



VANCOUVER ISLAND:
Military Museum
Celebrates 40th

ROYAL MONTREAL REGIMENT
Welcomes Visitors
from Wales

**ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY
MUSEUMS OF CANADA**

THE **Bulletin**

War Brides

of New Brunswick Exhibit
at NB Military History Museum

**Canadian Armed Forces
Accredited Museums Virtual Tours**

"Taking on a Life of its Own"

A Relic of Operation Eclipse and VE Day

THANK YOU DALE MURRAY

and a Note on Military Decoration Displays



In this Issue:

3 Letter from the Executive Director

5 "Taking on a Life of its Own"

7 A new Acquisition for Our Museum

4 A Relic of Operation Eclipse and VE Day

6 Vancouver Island Military Museum Celebrates its 40th Anniversary

11 Three Items from the 12 Service Battalion Museum

FEATURES

8 Canadian Armed Forces Accredited Museums Virtual Tours

12 Thank You Dale Murray and a Note on Military Decoration Displays

14 The War Brides of NB



16 Military-Owned Business Supporting Museum's Gift Shop



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ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY MUSEUMS OF CANADA (OMMC)

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Our Story

The Organization of Military Museums of Canada (OMMC) was founded in 1967, with the encouragement of the Canadian War Museum, to serve as a national forum and support network for military museums across the country. Its creation provided a "meeting and learning place" for museum staff working within the Canadian Armed Forces, helping to coordinate training, share resources, and foster collaboration. Initially supported by the Department of National Defence, the OMMC organized annual training sessions at military bases across Canada, strengthening the capacity of military museums from coast to coast.

By the late 1980s, growing concerns over the condition and care of military museum collections prompted the formation of the federal Task Force on Military Museum Collections in 1990. The Task Force, which included input from multiple government departments, recommended formalizing the OMMC's structure to better fulfill its mission. As a result, the OMMC was officially incorporated in 1992 as a federally registered,

charitable, non-profit organization. This step enhanced its ability to secure funding and support the preservation and promotion of Canada's military history through its network of over 100 institutional and individual members.

Mission

The Organization of Military Museums of Canada supports, promotes, and advances Canada's Military Museums through advocacy, education, collaboration, and engagement.

Vision

To be a leading network of Museums and Institutions, supporting and inspiring a deeper understanding and appreciation of Canada's Military History and Heritage.

Accountability

OMMC will be accountable to its members, to its supporters in and outside government and to the applicable regulatory agencies of the Government of Canada.



COVER: Members of the Yukon Field Force, ca. 1899

*Photograph by A.E. Hegg
RCRM2020.001.0001, Archives Collection, The Royal Canadian
Regiment Museum at Wolseley Barracks, London, ON.*

Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to announce that I am the new Executive Director of the OMMC, effective December 2025. This position was made possible through a generous donation from Mr. Jack and Mrs. Sylvia Gin.

As some of you remember, the OMMC was staffed by an executive director many years ago, so the reintroduction of the position is long overdue. It will allow the OMMC to move forward swiftly and proactively, ensuring our members remain up to date with museum and heritage industry advances and issues. It will also support the continued growth of the organization through fund development, enhanced liaison with other museum and heritage organizations across Canada, and the redevelopment of organizational policies and procedures. As executive director, I will be your point of contact for membership issues, the distribution of

emails, etc. I will continue in the position of course director and look forward to seeing all of you at the Annual Museum Studies Programme in Halifax this year.

I started my museum career as a volunteer with the Royal Alberta Museum (then the Provincial Museum of Alberta). From there I became the curator for the Edmonton Police Service, and 11 years later I was offered the position of base museologist with CFB Petawawa. I moved to Calgary in 2010, and after a series of small contracts, became the executive director of the Hangar Flight Museum. It was then that I was awarded a master's degree in museum studies

from the University of Leicester. Museums and especially military museums have been my passion and vocation for over 30 years, and I am honoured to be able to continue as executive director of the OMMC.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for this amazing opportunity, and Mr. Jack and Mrs. Sylvia Gin for their support of the OMMC.

I look forward to working with you. I can be reached at 403-990-9976 or ExecutiveDirector@ommc.ca.

**ANNE LINDSAY MACLEOD, MMST
Executive Director / OMMC**



A Relic of Operation Eclipse and VE Day

An item recently donated to The Fort Garry Horse Museum is a John Haig whisky bottle, with faint signatures on the label. The bottle was the property of Major Harry Sleigh of the FGH.

Harry Sleigh was posted to 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade HQ at the time of the Normandy invasion, and was later appointed Staff Captain 'Q' at Canadian Army HQ. Starting in early 1945, "ECLIPSE" teams were formed, their purpose to locate and get under control all captured enemy material and goods which could be put to use by the allies, and also to assist the civilian population in parts of Germany under allied control.

By May 4th, 1945 the team was in a commandeered hotel in Leer, Germany, not far from Aurich. The hotel had a wine cellar and the regular ration was supplemented by the odd cow or pig, who by mis-adventure had trod on a mine. A dinner was put on, with 30 participating, and at about 22:00 hrs, May 4, a dispatch



“ Harry Sleigh had been saving a bottle of scotch for the occasion and stated that they should all drink to the end of the war. Somehow, each of the 30-odd people managed at least of taste of the Scotch. Then, each signed the label which was dated 4 May 1945 and has the date/time group “042310B”.

rider arrived with a message for Capt Sleigh. It read "At 0800 hrs May 5th, 1945, all troops will stand-to in their positions with weapons at the ready". This was not a cease-fire - but a stand-down with weapons at the ready, however, it was clear that the war was over.

Harry Sleigh had been saving a bottle of scotch for the occasion and stated that they should all drink to the end of the war.

Somehow, each of the 30-odd people managed at least of taste of the Scotch. Then, each signed the label which was dated 4 May 1945 and has the date/time group “042310B”. The “B” indicates the military time zone. After the war, Harry covered the label in scotch tape, hoping to preserve the signatures, but the ink bled into the tape, making many of the signatures unreadable. The dried tape has been removed, and the bottle remains an interesting and personal reminder of the experience of VE Day. 🍁

*The Fort Garry Horse Museum and Archives
<https://fortgarryhorse.ca/wp/museum-and-archives>
Lieutenant-Colonel Marcus Strachan, VC, MC Armoury
551 Machray Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. R2W1A8*



Guest speaker being piped into the Mason's Lodge for the Vacant Chair ceremony, November 9, 2025. With permission from photographer Mason Dodd.

"Taking on a Life of its Own"

By Wendy Aitkens

Assistant Curator, Lethbridge Military Museum

Women's stories are often hidden or lost through the passage of people and time. The Lethbridge Military Museum saw an opportunity to fill the gap in our galleries with stories of local women's contributions to military efforts over the past hundred and twenty-five years.

Research uncovered many interesting and intriguing stories of women who served in uniform and as civilians. With photographs of individual women and women's organizations, a guided tour was developed, celebrating their work. People booked tours and came to the museum for an hour-long tour starting in November 2024.

In early 2025, the programmer from a retirement home called asking if the LMM program could be offered at their facility. She indicated that many more of their people would see and learn about the women if our presentation was offered at their site as they had limited transportation options. Photos were transferred to a PowerPoint format, and the stories were shared with over 60 people.

Since then, the program/tour has taken on a life of its own. It has been shown to several local organizations such as the

local Historical Society, the Mason's Vacant Chair ceremony, and the Genealogical Society. It is now being promoted to other long term care facilities and local organizations to reach a larger audience while the museum tours remain a popular way to explore the galleries. These tours and programs have given the LMM a welcome boost in its visitor numbers.

A wonderful bonus to all these presentations off site and in the museum is the number of new stories being shared with museum staff. The tour/program often triggers a family memory or mention of a person's own service. Whenever possible, a new name, photo, and story is added to what has already been gathered. 🍁

*Lethbridge Military Museum • 337 Stubb Ross Road, Lethbridge AB
www.lethbridgemilitarymuseum.org*



photo attributed to: Chris Bush/Nanaimo News Bulletin

VANCOUVER ISLAND MILITARY MUSEUM Celebrates its 40th Anniversary

By Carina Nilsson

General Manager
Vancouver Island Military Museum (VIMM)

The Vancouver Island Military Museum (VIMM) proudly celebrated its 40th Anniversary on January 20th, 2026.

Four decades after its founding, VIMM continues its vital mission of preserving the rich military heritage of Vancouver Island and educating the public on the sacrifices and contributions of Canadian service members. Over the years, VIMM has expanded its unique collection of artifacts and memorabilia spanning from the Boer War to modern-day conflicts, offering a deeply personal look into the lives of those who served.

This milestone is a testament to the tireless efforts of past and present volunteers who have sustained VIMM since its beginnings in 1986. In fact, three of VIMM's dedicated volunteers were recognized this winter for their exceptional commitment by being awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers (SMVol), and our own President, Brian McFadden, will receive the City of Nanaimo's Honour in Heritage award this Spring.

Reaching 40 years reflects the community's dedication to remembering our veterans. VIMM looks forward to many more years of sharing these important stories and serving as a key resource for historical research and remembrance. 🍁

Vancouver Island Military Museum
<https://militarymuseum.ca>
100 Cameron Rd, Nanaimo, BC V9R 0C8

1



1. THE MONS MEDALION: Script on the rim of the medallion left side LIEUTENANT GENERAL. Script on the rim of the medal right side: SIR ARTHUR W. CURRIE K.C.B. K.C.M.G. Script on centre of medal on monument (text as written on the medal - lower case used on the word Souvenir to permit fit and spacing by the craftsman) : "EN Souvenir DE LA LIBERATION DE LA CITE PAR LE CORPS CANADIEN"

2. Obverse of the medal: LA VILLE DE MONS AU Artist's name Paul DuBois

2



A new Acquisition for our Museum

By Craig Cotter

Director, 5th (BC) Artillery Regiment Museum

We were pleased to receive a donation of a notable artifact recently and we attribute it to an activity that was recently held here in Victoria.

The 5th Artillery Regiment Museum and Archive was presented this medallion and a few other artifacts recently after our celebration of the anniversary of Sir Aurthur Currie's 150th Birth. The celebration encompassed on day one, a program of seminars by experts on Currie. As well an open house was held by the 5th (BC) Museum and The Canadian Scottish Regiment Museum and over 25 exhibitors on the main floor of the armoury. Day two saw a Professional Development Day for the members of The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's), 5th (BC) Field Regiment and 15 Field Regiment. That evening a gala dinner was held for all participants. This event also saw the announcement of the renaming of our Armoury to the General Sir Aurthur Currie Armoury. Currie served as the

Commanding officer of both the 5th (BC) Regiment and the Canadian Scottish Regiment, so the renaming was significant to both units who reside in the Armoury.

As a result of the activity, our museum (The 5th (BC) Regiment), was donated several artifacts which we attribute to the profile of the events relating to Sir Arthur Currie.

The lesson learned for us was that without attraction, potential donors with artifacts don't think of you and that donation is an option. Your actions are showing you as a centre of excellence.

We show here the Mons Medalion 1918. Presented to Sir Arthur Currie and the Canadian Corps by the citizens of Mons Belgium after the the Liberation of the city at the end of WW1. 🍁

Director 5th (BC) Artillery Regiment Museum • Bay Street Armoury
715 Bay Street, Victoria BC V8T 1R1 • <https://www.5rcmuseum.ca/>

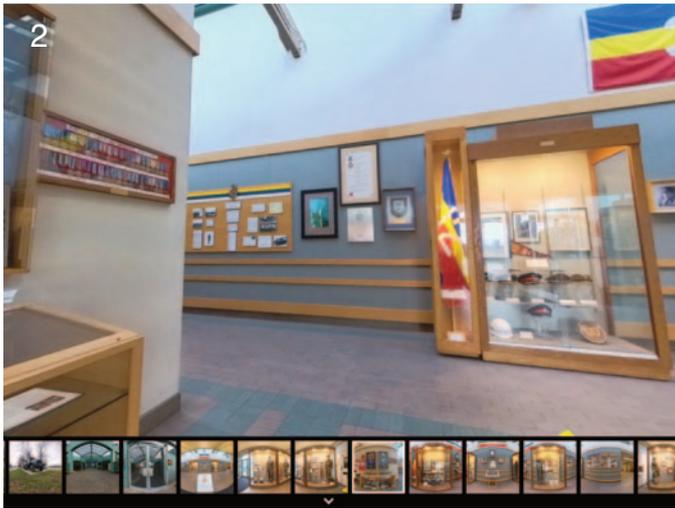


CANADIAN ARMED FORCES Accredited Museums Virtual Tours

Capt Newcombe, Staff Officer with the Directorate of History and Heritage Museums Section (DHH 5), has spent the past five years undertaking a personal initiative to create virtual tours for all 73 Accredited CAF Museums across Canada.

The virtual tours are produced using the Kuula platform and are composed of photographs captured with a 3D camera. Each tour contains between 20 and 200 images and may include museum interiors, exteriors, messes, offices, storage areas, vehicle parks, and the interiors of selected vehicles. Throughout the photography process, deliberate effort has been made to avoid capturing weapons rooms and operationally sensitive areas whenever possible.

In many cases, the virtual tours incorporate Intellectual Property (IP) assets belonging to the Command element responsible for each museum. These assets may include variations of camp flags, cap badges, and museum logos. Prior to public release, museum staff review the tour content and identify any required amendments. Following museum approval, formal permission is



sought from the Commanding Officer to authorize the use of the associated IP as it appears within the published tour.

To date, Capt Newcombe has photographed sixty-three museums and has dedicated more than five hundred hours to producing the virtual tours. The remaining ten museums were either unavailable for photography or requested that a tour not be created. Of the sixty-three completed tours, thirty-eight have received the necessary IP permissions and are now publicly accessible through the links provided below.

12 SERVICE BATTALION MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7cYwX?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

5 (BC) FIELD REGIMENT RCA MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XB3C?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL E.C. ASHTON MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XBWz?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE CANADIAN SCOTTISH REGIMENT (PRINCESS MARY'S) REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XrvY?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7c4xf?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7c4mY?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

COMOX AIR FORCE MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7cmTc?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

1. The Army Museum of Alberta

2. 12 Service Battalion Museum

3. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Regimental Museum and Archives

CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL AND MILITARY MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7cm8J?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

THE ARMY MUSEUM OF ALBERTA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7X7Bl?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE (ROYAL CANADIANS) MUSEUM)

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XNm4?logo=-1&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&initload=0&autop=10&thumbs=2&alpha=0.60>

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY REGIMENTAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

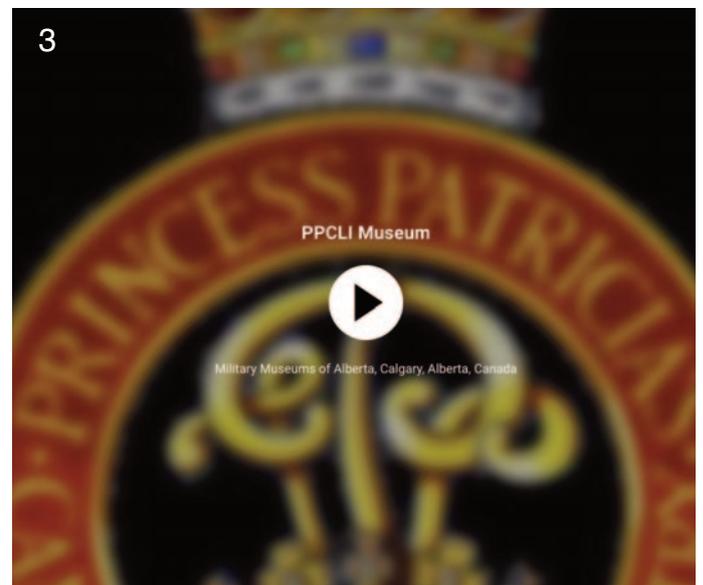
<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JrwR?logo=-1&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&autop=10&thumbs=1&margin=2&alpha=0.60>

THE CALGARY HIGHLANDERS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

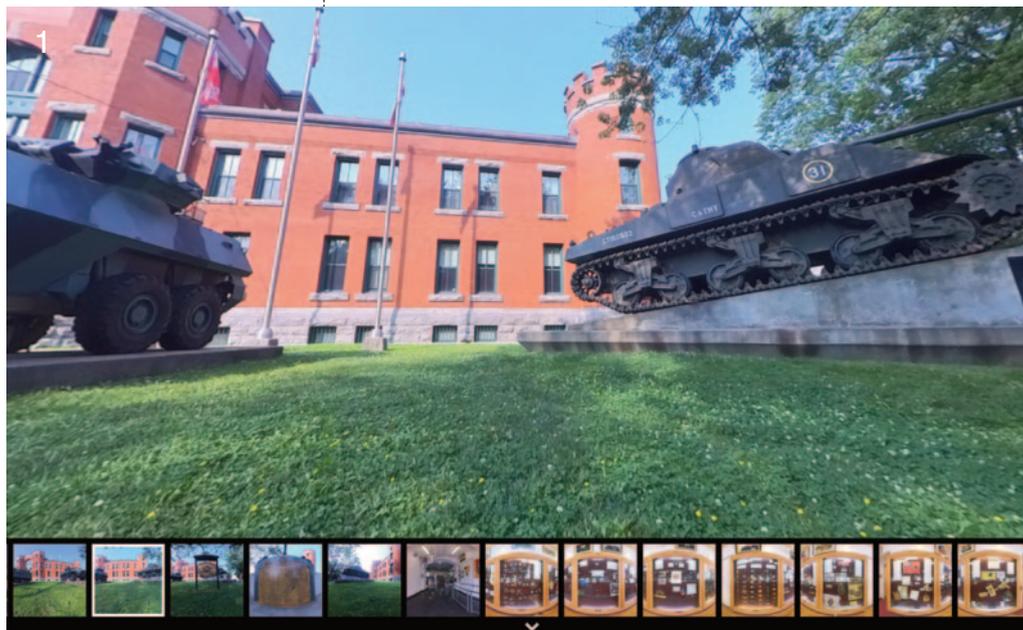
<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Jrkc?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

LETHBRIDGE MILITARY MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7HFSG?logo=-1&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>



1. Le Musée militaire du 12^e Régiment blindé du Canada.png



THE AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF ALBERTA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XNdw?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

THE NAVAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7X57q?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

31 SERVICE BATTALION MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XTm1?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

42ND FIELD REGIMENT (LANARK & RENFREW SCOTTISH) RCA MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JzIY?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

BASE BORDEN MILITARY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XqBn?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

GARRISON PETAWAWA AND CANADIAN AIRBORNE FORCE MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JQF4?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

STORMONT DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY HIGHLANDERS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JlZy?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Xp6r?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S FOOT GUARDS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XhpQ?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&initload=0&autop=10&thumbs=2&alpha=0.60>

THE GREY & SIMCOE FORESTERS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XPPD?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Jc11?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE IRISH REGIMENT OF CANADA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JRnx?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&autop=10&thumbs=1&margin=2&alpha=0.60>

THE LORNE SCOTS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Kj5t?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE ONTARIO REGIMENT (RCAC) MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XqjZ?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE QUEEN'S YORK RANGERS (1ST AMERICAN REGIMENT) MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XlBF?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

NATIONAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF CANADA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Jbc3?logo=-1&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&autop=10&thumbs=1&margin=2&alpha=0.60>

THE CANADIAN FORCES MUSEUM OF AEROSPACE DEFENCE

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JS1s?logo=0&info=1&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&thumbs=1>

LE MUSÉE DU FORT SAINT-JEAN

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Xw5H?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

LE MUSÉE MILITAIRE DU 12^E RÉGIMENT BLINDÉ DU CANADA

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7DbQ3?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

LE MUSÉE RÉGIMENTAIRE LES FUSILIERS MONT-ROYAL

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Xw9C?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE BLACK WATCH (ROYAL HIGHLANDERS REGIMENT) OF CANADA REGIMENTAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Xd7h?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE CANADIAN GRENADIER GUARDS MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XzrV?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE ROYAL MONTREAL REGIMENT MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7XQTZ?logo=0&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE NEW BRUNSWICK MILITARY HISTORY MUSEUM

<https://kuula.co/share/collection/7DsLB?logo=-1&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

THE NAVAL MUSEUM OF HALIFAX

<https://kuul+A1:B39a.co/share/collection/7DTZW?logo=-1&info=0&fs=1&vr=1&zoom=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

As additional museums receive IP authorization thus allowing public access to their virtual tours, these releases may be announced by the respective museums through their social media channels. Capt Newcombe will continue to update the consolidated “tour-of-tours” collection accordingly, which remains available to members of the DHH Facebook Marketplace private group. 🍀

THREE ITEMS FROM THE 12 SERVICE BATTALION MUSEUM

By Colin MacGregor Stevens, CD, BA

Curator, 12 Service Battalion Museum

12 Service Battalion Museum in Richmond, B.C. is completing the renovations of their monument vehicles

The soft skin monument vehicles had been outside in a wet climate for about 30 years. With financial help from DHH, they were all sandblasted and repainted with durable epoxy paint as the priority was to have the paint last for at least 30 more years. New concrete pads were required. The project was greatly assisted by the R.C.A.F. Reserve 192 Construction Engineering Flight in Aldergrove, B.C. who constructed the concrete pads and assembled the Jeep shelter as training exercises. The identities of the vehicles have all been restored with their original CAR/CFR numbers. These are an M62 Wrecker, CJ-7 Jeep, M100CDN 1/4-ton trailer, M135CDN W/W "Deuce and a half" with winch and an M104CDN 1-1/2 Ton trailer. The only work remaining to be done is to add a wire protective cage around the Jeep shelter and to install the interpretive signage which is ready.

IN MEMORIAM - John Dutton, CD,

Former Curator of 12 Service Battalion Museum passed away 19 June, 2025. John was a retired RSM and had served with the LdSH(RC) (including a tour in Cyprus with UNFICYP), 12 Field Ambulance and 12 Service Battalion at the end of his service career. John volunteered with the museum from its beginning, circa 1993, for over 30 years.

WANTED: For FN C2A1

30 round magazine(s) and rear sight - 12 Service Battalion Museum has a C2A1 LMG, but does not have any of the correct 30-round magazines for it. The rear sight is damaged, so if someone has spare FN 30-rd magazines(s) and or a spare C2 rear sight, that would be appreciated. Contact: Colin Stevens, CD, Curator, 12 Svc Bn Museum seaforth72@gmail.com 🍀

Feature



BGen William Okell Holden Dodds, CMG, DSO, VD
1867-1934

William Dodds from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, joined the Militia at the age of seventeen. By 1914, he was an officer in 3rd Montreal Battery, CGA. During WW1, he rose to command the 5th Canadian Divisional Artillery. After the Armistice, he served as Military Governor of Bonn. He returned to business life and was Colonel Commandant of the RCA from 1928 until his death in 1934.

William Dodds, de Yarmouth, en Nouvelle-Écosse, s'est joint à la Milice à l'âge de dix-sept ans. En 1914, il était officier dans la 3e Batterie de Montréal, CGA. Pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, il prend le commandement de la 5e Artillerie divisionnaire canadienne. Après l'armistice, il devient gouverneur militaire de Bonn. Il retourne au monde des affaires et devient colonel commandant de l'ARC de 1928 jusqu'à sa mort en 1934.



1

1. Medal set for Brigadier W. O. H. Dodds, Commander of the 5th Canadian Divisional Artillery in WWI and the RCA's third Colonel Commandant (1928–1934).
2. Medal set for Colonel F. M. Benson of A Battery, an officer during the 1910s–40s, with a DSO for bravery in WWI.

THANK YOU DALE MURRAY

AND A NOTE ON MILITARY DECORATION DISPLAYS

By Ken Turpin

Director, Indian Head Museum

We're often asked, "Why aren't my father's medals on display? We donated them years ago." It's a good and understandable question. The simple truth is that we can't display every medal set we receive.

Our collection is vast, and space is limited. In 2023, we redesigned the Gunner Gallery. What was once a quiet space showcasing a single Victoria Cross has become a vibrant room featuring 81 medal sets from Canadian Gunners. We display each one with a short biography, alongside that original Victoria Cross. Visitors now pause, read, and reflect - connecting more deeply with the stories of Canadian Artillery.

This transformation would not have been possible without the generosity of our donors over the past sixty years. Among them, Dale Murray of Victoria, British Columbia, stands out. Over the last 25 years, Dale has donated thirty sets of military decorations belonging to Canadian soldiers, including some key figures in the RCA:

- Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Burstall, Commander of the 2nd Canadian Division during WWI.
- Brigadier W. O. H. Dodds, Commander of the 5th Canadian Divisional Artillery in WWI and the RCA's third Colonel Commandant (1928–1934).
- Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Montizambert, the second Commanding Officer of B Battery in Kingston, ranks among the most distinguished Canadian artillery officers of the 19th century.

In past newsletters, we've shared stories about these three, along with two other medal sets that Dale donated:

- Colonel F. M. Benson of A Battery, an officer during the 1910s–40s, with a DSO for bravery in WWI, and
- Pilot Officer William (Bill) Fortt, RCAF, died in 1942 during a Spitfire training flight at the age of 21.

Before the gallery update, we displayed only one of Dale's medal sets. Today, the Gunner Gallery features eleven more. Each includes the mounted decorations, a photo, and a short biography.

We've made real progress, but we still can only display a small portion of what we hold. The museum has over 60,000 artifacts in



Col Frederick M. Benson, DSO

1890-1973

Frederick Benson was commissioned with A Battery in 1910. He volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary Force in August 1914 and fought with the Canadian Artillery in France. He received the Distinguished Service Order for conspicuous gallantry in July 1918. He worked at the Canadian International Paper Company in Ottawa until 1961. During WW2, Colonel Benson commanded the Canadian Army Trades School in Hamilton, Ontario.

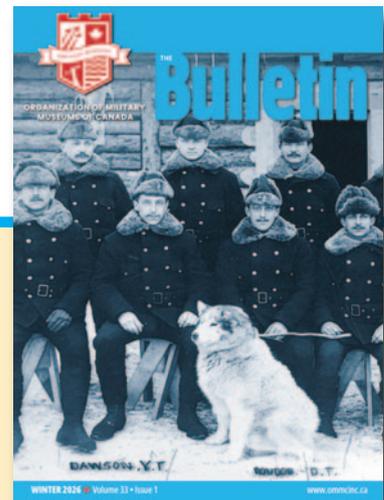
Frederick Benson est nommé officier de la Batterie A en 1910. Il s'est porté volontaire pour le Corps expéditionnaire canadien en août 1914 et a combattu avec l'Artillerie canadienne en France. Il reçut l'Ordre du Service distingué pour bravoure remarquable en juillet 1918. Il travailla à la Canadian International Paper Company à Ottawa jusqu'en 1961. Pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le colonel Benson commanda l'École des métiers de l'Armée canadienne à Hamilton, en Ontario.

total, and at any given time, only about 2% are on display. Permanent galleries offer visitors a consistent experience, then are refreshed every ten years. Temporary exhibits, which rotate annually, let us share new stories and bring fresh attention to different parts of our collection.

Every donation matters to us. We do our best, but we can't promise that each donation will be displayed. That's one of the challenges of museum work. Even so, we're committed to rotating exhibits and updating the Gunner Gallery as space and funding allow. To all our donors: thank you for your trust, your generosity,

and your patience. And to Dale Murray in particular – thank you for your remarkable support, your thoughtful contributions, and your dedication to preserving Canada's artillery history. 🍁

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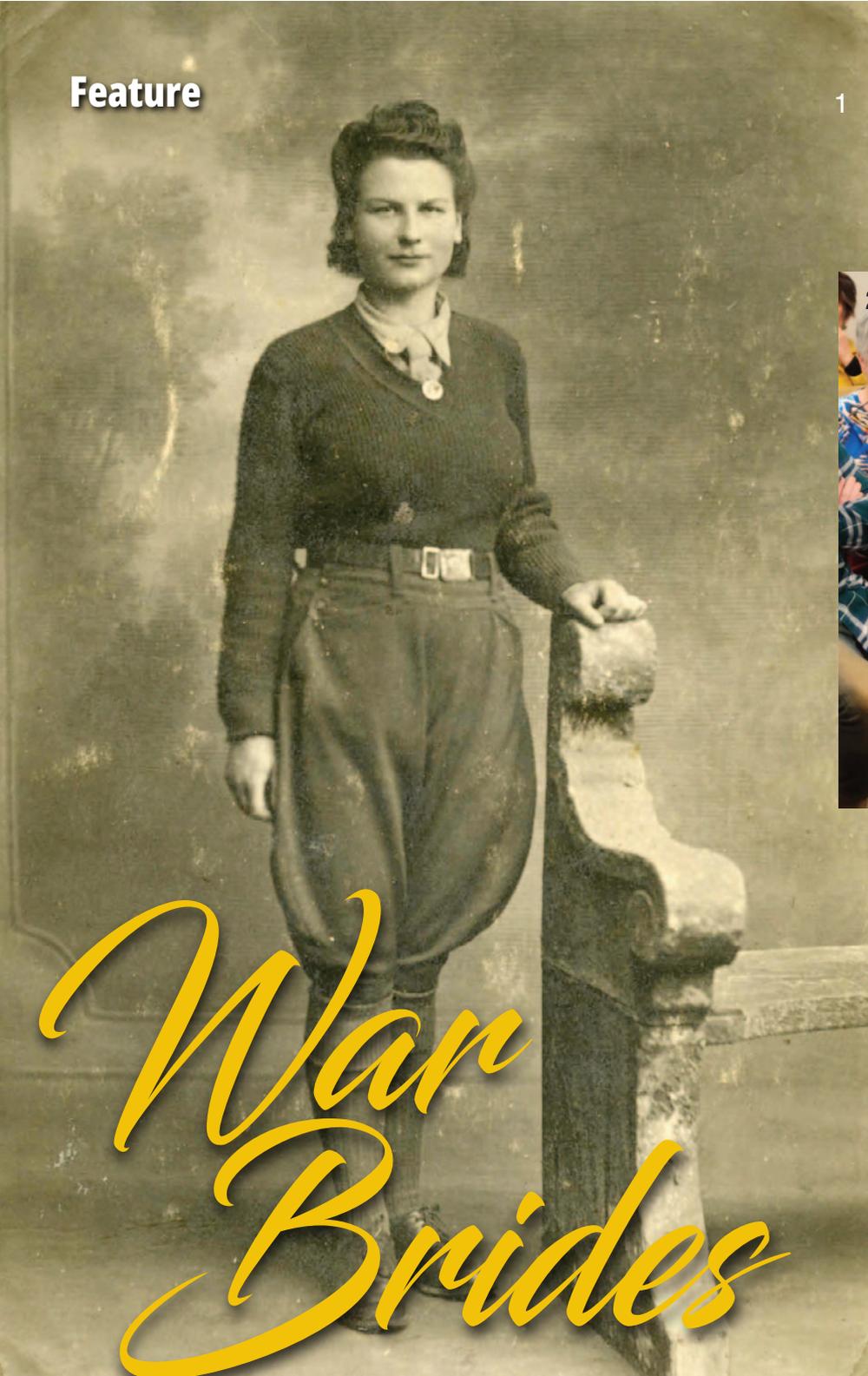
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1

1. Doreen Lawrence in her Women's Land Army uniform, 1944. Doreen's husband Byron served with the Royal Canadian Artillery and they were married in 1943. She was one of 1800 War Brides to settle in New Brunswick at the end of the Second World War. Photo courtesy of Doreen Lawrence.



War Brides

OF NEW BRUNSWICK EXHIBIT OPENS AT NB MILITARY HISTORY MUSEUM

The stories of British and European War Brides who came to New Brunswick at the end of the Second World War will be featured in a new exhibit opening at the NB Military History Museum on Family Day, Monday, February 16.

2



80 years ago this month, the first dedicated sailing of Canadian War Brides began with the departure of the RMS Mauretania from Liverpool, England to Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. That sailing marked the beginning of one of the most unprecedented immigrant waves to hit Canadian shores: nearly 44,000 women and their 21,000 children, mainly British, and all from the same age group, the story of Canada's War Brides is one of the most fascinating of the Second World War.

David Hughes is Manager of the NB Military History Museum. He says the majority of New Brunswick's 1800 War Brides and 900 children arrived in 1946, when huge drafts of up to 6000 brides per month left England for Canada.

"More than 90% of War Brides were British, and that makes sense because Canada was among the first to come to the aid of Britain when war was declared in September, 1939," says Hughes. "The Canadians were in Britain so long they became part of the cultural landscape," he says.



Melynda Jarratt is Curator of the NB Military History Museum and an expert on Canadian War Brides. She says New Brunswick War Brides came from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Italy and France. Some War Brides even came from Newfoundland and Bermuda where Canadians were stationed during the war."

Jarratt says the diversity of the War Bride experience is what makes them so interesting. "There are War Fiancées, War Widows, Jewish War Brides and War Brides who married First Nations men. There are even "War Grooms" - Allied servicemen who married New Brunswick women. No matter their background or personal circumstances, the War Brides

brought with them wartime experiences and cultural baggage that shaped the lives of their families and communities for generations to come. In the end, they became good, contributing Canadian citizens and their legacy is found in the thousands of descendants who are very proud of the War Bride in their family tree."

This exhibit was made possible with the support of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, The Fredericton Region Museum and the Friends of the NB Military History Museum. 🍁

*New Brunswick Military History Museum
119 Walnut Street, Building A-5, 5th Canadian
Division Support Base Gagetown, Oromocto, NB
<https://nbmhm-mhmnbc.ca>*

2. 100 year-old Doreen Lawrence spoke about her wartime experiences at the opening of the War Brides exhibit.

Photo: NBMHM.

3. English War Bride Eileen (née Mansfield) and Bill Mesheau of the 8th Hussars (Princess Louise's) on their wedding day. Eileen's original silk and lace wedding dress and the crown that held her veil in place are on display in the War Brides exhibit.

Source: PANB MC3495.

4. Betty Hilman, Miss Canada.



Will and Mark reviewing artwork to be laser engraved onto wood.



MILITARY-OWNED BUSINESS

Supporting Museum's Gift Shop

By Bethany Aitchison

Canadian Forces Museum
of Aerospace Defence

Museums that have retail operations are all looking for the next great item to offer. For the gift shop at the Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence (CFMAD) at 22 Wing/CFB North Bay, that has led to an exciting partnership with a military member-owned company that has been looking to expand their reach.



ReliableBear is the brainchild of Captain Will Gonzales and Captain Mark Emmerson, both currently posted to North Bay. Their passion for woodworking and for creating unique pieces for their fellow members drove them to team up and build a business together. "A year before we launched the company, my Deputy Commanding Officer was counting down the days to retirement," said Capt Emmerson. "Like many others, he wrestled with whether to hold a Depart with Dignity ceremony at all. I told him it wasn't really about him. It was about honouring a career, recognizing the people who carried that weight alongside him, and pausing to acknowledge the sacrifices he made in service to our country. When we founded ReliableBear, that conversation became our compass: What did this member's service truly mean to them—and how do we build something that lets them feel that every time they hold it?" With a portfolio of high-quality plaques, charcuterie boards, shadow boxes, and other custom woodwork, a plethora of tools like laser engravers, CNCs, and 3D printers allowed for customizing their work.



Finding a good foothold in creating quality military-themed items, they approached CFMAD with an idea— stone coasters, etched with designs of North Bay's various sections. Immediately, they were popular. They were something unique to 22 Wing/CFB North Bay, small, easily packable, and accessibly priced. With a laser engraver and two people excited to do custom work, the question became, "what next?"

The duo being capable of extremely detailed designs and fine lines, CFMAD suggested wooden magnets with line drawings of different aircraft reflected in the museum's history. With the suggestion and a hand-written list of aircraft, the two were off and running, researching the aircraft and creating the designs that have proven equally popular.

"You can't just create a coaster with a LAV or a CF-18 and call it meaningful," said Capt Gonzales. "You have to know which airplane, which variant, which tail number, and why it matters to the people in that community. The museum curators are critical partners and mentors. They have been giving us an amazing opportunity to grow in our understanding of both the CAF's history and our way forward. What works so well for us is to listen carefully to what the museum is



asking for – they teach us, and then we reflect that understanding back to them in the finished piece."

As CFMAD's gift shop expands in 2026, the staff are already looking at more options to create unique pieces that will be attractive to the diverse audience that the museum gets. Having a company with two people that are excited to explore new visions, products and designs, while having fun while doing it, will no doubt be mutually beneficial.

ReliableBear is a military member-owned business looking to expand, and specifically hoping to work with more military museums to give back to their CAF community. Their custom offerings range from smaller, high-quality pieces that keep a museum shop moving – magnets, coasters, and other accessible items that visitors can take home, up to larger, bespoke pieces such as shadow boxes and departure gifts for Changes of Command or Departs with Dignity. If you would like to learn more about their work, contact them at sales@reliablebear.ca. A new website will be available in the coming months, showcasing their offerings, but photos can be requested by e-mail. 🍁

"You can't just create a coaster with a LAV or a CF-18 and call it meaningful," said Capt Gonzales. "You have to know which airplane, which variant, which tail number, and why it matters to the people in that community."



ReliableBear products are available at the Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence (CFMAD) gift shop. • <https://www.aerospacedefence.ca/reliablebear.ca>. • sales@reliablebear.ca.



ROYAL MONTREAL REGIMENT WELCOMES Visitors from Wales



By Ron Zemancik
Curator, Royal Montreal Regiment

On February 17th the RMR Museum was visited by 17 students and 3 adult monitors from the Neath Talbot College, located in Wales U.K.

The students are all studying public service courses and travelling through Quebec and Ontario for sixteen days. They are experiencing the culture and partaking in volunteering and educational activities. They are learning about the military, public, civil and emergency services here in Canada. Once the RMR tour was over they were heading to the Old Brewery Mission to work a shift feeding the homeless.

Many thanks to the Je Me Souviens team for their help with the tour. 🍀

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