

BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News



July 2018

Traveller's Day Parade



On 9 June 2018, the RCA Museum participated in the Traveller's Day Parade. We included seven vehicles and two guns. Thousands of people lined the roads in downtown Brandon and observed our vehicle and gun display. CFB Shilo Base Commander, LCol Dave MacIntyre rode in our Parade Jeep. Our vehicles were driven and co-driven by CFB Shilo military personnel.

Brandon Summer Fair Display



After participating in the parade, we set up a vehicle and gun display at the Brandon Summer Fair. Our main attraction was an open M113 APC. We had our two summer students oversee the M113 for the afternoon. Hundreds of children and adults entered the M113 and sat behind a 50 cal machine gun. The weather was great and our staff enjoyed the event.

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BFC Shilo, C. P. 5000, succursale Main
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Conflict and the Atlatl

Our Manitoba Gallery is slightly different from the rest of the museum. The gallery focuses on the history of conflict over the past 12,000 years in the area, while the rest of the museum focuses on the history of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery and Canadian military history. At the entrance to this gallery our curators have placed a mannequin wearing reproduction First Nations bison skinned clothing, holding a replica atlatl with replica spear. Based on historical data, Manitoba's first inhabitants arrived soon after the last ice age or just over 12,000 years ago. From that timeframe, local inhabitants experienced conflict and used a variety of weapons in warfare. One of the oldest weapons was the atlatl and inhabitants used it with a spear for both hunting and warfare.



Note the picture above.

The atlatl is a vast improvement from the spear. The spear was invented around 500,000 years ago, while the atlatl was thought to originate 17,500 years ago. Adding the atlatl to the spear made the weapon faster, more accurate and deadlier. The atlatl itself was a simple yet ingenious device that was carved out of wood or bone. It had a hook at the rear end, while the front has a handle. Basically, you would grab the handle and then place the spear on top of the atlatl, aim and fire using a sweeping motion at the target. The atlatl provided extra leverage compared to just an arm. This extra leverage increased the weapons overall effectiveness.

Approximately three thousand years ago, Manitoba inhabitants started using the bow and arrow which is an improvement to the atlatl. The atlatl is heavier and harder to use compared to the bow and arrow. Next to this display we have a number of stone spearheads going back nine thousand years, and an arrowhead estimated at almost two thousand years old. Spears used significantly larger stone tips compared to stone arrowheads that are rather small. Note the picture to the right of a stone spearhead estimated at 7,000 to 9,000 years old that was found within 50 km of Shilo. Within the last 400 years, with the arrival of the Europeans, the weapons of conflict changed to firearms. The RCA Museum is filled with weapons of conflict, such as stone spearheads and arrowheads.



Korean Gun Pits

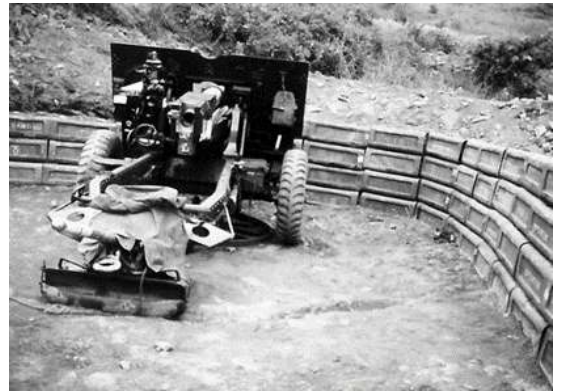


Over the past year, the RCA Museum has received a number of photo collections originally belonging to Canadian gunners that fought in the Korean War (1950-1953). These collections typically include photos of soldiers standing in 25 pounder gun pits. During the war many Canadian gunners in the field spent a significant portion of their time in gun pits such as the one in the photo to the left. One common feature of these photographs is the 25 pounder ammunition boxes built into the walls. These empty cases were typically filled with dirt and then neatly stacked as a practical means of reinforcing the walls.

Our museum archives contains many military training manuals from Confederation to present, but we possess very little on the building of gun pits. Nevertheless, I was able to locate one manual dated from 1948

which detailed the construction of gun pits and command posts. As stated in the manual: "A gun pit is required to protect the gun, a proportion of its ammunition and its detachment when they are manning the gun. The smaller the pit the better will be the protection afforded, but the pit must be big enough to allow the zone of fire to be covered and the detachment to man the gun effectively." Certainly, building a first-rate gun pit is a specialized task which is evident from the photos.

The photos we have on file certainly show soldiers manning the gun pits and relaxing near stand easy locations. A stand easy is also a topic that is rarely if ever mentioned in military documents. A stand easy is a rest area for gunners a short distance away from the gun. A photo of a stand easy is shown to the right. The stand easy locations were commonly built with ammunition boxes stacked to form a wall with a tarp hung on top as a makeshift roof.



During the spring of 2018, a Korean War vet came to our museum for a guided tour. During the tour, I asked him about the photos of gun pits that we have been receiving. He mentioned that alternative and forward guns tended not to use 25 pounder ammunition boxes in the walls of the gun pits. He confirmed that in permanent

locations, gun pits had ammunition boxes built into the walls and that the boxes were full of dirt. Stand easy locations usually were made, in part, out of 25 pounder ammunition boxes. He noted that when he arrived in Korea, the permanent gun pits had already been built using 25 pounder ammunition boxes in the walls. The Korean War vet said he spent a lot of time in the gun pits and Canadian gunners commonly took photographs of their daily routine. Today, we can certainly acknowledge and appreciate these Korean War photographs.



Korean War Anniversary

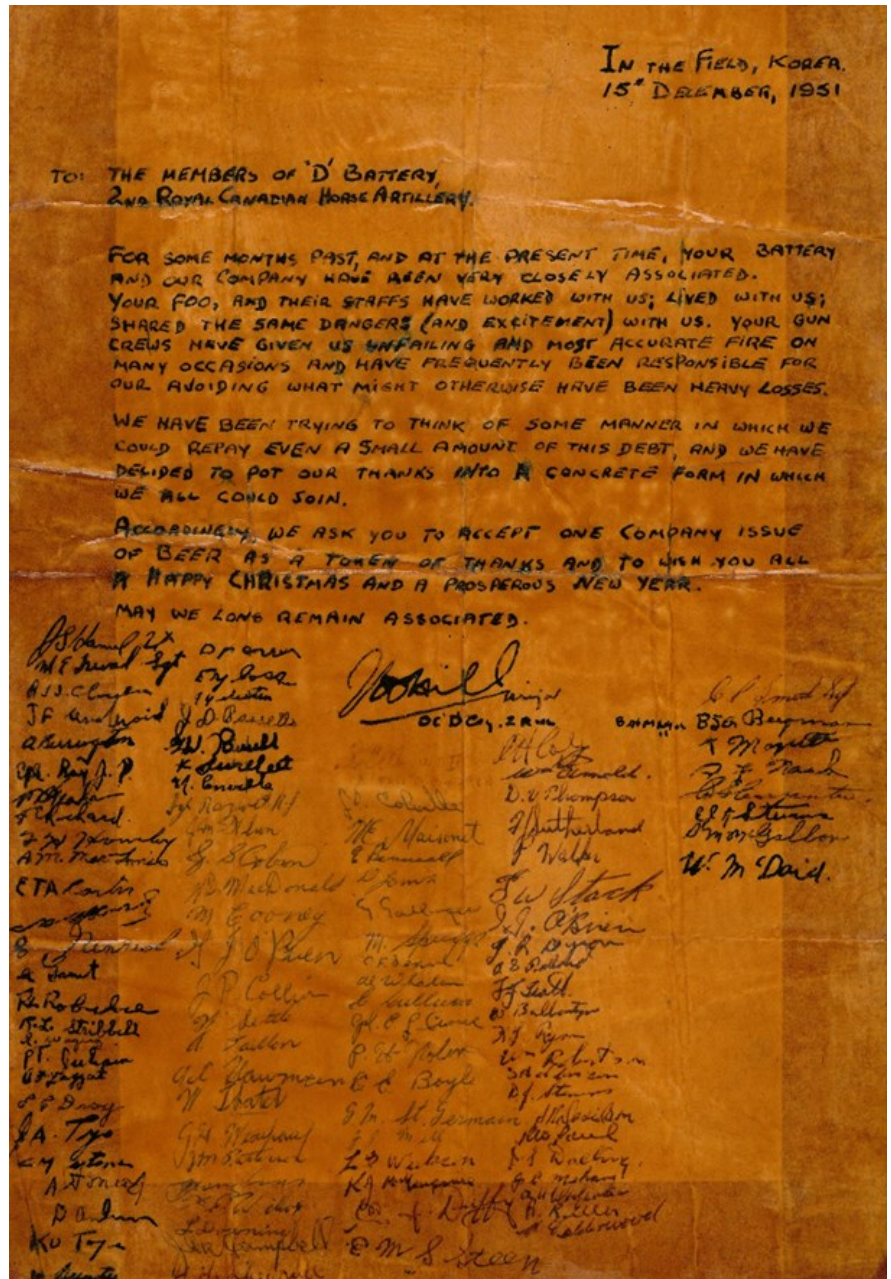
The 65th Anniversary of the Korean War Cease-Fire will occur this summer on July 27th. In conjunction with Veterans Affairs Canada, the RCA Museum will offer free admission to all visitors. Our Korean War display at the RCA Museum is limited and we plan on updating it in the near future. We have a number of artillery pieces that were used during the Korean War and text panels with photos, but not much else. Conversely, in our archives we have Korean War artifacts, which includes paper documents.

I found an unusual letter in our collection. It is handwritten on orange cardboard. At one time, the edges were probably taped and about one inch of overlapping residue remains. Also, the cardboard was treated with a light coat of lacquer, probably to protect and preserve it. Likely this letter was prominently displayed in a mess or headquarters at 2 RCHA.

The letter is dated 15 December 1951 from the field, during the Korean War by D Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, to Members of D Battery, 2nd Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, who were also in Korea as part of the UN contingent of soldiers.

The artifact is an in the field Christmas Card thanking D Battery for providing effective artillery fire which helped save and protect fellow soldiers. In the letter, RCR soldiers' state: "Your foo, and their staffs have worked with us; lived with us; shared the same dangers (and excitement) with us." In the message, D Company remarks they are providing D Battery with "one company issue of beer as a token of thanks..." which was probably very much appreciated.

This document shows the esprit de corps seen between the ranks and regiments during warfare which is certainly part of our Canadian heritage. While we don't have any empty beer cans or bottles in our archives to commemorate this fine gesture, we do have this remarkable letter signed by soldiers of D Company, 2nd Battalion, of the Royal Canadian Regiment.



Canadian Military Pattern Vehicles



At the RCA Museum, we display a WW2 Field Artillery Tractor (FAT), pictured above. Its role was to tow the 25 pounder field gun or the 17 pounder anti-tank gun. Later in the war, in some cases, they were replaced by track based towing vehicles. We are very fortunate at the RCA Museum to have a sizable collection of WW2 vehicles. Most of these are located in our M101 storage facility. Due to space restraints we can only show a few of these WW2 vehicles in our museum.

The Canadian army underwent a period of extensive mechanization during WW2. During the war, 137 types of Canadian designed vehicles entered service as well as an additional 22 types from the United States. Canadian manufacturers produced more than 850,000 vehicles for the Allied forces. Over 168,000 vehicles went into service with the Canadian Armed Forces during WW2 with a ratio of one vehicle for every three soldiers.

The FAT was a Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) truck. CMP's were a versatile, mass produced vehicle used around the world by British Commonwealth armies during WW2. They included at least 90 variants on 12 different chassis with interchangeable components. These trucks were produced by Chevrolet, a division of General Motors, and by the Ford Motor Company of Canada. Just under four hundred thousand CMP trucks were built in Canada with the most common being a 4x4, 3 ton truck.

CMP trucks followed the British convention and incorporated a right-hand drive. The Ford Motor Company included a 95 horsepower V8 flathead engine, while most Chevrolet used an 85 horsepower straight-6 overhead-valve engine. Both manufacturers followed a prescribed standard cab design that changed during the course of the war. There were three main generations of cabs: No. 11, 12 and 13. Our CMP FAT on display is a cab 12 which is noticeable by the two-part radiator grill. Body types also changed, in our case, we have a No. 7A2 which is proudly on display in our National Artillery Gallery.

Museum Summer Students



This year the RCA Museum has two very helpful summer students.

Student Biographies:

Hallie Dyck – I was born in Brandon, MB and raised on a grain farm south of Killarney with my parents and younger brother. Growing up and attending the same K-12 school, I developed a strong sense of community, particularly with those in my grade, but also with the staff and other students. In high school, I was an active member of our student government and participated in several provincial and national student leadership conferences. In Grade 12 I was chosen to be Senior High Student Government Prime Minister. Besides my academics, I enjoyed participation in softball, curling, choir, drama, band, and Youth in Philanthropy as a branch of the Killarney Foundation. I graduated *magna cum laude* and with distinction in June 2017, and currently attend Brandon University to obtain my Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education degrees. I am pursuing a biology major and history minor; however, I also enjoy my chemistry and psychology courses. In my spare time, I enjoy travelling with my family, spending time with friends, and watching classic movies. I am very excited to have the opportunity to work at the RCA Museum this summer.

Michael Brooks – My name is Michael John Brooks. I was born in 1996. Besides two years in Shilo when I was very young I have lived in Brandon all my life. My father is a Warrant Officer in the Canadian Forces and my mother is an electrical engineering technologist in the private sector. For five years I was a member of 2520 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corp, aging out as its RSM in 2015. I attended Ecole Secondaire Neelin High School before starting my undergraduate degree at Brandon University. As of writing this I plan on one more year of courses before I graduate with a major in history and a minor in drama. After graduation I plan to investigate careers in the military, politics, and the theatre. My hobbies include performing in community theatre and table-top board games. I am excited and honored to spend my summer as an intern at the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum.

Afghanistan Memorial Dedication Ceremony



3rd Canadian Division Support Group Commander, Colonel Scott McKenzie and other dignitaries were on hand for the Afghanistan Memorial Dedication Ceremony at Canoe River Memorial Park in Shilo on 26 June 2018. The event was well attended by military personnel, local dignitaries and civilians. The weather was excellent and the event was well received.

During operations in Afghanistan, Canadian soldiers relied on the LAV III, a light armoured vehicle, for sanctuary and safety. For many the LAV III symbolizes Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. From 2001 to 2014, over 40,000 Canadian soldiers were deployed to Afghanistan. During the operations in Afghanistan thousands of Canadian soldiers were wounded and 158 died, including 20 soldiers based out of CFB Shilo.

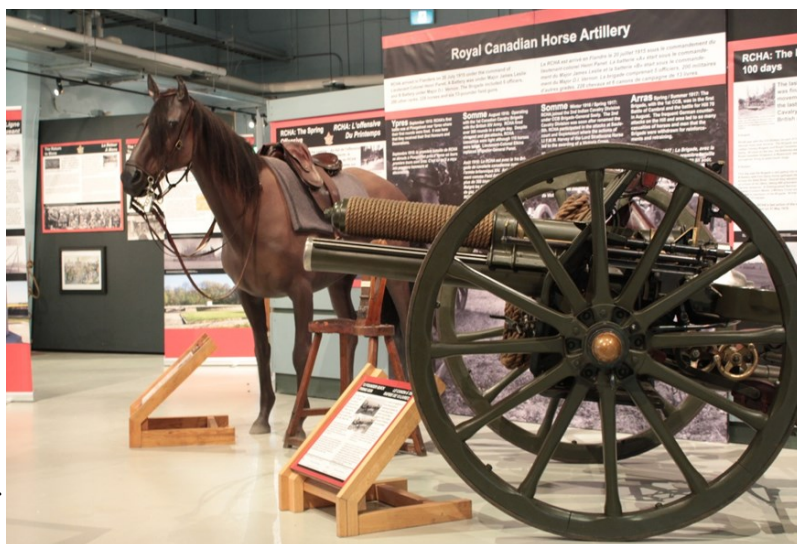
The memorial project took six months to complete and many groups deserve thanks. The vision and direction behind the project came from CFB Shilo Base Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Dave MacIntyre. The LAV III Monument Program by Canada Company provided the monument and the main plaque. The Shilo Service Club provided the stone cairn in front of the monument, and Real Property Operations constructed the cement pad that supports the LAV III. The RCA Museum assisted with the acquisition and transportation of the LAV III from London, Ontario to Shilo, Manitoba.

When the LAV III arrived in March 2018, it had no external bracketry or kit. It was plain on the outside and did not look like a LAV III used in Afghanistan. It fell on our museum mechanic, Rob Love, to kit out the LAV III. He spent two months working on this project. Note the picture above. Please come and see for yourself. It's sure to keep people talking. The LAV III monument is a fitting tribute to Canadian soldiers who served in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.

1918: The Last 100 Days

The RCA Museum is proud to present this temporary exhibit entitled “1918: The Last 100 Days”. Ypres, Somme, Vimy and Passchendaele are battles that many Canadians are familiar with after the Centennial commemorations on the First World War. However, it was in the last 100 days of the war that the Allied Powers came to rely on the strong and experienced Canadian Corps for victory in battle.

The Canadian Corps advanced and took ground as the Germans retreated in a series of battles that began with the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918. Some of the highest casualty rates and bloodiest battles came at the end of the war. The scope of the fighting and the success of all the Allies against a determined but weakened German Army led to this final chapter called the Last 100 Days. Our exhibit will run until 14 December 2018.



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