

THE / LE BULLETIN



President's Comments

By Léon Chamois, President OMMC

By now you all know that health issues have forced Andrew to resign as our president. I wish that my promotion to president had occurred under more pleasant circumstances. I am sure that you join me in wishing Andrew the best.

Because of the hard work of Stu, Andrew, Richard and David, as well as the rest of your board members, our organization is well positioned to take its rightful place as Canada's premiere military museum organization.

I make no promises other than that I will do my utmost to ensure that we continue down the path that they have charted for us. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your ideas or concerns. I look forward to seeing you all in Calgary next year.

Léon

Commentaires du président

Par Léon Chamois, président de l'OMMC

Vous êtes tous au courant que Andrew a démissionné comme notre président à cause de sa santé. J'aurais beaucoup préféré que ma promotion aurait eu lieu sous des conditions plus plaisantes. Je suis certain que vous vous joignez à moi pour souhaiter nos meilleurs vœux à Andrew. À cause des grands efforts de Stu, Andrew, Richard et David et des autres membres de votre conseil, notre organisation est bien positionnée pour prendre sa juste place comme la première organisation de musées militaires du Canada.

Je ne fais aucune promesse autre que je vais faire de mon meilleur pour assurer que nous continuerons sur le sentier qu'ils nous ont dressé. N'hésitez pas à me contacter avec vos idées ou vos inquiétudes. J'ai hâte de vous voir tous à Calgary l'année prochaine.

Léon

The Veterans Wall of Honour

By Pat Murphy, Vancouver Island Military Museum

The Vancouver Island Military Museum wanted a place where families of central Vancouver Island veterans could honour their family members in a way that would be permanent and ongoing. The Idea of having granite plaques with the names of veterans, the service they were part of and the dates of service was soon developed. A local source for granite was available and a company that could do the etching was found.

The next step of the process was selecting the most suitable space for the display. The Board of Directors selected the south-facing external wall at the front of the museum to mount and display the granite memory plaques, and soon a marketing plan was introduced and the project was launched. It was assumed it would take approximately one year to sell the 264 memory plaques in two phases, with each phase consisting of 132 plaques, created and mounted for \$195 each. In the beginning, sales were very brisk and within seven months all Phase One plaques were sold, and by July, they were mounted on the wall. In fact, we over sold Phase One and had a good start of the Phase Two.

It was determined that any person who had served or was serving in the Canadian Military, the RCMP or any of the Allied Nations would qualify to be honoured on the Wall. Families with veterans in both World Wars and Canadian Peace Keeping operations were enthused at the prospects of having a family member honoured, some families purchased two or three plaques, with one family purchasing five granite stones. As we had hoped and expected, several American families came forward and members with Commonwealth services also stepped up to honour a family member.



Museum volunteers Bruce Davidson (left) and Bill Brayshaw (right) holding granite memory plaques for the Veterans Wall of Honour, Phase Two.



Phase Two sales have slowed a bit, and 45 remain to be sold, but with Remembrance Day approaching, it is expected that most of those unsold plaques will be claimed and in the spring of 2016 the tile installers will complete the mounting of Phase Two. A Gala dedication ceremony is in the planning stages for May of 2016 and each family that has honoured a family member will be invited to attend the event with a picture of the Veteran that has been honoured. Lest we Forget.

A Most Unique Souvenir

By Bethany Aitchison, Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence

World Space Week is every year from October 4-10. This year, North Bay decided to host an event showcasing the current aerospace initiatives in the area, and hoping to attract future industries to the city. North Bay's World Space Week was, for the most part, held at 22 Wing/CFB North Bay, and the Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence had the privilege of being a part of the festivities which included Education and Community Days, attracting more than 1,000 school kids and more than 500 community members to the Wing. The finale of the programming was a presentation by Canadian astronaut, and former CF-18 pilot, Chris Hadfield, at our local theatre. Our museum got to be a part of his visit, in more ways than one.



Several months before World Space Week was even in planning, museum Curatorial Assistant, Bethany Aitchison, found a curiosity buried in a scrapbook in the collections room. It was a certificate by the CFB North Bay Graphic Artists commemorating the first ever intercept of a Soviet 'Bear' aircraft by a CF-18, which we knew Chris Hadfield flew. Focusing mostly on the local radar crew working at the time, it also happened to list the two CF-18 pilots and one of them was a Capt Hatfield (notice the spelling error in his name). It was later discovered that the final version of this certificate was stored in the Operations Room on the Wing.

During the World Space Week planning meetings, the team was discussing what to present to Chris Hadfield as appreciation for attending the event, and Bethany suggested a copy of this certificate. The committee loved the idea; Bethany prepared a high-quality print, and the committee had it framed, with the members of the committee signing the matting.

Before his performance, we provided a tour through the museum to the astronaut. The Operations Squadron had brought over the certificate that had been on display for 20 years for him to sign, and he graciously did so (correcting his name) and even took a cell phone picture of it as he had not seen it before.

As his show concluded and the Mayor and one of the Wing's Honorary Colonels presented him with the certificate, we knew already that he would love and appreciate the gift of a piece of local history, with a spelling quirk, to thank him for his support of North Bay's first ever World Space Week.



Honorary Colonel George Burton presents the certificate to Chris Hadfield (City of North Bay/Patrick Gilbert Productions)

Marching Through History

By Greg Fekner, New Brunswick Military History Museum

This summer, the New Brunswick Military History Museum participated in an annual summer camp program called 'Marching Through History' that is hosted by the Fredericton Regional Museum. During the week of July 20-24, students learned about New Brunswick's role in and the importance of the French and Indian War, the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the First World War, and the Second World War. During that week, I utilized a lot of my own re-enactment kit and select items from the museum's collection to do a variety of hands-on activities. Some of these activities included doing skits that captured the student's attention and interest immediately. My approach towards these outreach initiatives has been quite simple: let the students get a real feel for the kit, but most importantly, add a little humour with an impassioned yet serious punch line at the end and you're good to go.

In my experience, these types of outreach initiatives are usually the most effective. Not only do they provide you with the opportunity to rub shoulders with local community groups but they also give you the opportunity to voluntarily put yourself out there and be recognized for the work you do. It also gives these groups a better appreciation for who and what your museum is all about.



From Our Collection: The Medals of Rifleman Tom Chaske

By Jen Sguigna, Juno Beach Centre Association

Tom Chaske was a Métis Canadian born on 3 March 1922 in Edwin, Manitoba, to Tom and Nyjookwah Chaske. He enlisted in March 1943. He ran off to marry Marjorie Thomas in April that year before being transferred to The Fort Garry Horse and later to The Royal Winnipeg rifles, where he would remain as a Rifleman. He arrived in the United Kingdom in early September 1943, training until June 1944 when he landed on Juno Beach as part of the D-Day invasion force. Chaske and The Royal Winnipeg Rifles fought their way through Putot-en-Bessin, encountering heavy resistance at Caen, Carpiquet, Falaise, and the low countries.



Rifleman Tom Chaske's Medals, currently held at the Juno Beach Centre, in Normandy, France (Juno Beach Centre Association)

On the morning of 12 December 1944, near Nijmegen, Holland, Chaske was assigned to Pioneer Company of The Royal Winnipeg Rifles under the command of Lieutenant D. C. Mackenzie. Lt. Mackenzie sent men out to repair a road, ordering ten men into the open compartment of Universal Carrier WD #Cz201179 with a driver, a co-driver, and himself in the front. The carrier was also towing a 5cwt trailer stacked with picks and shovels. As the carrier made its way across the top of a dyke, the driver lost control and the vehicle slid down an embankment, turning over and pinning seven soldiers underneath, ultimately drowning them. Killed along with Rifleman T. Chaske (H8778) were: Rifleman A. H. Burrough (A104565); Rifleman J. E. Duffy (F65759); Rifleman G. Lennox (H40814); Rifleman W. H. Rutland (H42140); Rifleman J. Delipper (H41296); and Rifleman E.H. Tricker (L104439).

Fellow Winnipeg Rifle, Jim Parks, remembers the accident: "I was one of the group dispatched to retrieve the bodies of those pinned under the trailers. It was a sad moment...Where the accident happened, the ground was flat and partly flooded. They also had permanent smoke screens as it was under enemy observation, and shelled regularly...We had a lot of Métis and First Nations soldiers in our outfit and they were a great bunch of guys."

An official Court of Inquiry determined that Lt. Mackenzie had erred, in that 12 men in full winter kit along with the trailer were an excessive weight for the carrier. He was to be held responsible and admonished, but a superior office would eventually state that the deaths of the soldiers were not caused by the fact that the carrier was overloaded and Lt. Mackenzie was absolved of the responsibility of the deaths.

Rifleman Chaske died on 12 December 1944 at the age of 22 and is buried in Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherland. In his name, his widow received the 1939-45 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-1945, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Overseas Clasp, and the GRVI Memorial Cross.

The Juno Beach Centre, Canada's only museum on the D-Day landing beaches, recently acquired Rifleman Chaske's medals. The medals are now on display as a part of a larger exhibit honouring the service of all Canadian First Nations and Métis soldiers in the Second World War.

H5 601: A Memoir

Submitted by Kevin Windsor, National Air Force Museum of Canada

Most notable characters, when they feel they have reached a venerable position in life, contribute to posterity by publishing their memoirs. I, Helicopter Sikorsky 51, RCAF designation H-5, registration number 9601 have attained this position. My memoirs will provide a word to the wise (pilots). You see, I am the oldest helicopter in the service, mainly because I was the first one owned by the RCAF. Most important though, I have the longest accident record of any helicopter in the RCAF.



At this moment one of the Inspectors of Accidents at DFS is closing my sixth accident file, no incidents mind you (all accidents) and some involving extensive damage. The latest one was caused by my pilot trying to squeeze me down into a narrow clearing in the woods and whacking my rotors unceremoniously against a dead tree. Mt injuries were given Category "D". All my rotor blades were replaced and my engine changed.

Actually, my life in recent years has been quite peaceful; this was my first accident in seven years - the last one happened in June 1952. On that occasion my pilot simply let me get out of control on takeoff, and I immediately crashed suffering Category "C". After takeoff he neglected to let me hover for a moment to ensure control before assuming forward flight.

When I look back over my 12 years of life I see that my real misfortunes took place in my youth - the first four years of my life were the hectic ones. In fact, at some time in every one of those terrible years I was being repaired and rebuilt following a major catastrophe. My first accident occurred no less than one month after I left the Sikorsky factory at Bridgeport, in February 1947. My pilot ferried me across the Canadian border to Trenton. For several weeks I was the centre of interest. I was beginning to like Trenton and to trust my pilot. Then, in a practice autorotation he flared me a little too much and my tail rotor blades touched the ground and flew to pieces. Without my tail rotor I lost directional control and spun violently until I crashed. It was years before I could forgive my pilot's error in judgement. For a while I thought I was doomed to the scrapheap. However, thanks to the wise engineers, I was spared.

The following year I suffered another accident during a practice autorotation landing. This time the pilot, after flaring me, applied coarse collective pitch to break the descent, but he erred in retaining the cyclic pitch control in the aft position. The result was a loss of RPM and a condition known to all pilots as "power settling". I hit the ground hard getting thoroughly shaken; my nose wheel was damaged too.

In the third year of my life I was damaged during a landing accident in bush country. My port wheel dropped into a depression on a gentle slope. The pilot applied power to prevent my toppling, but my somewhat protruding tail tangled with a tree.

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Finally, I completed the trials of my youth with my second major accident, and once again I faced the prospect of being written off. The year was 1950 and to add insult to injury I was subjected to the indignity of crashing in an air show in front of hundreds of eager spectators. This time my pilot landed with a drift in a crosswind and to avoid drifting into the crowd he forced me in to the ground on one wheel. I toppled over beating the ground furiously with my rotors as if to stave off the crippling disaster. When the dust settled and the silent crown resumed its murmur, there I lay battered and torn.

This is my life. Six accidents - five during landing and one during take off.

Mind you, my early accident rate has declined throughout my life. As someone once said, "The first four years are the worst." This surely applies to me. Maybe the twilight of my life will be free from catastrophe, and I will continue to escape the clutches of the scrap dealer.

What are my odds? Well, let us glance at the overall "egg beater" accident picture in the RCAF. I see it is a little shattering. The helicopter accident rate is approximately twice the rate for jet aircraft and three and one-half times the rate for reciprocating aircraft. Similar to jet and reciprocating aircraft, pilot failure accounts for over 50 per cent of the helicopter accidents.



Now I am loathe to point the proverbial digit, but as a patriarch among helicopters I feel it is my duty to implore the pilots to be kinds to us. Mind you, it is with no rancour that I speak of pilots. For this I have the greatest affection since without them I could not break the clutch of gravity and sail off into the blue. Nevertheless, they are humans and thus have inherent failings which DFS categorizes and "Negligence," "Carelessness," "Error in Judgment," "Poor Technique," and "Disobedience to Orders." These weaknesses can be avoided under most circumstances; after all the pilot is highly trained to conquer them. There are only a very few exceptions - when adverse conditions are compounded against the pilot, or he fails because of psychological condition (Human Factors) over which he has no control or means of correcting.

I appreciate we helicopters are difficult machines to control, even tougher than jets, since, our lifting surfaces are in constant motion during flight.

All the more reason, my beloved pilots, to adhere to the strictest personal discipline in flying at all times. Above all, acknowledge your inherent weakness and be on guard against them, especially when you take us whirlybirds in hand. I am an old egg beater - qualified this year for the CD Medal - I would like to enjoy my superannuation.

The Naval Museum of Alberta acquires a rare First World War Naval Uniform

By Brad Froggatt, Naval Museum of Alberta

The Naval Museum of Alberta is often offered uniforms from the families of those who have served in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). Though many of the uniforms are common, each uniform is evaluated for its uniqueness - both in manufacture, alteration, and provenance. In 2014, the NMA was fortunate to have been offered a specific uniform that is unique in many of these areas, as it reflects a transitional time in Canadian Naval History, and demonstrates the evolution of the naval uniform and how sailors altered their uniforms to fit their experience.

At the start of the First World War, Canada was unprepared with only two warships: Niobe and Rainbow, and only 350 men. By the end of the war the Canada had over 100 warships, and the RCN grew to 5,500 officers and men, with another 3,000 Canadians serving with the RN. At the outset of the war the governments in London and Ottawa were planning to expand the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), but it was decided that that Canadian men could join either the Royal Navy (RN), or the RCN. Many decided to enlist with the RN.



In October 1917, William (Bill) Duce answered his country's call to service in the Great War and volunteered for the Royal Navy Canadian Volunteer Reserve (RNCVR) at the Cardston Alberta post office. On November 17 of that year he left Lethbridge with a party of recruits and was posted to Rainbow Division on the West Coast where he qualified as a 1st Class Seaman. He was later posted to the Atlantic Coast where served in Niobe Division as the Ship's Cook. Bill Duce ended the war as a Petty Officer on one of the small coastal vessels at St. John New Brunswick – the St. Helena. His war had involved minesweeping and fireboat service, and he had escorted troops halfway into the Atlantic.

This acquisition is unique, as it includes not only the uniform, but provenance that details the owner's history with Naval Service in the Great War. The collection includes images, personal items, and documentation including details of his struggle in later years to be granted a pension for his service.

From its formation in 1910, Officers and Ratings of the RCN wore for the most part, uniforms identical to those worn by the British Royal Navy. According to RCN dress regulations of the period; those Canadians serving with the RNCVR were to be issued with the same kit as those enlisting in the RCN. As was often the case, official Dress Regulations were sometimes altered or ignored, and varied between Ship and Station, especially in wartime. Period photographs and examples of period artefacts often prove exceptions to the regulations.

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Prior to the end of the First World War it was common for sailors to either make some of their clothing, or to purchase articles of clothing and uniforms that had been made on board ship. At least one afternoon a week was devoted to “make and mend”, where sailors cleaned, altered or made clothing. Dress Regulations went into great detail to ensure that locally made clothing was up to Navy standards regarding material and pattern, though individual sailors did not necessarily follow these regulations.

The uniform consists of a First World War era Class II (familiar sailor’s uniform of flat hat, blue or white jumper and bell-bottomed trousers) duck tunic complete with blue naval tri-striped denim collar which is sewn onto the tunic, which is in contrast to the regulations of the time which states that a detached blue jean collar is to be worn. The tunic bears Petty Officer Rank (blue cotton on white) on the right upper sleeve, and blue piping on the cuffs and tunic bottom. The tunic came complete with the original lanyard and black silk neck-handkerchief.

The “silk” conforms to the “Royal Canadian Navy Regulating Branch and Naval Police Rating’s Uniforms regulations of 1918” which states: “Neck-handkerchiefs are always to be worn except by men employed coaling or refitting. They are to be tied behind the collar, the bight in front being confined by the strings, which, having been first tied together, are to be tied tightly in a bow over the handkerchief, leaving a bight about 3 inches long. The handkerchief should thus be firmly secured to the jumper.”



This neck-handkerchief is a black silken material with a floral pattern, and is larger and longer than the later evolution of the folded silk worn by seamen with their “square Rig”. The original strings by which the silk is secured to the jumper are attached.



The trousers are white summer duck RN trousers, 5 buttons, laced at the aft waistband, and stamped with the name “W. Duce” on the inside of the rear of the trousers. Interestingly, the trousers still have the remnants of the “seven seas” folds on the lower legs. The collection includes a black peaked cap with a Petty Officer’s cloth badge, red on black, and a white cloth weather cover which, in accordance with regulations of the time, “...are to be worn with white clothing. They are also to be worn with blue clothing from 1st May to 30th September inclusive.”

This uniform will be prepared for exhibit in the Naval Museum of Alberta as part of the revised First World War section.

The Editor Asks... Do you have a 'mystery object' in your museum?

From The Army Museum - Halifax Citadel

We know that it is a kilt but our challenge is that we cannot identify the tartan so we cannot match it to a Regiment. The only markings are inside made in a marker and is:

2 BW

11-37

We do not believe that this means 2nd Black Watch as this is not the Government tartan but would be happy to be corrected.



This item measures 5 ¼ inches wide, 3 ¼ inches high and 2 inches deep. It is a leather case with no markings or evidence of ever having a carrying strap or means to attach to load carrying equipment. Inside is soft padding with a slit the length and depth of the case for something breakable (?) to be stored.

The Organization of Military Museums of Canada

Executive

Léon Chamois: President

Dave Stinson: Secretary

Richard Ruggle: Treasurer

leon.chamois@forces.gc.ca

davelach@telus.net

shepherd@kw.igs.net

Directors

Bethany Aitchison

Rory Cory

Greg Gallant

Dale Murray

Eric Ruel

Bruce Tascona

James Whitham

bethany.aitchison@live.ca

Mor-curator@telusplanet.net

greggallant@pei.sympatico.ca

juddal@pacificcoast.ne

eric.ruel@cfsj.qc.ca

tasconab@mymts.net

jim.whitham@warmuseum.ca

'The Bulletin' is the official publication of the Organization of Military Museums of Canada. The editor is Bethany Aitchison. Articles can be submitted to bethany.aitchison@live.ca.