



# Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## The Ship Surgeon Versus Napoleon

Credited with establishing the lemon's anti-scorbutic effect on scurvy is British doctor James Lind who—as a 31-year-old Royal Navy ship's surgeon on board the H.M.S. *Salisbury*—conducted what is argu-



ably the world's first clinical trial. He chose twelve sailors with advanced symptoms of the disease, divided them into six groups, and fed all on the same diet (heavy in mutton broth). Two, however, also got a quart of "cyder" a day; two got supplementary doses of vinegar; two were given, three times daily, 25 drops of "elixir of vitriol" (sulfuric acid); two got a daily pint of seawater; two got a nutmeg-sized lump of a spicy paste made from cream of tartar, horseradish, mustard seed, garlic, and "balsam of Peru;" and the final two got a daily ration of two oranges and a lemon. The citrus-fed sailors recovered rapidly and were back on duty in six days.

Lind wrote an account of his discovery—the 454-page "Treatise of the Scurvy", published in 1753—but made little headway with the Navy, which ignored him.

On the insistence of senior officers, led by Rear Admiral Alan Gardner, in 1794 lemon juice was issued on board the "HMS Suffolk" on a twenty-three week, non-stop voyage to India. The daily ration of two-thirds of an ounce mixed in grog contained just about the minimum daily intake of 10 mg vitamin C. There was no serious outbreak of scurvy. This astonishing event resulted in a widespread demand within the Navy for lemon juice. In 1795, after persistent lobbying by naval physicians Gilbert Blane and Thomas Trotter, daily rations of lemon juice—and later, cheaper lime juice—were made compulsory for British sailors. Between 1795 and 1814, 1.6 million gallons of lemon juice were issued to Royal Navy ships (stored in casks, under a preservative layer of olive oil). In the same period, cases of scurvy in the Royal Naval Hospital fell from nearly 1500 to 2.

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### CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
November  
18th,  
2014**

**7:00 pm**

At the  
Petty Officers' Mess

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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, November 18th, 2014**  
**19:00 (7:00 pm)**

At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

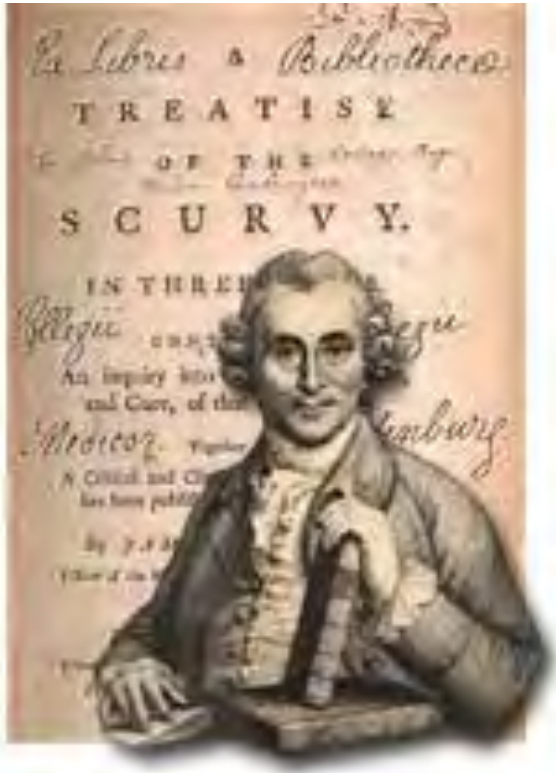
Members are reminded that an offering of foodstuffs for the Legion Food Bank is considered your unofficial entrance fee to our regular scheduled meetings.

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, Kevin R. would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting for an informal time of fellowship.

The eradication of scurvy made it possible for British seamen to maintain the coastal blockade that was essential for defeating Napoleon. Wrote one relieved naval surgeon after the vanquished Emperor had been banished to St. Helena: "It is the opinion of some of the most experienced officers that the blockading system of warfare which annihilated the naval powers of France could never have been carried on unless sea-scurvy had been subdued." Unfortunately the common nickname for British sailors—"limeys"—gives no credit to the equally important lemon.



Lind, at another time noticed that typhus disappeared from the top floor of his hospital, where patients were bathed and given clean clothes and bedding. However, incidence was very

high on the lower floors where such hygiene measures were not in place.

Lind recommended that sailors be stripped, shaved, scrubbed, and issued clean clothes and bedding regularly. As a result, British seamen did not suffer from typhus, giving the British navy a significant competitive advantage over the French





## Menin Gate Lions arrive at Canadian War Museum



One of the centrepieces of an upcoming exhibition at the Canadian War Museum is already drawing visitors to its ethereal presence. Greeting visitors to the exhibition are the Menin Gate Lions, two stone lions dating to the 17th century, which once flanked the gate to the city of Menin, Belgium. Allied soldiers marched between the lions on their way to the First World War battlefields at Ypres, where hundreds of thousands died during a series massive, drawn-out battles throughout the conflict.

The battle-scarred statues were recovered at the war's end. They are currently on loan from Australia, where they were donated to the Australian War Memorial as a token of friendship. The location of the gate at Menin was turned into a massive memorial arch and hall of memory in 1927, naming and commemorating the 54,896 Commonwealth soldiers who died in the nearby battles and whose bodies were never found or identified.

Among those commemorated are 6,983 Canadians. Between the stone lions in the museum's exhibit hangs the massive Menin Gate at Midnight, a 1927 painting by Australian artist Will Longstaff. It depicts a group of ghostly soldiers marching past the illuminated Menin Gate memorial under darkened, turbulent skies.

The painting is on loan from the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

"The Menin Gate Lions and Longstaff's painting of the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium represent resilience, remembrance and the enduring bond between nations, like Canada and Australia, that stood together at Flanders," stated James Whitman, director general of the Canadian War Museum.

"We are grateful to the Australian War Memorial and to the people of Australia for so generously sharing their national treasures with Canadians."

The exhibition, *Fighting in Flanders - Gas. Mud. Memory.*, opens on Nov. 7 and runs until April 26, 2015. The exhibit is a partnership between the museum and the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 in Belgium.

