



# Sabretache

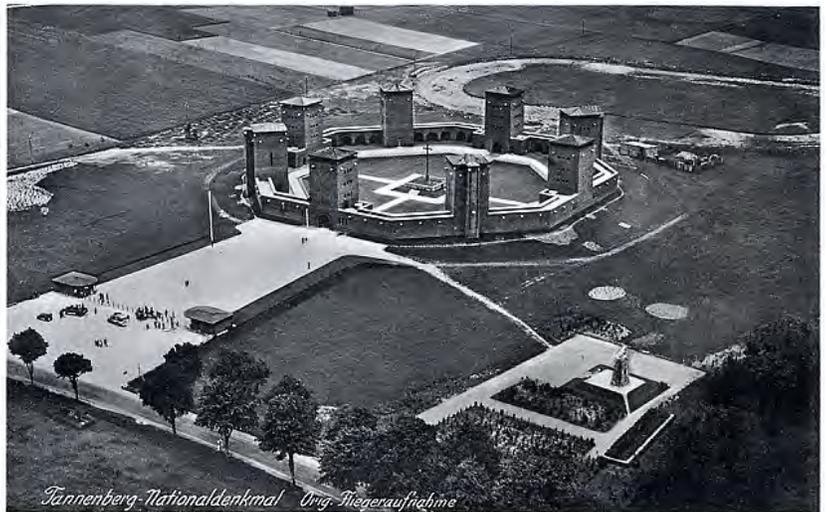
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April 2014

## Tannenberg Memorial : a Monument of German Pride

In the interwar period a monument was erected at Hohenstein then in German East Prussia (now part of Poland) to celebrate the late August 1914 WWI battle in which the German Army surrounded and annihilated the Russian Second Army . In part the battle took place in the vicinity of the village of Tannenberg, the location where some 500 years earlier the combined Polish-Lithuanian forces had dealt a crushing defeat to the Teutonic Knights, a German Military Order. The 1914 victory became known in Germany as the Second Battle of Tannenberg. On this latter occasion the German victory had been total: of the 150,000 strong Russian Second Army 92,000 had been taken prisoner and another 30,000 were killed or wounded.



The concept of erecting a monument to celebrate the 1914 victory was first advanced in 1919 by the Association of the Veterans of East Prussia. Subsequently, a contest was staged for a design of the monument. It resulted in the submission of over 400 projects and was won by the brothers Walter and Johann Kruger, architects from Berlin.

In 1924, on the 10th anniversary of the battle, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, who had commanded the German troops in the battle, took part in the laying of the monument's foundation stone, a ceremony attended by some 60 thousand people, primarily veterans of WWI. The monument was built in the period 1925-27. Hindenburg, who in 1916 became Chief of Staff of the German Army. He became President of Germany after the war and as such he appointed Adolf Hitler to be its Chancellor in 1933.

Standing on a man-made rise in the ground, the monument, a structure of imposing proportions took the shape of a regular octagon 325 feet across. In the middle of each of the eight sides rose a 75 foot-high tower 30 by 30 feet at its base. Linking the individuals towers were 20 foot-high walls, solid on the outside but on the inside forming an arcade facing the monument's central plaza. The overall appearance of the monument was strongly suggestive of a Teutonic

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### CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
April 15th  
2014**

**7:00 pm**

At the  
Petty Officers' Mess  
HCMS Tecumseh



**Sabretache**  
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
is a non-profit registered society  
which fosters the study of the  
military and the police, and the heritage of  
Canada, the British Empire, and the world  
as well as the preservation of military  
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar month  
at:

Petty Officers' Mess  
HMCS Tecumseh  
1820 - 24th Street SW  
Calgary AB T2T 0G6

All are welcome to attend

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## Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday, April 15th, 2014**  
**19:00 (7:00 pm)**

At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.  
Members are reminded that an offering of foodstuffs for the Legion Food Bank is  
considered your unofficial entrance fee to our regular scheduled meetings.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:

- Introduction of guests Minutes of last meeting
- Correspondence Membership report Treasurer's report
- Old business / New business Break
- Show and Tell, Adjourn

The President, David S, would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting  
for an informal time of fellowship.

castle, an indication that the Germans viewed the 1914 victory as in some way a reprisal for the defeat suffered 500 years earlier in an encounter with Slav armies. In the middle of the plaza was located the tomb of 20 unknown German soldier who had died during the 1914 battle. Above the tomb rose a wooden cross 40 feet high sheathed in brass. The unavailing of the monument took place on the 18th of September 1927, Hindenburg's 80th birthday.

The monument acquired new and greater importance after Hitler came to power in Germany. The Nazis made it a symbol of the glory of the German Armed Forces. Already in August 1933 the monument was visited by Hitler as the Chancellor of the German Reich. His visit was the occasion for a great patriotic gathering. The greatest ceremony in the history of the monument was, however, the funeral of Field Marshal Hindenburg. Although this had not been either Hindenburg or the monument's planners intention. Hitler had decided that the monument should become a mausoleum for Hindenburg and his wife,



## Minutes of the last meeting

### CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of Meeting held on February 18th, 2014

Petty Officers Mess: HMCS Tecumseh

**Meeting** called to order at 7:05 PM by President David S.

Total of 18 members attending.

**Newsletter** is discussed, including story behind picture on page 2.

**Minutes.** Usual complaints but moved to accept by Bob M. and Mike C.

**Correspondence.** Letter from Member, **Wyn Van Der Schee**. Wyn says hello to all members and provides donation to society. Many thanks to Wyn as he is missed here.

**Membership report.** Given by Brian H. 44 members down from 48

**Treasurers report.** Given by Brian H. Money collected from memberships, donations. Money spent on various bills. Moves that his report be accepted. Barry E and Mike C. Unanimous consent.

#### Old Business.

Alan. - Reminds all Calgary Regional History Fair.

#### New Business

Kevin. - Collectors Club Show. Weekend after Easter Gun Show at Acadia Rec. Centre. April 26 and 27th. Good high quality stuff to buy.

Alan. MCCofC show in August. Will provide dates next meeting.

:Mike C—Antiques Road Show, Fish Creek Library April 26

Discussion on 22 Medals of Honour handed out by President Obama. WW2, Korea and Vietnam veterans who were by passed over because of their race or religion. Unfortunately only 3 were alive to accept.

#### Show and Tell

Floyd S.- Morse Code message on 1945 Victory Nickel. Ivory Plate Box day planner from Civil War collection.

Barry E.— WW1 knife by Turner and Co. Made in Canada. Badges of lineage of Ordnance Corp. and RCEME Discusses history of unit.

Kevin R.—Collect of vintage military items he has purchased. 1915 Fife, Metal box with Epaulets and uniform of Officer 1880.

WW2 Hospital battledress tunic and coat. WW1 gas mask hood. WW1 Air Corp observer arm board and scroller..

Alan McK.— Museum items Pincher Creek. EBay item alert , Boer War. Storey of wives, relatives medals lost and now found.

Don S. Story on Eagle Farm Air Base in Australia . Talks about Jap planes that were rebuilt and tested. And how they were named by Col. McCoy.

David L.— German WW2 Detonator box with various timers and clocks.

Bob McP.— Books Civil War Chronicles and German Army and Navy.

Mike C. QASA with dated bars. 1 of only 27 . Hangman's medal

James— 1956 Military phone.

Darrel K. Story on badges approved by Queen. Badges that are fake . Repro knives in 1947 pattern. Back pack 1942 version.

Meeting to adjourn. Mike C and seconded by Marjory



To effect the change in purpose, Hitler had the grave of the unknown soldiers removed, and the level of plaza lowered by 8 feet with stone steps surrounding it on all sides. A vaulted burial chamber was built in the crypt of one of the towers. The entrance to the crypt were guarded by two 13 foot statues of soldier on guard. Special brass sarcophagi were placed in the burial chamber. Behind the sarcophagi stood two crosses joined at the arms. Inscribed on them were two of the Field Marshal's favourite sayings: "Love is eternal" and "Be faithful till death." On the wall hung a black Prussian eagle. In the tower above the crypt, another chamber housed Hindenburg memorabilia and within it stood a 13 foot-high statue of the Field Marshal in dark green porphyry. On the 7th of August 1934, the body of the Field Marshal was laid to rest to the sound of church bells and in the presence of high government officials and representatives of foreign nations. Hitler gave the funerary oration ending it with the high flying words "*Toter Feldherr, geh' ein in Walhall!*" (Supreme leader, enter Walhalla.)

The Tannenberg monument itself was elevated to the rank of a "Monument of German Pride", the only such in all of Germany. It became a symbol, a myth, a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Germans. School children were required to visit it and it was the site of the annual reunions of the veterans of WWI.

Then came the Second World War. On January 20th 1945, as the Soviet Armies advanced into East Prussia, the Germans military, fearing profanation by the Russian, evacuated the remains of the Field Marshal and his wife. After a perilous journey these found a lasting resting place, probably in Marbourg Cathedral. A day later, at night, the Germans blew up both the entrance tower and the one that had housed the Hindenburg tomb. The Soviets did not further destroy the monument which stood till 1949 when its building materials began to be utilized in the construction of the Palace of Culture in Warsaw and of the Headquarters building of the Workers (communist) Party there.

Nothing remains of the monument today other than its buried foundations. The area is now an Olsztynek Poland, city park.

In 1946 the U.S. Army now in possession to the remains of Hindenburg and his wife, laid them to rest at St. Elizabeth's, a 13th century church built by the Teutonic Knights in Marburg Hess, where they remain today.



Hindenburg at the battle of Tannenberg

