



Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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September 2014



In This Issue:

- Minutes from the last meeting
- Dispatches from the front
- Notice of next meeting
-

CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,
Sept. 16th,
2014**

7:00 pm

At the
Petty Officers' Mess
HCMS Tecumseh



A piece of Canadian history was reprised on July 14th of this year, when soldiers from the Royal 22nd Regiment stood guard outside two Royal residences in the heart of London.

The men from the Quebec-based unit marched to their posts at Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace respectively to begin six days guarding the British Royal Family, to the cheers of thousands of tourists thronging the capital.

Their task came as recognition of the regiment's centenary and repeated an assignment last undertaken in April 1940 at the personal request of His Majesty King George VI.

Arthur Mignault, MD Sept. 29, 1865-April 26 1937
A French Canadian pharmaceutical entrepreneur, physician and colonel of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. Serving in the WW1. He is the founder of the Royal 22nd Regiment, today the largest regiment of the Canadian Army

Continued page 2

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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

Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

Tuesday, September 16th, 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.

On August 6, Ottawa ordered that a contingent of volunteers be formed and designated camp Valcartier (35 km north of Quebec City) as the mobilization site. By September 8, the quota of troops had been met and on October 3 the first contingent left Canada for England. However, out of the 32,665 volunteers, only 1,245 (or 5.36%) were French Canadian. These men were dispersed throughout the English-speaking units. Sam Hughes had excluded the standing army's French-speaking senior officers from participating. Thus the contingent, which became the first Canadian division established, was created without regard for ensuring an adequate French-Canadian presence.

Under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Mignault, a delegation of federal and provincial politicians, joined by bishops and members of the business sector, concluded that national unity hinged on, among other things, integrating French Canadians into the standing army and forming an exclusively French-Canadian battalion.

In 1914, Mignault communicated with Prime Minister Robert Borden to propose the establishment of a solely French Canadian Battalion within the CEF. According to Mignault, this would allow Canadians of French extraction to circumvent the language barrier of the English-speaking battalions. To support his cause, Mignault offered the significant amount of C\$50,000.. He expressed the desire to accompany the unit overseas, should it be formed. Despite Canada's relatively modest population, Borden had recently committed his country into providing half a million soldiers for the cause. Realizing the difficulty of raising such an army on a voluntary basis, Borden conceded. Accordingly, on 14 October 1914, the exclusively French Canadian 22nd Infantry Battalion, CEF, was formed.

On October 21, 1914, the 22nd (French-Canadian) Battalion officially took its place in the military. The unit trained at Saint-Jean, Quebec from October 1914 to March 1915. At the explicit request of the 22nd Battalion's first commander, Colonel F.-X. Gaudet, the troops were sent to Amherst, Nova Scotia to complete their training in preparation for their deployment to Europe. It was then that the unit's distinct nature first became evident.

The residents of Amherst greeted the soldiers with an icy welcome when they arrived on March 13, 1915. Yet as the men left for England on May 20, 1915, the same crowd gave them the warmest send-off imaginable. Mr. Claudius Corneloup, a member of the 22nd Battalion since its inception, described the tribute in the following terms:

"...Amherst will forever remain in the hearts of French Canadians as a city where kindness blooms and hospitality fills the air."



The distinguishing patch of the 22nd (French-Canadian) Battalion, CEF



Edward, Prince of Wales, inspects guard of honour formed by the Royal 22nd Regiment upon his arrival in Quebec City on July 30, 1927.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held August 19, 2014

Meeting called to order by Pres. David S. at 7:10 PM No guests were present.

Minutes of previous meeting questioned by the usual suspects. Declared no errors or omissions and moved to accept by Bob McP. and seconded by Floyd S. Unanimous

Newsletter. Discussion of main story and . Various stories about seeing this statue in the newsletter and also some that were at the Paddington Station and never noticed it.

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. Lists all costs and all incoming monies with closing balance.

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

Old Business.

President David S. Reminds everyone about the plaques to the winners of the historical fair. Questions if we are still interested. Everyone nods consent so members are charged to find costs for next meeting.

New Business

President David S reminds all of the Annual General Meeting which is held next month. Questions if there is interest in members stepping forward.

David G.—States he will not be here for the AGM but will continue on as Editor if they wish.

Bob McP.— Calls for immediate vote and railroads David G. in as Editor and Secretary. All agree.

Kevin R.—Thanks all for advertising of his website in the last newsletter.

Al-questions when is next sale at Thorncliff.

Barry E.— **September 20th is the date of the Gun Show and Sale at the Thorncliff Community Centre.**

Kevin R.— **Reminds all that the MCCoC Show is in Edmonton on Sept3mber 12th and 13th.**

Break.

Show and Tell

Gary.— Discussion of Kevin's Collection. Purchase of Boer War Belt. Research of Grandfather who was WW1 RNR from Newfoundland .

Dave L. Medallion British Red Cross Medal present by Princess Mary. Shows recent copy of Princes Marry Tin given out by the London Daily Mail. NCC shoulder badge which represents Non Combatants Corp.

Bob McP. —French Silk Postcard from WW1 and Medal group from Japan.

Bruce G. New style army buttons that are being issued. Very old sheet music that has WW1 Regiment and Battalion stamps on them.

James B.—Mount Royal Journal put out by students with WW1 content.

Floyd S. —Collection of items from WW1 including "Beaver Club" in London sent to him by his brother.

Martin— Globe and Mail article on dairy of Soldiers. Naval Press newsletter.

Barry—Various badges from WW1 Dental Corps.

Kevin R.— Vickers machine gun and describes all the various aspects and actions.

Alan McK-WW1 display from Grandfather. He was Irish and fought for the British and describes the difficulties that this caused.

David S. Discusses book "Generals Die in Bed. Badge WW2 . Discusses PPCLI trouping paraded.

David G.—1952 Officers manual and Letter to his aunt from local Chaplain after her husband was wounded at Ortona.

Al D.— Describes UTube Video WW2 story of Japanese US soldier who won medal of honour.

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

At the Front – Uniqueness and Distinction

The 22nd Battalion fought in the trenches for the first time on September 20, 1915 and subsequently spent 38 months in combat. Time and again, the battalion succeeded in setting itself apart from the rest. On February 26, 1916, Major T.L.A. Tremblay, who had been kept on the sidelines by Sam Hughes, assumed command of the 22nd Battalion at the rank of lieutenant colonel. He commanded the unit until August 10, 1918, when he took charge of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade as brigadier general. He was, in fact, the only French-speaking general in command at the front during World War I. At the young age of 30, Tremblay was both the leader of the 22nd Battalion and its inspiration. His diary contains the following entry:

"...I fully understand the immense responsibility that accompanies this appointment... My battalion represents an entire race. The task is a heavy one... My actions will be guided by that fine motto: JE ME SOUVIENS."

The 22nd Battalion took part in its first large-scale attack as an army corps at Flers-Courcelette on September 15, 1916. Tremblay was proud of the characteristics that defined his battalion. In requesting to conduct the attack on Flers-Courcelette, he was intent on proving the valour and high calibre of his men. After giving them their orders, he declared:

"...we shall take the village, and once we have, we shall fight to the last man to keep it. This is our first important mission. We must be victorious for the honour of all French Canadians, whom we represent here in France."

After several days of fierce combat, and despite heavy losses, the attack was a success. Newspapers the world over paid homage to the bravery of the French Canadians. On the 25th anniversary of the battle of Flers-Courcelette, Great Britain's Minister of War once again underscored their courage.

During the course of the First World War, the men of the 22nd Battalion had to engage in two kinds of combat: one, against the German enemy; the other, to gain recognition of their courage and win the respect of one and all. Corneloup provides a telling commentary on this subject:

"...no other battalion was as renowned, as closely scrutinized, or as greatly criticized. Those brave men all knew that suspicious eyes were watching their every move and that the slightest act of carelessness would be talked about, exaggerated, and distorted. They had been thrust into the British army on equal footing but, supposing the French army had made comments to an English regiment lost in its midst, what might have resulted if the slightest show of weakness, a simple error, or a fatal calamity had occurred? Given the circumstances, a brigade, even a division, would have been pardoned. Sadly, the 22nd would have been blamed, reprimanded, and disgraced because, in an army of seven million English soldiers, it was the only French-speaking unit."

On more than one occasion, Tremblay and his men were forced to fight in order to have the 22nd Battalion's merit and distinctiveness acknowledged. As a case in point, during the battle of Amiens on August 5, 1918, the unit was slated to serve as a backup. Dissatisfied with the duty assigned to his troops, Tremblay went to see the brigade commander. He later remarked in his diary:

"...I pointed out that my battalion was only selected to make attacks when conditions were the most difficult and there was little chance of success, but when it came to well-organized attacks where success was certain [...] we were put on reserve."

Honours Nevertheless, since the 22nd Battalion was the only French-Canadian unit to fight at the front for the entire duration of the war, its commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers were determined to defend the honour of their unit and the cultural group they represented. The military feats credited to the 22nd Battalion during the First World War were many and glorious. In addition to being awarded 18 battle honours by His Majesty King George V, the 22nd Battalion received a total of 352 decorations. These included two Victoria Crosses: the first, presented to Corporal Joseph Kaeble in June 1918; the second, to Lieutenant Jean Brillant in August of the same year.



Corporal Joseph Kaeble VC



Jean Baptiste Arthur Brillant VC