



CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Inside
THIS ISSUE

Unidentified ship 2
 Museum exhibits
 out in the community..... 4
 An impostor
 or the real “McCoy? 6
 Ringing the changes in
 Museum Square 7
 Contact Us 8
 Donations 8

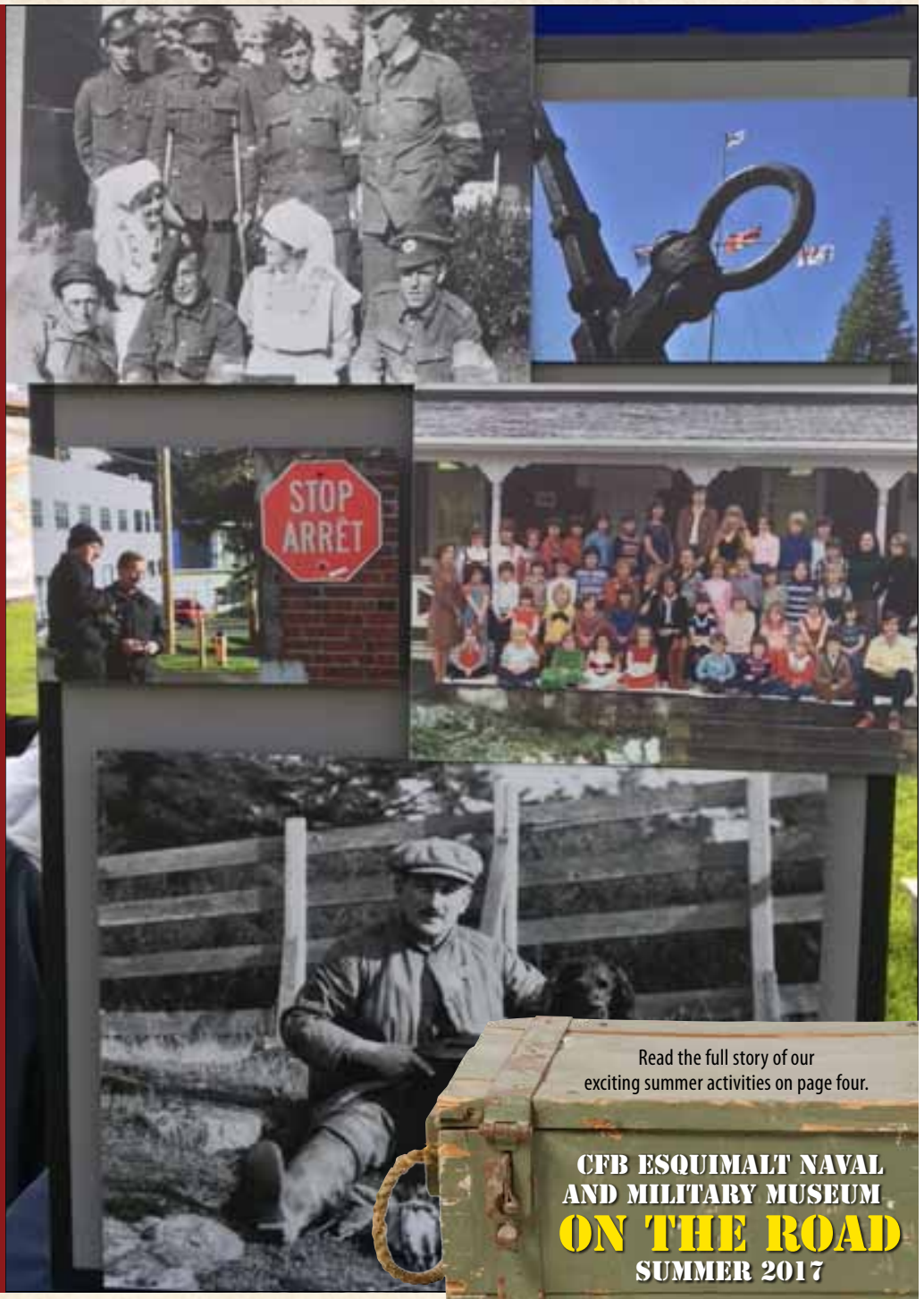


CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum is located at Naden on Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in the city of Victoria, which is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, province of British Columbia, Canada.

The museum’s goal is to collect, preserve, interpret and display the history and heritage of the naval presence on Canada’s West Coast and of the military on Southern Vancouver Island.

Statutory holiday closures

- Statutory holiday in lieu of
Remembrance Day:
 Monday 13 November 2017
- Christmas Day:**
 Monday 25 December 2017
- Boxing Day:**
 Tuesday 26 December 2017
- New Year’s Day:**
 Monday 01 January 2018



Read the full story of our exciting summer activities on page four.

CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL AND MILITARY MUSEUM
ON THE ROAD
 SUMMER 2017



Unidentified Ship

THE PHOTO of an unidentified ship (next page) was donated to us in August by Senator Pat Bovey, on behalf of Bovey Marine Ltd. of

Vancouver.

When I first showed this photo to retired Master Mariner, Capt. Hill Wilson, he said it was one of the best photos of a Park ship he had ever seen, and that this was saying a lot, since as a collector of merchant ship photos he had at least 1500 photos in his collection.

He was particularly impressed by how well you could make out the anti-torpedo nets on the port side of the ship and the Oerlikon 20 mm gun at the stern of the ship.

He guessed that it was returning to Vancouver after passing its sea trials, but he could not tell me the name of the ship.

He said it wasn't unusual to put the ship's name on wooden boards and to only display those boards at the bow of a ship, when you were entering a port.

Whenever you try to identify a photo, it is always good to go over all the known facts.

Here is what we know for sure about this photo:

- It is an "official photo" taken by Chic Greenwood, staff photographer for West Coast Shipbuilders Ltd., Vancouver, B. C.
- Its photo number is 444.
- It was most likely taken from Prospect Point Lookout in Stanley Park. This lookout is located just west of the Lions Gate Bridge and Capt. Hill Wilson assures me that the buildings in the background are a lighthouse that stood at the entrance to Vancouver Harbour.
- The vessel is definitely a WWII cargo ship. West Coast Shipbuilding built three classes of these ships: 1) the North Sands/Ocean Type; 2) the Victory type; and 3) the Canadian type.
- This ship is of the Victory type. The distinctive features of this type are the large lifeboats fore and aft which are suspended at a 45 degree angle to the main deck, and well as two more lifeboats which are mounted on davits near the ship's funnel.

West Coast Shipbuilding built 29 Victory type ships of which 7 were tankers, so this leaves 22 possible ships. Of the 22, six were Fort ships, 11 were Park ships and 5 were built for the Royal Navy.

The Fort ships were leased to Britain and used on Atlantic convoys between North American and

THE MUSEUM *Team*

Museum Team

- Debbie Towell – Curator
- Joseph Lenarcik – Assistant Curator
- Clare Sharpe – Museum Exhibit Designer/Webmaster / Volunteer Coordinator/ Newsletter Editor
- Tatiana Robinson – Archival Assistant
- Selena Gillespie – Special Projects
- Sarah Taylor – Special Contracts & Services
- Francois Bouchard – Museum workshop staff



Our Active Volunteers

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Cecil Baker | Clarence Lockyer |
| Don Bendall | Brian McGregor-Foxcroft |
| Valerie Chatten | Florence McGregor-Foxcroft |
| Jeremy Clunn | Paul O'Reilly |
| Janet Kay Curley | Tom Pound |
| Chris Fraser | Zoila B. Proud |
| Dave Freeman | Greg Sharpe |
| Michael Harrison | Don Thomas |
| Bob Hewitt | Norm Truswell |
| Gerry Kennedy | Ed Widenmaier |

Britain. They were the first ships built and they had the highest casualty rate.

The Park ships were built later and were used on two main runs. The first was between B.C./Washington State, Australia, New Zealand, Peru and Chile. The second was between Argentina/Uruguay, South Africa and India. There were only two Park ships lost to enemy activity, and another two lost by accidents at sea.

If we assume the ship in the photo is a Park ship, then it has to be one of the following: Sunnyside Park, Parkdale Park, Queens Park, Atwater Park, Tuxedo Park, Weston Park, Cornish Park, Queensborough Park, Winona Park, Montebello Park or Waverley Park.

Any additional information our readers can give us about this picture would be greatly appreciated.

~ Joseph Lenarcik, Assistant Curator



Unidentified Victory ship WWII.

To Our Readers

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Merci!

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Museum Exhibits

OUT IN THE

Community

The CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum has had a busy summer.

Special Projects Contractor Selena Gillespie and our two summer students from the University of Victoria, Myles Beaman-Dodd and Erin Spence, participated in a number of open houses and public events around the Greater Victoria Capital Region District (CRD). (In previous years this outreach work for the museum at public events was carried out by one staff member, Clare Sharpe).

We began the season on May 27th at the Canada 150 event at Fort Macaulay.

Fort Macaulay, now known as Macaulay Point Park, began as a coastal defence fortress built in 1895 by the Royal Engineers.

A popular park for dog-walking, picnicking and bird-watching, the park has now been further enhanced with permanent interpretive plaques for the buildings and gun emplacements still located within its grounds.

The beginning of July saw the CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military hosting a Christmas in July Open House event.

Our museum exhibits were decked out with festive cheer.

Celebrating our 32nd anniversary with us were representatives from the BC Aviation Museum, the Ashton Armoury Museum, and members of the

Victoria-Esquimalt Military Re-enactors Association (VEMRA).

A Civil Defence-style tea was provided as well as cupcakes and sno-cones aplenty.

The end of July saw Selena and Myles travelling up to Sidney to participate in the BC Aviation Museum Open House. We contributed to the atmosphere of this popular event by featuring displays about the Canadian Naval Air Service. These included a slideshow of Canadian Naval Air history researched and developed

by Selena, as well as feature panels on Lt Hampton Grey, VC, DSC RCNVR, Cdr. William "Bill" Henry Atkinson, DSC, MLD, RCNVR, Lieutenant-Commander Roy Sydney Baker-Falkner, DSO, DSC, MIDRN, and the "Canadian Raleighites", all created by the Museum's Exhibit Designer specially for the event.

To provide interactivity for kids of all ages we bought a button/badge maker this summer.

Using a template, people were able to draw whatever inspired them and we would then press it into a button right there on the spot.

We encountered skill-levels of all types including some very enthusiastic and talented artists.

We took our button-maker to the rest of the events that we participated in over August and September, including the Esquimalt 150 Event at Bullen Park on August 12th.

Here Selena and Erin featured the history of the Naval Base in Esquimalt.

A week later, Selena and Myles spent the day out at the Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site celebrating their Fab Forts Event. Our focus this time was on Coastal Defence in and around Esquimalt Harbour. This was a fantastic





Museum summer student Myles Beaman-Dodd at the BC Aviation Museum open house, July 29, 2017.

family event, with the Victoria-Esquamalt Military Re-enactors Association, the Pacific Association for Recreating the Middle Ages, and members of the 5th (British Columbia) Field Artillery Regiment, among others, all participating.

The event culminated in a mass water gun fight at the Belmont Battery.

The busy summer open house/event season concluded for us with a final event on Saturday, 17 September, at the CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum as part of the Victoria Foundation Community Day. This event coincided with Formation Fun Day at CFB Naden.

Popular attractions across the CRD took part in welcoming the public to free events and open houses across the city.

All in all, it was a busy, successful summer season full of opportunities to connect with our local Esquamalt community as well as the larger Capital Region.

We look forward to planning and preparing for next summer's outreach program.



Museum summer student Erin Spence staffs the button-making station at our display for Esquamalt municipality's August 12 2017 event for Canada's 150th.

An Impostor or the Real “McCoy”

When is a shirt not just a shirt? We have many articles of clothing in our collection, some being copies of the same piece of clothing: shirts, ties, trousers, coats, etc. Museums will usually keep multiple copies of the same item. This is one way of risk managing the collection.

So, it is not unusual when we look at our collection of clothing that it elicits nothing more than a disinterested glance or even the typical hand over mouth to stifle a yawn.

So, when is a shirt not just another in a series of shirts?

That question was asked and answered with a recent email inquiry through our website. We received a request from Taylor Reeves who, after a conversation with his Nana, wondered if we had an article of clothing from Ferdinand “Waldo” Demara, none other than “The Great Impostor” *.

Ferdinand Demara served aboard HMCS Cayuga assuming the role of a doctor with the rank of Surgeon-Lieutenant under the false name of Joseph Cyr.

Of course, he was no such thing, yet still he managed to perform numerous minor surgeries. His exploits would later be told in a Hollywood motion picture with Tony Curtis in the starring role.

After Mr. Reeves email inquiry, we began our hunt.

Did his grandfather actually come in contact with and receive an article of clothing from Demara?

We keep photographic records and spreadsheets of our artefacts and we did indeed have a tropical shirt with the name of “Cyr” written in black ink along the hem.

This in turn led us to the donor file of Taylor Reeve’s grandfather,

Mr. W. P. Hodgkin, who when he donated the shirt, wrote to us:

“I sailed in Korea in HMCS Cayuga, at the time the medical officer was an impostor. Interesting times. The Sick Bay was directly above the Captain’s office. I was the secretary to Commander Plomer. I can recall many hours at sea visiting with Ferdinand Demara, he was a fascinating talker.

“The accompanying tropical shirt with J. Cyr in black ink for the ship’s laundry, was one of two he gave me because they were too small.

“They have been stored in the trunk ‘all these years’ and while they are somewhat discoloured, they have in truth been sent to the laundry.”

None of this would have twiggged our memories, were it not for the email from Mr. Taylor.

We like to think we can remember all of our donations in great detail.

The museum quite literally has thousands of artefacts which, up until a few years ago, we had no system in place to track them.

Thanks to the hard work of our contract employees, Tatiana Robinson and Rob Nichol, who built the system from the ground up. If it were not for Tatiana and Rob, we would still be



The tropical shirt of Ferdinand Demara, a.k.a. Joseph Cyr.



Ferdinand “Waldo” Demara (Cyr) in uniform.

searching to see whether such an item was in our collection. Instead it was a matter of minutes.

So, while this tropical shirt may seem like, just a shirt – it most certainly is not. With it comes a tall tale; one which can evoke strong memories amongst those who served.

It also brings a smile to the face of staff who come across such items and it is a pleasure to be able to share that with family members who donated the piece.

It isn’t often when we can answer the question of “when is a shirt, not just a shirt?”

I think in this case, it has indeed been asked and answered.

~ Debbie Towell



***Please see**

www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org/archives/articles/characters/ferdinand-waldo-demara for more information regarding this fascinating character of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Museum Square

RECENTLY we began a project to add kisbee rings from the museum's collection to the exterior of our workshop building in Naden 29. Kisbee rings – which the museum has an extensive collection of – are already a very recognizable feature outside our main exhibit and display buildings in Buildings 37 and 39 at Naden. So it seemed to make sense to extend the rings to show them off in an additional area, and at the same time add to the seamanlike Navy environment in and around the Museum Square.

The kisbee ring project meshes very well with a goal of mine to use more open storage at the museum. By open storage, I mean that, instead of storing artifacts in the museum warehouse in the Dockyard, some of these artifacts can, where suitable, become active exhibits as part of our public displays.

Open storage is not a new concept, in museum terms. Many museums throughout the world showcase publicly accessible displays of stored collections. In this type of presentation, large numbers of objects are made available in dense, non-thematic displays either out in the open, behind glass, or with the aid of staff. An essential difference between open storage and traditional public exhibits is that public exhibits includes themes and stories and interpretation aids like text panels to tell the visitor about the object and offer ideas about its context.

But some objects don't rely on this kind of interpretation to be meaningful. They may even gain additional meaning by being brought together in one grouping for display. Take ships' kisbee rings, of which the museum has

many fine examples. These rings, like ships' bells, evoke the vessels they once served.

In seeking out kisbee rings from the museum's warehouse collection, I tried to choose examples which represented ships recently serving in the RCN or which had special significance for members still in the Navy – HMCS PROTECTEUR being a case in point.

Another factor was the overall condition of the kisbee rings selected. Not all of the rings in the collection are robust enough to withstand display in an outdoor location. There are substantial overhangs along the verandah of Naden Bldg 29 to provide protection from the elements, and kisbee rings are, by their nature and purpose, built to be sturdy and tolerant of all kinds of weather, fair and foul. But it only made sense to pick the ones in the best overall condition. Here I received strong guidance and assistance from Tatiana Robinson, the museum's Archival Assistant, who helps to look after, preserve and document the collection.

The leadership and personnel at the Sea Training Centre at Naden were another great source of help with this project.

When I asked PO Kevin Hall at the STC for their help to add decorative nautical knotwork to the kisbee rings, he gave a very positive response. The museum supplied the materials for this project but the craftsmanship and hands-on work done by LS Ashely Wirth and LS Preston Pajot made all the difference in improving the appearance of these artifacts and reflecting the pride of the RCN in its customs and long traditions. I understand from both Leading Seamen involved that the ropework for each kisbee ring represents a minimum of 2 weeks' laborious and detailed work. I would like to thank them and everyone involved for the considerable time and effort expended on this project.

We also want to thank LS Francois Bouchard, who is currently working in the museum workshop. It was his idea to make curved brass brackets for mounting the kisbee rings, to replace the previous square metal brackets, which were not attractive. He designed the brackets himself, and hand and machine-made them at the Fleet School, with the kind use of their machinery. The finished product made by LS Bouchard is an impressive way to display the rings in style, and complements their look and proud commemoration of the ships and shore establishments they represent.

~ Clare Sharpe,
Museum Exhibit Designer



L to R: LS Preston Pajot, LS Francois Bouchard and LS Ashely Wirth with some of the newly restored and decorated kisbee rings that will now be featured on permanent display along the exterior of the museum workshop in Naden Building 29.

Write us...

We welcome your questions and comments with regard to any of the articles we have featured in this or past issues of *Headway*.

Please write to the museum at:

CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum
P.O. Box 17000 Stn. Forces
Victoria B.C. V9A 7N2

Or email:

curator@navalandmilitarymuseum.org

CFB Esquimalt

NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM

Statutory holiday closures

Statutory holiday in lieu of Remembrance Day:

Monday 13 November 2017

Christmas Day:

Monday 25 December 2017

Boxing Day:

Tuesday 26 December 2017

New Year's Day:

Monday 01 January 2018

HOURS OF OPERATION

Open Monday through Friday:

10:00am - 3:30pm

(Closed statutory holidays)

SUGGESTED DONATION

Adults \$2

Family of Four: \$5

Children, Youth & Seniors \$1

FOR INFORMATION

Call (250) 363-4312 or 5655

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VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org



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Artifact Donations

CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum holds a growing collection of files on Canadian naval vessels, biographies of leading figures in the establishment of Canada's Navy, information about the history and development of what is now Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, maps and charts, historical documents, and photographs which have been digitally scanned.

All this information is available for the interested visitor.

The museum is always looking for more documentation that can be included in its library and archive. We also seek artifacts that relate to the history of the Navy and Army on the west coast of Canada. We are particularly interested in obtaining

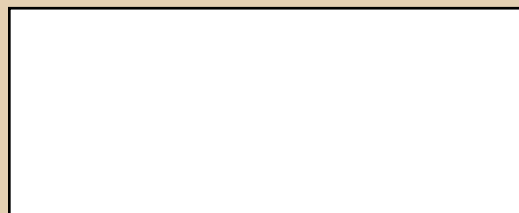
photographs for addition to the museum's growing photo database.

If you have photos, periodicals, personal documents or other items pertaining to the West Coast defences, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Women's Army Corps or the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, please contact the museum.

We are careful about adding to the collection. We want to make sure that everything collected by the museum is significant and relevant to our mandate.

If you own an item that you believe fits these guidelines and would like to share it with the future, CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum would like to hear from you.

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