

# BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News



October 2016

## Director's Note

Since the new temporary exhibit opened, *The Somme: The Mechanization of War*, attendance has been strong. During July and August, the museum had 2200 visitors, which is a 10% increase over the average number of visitors during this period. This increase is likely due to a number of factors: increased media traffic, increased outreach activities, expansion of the website and twitter, the 13-pounder gun acquisition, and the new temporary exhibit display. If you have not seen our exhibit, please come in and see it before it closes on November 25, 2016.

We currently have a 4.5 star rating on Tripadvisor.com, but we have received some negative feedback that we are working on. Two reviewers negatively pointed out our cash only policy. I am happy to report that we now have a debit machine and have fixed this problem. We are working on updating our interactives throughout the museum. This is an ongoing issue, which we are currently addressing.

From the middle of June to the end of August, the museum received a substantial amount of positive media exposure, which likely assisted with the better than expected attendance numbers in July and August. On at least four occasions, we made it into the Brandon Sun, which has a large Westman readership. We were lucky enough to make it into the Winnipeg Free Press regarding the 13-pounder acquisition. All of this

press certainly helps maintain and build public awareness about The RCA Museum.

With the assistance of Travel Manitoba and the Star Attractions program, we updated our signage free of charge. We have added six Star Attraction signs, two from the South on Highway 340 and two from the North on Highway 340 directing visitors to enter the North gate. This should make it easier for visitors to find the museum, especially on week-ends when the South gate is closed. We installed the other two new Star Attraction signs on the base.

Our website [rcamuseum.com](http://rcamuseum.com) is effective. Statistics on the



**The Royal Canadian Artillery Museum**  
CFB Shilo, P.O. Box 5000, Station Main  
Shilo, Manitoba, R0K 2A0

**Website:** [rcamuseum.com](http://rcamuseum.com)  
**Facebook:** The RCA Museum

**Musée de l'Artillerie royale canadienne**  
BFC Shilo, C. P. 5000, succursale Main  
Shilo (Manitoba) R0K 2A0

number of visitors have been active since the start of April 2016. The new website provides a professional platform for the museum to display what we have to offer. We receive about seven thousand hits per month with two thousand unique visitors per month. The Great Gunners and our gallery of artillery receive a lot of traffic. New features and revisions are continuing. Our Museum Twitter account has 1248 followers. In July, there were 27.8k engagements (nearly 900 per day). Our Facebook page also receives about 200 visitors per week.

As the Director of the museum I am commonly asked, “What is there to see at the RCA Museum?” Our museum is distinctive in a number of ways. It is a gunner and regimental museum built on the history of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery and the military history of Manitoba. It is a collection centered museum with a large restored collection of military vehicles, cannons, howitzers, self-propelled artillery and small arms. It is also a storyline focused museum highlighting many important military leaders and great gunners in Canadian history. I believe the public has a lot to see in our museum and I am excited to be a part of it.

## Research Summer Students



### Nicholas Simonds

My name is Nicholas Simonds and I am a summer intern at the R.C.A. Museum. After finishing my studies in History at Queen’s University in Kingston this spring, I was happy to return to the R.C.A. Museum for my third summer internship. My time at the Museum has proven to be an immensely rewarding experience, providing a multitude of learning opportunities. Due in part to the abundant outreach opportunities and the vastness of the Museum’s collection, I have been able to explore and participate in many aspects of the museum process. Engaging in the research, cataloging, and storage of artifacts, I have been able to take in first-hand a small part of what the R.C.A. Museum has to offer. Through the display and explanation processes, assisting in the assembly of exhibits and by conducting tours, I do my best to share the fascinating histories that fill this Museum to the brim.

### Britney Weber

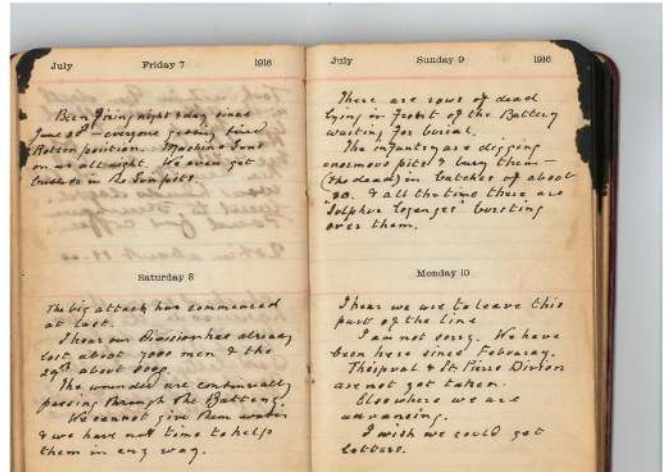
I have had a passion for history for as long as I can remember. I am currently in my last year of studies at Brandon University (BU) working towards a Bachelor of Arts 4 Year Honors Degree in Anthropology, with a focus on Archaeology. Safe to say, I know more about rocks than guns. I participated in BU’s Archaeological Field School at the Camp Hughes National Historic Site near Carberry, Manitoba. It was by far one of the best courses (and summers!). Prior to working at the RCA Museum, I had very little knowledge of military history. That changed quickly as I have been working on exhibit maintenance and setup, leading tour groups, entering artifacts onto the database, accessioning new donations, taking part in museum and public events, and helping organize the collections storage area. I am passionate about archaeology, museum work, preserving history in all forms, and I look forward to discussing these topics with you!



## The Diary of Lieutenant Frederick G. Scott

We recently received a treasured original war diary from the Dooley family in the United Kingdom. The diary belonged to Lieutenant Frederick G. Scott from Toronto, Ontario who served with the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery and was killed in action at Vimy, France, on 20 April 1917. With a deep sense of gratitude, I would like to thank the Dooley family for their generous and historically significant donation.

The war diary contains a brief, firsthand battlefield account of the Western Front. Lt. Scott died in the line of duty serving our country: his service is representative of sacrifices endured by Canadians and is honored on Remembrance Day. I have included the text from the last two pages of entries in his diary covering the period from July 7<sup>th</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1916.



*7 July* - Been firing night & day since June 20<sup>th</sup> – everyone getting tired. Rotten position. Machine guns on us all night. We even get bullets in the gunpits.

*8 July* - The big attack has commenced at last. I hear our Division has already lost about 7000 men & the 29<sup>th</sup> about 8000. The wounded are continually passing through the Battery. We cannot give them water and we have not time to help them in any way.

*9 July* - There are rows of dead lying in front of the Battery waiting for burial. The infantry are digging enormous pits to bury them – (the dead) in batches of about 20. And all the time there are ‘sulphur lozenges’ bursting over them.

*10 July* - I heard we are to leave this part of the line. I am not sorry. We have been here since February. Thiepval and St. Pierre Divison are not yet taken. Elsewhere we are advancing. I wish we could get letters.

Lt. Scott was writing about the Battle of Somme that resulted in over one million casualties from July 1<sup>st</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1916. He also mentioned the use of sulphur - the British used sulphur as a sterilizing agent during the burial process. Months later, at the age of 21, he died.

In the *Circumstances of Death Registers, First Word War*, Lt. Frederick G. Scott’s entry states:

Killed in Action. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917, at about 2:15 P.M., he was proceeding through the main street of VIMY with another officer of his Battery, for the purpose of taking bearings of a new gun position about to be occupied. At the time, the enemy was laying down an intense fire along the road, and a 5.9 shell landing at their feet killed Lt. Scott instantly, and so severely wounding his companion that he died later.<sup>1</sup>

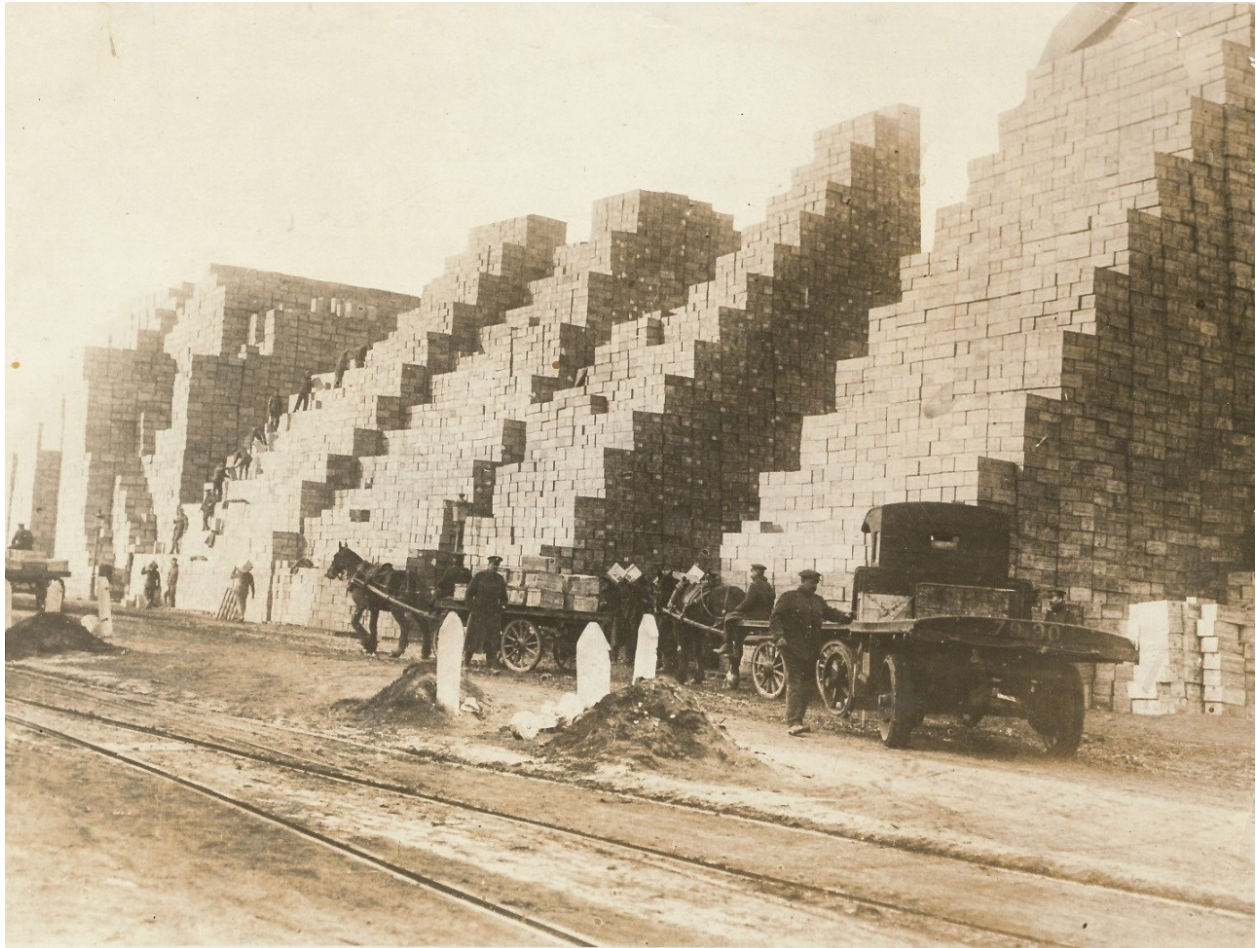
Lt. Scott is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery in Souchez, France. Many Canadian casualties from the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the aftermath are buried at Cabaret-Rouge. We are fortunate to have his war diary, a first-hand account from a Canadian Gunner killed in action on the Western Front. Please take some time this Remembrance Day to honor soldiers such as Lt. Frederick G. Scott.

<sup>1</sup>Circumstances of Death Registers, First World War, Record: 46246, Volume Number: 31829\_B016700, page 167.



## British Army Depot WW1

A decent meal was hard to find on the frontlines during WW1. By early 1917, Britain and her allies had amassed great armies and behind these armies stood their resources – economic, material and spiritual. The war effort was on a massive scale, requiring millions of men and the supplies to sustain them. Over eight million served in the British Army during WW1, and at its peak, over two million were serving in France and Flanders. This huge army required vast quantities of food and supplies. To accomplish this task the British Armed Forces relied on a sophisticated supply chain network.



In our archive, I found an interesting First World War photograph of British food boxes piled sky-high destined for the frontlines of France. After a little research, I discovered this is a picture of the British Army Supply Depot, in Rouen, France, responsible for supplying British soldiers with food and supplies, taken on 15 January 1917.

In terms of quantity, the soldiers on the Western Front required thousands of tons of supplies every day. To accomplish this task the British ferried the necessary goods to French ports. They then forwarded the goods to frontline depots. Once at the depots, supplies were stacked and arranged for transport by narrow gauge railway, motor transport or horse-drawn carriage. Horse-drawn carriages proved ineffective at transporting goods to the front. More commonly, the British employed narrow gauge railways and motor transports, including civilian lorries and buses. As indicated in the picture above, the British Army required a mountain of neatly packed wooden supply boxes and a complex transport system to sustain the war effort.



One of the nicest parts of our regimental artillery museum is the Gun Park. The outdoor guns are a handsome addition to the property, mechanized and manmade. They hold a metallic aesthetic that peacefully, but powerfully, blends in with the local trees: I have heard that some visitors think our Gun Park is the museum! They walk or drive around the forty artifacts and never enter the museum. While I hope all visitors enter and see our museum, I can certainly understand why the outdoor Gun Park receives a lot of positive attention.

Years ago, the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery used many of these armaments. Now, they stand as physical monuments, and as a tribute to the service and sacrifice of past soldiers. Weapons designers created these guns to be formidable weapons of war. In some cases, these weapons arrived in Canada as war trophies. The Gun Park contains many German guns from WW1 and WW2 that were transported to CFB Shilo decades ago. The Gun Park, for me, in part represents the physical remnants of various strategic rearmament policies instituted by multiple nations both prior to and during major military conflicts of the twentieth century.

Operationally, in 1914, both Great Britain and Canada were not prepared for a long world war. In terms of artillery, just before WW1, Great Britain and Canada simply did not have a sufficient arsenal of artillery to participate in a protracted world war. In 1914, at the outbreak of hostilities, Great Britain had 486 pieces of artillery in service. The primary artillery included:

*13 Pounder Gun used by the Horse Artillery*

*18 Pounder Gun used by the Field Artillery*

*4.5 Inch Howitzer used by the Field Artillery*

*60 Pounder Gun used by the Heavy Artillery*

*6 Inch Howitzer used by the Siege Artillery*

Of note, The RCA Museum has at least one example of each of these weapons in our collection. While the 486 artillery pieces might appear to be a reasonable number at first glance, it proved aggressively inadequate during WW1.

Imagine millions of men fighting on land that did not offer flanks to manoeuvre around or the mobility to launch direct assault due to the advent of modern firepower, with few options other than to dig a complex network of field entrenchments across the Western Front. This was the reality for many frontline soldiers for the better part of WW1. Prohibitive casualties generally resulted when one side attempted to break the deadlock by pursuing a direct assault. The advent of modern firepower, such as the magazine rifle and machine gun, largely rendered direct assault impractical which resulted in the entrenchment of soldiers on both sides and the certainty of trench warfare on the Western Front.

As a supporting arm of the infantry, artillery became a paramount instrument to break the enemy. Artillery tactics certainly evolved during WW1. Both sides used artillery fire extensively on entrenched enemy positions. Thereupon, if the enemy position was heavily bombed, then the infantry could advance without prohibitive casualties. By the end of WW1, Britain had 2200 guns or a five-fold increase from the start of the war, including new, much larger calibre artillery of up to 15 inches. This massive increase in artillery and its usage helped win the war.

After WW1, many of the enemy guns on the battlefronts of Europe came to Canada as war trophies. Great Britain and Canada decommissioned most of their wartime guns, eventually housing many in museums and military storage facilities across the globe. Many of the guns were not regarded as monuments or historically significant, and were melted for scrap metal. After WW1, the British enacted the 'Ten year Rule' restricting funds for new artillery. British armament levels throughout the 1920's and early 1930's remained low. It was not until 1933, when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany that Great Britain and Canada began the process of rearming.

Great Britain's annual expenditure on rearmament, from 1934 to 1939, was very generous. In 1934, Great Britain spent roughly 37 million pounds on rearmament compared to 1939 when it spent 273 million pounds (an 8-fold increase). During each of the six years that led up to the outbreak of war in September 1939, expenditures on rearmament expanded at a significant rate.

*Estimated British Rearmament Expenditure, 1934–39 (Millions of British Pounds)*

Year ending March	Total	Army	Navy	Royal Air Force
1934	37.2	6.9	20.9	9.4
1935	42.6	8.5	24.2	9.9
1936	60.7	12.5	29.6	18.6
1937	104.2	21.4	42.0	39.3
1938	82.2	44.3	63.2	66.0
1939	273.1	67.6	82.9	109.9 <sup>2</sup>

While Britain was rearming, it was also utilizing a policy of appeasement during the latter half of the 1930's. Most famously, appeasement meant making political concessions to Mussolini during the Abyssinian Crisis (1935-36) and Hitler during the Munich Crisis (1938). Historians tend to look unfavorably on the 1930's British appeasement policy, but during this period, Great Britain and her allies were not in a position to fight in a prolonged world war and used this timeframe, as the expenditures listed above demonstrate, to rearm and prepare for war. During the 1930's, Britain and her allies were in large part not prepared for warfare, but by 1939, they were certainly in a much better position to fight.

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland resulting in the outbreak of WW2. By this time, Great Britain had already significantly expanded their artillery. Our regimental museum Gun Park serves as testament to the brave men and women who fought in WW2 and during other military engagements. It also serves to underscore the role rearmament played before and during WW1 and WW2. Our Gun Park is open to the public, free of charge, year-round.

<sup>2</sup>Postan, Michael M. *History of the Second World War: British War Production*. Retrieved from <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/UK/UK-Civil-WarProduction/UK-Civil-WarProduction-2.html#fn4>



## QF 4.7 Inch Mk IV Gun

From the call to arms to the capitulation of hostilities, Canadian gunners used their strengths, energies and esprit-de-corps to put their indelible stamp on history with the QF 4.7 Inch Mk IV gun. The RCA Museum's QF 4.7 Inch gun accurately represents artillery used by British and Canadian soldiers during the Boer War (1899-1902), WW1 (1914-1918), and for training purposes during WW2 (1939-1945).

Right outside the entrance to our museum, we have placed the QF 4.7 Inch Mk IV gun manufactured by the Elswick Ordnance Company of Great Britain, circa 1885. Its maximum firing range was 12,000 yards or (11,000 m); it fired a 45 pound shell at a maximum of five or six rounds per minute. Naval, coastal defense and the field artillery used this weapon. This particular QF 4.7 Inch Mk IV was in service with the Canadian military since 1902 until 1947.



In the *Record of Rounds Fired*, the first firing of this weapon occurred on 19 August 1902 – it was not fired again until WW1, and then again during WW2. Our gun stayed in Canada during the two world wars. The gun was not wildly popular with Canadian gunners, due to being difficult to move and operate, and its relatively light shell proved ineffective in trench warfare.

Our records show that in August 1954 this QF 4.7 Inch gun was in the RCSA museum in Shilo. When the RCA Museum originally opened in 1962, it was part of the collection. Move forward thirty years, we have pictures of this gun in 1993 with wooden wheels that were rotten (note the picture to the left).

We also have pictures from 1999 of new wheels for the gun after construction (example to the right). Years later, the gun received a fresh coat of paint. The RCA Museum does not just display artillery. We are in the business of documenting the lives of the more than 200,000 Canadian Gunners who have served Canada in war and peace. With the roar of artillery fire, the QF 4.7 Inch gun contributed notably to the growth and evolution of the Royal Regiment. For more information on the QF 4.7 Inch, visit our website at [RCAMuseum.com](http://RCAMuseum.com).





Above is the museum's restored 1912 Cadillac Truck, used by the Canadian Military, currently on display in our temporary exhibit, *The Somme: The Mechanization of War*.

Donations are important!

All donations are promptly processed and a tax receipts provided.

I would like to support The RCA Museum with a monetary donation of:

☐ \$50      ☐ \$100      ☐ \$500      ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send your donation by cheque payable to *The RCA Museum* – Box 5000 Station Main, Shilo, Manitoba R0K 2A0, Canada.

I consent to be on The RCA Museum mailing list and receive the Quarterly Newsletter (Barrage).

☐ Yes

☐ No, I do not consent.

## Contact Us

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## Pour nous joindre