

The Friends of the Canadian War Museum

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal year 2020/21



HONOURING HISTORY FOR A BETTER FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends of the Canadian War Museum (Friends). As I prepare this report, it is now more than one year during which we continue to experience one of the most difficult health and wellness challenges facing Canadians in more than a century.

Notwithstanding, I am pleased to advise that donor and membership support is continuing and that under the leadership of your Board of Directors (BOD), working virtually for more than a year, solid progress is being made in our purpose of supporting the Canadian War Museum (CWM). I am extremely proud of the work which has been done from the development of a full suite of policy, procedure and guidance documents; through the inauguration of an impressive new website; to the pending launch of our first newsletter, the commitment, dedication and leadership of your BOD is in evidence. Financially we remain in a sustainable position due to the generosity of donors together with prudent financial management. The Friends has not suffered the catastrophic losses experienced by some other charities and we were able to make a generous donation of \$52K to CWM programs; indeed, in the budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year, we have earmarked a similar gift.

On behalf of your BOD, I would like to express our appreciation to all Friends and donors for your continuing support throughout the year. The Friends was founded in 1985 and was federally incorporated as a registered charity in December of 1987; our work depends almost entirely on volunteers to accomplish its objectives. We strive to be a pan-Canadian corporation with national appeal; we seek to be relevant, sustainable and effective and we do so through your commitment and support.

THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATING FRAMEWORK

In these difficult times we continue to rely on our established statement of purpose, strategic objectives and formal concept of operations to facilitate dealing with unforeseen challenges and threats. We are fortunate to be supported by a well conceived, well structured and rigorous governance and operating backbone; the relevance and value of this has been confirmed during the year.

Purpose and Vision

Our purpose is to promote and support the CWM in its role as a vital Canadian institution. In this regard, we envision ourselves as a pan-Canadian organization supporting the museum through fundraising, volunteering and program support.

Strategic Policy Statement

In all endeavours, the Friends is guided by the **fundamental strategic objectives of building constituency and strengthening financial position**. The Friends leadership is empowered to make appropriate choices within this framework for ensuring support to the CWM through effective operations in the context of accountability to our members.

Strategic Objectives

We have established four strategic objectives which support our purpose and our vision:

To raise funds.

To build constituency across Canada.

To optimize support directed to the CWM; and,

To govern and administer the Friends organization effectively and efficiently.

Delivering the Product - the BOD and supporting Committee Structure

At the heart of our work is the BOD. Elected by the general membership, it is empowered to manage the business of the Friends. Its membership includes those with the commitment, skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the purpose and the needs of the CWM. The BOD membership is refreshed or renewed annually at the Annual Members Meeting (AMM) and at that time chooses its corporate officers. With the constraints and restrictions associated with the pandemic, the AMM this year was conducted virtually in December 2020.

The BOD provides oversight, approval and direction in the context of policy and procedure and is also deeply involved in operational matters. In this regard, in order to operationalize delivery against the strategic objectives, committees of the BOD have been struck. Each director of the BOD, in addition to his or her oversight function is a member of at least one of the operational committees. The FCWM BOD has no directors at large.

The following are the committees of the BOD: Museum Support; Ways and Means; Communications and Marketing; Governance; and Corporate Services. Additionally,

during the year, lateral communications have been facilitated through the support of an *ad hoc* committee comprising the corporate officers and committee chairs (COCC); over the year this committee proved its worth through regular virtual meetings. In addition, the committee acted as the project management team to steward the introduction of the new website.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

General

For practical purposes, the restrictions occasioned by the pandemic have impacted all aspects of the Friends activities throughout the entire year. Nevertheless, with commitment, creativity and the full cooperation of the CWM, much has been accomplished,

Selected Highlights

Let me now touch upon some representative highlights from the past fiscal year. I frame these remarks in the context of the aims of the aforementioned committees of the BOD.

Corporate Officers and Committee Chairs (COCC)

This committee, while not formally established, has met regularly throughout the year to strengthen inter-committee awareness and support the BOD by proposing items for its consideration. Unlike the Executive Committee, a concept which was discontinued in 2019, it has no formal authority save to serve as an assist to the BOD. During this past year where contact and access have been extremely limited, the COCC has also served as an additional enabler in the broader need for sustainability.

Museum Support

Ultimately, all efforts by the Friends are intended to support the aims, programs and activities of the CWM; in this regard, the fundamental purpose of the Museum Support Committee is to foster relationships and personnel and financial support as they pertain directly to the CWM. The Museum Support Committee may be considered the agent of the BOD where the entire volunteer effort is formulated focussed and delivered.

During the past year, this capability of the Friends was maintained fundamentally through the close cooperation among the President, the CWM Acting/DG and her staff, the COCC and the BOD. Communication was accomplished virtually and by telephone. A principal product of this co-operative approach is the contribution agreement which sets out the particulars of the Friends support of the CWM. The 2020/21 Agreement

under which the Friends have contributed \$52K, supported projects including the enormously popular Second World War Supply Line initiative and the virtual Remembrance Day event which was noteworthy both for its creativity and success. Also included was a sum in support of veterans' parking although in a reduced amount due to restrictions in access.

Together with the CWM leadership, we are now examining opportunities for the fiscal 2021/22 contribution agreement which will likely include support for an Oral History initiative with broad scope and outreach. These agreements have their genesis in discussions with the CWM/CMH Director of Major Gifts and Campaigns whose assistance has been very helpful.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of this Friends/CWM cooperation; indeed, it was a CWM initiative which enabled the opportunity to offer used book sales through the CWM gift shop while access to our book room was impossible. This cooperation serves to highlight the deep mutual appreciation and respect between the Friends and the CWM.

Ways and Means

The Ways and Means Committee serves to identify internal and external funding opportunities, develop sponsor relationships and grow the Friends constituency of support.

The committee has been active and has contributed to a better understanding of the fundamental need for focus in our branding, messaging and carrier services in support of outreach and strengthening financial position. Working cooperatively with the Communications and Marketing Committee, it has contributed materially to the core messaging in the Friends new website with its focus on our role as a registered charity.

The committee also integrates outreach and service initiatives such as the Adopt-a-Book program, the Friends' Forum and the Book Room. Of course, work has been impacted by the current restrictions but I have been impressed with the creativity of this committee in treating the current virtual environment not only as a challenge but as an opportunity. In this regard, consideration is being given to exploiting the potential of virtual communications to broaden the scope of the Friends' Forum initiative and to recruit presenters and participants from across the country. Similarly, this electronic outreach will be leveraged to enable the concept of a speakers' forum.

As an indication of the commitment and dedication of this committee, on the book room front, notwithstanding its closure during the year, its leader arranged for the collection of donated titles and their periodic delivery to the book room while maintaining strict social

distancing protocols. As mentioned above, the CWM assisted by arranging for sales of used books through its gift shop during the admittedly limited times it was open to visitors. Setting this to work involved periodic replenishment by the book room staff, a sales taxes avoidance arrangement at point-of-sale and in accounting and the electronic transfer of revenue from the CWM to the Friends. The revenue was modest but there was considerable interest among visitors when they learned that there was indeed a military history used book room. The cooperation displayed here is characteristic of the healthy relationship between the CWM and the Friends.

Communications and Marketing

The Communications and Marketing Committee develops and supports the carrier and communications services to promote the Friends, to support the Ways and Means initiative and to facilitate donor connectivity and outreach.

The committee has been very active during this period of constraint. Of fundamental importance has been the work to develop a new website to serve as the flagship carrier service. Under commercial contract and with the project leadership of the COCC, this initiative has now been completed and the new website is active; initial feedback is very positive. The website is attractive, nimble and easy to access. It places a strong focus on the Friends' charitable purpose and facilitates both ease of donation and membership application. It is closely linked with Canada Helps to facilitate donation and ease of financial management and it is linked to our constituency relationship management (CRM) software. The website is easy to manage from the perspective of content and its technical currency, maintenance and sustainability are now supported under contract. It is noteworthy that this important achievement was undertaken almost entirely through electronic communication involving, contractor, project team and the BOD ... an admirable achievement!

Following on from the website work, and on behalf of the BOD, the committee has turned its attention to the legacy of the Torch and how to retain its valuable elements while moving us towards an improved modern outreach and communications vehicle. Once again, there has been strong focus on charitable purpose, museum support, timely communication with both member and donor and broader outreach. In this regard, the decision has been taken to develop and launch a monthly electronic newsletter.

In substance, the newsletter will embody the commitment to timely and relevant communication. As the term implies it will embrace the fresh and newsworthy and also introduce variety, will stimulate interest and will be closely integrated with the website. It will not be lengthy; new items will be introduced in vignette form with links to the website

for the complete material. In this manner we will preserve the capability to introduce a greater range of more extensive material reflecting the input of contributors; of course, the newsletter will be available in both official languages. There will be links to CWM activity and initiatives and in its production, there will be close liaison with the CWM.

As is the case for all such newsletter products, careful oversight of content and language is needed and must be furnished in a timely manner. In this regard, an oversight group involving members of the BOD and a CWM rep is being established; the membership will comprise of both anglophones and francophones and the Acting/DG CWM has kindly volunteered her engagement! The first launch of the newsletter is planned for early spring 2021.

Governance

Compliance with the strategic objective of governing and administering ourselves effectively and efficiently calls for continuous vigilance and due-diligence.

For more than a year now, we have operated well under the committee structure set to work last year and developed to give operating effect to our program purpose through our 4 strategic objectives. The particular challenges imposed by the pandemic restrictions have tested the worth of this construct and I am pleased (but not surprised) that it continues to serve us well. That the Friends finds itself in this enviable position is due principally to the visionary work of the Governance Committee.

This important governance work has continued throughout the year. At its final meeting of this fiscal year in March 2021, the BOD approved the full suite of policies, procedures and guidance (known as our PGM manual). This is an exceptional piece of work which will serve us now and well into the future. It is the product of more than one year in its development and testing; it embraces the spectrum of requirement from legal and regulatory foundational material through bylaw, operating policy and procedural guidance. The document is structured in a hierarchical fashion, is very user-friendly, recognizes the need for both configuration and access controls and yet remains a living document so as to accommodate update and revision. This is an exemplary document, a model of its kind and represents a significant investment in sustainment.

Compliant governance also demands that your BOD remain current with respect to the statutory requirements for our registered charity and the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of directors. This is essential if we are to continue to fulfill our mandate to represent you the members and to manage matters appropriately in support of our program purpose. Once again, this year, many of your directors attended the annual Carters LLP Charity and Not-for-Profit Law seminar (this year offered virtually) in order to keep abreast of developments as presented by experts and a senior official of the

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). While not likely to impact the Friends materially, some interesting changes for charities are in the offing all of which demand a strong control environment. I am confident that we are well equipped and an updated BOD training package which has been updated will be delivered to the BOD later in the spring.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Committee oversees all of the activities which enable the business of the Corporation, namely: general administration, financial accounting, human resources, procurement, information management and technology. The corporate services function is customarily led by the vice-president (VP) and is a work-in-progress activity with volunteer support regularly present in the CWM.

Notwithstanding the pandemic restrictions, its work has been carried out well in the working-from-home mode supported by electronic access. Throughout much of the past year, the committee was absent a leader due to the stepping back of its chair because of other commitments and its activities were managed by the president on an interim basis. With the appointment of a VP in December 2020 and under his leadership, a great deal has been accomplished in a short period.

A noteworthy achievement was the support to the AMM held in December 2020. Conducting a fully compliant AMM utilizing virtual technology permitting membership participation and voting integrity was no mean achievement. Working cooperatively with the BOD and supported with research and testing, the success of this event was largely attributable to volunteers of this committee.

Other important initiatives have been the creation of a real-time membership and donor database and the establishment of a cloud-based data depository for our foundational and operating documents and records including the aforementioned policy procedures and guidance manual (PGM). Also, working closely with the treasurer and with broad consultation a more rigorous budgeting capability was introduced leading to approval by the BOD of a budget for 1921/22 which will support us well and which reflects our intention to continue to make a charitable financial gift in support of programs of the CWM.

On the financial front under the capable hand of our treasurer and with prudent financial management by the BOD we had a successful year. The treasurer will be furnishing our 1920/21 financial statements for consideration during our next AMM. Furthermore, we underwent a full and successful external review by a professional accounting firm of our 2019/20 financials, and we plan to utilize their services once again in the interest of full compliance and accountability.

CLOSING COMMENTS

As I prepare this report, in the continuing environment of the pandemic, the future is unclear, but it is comforting to know that we have learned to accommodate to the circumstances and to develop in the face of the challenges and what may become in many ways the face of a new reality.

As we move ahead, we look forward to introducing the newsletter, continuing to refine our new website and leveraging our newly developed virtual and online skills to advantage. In the month of May we plan to hold a small event where we present the CWM with our 2020/21 financial contribution. Circumstances permitting, we may be able to do this onsite; otherwise, it will be virtual.

Notwithstanding the challenges, we are blessed with a supportive membership and donor base and a knowledgeable, energetic and enthusiastic BOD. At the December AMM we created the 2021/22 BOD, renewing many and welcoming some excellent new directors. For those leaving the BOD, we are grateful for their many contributions and as is our practice we will honour them at a luncheon when circumstances permit. At the first BOD meeting we renewed the existing slate of corporate officers.

Your BOD is charged with leading and managing the Friends as a federally incorporated registered charity. I find it gratifying that the directors and the other volunteers, newly minted or otherwise, all display such a positive and upbeat attitude. In my opinion this is due largely to personal motivation and the inspiring opportunity to represent you the Friends and to serve the worthwhile and noble cause of supporting the CWM, a great Canadian treasure. I know that many of us find this service both motivational and helpful in the struggle with difficult times,

Dear Friends, donors and supporters, thank you for continuing to stay the course. Collectively we all share in the significant efforts and achievements this year all of which are products of your commitment. Please stay with us, be well and be kind to one another.

Yours aye,



Robert Hamilton

President

The Friends of the Canadian War Museum

