

BARRAGE

The RCA Museum News

THE RCA MUSEUM
CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM



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Research and Remembrance: A Korean War Study Tour

In April 2026, I travelled to South Korea on behalf of the RCA Museum. In preparation for the opening of the museum's Korean War exhibit this August, CFB Shilo approved career development travel for me to conduct research at historic sites, attend commemorative ceremonies, and compare exhibit design approaches in Korean museums.

My first excursion outside Seoul took me to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which separates North and South Korea. Imjingak Peace Park on the Imjin River features numerous monuments and displays, including a steam locomotive destroyed by aerial strafing during the conflict. Inside the Civilian Control Zone (CCZ), where authorities strictly control access and movement, the Third Infiltration Tunnel evokes the subterranean warfare of the First World War. A shaft cut through bedrock descends to where South Korean sappers intercepted a North Korean tunnel in 1978. The tunnel passes under the DMZ but is blocked just short of the border. At Dora Observatory, I viewed North Korean soldiers looking back from an observation post on their side. Photography is prohibited at both these locations in the CCZ. At Gamaksan, concrete pill-boxes mark where the British Gloucestershire Regiment resisted the Chinese Spring Offensive in April 1951, while 2 PPCLI held firm at nearby Kapyong.

In Seoul, I visited the War Memorial of Korea, the country's national military museum. Its expansive outdoor display includes aircraft (including a B-52 bomber!), helicopters, towed and self-propelled artillery, armoured personnel carriers, tanks, and even a 33-metre patrol boat.



Senior Curator Jonathan Ferguson on the summit of Hill 677, Gapyeong, looking north in his RCA Museum shirt.

Inside, the exhibits span thousands of years, but most galleries focus on the Korean War and the modern Republic of Korea Armed Forces. Canada features prominently in the gallery dedicated to United Nations contributions to the Korean War, where exhibits include uniforms, accoutrements, and personal equipment used by Canadian soldiers.

The highlight of my visit was the commemoration of the Battle of Kapyong on 24 April. With permission to wear my uniform as an Army Reservist, I rendezvoused early that morning with a contingent of 55 members of 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry conducting exercises with the South Korean Army to mark the battle's 75th anniversary. We first attended a ceremony at the Commonwealth memorial in downtown Gapyeong, alongside British, Australian, and New Zealand troops. The delegations included the commanders of all four nations' armies. A second ceremony followed at the nearby Canadian memorial, where participants presented scholarships to schoolchildren.

After the ceremony, I joined members of 2 PPCLI in climbing Hill 677. The steep, sandy terrain required two hours to reach the summit. Along the route, signposts marked the positions held by 2 PPCLI companies. At D Company's position – the highest and farthest location – we held a private commemoration to honour the valour of those who had fought there 75 years earlier. I was proud to rep-



Beyond this fence at Imjingak lies the CCZ. South Koreans tie ribbons here in remembrance of family members separated by war in North Korea.



The open-air exhibition area at the War Memorial of Korea.



The Canadian display for the Korean War at the War Memorial of Korea.

resent the RCA Museum at this significant moment in their regimental history.

I later travelled to Busan in the far south of the peninsula, where South Korean forces had retreated during the early months of the war. As the wartime capital and principal port of entry, Busan became the site of the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea. Today, 382 Canadians are buried there, including veterans who chose to be laid to rest beside their comrades. At the top of a rise lies the "Symbolic Area," where the flags of the United Nations, Canada, and other allied nations are displayed.

The Canadians buried here are exclusively 2 PPCLI who died in 1951, including those who fell at Kap'young. The remainder of the Canadians are interred in three sections of the cemetery's Main Area.

During my visit, I learned how the cemetery's policies differ significantly from Canadian practices of remembrance. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission encourages visitors to walk among the headstones, read the names, and pay respects to the fallen as individuals. In Busan, however, visitors must remain on designated paths unless visiting the grave of a family member. With some explanation, I was able to locate and visit the graves of the twelve Gunners buried there.



The Canadian Korean War Memorial at Gapyeong.

Beyond these Korean War-related sites, I visited several major cultural institutions, including the National Museum of Korea, Gyeongbokgung Palace and Museum, the Seoul Museum of History, Gyeonghuigung Palace, the Busan Museum, the United Nations Peace Memorial Hall, and Myeongdong Cathedral. These visits provided valuable insight into how South Koreans interpret and present the Korean War, while also offering new perspectives on museum design and public history.

By Jonathan Ferguson



The Symbolic Area at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan.

Leading by Example: The Medal Set of Brigadier F.D. Lace, DSO, OBE

This year, the RCA Museum was honoured to receive the medal set of Brigadier Frank Dwyer Lace, DSO, OBE, through a generous donation from his children, Roger and Cathy Lace. Lace was one of the youngest Canadian general officers of the Second World War; at just 33 he became Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division during the liberation of Northwest Europe and was appointed Acting Brigadier.

Roger and Cathy grew up in a household where the Second World War was rarely discussed. Despite his father's distinguished wartime service, the family focused on the present rather than the past. Roger recalls that his father seldom spoke about the war, except for the occasional humorous anecdote.



Photo from Upper Canada College Alumni page

As an adult, Roger was often asked what it was like to grow up with a general as a father. Many assumed that life in the Lace household must have been highly regimented, but his recollections paint a very different picture. “Dad had a soft touch,” he wrote. “He led by example, and harsh orders and punishments were not part of his lexicon.”

Born on 20 November 1911, Frank Dwyer Lace attended Upper Canada College before entering the Royal Military College of Canada, graduating in 1932. During the Great Depression, he maintained his connection to military service through his involvement with the 7th (Toronto) Regiment, RCA.

During the Second World War, he commanded the 15th Field Regiment and later the 13th Field Regiment, RCA. He also served as General Staff Officer Grade 1 (G.S.O. 1) at First Canadian Army Headquarters, where he played a central role in planning training exercises in England in preparation for the Normandy invasion and the liberation of Northwest Europe under Brigadier Brownfield. By late 1944, he had become Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, coordinating the division’s artillery support during the final campaigns of the war.

As CRA, Lace coordinated Canadian artillery firepower, earning a reputation for precision, responsiveness, and effectiveness throughout the Northwest Europe campaign. Alongside other senior artillery commanders, he planned and directed the fire support that enabled Canadian infantry and armoured units to overcome German defensive positions. He frequently took to the air in his Auster aircraft to better understand the battlefield and observe operations firsthand.



Brig Lace in the field in NW Europe



On the medal set, from the left, are the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and the Order of the British Empire (OBE). The collection also includes the 1939–1945 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, War Medal 1939–1945 with Mention in Dispatches device, Canadian Centennial Medal, and the Efficiency Decoration.

While these medals chronicle Brigadier Lace’s military achievements, they tell only part of his story. The RCA Museum is deeply grateful to Roger and Cathy Lace for their generous donation, which together with accompanying correspondence provides valuable insight into the man behind the decorations and ensures that this important piece of Canadian military history is preserved within the collection. Through his gift, the story of Brigadier F.D. Lace, DSO, OBE and the wartime service of Canada’s Gunners will continue to inform and inspire future generations.

2026 Summer Students Working at the RCA Museum



Robyn Dyck

Hi! My name is Robyn, and I have the pleasure of interning at the RCA Museum this summer. I have just finished my second year at Brandon University where I am pursuing a 4-Year Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in Geography. My love of history began at a very young age, and I have always been fascinated by the ancient civilizations of the Middle East and Mediterranean regions and how those ancient places were transformed into the nation-states of the modern era. Although the story of Canadian Artillery told in the RCA Museum is outside of my usual area of interest, I have been enjoying the change of pace and learning about history a little closer to home. In my spare time, I love to read and spending time outside, especially in my garden. I am looking forward to learning more about the work being done within the RCA Museum and developing my skills and knowledge this summer!

Carson Zavitz

I am excited to be returning to the RCA Museum for my second summer as one of its research interns. I recently graduated from Brandon University with a double major in History and English and this fall I will be continuing my studies in Ontario, where I will be pursuing a master's degree in history at Trent University. During my time at BU, I was primarily interested in nineteenth and twentieth-century world history, particularly issues of imperialism, colonialism, and the relationship between the global north and global south. My proposed master's thesis will be focused on exploring the foreign policy of Argentina's military government of 1976-1983 within the context of the Cold War. I am particularly interested in how the regime's foreign policy was influenced by both its ideological ties to western powers such as the United States, and the pragmatic development initiatives that led it to extend collaboration with Communist-aligned powers such as the Soviet Union.

One of the most exciting aspects of working at the RCA Museum is being able to work with historical artifacts and primary documents; discovering the stories behind them and sharing them with the public. Along with helping donations find a home within the museum and aiding in preparation for the upcoming Korean War exhibit, I also enjoy writing for the museum's newsletter, as it allows me to highlight and contextualize particularly fascinating items within the museum's collection while using the skills in research and writing that I acquired during my degree.

Conservation Update: Rebuilding the Wooden Wheels of the 4.7-Inch Gun

For decades, the QF 4.7-inch gun stood at the museum entrance as a familiar landmark. Its wooden wheels, exposed year-round to Manitoba's freeze-thaw cycles, gradually deteriorated as moisture penetrated joints and the timber lost integrity. By early 2025, cracking, compression, and rot had advanced to the point where the gun could no longer remain safely on display.

Staff reviewed several options. Stabilisation would have slowed the decline but not addressed the structural failure within the wheels. A full reconstruction, carried out using traditional wheelwrighting methods, offered the only long-term solution. It also allowed the museum to retain original iron and bronze components wherever possible, preserving continuity with earlier restoration work.

The wooden wheels were not original to the gun. They had been added during a previous restoration approximately three to four decades ago, when the piece was prepared for outdoor display. While effective at the time, those wheels were never intended to withstand prolonged exposure to harsh prairie conditions.

The museum entrusted the project to wheelwright Brian Reynolds, based near Rapid City. Originally from Wales, he immigrated to Canada in 1993 and has since



built a practice centred on traditional carriage and wagon construction. His workshop focuses on hand-built repair methods and locally sourced timber, and his work includes commissions for both private collections and institutions such as the Canadian War Museum. He also serves as Manitoba Director for the Western Canadian Wheelwrights Association.

Work began in August 2025. The first weeks were spent selecting timber, laying out spokes, and establishing the geometry of the wheel. Progress was steady through the autumn, with assembly of the spokes for one wheel completed by late October. By December, custom jigs had been built to control alignment during construction,

ensuring consistency across both wheels. With these in place, fabrication of the remaining components moved more quickly.

By February 2026, both wheels were assembled. The second required additional restoration work at the hub, where earlier damage and a poorly executed repair had compromised the bronze casting. Reynolds machined the affected area back to clean metal and fitted a new bronze ring, restoring strength while retaining as much original material as practicable.



In March, the steel tyres were heated, expanded, and fitted using traditional shrink-fitting techniques. As the metal cooled, it tightened around the wooden rims, locking the structure into place. By mid-March, the wheels were structurally complete. Final assembly and inspection were carried out shortly after his return from a brief break, bringing the project to completion at the end of the month.

The completed wheels follow a design similar to the originals while correcting the structural weaknesses that had developed over time. Back at the museum, Collection Manager Will Brandon completed the finishing work. He applied multiple coats of golden oak stain followed by satin Varathane, a finish chosen to protect the timber while allowing its grain to remain visible.



For long-term preservation, Reynolds recommends keeping the gun under cover or indoors whenever possible. He also advises rotating the wheels every six months and maintaining slight clearance from the ground. This distributes the load evenly and reduces stress on the timber. Traditional military paint or varnish finishes both work well, depending on the desired look.

The gun, a QF 4.7-inch Mk IV, was developed in Britain by the Elswick Ordnance Company (Armstrong Whitworth) in the late nineteenth century. It served in naval and coastal defence roles across the British Empire and formed part of Canada's coastal defence network from the early 1900s through the First World War. Effective in fixed positions, it proved difficult to manoeuvre in the field.

Today, the gun stands fully assembled once again at the museum entrance. Restored as a complete field carriage-mounted gun, it is far more stable and gives a much clearer sense of its original form.

Photographs document every stage of the work — from shaping spokes and building jigs to hub repairs, tyre fitting, and final assembly. These images preserve not only the technical details but the decision-making behind the restoration.

Conservation rarely returns an artifact to an operational and original state. Instead, it protects surviving material while honestly acknowledging the object's history of use, repair, and change. Here, the rebuilt wheels restore both function and presence, ensuring the gun can remain on public display for years to come.

Thanks to the dedicated work of museum staff and Brian Reynolds, this gun once again stands as a powerful reminder of the engineering skill and industrial craftsmanship that shaped Canadian artillery more than a century ago.

By Andrew Oakden



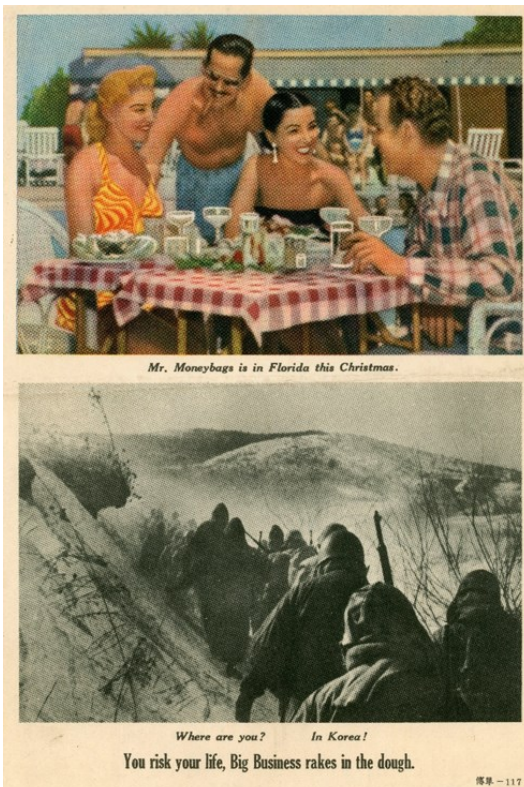
Paper Bullets: Propaganda and the Korean War

Propaganda is one of the most common tools of ideological persuasion used during wartime. Whether employed against a civilian populace or military force, governments employ propaganda to demoralize enemy combatants, promote distrust in opposition leadership, and engender support for the war effort at home. As one of the first major conflicts of the Cold War, the Korean War of 1950-53 functioned as an exhibition of the wider ideological struggle between the Capitalist West and the Communist East, as American and United Nations forces rushed to defend South Korea, while China and the Soviet Union supplied aid to the invading Northern forces. Propaganda was such a ubiquitous part of wartime Korea, that UN forces spent approximately \$1 billion a year on manufacturing and distributing propaganda leaflets.

While propaganda campaigns in other countries relied heavily on radio broadcasting, this method proved impractical in Korea, where only 1 radio set existed for every 100 people. America's propaganda strategy had to be further tailored to the Korean context as nearly one third of soldiers captured from the Korean People's Army (KPA) and the Chinese People's Volunteers Army (CPVA) were found to be illiterate. As a result, leaflets became the favoured method of disseminating propaganda by US forces and in accordance with orders from US Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace, to literally, "bury the enemy in paper," over 2 million leaflets a day were dropped on North Korean and Chinese forces, either from aircraft or fired from modified artillery shells. In the case of the former, a B-29 bomber could drop about 22,000-45,000 leaflets in a single trip, while a 105mm howitzer could deliver about 400 leaflets in an artillery shell barrage. Once dispersed, enemy troops could expect to find the ground scattered with leaflets carrying striking images that could, in theory, be understood at face value.



Figure 1: UN propaganda frequently depicted Communism and the Soviet Union as foreign and subjugating forces.



Propaganda distributed by the UN was intended to either appeal to personal interests and emotions or intimidate the enemy and encourage surrender by emphasizing the superior numbers and firepower of UN forces; efforts codenamed Operations "Home and Mother" and "Skin Saver" respectively. Other leaflets sought to undermine North Korean and Chinese leadership. A common motif was to depict North Korean forces as acting at the behest of Communist China, which was itself a puppet of the Soviet Union. Likewise, Communist propaganda framed the UN as the imperialist force meddling in Korean affairs.

Another method used by UN forces to discredit the North Korean campaign was promoting propaganda that claimed that Kim Il Sung, who was recognized by many North Koreans as a heroic insurgent who resisted Japanese occupation during WWII, was really an imposter who took the name to use for his own purposes. On the North Korean side, leaflets similarly tried to sow discord among the American troops by highlighting examples of White soldiers discriminating against Black or Hispanic ones. Given its interest in keeping the UN out of the Korean conflict, a unique component of KPA propaganda was that much of it promoted peace and carried anti-war messaging.

Figure 2: Appealing to personal and ideological convictions, this leaflet questions the place of UN soldiers in Korea and suggests that it is wealthy war profiteers who stand to benefit from their involvement.

There were several other differences related to the way propaganda was produced and distributed by forces on either side of the conflict. The production of UN leaflets was highly centralized, and contained primarily to the US army's psychological warfare, or "Psyops" division and the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA)'s Bureau of Public Information. Propaganda production was far more diffuse on the North Korean and Chinese side however, being split between army headquarters, culture sections of the army field command, and organizations such as the National Unification & Democracy Front. Moreover, in contrast to the mass distribution of UN leaflets, KPA leaflets were distributed through individual contact on the ground via infantry forces. This more deliberate approach resulted in some CPVA propaganda even taking the form of personalized letters addressed to specific unit formations, rather than the broader approach seen in most wartime propaganda.

Despite differences in production and distribution methods, leaflets produced by both sides often touched on similar thematic content, emphasizing distance from home, distrust of foreign allies, and the fear of death or injury. This final theme proved especially prescient as, within a year of the war's outbreak, more than 2 million soldiers and civilians had been killed or wounded. As a result, both sides sought to capitalize on the soldier's desire for self-preservation and produced "safe conduct passes," which carried instructions outlining how to safely surrender to opposition forces. After the successful landing assault carried out by UN Forces at Incheon, safe conduct passes reading "surrender or die" and bearing the signature of American general Douglas MacArthur were dropped on KPA forces. More than 100 soldiers surrendered, claiming that it was MacArthur's signature that ultimately convinced them. It is estimated that more than 100,000 North Korean and Chinese soldiers surrendered throughout the war.

Not only were North Korean and Chinese soldiers the target of UN leaflets, but they also collaborated in their

production. Captured POWs reviewed the leaflets created by US military personnel and

psychologists and indicated which ones they found most compelling. This review process brought to light several flaws in the way this propaganda was produced. While leaflet illustrations were intended to be easily interpreted, this wasn't always the case. Iconography familiar to Americans often did not translate to Chinese

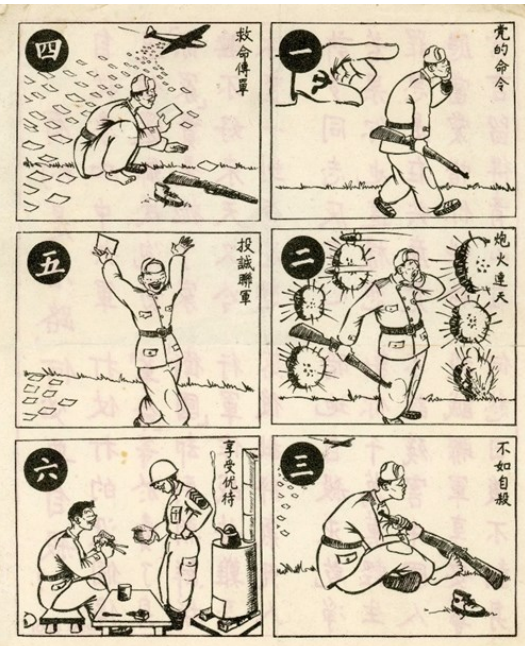


Figure 4: Depicts surrender to UN forces as a lifesaving act that promises good treatment at the hands of captors.

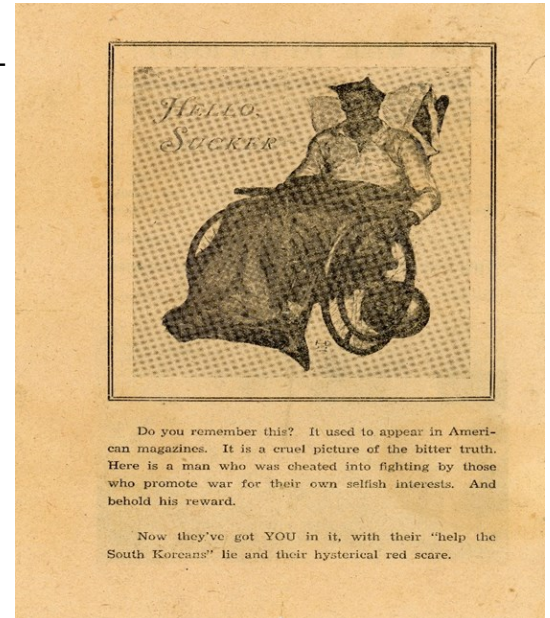


Figure 3: Invokes the danger and potential lifetime consequences of combat that could befall soldiers as a result of the "red scare".

and Korean audiences, while POWs frequently failed to recognize themselves in the illustrations, sometimes mistaking drawings of Chinese soldiers for Americans or South Koreans. On the other extreme, illustrations prepared by Western artists frequently drew heavily from stereotypes and resembled racist caricatures.

Conflict also arose between psychologists and military personnel over the thematic direction of the leaflets. Psychological experts believed that the most effective forms of propaganda were those which emphasized personal interests and emotional appeals, as it was leaflets with these themes that performed best when reviewed with POWs. Military personnel, on the other hand, preferred more ideological messaging that lampooned the Communist opposition, even though most surrendering POWs cared little for ideology.

Propaganda leaflets such as these are valuable historical documents which help bring to life the Korean War, while contextualizing the attitudes and belief systems of those involved in the conflict. The heavy ideological currents that run throughout these leaflets likewise help to place them within the wider history of the Cold War, while reminding us that, in large part, these pieces were just as concerned with satisfying the ideological convictions of their creators, as they were with winning the hearts and minds of their intended audience.

Recent Donation Adds New Artifacts to Afghanistan Collection

[Help preserve Canada's Afghanistan legacy—donate artifacts that tell the story.](#)

In March 2024, former Infantry Non-Commissioned Officer Kevin Foley donated a small collection of artifacts from his service in Afghanistan. Foley, a veteran of more than 20 years in the Canadian Armed Forces, including service with 2 PPCLI, had previously worked with the museum. His donation supports ongoing efforts to preserve material from Canada's Afghanistan mission.

Canada's deployment to Afghanistan ran from 2001 to 2014, evolving from early stabilization work into sustained combat and counterinsurgency operations. By 2006, Canadian forces were operating as part of Task Force Orion in Kandahar Province, with activity centred in places such as Panjwaii and the Arghandab Valley, while also supporting broader coalition operations across southern Afghanistan, including Helmand Province.

Each artifact in the donation carries a direct link to service in Afghanistan. A small jingle truck model, purchased at a bazaar near Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City, reflects the everyday transactions and informal exchanges that continued alongside military operations in theatre.

An AK-47 magazine was found during a post-operation search in the Panjwaii area as part of a mission involving elements of 1 PPCLI. It reflects the brief, fast-moving contacts that could define patrols in the region, often followed by rapid clearance of the area.

A vehicle license plate was recovered following a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device incident near a light armoured vehicle (LAV III) during operations in Kandahar Province. The vehicle's armour contained the blast, but the explosion left behind fragments and debris at the scene.

An Afghanistan flag, taken from an abandoned position during operations in Helmand Province in 2006, completes the group. It speaks to the presence of symbols, structures, and materials left behind as control of areas shifted over time.

Taken together, these objects reflect different layers of deployment life: movement between patrol bases and villages, reconstruction projects unfolding alongside combat operations, and the constant uncertainty that shaped daily routine. Small artifacts like these often preserve details that sit just beneath the surface of broader operational histories.

The museum's Afghanistan collection continues to grow, though material from 2001–2014 remains relatively rare. Each new donation adds depth and texture to the historical record.

We continue to welcome donations from veterans of the Afghanistan mission, including operational gear, equipment, and personal items brought home in service. Each artifact is reviewed for historical value and context before being added to the collection.

