

BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News



April 2018

1920s Artillery Tractor Wheel Restoration

Update: The four wheels originally constructed in the 1920s are rather complex and require the expertise of a capable and skillful wheelwright. We retained Brian Reynolds, an accomplished wheelwright, to complete the task. We provided him with the original metal rims with original vulcanized rubber on the outside. On the inside he needed to create the wooden fellows and then press them together to create one wheel.

We heard recently from Brian that he completed the first wooden fellows, note the picture to the right, the photo also shows the original rims that we provided. The original wheels were created by Goodyear who no longer retain any information regarding the construction of these wheels. They would have used specialized equipment that no longer exists. Our wheelwright had the difficult task of pressing wooden fellows into a fixed metal hub. The metal hub could not be heated and then shrunk into place due to having vulcanized rubber on top. Therefore, the wooden fellows had to be built to a high degree of accuracy.



Our wheelwright certainly had a big challenge on his hands. He needed to build a jig for the wooden fellows and a specialised press. Note the picture to the right. He also determined that our original steel rims were heavily corroded and required some restoration. To accomplish the task of pressing the wooden fellows into the steel rim, he built a press out of two 50 ton jacks. The actual pressing required approximately 60 tons of force. Note the completed wheel below. The remaining three wheels should be constructed a lot faster.



Some restoration projects at the museum, such as these wheels, require a specialist to complete. There are probably very few people that could have constructed these wheels and we are very grateful that Brian found a way to build them by using his many years of experience and initiative to create an excellent finished product. Surely, these wheels will last another fifty or one hundred years, and it will then be up to another skilled specialist to get it running like old again. After receiving the wheels, RCA Museum staff will move the project to completion.



Royal Manitoba Winter Fair



We were very fortunate to participate in the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair this year. From March 26th to 31st, we manned a twenty foot display in the Manitoba Room. This year we brought one artillery piece and two display cases full of Canadian medal sets. During WW1 Canadian soldiers used the 18 pounder. In WW1, the 18 pounder had wooden wheels and was pulled with an ammunition limber by a team of six horses. The gun we brought includes a 1930s upgrade to rubber wheels which enabled it to be pulled with limber by an artillery tractor. Guns such as this were used for training purposes in Canada during the Second World War. Our display at The Royal Manitoba Winter Fair also included a number of WW1 and WW2 medal sets originally belonging to Canadian Gunners.

Updated CF Heritage Gallery

The RCA Museum is fortunate to hold a large collection of WW1 and WW2 medals, which were originally presented to privates and corporals, all the way up to colonels and generals. Indeed, each medal set in our collection has an important story to tell. We recently updated our Canadian Forces Heritage Gallery with an assortment of WW1 and WW2 artifacts, including photos, military uniforms and medal sets. We added six WW1 medal sets and two WW2 medal sets. We also have a fair number of unique medal sets placed throughout our museum.



Shown above is the complete medal set of Major General John H. Roberts.

One of the newly placed medal sets is that of Major General John H. Roberts. He is listed as one of our Great Gunners in RCA history and his medals cover both world wars. As a Major General he commanded the First Division during the Dieppe Raid on 19 August 1942. His involvement in this raid has certainly been critiqued by historians. To that end, he received a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) from King George VI for his role in the Dieppe Raid. The DSO is just one of fourteen medals in his collection that is currently on display in our CF Heritage Gallery.

LAV III Monument

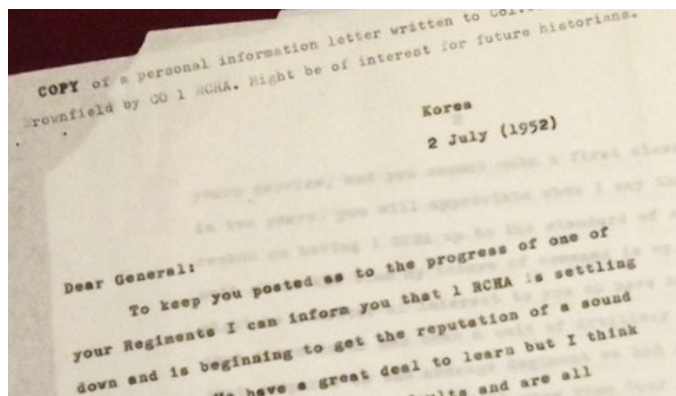
CFB Shilo and the RCA Museum are working together on a LAV III vehicle monument to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. The completed monument will be placed in the Canoe River Memorial Park on base. Currently, there are a number of older memorials at the park but nothing about the Afghanistan Mission. Update: The LAV III monument arrived on March 23rd and was transported to our M101 storage facility shown below.



There are still a number of steps remaining to complete this project. Our museum mechanic, Rob Love, is tasked with adding external bracketry to the LAV III. After this is complete we will temporarily move the LAV III monument to the museum's Gun Park. A cement pad will need to be poured at Canoe River Memorial Park and then the LAV III will be moved to the park.

There will also be a cairn placed at the memorial dedicated to honour the sacrifice made by all those who participated in the Afghanistan Mission 2001 – 2014. We will have an opening ceremony for the new monument in the summer or fall. Details to be determined.

Dear General



“Dear General” the letter started. I found an old, yellowing personal letter copy dated 2 July 1952. The eight page letter was signed by the CO of 1 RCHA Col. Teddy McNaughton addressed to Col. Comdt. H.O.N. Brownfield: two notable names in Canadian military history. Col. McNaughton wrote the letter in the field as 1 RCHA fought in the Korean War. In the first paragraph he mentions 1 RCHA beginning the process of settling in for a fight, an engagement in which they had much to learn. He states that while 1 RCHA may not be the best unit in Korea, they are getting better. He

mentions that four fifths of his NCO’s have less than two years of military service, and it takes time to make a first class soldier.

Intriguingly, Col. McNaughton states: “the war is rather a silly affair but provides really excellent training conditions.” He asserts the fight can get rough, but also there is a current lull while the peace talks continue. He complements his adversary stating the Chinese are very effective with their artillery which makes life “not a bit pleasant.” The Chinese infantry are “gallant and hang onto localities that we would consider quite useless.” He then points out a rather noteworthy fact that the Chinese had deep trenches and supply chains stretching for miles, saying: “I am sure they can walk from coast to coast in their trenches.”

He supports the need for trenches and that the Canadian infantry are “learning the true value of a shovel.” He states that 1 RCHA is “dug in like an infantry battalion,” with ten belts of double apron fencing, a mine-field behind them and a few 17 pounders to protect the front.

On page six he writes: “I have not been able to fathom why everybody is so stupid about this war but it really is extraordinary how normally truthful people become fantastic liars when talking about this unfortunate country.” He states there are many misconceptions about Korea and about the war that people tend to exaggerate to create a story. He talks about Korea being misunderstood in the west. He says the country is attractive and the climate is very good. He states that while this is at variance with the accepted version of Korea, it is in fact so. One weakness of Korea is not having a “Paris for leave purposes” other than that it is ideal for warfare.

He closes the letter addressing a problem of being understrength by one hundred and forty-eight men. Soldiers continue to leave for home, but are not being replaced quickly enough. He also mentions he didn’t think a large offensive would happen in the near future due to a lack of manpower. He also didn’t think it would be beneficial to press forward, due to having nowhere particular to go. He states “As far as I can see there is no reason why the war should not go on for ever.” Ending the letter with ‘Your Servant, Teddy McNaughton.’

In summary, it is fair to say that the Korean War and Canada’s involvement therein has commonly been misunderstood and sometimes forgotten. Letters such as this add to our general historical understanding of this war. The letter provides a healthy dose of factual realism, common sense, and insight to the challenges of leading 1 RCHA during the Korean War with credits to the archives at the RCA Museum for acquiring and retaining a copy.

Wedding Limber



Last fall we had a request from Captain Kyle Nielsen of 1 RCHA to use our wedding limber. Above is a photo taken after the wedding ceremony. The photo includes our parade jeep towing the wedding limber and 25 pounder gun. The RCA has a long tradition of carrying the bride and groom after the wedding ceremony on a limber. We have a number of WW2 photos in our collection with war brides using wedding limbers. I found in our archives a letter from 1961 from the Director of Artillery, Colonel EG Brooks, proposing official use of gun and trailer at weddings. It's rewarding that we can continue these traditions established by the RCA.

Colonel Commandant Coin Presentation



Pictured (right) is Brigadier General James Selbie, the Colonel Commandant of the RCA, presenting Mr. Love, our museum mechanic, with a Colonel Commandant Coin. On 10 June 2017, the RCA Museum participated in the Freedom of the City Parade, the Traveler's Day Parade and then had a large exhibit at the Summer Fair in Brandon. Rob ensured that all twelve vehicles were running without any breakdowns during all three events. Given that many of the vehicles were WW2 vintage, this was a very difficult undertaking. He also was responsible for the coordination and loading of vehicles on base transport. He also helped train all the military and civilian driver's on each of the vehicles. Well done Mr. Love.

New Colonel Commandant Exhibit

We have added a new display to our museum on the Colonel Commandants from the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. After the passing of Brigadier-General William W. Turner, CD on 13 December 2016, we decided to create a permanent display to honor both him and the position he once held as Colonel Commandant from 1979 to 1986. We placed this new display next to our Great Gunner Interactive in the hallway between our WW2 display and our Korean War display.



The Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Artillery as per military instructions from 1973, will:

- A. Foster esprit de corps throughout the corps;
- B. Advise Army Headquarters as appropriate in his capacity as Colonel Commandant;
- C. Act in an advisory capacity to the corps association pertaining to the corps so that uniformity is maintained in such matters as dress and customs;
- D. Advise on the administration and disposition of corps funds and property;
- E. Advise on corps charities, organizations and memorials;
- F. Maintain close liaison between the Regular and Militia units of the corps;
- G. Keep in touch with allied corps."

The first Colonel Commandant of the RCA was Maj General TB Strange, known as a father to the Canadian Artillery back in 1925. In 1872, he was appointed Inspector of Artillery and Warlike Stores for Canada and the first Commandant of "B" Battery in Quebec City. More information about Maj General Strange can be

found on the RCA Museum website under Great Gunners. It's worth noting that Colonel Commandants are initially appointed for a period of five years with the possibility of one extension. The current Colonel Commandant of the RCA is Brigadier General James J. Selbie, OMM, CD.

It wouldn't be a museum exhibit without some notable artifacts. In this case, we included three artifacts associated with BGen Turner. We included his red mess jacket, cap and the WW Turner Trophy presented annually to the best third year artillery cadet at the Royal Military College from 1986 to 2009. We also included a bio on BGen Turner and some notable information on the role of the Colonel Commandant. While our new exhibit is small, we hope visitors will stop, read the inscriptions and reflect upon the vast heritage of the RCA.

15 Pounder Presentation

The RCA Museum has dozens of historic cannons. One that certainly deserves mention is a 15 pounder which is safely stored in our M101 storage facility. I had heard the 15 Pounder Gun was used during the funeral of Queen Victoria to carry her casket, but I did not know how it found its way into our collection.

There is certainly more to this account. In 1962, the Royal Canadian Artillery Association held their annual meeting in Shilo. During the event, British General Sir Robert Mansergh, GCB, KBE, MC, The Master Gunner of St James's Park, participated as the RCAA's special guest. He presented the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery with the 15 Pounder Gun. The following text appeared in the October 1963 issue of The Gunner Bulletin, page 19: "This Gun was handed for safe keeping to the Colonel Commandant and the Royal Canadian Artillery as a token and a symbol of much valued service together of the two Regiments both in peace and war."

From the Gunner Bulletin, October 1963: "The Gun had been prepared and cleaned after the journey from Britain by three members of the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and was truly in "Mint Condition." While arriving from Great Britain in excellent condition, it also came with a plaque which is kept in storage. As stated on the inscription, this cannon was approved for donation by her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September 1962.



It would not be a proper story without a picture of the immaculate gun, dated 5 October 1962. On the right is General Sir Robert Mansergh, GCB, KBE, MC, The Master Gunner of St James's Park. On the right is Brigadier PAS Todd, CBE, DSO, ED, CD, The Colonel Commandant of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. This gun is currently not on public display. It is,

however, one of many treasures we have in storage. In the near future, we are likely to display this historic cannon either in the museum or during outreach events.

To the right is an old print of a Gatling Machine Gun in our museum archives. On the back of the photo is printed: "Captain 'Gat' Howard with a Gatling Gun, a weapon which he used to good effect when serving with 'A' Battery at Batoche in 1885."

It's worth noting that in 1885 during the North West Campaign, the Gatling Machine Gun was used as an artillery weapon by the Royal Canadian Artillery. Other artillery used by the RCA during the North West Campaign included the 7 pounder RML and 9 pounder RML.



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