

BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News

THE RCA MUSEUM
CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM



July 2022

Cultural Property Certification for the Lt-Gen Sir Henry Burstall Decorations

The Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board recently certified the Lt-Gen Sir Henry Burstall decorations as of "outstanding significance" to the history and heritage of Canada. Category A cultural institutions, including the RCA Museum, can apply through the Cultural Property Review Board to certify objects of national significance and provide the donor with an enhanced tax benefit. Our museum has three collections certified through the Cultural Properties programs, including the Gregg Collection of WW2 vehicles, the Brigadier Harold Griffin medals, and now the Lt-Gen Sir Henry Burstall medals.



Above left is a photo of Lt-Gen Sir Henry E. Burstall, and above right are the decorations belonging to him.

Lt-Gen Sir Henry Edward Burstall, KCB, KCMG, ADC (1870-1945) was an outstanding military leader with a commanding personality. He masterfully commanded the RCHA before the First World War, the Artillery of the CEF after the outbreak of war, then commanded the entire 2nd Canadian Division during the war. These outstanding contributions, along with his extensive military resume, had a significant impact on the military history of Canada. We display Lt-Gen Burstall's decorations in our museum thanks to Dale Murray, who generously donated them.

Donations such as these, with a direct connection to Canadian history, elevate the Canadian Forces' achievements. We are purchasing two new pedestal cases to display the Lt-Gen Sir Henry Burstall decorations and the Father of the Canadian Artillery, Maj-Gen TB Strange decorations. We expect the latest cases to arrive in the fall of 2022 and hope these updates will help tell the story of the Canadian Gunner.

Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid or Operation Jubilee

2022 marks the 80th anniversary of Canada's most deadly day during the Second World War - the Dieppe Raid.



At the RCA Museum, we don't have many Dieppe Raid-related artifacts. We have a certificate to Albert Nicholls, which states he "took part in the Raid on Dieppe the 19th day of August 1942, as a member of the Second Canadian Division," produced by the Dieppe Veterans and Prisoner of war association. A photo of Albert Nicholls in uniform, a WW2 map of France, and a Dieppe uniform pin, are shown above.

In the spring of 1942, the Allies were not strong enough to mount a full-scale invasion of continental Europe. Instead, the Allies planned for a limited amphibious raid on the Port of Dieppe, France. The attack occurred when the majority of continental Europe was under German occupation and when the Allies did not have a foothold in Europe. RCA Great Gunner, Major-General J.H. Roberts, Commander of the 2nd Canadian Division, led the Dieppe Raid or Operations Jubilee. The decision to conduct the raid was primarily political, and the Port of Dieppe was of little strategic importance to the Allies.

On 19 August 1942, 4,963 Canadian soldiers, out of the total Allied operations force of at least 6,050, stormed the beaches of the port town of Dieppe, France, and paid a terrible sacrifice. By day's end, the Allies withdrew their force, failed to achieve their primary objective of occupying the town of Dieppe and suffered heavy casualties. Canada had 3,367 casualties that day, including 907 deaths and 1,946 soldiers taken prisoner-of-war. Only 2,210 Canadians returned to England, with approximately half wounded. The raid failed for many reasons, including but not limited to a lack of complete air superiority, overpowering firepower, and massive artillery support.

The Dieppe Raid represented one of the most demanding and deadliest learning experiences during the Second World War. The loss of life and failure to take Dieppe were not entirely in vain. In war, there will always be challenges that test one's mettle, and sometimes objectives are not achieved, which happened in this case. It was a failure that no one intended; however, Canada and the Allies learned from this experience and corrected their errors, becoming a more effective fighting force. Inadvertently, the lessons learnt from Dieppe would help Canada and the Allies be successful during the large-scale D-Day Landing, liberating Northwest Europe, advancing into Germany, and ultimately winning the war in Europe.

In 2022, pause and reflect upon Canada's most deadly day during WW2.

By Andrew Oakden

The Riel and Drury 1885 Notes

The RCA Museum has two handwritten notes from the North-West Rebellion or North-West Resistance. Louis Riel purportedly wrote the first note found after the Battle of Batoche, dated 12 May 1885. Captain Charles W. Drury wrote the second note on birch bark after the Battle of Fish Creek, dated 29 April 1885. Both are exceptional discoveries that help explain a controversial moment in Canadian military history.

In March 1885, a group of Métis led by Louis Riel started an uprising against the Canadian government in the Districts of Saskatchewan and Alberta called the North-West Rebellion or North-West Resistance. Some North-West Métis thought the federal government was not protecting their rights, land, and economic prosperity. They lost revenue from the waning fur trade and the loss of the seasonal bison hunts. The 1885 uprising also included an associated revolt by First Nations, who faced starvation due to the disappearance of bison herds and the loss of land from treaty agreements.

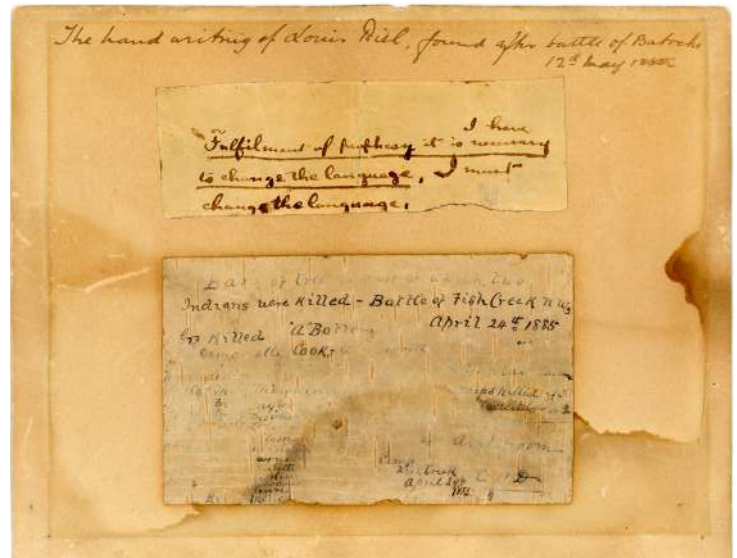
In 1884, Louis Riel returned from exile in the United States to lead the Métis resistance. Most of the Métis and First Nations in the North-West stayed out of the fighting. On 26 March 1885, a group of Métis under Gabriel Dumont clashed with the North-West Mounted Police at Duck Lake in the District of Saskatchewan. On 2 April 1885, at Frog Lake, a party of Cree killed nine settlers. In response, General Middleton gathered his forces at Fort Qu'Appelle in March/April 1885, including A and B Batteries and militia Gunners serving as infantry. The Winnipeg Field Battery activated for service (now 13th Field Battery in Portage la Prairie). During the hostilities, the Métis had notable early victories at Duck Lake, Fish Creek, and Cut Knife.

The handwritten notes from the 1885 uprising are in relatively good condition considering someone glued them to cardboard at least fifty years ago. Today, we would never glue artifacts directly to a display mount because doing so would likely damage them over time. The fountain pen ink has faded in parts, probably due to prolonged exposure to light and water damage, and it may not be easy to display these artifacts in the future due to conservation concerns.

On the back of the cardboard, it says: "Presented to the RCA Museum by 1 RCHA." We have no presentation date, but it likely occurred in the 1960s. We have an article from *Reader's Digest, Explore Canada 1974 Edition* citing the two 1885 notes on display at the RCA Museum. Clive Prothro-Brooks, the museum's long-term collection manager, confirmed they were on display until 2002.

The Drury note reads in part: "Bark of the tree at foot of which two Indians were killed - Battle of Fish Creek. N.W. - April 24, 1885." The words used to reference First Nations have changed during Canadian history. In this case, the message contains a now derogatory term; however, one hundred years ago, this was not considered as such. The author was Captain Charles W. Drury, the acting commander of A Battery, who later became a Major-General and RCA Great Gunner known as "the Father of Modern Artillery in Canada."

General Middleton split his force in two before engaging the Métis and First Nations at Fish Creek in the District of Saskatchewan on 24 April 1885. Each force advanced down either side of the South Saskatchewan River.



The Riel and Drury Notes from 1885 at the RCA Museum.



MGen Charles W. Drury

The battle started with 150 Métis and First Nations ambushing the scouting party of federal troops at Fish Creek, which was 20 kilometres south of Batoche. The Métis and First Nations then retreated to ravine dugouts along the river. Once attacked, General Middleton ordered shelling of the ravine dugouts, which failed to dislodge the Métis and First Nations.

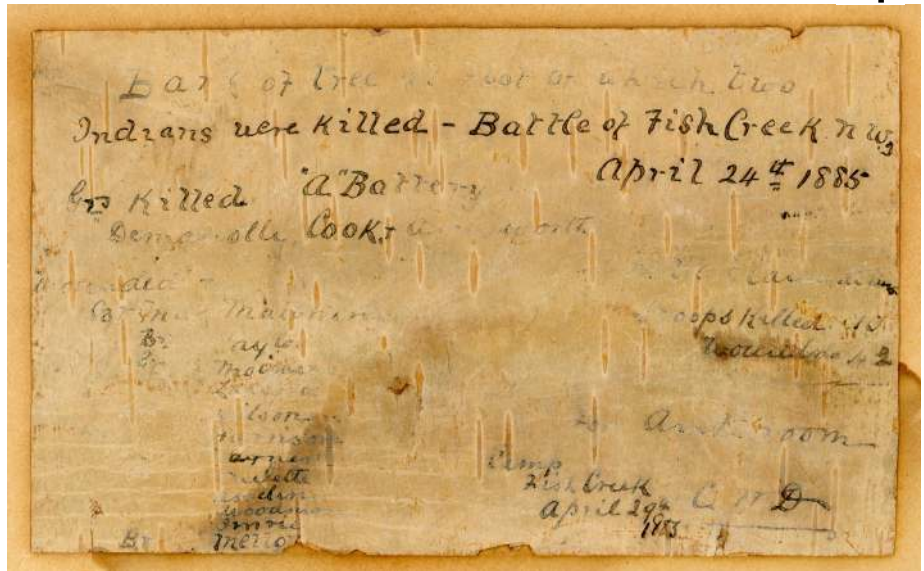
The Métis and First Nations held their ground, and the soldiers pulled back after heavy fighting, halting Middleton's advance. The old-style lead bullets from the rifles caused terrible injuries to the combatants on both sides. After the battle, dead horses also littered the battlefield. Ten soldiers died at Fish Creek, and an equal or larger number of Métis and First Nations died during the battle. The Drury note represents an eyewitness statement of the military casualties during the Battle of Fish Creek. The reported dead included three from A Battery: Gunner Ainsworth, Gunner Cook, and Gunner Demanoilly - these were the first Permanent Force casualties in Canadian military history. Drury then lists the names of wounded gunners and the number of overall troop losses and signs it: Camp Fish Creek - April 29, 1885, CWD.

On the Riel note, the script says, "I have fulfilment of prophecy - it is necessary to change the language. I must change the language." Above this text, museum staff confirmed that Louis Riel wrote the note found after the Battle of Batoche on 12 May 1885. Riel added a religious element to the uprising, which is evident in the note's subject matter.

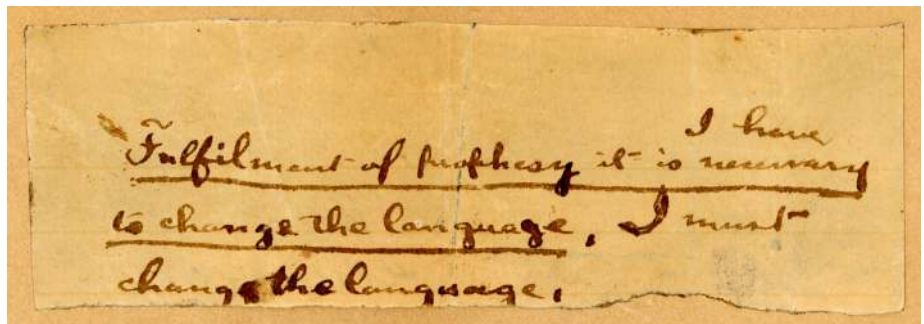
During the Battle of Batoche, federal forces with the guns of A Battery and the Winnipeg Field Battery militarily defeated the Métis on 12 May 1885. Each morning, from 9 to 12 May, troops advanced on Métis lines, then retreated at night. On 12 May, on the fourth day of advances, Middleton's forces overran Riel's forces. The Battle of Batoche ended the Métis insurgency and led to Riel's arrest for treason. The Alberta Field Force under General Strange, with the Steele Scouts, continued the fight at Frog Lake and then Frenchman's Butte with First Nations warriors. The last shots of the rebellion came on 3 June, at Loon Lake, Alberta.

As museum director, I can attest that our collection has no other artifacts like these. However, the aftermath of the uprising, including the execution of Louis Riel and the marginalization of Métis and First Nations, remains a polarizing and controversial moment in Canadian history. The rebellion left dozens of Métis fighters and First Nations warriors dead, and federal forces lost 38 soldiers with 141 wounded and 11 civilians perished.

From the perspective of a military museum, we want visitors to remember and re-evaluate the 1885 uprising. Building a nation relies on individuals or history-making agents. These historical figures, such as Louis Riel and Captain Drury, have important stories to tell with far-reaching historical consequences. Back in 1885, two men on opposing sides wrote these notes, which provided eyewitness perspectives to the story of the uprising. While we may question the lasting importance or legacy of the 1885 uprising on Canadian soil, we cannot forget that these events happened.



Handwritten note on birth bark by MGen Drury from Battle of Fish Creek. The Drury note represents an eyewitness statement of the military casualties during the Battle of Fish Creek. The reported dead included three from A Battery: Gunner Ainsworth, Gunner Cook, and Gunner Demanoilly - these were the first Permanent Force casualties in Canadian military history. Drury then lists the names of wounded gunners and the number of overall troop losses and signs it: Camp Fish Creek - April 29, 1885, CWD.



Handwritten note by Louis Riel found after the Battle of Batoche.



Louis Riel

The May Atkinson Machine Gun Donation

On behalf of the RCA Museum, I would like to thank May Atkinson for her generous donation of two First World War machine guns. The two machine guns include a Vickers 303 Caliber Machine Gun with MK5 tripod and military chest and a Lewis Model 1914 Machine Gun with an original tripod, magazine and chest. The machine guns were part of the Wulostock Museum in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

The donation process started back in December 2020. The pandemic caused several logistical and timing delays, and we are very excited to report the finalization of the donation. May Atkinson asked to donate the guns to a military museum that would appreciate and display them to the general public. At our museum, we will make that happen.

We will use these artifacts to explain the role of machine guns in modern warfare, particularly during trench warfare. The First World War was a defensive war with trench systems stopping advances and machine guns playing a vital role in this deadly strategy. The machine gun, along with other essential weapon systems, such as artillery, rifles, and tanks, caused many casualties on both sides. Vickers and Lewis were two of the most iconic machine guns during the First World War. The donation strengthens our machine gun collection and relates directly to our mandate to tell the story of the Canadian Gunner and the Canadian Military.



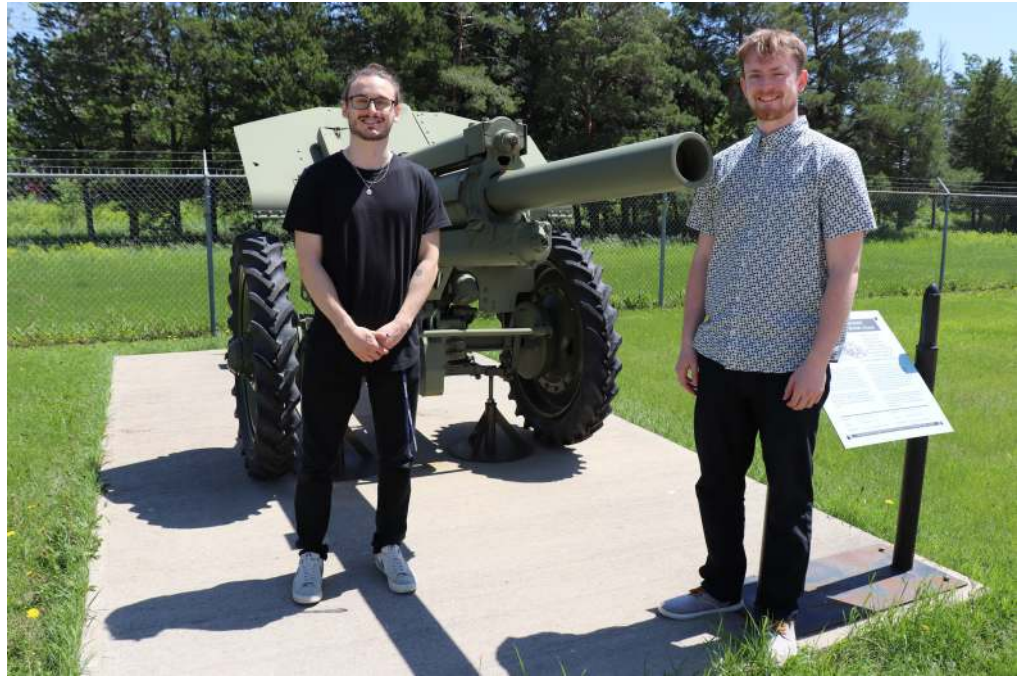
May Atkinson's machine gun donation will impact thousands of visitors to the RCA Museum. It is a significant donation of two rare WW1 machine guns that advances the history and heritage of the RCA. The gift will make a considerable difference, and we appreciate it. We thank May Atkinson for this generous and meaningful donation.

By Andrew Oakden

Summer Students at the RCA Museum

Paul Refvik

My name is Paul Refvik, and I am from Dauphin, MB. I am twenty-seven years old, and in February 2022, I graduated from Brandon University with a 4-Year Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in History with a minor in English. In the fall, I am entering the Faculty of Education After-Degree program at Brandon University, intending to teach high school History. During my studies, I unexpectedly became enthralled with the subject of History and was ecstatic to be hired at the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum this summer.



In the photo, Paul Refvik stands to the left and Graeme Chapman to the right.

I started working at the RCA Museum at the beginning of June and have learned a great deal about museum work and responsibilities. Thus far, I have gained experience accessioning artifacts, working the front desk, and learning to give tours. It has been fascinating to study the process of acquiring artifacts through donations, the organization of information, and item-preservation techniques.

Moreover, I have been expanding my knowledge of Canadian military history and the context surrounding the sacrifices of those who preserve the freedoms of liberal democracy in Canada. I am motivated to continue to learn about museum work and Canadian military history this summer to develop my skills as a historian.

Graeme Chapman

My name is Graeme Chapman, and I am one of the summer interns at the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum this season. As a recent Brandon University graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in History, I believe working at the RCA Museum is an excellent opportunity for me. During the coming school year, I will be returning to Brandon University to take courses in French and Latin. I also believe this job will improve my chances of being accepted into a Master's program.

It was not until my studies at University that I became interested in modern military history. I always thought memorizing the names of different guns or tanks was uninteresting, but my professors showed me that there is much more to military history. I became fascinated with the incredible amount of resources on different aspects of war in the 20th century. There are countless stories from all sorts of people involved in wars that we can access from the leaders of nations or the soldiers who fought and died in them. I discovered vast subject areas, ranging from foreign policy to civilians' lives during the war. These discoveries, brought on by the helpful faculty of history at Brandon University, pushed me in the direction of the internship at the RCA Museum.

I will repeat: this is the perfect summer job for me. I have spent most of my time here studying the peacekeeping missions that the CAF has been a part of, and I have been able to research the conflicts in Cyprus, Egypt, the Balkans, and more. My favourite part of my history degree was doing research, and now research is part of my job! I have also been compiling my research to prepare for the upcoming peacekeeping exhibit at the Museum. Between learning about Canada's military and peacekeeping history and how a museum works, it has been a joy working at the RCA Museum.

A Rusty Shrapnel Round

In 2017, as museum staff prepared for the Austin Thresherman's Reunion outreach event by collecting artifacts for display, I noticed a very rusty half-casing on the shelf at our secondary archival facility. When I leaned in to examine the shell, I saw dozens of musket ball-sized lead bullets caked in tar, shown below. I remember wondering what round used such an unusual and complicated payload. Fast forward to 2022, I can identify the round as an 18 Pounder WW1 shrapnel shell - a long-range anti-personnel munition with a long and distinguished history.

In the early 19th century, the British Artillery deployed smoothbore cannons, such as the 9 Pounder SB, which fired solid shots, shells (a hollow cast-iron round with gunpowder in the centre), or a canister round - a short-range anti-personnel munition. As the distances between the Artillery and the opposing forces increased, Gunners needed new and more technologically advanced munitions that spread destruction at ever-increasing distances. The British lacked an effective anti-personnel shell for longer ranges - the shrapnel round or spherical case shot solved this problem. The shrapnel shell combined the lethal canister round effect with a long-range fuzed projectile.

Major-General Henry Shrapnel (1761–1842) from the Royal Artillery in Britain started developing shrapnel ammunition in 1784, and the British adopted the shell in 1803. Lieutenant Shrapnel served in Newfoundland early in his career, which gave him a Canadian connection. When fired, the munition flew towards the target, with a time fuze igniting a propellant charge, blowing off the top of the shell casing and ejecting the lead bullets towards the target. The metal casing was not lethal; its function was to transport the lead bullets.

The British used shrapnel ammunition extensively during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) and Crimean War (1853–1856). The munition underwent many changes and improvements over the nineteenth century. However, the shrapnel round always used lead balls or shots that relied on the shell's velocity for lethality.

During the First World War, all sides used shrapnel rounds for long-range anti-personnel ammunition. Gunners fired tens of millions of shrapnel rounds, resulting in high casualty rates during the war. It was highly effective against troops in open formation but less effective in trench warfare - the ammunition did not penetrate the earth or trenches. Canadian manufacturers produced about one-third of the shrapnel rounds for the war effort from 1914 to 1918.

In the latter stages of the First World War, the shrapnel ammunition was phased out and made obsolete. The shrapnel round was expensive to make and not as effective as the modern High Explosive (HE) round. The HE shell had similar but more effective anti-personnel attributes. HE rounds used high explosives to explode the metal casing into thousands of tiny shards of shrapnel - it was a different means to use shrapnel, but certainly part of the evolution of long-distance anti-personnel ammunition.

The shrapnel munition was an effective anti-personnel shell for longer ranges, notably from 1803 to the end of the First World War. Canada still had rounds for some howitzers into the 1930s, but HE rounds were more effective by this period. The shrapnel munition is still used by some armies around the world today. This round will be displayed to help explain the history of ammunition and the Canadian Artillery in the First World War.



By Andrew Oakden

DONATE

Thank you for your support! Donations help us to fund curatorial projects and pay the salaries of summer students. In 2023, we currently do not have funding for summer students.

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

\$50 \$100 \$500 Fund a student 10k Other: _____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/Province: _____

All donations are promptly processed and a tax receipt provided.

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Payment Method:

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

All monetary donations are appreciated and will be recognized in The RCA Annual budget.

Please check the following that apply:

1. I consent to my name being published on the RCA website.

Yes No, I wish to remain anonymous.

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

Yes No, I do not consent.

Contact Us

Pour nous joindre

Telephone : (204) 765-3000 Ext. 3570
 Fax: (204) 765-5289
 Email: rcamuseum@forces.gc.ca
 Website: rcamuseum.com
 Facebook: RCA Museum

**The Royal Canadian Artillery
 Museum (The RCA Museum)**
 Building N-118
 CFB Shilo
 P.O. 5000, Station Main
 Shilo, Manitoba R0K 2A0

**Musée de l'Artillerie royale
 canadienne**
 (Musée de l' ARC)
 Bâtiment N-118
 BFC Shilo
 C.P. 5000, succursale Main
 Shilo (Manitoba) R0K 2A0

Telephone : (204) 765-3000 poste 3570
 Facsimile : (204) 765-5289
 Courriel : rcamuseum@forces.gc.ca
 Site Web : rcamuseum.com
 Facebook: RCA Museum

Director/Directeur
 Senior Curator
 Assistant Curator/Conservatrice adjointe
 Collections Manager/Gestionnaire des collections
 Front Desk/Reception

Andrew Oakden
 Jonathan Ferguson
 Dayna Barscello
 Clive Prothero-Brooks
 Anita Michelsen

Ext/poste 3763
 Ext/poste 3531
 Ext/poste 3577
 Ext/poste 3076
 Ext/poste 3570