

## The Reverend Philip (“Tubby”) Clayton, “Innkeeper” at Talbot House, Poperinghe

By: Allan Bacon

Several years ago, whilst visiting the First World War Western Front, I had the privilege and pleasure of visiting the iconic Talbot House (Toc-H) in Poperinghe. (Toc = ‘T’ in army signallers’ code in WWI.) It was a fascinating and indeed moving experience, in particular as I stood in the Chapel in the loft (the Upper Room – often referred to as “The Shrine of the whole (Ypres) Salient), and thought about those many men who had worshipped here and had gone to their deaths up the line. The House, preserved today as it was in 1915-1919, is full of memorabilia from that era, among these many reminders of the Reverend Philip Clayton, universally known as “Tubby” who, along with Private Arthur Pettifer, his batman, dubbed by local children “The General”, presided over what became for thousands of soldiers of all ranks a haven of rest from the horrors of war.

Tubby had been asked by his friend from Oxford University days, the Reverend Neville Talbot, Senior Chaplain of 6th Division, to assume responsibility for the House in December 1915. Named after Neville’s younger brother Gilbert, who had been killed at Hooge (and not ‘Church House’ as the authorities had wanted, as this would have turned away the very men they wanted to attract), Talbot House quickly became a home away from home, where “social background, personality, rank and creed seemed irrelevant.” The sign above the front door said it all: “Every-Man’s Club.” Tubby became the life and soul of the place, and it was his welcoming influence that endeared Toc-H to its many “customers,” as Tubby referred to the men who entered its doors. He was a most unmilitary looking figure, but his magnetic personality as the “innkeeper,” as he called himself, ensured a cheerful atmosphere, and men felt that they could approach him with their problems and that he took a genuine interest in them, not only at Talbot House but also when frequently he visited them in the dangerous front line areas. A notice at Talbot House captures the essence of Tubby: “Here I am – Chaplain to the Forces. I am a comic kind of creature in officer’s kit, but people are getting used to my queer unmilitary ways, and tolerate me without demur. My job here is of the kind I more or less understand, i.e. being friendly to all comers, without any of the regimental business to bother me.” He signed the notice “Tubby.”



Army-type discipline was not the order of the day once inside the doors of Toc-H. Notices such as “If you are in the habit of spitting on the carpet at home, PLEASE SPIT HERE” and “A tidy draft of reinforcements in woolies – i.e. socks etc – has reached Talbot House...Applications for the same should be made to the Chaplain. Allotment, one sock per battalion” capture the spirit that pervaded the House. That the notice over Tubby’s room “All rank abandon ye who enter here” was observed is abundantly clear from many surviving letters. One, from Captain Burgon Bickersteth, Royal Dragoon Guards in August 1937 read “Julian and I had our meal with Clayton and three private soldiers – the first time I had ever sat down to eat out here in uniform with soldiers.” Another letter, from a staff officer read in part “I arrived booted and spurred with red tabs on my uniform...I faced a

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## **President's Remarks**

Dear reader, welcome to the November 2019 issue of the Torch. Continuing with our themed approach this edition focusses, quite appropriately, on remembrance. In this regard, our editor presents you with interesting contributor articles, two in particular, which I'm sure you will enjoy. And, mentioning our themed concept, may I add my appreciation to those many among you who wrote to express appreciation for the August edition coverage of Canadians and Vietnam.



On the governance front we continue transitioning to the new committee structure. In support, we are introducing a suite of policies and procedures to facilitate the work of the board of directors and its committees as they address the strategic and operational challenges of the Friends in support of the CWM. This major governance initiative provides the Friends with a strong and relevant strategic and operational functionality backbone fully able to sustain and support its purpose as a not-for-profit charitable corporation well into the future.

With respect to supporting the CWM, in August I mentioned that we had concluded the 2019/20 contribution agreement with the museum, an agreement which has a strong focus on education particularly for youth. Late in the summer a formal cheque presentation ceremony was held in the Lebreton Gallery and, subsequently, the CWM issued a press release acknowledging the \$100K contribution and expressing appreciation to the Friends as a major donor. One interesting project component of the agreement is our support for Supply Line 2, a kit-based SWW training package for students across Canada. At an inaugural event at the Bayview Middle School in Saint John New Brunswick in September the kits were introduced to students. The project acknowledges the Friends contribution and, as it rolls out, the message of our support will be conveyed to Canadian schools across the country.

As we move ahead we will continue with the contribution agreement approach for addressing our support to the CWM. At this point in the third quarter of the fiscal year, we are mindful of the importance of remaining relevant to CWM needs and for crafting our next agreement in close co-operation with the museum to ensure that we invest our resources where they are needed. Here it is well to pause and reflect on our fundamentals. As a corporation the Friends exists solely to support the CWM. In our charitable status the museum is our single qualified donee and our support is delivered entirely through our human and financial resources. It is important to recognize and champion our success in contributing to the museum but it also vital to ensure that we find the ways and means to sustain the effort and recruit volunteers and build financial equity in support.

At present we are continuing to make a meaningful contribution but sustaining this level of support will require strengthening both the volunteer and financial base. This work is properly the mandate of the BOD and its committees and we are seeking to build constituency and strengthen financial position. We are looking to develop a catchment of donors and sponsors who can assist us to sustain and even grow our level of contribution.

Of course, dear reader, we remain deeply grateful for the contribution of our members and supporters. Please stay with us; our needs and those of the museum are great!

Yours aye, Robert Hamilton



room packed with laughing soldiers of every rank. Tubby approached...a place made for me beside a Corporal of Signallers...I was soon chatting with him as if he was my best friend. Such was the magic of Tubby."

General Plumer arrived on one occasion, asked to see Tubby, and requested that he find a bed for a sergeant to whom he had given a lift in his car. A Brigadier General Sweney, seeking lodging for the night, insisted that he was more than happy to sleep on a stretcher rather than in the bed that was available to him. Officers and men often attended communion together in the Upper Room. There were many humorous incidents. To borrow a book from the Library at the House, one left one's army cap in pawn and took off to find a comfortable spot to read. One Australian Private returned to his unit wearing a British field officer's cap, because two similar books had been on loan at the same time.

Although Tubby never pushed religion on any of his "customers," thousands worshipped in the loft Chapel during the war. It had been built originally by machine gunners of the Queen's Westminsters, and many of the religious items (still there today) were donated by army units. Here Generals and Privates knelt together to receive communion (over 20,000 in all), 800 men were confirmed and some 50 baptized. Today one can still sense the peace and serenity that these men experienced away from the maelstrom of war.

Tubby ensured that local children were well taken care of, with parties and toys at Christmas. Soldiers also contributed funds to pay the yearly maintenance of an adopted child. Private Pettifer, Tubby's faithful companion at Talbot House, was beloved by the local population. Pettifer also accompanied Tubby on his frequent visits to all parts of the front to minister to "his parishioners." His visits to the danger zone he referred to as "visiting the slums of war." Many veterans spoke of Tubby's visits as "acting like a tonic upon the men." His talks to

them in the trenches and in forward areas were full of humour and showed a real understanding of the reality of soldiers' lives and their shared experiences. He was one "sky pilot" or "Devil-Dodger," as soldiers referred to Chaplains, who was loved and respected by all.

After Talbot House closed at war's end, Tubby returned to London, England, where he became vicar of All Hallows Church. Private Pettifer accompanied him and worked alongside him for many years. Tubby and many returned veterans around the world "dreamed of re-creating the spirit of Talbot House in peacetime," and so in 1920 they came together to found Toc-H that grew into an international organization devoted to "easing the burdens of others through acts of service." In this way veterans felt that they could honour the fallen, "not by building memorials, but by building a better world." The tomb of the Reverend Philip ("Tubby") Clayton, and the ashes of Private Arthur Pettifer, of whom Tubby said "no man knows me so well, nor have I leant on any man so much throughout my life," lie in All Hallows Church. Two men who made a tremendous difference to so many, and showed how the human spirit can rise above unimaginable suffering.

**In writing this article acknowledgement is made to Jan Louagie.**



## Editor's Comments

November is always a month for reflection as we remember those who were killed in the service of Canada. For many who serve and who have served, they carry the burden of memory which stayed with them for life and in this edition we touch a little on PTSD. I am writing these comments in early September, so with the cooler temperatures I usually have the upcoming fall season on my mind rather than thoughts to past casualties. I do find it interesting to see how other countries remember their history and I was just recently in Paris, France and Mons, Belgium for the 75th Anniversaries of their liberation during the Second World War. Paris was liberated by the Free French Army on 24-25 September, 1944 and Mons by the U.S. Army a week later. Both commemorations were formal affairs with the usual parades and speeches but unlike Canada they involved large static displays of Second World War

vehicles which were later driven in convoy through both cities. These convoys, with their attendant re-enactors dressed in Second War uniforms and civilian clothing, drew huge crowds of all ages with the one in Paris lasting over an hour.

The Vietnam articles in the August edition of The Torch attracted a lot of attention and generated a number of comments which are covered in the E-Communications section of this newsletter.

We have two returning authors with Allan Bacon providing us with a report on Tubby Clayton and his work at Talbot House in Poperinghe, Belgium during the First World War. We also have a poignant and heartfelt story from Gerry Cann on the last time he saw his ailing First World War Veteran Father.

I would like to welcome Jean Morin to The Torch team; he brings with him a dedication to the Friends, a passion for history and the ability to write to tight deadlines for no pay. Welcome aboard! Let me also take this time to remind everyone that

rather than sending your comments or suggestions concerning The Torch to the Friends Office you are instead encouraged to send them direct to me at edstorey@hotmail.com.



***Upon hearing about the article on The Salvation Army which The Torch ran in February, a collector colleague from Scotland was kind enough to gift me this Salvation Army commemorative coffee mug for my collection.***



***It was a hot Sunday afternoon in Paris as a convoy of vehicles snaked its way along the Avenue de Général Leclerc to la Place Denfert-Rochereau. Here a fully stowed wartime vintage M8 armoured car provides a place of honour for a French Army Officer while keeping pace with French re-enactors who were walking the route.***

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# SALUTE

by Gerald D. Cann

If I wanted to know what war did to people all I had to do was look at my father. My brother called: "If you want to see Dad again you'd better get out here; cancer of the liver, he has less than a week left." I flew to Vancouver that night and went directly to the hospital. He simply stuck out his hand: "Glad you made it out Gerry, I'm not coming out of here you know." We talked for most of the day.

When he was sixteen, he badgered his parents to letting him enlist. They agreed. Times were different then, when a sixteen-year-old was considered fit to do a man's work. His older brother had gone to sea at fifteen, and had been killed in a shipwreck in 1914. His father had shipped out as a cabin boy at twelve, so it's pretty certain his enlistment in the army wasn't anything unusual. When he discovered the accepted age for enlistment was seventeen and a half, he simply adjusted his age. His records reflect that lie.

Dad seldom talked about his war when I was growing up. When we used to fish and hunt together during my advanced teens, he'd mention something. I remember him saying once, when I asked about casualties during his war, that when he was hit there were many men missing from his company since he joined it nearly two years previously. A company complement numbered two hundred and fifty men. During the First World War (FWW), nearly 4700 men had served in the 25th Battalion which was recruited from western Nova Scotia (a battalion strength was about 1000, which gives an understanding of the casualty rate). Canada had four divisions in France - Six hundred and fifty thousand Canadians out of a population of about eight million served over the four years it lasted. Sixty-six thousand were killed; a hundred and seventy-five thousand were wounded.

Badly wounded in the left thigh just forty-six days before the war ended, Dad was shipped to England nearly dead from infection. An emergency operation discovered five gauze swabs left in the wound by the forward dressing station, and he survived in the days before antibiotics. His sciatic nerve was severed and his left leg paralyzed. I remember him making repeated trips to the Halifax veteran's hospital in the mid-1930s. Eventually his toes were amputated, leaving him with half a foot. He was fitted with a splint - steel bars through the boot heel, secured with a strap below the knee that prevented his foot from dropping. He must have worked at it, because he never limped.

Card parties with old comrades were frequent occurrences at our house. It was these story telling times that I used to listen to through the heat register outside my bedroom door. One still stands out as funny; Dad had been made a batman, a servant really, to his company commander who was always at the card games. "Do you remember sending



*Private James Ernest Cann*



*Cap Badge – 25th Battalion (Nova Scotia), W.E. Storey Collection*

me back one time to strain out tea leaves? You should have drank it. I strained it through my shirt tail that I hadn't had off my back for three weeks!" He was the youngest man in the battalion and was so slight of body that he earned the name 'Pullthrough.' A pull-through was a piece of cord to which is affixed a cotton swab and was used to clean the barrel of a rifle. Every rifle had one and it was stored with a brass oil bottle in a special tube cut into the inside of the wooden butt and accessed through a flap in the metal butt plate.

That day in the hospital he seemed to want to talk about his teen years. Perhaps dying, he wanted to remember his youth, part of which had been spent in the war. I think he thought that I, ex-military, could relate. Stories spilled out that will always stay in my memory. He talked about training in England and finally being transferred as a replacement to the 25th battalion, a Nova Scotia outfit that stayed together during his entire war. Casualties were always replaced by Nova Scotia men, and on that basis he was selected. Not yet seventeen, he bluffed his way through a medical examination: "Cann, how old are you? "Nineteen sir." "Cann, I know a growing boy when I see one, how old are you really?" "Nineteen sir." "Cann, I can get you out of this, you don't have to go, how old are you really?" "Nineteen sir!" And so he went to France. His records indicate that he joined the 25th battalion less than two weeks later.

Dad arrived in France and Flanders in March just before Vimy Ridge, and the battle of Arras, near the end of the war, where he was wounded. He talked about the unusual extent of the training they received before Vimy when every man knew where he was supposed to be at a given time, and about the night patrols leading to Easter Sunday 1917. He made it to the top of the hill without a scratch. He said that once there, he marvelled at the sight of untouched green fields beyond compared to the sea of mud behind him.

That was the first and only time that the Canadian army fought as a single unit, but at the cost of over 3000 dead - but they did in a day what the French on one hand and the British on another were not able to do at all with about 50,000

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*Patients sitting in a hospital ward. W.E. Storey Collection*

casualties each.

Later that year the 25th fought at Passchendaele in another sea of mud, so deep that men were drowned in it. Again, he survived, having his helmet shot off his head. He kept it as a souvenir, but lost it when he was hit months later. On another occasion both his water bottles were shot through, and again he was untouched. He told about being with his company on another occasion, cut off by the enemy for four days. They had little water and hardly any food except for hard-tack crackers and orange marmalade which he would never eat at home. He told me about always being hungry, and how, in the front line rations didn't always arrive, and how he would search the packs of the German dead for the nutritious 'black bread' they always carried, and how easy it was to become a savage fatalist, never believing he would survive. I carry the name of his best friend (Gerald Davies) whom he found dead.

But he would not talk about the killing. I know that he was a light machine gunner (a Lewis gun), so that aspect of his war is completely likely. On another occasion a horse mounted cavalry unit was ordered to attack a machine gun position. He called it a criminal order and described how they spent the next day shooting wounded horses. He hated napalm, a jellied gasoline used in backpack flamethrowers during both wars. During the Viet Nam war he raged about it. One of his shoulders was scarred from a deep burn from the stuff.

It was a strange day listening to him. I got the impression he was telling about bottled up memories that he wanted to get off his chest before he died. He had never talked about the war at home, but wanted to that day.

Interviewing veterans of another war and later writing their stories, I came to realize that those who have fought a war continue to relive it. Their problem was and remains that only those who were there can really understand. Only a few would level with me, and I finally understood their reluctance to talk.

Dad said he lost friends on a regular basis, and how military life develops a closeness that one is never able to find in civilian life. I think that is the real value of the Royal Canadian Legion, a spot where they can relate to one another. To a degree I've experienced a bit of this, but my war was the Cold War, not a shooting one; but living in an all-male atmosphere for years, sharing uncertainties, one develops a type of friendship that is indescribable. I carry a sense of honour that has never left me.

I know from reading, and talking with those few who would open up, that the FWW veterans lived through the hell of the trenches for years that made the Second World War pale by comparison. But it was a long time before I knew that my father suffered a degree of what we now call

PTSD (post-traumatic stress syndrome) himself. His was a recurrent dream. Ever since I was little I remember him pacing the floor in the middle of the night, beads of sweat on his bald head. "what's wrong, Dad?" and the answer was a curt "go to bed." During a visit to my home years later I found him the same way: "You're not going to tell me to go to bed this time chum, tell me what's bothering you." And he did: "Gerry, I've had the same dream for years; I'm alone in the middle of a barrage, trying to get to a village. I'm almost there when an explosion wakes me up, and I'm terrified." We talked for a long while that night.

But it's not just soldiers who experience this malady. Winston Churchill probably said it best when talking about the people who lived through the bombing of England...there are no extraordinary people, just ordinary people who are called upon to do extraordinary things.

Dad, an invalid, returned home in 1919. His father was the Master of a small supply steamer that served a series of the out-ports of those days, his ship sailing from Yarmouth to Brier Island, to Freeport, to Tiverton to Victoria Beach, to St John New Brunswick and back again. With nothing to do he sailed in his father's ship. During a stop in Tiverton, the first village on the first island off Digby Neck, he met my mother. They were married in Tiverton on New Year's Eve 1924, and today their ashes are scattered below Boars Head light house, fittingly I think, because it was there that they first met.

I left Dad in the early evening to meet my sister and brother. When we returned to the hospital he had slipped into a coma. The palliative care nurse said simply, "he was waiting for you." We sat with him over the next couple of days. On the second evening after the others had left I stayed, knowing I would never see him again, I had to return to Ottawa next day. When I finally left I stopped in the doorway and turned to look at him. Overcome with emotion I snapped to attention and saluted.



It seemed then and still does, the greatest mark of respect I could offer, the only salute to which the private soldier is entitled.

Twenty minutes after I got back to my sister's house the phone rang. "Your Dad just died, would you like to see him?" "Thanks, no. I'd rather remember him alive."

### **Editor's Notes**

The personnel file for 733650 James Ernest Cann contains 98 pages, most of which are medical related due to the injury he sustained while on active service. When young 16-year-old Cann joined the infantry and attested with the 112th Battalion he stated to having been born on 27 February, 1898 and was recorded as being 5'9" tall, weighing 130 lbs with a 32 inch chest and appeared to be 18. He also stated that he was a Confectioner who had had previous training as a recruit with the 29th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery.

James Cann enlisted in the 112th Infantry Battalion on 15 February, 1916 and following seven months of basic training sailed with his battalion to England on 23 July, 1916 arriving on the 31st. He trained at Shorncliffe Camp before being transferred to the 26th Reserve Battalion at Bramshot Camp on 3 February, 1917. It was during this time that he would have been brought up-to-date on the latest weapons and techniques used for combat on the Western Front. Cann shipped out to France on 20 March, 1917 where he would have stayed in a reinforcement camp before being declared fit to be taken on strength by the 25th Infantry Battalion on 20 March, 1917.

Having served with his battalion for nine months, Private Cann was granted 14 day leave to England on 5 January, 1918 and he reported back to his battalion on the 26th. It was eight months later on 24 September, 1918 during the fighting around Arras, France that he received a gunshot wound to the left thigh. He was shipped back to England on 1 October, 1918 and due to the nature of his wound would spend time in six military hospitals before being invalided back to Canada on 18 July, 1919. As a testament to his pluckiness, determination and no small measure of good luck, James Cann had spent 19 months in France and Flanders and was only 19-years old when he returned home from the war.

James Cann's file records service in several Nova Scotia units and illustrates the transition of reinforcements as they made their way from Canada to the trenches of the Western Front.

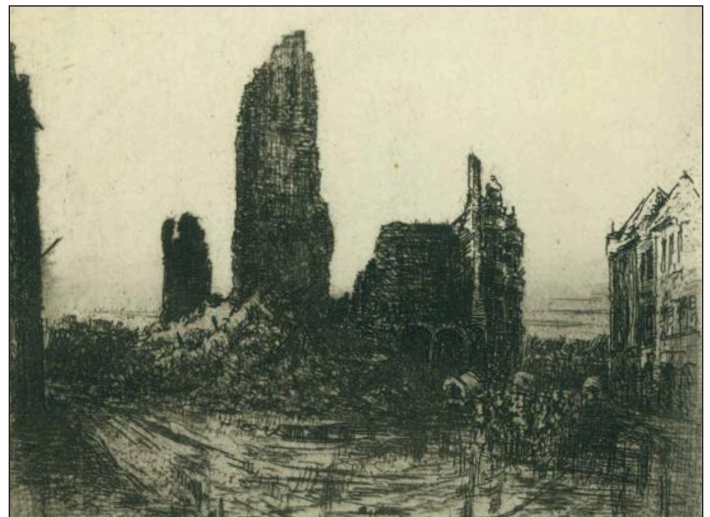
29th Battery RCA has its roots firmly planted in Nova Scotia. Upon amalgamation on 5 June 1906 the battery was redesignated 'No. 4 Battery', 7th "Nova Scotia" Regiment, Canadian Artillery'. Again the battery was renamed this time to the 29th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery (CFA) on 1 February 1912 and this battery would eventually go on to form part of the 14th Brigade, CFA, 5th Divisional Artillery for service overseas during the First World War. Today the 84th Independent Field Battery, RCA is a Nova Scotia based primary reserve artillery regiment that can trace its history back to the 29th Battery.

The 112th Battalion (Nova Scotia) was authorized on 22 December 1915 and embarked for Great Britain on 23 July 1916, where it provided reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in the field until 7 January 1917, when its personnel were absorbed by the 26th Reserve Battalion, CEF. The battalion disbanded on 15 August 1918 and is perpetuated by The West Nova Scotia Regiment.

The 26th Canadian Reserve Battalion (Nova Scotia) was organized at Shorncliffe, England on 4 January 1917 and was formed by absorbing the 40th, 112th and 211th Battalions as well as reinforcements for The Royal Canadian Regiment on 22 January 1917. The Battalion moved to Bramshot on 8 January 1917 where it reinforced the 25th Battalion and Royal Canadian Regiment. It was later absorbed by 17th Canadian Reserve Battalion on 15 October 1917.

The 25th Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles), CEF (also known as "MacKenzie Battalion", "Master Raiders", or "Raiding Battalion") was the first of three infantry battalions raised entirely in Nova Scotia during the FWW. The 25th Battalion served in Belgium and France as part of the 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division, from 16 September 1915 until the end of the war. Regimental headquarters was established at the Halifax Armouries, with recruitment offices in Sydney, Amherst, New Glasgow, Truro and Yarmouth. Of the 1000 Nova Scotians that started with the battalion, after the first year of fighting, 100 were left in the battalion, while 900 men were killed, taken prisoner, missing or injured.

The 25th Battalion was authorized on 7 November 1914 and embarked for Great Britain on 20 May 1915. The battalion was disbanded on 15 September 1920. By the end of the war 53% of the men who had served in the battalion had been wounded (2713 soldiers), while 14% died in battle (718 soldiers). The 25th Battalion is perpetuated by The Nova Scotia Highlanders.



**Artist's rendition of Hotel de Ville, Arras – 1918, from *The 51st Division, War Sketches*, 1920**

# The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers for both Helen McKiernan and Doug Rowland

By: Jean Morin

On September 6th, 2019, His Worship the Mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, had the rare opportunity to offer the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers to husband and wife on the same occasion. They were recommended for the honor by separate organizations and each received it for a lifetime of dedication to volunteering.

Helen McKiernan and Doug Rowland are well-known to the Friends of the Canadian War Museum. Helen was, among other things, the Chair of the Events and Outreach committees, and Doug is now a former President of the Board.

But few among us know the full extent of their extraordinary activities over many decades in other charitable, humanitarian and cultural organizations in which they played leading and key organizational roles.

Doug, a former Member of Parliament, was foremost involved in organizations which promoted parliamentary democracy at home and abroad, fostering of election monitoring, and teacher and youth civic education. He was, among other such activities, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, and Founding Member, First President, and President Emeritus of International Election Monitors Institute. He was also very actively involved in hospital re-structuring and development, promotion of social and humanitarian policy, and poverty relief.

Helen was full of energy in promoting cultural, humanitarian, as well as elderly and veterans care causes, while supporting the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians to such extent that she was honored as their first Lifetime Associate Member for two decades of dedication. Her work with the Salvation Army, the

Ottawa Historical Society, the Bytown Museum, the Board of Good Companions and the Canadian Legion all benefitted from her experience in a career as Public Servant in human resources, public administration and high profile management (she was the General Manager of the Ottawa International Airport from 1990 to 1997).

Doug and Helen were both Directors of the Board of the Friends, Doug for close to ten years and Helen

for seven years. Their respective wide and varied experiences benefited the Canadian War Museum and fostered large networks of contacts and opportunities.

We wish to extend to both of them our most sincere congratulations for their extraordinary double Sovereign's Medal for Volunteering, and deepest appreciation for what they brought to the Friends and so many other laudable causes.



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Covering the period July 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019, (plus donations received through CanadaHelps after April 22, 2019)

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and in honour of Norma Hundert on her 100th birthday

Col Sean Henry and Mrs. Eleanor Henry in memory of Mrs. Lorraine Raymond

Mr. J. R. (Digger) MacDougall, in honour of Mike Miller and the CWM Workshop Volunteers. My guests and I have benefited from their hosting, knowledge and experience. They are AWESOME. I am grateful.

Mr. Malcolm Mate in memory of Julius Mate of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada

Ms. Lori Parent, in memory of Robert Parent

Mrs. Ida Schjelderup, in proud memory of Col Roger Schjelderup D.S.O., M.C. with BAR, C.D., a D-Day hero



# Guinea Pigs: the Topic of September's Friend's Forum

By Tom Kari

Would you like to join a club? How about a very exclusive club? Even captains of industry and heads of state can't join!

The membership requirements, though, are steep. You need to be "Fried, Mashed, or Hash-Browned, Burned, Maimed, or Both". Welcome to the Guinea Pig Club!

On Thursday, September 26 the Club was presented to us by Rita Donovan, based on her book "As for the Canadians: The Remarkable Story of the RCAF's Guinea Pigs of World War II". The talk was organized as one of the "Friends Forum" events organized by the Communications and Marketing Committee of the Friends of the Canadian War Museum.

The audience was introduced to the small English town of East Grinstead, home to the Queen Victoria Hospital. It was here that the RAF located a specialized facility to treat burn victims; with World War II around the corner, large numbers of airmen were expected to suffer horrifying burns.

As research for her book, Ms. Donovan interviewed a number of Canadian veterans of the burn unit, and presented many of their stories during the talk.

She did a wonderful job of portraying the suffering, the courage, and the camaraderie of these young men, barely out of their teens, whose lives changed in an instant. While they were all heroes, special recognition is afforded to two of the medical leaders.

Dr. Archibald McIndoe, "The Maestro", managed the hos-

pital, always with the best interests of the patients at heart. Gregarious and outgoing, he resisted the traditional air force bump, allowing the men to retain their uniforms, have the occasional beer, and ensuring that every new patient was taken under the wing of someone whose treatment was more advanced.

Canadian Dr. Ross Tilley, "The Artist", specialized in the detailed reconstruction of hands, bringing back function where previously amputation would have been the only option. His quiet and reserve contrasted with McIndoe, making them the perfect team.

Their compassion, brilliance, and pioneering work in the field of plastic surgery made for an inspiring story. "The Guinea Pig Club" stayed together after the war, with annual reunions until age took its toll.

Many thanks to Ms. Donovan for sharing this inspiring and little-known story of the triumph of the human spirit.

Rita Donovan is an Ottawa writer and teacher, who has published eight books.

**Tom is an Ottawa native, who had a long and satisfying career as a software developer at Statistics Canada. While he has no formal association with the Canadian Armed Forces, he has been interested in military history for many years, and considers the Canadian War Museum a nation treasure. He is very proud of his daughter, Sandra, who works as a civilian engineer with DND.**

## Group Friends

ANAVETS in Canada - Dominion Command, Ottawa, Ontario

ANAVETS Unit 217, New Waterford, Nova Scotia

Canadian Association of Veterans of U.N. Peacekeeping (Col John Gardam Chapter), Ottawa, Ontario

Ladies Auxiliary - Royal Canadian Legion Branch 370 (ON), Iroquois, Ontario

Royal Military Colleges Club (Ottawa), Ottawa, Ontario

The Polish Combatants' Association in Canada, Head Executive Board, Toronto, Ontario

The Polish Combatants' Association, Branch 8, Ottawa, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 006 (ON), Owen Sound, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 009 (SK), Battleford, Saskatchewan

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 024 (ON), St Catharines, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 029 (QC), Montreal, Quebec

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 047 (NL), Labrador City, Newfoundland and Labrador

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 153 (MB), Carberry, Manitoba

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 185 (QC), Deux-Montagnes, Quebec

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 314 (ON), Manotick, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 341 (SK), Pense, Saskatchewan

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 442 (ON), Erin, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 636 (ON), Minden, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 638 (ON), Kanata, Ontario

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 641 (ON), Ottawa, Ontario

Walker Wood Foundation, Toronto, Ontario

## E-Communications

The two articles on Canada in Vietnam attracted a lot of correspondence starting with Tim Smith who wrote about and reflected upon his time in Vietnam with the ICSC from May 1970-1971. Tim spotted a discrepancy in the lead article "Vietnam and Canadian Peacekeeping" by John MacFarlane and wrote "I have difficulty with John's statement on p.3 regarding the two Canadians in uniform killed in a helicopter crash in 1965. I know that two Canadians in uniform were killed in 1965 when the NVA shot down one of the Stratoliners, but I have never heard of any killed in a helicopter crash at that time. Believe me, if that had occurred we would have talked about it during my time with the ICC."

Raymond Fortin also questioned the article and this is his e-mail to the Friends;

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Assurément, il me fait plaisir de vous souligner l'erreur que j'ai relevée dans le dernier paragraphe de l'article de John, à la page trois. Il écrit, et je cite: "deux Canadiens en uniforme ont perdu la vie dans un écrasement d'hélicoptère en 1965 ". Mais il s'agit plutôt de la disparition d'un avion Boeing 307 Stratoliner avec identification F-BELV de la compagnie International des Transports Civils Aériens (CITCA) qui faisait la liaison de Saigon-Phnom Penh-Vientiane et d'Hanoi en ce lundi soir du 18 octobre 1965.

Les Canadiens décédés dans cet écrasement sont:

- 1) Le sergent James Sylvester Byrne, Royal Canadian Army Corp, d'Aylmer, Québec.
- 2) Le caporal Vernon J. Perkin, Royal Canadian Hussars de Régina (incorrect Regiment – ed.).
- 3) John Douglas Turner, un agent du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, de Vancouver.

A ce jour, cet avion ainsi que les membres de la CISC à bord n'ont jamais été retrouvés. J'ai beaucoup d'autres informations sur les recherches entreprises depuis avec le gouvernement vietnamien, qui malheureusement n'a jamais pu éclaircir cette disparition. Le mystère, à savoir ce qui est réellement arrivé à cet avion, n'a jamais été résolu.

Vous pouvez dire à John et Tim qu'ils peuvent correspondre avec moi en anglais si cela leur est plus facile. Je crois que cette note saura aussi intéresser Tim. J'inclus des photos du Stratoliner et des photos pour Tim.

Mes salutations, Raymond

John replied with a short e-mail letter.

Readers of the Torch,

I am pleased to hear from Ed Storey that he has received many comments on the "Vietnam and Canadian Peacekeeping article" of August. I am particularly glad that one reader found an error that I would like to correct. I referred to fatal helicopter crashes in 1965 and 1973. In fact, the missing aircraft lost in late 1965 was a French Boeing Stratoliner carrying five Indians, three Canadians and one Polish member of the ICSC along with its French crew of four; it went missing on a flight from Vientiane to Hanoi. The Canadian casualties were J.D. Turner, the Permanent Representative in Hanoi, Sergeant J.S. Byrne, RCASC, and Corporal V.J. Perkin, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada. On 7 April 1973 Captain C.E. Laviolette was killed with eight others (officers of Poland, Hungary and Indonesia, two Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam (PRG)(Viet Cong) officers and three crewmen) in an ICCS helicopter near Lao Bao.

Gerald J. Gallagher a U.S. Friend sent the following message, "Your special edition on Can. Involvement in the Vietnam Campaign is beautifully done. I'm pleased that the CWM takes such an interest in that era, as I assisted your former Curator of Collections, Major R. K. Malott, C.D., with the gathering of uniforms and artifacts from among Veterans with whom I'm acquainted. Also had good fortune in contact with GEN Westmoreland, whose fatigue uniform, complete with insignia, is within the CWM's collection. You and your staff define the term "Well Done". Gerald J. Gal-

agher (a U.S. member of the Friends)."

We also heard from Dick Malott who sent the following letter;

Dear Editor:

Dr. John MacFarlane's article on "Vietnam and Canadian Peacekeeping" was of particular interest to me as I was one of the 290 Canadian military serving on the International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS), January - July 1973. I retired from the RCAF/CAF a year later to serve at the CWM as the Chief Curator of the Collections and the Executive Director of the Organization of Military Museums of Canada (OMMC), Inc. I retired from the CWM in December 1992 and the OMMC Inc in December 2000.

Hopefully anticipating a job at the CWM I obtained authority from several sources to collect items from Vietnam for the CWM. Over 2 dozen types of weaponry were collected, often for the price of a \$1.00 carton of American cigarettes. Insignia, medals, accoutrements and uniforms were acquired and shipped back to the CWM. After the CANDEL ICCS was withdrawn from Vietnam our late leader Lieutenant General Duncan McAlpine, CMM, CD, recommended that our close knit group form an association for fellowship in the future. Thus was formed the CANDEL ISSC Association of which I was appointed the Secretary/Treasurer, a position that I have maintained for 46 years. We have had several Presidents, the longest serving being the late Colonel Harky Smith, MMM, CD. Our present President is LCol Fletcher Thomson, CD, one of the 2 Canadians imprisoned by the Vietcong for two weeks. The black Vietcong uniform that LCol Thomson wore during his captivity was later donated to the CWM.

As a result of my position at the CWM and the ICCS, the CWM was able to obtain many interesting artifacts from ICCS members, including the personal campaign maps of LGen McAlpine and an inert SAM missile gifted to LGen McAlpine by the South Vietnamese Government. It was this type of missile that shot down the helicopter that killed all 9 aboard, including one Canadian soldier, Captain Charles E. Laviolette, CD, on 7 April 1973. Over 150 of the 290 Canadian military serving in the ICCS are deceased and 100 still maintain membership in the CANDEL ICCS Association. Once a year a Reunion of 30 to 40 members is held at a local Ottawa Vietnamese restaurant. There are 4 different styles of the Canadian Service Medal issued for the ICCS which was also issued to civilian members of External Affairs serving in Vietnam. The CWM has all 4 types in its medal collection.

Canadians led the way getting things done during the short 6 months in Vietnam. Our comrades in arms from Indonesia, Hungary and Poland were a challenge to work with but the Hungarians and Polish military sure liked our Canadian whiskey which we gladly shared with them on national holidays. The Indonesian personnel abstained from alcohol but they certainly were excellent at sports and playing dominoes.

Best regards,

Dick Malott

Major (Retd), CD, RCAF/CAF



The photographs were with his letter and one shows a Boeing 307 Stratoliner. Here is what Tim Smith has written about the other two images.

The chap in the photo (behind me at the car, on my left facing away in the blue shirt) is the late Major Jean Lajeunesse, (R22eR) one of the other two AMA's. Jean and Dave Stothers (Artillery) were the two who alternated in Hanoi. Jean became a very close friend and a thoroughly enjoyable person to be with. He was the officer who was sent to the UK to teach Prince Charles and Princess Anne to speak French, and he was married to the daughter of the CDS, Jean Victor Allard. I have the greatest respect for him and profoundly regret his passing several years ago.



The hotel where Raymond and I are standing is the Continental, where I lived for several months. The balding person standing next to me at Tan Son Nut is the replacement SMA (cannot think of his name at the moment).



## Museum Support: The Book Room and Adopt-A-Book

### Allan Bacon

The Book Room, operated by the FCWM, and the Friends annual Adopt-a-Book campaign, are two important ways in which support is provided to the Museum and to the Military History Research Centre (MHRC).

Described by Dr. Tim Cook as "the best second hand military bookstore," the Book Room is not only a valuable outreach, but also the provider of a major portion of the \$100,000 contribution made by the Friends to the Museum. Those who visit 'to browse and buy' encounter a friendly, welcoming and very knowledgeable staff who represent the public face of the Friends. There is a guest book for those who choose to make note of their visit and, if they wish, leave contact information. The bookshelves are well organized and maintained and rarely fail to satisfy the military history buff.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Book Room and the CWM, which is mutually beneficial,

when books are donated to the Friends they are 'triaged' and checked against the MHRC's holdings. If the Centre does not have a particular title, or it is known that a second copy of a title is needed, or if a title is one that is rarely obtainable, then these are forwarded to the Centre. The latter retains a fair proportion of these titles and each quarter provides a list of these to the Book Room. In 2018, for example, the Centre accepted 166 items from the Book Room. Books that are not needed by the Centre are returned to the Book Room for sale. A value is assessed for the books retained by the Centre and is reported annually by the President. In the past two years sales in the Book Room itself have exceeded \$33,000 and help the CWM to fund programmes otherwise beyond its core budget allocation. It is important to understand that the MHRC's holdings are accessed not only by researchers who visit the CWM and by the Museum's historians, but are also loaned out to other libraries and

researchers across Canada, and sometimes around the world, as part of the Inter-Library Loan Service.

The Friends owe a debt of gratitude to the dedicated members who staff the Book Room under the able leadership of Jerry Jensen. They are Derek Howes, John Ward, John Easson, Mike Braham, Bruce Brown, "Buzz" Dumeresq, Nick Pineault, Don Allen, Peter Mace, Ian Sinclair and Robert Hamilton.

The Book Room urgently needs donations of books. For those able to bring these to the CWM, carts are provided to bring the books from the parking garage to the Book Room, together with a free parking pass. If it is not possible to deliver the books in person, and the donor resides in the Ottawa area, then by arrangement these can be picked up.

The annual Adopt-a-Book Campaign has been in existence since 1998. Each year, towards the end of January, the MHRC presents a list to the Friends of titles that it wishes to acquire, titles

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that would be beyond the ability of the Library to purchase from its budget allocation. The list is then posted on the Friends website and is printed in the May edition of 'The Torch.' When members of the Friends 'adopt' a book, then this is acknowledged with a donor plate inside the front cover of each volume

when it is placed on the Library shelves. Since 1998, including the titles currently being adopted in the 2019 campaign, over 1,000 titles have been purchased for the MHRC (for a total value of \$42,000) thanks to the generous and ongoing support of Friends. Clearly, this

is of great benefit to the Museum and it is to be hoped that remaining 2019 titles will soon be adopted.

**Allan Bacon heads up the Adopt-a-Book initiative, and is ably supported by Julia Finn, Phyllis Kiss, Robert Farrell and Joe Bedford.**

## A Touch of Paradise in Hell - Talbot House, Poperinghe Every-man's Sanctuary from the Trenches by Jan Louagie

**Reviewed by Allan Bacon**

This beautifully produced, well written and researched volume is a 'must read' for those who wish to understand fully the importance of Talbot House (Toc-H) in Poperinghe ("Pop") to the lives of the many thousands of soldiers of all ranks who passed through the town on their way into, or back from, the horror, sacrifice and slaughter of the Ypres Salient. Poperinghe, from the Spring of 1915, had become the nerve centre of the British sector. Located some 8 miles west of Ieper (Ypres) it became a rest area, although it often suffered enemy artillery and aerial bombardment. Many civilians had remained in the town and made a good living running estaminets, cafes and souvenir stores. Drinking, gambling and frequenting brothels led to much lawlessness. As a result, in the summer of 1915, Lt. Col. Reginald May, Quartermaster-General of the 6th Division, requested the Rev. Neville Talbot, in an effort to provide rest and recreation for the men, to set up a religious and social centre for officers and men. From this initiative Talbot House was born, named after Lieutenant Gilbert Talbot.

Profusely illustrated with some 158 photographs, sketches, Toc-H memorabilia, maps and documents from the period, letters and diary extracts, the book is divided into four main sections. The first section (An Every-Man's Club) details the history of the House from December 1915, when it was rented from a local wealthy banker and hop merchant by The Rev. Neville Talbot and the Rev. Philip ("Tubby") Clayton, until the owner returned in 1919. Tubby, along with his

faithful batman Private Arthur Pettifer, for three exhausting years made Toc-H a remarkable wartime haven, an Every-Man's Club in which rank had no place and where Generals and Privates mixed freely. This section paints a vivid picture of life at the House and describes, among other events, how, during WW2, the town's residents hid every item in the House from the Germans, who used it as their HQ, returning everything at war's end.

In the second section (A Home from Home) Tubby provides a guided tour of the House, taking the reader to each room in turn, describing how by day it was a recreation centre and by night a rest house. The many rooms catered for men's needs: rest; tea and cake in the (alcohol-free canteen); the writing room,

the library, the games room, the concert 'hall,' the garden ("an oasis of calm") and most importantly the Chapel in the loft, a place of peace and serenity, where thousands of soldiers worshipped over the years, many for the last time. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York at different times celebrated communion here. This guided tour is enlivened by recollections of some 40 officers and OR's recounting how they experienced the unique atmosphere of Toc-H.

The third section (A House of People) begins with a focus on Tubby (the "Innkeeper") and Pettifer ("The General"). It is followed by a collection of stories by Tubby about 'customers' of the House who, for some reason, made an impact on him. The section concludes with five 'Talbotousians' relating memories associated with Talbot House and the Rev. Clayton. Throughout there is much humour.

The final section deals with the frequent visits that Tubby made to his parishioners in the front lines. His ministering to the men's needs, seeing to their well-being, and often holding communion under shellfire, earned him the love and respect of all ranks. The section also deals briefly with the 5-month existence of Little Talbot House, located in a cellar in the ruins of Ypres.

This book by Jan Louagie is an outstanding contribution to the literature of the First World War, and is most highly recommended. Today, Talbot House is preserved as it was in 1915-1919.

**Helion and Company, 2015**  
**ISBN 978-1-910777-12-1**  
**388 pages**

