

BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News

THE RCA MUSEUM
CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM



LE MUSÉE NATIONAL DE L'ARTILLERIE DU CANADA
LE MUSÉE DE L'ARC

April 2016

109th Royal Manitoba Winter Fair in Brandon

The RCA Museum participated in the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair from March 28th to April 2nd, 2016. We teamed up with the Canadian Forces on Opening Day, Monday, March 28th, in a joint effort to display current and vintage military vehicles on the Keystone Centre grounds. We also filled a tradeshow exhibit in the Manitoba Room.



The above picture, taken on the Keystone Centre grounds, shows a WWII Lynx Scout Car. We also had on display a WWII Universal Carrier and Field Artillery Tractor. All three vehicles garnered a lot of interest from the public throughout the day. Children and teenagers especially enjoyed the unique shape and armour on the Lynx Scout Car.

From March 29th to April 2nd, the museum filled a forty foot tradeshow booth in the Manitoba Room. We showcased our M37 Dodge military truck and one of our vintage 25 pounder artillery pieces. Clive Prothero-Brooks, our Collections Manager, volunteered to man the display for the week and did an excellent job. Thousands of people saw our display and talked with museum staff. This has been an excellent opportunity for the museum to reach a broad audience and to showcase some of our amazing artillery collection. We certainly look forward to being involved with the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair next year.

The Royal Canadian Artillery Museum
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Shilo, Manitoba, R0K 2A0

Website: rcamuseum.com

Musée de l'Artillerie royale canadienne
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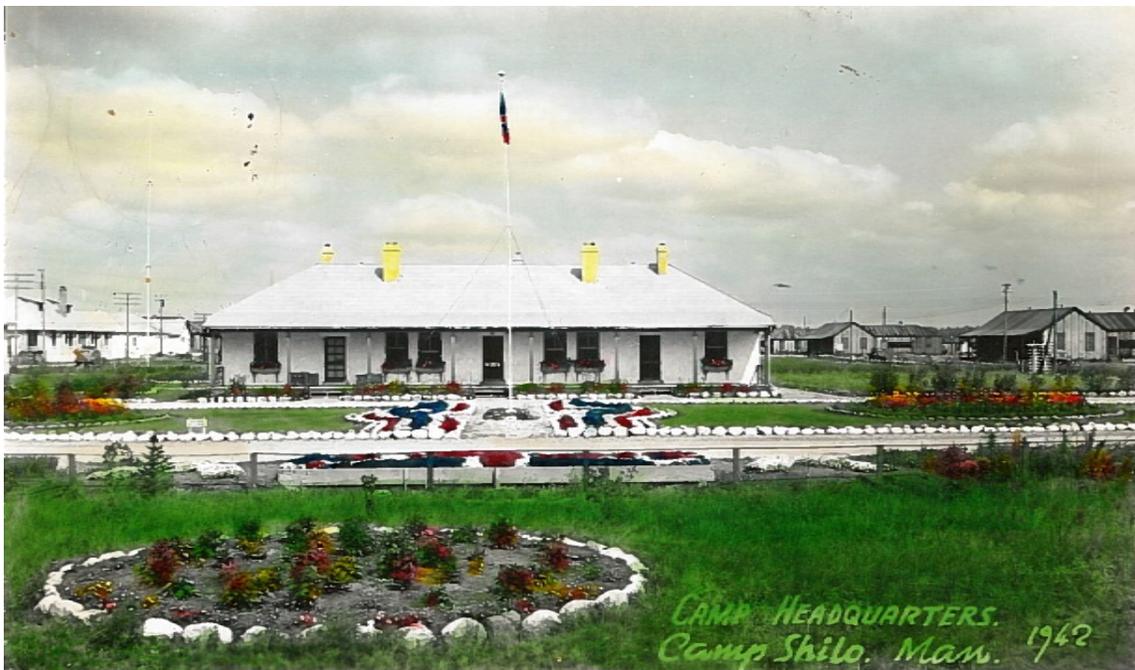
Camp Shilo & the YMCA in WWII

The RCA Museum has amassed a significant collection of artifacts. These artifacts include impressive war treasures such as the German 17cm Kanone 18 cannon weighing approximately 17,000 kilograms placed at the North museum gate. While the collection includes many large artillery pieces and vehicles, the majority of our collection pertains to small artifacts such as military patches, ribbons, pictures and postcards. Every year the museum receives donations from public and private sources complementing our collection. One such donation came in June 2014 from Hazel Crossart, a local resident of Brandon, who donated 25 original photographs and postcards. Originally these war treasures belonged to her father, Bill Ingram, who worked in Shilo as a YMCA war services representative from 1940 to 1944.



(Bill is located at the top of the image.)

History through photographs gives us a fascinating snapshot of the past. What first intrigued me about this collection were the images of Shilo during the early 1940's. Camp Shilo was a military training camp during the Second World War. The postcard below shows Shilo Headquarters in 1942.



Headquarters is a small, single-storey building with mostly small buildings and no tall structures in the background. During the Second World War Shilo became a major training base.

Bill Ingram, the original owner of these war treasures, worked in Shilo for the YMCA during the early 1940's. Most people are probably not aware that the YMCA has a long history of assisting Canadian soldiers since 1866. During WWI and WWII the YMCA supported CF troops and POWs overseas, and in Canada by offering educational and recreational activities.



The postcard image above shows the newly constructed YMCA building located on the Shilo military base. On the reverse side of the postcard Bill wrote regarding the building: “Canteen in the centre, staff quarters at far end, reading & writing room this end & hall at back.” On base the YMCA was a recreational center which included a canteen, sporting activities, discussion groups, musical events, talent nights, and provided room for recruits to study and write letters to their loved ones.

These pictures and postcards give us a glimpse of the environment afforded by Camp Shilo during the Second World War. The photographs below display two different types of activities commonly held by the YMCA.



The picture on the left shows military men participating in archery class while the picture on the right shows a large crowd of soldiers participating in a band concert.

Recently, I spoke with Hazel Crossart regarding these wartime treasures. Hazel mentioned she was a young girl when her father, Bill Ingram, left to help in the war effort and some memories have been lost. The photographs and postcards thankfully remain to tell her father’s story. Hazel remembered that before the Second World War her father had been a grade school teacher. In 1940, Bill joined the YMCA as a war service representative stationed at Shilo, and during the war he planned activities for recruits, helped recruits write letters, ran the YMCA library and assisted with other physical activities. In the fall of 1944, Bill returned to his teaching duties. Seventy years later Hazel donated these war treasures to The RCA Museum, and I am now able to tell the story. Even though these are small artifacts, they play an important role in preserving and communicating our proud history and heritage.

Colonel C.H.L. Sharman's Order of St. Vladimir

Small objects can have great historical significance. While walking through The RCA Museum, I noticed a display case containing military decorations awarded to the late Colonel C.H.L. Sharman. One of the items raised my interest: The Order of St. Vladimir with Crossed Swords and special ribbon (an Imperial Russian Order awarded for military merit). From The RCA Museum archival records, Colonel Sharman received the Order of St. Vladimir from the Czarist Russian government in 1919. Why would a Canadian Gunner be awarded an Imperial Russian Order after the end of the First World War and during the Russian Civil War?



When the Great War officially ended on November 11, 1918, not all Canadian soldiers stopped fighting. At this time, the then Lieutenant-Colonel C.H.L. Sharman commanded the 16th Field Brigade, Dvina Force, stationed in Northern Russia, composed entirely of Canadian Gunners in two batteries – 67th and 68th Batteries – totalling nearly 500 men. The North Russia Intervention, part of the Allied intervention of Russia, resulted in foreign troops entering Russia to fight in the Russian Civil War alongside the pro-Czarist, White Russian forces against the vastly larger Red Bolshevik forces lead by Vladimir Lenin. The 16th Field Brigade, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel C.H.L. Sharman, pursued protracted military action mainly to assist and train the anti-Bolshevik, White Russian forces and to protect military supplies.

While the day of Armistice marked peace on the Western Front, it also heralded a period of intense fighting in Northern Russia. Early in the morning on November 11th, 1918, at the Dvina River, Bolsheviks attacked



the 67th Battery of the 16th Field Brigade from the front and rear, resulting in heavy fighting and casualties on both sides. From the *Confidential War Diary of 67th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, Library and Archives Canada*, dated November 11th, 1918: “At 9.A.M. large body of enemy... 600 strong who had got in rear of our guns (in woods) and attacked.” Members of the 16th Field Brigade courageously reversed one 18 pounder gun and directed fire to the rear and ultimately repelled the initial enemy attack. The *War Diary* states that later in the afternoon the Canadians: “were able to get a Sub gun out of its pit and reversed and owing to its position were able to bring direct fire to bear over open sights on the enemy... The enemy on darkness falling retired back into the wood where he came from leaving between 50 and 60 killed and prisoners.” Two Canadian soldiers died on this day: Corporal S. B. Wareham and Gunner Walter Conville both laid to rest in Northern Russia.

In April 1919, as Commander of the 16th Field Brigade, Colonel C.H.L. Sharman had the distinction of leading the transport of three 60 pounder guns to the Allied advanced post Kitsa by specially constructed sleighs, traveling 120 miles through deep snow in ten days, an undertaking called impossible by the military ordnance authority. The 60

pounder guns were dismantled and each component part was placed on individual sleighs, pulled by between four and ten horses per sleigh.



(Library of Congress)

The photograph above was taken in 1919 by the Red Cross in Northern Russia which displays the innovative design of the wooden sleigh attached directly to the wheel. The officer in the photograph with the cane appears to be Colonel C.H.L. Sharman.

Canadian ingenuity helped bring the 60 pounder guns to the North Russian front, but the Bolsheviks had more artillery and greatly outnumbered anti-Bolshevik and Allied forces. In June 1919, pressure from Ottawa and London lead to the 16th Field Brigade ending military involvement and leaving Russia. All Allied forces had withdrawn from Russia by the winter of 1919. The campaign was not popular with the public in Britain and other Allied nations. Although the Allied forces, including the men of 16th Field Brigade, fought bravely in what became known as the North Russia Expedition, it became a subordinate event in the much larger framework of the Russian Civil War.

Colonel C.H.L. Sharman's Order of Vladimir with Crossed Swords was awarded for outstanding work and leadership during the North Russia Intervention. Sharman returned to Canada in August 1919 and was subsequently appointed Brevet Colonel (a higher title rewarded for gallantry or meritorious conduct). He retired and had a long and distinguished civilian career including becoming the Chief of the Canadian Narcotic Service from 1927-1946. The original Order of St. Valdimir awarded to Colonel C.H.L. Sharman, one of many small but historic items that you will discover, is proudly on display at The RCA Museum.

Designed for Victory: A Collaborative Project

When Canada became a country in 1867 only 11% of Canadians could vote. Nearly 150 years later, this collaborative exhibit celebrates the 100 years since women earned the right to vote in Manitoba. It traces the hard fought process to bring enfranchisement to all Canadian citizens since Confederation.

Brooke Drummond, a history student from Brandon University, further developed the storyline through text and pictures. Although the suffrage movement had been active on the Prairies for many years, it was Canada's entrance into the Great War and women's full support and contributions to the war effort in their communities and their new workplaces that accelerated the process. However, full participation in Canadian elections did not extend to all citizens until another war and subsequent cultural shifts leading up to 1960, when First Nations persons finally gained the vote.



This connection between war, women and the vote is wonderfully illustrated thanks to Maralyn MacKay-Hussain and the volunteers of the Costume Museum of Canada in Winnipeg. This Museum has specially selected authentic period garments that are tastefully and thematically arranged throughout the exhibit. The fight and victory that women achieved for themselves and on behalf of others in the 20th Century is reflected in the clothing of the times, influenced by wartime experiences, economic necessity and cultural expression.

The RCA Museum added photographs from its own collection and the Manitoba Archives as well as a Second World War artillery uniform with a War Bride wedding suit and a Canadian Women's Army Corps Uniform. The CWAC is displayed with a Second World War ambulance from the Museum's collection. The Women's Auxiliary from the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum provided interpretive panels from their Women of the War Years traveling display.



Also involved in the project was Assiniboine Community College's Interactive Media Arts Students who photographed and developed a virtual tour of the exhibit which will be hosted on their class website prairiehistorycentre.ca to be launched on 11 April 2016.

The exhibit was opened by the Base Commander, LCol. John Cochrane on 26 February 2016 with members of the military, the exhibit partners, students and members of the public attending. The exhibit will run until 19 June 2016.

60 Pounder Gun

The RCA Museum has one Breach Loading (BL) 60 Pounder, Mark 1 gun, prominently displayed in the National Artillery Gallery, circa 1918. The 60 Pounder is in good shape for being ninety-eight years old. Portions of the recoil mechanism have been removed and replaced by welded covers. If you look closely, you will notice small arms fire scarring on the barrel. These alterations or battle scars provide added charm.



Developed from 1903-05, the new 60 Pounder Gun filled an operational and strategic void that was first noted during the Boer War (1899-1902). The Boers had effectively used modern long range heavy field guns against the British. Consequently, to enhance battle worthiness and to combat a future enemy's ability to wage war, the British Empire - including Canada - designed, produced and distributed long range heavy artillery such as the 60 Pounder.



The 60 Pounder, Mark 1 gun is a brute weighing over four tons with a barrel length just over thirteen feet and with two heavysset wooden wheels five feet in diameter. The Mark 2, introduced in 1918, had a longer fifteen foot barrel, modified carriage and improved recoil system placed below the barrel. The calibre of shell is five inches (127 mm) and can be fired twice per minute. In field operations the 60 Pounder would include a limber, two ammunition wagons, ten gunners and eight drivers, and an estimated seventeen horses for transport. The 1916 training manual, housed in The RCA Archives, shows the detachment manning the gun consisted of ten gunners with eight responsible for firing the gun and two in reserve.

The 60 Pounder proved to be a very effective heavy gun during the First World War. It was used in all theatres of the war by the British Empire, United States and Russian Empire. Noteworthy, the 16th Field Brigade, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel C.H.L. Sharman, composed entirely of Canadian Gunners, used 60 Pounders against Bolshevik forces in the North Russia Expedition of 1918-1919. The gun was removed from active service in 1941: it still serves in the passive arsenal of The RCA Museum.

Donations

Support of The RCA Museum helps cover ongoing operational costs. Personal thank you letters and Income Tax receipts are sent to anyone that donates.

Please send your donation by cheque payable to The RCA Museum - PO Box 5000 Station Main, Shilo, MB R0K 2A0, Canada.

The Somme: The Mechanization of War

The Battle of the Somme has been seen as a pivotal moment in human history and warfare, where the machinery of war could crush the effort and ability of men meeting in battle.

At the Somme, Field Marshal Haig and the British Command planned for a much desired breakthrough by the Allied



countries against German frontlines and in support of the French Army fighting for its existence to the south at Verdun. Reliance for success was placed on a sophisticated transport system for supplies and equipment, massive and powerful artillery support, an agile Royal Flying Corps and finally the well-equipped and determined British (and colonial) soldier who was the inheritor of over two hundred years of Empire. The British had also developed a secret weapon that they hoped would change the course of the war.

The battle was engaged on 1 July 1916 and began with the heaviest losses ever suffered by the British Army. It ended five months later with over 1 million casualties on all sides and gains that could only be measured in yards.

Divisional Commander, **Sir Henry de Beauvoir De Lisle**, was to write of the Newfoundlanders effort at the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel, one of opening engagements at the Somme: *"It was a magnificent display of trained and disciplined valour, and its assault failed of success because dead men can advance no further."*



In our next First World War temporary exhibit, The RCA Museum, will review the Canadian experience at the Battle of the Somme through the equipment, supplies, guns and vehicles brought forward as well as the men that had to fight. A new acquisition to the Museum, a 1912 motorized WW1 army truck donated by the Manitoba Automobile Museum, will be on display after going through the first stage of what will be an extensive restoration. Also on display will be a rare horse drawn army ambulance on loan from the Prairie Mountain Regional Museum. Both of these army vehicles were purportedly used at Camp Hughes while it was in full operation from 1915 to 1917. The exhibit will open on 1 July and run to 25 November, 2016.

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