

2011

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Recommended Citation

LCMSDS "Table of Contents." Canadian Military History 20, 3 (2011)

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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



Volume 20, Number 3

Summer 2011

CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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ISSN 1195-8472
Agreement No.0040064165
Publication mail registration no.08978

Canadian Military History is published four times a year in the winter, spring, summer and autumn by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University.

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Printed in Canada by E GRAPHICS GROUP,
Kitchener, Ontario



Subscription Information

Canada: One year (4 issues): \$45.00
International: One year (4 issues): US\$60.00

Subscriptions are handled by
Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Order or Renew online at:
<http://www.wlupress.wlu.ca/press/Journals/cmh/>
Order or Renew by phone at:
(519) 884-0710 ext.6124

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program toward our mailing costs.



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From the Editor-in-Chief

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I just realized with a jolt that five years have passed since I took up this position in the summer of 2006. With that experience I have become less surprised at how different writers in different parts of the country make submissions on linked topics in good time to give a clear focus to an issue. A central element in the alchemy is the continuous quiet work by Mike Bechthold, our managing editor, in encouraging folks near and far (and surely he never puts on the heat...). Even allowing for Mike's benevolent influence, the present issue has emerged with a particularly tight focus on commemoration.

Andrew Horrall presents an important example of artefact based research. When Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King toured the Canadian Army's battlefields in 1947, the Dutch town of Putte presented him with a plate in fine Delft china that commemorated the 12 members of the Essex Scottish Regiment killed while liberating the town in October 1944. It was a small action, scarcely noticed then or later among the greater battles that preceded and followed, and it appears that the prime minister did not really appreciate the plate's significance. It sits, un-interpreted, among the many mementos displayed at Laurier House in Ottawa, Mackenzie King's residence during his years as prime minister. Andrew has unearthed the story of the plate and its significant place in the development of Dutch commemoration of the war, and especially the special place of the Canadian forces in that commemoration.

Vanessa McMackin and Jean-François Born have produced articles

on two successful efforts to revive remembrance of particularly striking fatal casualties during the opening days of the Normandy campaign in 1944: the murder of Canadian prisoners of war by members of the 12th SS Panzer Division, and the deaths in combat of three brothers of the Westlake family of Toronto. Both Vanessa and Jean-François were inspired to take up the research by their participation as students in the Canadian Battlefield Foundation study tours of Normandy, in which both the Laurier Centre and the University of New Brunswick's Gregg Centre have played a leading part.

David Bercuson has kindly allowed us to print his keynote address at the May 2011 Military History Colloquium concerning conflicts over representation of the past, the difficult balance between commemoration and interpretation of the historical record. David relates his experience in the controversy over the Canadian War Museum's text panel on the bombing offensive against Germany, together with his reflections on that experience, and the state of scholarship on the bombing offensive.

Andrew Iarocci, drawing on research he did on the Canadian War Museum collections during his fellowship at the museum, relates the story of an earlier controversy. When in 1917 the British War Office authorized the wearing of chevrons in the imperial forces denoting years of service in war zones as a morale boosting measure, many Canadians, including General Sir Arthur Currie, protested: eligibility was too broad and thus the chevrons were meaningless. Nevertheless, in

the postwar years, veterans seized on the once despised chevrons as a symbol for commemoration.

Tyler Wentzell, whose biographical study of Brigadier J.K. Lawson, commander of the Canadian "C" Force at Hong Kong in 1942 appeared in the Spring 2011 issue (vol.20, no.2, pp.14-26), visited Hong Kong last summer and toured the battlefield sites. Here he has assembled photographs from his trip, together with images of the same locations taken shortly after the war.

Ed Storey, who has become something like the journal's in-house expert on land forces equipment, has produced notes on the technical development of the Light Armoured Vehicles family, together with extensive references to tracked vehicles in Canadian service whose history sheds further light on the LAV story. Ed was inspired by Frank Maas's piece on the LAV programs that appeared in the Spring 2011 issue (vol.20, no.2, pp.27-36).

Roger Sarty
August 2011