



ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY MUSEUMS OF CANADA

"The Bulletin" is the official publication of Organization of Military Museums of Canada (OMMC). Articles may not be reproduced without permission. Issues are published four times annually.

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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: "The Journey to Remembrance" 72" x 60" Acrylic on Canvas, Permission granted by artist Deanna Lavoie to use for our cover. Original painting currently on loan to the Military Museums of Calgary. More information can be found on her website at www.DeannaLavoie.com

SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN REGIMENT

www.southsaskatchewanregiment.ca

- A great resource about WWII for Saskatchewan students.
- Content about Saskatchewan soldiers and their families.
- Details about what the Regiment did in WWII.
- Tips on how to get service records for your ancestors.
- A soldier's history of the war.
- An opportunity to contribute content.
- Created by South Saskatchewan Regiment Association.

Gregory Salmers

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War Diary
Nominal Roll
Photo Gallery
Soldiers
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Links

Letter from the Editor

As we come to the close of another year at the OMMC Bulletin, I want to thank you for your interesting submissions, kind comments, and ongoing engagement.

ll across Canada, military museums – large and small – are conducting meaningful work. They are preserving history, telling stories, and building connections within their communities. Whether it's in the back of a storage room, at the front desk, or swearing under their breath while wrestling with inputting artifacts online, the work done by our staff and volunteers is incredibly important.

Articles in this Remembrance issue offer a glimpse into that work: a wartorn family has been reunited thanks to research at the Indian Head Museum (pg 20); a volunteer-led initiative is bringing together veterans, historians, and government agencies in recognition of more than 40,000 Canadians who served in the Balkans (pg 18); and the history of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment has become a

curriculum option for some Grade 12 students (pg 8).

I've been a member of this organization for just three years and joined the board within the last twelve months, but I am honoured to edit the Bulletin submissions and learn, first-hand, about the work happening in our communities.

This year, our Bulletin received a design "face-lift," thanks to the talented contribution of Bruce Chapman, our excellent graphic designer.

Thank you to all OMMC members for your dedication to making Canada's military heritage accessible and relevant. I look forward to next year's submissions.

Warm regards,

KELSEY LONIE

Communications Chair / OMMC



South Saskatchewan Regiment NOT FORGOTTEN

Curator of the LCol V.C. Currie VC Armoury's Historical Collection, Greg Salmers, promoted awareness of the military heritage of Moose Jaw and southern Saskatchewan in recognition of Remembrance Day.

resentations about the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) and its Association website were given to 120 high school students in two sessions at Vibank Regional School on November 5th, and to 25 home schooled students and their parents at Grenfell Branch of Southeast Regional Library on November 7th.

Students and teachers were shown how to use the SSR website's nominal roll, war diary, and links to Library and Archives Canada service records for genealogical purposes, and the soldiers and history sections for military history. Additionally, they were invited to submit content for the soldiers section in honour of SSR veterans in their families. They were also invited to bring artefacts to the sessions. Artefacts from the Historical Collection were displayed during the sessions.

During the Remembrance Day ceremony in the Temple Gardens Event Centre in Moose Jaw on November 11th, twenty-one banners depicting the Saskatchewan Dragoons (SaskD) Guidon, the battles of its seventeen battle honours, and three local Victoria Cross winners were displayed and narrated by Mr. Salmers for ceremony attendees as they entered and exited the ceremony.

SaskD recruitment cards, SaskD lineage chart, and SSR website cards and posters were also displayed. Visitors to the display were shown how to obtain service records of family members who were veterans, and to submit content in honour of their veterans for display online. *

LCol. David V. Currie Armoury 1215 Main Street North, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan



For Country and For Sport

By Kate Wood

Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame employee and RUSI Regina volunteer



For Country and For Sport is a collaborative exhibit between RUSI Regina and the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, highlighting veterans who also made significant contributions to sports.

he exhibit spans 103 years of military service and athletic achievement, showcasing a remarkable group of athletes whose lives bridged both worlds.

Hosted by the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, For Country

and For Sport explores the deep connections between sports and the military. Some veterans drew on their athletic experience during wartime, others competed for the Canadian Army in sports overseas, and a few transitioned from sports careers into military service. Featured athletes include Edward "Ed" Staniowski, Phyllis Dewar, Tom Settee, Hector "Hec" Jones, Alexander "Alex" Decoteau, and David Greyeyes – all exemplary Saskatchewan athletes who also served their country.



Multiple conflicts are

represented in the exhibit. Alexander Decoteau served in the First World War, ultimately killed in action during the Battle of Passchendaele. He was also the first Saskatchewan athlete to compete in the Olympics in 1912.

The Second World War is represented by Tommy Settee and Hector "Hec" Jones of the Regina Rifles, who both landed on Juno Beach on D-Day, and Phyllis Dewar, an Olympic medalist swimmer from Moose Jaw and one of 7,000 women who served in the Second World War with the Women's Royal Naval Service. The conflict in Afghanistan is represented by Edward "Ed" Staniowski, who played professional hockey for teams including the St. Louis Blues, Hartford Whalers, and Winnipeg Jets before beginning his military career with the Royal Regina Rifles.

This partnership between RUSI Regina and the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame relays the powerful connection between sports and military service. Visitors to the exhibit gain a deeper understanding of how local athletes contributed to Saskatchewan's military history across multiple conflicts. By highlighting these intertwined careers, For Country and For Sport fosters appreciation for both athletic and military legacies and opens dialogue about enduring connections between sports, service, and community. **

Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame • 2205 Victoria Ave., Regina, SK, S4P 0S4 https://sasksportshalloffame.com/exhibits/for-country-and-for-sport/

feature

"A Journey to Remembrance"

The Story Behind the Artist and Her Painting

By Kelsey Lonie

following her interview with Deanna Lavoie on October 6, 2025

From the moment she could hold a crayon, creativity was part of Deanna Lavoie's being. For her, art was as natural as having arms and legs. Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Lavoie graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary and has become known for her beautiful Southern Alberta landscape paintings. But she is also known for her paintings of remembrance – something that she didn't think she would ever paint.

ut, a spontaneous backpacking trip through Europe with her friend would unknowingly plant the seeds for what would become one of her most significant works titled: *A Journey to Remembrance*.

"We met this Australian girl who said she was heading to Gallipoli. I didn't even know where that was," Lavoie admitted. At the time, her understanding of war history was vague, a distant concept marked only by solemn Remembrance Day assemblies. Gallipoli seemed foreign, almost irrelevant – until

it wasn't.

Years later, she met and married Murray, a New Zealander with deeplyrooted military family history. He had served seven years in the Navy; his father and six uncles had served in the military; and his grandfather had fought in Gallipoli, the Somme, and Passchendaele – and had survived to tell the tale.

"He had all these stories.



- 1. Front Showing A Minute Silence 2013. Courtesy of Deanna Lavoie
- 2. Deanna Lavoie.
- 3. Deanna Lavoie and her family, Gallipoli Art Awards Apr 2013. Courtesy of Deanna Lavoie

It was overwhelming at first," she said. "We watched the movie *Gallipoli* together, and it really hit me – what these people went through. What their families went through."

As a Canadian artist and now a New Zealand citizen, her world expanded. Living in Perth, they joined tens of thousands of others for the dawn service on Anzac Day. "It was so powerful," she remembers. "We don't do that in Canada – not like that. And that was the beginning of me really feeling remembrance."

These experiences prompted her to enter the *Gallipoli Art Prize* in Sydney, Australia - a prestigious competition open to artists from Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey. She and her husband envisioned a four-panel piece, *A Minute's Silence*, shaped like a headstone that opened to reveal stories within – portraits of his grandfather at 20 and 101, a depiction of Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and symbols of remembrance like the rosemary that grows wild on the hills of Gallipoli.

The piece was selected as a finalist. But what mattered most wasn't the competition – it was the story it carried. "Murray's grandfather always wanted to be in Sydney for Anzac Day," she shares. "He never made it. But his story did. We were there, with our kids, his great-grandchildren, and it felt full circle."



Later, living in Alberta again, Murray made the comment: "You should paint something for Canada." His suggestion sparked action. "I couldn't just wear a poppy anymore. I had this skill – and I wanted to use it." And so, *A Journey to Remembrance* began.

It took 9 months to complete, painted in the quiet of a room not usually used for art, in long, thoughtful sessions. The sky – taking up half the canvas – began as dark and ominous, a reflection of the heaviness of war. But as Lavoie continued to paint, the sky evolved, lightening, shifting, suggesting hope, or perhaps healing. And symbolically, it connects to the famous Remembrance lines: "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them."

Before the painting was finished, she and her family went on a literal journey of remembrance. Murray and their son attended the centenary dawn service at Gallipoli. Later, the whole family traveled to the battlefields of the Somme and Passchendaele, walking the very ground where Murray's grandfather had fought. "It was incredible. And surreal," she says. "I thought back to that Australian girl I met in Europe. I finally understood why she was going to Gallipoli."

The painting was completed just before the Somme commemorations in 2016. It became not just a piece of art but a personal reckoning. "Who was I to paint this? I'm not a historian," Lavoie commented. "But then a veteran came up to me after a showing and thanked me for painting it. And it made sense. Maybe I was meant to paint it because I didn't always understand. Maybe I can help others begin their own

journey to remembrance."

How does
Lavoie mark
Remembrance Day
now? It's not with
grand shows or loud
gestures. It's quiet.
"Remembrance
shouldn't just be one
day," she says. "It
should be part of
who we are, every
day."

...as Lavoie continued to paint, the sky evolved, lightening, shifting, suggesting hope, or perhaps healing. And symbolically, it connects to the famous Remembrance lines: "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them."

The Journey to

Remembrance now resides at The Military Museums in Calgary on a long-term loan. And in a way, the location of the painting has become part of the experience.

As visitors walk toward it, they see it from a distance, and it feels like walking with soldiers, moving closer with each step – each person undertaking their own journey to remembrance. "Even the way you reach the painting feels symbolic," she reflects. "Everyone has their own journey. And that painting now has its own, too."

More information about www.Deanna Lavoie can be found on her website at www.DeannaLavoie.com

Jeature

The History of the North Shore (NB) Reg BECOMES A NEW BRUNSWICK HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY COURSE

This fall, for the second time, the history of the North Shore (New Brunswick)
Regiment became a curriculum option for some Grade 12 students in New Brunswick.

amual Jean, a teacher at École secondaire Népisiguit in Bathurst is teaching a class of 29 students..

The course, taught in French, is similar to a previous course taught in 2024 by Brandon Savage and Krista Cabel, in the following schools, Miramichi Valley High School, James M. Hill Memorial High School, Blackville School, Dalhousie Regional High School, and Sugarloaf Senior High School in Campbellton.

Much of the course is based on the text One Hundred Years, by Bruce Morton, and the equivalent Cent Ans, which had been translated into French by the regiment's commanding officer Rénald Dufour in 2017. The launch of the French course was also greatly assisted by the recommendations of Paolo Fongemie, Honorary Colonel of the NS(NB)R, previously Mayor of Bathurst, and currently Mayor of Belle-Baie.

Brandon Savage, who is a history teacher and currently Vice Principal at James M Hill Memorial High School, is also the president of The North Shore NB Regt Assn - Assn du North Shore NB Regt. Together with history teachers Chris Matheson and Bret Cameron they formed the North Shore Legacy Tours Company and





Bruce Morton







1.Book Cover, One Hundred Years, Cent Ans.

2.Brandon Savage

3.Samuel Jean

4.The 2019 Walk In The Footsteps Of The North Shore Regiment Tour, on the beach, in front of 1354

Promenade des Français, Saint-Aubin sur Mer. This is the exact location of where Maj Archie MacNaughton and A Company landed during the first wave of the invasion on June 6, 1944. 5. North Shore (NB) Reg landing on D-Day.







organized the Walk in the Footsteps of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment Tours that operated successful tours in both 2019 (150 participants), and 2024 (300 participants).

Samuel Jean, in addition to his teaching responsibilities is currently a Sergeant with the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment. *

One Hundred Years, by Bruce Morton is available at all major bookstores and online at www.indigo.ca and www.amazon.ca.







By Johannes Bosma

Biography. Source: Miramichi Lads & Ladies, Book 2, by Johannes Bosma.

Robert Joatham Currie was born on November 4, 1912, to Thomas and Elspeth (MacLean) in Millbank, NB. He was the third in a family of seven children with an older brother and sister and four younger sisters. With relatives living in the United States, his eldest brother moved to Massachusetts at age 19, as did one of his younger sisters.

ob's great-great-grandfather, Andrew Currie, came to the Miramichi from Scotland in 1812 and had received a land grant in Millbank, where the next four Currie generations grew up. Bob's grandfather was Robert MacLean who was a sailing captain on the Miramichi River and who also sailed to the Caribbean.

Bob, like his Irving cousins, who established Millbank Music, had a gift for music. He learned to play a variety of instruments on his own and had a

beautiful voice with a great range. He was also a gifted athlete, playing hockey and baseball with his Millbank friends. Robert loved the water like his grandfather MacLean and when World War Two broke out he wanted to join the navy. However, all of his relatives and buddies, like the Clarks and Irvings of Millbank, were joining up with the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment. Consequently, on June 12, 1940, Robert, at age twenty-seven also enlisted with the regiment. On October 15, 1940, Robert Currie married Ida Grace Wood.

Shortly afterward he returned to training at Woodstock and later Sussex. The couple would have three children: Bobby and daughters, Sharon and Janice. Bob would not meet his son, the oldest until he returned from overseas in 1945.

The following summer on July 21st, 1941, Robert Currie embarked with the regiment for the United Kingdom. They traveled from Halifax on the SS Duchess of York and arrived in Liverpool on July 30th. Bruce Morton writes: "The first close-up sights of England were made sailing up the Mersey River to Liverpool. The docks, warehouses, and ships had been the target of numerous German air raids and destruction was everywhere. The warehouses were reduced to piles of twisted steel and rubble and the shores were lined with bombed-out hulls of partially submerged ships." The regiment was initially transferred to Aldershot in the south of England but over the next three years trained throughout England and Scotland. When asked by his wife what he was doing in England, Currie replied as follows: he got up at 5:30 am, blew reveille, and then marched around with the band. After that, they all had breakfast, and from 8:30 to 9:30 am, they had squad drill. Then they would have band practice until noon lunch, followed by stretcher drill and first aid until 4:30 pm. After supper, they would go out for a treat. So, you see we have a long day but not too hard.

On September 18, 1941, the Canadian troops had a visit from King George and Queen Elizabeth who inspected the ranks. Currie, wrote "I had a real good look at the King and Queen. She was very nice looking.... they talked to some of the boys from our unit." After their training was done for the day, the Canadian soldiers would go to concerts, dances, and many movies, depending on where they were stationed. Also, as Currie was a talented musician, he was quickly recruited by the NS(NB)R band for military parades, dances, and for other regimental events. In

a letter home, he wrote "We played for a dance last night for the Queens Own Rifles. It was in a hotel just on the outskirts of Brighton and tonight we are playing for the Chaudière officers..." In addition, Currie was called upon to sing solos. In February 1942, he and some others were invited to broadcast from the BBC studio. A recording was to be part of a CBC program in Canada called "Regimental Roundup" in which the Corporation would play information and entertainment from Canadian Forces in England.



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Although a member of the United Church, Bob endeared himself to Reverend R.M. Hickey by singing at many masses at the Chaplain's request. On Christmas Eve, 1943, he sang with the Roman Catholic Choir. In a letter home, he wrote "I have two solos in the mass and a duet. My solos are *Adeste Fideles* and *Kyrie* and the duet is *Benedictus*. Hickey mentioned him in his book The Scarlet Dawn. (p. 139) "Many of those boys are dead and gone I could hear Bobby Currie singing it (*Adeste Fideles*) as he did so beautifully that night so long ago."

Currie was also a dedicated athlete and, when off duty, played for the

NS(NB)R team in the Canadian Divisional Hockey League. Hickey was the team coach. On February 10, 1942, Currie wrote: "I was up at 5 am and left camp at 7 am to play hockey. We had quite a hard game but we won again 5-4. We have to play the same team on Friday and, if we win or tie, we will be the champions of the 3rd Division. If it hadn't been for penalties on our side, we would have beaten them worse." The North Shore team won the championship.

In many of his letters home, Currie was not shy about offering his opinions. Referring to an article in the Canadian Press about Canadian soldiers getting married in the British Isles, he wrote: "The Canadian girls, it seems, wanted to know why we had to come way over here to find a wife. I guess the answer to that: it's everyone's privilege to marry whom they please and anyhow it might be years before they'd go back to Canada." When they asked soldiers to buy victory bonds, Bob pointed out: "I don't know how they expect a soldier to buy a Victory bond on twenty dollars a month and you have to pay eight each month on the bond."

On D-Day (June 6, 1944), Bob Currie, his close friend, Harold Daley, and his Irving and Clark cousins, all with A Company, landed with the regiment in Normandy at Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer. There was no question why the NS(NB)R was first on the beach. In training during, battle simulation schemes, they had not only won the brigade competition but also the final Division Championship.

Despite numerous casualties on the beach on that longest day, Bob, Harold, and all but one cousin survived. Doc. J.A. Patterson, Rev. R.M. Hickey, and stretcherbearers Edward Hachey and Bob Adair worked tirelessly to retrieve the wounded. On June 9, 1944, Currie wrote to his wife: "I suppose you know before this, or at least have heard rumours, that we are in France. Well, honey, it's quite true. We landed on the 6th and most of us came through the initial stages of the operation. I haven't



 The North Shore Regiment Band including Bob Currie, front row, far right.
 Rob Currie and friends George Clark, John Barry, and Harold Daley.



seen Andrew (Irving) since we landed. He was reported missing but do not mention it to anybody until his people are informed."

The regiment had made good progress and by noon had control of most of Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer. LCol Donald Buell now ordered that they push south to capture the village of Tailleville about 3 km inland. It was believed that German artillery positions that were still firing on the beach were controlled from Tailleville. As they moved south, they encountered snipers hidden in the woods and grain fields and were targeted by mortar fire. The advance was led by C Company who came under heavy machine-gun fire. The North Shore responded with mortars and took out a machine gun nest. C Company then sent patrols into the village to clear buildings and reported that the objectives were achieved. The firing on the beach had not stopped however and because of tunnels and trenches connecting the buildings, many Germans had escaped and repositioned themselves. LCol Buell now ordered that the clearing of Tailleville be repeated until the firing on the beach ceased.

Bruce Morton writes: "Shortly after giving these orders, LCol Buell and Major Archie MacNaughton led an A Company HQ party into the village via a cluster of farm buildings. As they reached the entrance, they saw three Germans hitching a horse. A moment later, a machine gun in the loft of a barn opened fire, and all dove to the ground. They tried to run for safety under cover of a smoke grenade but another burst of machine-gun fire instantly

killed Archie MacNaughton, Harold Daley, and Art Strang and wounded Bill Savage, Hech Archer, and Billy Adair. Harold Daley was 23 years of age.

Shortly afterward the Fort Garry Tanks smashed their way into the farm compound. At about the same time a C Company platoon attacked from a different direction and silenced the machine gun in the loft. Germans started to surrender but house-to-house fighting continued and it was 5 pm by the time the North Shore Regiment had control of Tailleville." Buell's evaluation had been correct and the artillery control center was silenced.

Currie later wrote home: "Bob McIntyre, Frank Cripps, and I went out to the beach the day before yesterday to see if we could find the graves of the boys who were killed. The only ones that had names on the crosses were the Majors, Harold Daley's, and Art Strang. They were buried with some English fellows. All the others are

only numbered. The fellows working out there (English) told us that the French people put flowers on the graves every Sunday and sometimes through the week. All the graves are fixed up nice, Germans included. My main intention for going out there was to find where Andrew (Irving) was buried...".

Later, in August, a telegram was sent to Ida Currie stating that her husband was wounded on August 23, 1944. He had been hit with shrapnel. He was treated and a month later, on September 23rd, sent to a Convalescent depot in Belgium. Although most of the shrapnel had been removed, there were still fragments that remained with him for the rest of his life. By the end of October, Currie was back with the regiment.

In a letter dated December 1, 1944, Currie writes about a feed of ice cream while on leave. "I had some several times



(Currie writes about a feed of ice cream while on leave.) I had some several times but one night in particular Major (Toot) Moar, Bill Clancy, lan Kirby and I went into this ice cream parlour and we had everything on the list which was eight dishes. Not bad, eh.

but one night in particular Major (Toot) Moar, Bill Clancy, lan Kirby and I went into this ice cream parlour and we had everything on the list which was eight dishes. Not bad, eh." On the morning of 7 May 1945 at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) headquarters in Reims, France, the Chiefof-Staff of the German Armed Forces High Command, General Alfred Jodl, signed an

unconditional surrender document for all German forces. The next day was declared VE-Day (Victory in Europe Day) and World War 2 was officially over.

The North Shore Regiment was in Germany at the time and moved back to the Netherlands and eventually England to await the news of returning to Canada. On May 29, 1945, Currie wrote home with good news.

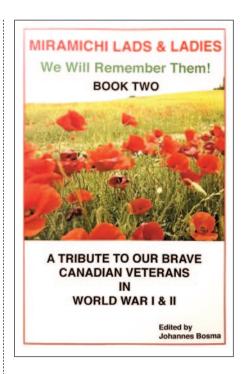
My Dear Ida,

Well Sweetheart this is the day and no doubt this is the letter you and Shave been looking forward to. Honey, Im leaving the regiment on the 31st on my way (home) and am Jever happy. I guess there are 27 of us in the first bunch, two besides me from Chatham.

I don't know how long it will be before we leave England but Sweetheart you needn't write any more letters after you get this letter. You can tell Ma the same but I will keep writing and try to let you know just when I will arrive. Im quite sure it will be sometime in June. However, I will keep you informed about things as best Fcan. Fcan tell you this is quite a day in my life. After four years of praying, wishing, and longing for just this thing. It is now a reality. I can't explain what it is like but, boy do I feel good!!

Even the miserable neather is not bothering me today. Fimagine we will be in England before this week is out and I don't suppose G will get any mail after Fleave here but it will no doubt follow me. This is just a note honey so I will close for now. Best regards to all the folks. Take real good care of yourself and Bobby. Always remember that Flore you both so very very much and now Fcan say, Fll be seeing you.

All my love Bob.



Robert Joatham Currie passed away at age 70 on February 9, 1983, and is buried at Moorefield Cemetery in Millbank. At age 98, his wife Ida was laid to rest next to him on September 12, 2020. *

Johannes Bosma's books can be purchased at Mill Cove Coffee and Bookstore in Miramichi.

Feature George Mitchell (SERVICE # G976)

By Bruce Morton

George Robert Mitchell was born April 20, 1919, in Saint John, NewBrunswick, the son of Robert Bliss Mitchell and Margaret Agnes. Bliss's ancestors were from England, and Agnes's from Cork and Belfast. Both had grown up on farms in Kings County, NB, Bliss near Passekeag and Agnes near Bloomfield. Bliss worked for the Owens Brewery in Fairville and also NB Power, which at the time produced coal gas for streetlights.

eorge had two siblings, Bliss Jr. and Dorothy, and the family lived at 27 Harding St. in Fairville, a small town with a CPR station on the west side of Saint John. The town was later renamed Lancaster and in 1967 was incorporated into the city of Saint John. Like most students in those days, he left school after grade eight. Records show that at times he worked as a waiter and also at the local Owens Brewery from 1935 to 1937.

From 1937 to 1942, he worked for Maritime Construction in Saint John during the summer, earning \$20/week, and as a longshoreman for Sam Clark at Furnes & Whitty, earning \$40/week. There are also notes that he worked as a truck driver. When not working, George enjoyed his hobbies such as playing the accordion, and in winter, speed skating. By 1940 it was clear that the war with Germany would require more recruits.

Initially on October 9, George enlisted



- 1. George Mitchell
- 2. Canadian Stamp commemorates the Battle of the Scheldt
- 3. George Mitchell skating

with the Non-Permanent Active Militia, serving with the 2nd Battalion St. John Fusiliers. This militia was composed of volunteer soldiers who trained on weeknights, weekends, and

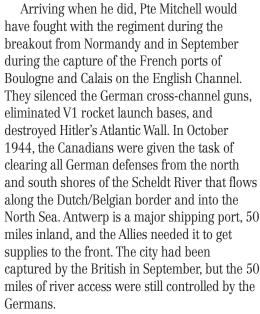
at summer camps. They were paid and could be called upon for home defense. A year and a half later, on March 27, 1942, he made the transition to the Canadian Active Service Force to serve wherever he was needed. He was now assigned service # G976. He was 5' 9', 140 lbs, with red hair, and described as having the potential to be a non commissioned officer.

Basic training was completed at Camp 70 near Fredericton. Initially George was placed with the Canadian Armoured Corp (CAC), and training included learning to drive tanks at Camp Borden in Ontario. By June 1942 he had qualified as a Class III driver for both wheeled and tracked vehicles, and at some point, he assigned \$20/mo. to be sent to his mother. He also purchased life insurance with his mother as the beneficiary. On July 18, 1942, George was sent overseas to the United Kingdom and was placed with the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit.

Two years later, on June 12, 1944, he crossed the channel to France and was placed with the reinforcement unit of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment. On July 16, 1944,

George Was transferred to the front lines. It is likely, with George Mitchell's initial training as a tank driver, that upon transfer to the NS(NB)R he became part of the Carrier platoon. A Universal Carrier, or carrier as it was called, was a tracked vehicle with armored sides, no roof, and many functions. It could transport several men or deliver ammunition, food, and water to the troops. When outfitted with the new British Bren machine gun, it was referred to as a Bren Carrier. The Bren Carrier was frequently used to attack small targets like machine gun nests, or provide cover for the advancing rifle

companies. When outfitted with a flamethrower, it was called a WASP. The carrier contributed to the reduction of trench warfare that had produced excessive casualties in WWI.



In what became known as the Battle of the Scheldt, the Canadian 3rd Division was ordered to capture Breskens Pocket, which straddles the Dutch/Belgian border between the Scheldt River and the Leopold Canal. Initially, the attempts to enter Breskens Pocket from the

south across the Leopold Canal had failed. Then, as part of stage two of the plan, the Canadians, including the NS(NB)R, circled northeast and were transported by all-terrain vehicles to the south shore of the Scheldt near Hoofdplaat. This created a new front to the north of the Germans.

On October 12, the NS(NB)R moved south of the river and began an exhausting daily series of deadly battles that would last until the end of the month. They fought in heavily mined, flooded terrain, in the cold, the mud, and the rain, with as little as three hours of sleep per night. Their protective slit trenches,



Killed In Action



PTE, G. R. MITCHELL

Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Mitchell, 27 Harding Street, Fairville, have received word that their son, Pte. George Robert Mitchell, North Shore (N.B.) Regiment, was killed in action in Europe on Oct. 28. Private Mitchell enlisted in March, 1942, and went overseas in July of the same year with an armoured regiment, later transferring to his present regiment. Surviving besides his parents is a sister, Mrs. Louis Clark, at home, and a brother, Bliss Mitchell, Fairville, He was a member of St. Rose's Church, Fairville, and of the C.Y.O. of the parish,

used throughout France, were of little use here as they quickly filled with water.

On October 24, the NS(NB)R was pushing west towards Scherpbier along a main dyke, moving slowly. They were very exposed and under fire from surrounding farm buildings and the village of Scherpbier ahead. But with Bren guns actively returning fire, they continued west. Lt Harry Nutter described horrible sights: horses tangled in wire, starving, wounded cattle that needed to be shot, and bodies of dead

Germans in the ditches. By noon on October 24, they had control of Scherpbier and five dykes leading into the village.

The War Diary states that October 25 was cold and clear, and Lt Bernard McElwaine described their activity: "the boys make three or four attacks in a day.... take a dyke, a few buildings... compress Jerry a little more...a straggle of prisoners go back. We tee up and go on...mines are a big headache here.

"Owners of houses have absolutely nothing...Jerry took all their food...big guns killed all their stock...windows and roofs are gone...cellars are flooded...no coal...nothing but a miserable winter coming on."

On the morning of October 27, the regiment was still fighting near Scherpbier. The advance was delayed as carriers reported that the roads were still mined. Snipers also remained a constant threat, and the attacks were canceled. On the morning of October 28 at 5:00 a.m., while still dark, the regiment moved west again from Scherpbier. At first light, they were close to their objective when the enemy opened up with a 75 mm gun, resulting in casualties. Lt Harry Nutter of A Company and his men charged the gun position, killed three of the crew, and put the gun out of commission. Lt Blake Oulton of B Company stated that their attack was led by Lt Aubut's platoon. They were headed for a group of buildings adjacent to the Henricus



4. Newspaper notice of George Mitchell's death 5. The grave of Pte George Mitchell in Adegem Canadian War Cemetery



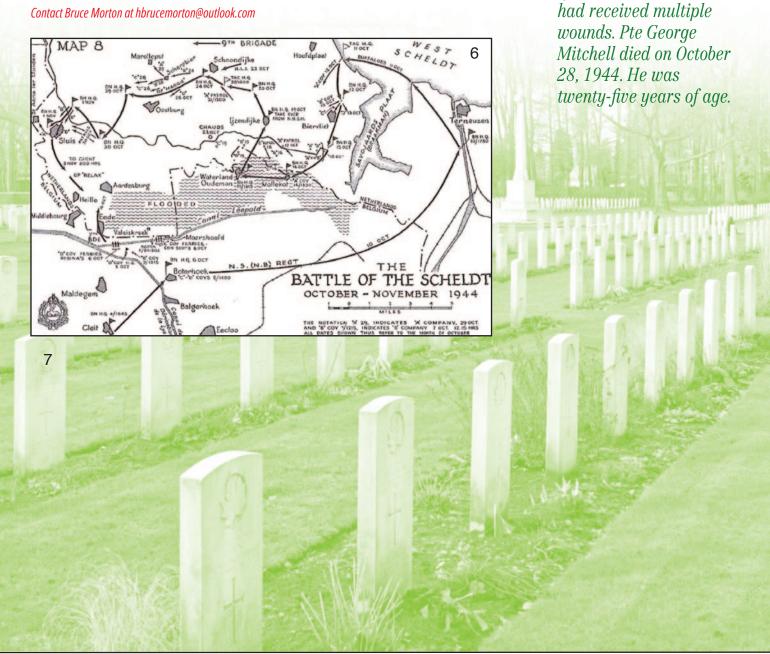
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Dike. It was assumed that the Germans used these buildings as a nighttime shelter and then returned to their defensive positions on the dikes in the morning. Their assumption was correct. The surprise attack sent the Germans into quick retreat, but they soon launched a counterattack. The NS(NB)R now brought six antitank guns forward to fire on the German buildings. The guns blew holes in the walls, and the Germans took to the cellars. When the shelling stopped, the buildings were captured. The War Diary records that the NS(NB)R had achieved their objective by 4:05 p.m. and that two German officers and ninety-eight other ranks were taken prisoner. Records show that Pte George Mitchell was one of the casualties and had received multiple wounds. Pte George Mitchell died on October 28, 1944. He was twenty-five years of age.

On November 8, the Scheldt River delta was cleared, and on November 28, 18 ships with 10,000 tons of supplies arrived at Antwerp. The first ship into the port was the Canadian ship, Fort Cataragui. The Canadian Encyclopedia records 12,873 Allied casualties (killed, wounded, or missing) in the battle of the Scheldt; 6,367 were Canadian.

For his service to Canada, Pte George Mitchell was awarded the following medals: 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, War Medal 1939-45, Defense Medal, and Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. Pte George Mitchell is buried in the Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, Belgium, Plot IX. F. 2. In recognition of the unrelenting month-long struggle and their achievement during the Scheldt campaign, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery affectionately renamed the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division "The Water Rats." 🌞

Contact Bruce Morton at hbrucemorton@outlook.com



The War Diary records

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By Ken Turpin

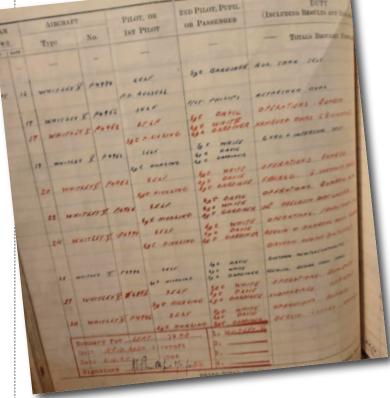
Director, Indian Head Museum

While working as a director at the Indian Head Museum this year, I was approached by a veteran and grand-nephew of Garfield Prior. He brought in a personal pocket Bible that had belonged to Prior, and he and his sister asked whether it might be possible to create a display about the Prior brothers – four of whom served with the RAF/RCAF during the Second World War.

explained that we would love to do so, but that we had very few artifacts to build from. After that conversation, I began researching Garfield and his brothers.

Garfield Prior and his crew were lost over Berlin in January 1943 when their Short Stirling went down after a bombing run; his remains were never recovered. There are rumors that he had earned a bar to his DFC but was killed before it could be formally announced, though I have not yet been able to confirm this.

During my research, I came across an old message board post inquiring about the Prior family. On a whim, I emailed the poster — even though the message was seven years old. To my surprise, he responded. He turned out to be the nephew of Prior's wartime fiancée. Typically, a fiancée was not considered next of kin, but Prior had evidently updated his paperwork, because after his death all of his personal effects were sent to her rather than to his immediate family.



After a long phone conversation with this gentleman from South Dakota, I was able to put him in touch with Prior's relatives who still live in the area. He had spent years trying to locate the family so he could return Garfield's flight log, even hiring private investigators twice, but with no success. Meanwhile, the Prior family had also been searching, knowing that personal items existed somewhere but unable to track them down.



Thanks to the dedication of several family members, Garfield Prior's flight log was finally repatriated to Canada and placed back into the hands of his descendants. And just this summer, the family donated this remarkable piece of local history to our museum, where it will hold a place of honour in our military room. *

Indian Head Museum • 610 Otterloo St., Indian Head, Saskatchewan https://townofindianhead.com/attractions • indianheadmuseum@gmail.com

Indian Head Flyer Is Welcomed Home

Prior to Be Instructor

(Special Despatch)

I"DIAN HEAD, Sask., Jan. 29.-Flight Lieutenant Garfield Prior D.F.C., Indian Head's war ace and hero, back in Canada as an instruc tor, was given a reusing welcome by the old home town Monday morning when a large number of citizens gathered at the C.P.R. depot to acclaim their favorite son. He was met by his father, the Ca-nadian Legion, Mayor Adair, and many prominent citizens, who cheered him heartily. The Legionaires formed an arch with flags and Lieut. Prior passed under, saluting everybody as he went by.

About three months ago Lieut. Prior was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery in action, and for his splendid exploits as a flyer with a squadron of Royal Air Force men, that has accounted for a great number of enemy machines. He was presented with the decoration by His Majesty King George.

Garfield Prior is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Prior of the Sunny war broke out, was assigned to a

He was born in Indian Head dis- high honors. trict, attended school at Sunny After a short visit with his par-Slope and Indian Head public and ents and relatives in the district, high schools and, on graduation in including his grandfather. Joseph



FLT.-LT. PRIOR

and arrs. Gibert Prior of the Sunny fighting squadron, later going to a ben ill, was unable to meet him at the train.

Application of the Sunny fighting squadron, and made for himself a reputation which brought

1936, enlisted with the Royal Air Gray, Lieut. Prior will return to Force. He took a period of inten-flying activities, this time instructsive training in England, and, when ing student flyers in Canada.



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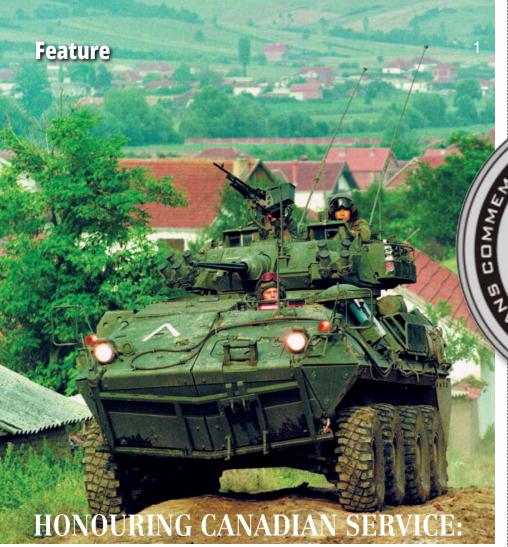
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For all advertising inquiries, please contact: Kelsey Lonie at: communications@ommc.ca

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By Paul Hale

Chair, Balkans 35th Commemoration



1. Peacekeeping in Kosovo between 1999 and 2000 saw the first deployment of the new Coyote reconnaissance vehicle.

Canadian Forces Photo

o recognize the contributions of more than 40,000 Canadians who served between 1992 and 2004, a volunteer-led initiative, Balkans 35th Commemoration, is bringing together veterans, historians, and government agencies to ensure this critical chapter of Canadian history is remembered.

A SYMBOL OF REMEMBRANCE

The commemoration has its own distinctive logo, inspired by the design of a challenge coin. The reverse side features 23 Maple Leaves, honouring the twenty-three Canadians who lost their lives during their service in the Balkans. It is a simple but powerful reminder of the sacrifice and dedication of those who served.

The initiative's website, **balkans35.ca**, went live in September 2025 and is now fully bilingual. The site features surveys to gauge interest in returning to the Balkans, participating in interviews, contributing written histories, and attending commemorative events.

The Balkans 35th Commemoration



In 2027, Canada will mark
the 35th anniversary of
its military, police, and
government personnel's
service in the Balkans –
a region that saw over
a decade of conflict
and international
intervention.

Marie The Despite their contributions. Balkans veterans have not been formally acknowledged for their service to Canada. Balkans 35th Commemoration aims to change that, giving these veterans the recognition they deserve while preserving the history of Canada's role in a complex and challenging international mission.

RECORDING HISTORY, ONE STORY AT A TIME

At the heart of Balkans 35th Commemoration is an ambitious oral history project. The organizers aim to conduct 1,500 virtual audio-video interviews with veterans from all groups that deployed to the Balkans, including the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, Canadian Border Services Agency, Correction Services Canada, and Canadian International Development Agency.

These interviews, lasting 45 to 75 minutes, will provide the foundation for six interactive museum displays and three to four documentaries showcasing Army, Navy, Air Force, RCMP, police, and other government contributions. Select veterans will also be invited to participate in longer, in-person interviews across Canada.

The initiative seeks to gather diaries, newsletters, photos, and videos from the Balkans to create a Balkans National Repository, which will preserve these personal stories for historians, researchers, and future generations. Digitization will be a priority, and a dedicated archivist is expected to be in place by mid-2026 to catalogue donated materials.

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The 35th anniversary will be marked by national and local events, with the Canadian Army, the Canadian Defence Association, the Toronto Warriors' Day Parade, and the 32 Canadian Brigade Group all supporting the initiative. Veterans are encouraged to host smaller community events in 2026, building momentum toward larger celebrations in 2027.

A key highlight will be the Return to the Balkans tours, which will be organized exclusively for veterans and their families. These 8-10 day tours will occur between June and September 2027, providing an opportunity to revisit sites of service and reflect on shared experiences. Each tour will include mandatory mental health discussions led by professional advocates, emphasizing well-being alongside remembrance.

RECOGNITION LONG OVERDUE

Despite their contributions, Balkans veterans have not been formally acknowledged for their service to Canada. Balkans 35th Commemoration aims to change that, giving these veterans the recognition they deserve while preserving the history of Canada's role in a complex and challenging international mission.

Balkans 35th is about honouring service, preserving history, and supporting our veterans. It is a chance for Canada to recognize the sacrifices made and the stories that have yet to be told. *

For more information or to participate in surveys, interviews, or events, visit balkans35.ca.





CIVIL WAR:

THE ATLANTIC CANADIAN CONNECTION

On October 9, 2025, a temporary exhibit opened at the New Brunswick Military History Museum located at CFB Gagetown in Oromocto, New Brunswick, highlighting New Brunswickers and others from Atlantic Canada who took part in the American Civil War.

t is believed to be the first dedicated exhibit on the subject in New Brunswick and perhaps all of Canada. This exhibit was developed by guest curator Troy Middleton, a Canadian Army Veteran who, over the past 30-plus years, has been researching Atlantic Canadians who participated in this war. With the assistance of members of his reenactment group, the 20th Maine Volunteer Regiment, Company I, they have documented nearly 5500 men and women from the region who took part.

The American Civil War, though fought between the Northern and Southern states, had significant effects on North America, including the British North American colonies that later became Canada. While Britain maintained official neutrality, the Confederacy sought recognition from Britain and France – support that might have changed the outcome of the war and even altered Canada's path to Confederation.

Many people from the colonies joined the conflict despite neutrality. Most supported the North, though ports like Saint John and Halifax had some sympathy for the South due

Troy Middleton, CD

Vice President, The New Brunswick Historical Society • President, 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry, Company I Reenactment Group

to resentment of U.S. trade policies and fears of American expansion. Thousands of individuals from British North America fought: some had already moved to the U.S., like Edwin Dow of New Brunswick, who became an officer in the 6th Maine Artillery at Gettysburg; Sara Emma Edmonds, who enlisted in Michigan while living under the name Franklin Thompson; and Alexander Lister of Saint John, who fought with the 20th Maine at Little Round Top and was killed there.

The 20th Maine reenactment group,



Photographs: "Graveside service held for Dr. Stevenson and Pvt. Charles Norris of the 43rd USCT this Memorial Day weekend in their hometown of St. Andrews, New Brunswick." Courtesy of Troy Middleton.

formed in the early 1990s, chose to portray Company I in honour of Alexander Lister. Other locals also played notable roles in the Civil War. William Collins, originally from Ireland and raised in New Brunswick, served in the Confederate Army and even returned to Saint John during the war to plan a bank raid in Calais, Maine. Dr. John F. Stevenson of St. Andrews offered his medical services to the Union in 1863 and became Regimental Surgeon for the 29th Connecticut Infantry. His dress sword, loaned by the New Brunswick Historical Society – which operates the Loyalist House Museum, once home to another Civil War surgeon, Dr. David Merritt – is the centrepiece of the New Brunswick Military History

The 20th Maine, Company I reenactors have also held graveside services for many Civil War veterans buried in the region. The exhibit runs until the end of January and features many more local participants in the conflict.

The 20th Maine Volunteer Regiment, Company I (https://www.facebook.com/20thmainecoi),

from Nova Scotia.





A partnership between the Friends of the NB Military History Museum and the Knitting & Crocheting Club of the Military Family Resource Centre at Base Gagetown has revived a proud tradition of supporting soldiers overseas. This year, nearly 500 HANDMADE KNIT ITEMS will be shipped to Canadian troops serving in Latvia in time for Christmas.

his growing initiative traces its roots to a travelling exhibit on wartime knitting hosted by the NB Military History Museum in 2024. Developed by the Kings County Museum and the Fibre Arts Group in Kentville, Nova Scotia, the exhibit showcased dozens of handmade garments recreated from original patterns promoted to Canadian women during the Second World War.

David Hughes, Manager of the NB Military History Museum, says the exhibit resonated strongly with visitors.

"Knitting was something women and children could do from the homefront," says Hughes. "And they did it in the tens of thousands across Canada through groups like the Canadian Red Cross."

The exhibit also inspired members of the Knitting & Crocheting Club. According to club member Linda Peters, the opportunity to partner with the museum was an exciting one: "Our group



was eager to get involved, promote knitting and crocheting to a wider audience, and maybe even recruit a few new members."

In just a six-week period between January and February 2024, the club produced nearly 100 handmade items in Royal Canadian Regiment colours. These items were delivered by the Padre and quickly distributed to 2RCR troops in Latvia – just in time for International Women's Day.

"We were told the hats, scarves, and mitts were gone in 15 minutes," Peters recalls.

Encouraged by that success, the Friends organization and the Knitting & Crocheting Club expanded the project in 2025. With dedicated funding for supplies, the initiative grew to include items in both RCR colours and those of the Royal New Brunswick Regiment. The museum also hosted special Learn to Knit sessions, attracting large numbers of women and girls eager to learn the craft and contribute to the cause.

This revived tradition continues to grow – one stitch at a time – honouring the spirit of wartime volunteerism while providing warmth and comfort to deployed Canadian soldiers. *

Financial support for this project came from the Friends of the NB Military History Museum, the Province of New Brunswick, 2 RCR, and Anne McCluskey.



- 1. Members of the Crocheting & Knitting Club at opening of wartime knitting exhibit January 2024.
- 2. Knitted items in both RCR colours and those of the Royal New Brunswick Regiment.
- 3. Monarch Knitting Magazine Book # 87 is filled with patterns for woolen hats, scarves, sweaters, vests and socks and even womens' underwear!
- 4. Padre Dave Egers with members of 2nd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment showing off their new mittens and hats.
- 5. Jean Shannon was just a little girl during the Second World War when she knit scarves for Canadian troops overseas. Here she is teaching Vanessa Vander Valk of CBC NB how to knit!
- 6. Learn to Knit event in June 2025 attracted more than 20 would-be-knitters!





refining the story of General Crerar

By Andrew Oakden

Museum Director, RCA Museum

A museum exhibit is never truly finished. Every display has room for refinement, and each revision offers a chance to sharpen its message.



ver the past year, we have updated more than a dozen cases throughout the museum. One of the most telling examples of this process is the transformation of our display dedicated to General Harry Crerar.

When we first examined the case, it held just two artifacts: a 1907-pattern officer's tunic hearing the rank of major and a 1945 sports trophy While historically interesting.

tunic bearing the rank of major and a 1945 sports trophy. While historically interesting, neither communicated the central message about Crerar – that he commanded the First Canadian Army during the Second World War. The display lacked a clear narrative.

We began by reassessing our collection of Crerar's wartime artifacts. In the first update, we improved the mounts and presentation, adding his brown leather gloves – visible in many wartime photographs – and his Second World War beret. We also included ceremonial trophies and keys to the city presented to him by Canadian municipalities. These changes added visual appeal, but the case still felt unfocused.

Our next revision brought a more defined narrative. We removed most of the ceremonial items, kept a single key to the city, and replaced the beret with Crerar's wartime forage cap – his more characteristic headgear. Most importantly, we replaced the officer's tunic with his RAF-pattern Irvin Model 1940 flying jacket. This dark brown leather jacket, with its heavy-duty zipper, was worn by Crerar while commanding the First Canadian Army during the North-West Europe Campaign and on reconnaissance flights in his Auster aircraft. Favoured by several Allied generals, it became a recognizable symbol of command and confidence. Together, these artifacts present a clear and immediate message: these were the personal items of the Canadian Army's commander in Europe during the Second World War.

As director, I want every exhibit in our museum to tell a clear, compelling story. When a display is overcrowded with seemingly unrelated objects, its story is lost. What remains is a scatter of curiosities – attention-grabbing, perhaps, but without focus, connection, or lasting impact. The new Crerar case addresses this problem directly. By carefully selecting and refining the artifacts on display, we've given visitors a clearer, more immediate connection to the history of the Canadian Army – something they can experience, not just read about.

I don't see our exhibits as finished pieces – they're ongoing conversations with our visitors. They need care, fresh ideas, and sometimes a complete reexamination. Each time we update a display, we strive to be more accurate and respectful to better honour the people whose stories we tell, and to help visitors see our military history with greater clarity and understanding.

The Royal Canadian Artillery Museum Building N-118, Patricia Road, CFB Shilo, MB https://en.rcamuseum.com/



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