the most skilled in the world. The Enfield factory had been producing interchangeable gun parts since approximately 1850. Why did the War Department allow such larger, unnecessary +/- tolerance in their ammunition supply? Seems to me the blame for malfunction is placed on Canada rather than Britain who supplied the faulty ammunition. Was it deliberate to eliminate the Ross to benefit the British arms producers? We know the rifle was 'safe' if used with Canadian ammunition. A special cartridge clearing tool was issued with every Lewis Gun. Was this because of jamming, a hot barrel and an oversized case? Why no uproar about that? The Russians were still using their Ross rifles safely as late as 1954 when they won a competition with a Ross MKIII chambered for their 7.62 MM.

(I was supposed to be a 'qualified' gunsmith but I never felt I was more than a good mechanic. Just recently I had fun restoring a two band Snider which was reputed to have been buried in a coal bin for maybe about 50 years. It came in totally sized and metal very hard to even see. Now it is fully functional and worth putting out on display.)

I personally find it interesting that all the complaints that are attributed to soldiers in the field the soldiers are not named. Also I can find no example, maybe you can, of a soldier saying 'I John Smith' had this or that happen. It is very rare to even find 'I saw it happen'. It is always couched in 'I was told' or 'I heard', or even "We know" or even "Everyone knows"... Even the famous Sergeant Elliott example* makes sure not to name the author, Colonel or the Batt. Number. Finding the two in the attestation papers does not help. It is hard to verify the truth when the episode is so carefully hidden. If this is a true story, why was it not passed up, a

coward Colonel? Maybe it was passed up but we are not told. I also find it interesting that out of the whole time, supposedly, hundreds if not thousands of soldiers who supposedly died as a result of 'Ross rifle failure' of some sort; there was not a single person of any rank who kept any kind of personal record, diary, notes, ledger, or list of the numbers or names of the ones in their Battalion who died. Nobody cared?

Another criticism is the 'gung ho' officer who after his Battalion has suffered many losses makes comments like "They showed them how to die like men". Just what would you say knowing it will get back to your men? 'Oh you poor slob got slaughtered again! Better luck next time.' Actually in reading, only a cursory perusal I must admit, of documents, notes, diaries, and letters, of the 2nd Batt CEF I find none of either type of comment from any officer or man.

Finally I deplore the use of the term wastage or words of that intent. I will not dispute that there were "horrendous losses". How could I? The question I raise is, given the equipment available just how could those losses have been lessened significantly. We seem to feel (glory in) that the tactics at Vimy Ridge did everything correctly yet the losses were still high. Most histories still blame the 'stupid', 'uncaring', 'unthinking' 'incompetent' officers who are pictured as glorying in the high losses his regiment or battalion suffered as a badge of honour. Maj. Roscoe Vanderwater of the 2nd Batt CEF never seemed to carry any stigma of that kind home with him and went on to serve many years with great respect from many of the men from the CEF battalions he served in.

Those units that fought in WWII over the same areas or in other counties with similar mud, rain, flooding, conditions found know that their increased losses could not be reduced because 'we know better and have better equipment now'. Just recently, Tom Smith, a member of the Black Watch related his experience on Aug 5 '44. We were crossing a wheat field alongside the Orne River to Cannes. All hell broke loose. The four advancing platoons were attacked by the Germans who were supposed to have retreated. Within four hours we were nearly all wiped out. He estimates that only 2 of the company of 200 survived. As he was severely wounded in his left hand requiring him to be sent immediately to England there would be only one 'effective' answering the roll call next day. Sound familiar to a famous First World War Regiment? The same in WWII as in WWI. Far too often too little recognition is placed on the almost impossible geographic and weather conditions.

*For those who may not know this story a shortened version with no important facts left out.

Armourer Sgt reports to the Batt. Lt Col. The Col says bolt will not fly back. Armour works on the rifle and bolt. Clamps rifle on the trench parapet. Ties cord to trigger and pulls it. Bolt flies back and embeds itself in the rear wall of trench. Col turns pale. End of story.

My inquiring mind wants to know. (If this actually a true story?) What purpose did the demonstration have using the Lt Col? The Col. had no say in what rifle would be issued or used. This served only to further lower the moral and increase fear in the soldiers.

N.S. MAN CREATES FIRST CANADIAN MILITARY ACTION FIGURES

CBC News online, 29 December 2011

A Nova Scotia man is one of three partners behind new action figures sporting Canadian military uniforms that they're trying to get on the market. Although the figures may not become as popular as G.I. Joe, the first-ever Canadian military action figures are starting to sell quickly in Nova Scotia.

The look and feel of the three soldiers came from the home office of John Alan Sperry in Valley, about eight km from Truro. "We created the first Canadian action figures, three of them — air force, army and navy personnel — it depicts them. They're really taking off; people are really interested in them and it's been great," Sperry, a graphic artist, said Wednesday.

While Sperry did the artwork, it was his friend, Canadian soldier Shannon Thibodeau, a native of Meteghan now stationed in Borden, Ont., who really got the project rolling. Thibodeau became the template for the new figures. With a third partner, a distributor in Ontario, the idea of mass-producing the tiny military action figures became a reality.

Currently not available in any major retail outlets, nearly half of the 6,000 action figures have already been sold from places like the Masstown Market and the Heavenly Crumbs Bakery in Bible Hill. Bakery owner Joanne Leavitt has been receiving a lot of feedback. "They think the toys are great that they depict the Canadian forces and it brings up stories of maybe a son or a family member who has been killed in the war," she said. "It's very heart wrenching for me to listen to them, and I was not expecting that at all."

A dollar from each action figure sold is going to the Soldier on Fund. The fund supports serving Canadian Forces personnel and families of injured members.

Sperry would love to see his three Canadian soldiers fight their way into the shelves of a big retail company. "Once they're all sold and \$6,000 goes to the soldiers' fund, then we'd love to expand into different areas, maybe [add] more to the line, a female character. We have some ideas," Sperry said.

The action figures are only available in four locations in Nova Scotia — two in the Truro area, one in Dartmouth and another in Bridgewater. They're also available in select locations in Ontario.



Images from <http://www.heroesforce.com/Gallery/>

WAR IF NECESSARY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY WAR!

Contributed by Don Manley

As we understand wars, armies fight each other and casualties result on both sides. To have two armies face each other for over 20 years and not fire a shot is rare indeed.

In 1859 on the island of San Juan, the boundary had not been settled and hence both Canadian and American settlers set up the homes. An Englishman, Charles Griffin, of the Hudson Bay Company had a pig which escaped and ate the potatoes from the farm of Lyman Cutler who then shot and killed the pig. The British authorities threatened to arrest Cutler and his American neighbours called on the US government for protection which they received in the form of the 9th Infantry.

Not to be outdone, or should I say outgunned, the British sent 3 warships under Capt. Geoffrey Hornby. Both sides increased their forces but no shots were ever fired. British Rear Admiral Robert Bayes, Commander of British Naval Forces in the Pacific, tried hard to avoid war, it seemed unconscionable that Great Britain and the United States should go to war over one pig. The US president sent General Winfield Scott to try and settle the matter. Both sides agreed but kept token forces on hand in what is now known as American camp and British camp.

The main question was who owned the island and it was not until 1872 that a third party was appointed to settle the matter. That person was Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and on October 2nd he declared the island to be American and so ended the war.

The matter could have been settled earlier when Cutler offered Griffin \$10 in compensation; Griffin, in turn wanted \$100. To my way of thinking, if the British and American governments had anteed up \$50 each, they would have saved themselves the expense of maintaining troops in situ for 20 years.

THE ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY MUSEUMS OF CANADA, INC.

L'ORGANISATION DES MUSÉES MILITAIRES DU CANADA INC.

Organization of Military Museums of Canada Inc

Phone: 1-877-474-6662

Fax: 1-877-474-6662

Email: ommc@ns.sympatico.ca

President/ Présidente

Marilyn Gurney

1-877-474-6662

ommcinc@gmail.com

Vice-President/ Vice-président

LCol (ret'd) Stu Beaton

(705) 424-1200 ext. 3531 fax:(705) 423-3623

Secretary/ Secrétaire

Treasurer/ Trésorier

Michael Shortridge

(204) 837-1490 fax: (204) 222-2168

Directors/ Directeurs

Wendy MacKenzie (Kamloops) (250)372-0851

fax:(250)851-4891

Don Manley (Victoria) (250) 898-8782

Don Pearsons (Winnipeg) (204)-833-2500 ext.
6276

fax: (204)833-1215

Marcel Richard (Gagetown) (506) 422-1302

fax: (506)422-1304

Administrative Assistant/ Adjointe administrative

DND Liaison Officer/ Officier de liaison du MDN

Michel Litalien

(613) 998-7054 fax: (613) 990-8579

Special Advisor/ Conseiller spécial

Major (ret'd) Dick Malott, CD

(613) 829-0280 fax: (613) 829-7673

rmaalott@magma.ca

Newsletter Editor

Arlene Doucette

amdoucette@hotmail.com