



**6 FIELD ENGINEER SQUADRON MUSEUM ASSOCIATION**  
**Museum Newsletter**  
**March 2018**



After a lengthy hiatus we are pleased to announce that the Museum Newsletter has returned.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

After a long absence from the Vancouver area I have moved back to the Lower Mainland and am able to once again be involved with my old unit.

My military history: - I joined 6 Field Engineer Squadron as a sapper in early 1958 and finished as a Brigadier General and Colonel Commandant of the Engineers several years later. Along the way I did a few things.

I have been a life member of the Museum for many years but since moving to New Westminster have been able to actively participate and am pleased to join an executive that has accomplished so much.

The museum executive is now poised to begin a new growth phase. The recent successful Octoberfest greatly helped our funding situation and is only the start of steps to come.

We are also striving for a wider readership. Read the section on "Lost Trails" and help us expand our distribution. Please give us the contact information for any former members and anyone who would be interested in being kept up to date on the museum and the Regiment.

Plans are underway for a larger outreach footprint to include exhibits at Regiment units in Chilliwack and Trail. In addition, we are hoping to organize more frequent social events to allow our "friends" to view museum progress and visit with each other. Also, the initiatives to become an official Canadian Forces Museum offer promise of great things in the future.

We are aiming to have future newsletters include articles on Regiment members and unit activities. The article on Exercise Artic Eagle in this issue is only a start.

T.H.M. (Jerry) Silva  
President  
6 Field Engineer Squadron Museum Association

**WORKING WITH THE NORTH VANCOUVER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES**

On 5 September 2017 Vince Larocque met with Nancy Kirkpatrick of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives. Their discussion focused on the new museum being constructed near Lonsdale Quay. The plan is to have a small rotating display covering the defense of North Vancouver. This display will be changed every 3 to 4 months, with displays on the 6<sup>th</sup> being amongst those regularly featured. There are also portable historical displays being constructed which will move between the local community centres. The plan is to have one on the 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be a need over the next year to keep in contact with the NVMA as these projects progress and to create several packages of artifacts and materials for the displays.

## **MUSEUM EXECUTIVE INVESTIGATING THE FORMATION OF A 39 COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENTAL MUSEUM**

On 19 October 2017 Michel Litalien, the Manager of the Canadian Armed Forces Museums Network, Directorate History and Heritage in the Department of National Defence visited the Lieutenant Colonel J.P.Fell Armoury. There he was met by Vince Larocque, Bob Irvine and Bill White. The informal visit and meeting ranged over a number of issues. One of the items discussed was the regiment forming an official Canadian Forces Museum. For those of you that are not aware the 6 Field Engineer Squadron Museum Association is a registered society in the Province of British Columbia and a member of the Organization of Military Museums of Canada. However, it is not an official Canadian Forces Museum. It is instead classified as an Historical Collection by the Department of National Defense.

This subject was extensively discussed at the Director's Meeting on 13 December 2017.

There are both pros (financial support from the CF) and cons (increased administrative load) into establishing a Canadian Forces Museum. However, the general consensus of the executive was that the change would be for the better. The concept discussed was similar to what is done in other regimental museums where the artifacts are held by either the regimental or museum association while the CF provides dedicated space in the armoury as well as funding for renovations, display cases, insurance, computers, software, security upgrades and alarm systems. The CF would also donate surplus equipment to the museum and provide funds for training and staff. However, the CF will not provide funds for the purchase of artifacts. So, in order to expand the collection there will be still be a need for fund raising by the museum and regimental associations.

There will also be a need to do more research on the pros and cons and then if the decision is made to proceed the next step would be to staff the necessary documents through the regiment in order to create a regimental museum. Once the documents are submitted it is expected it will be at least 12 months before approval is received from Ottawa.

If this comes to pass then there would be both a 6 Field Engineer Squadron Museum Association (holding the majority of artifacts on loan to the regimental museum and providing the funds to expand and develop the collection) and a 39 Combat Engineer Regimental Museum (which would be provided with accommodation, material, financial, personnel and training support by the Canadian Forces).

### **NEW MUSEUM EXECUTIVE**

On 21 March 2018 the Museum Association had its Annual General Meeting. As is customary at the AGM the old executive resigned and a new one was elected. Our new executive consists of:

President	T.H.M. (Jerry) Silva
Vice-President	Bob Irvine
Secretary	Connie White
Treasurer	Carla Krens
Historian/Curator/Newsletter	Vince Larocque
Director at Large	Jim Happer
Director at Large	W.A.S. (Bill) White
Director at Large	Bill Paull
Director at Large	Kaj Boysen

As all have either served on the previous executive or in similar organizations, it is a very experienced team.

## CURRENT MUSEUM PROJECTS

There are currently two projects underway, one is to construct model bridge dioramas and the second involves the installation of an historical plaque in Headley Downs in the UK.

One of the bridging dioramas, for a Single Box Girder bridge, is now installed in the museum. The Bailey bridge and Class 9 Close Support Raft models are finished and will be mounted in dioramas over the next month. Other model bridges held by the association include a Medium Raft, a Medium Girder Bridge, a Floating Boat Equipment Raft, a Mark V floating bridge, a Kapok floating footbridge and various boats. The plan is to have all of them finished and installed in the next two years.



Left - Completed Single Box Girder Bridge Diorama showing a 6 Canadian Field Company R.C.E. bridge guard being resupplied during a field exercise in England in 1943.

Below - Completed Class 9 Close Support Raft with a 6 Canadian Field Company R.C.E. jeep and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division ambulance. The diorama will show the raft coming ashore after crossing a river in Northern France in August 1944.



The second project is the installation of an historic plaque in Headley Down in the UK. This plaque will commemorate the building of a WW2 army camp by Royal Canadian Engineer units, including the 6<sup>th</sup>. This project is being coordinated at

the UK end by Angela Jackson as part of improvements to their local area. The plaque installation is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2018. Limited financial support has been promised by the Canadian Military Engineer Association and a couple of the Directors are planning to attend (at their own cost).



6 Canadian Field Company personnel constructing the Canadian Army camp in Headley Down in 1941

## **BOOKS IN PROGRESS**

The second edition of the unit history is almost complete with only the last chapter covering the period from 1990 to 2011 still to be written. However more information is needed in order to complete that chapter. It is still a work in progress. Photographs, anecdotes and documents for all periods are being gratefully accepted. If you have anything that you feel could be of use Vince Larocque has been borrowing material off people, copying relevant items and then returning the materials to their owners. So please contact Vince at [bcspartner@telus.net](mailto:bcspartner@telus.net) if you have any material you think will be suitable.

Bob Irvine is almost finished writing a book on the North Vancouver Cadet Corps. And there have been a lot of north shore cadet corps. If you have any material that Bob can use please give him a call. He can be contacted at [bcspartner@telus.net](mailto:bcspartner@telus.net)

There is also a proposal to publish the memoir of Hugh C Kernighan, one of the 6<sup>th</sup>'s WWI sappers, sometime in the near future. More information and an extract has been provided later in this newsletter.

## **RUMOURS OF OTHER CHANGES**

As some of you may have heard, during the last couple of years there has been construction work in the Armoury as part of a DND project to improve a number of the Armouries in BC. At one point during this project there was a request to take part of the museum space and set it aside for the recruiting office. This request is now in abeyance as the recruiting office has found another office in the building.

However, as we are still classified as an Historical Collection and not as Canadian Forces Museum we only occupy the building at the Commanding Officer's pleasure. And as such, if the regiment has a pressing need the possibility of losing part or all of our space still exists. However, if we become a Canadian Forces Museum we would have a dedicated space in the building. So that would no longer be an issue.

## **FINANCIAL SITUATION**

Since the last AGM the financial situation has improved considerably primarily thanks to the Octoberfest fundraising event along with donations by some of the Legions. Thanks to everyone involved in the Octoberfest. Approximately 50 people attended the event and the program included a live auction, a 50-50 draw, finger foods and craft beer from the North Shore's own Bridge Brewing Company.

## **FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM**

A Friends of the Museum list has been established, and it now has over 100 names. Although they are not due paying members of the Association they are considered friends and are being informed of the museum's activities.

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO MAJOR BOB IRVINE (R'ETD) AND GUY BLACK**

We are pleased to announce that two former members of the 6<sup>th</sup>, namely Major Bob Irvine and Corporal Guy Black have been awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. Bob has been involved in our association since its founding, serving as its president for at least two terms. Guy Black has worked as a volunteer for not only our museum, but with both the Seaforth Highlander and Port Moody Museums and was instrumental in the construction of the World War One trench system at the Port Moody Museum. Both medals are well deserved.



39 CBG personnel on Exercise Arctic Eagle 2018, Valdez Alaska, February 2018

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO CORPORAL GALLO**

Due to his outstanding work on Ex Arctic Eagle 18, we are pleased to announce Cpl Gallos of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment was presented the US Army Achievement Medal by the Commanding Officer of the 1/279 Infantry Battalion Alaska National Guard.

Ex Arctic Eagle was conducted in Alaska between February 21<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and primarily involved the Alaska National Guard. Besides the National Guard the exercise also involved the Canadian Rangers, 39<sup>th</sup> Canadian Brigade Group, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Alaska, U.S. Army Reserves; federal participation by the Environmental Protection Agency; State of Alaska Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health and Social Services, Public Safety, and Transportation; and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. In total 1100 people participated, with the 39<sup>th</sup> Canadian Brigade Group provided a platoon. Serving as part of this platoon were four members of 39 CER.

Corporal Gallo's citation reads:

*On 28 February 2018, during Exercise ARCTIC EAGLE, Cpl Gallos was tasked from his platoon to cut wood, when 3 PI, C CO, 1-297 IN BN's stove ran out of fuel. During the conduct of his task he performed above and beyond what he was expected to do and provided fuel to see the American platoon through the night.*

### **CAPTAIN CHRIS DEAS-DAWLISH PASSES AWAY**

Sadly we have to report that Captain Chris Deas-Dawlish has passed away. For those of you who didn't know Chris he served with the 6<sup>th</sup> and the Seaforth's in the 1980s and has been a regular supporter of both units ever since. Chris's Celebration of Life will be held in the Seaforth Officer's Mess between 1300 hrs. and 1600 hrs. on 8 April 2018.

## **2<sup>ND</sup> ARMY TROOP COMPANY CANADIAN ENGINEERS GETS SHELLED OUT OF CAMP – SAPPER HUGH C. KERNIGHAN**

Sapper Hugh C Kernighan was born in 1896 and joined the 6<sup>th</sup> on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1916 where he received his basic training at the Engineer Training Centre in North Vancouver. He went overseas in 1916 and on 3 March 1917 was posted to 4 Section of 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Troop Company in France, joining them on the 17<sup>th</sup>. He served with them for the rest of the war. After the war while waiting for repatriation in England he met Alice Harrison. On 1 April 1919 they were married in the parish church in Crowborough England and sailed to Canada six weeks later.

In 1930 he wrote his memoirs. It is a fascinating and honest story covering not only his wartime experiences but his move back to Canada with his war bride, his reintegration back into civilian life and how his civilian peers reacted to his military experience. More recent veterans with similar experiences who read his memoirs will no doubt say "Some things never change.", whether it be the pre-deployment training, the reception of the "newby" by the veterans, the randomness of death on the battlefield or the return to civilian life.

After his return Hugh worked for 35 years as a personnel manager in an oil refinery. He passed away on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1965. Alice passed away a year later on November 10<sup>th</sup> 1966.

In 2017 Guy Black made contact with the Kernighan family who kindly lent a copy of Hugh's manuscript to the Museum Association as well as his WW1 photo album. Plans are now underway to publish an annotated version of the manuscript with maps, war diary extracts, photos, drawings and organizational charts.

*The day we were shelled out of camp near Chateau de La Haye we had a number of laughs. It was a naval gun that was shelling and all night we could hear the double report that is peculiar to that sort of gun but we heard no whine of the shell, and arguments were great as to whether it was a shell or one of our own guns firing from the railway near by.*

*The explosion only came every so often about 10 min apart. In the morning we were pulling on our boots, when "bam" and one lit in the parade just in front of our hut. There was no doubt in our minds after that. We were told to scatter, when away went the washroom, so three of us climbed a little ridge and sat there to watch the camp blow up, when "bang" one hit just behind us. We left there in quick time believe me. Just behind the camp was an open field and our adjutant, said "lets play baseball". You see we were waiting word from Hdqts. whether to abandon camp or not.*

*"I'll play 1<sup>st</sup> base" and he ran over to take up his position there. When suddenly there was no first base and the adj was just getting up covered with mud. "To hell with 1<sup>st</sup> base" he said and everyone cleared out. He was pretty shaky after that and when one of the fellows yelled "Here's another", he took a header into the dirt again and everyone laughed. He got up looking about as sore as one could possibly be, but he was a good sport and didn't take it out on Shorty as he very easily could have done.*

*The cooks stayed to cook dinner but the rest of us scattered. ½ a doz played poker with a low stump for a table. Five minutes after they came in for dinner, the stump went up. We were glad to leave there alright.*

Sapper Hugh C Kernighan Unpublished Memoirs

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Army Troop Company War Diary Extract April 1918** Place X7.C.5.3 Sheet 36 S.E.

- 9 April 1918 ...The enemy commenced shelling the camp around 9:30 PM and continued shelling at 20 minute intervals during the night.
- 10 April 1918 Shelling of camp was continued. The shells which he used were roughly measured and were found to be about 7-5 base fuse. The company evacuated billets at 4:30 PM and were temporarily billeted at the hospital at QUATRE VENTS.

Sapper Hugh Kernighan with two unidentified lady friends in Vancouver in 1916



In the Engineer Training Centre in North Vancouver in 1916. Left to Right Frank Montador, Hugh Kernighan and George Walker



Above – Number 4 Section of 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Troop Company, Canadian Engineers in Mons, France after the Armistice.

Right – Alice and Hugh Kernighan on the Alexander Bridge over the Fraser River in the late 1920s.



## SOCIAL EVENTS

Since the last AGM on 31 May 2017 there have been a few functions held at the Armoury in conjunction with the Squadron, the JP Fell Pipe Band and the friends of the Museum Association.

This year these included;

- D-Day Dinner on 03 June 2017
- Major Bob Irvine Departure with Dignity 30 September 2017
- Octoberfest 6FESMA Fundraising Event 14 October 2017
- Remembrance Day 11 November 2017
- Burns Supper 27 January 2018

### **Port Tasting Meet and Greet**

14 April 2018

Combined Mess

Lt Col J.P. Fell Armoury

1513 Forbes Avenue

North Vancouver B.C.

Early Bird Tickets \$30

Tickets at the Door \$40

For tickets and further Information contact

[Kaj.Boysen@gmail.com](mailto:Kaj.Boysen@gmail.com)

### **Military Gala**

#### **Hosted This Year By 39 Combat Engineer Regiment**

12 May 2018

Sheraton Wall Centre - 1088 Burrard St, Vancouver BC

Mess Kit / Black Tie

Timing: 1800 for 1900 Hours

For More Information <http://militarygala.ca>

For tickets: <http://militarygala.ca/get-tickets/>

### **D-Day Dinner**

2 June 2018

Lt Col J.P. Fell Armoury

1513 Forbes Avenue

North Vancouver B.C.

Details still to be announced

### **39 Combat Engineer Regimental Dinner**

29 September 2018

Osoyoos B.C.

Details still to be announced

### **Octoberfest 2018**

October 2018 Date - To Be Confirmed

Combined Mess

Lt Col J.P. Fell Armoury

1513 Forbes Avenue

North Vancouver B.C.

## LOST TRAILS

During the course of time everyone loses track of people and events. In order to help restore contact we will be running a regular column asking people if they can help out. To start the process we have two photographs that we are looking to put names to. If you have an answer please contact Vince Larocque.



Unidentified Driver of a 6 Canadian Field Company RCE Half Track – August 1944 – Northern France

Demolition training of two female drivers and a new sapper. Nelson Island Wharf Demolition Exercise Fall of 1974. Although women at the time couldn't be field engineers the 6<sup>th</sup> still trained their female soldiers in the handling of explosives up to and including live firing. In the photo the three are getting their final briefing before firing their first basic charge. Later in the day they joined the demolition teams working on the wharf. The person on the left is Pte. Maria Romanelli. The question is "Who are the other two?"



We are also looking to make contact with the following individuals. Some of who may or may not have an email address. If you have any information please let us know at [bcsapper@telus.net](mailto:bcsapper@telus.net) as we would very much like to make contact with them and amongst other things add them to the newsletter's mailing list.

Lawrence Devries  
Donna Hewrelko  
Andrew Longmore  
Nancy Staley

Rodney Dunbar MM  
Brian Jarron  
Neil McNeill  
Julien Syme

Darcy Fysh  
Mark Kolhass  
Chris Shaw  
Naomi Yamamoto

## RESEARCHING CANADIAN SOLDIERS OF THE GREAT WAR – by Vince Larocque

As the unit's historian one of the commonest questions I get is "My grandad served in World War One. How do I find out more about him?"

Well, the place to start is the National Archives of Canada. They have been steadily digitizing the World War One personal files for the last few years, and as of March 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 568,203 of the 640,000 files are online. And more are being added every month. And they are free.

First start with <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx> This will give you an introduction and links to pages on things like military abbreviations. From this page you can next go to the personnel records by clicking on "Search Database". This will lead you to:



Fill in the search form and click Search. If you have an ancestor by the name of John Smith – good luck – you will get 734 entries.



However, there are only two entries for James Fell.

And it is pretty obvious which one the armoury was named after.

To go to his page click on his name and a new page will appear at:



<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/item.aspx?IdNumber=387291>

If you only want his attestation papers click on the image at the right. If you want the full file click on the Digitized Service File in PDF format. But be warned some of them are very large and take a while. And since the files are complete they contain things like medical and charge reports - so you may find out more than you wanted to.

Next issue – So after looking at his personnel file you know who grandpa served with but now the question is "What did his unit do?" - Researching World War One War Diaries.

**WISDOM FROM A WW2 VETERAN  
FOUND ON THE WEB AT @MEMESONHISTORY**

“If you encounter a unit you can’t identify, fire one round over their heads so it won’t hurt anyone.  
If the response is a fusillade of rapid, precise rifle fire, they’re British.  
If the response is a s\*\*storm of machine-gun fire, they’re German  
If they throw down their arms and surrender, they’re Italian  
And if nothing happens for five minutes and then your position is obliterated by support artillery or an airstrike... they’re American.”

**THE CADET CORPS WITHOUT A NUMBER**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Field Company Canadian Engineers Cadet Corps was the only cadet corps in Western Canada that did not have a number assigned to it. In fact, in all of Canada, just 3 cadet corps were discovered that had not been given a number and all 3 were Engineer cadet corps!

Back in 1902 when Major-General Cochrane the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dundonald was in command of the Canadian Militia he introduced the system of numbering cadet corps. The 3 Engineer corps all came into existence after 1902 which begs the question; was a mistake made?

As it turns out, these corps were definitely authorized but under a completely different set of orders than those used for all the others. After much digging through old documents held in Ottawa, it was discovered that there was a *Militia Order, Number 65* published on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1907, under the heading; “*Cadet Engineer Corps, organization and establishment of.*” It reads in part: “**The Honourable the Minister has been pleased to approve of the organization of Engineer Cadet Corps in connection with Universities on the same lines as Cadet Corps.**”

The first Engineer corps to be authorized a month after the order came out was the Dalhousie University Engineer Cadet Company in Halifax, followed in January 1911 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Engineer Cadet Company in Toronto and finally the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Company Canadian Engineers Cadet Corps of North Vancouver in January 1917.

Why the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Company corps was included with the others remains somewhat of a mystery, considering it was not connected to a University. Perhaps a mistake was made in that regard and if noticed was never corrected. And we must allow for Army Headquarters being very much preoccupied in 1917 with World War I.



**Major-General Douglas Cochrane,  
the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dundonald.**

Photo: Canadian  
Press Syndicate  
(1904)