



Sabretache

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THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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July 2014

Nancy Wake
DOB/DOD: 30 August 1912, died 7 August 2011
NATIONALITY: New Zealand
BACKGROUND: Born in New Zealand and raised in North Sydney, Australia. From a broken home, youngest of six children, married a wealthy French industrialist just before the outbreak of WWII
ALIASES/NICKNAMES: "White Mouse" by the Gestapo because of her ability to elude capture
WANTED BY: Gestapo, German high command, German Army (Bounty of 5,000,000 Franc reward for her capture offered by Gestapo)
MILITARY RANK: Agent, Special Operations Executive (SOE)
OBJECTIVE/MISSION: Organize French Resistance, disrupt the German Army through sabotage, communicate strategic information to the British
OUTCOME: the most successful region of Resistance against the German's
HONORS: George Medal, 1939–45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, British War Medal 1939–45, French Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, French Croix de Guerre with Star and two Palms, US Presidential Medal for Freedom with Palm and French Medaille de la Resistance (the most decorated woman of WWII)



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CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,
July 15th,
2014**

7:00 pm

At the
Petty Officers' Mess
HCMS Tecumseh

In 1933, as a reporter for Hearst, Nancy Wake was on assignment in Vienna. Wake witnessed the early persecution of Jews and other minorities.

"The stormtroopers had tied the Jewish people up to massive wheels," Wake later recounted. "They were rolling the wheels along, and the stormtroopers were whipping the Jews. I stood there and thought, 'I don't know what I'll do about it, but if I can do anything one day, I'll do it.' And I always had that picture in my mind, all through the war.

In 1939, Nancy married a handsome wealthy French industrialist, Henri Fiocca, in Marseilles. Six months after they married, Germany invaded France. In 1940 she joined French Resistance movement as a courier, smuggling messages and food to underground groups in Southern France. She bought an ambulance and used it to help refugees fleeing the German advance. Being the beautiful wife of a wealthy businessman, she had an ability to travel that few others could contemplate. She obtained false papers that allowed her to stay and work in the Vichy zone in occupied France, and became deeply involved in helping to spirit a thousand or more escaped prisoners of war and downed Allied fliers out of France through to Spain.

Early on, the Gestapo suspected her and began tapping her phone and opening her mail. She took many identities to evade them. By 1943, Wake was #1 on the Gestapo most wanted list with a five million-franc price on her head.

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Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

Tuesday, July 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 & Tell

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

Her husband told her, "You have to leave." Wake later told reporters, "I remember going out the door saying I'd do some shopping, that I'd be back soon. And I left and I never saw him again." She made six attempts to get out of France by crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. The French Milice (Vichy militia) captured her one attempt and interrogated HER for four days. She held out, refusing to give them any information, and with the help of the legendary 'Scarlet Pimpernel of WWII', Patrick O'Leary, tricked her captors into releasing her.

She finally made her way out of France and entered Britain. At a British Ministry of Defence camp, Wake received training in survival skills, silent killing, codes and radio operation, night parachuting, plastic explosives, Sten guns, rifles, pistols and grenades.

In late April 1944, Wake and another SOE operative, Major John Farmer, were parachuted into central France with orders to locate and organise the bands of Maquis, establish ammunition and arms caches from the nightly parachute drops, and arrange wireless communication with England. Their mission was to organise and train the Resistance in preparation for the D-Day invasion, but the French guerilla fighters wanted nothing to do with a "weak" woman. Wake quickly earned their respect. She could drink any man under the table and was superior to any man in battle.

There were 22,000 German troops in the area and initially 3-4,000 Maquis. Gaspard's recruitment work, with the help of Wake, bolstered the numbers to 7,000. Nancy led these men in guerrilla warfare, inflicting severe damage on German troops and facilities. She collected and distributed weapons and ensured that her radio operatives maintained contact with the SOE in Britain. Wake's most heroic mission involved her cycling 500 km through German checkpoints to replace her wireless radio and code book her operator had been forced to destroy in a German raid, shortly before D-Day. Without the codes they could not receive orders for the Allied invasion nor receive British air drops of weapons and supplies. She covered the distance in 71 hours, cycling through countryside and mountains almost non-stop.

With Wake's resistance group, no sector gave the German's more misery. The SS laid out a plan to obliterate the group. Heavily armed German troops were assembled near the Resistance's mountain stronghold. In June 1944, 22,000 seasoned SS troops attacked the Maquis' 7,000. The outcome: 1,400 German troops dead with only 100 of Wake's men lost. Later, she personally led a raid on Gestapo headquarters in Montucon and additionally killed a sentry with her bare hands during a raid on a German gun factory.

After D-Day, allied troops began to force the German army out of France and on August 25, 1944, Paris was liberated. Wake led her troops into Vichy to celebrate; however, there she learned that her beloved husband Henri was dead. A year after her leaving France, the Germans had captured her husband, tortured and executed him, because he refused to give them any information about the whereabouts of his wife.

After the war, Wake continued to work for the SOE and retired in 1960.

Her, WWII comrade Henri Tardivat, described his guerrilla chieftain as, "The most feminine woman I know, until the fighting starts. Then, she is like five men."

When asked about facing fear during her World War 2 exploits, Wake replied, "Hah! I've never been afraid in my life."

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held June 17th,2014

Meeting called to order by Pres. David S. at 7:11 PM No guests were present.

Minutes of previous meeting questioned by the usual suspects. Declared no errors or omissions and moved to accept by Mike C and seconded by Susan E. Unanimous

Newsletter. Discussion of main story and . Various stories about similar planes used as advertisements. Editor points out that storey was taken from various sources and events possibly were exaggerated.

Membership report. Brian H reports membership is at 46 which is down 2 from last year.

Treasures report. Treasurer Brian H. lists donations and funds received and also funds paid out. Gives yearly report mandated by the Province of Alberta. Lists all costs and all incoming monies with closing balance. The most esteemed Treasure also mentions new rules that are coming into effect and does not feel that it will affect us.

Barry E questions charity donations.

Marjory questions timing of charity donations.

Brian moves that the membership accepts his report and is seconded by Bob McP. Accepted by all members.

Old Business.

President mentions complaints from previous meetings and unveils his timer to be used during Show and Tell.

Mike C discusses costs to award plaques at Heritage Show. Approximately \$100 expenditure to make plaques and describes process to imprint the. More to follow next meeting.

David S discusses new idea for these awards and describes process (photo medal engraving). Will check it out and will also report back next meeting.

New Business

No new business.

Break.

Draw for old books by ticket master Neil.

Show and Tell

John E -various finds from garage sale.

Gary.- Replica medal that he purchased to complete his Grandfathers medal set.

Darrel—Framed badges that he has collect. And leather case from Airborne.

Robert.—Trip to San Diego Show medallions and mentions Balboa Park museums.

Bob McP. —Book on bomb shelter. 1 order and 3 medals, 3 certificates from 1st railroad in Canada.

Mike C.—Medallion, 1920, Calgary Highlanders, Framed print from 1915. “Banners of the Empire” by John Wilco Carmichael. Discussion follows on how print was made and various processes used.

Bruce—EBay item , Canadian Guards Pipers badge and history of how the pipers moved to the RCR pipe band.

Barry—Numerous Artillery Badges . WW1 Royal Canadian Training Artillery, King Edward and King George variations. , 61st and 78th Field Artillery (Alberta). 77 Artillery (Sask.) and shoulder badge for 233 Battalion.

Don S.—Book Aircrew Memories. Story on WestJet President inauguration to Aviation Hall of Fame. Show M.C.'s was Chris Hatfield.

Allan Mc. —info on Victoria medals QSA and KSA purchased. Copy of medal to Salisbury Field Force and differences noted.

David S.—PPCLI anniversary and what's happening. Discussion follows about problems at the Museum.

Meeting Adjourned Moved by Barry E and seconded by Mike C.

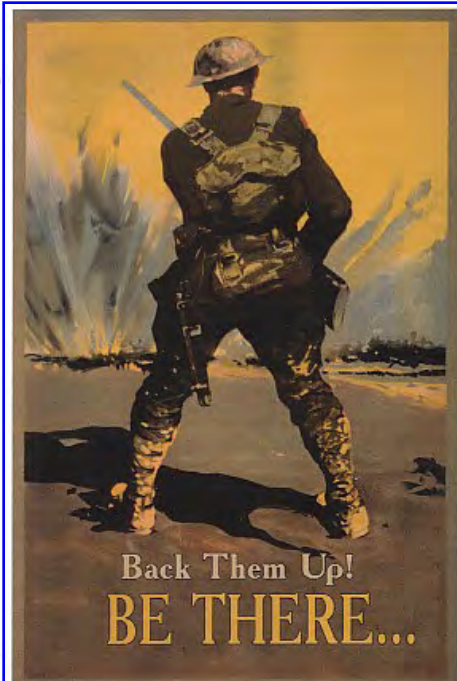


The Iron Harvest

The Iron Harvest continues to claim victims. A WWI shell or grenade exploded this week in Ypres, killing two workmen. One died instantly, another on the way to the hospital. At least two more were injured, one of whom is in a critical condition. The device was set off as workmen were trying to dig up an area, where a factory is being built. The area has been sealed off and local explosives experts have been brought in.

The Belgian army's Dienst voor Opruiming en Vernietiging van Ontploffingsstuigen (DOVO) or

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company consists of about 60 officers responsible for the collection and destruction of munitions since the Belgian practice of dumping them at sea was banned in the 1980s. Their base at Poelkappelle houses an extraordinary collection of munitions (used for identification purposes) of all shapes and sizes from many different countries. The base is always on standby and responds to about 2,000 calls each year. The Belgian government has paid out nearly 140,000 Euros in compensation over the past three years for damage to tractors, ploughs and combine harvesters.



ESPLANADE *Museum* presents

Medicine Hat's War, 1914-1918

4 August 2014 - 12 April 2015

A century ago on 4 August 1914, Medicine Hat went to war. It changed our community, our country and the world. We are still dealing with its impact one hundred years later.

The Esplanade Museum presents our newest exhibit *Medicine Hat's War, 1914-1918* in the Heritage Gallery.

Discover how much we owe to the generation who sacrificed so much during the First World War... a world event from a local perspective.

OPENING RECEPTION
Monday 4 August 2014
2:30 PM (1430)
Main Lobby

No admission fee
 Refreshments to follow

ESPLANADE
 Arts & Heritage Centre
 >>>>
 401 First Street SE
 403.502.8580
 >>>>
esplanade.ca

Attention All Members. Message from Member Tim Popp

Hello: "Request to locate Canadian General Service Medal with Fenian Raid 1866 Bar to Chris Joynt, Perth I. CO. Willing to purchase, trade or obtain photo (if in a collection). Please contact Tim Phone 306-937-3531 or scully01@sasktel.net"