



Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April Extra # 2 2021

Attention Members : A note from your President Page 2, 3 & 4



ARTILLERY IN ALBERTA

3rd Canadian Division Support Base
Edmonton

German First World War 7.7-cm Feldkanone 96 neuer Art (7.7-cm FK 96 n.A.), (Serial Nr. 929), M.3706 Kp, carriage 2361. This gun was captured by the 49th Battalion (Edmonton Regiment), 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) near Marquion, France on 27 September 1918. No. 1 in front of LFWA HQ.

3rd Canadian Division Support Base Edmonton (commonly referred to as Edmonton Garrison)

plans and manages the delivery of a range of support and services. To enable success of the units/members that are supported, the base provides personnel and administrative support, range and training areas, infrastructure and building maintenance for over 317 buildings in Edmonton, Whitehorse and Yellowknife.

The base is located in Sturgeon County on the Northeast border of the City of Edmonton and covers 2550 hectares of land. The main site is named Steele Barracks after Sir Samuel Steele, an original founding member of the Northwest Mounted Police.

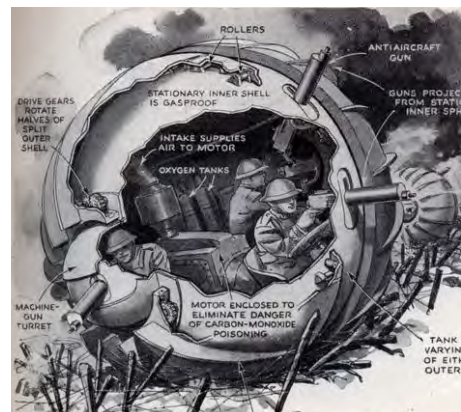
Continued Page 4 & 5



DUMB IDEA

The creative genius of half the world has been concentrated in an effort to make war more terrible on the one hand, and safer on the other.

Continued Page 6



A Note from your President

Firstly, I want to report that the business of the Society, such as it is these days, is being handled by your executive on your behalf. We are still an entity even if we cannot meet together.

I hope this note finds all of you, my friends, healthy and continuing to cope with these unusual times. It has been a while since I have connected with you. As we continue through this pandemic with the social isolation and care we must all take to ensure our safety as well as our families, increasingly I, for one, find this social distancing to be difficult. However, I like to look optimistically to the future and hope, with the increasing levels of vaccination, that we will be able to resume more normal lives. This includes resuming our monthly in-person Society meeting. I do miss those as well as making that real connection with my friends from the Society. In some ways we have become strangers to each other and have all too often lost some degree of contact. This has become more central in my mind because of recent happenings that have come to my attention which I wish to share with all of you.

Recently, I learned through conversation with his daughter, it gives me great sadness to report that our mutual good friend and long term Society member, Don Skinner passed away in February. To bring you up to speed on Don, some or all of you may have noticed that Don essentially dropped out of sight about a year prior to Covid. None of us knew what had happened to him. Again, from talking with his daughter on several occasions, she told me that he suffered a bad fall and broke his hip while still living alone at home. After a time in hospital to recover, he returned home where he again suffered a fall. He also had developed deep dementia, presumably from being unable to get out of bed while recovering for an extended period of time. Out of concern, his family placed him into a senior's home in Edmonton, near his daughter so that she could care for him on a daily basis. He lived there until last February when apparently he again fell badly and a few days later, presumably because of a head injury (I have to read between the lines on this), he died peaceably in his sleep. I have included a copy of his obituary below for your reading (if you care to go to 'Calgary Herald obituaries and search for Don's name, you will find a series of additional photos which are interesting). I can only speak for myself, but Don was a very good friend of mine for decades. Throughout that entire time, I came to know and respect him for his values, integrity, sense of humour and wonderful friendship. I will greatly miss him, but am comforted by the fact that he had his family close to him on his passing. Apparently, he had continuing moments of lucidity where he was able to interact with his daughter.

I must also pass on to you that our friend Marjorie Norris is also in a significant way, a victim of Covid and the circumstances around the pandemic. As many of you will know, Marjorie moved into a very nice senior's residence where she lived quite independently and happily for a couple of years preceding the pandemic. When Covid struck, given that she was in a senior home, she was placed into more of less total isolation and was, for her safety, rarely allowed out of her room. Her meals were brought to her and direct contact with her family and friends was limited to telephone calls and seeing her family at a long distance from time to time. From a conversation I had with her primary health assistant, she has, like Don, entered into significant dementia and while she still can carry on a conversation to some degree, usually does not know whom she is talking to. I don't know if this applies to her family members. She spends her days in what the facility call their "memory" ward where she gets attention and stimulation but the reality is that we have for practical purposes lost her friendship. This, again, has greatly saddened me because until recently I tried to keep in contact with her, albeit by phone. From what the personal care assistant says, this is happening all too frequently with the residents in this home. On more positive note, this facility has not yet had a single Covid case so physically she remains healthy. At least there is that small blessing.

Lastly, and with her permission, I want to inform you that another long-term member, Susan Elve, suffered a heart attack a few weeks ago. Fortunately, she received prompt medical care and is now recovering steadily at home. She is in good spirits but it was obvious when I chatted with her about a week ago, that this gave her a great shock. I passed on my prayers to her and all our best wishes. If you wish to call her, I can give you her phone number. I am sure she would welcome a call.

Please, all of you take care of yourselves so we can all look forward to, at some time in the future, to a direct reconnect. Stay safe my friends. Dave



Donald Glen Skinner

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved father Donald Glen Skinner. After a fall at his retirement home in Edmonton, where he has lived the past three years, he passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Don was born July 16, 1928 in Brisbane, Australia, and spent many of his formative years on his "magic carpet" - a wood-rim racing bicycle. When the Pacific war broke out in earnest in 1942, he was too young to enlist, but over the next several years found what he considered a dream job as an apprentice draftsman for US Navy personnel at nearby Eagle Farm airfield, where captured Japanese aircraft were repaired and test flown. From that experience came a lifelong passion for aviation, especially the US Naval variety. Eager to serve, as an alternative to enlistment he stowed away aboard a US torpedo boat; he was of course quickly discovered and sent home, thus ending his military career.

Post-war, Don emigrated with his brother Doug to Canada, where both found work with Pratt & Whitney aircraft near Montreal. Don married Marjorie Overton in Montreal in 1953 and together they had 4 children: Michael, Glenda, Leslie and Kathy. It wasn't long before the family began a long march

west, moving to Ontario and then to Calgary where Don spent the rest of his life. An avid skier, having worked and skied at Australia's only ski resort, Mt. Kosciusko, he was captivated by Canada's four distinct seasons, as compared to Brisbane's two: warm and hot.

Don continued his love affair with aviation in Canada, soloing as a novice private pilot but ultimately gravitating to gliding with the CuNim club in Calgary, where he offset the high cost of operating anything with wings by working as a volunteer instructor, and later putting on well-received training courses for gliding instructors. Happy years. When flying days were behind him, he continued to be a passionate fan of the National Air Races at Reno, Nevada, making an almost-annual September pilgrimage.

On the more contemplative side, the research he did into the history of a sword he was given as a thank-you for volunteer work at a Montreal museum led to another lifelong passion: military history. He built up a collection of swords and militaria and delighted in building gallery-worthy displays to complement his burgeoning collection of books and research journals, specializing in British and Indian cavalry regiments 1700-1900. His "collecting" trips to England from the late 1970s to 90s, and his friendships with like-minded collectors and enthusiasts were some of the highlights of his life.

Post-Montreal, Don worked in the aluminum industry for Alcan and Kawneer on the sales side. This changed in the 1970s when Don took the technical knowledge he had gained in architectural aluminum and started an independent consulting practice specializing in "building envelopes", the complex glass and aluminum exteriors of high-rise office buildings. His new business got a major break when he was hired on a significant project for Hanover Management, a company run by gliding buddy Clive Beddoe. Don made a major contribution to the quality, safety and economy of the project. As he established his reputation with other jobs, most towers on the Calgary skyline up to the late 1990s had Don's input. Not always popular on job sites, one foreman offered this assessment: "Don, I've got good news and bad news for you. The bad news is that the installers don't like you. The good news is they respect you."

Seeing a need for higher standards overall in commercial construction, especially with harsh Canadian winters, Don helped found the Alberta Building Envelope Council. That organization is still thriving today. Don was a faithful father and friend, and intensely proud of his children and grandchildren.

Continued Page 4

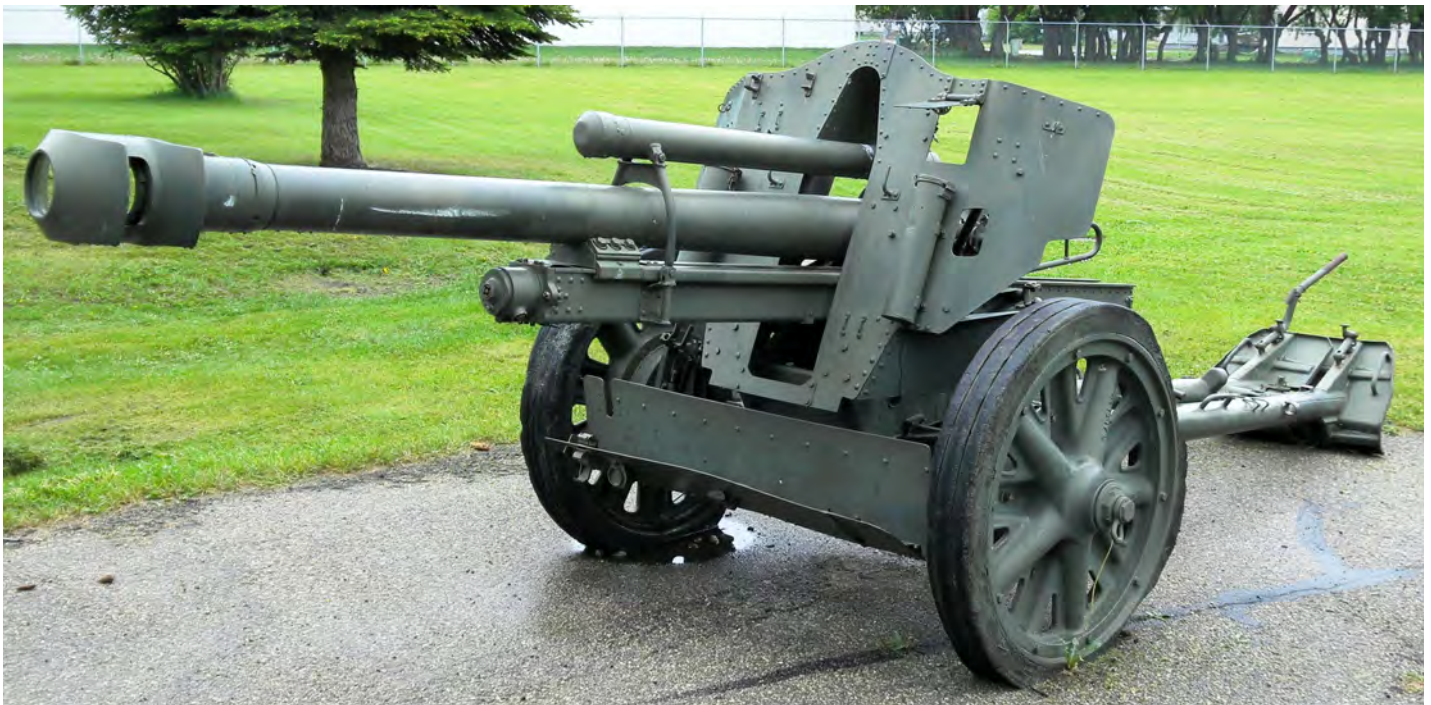
Donald Glen Skinner continued

He loved Elbow Park, where over 33 years he and Marjorie spent happy years with wonderful neighbours. He continued his habit of long daily walks in the neighbourhood even after moving to another part of the city when the nest was empty. He continued to demonstrate a well-ripened Aussie wit in his final days, agreeing that surviving COVID at the age of 92 with only minor sniffles was of course further evidence of being "a natural athlete."

Don was predeceased by his loving wife and companion Marjorie, and sadly also by the deaths of daughters Glenda and Leslie, so he was no stranger to heartache. Yet he carried on, appreciating family life and love ever more in his declining years. He will be deeply missed by his surviving children Michael (and wife Dorothy) and Kathy (and husband Chip), and his seven grandchildren, Brittany Junek, Matthew Skinner, Alissa Skinner, Cameron Bush, Elizabeth Skinner, Megan Bush and Blair Bush. And by his loving sister Pam and the clan in Australia.

Donations in Don's memory can be made to the Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories

ARTILLERY IN ALBERTA continued from page 1.



German Second World War 10.5-cm LeFH 18/40 Howitzer, Barrel (Serial Nr. R351) Fl 905, dxc, Breech Block (Serial Nr. Fl 539) mrf, SB dxc, Trail (Serial Nor Fl 697) bwl, Memorial Park South of the Officer's Mess, Edmonton Garrison.



75-mm M20 Recoilless Rifle, PPCLI HQ, CFB Edmonton



105-mm M40 Recoilless Rifle mounted on a jeep, back in the day. The soldier kneeling on the left is armed with a 7.62-mm FNC2 and the Corporal on the right is armed with a 9-mm Sterling SMG. (Library & Archives Canada

Photo, MIKAN No. 4235712)



155-mm M109 Self-propelled Howitzer, (Serial No. 34813), 1968, AC: MD, ECC: 119204 HUI C: 1941, SAUI C: 1941, VMO No. DLE21343, VMO Date: 10 Jun 2005. Churchill Park South of the Officer's Mess, Edmonton Garrison.

The 155-mm M109 self-propelled medium howitzers were highly mobile artillery weapons. The M109 had a crew of six, consisting of detachment commander, gunner, three ammunition members and the driver. The hull was made of all-welded aluminium armour. The driver had a single-piece hatch cover that opened to the left, with three M45 periscopes in front that could be covered by small metal flaps to prevent damage. The commander was seated on the right side of the turret and had a cupola that could be traversed through 360°, a single-piece hatch cover that opens to the rear and an M27 periscope. Pintle mounted on the forward part of the commander's cupola was a 12.7 mm (0.50) machine gun for use in local defence. Mounted at the rear of the hull, each side of the hull door, is a large spade which is lowered manually to the ground before firing.

The M109 was fitted with night vision equipment for night moves. The upgrade to A4 included a Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) defence system. It could ford to a depth of 1.828 m without preparation and could be fitted with an amphibious kit consisting of nine air bags, four each side of the hull and one at the front. The bags, which are not carried on the vehicle as part of its normal equipment, are inflated from the vehicle and it can then propel itself across rivers by its tracks at 6.43 km/h. The initial M109 was equipped with a short barrel, double baffle muzzle brake, large fume extractor, and a maximum range of 14,600m. The M109A2/A3/A4 howitzers used an extended M185 barrel and achieved a range of 23,500 meters.

Artillery In Alberta comes from the website belonging to **Harold Skaarup**
www.silverhawkauthor.com

The aim of this website is to locate, identify and document every historical piece of artillery preserved in Canada. Many contributors have assisted in the hunt for these guns to provide and update the data found on these web pages. Photos are by the author unless otherwise credited. Any errors found here are by the author, and any additions, corrections or amendments to this list of Guns and Artillery in Canada would be most welcome and may be e-mailed to the author at hskaarup@rogers.com.

POPULAR MECHANICS MAGAZINE

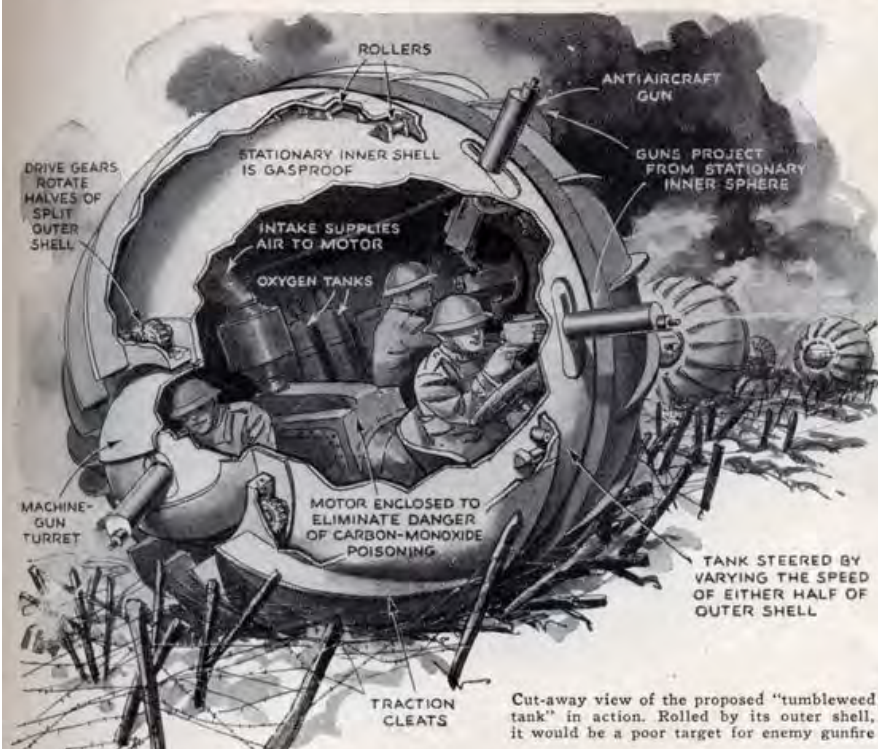


Since Europe has been merged in hostilities, scarcely a month has passed unmarked either by the development of some new agent of destruction, or the introduction of some new medium of defense. The creative genius of half the world has been concentrated in an effort to make war more terrible on the one hand, and safer on the other. And first, one belligerent and then the other has met crucial emergencies by ingenious, no to say startling, inventions.

The apparent deadlock on the western frontier has presented a perplexing situation. For months the armies have fought battles more sanguinary than Waterloo without making progress except in terms of yards. Trench warfare has been responsible for this. Any kind of an offensive movement has meant heavy losses.

To make the trench less secure for the enemy is an object which each of the belligerents is striving to accomplish. A step in this direction is found in the work of a British inventor who has developed a wheeled body shield that affords immunity from rifle bullets and shrapnel when advancing upon fortified positions.

Novel War Tank Resembles a Rolling Ball



ROLLING over the ground like a giant ball, a high-speed "tumbleweed tank" proposed by a Texas inventor is a new addition to modern war machines. A spherical hollow steel driving cab is inclosed by a rotating outer shell consisting of two cup-shaped halves fitted with circular traction cleats. Motor-driven gears, mounted on the inner sphere, rotate the outer shells to roll the tank along the ground. Steering is effected by varying the speed of either of the rotating traction shells. Machine guns are fired from the stationary cab through central firing slots and armored turrets at the sides. The heavy driving motor, centrally placed on the cab floor, gives the tank stability and prevents it from rolling sidewise. The inner shell can be sealed against poison gas, while the power plant is completely inclosed to minimize the danger from exhaust fumes. The inventor states that the tank's spherical shape presents the smallest possible target for enemy bombs or shells, and all but direct hits would glance off its curved sides. Missiles penetrating the outer shells would have expended most of their force.

Cut-away view of the proposed "tumbleweed tank" in action. Rolled by its outer shell, it would be a poor target for enemy gunfire

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The 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

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