

DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR NO. 2 CONSTRUCTION BATTALION - 144 AIRFIELD ENGINEERING FLIGHT (AEF) PICTOU COUNTY

On 15 June 2002, a dedication ceremony was held at the facilities of 144 AEF in the town of Pictou for the former members of the No 2 Construction Battalion, otherwise known as The Black Battalion, with the intent to increase the public knowledge of the Battalion and the military heritage of Pictou County. The No 2 Construction Battalion was one of three construction battalions that served Canada during the First World War. The establishment of the Unit was authorized on 5 Jul 1916 with its headquarters in Pictou, NS. The Battalion under the command of LCol DH Sutherland served in France as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force under the Forestry Corps and was comprised of 19 Officers and 605 enlisted men. The Battalion provided essential in-theatre support to the war effort through the provision of timber required by the Engineers and other front line units for the construction of buildings, bridges, defensive positions and roads. The unit was officially disbanded on 15 Sep 1920.

A bronze plaque commemorating No 2 Construction Battalion was unveiled and is displayed in the auditorium of the RCAF memorial building (144 AEF Building). There were various dignitaries, invited guests and members of the local Black Community present for this special event. Speeches were made by the Honourable Peter McKay MP for Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties, Mrs Muriel Baille MLA for Pictou East (on behalf of Premier Hamm) and his worship Mayor Lawrence LeBlanc from the Town of Pictou. Remarks were made by Rev Donald Sutherland, son of the former LCol Dan Sutherland (CO of No 2 Construction Battalion) and by Dr Lorne White son of the former Capt Rev William White (the Battalion Chaplain). A presentation of the 14 Airfield Engineering Squadron Badge was presented by Major Carlos Marques, CO of 14 AES, to his worship Mayor Lawrence LeBlanc for the outstanding support provided by the Town of Pictou to 144 AEF. The 14 AES badge is displayed at Pictou's Town Hall.

This important event helped not only to strengthen the military roots in Pictou County but also to increase the bond between 144 AEF and the local community.

CHIMO!



Shown in photo holding the plaque are Dr Lorne White and Pte Nolan Reddick from 144 AEF, whose great-uncle served with No 2 Construction Battalion. Standing behind them from left to right are Maj Carlos Marques, CO 14 Airfield Engineering Squadron (AES), LCol Brian Neyedlii Formation Construction Engineering Officer CFB Halifax, CWO Bill Bolch 144 AEF Warrant Officer and Capt Brian Boss Officer Commanding 144 AEF.