

## THE MUSEUM REPORT, DECEMBER 2020



2020 has been a difficult and challenging year for the 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars Museum. The impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic have had far reaching impacts in many cases. The museum was not allowed to open until July 2020 and closed at the end of August. Visitor numbers would drop from 2800 in 2019 to 560 in 2020. This drop would also be evident in a corresponding loss of revenue. Two of the museum's annual fundraising events, the Flea Market and the Balloon Fiesta, were cancelled and thus another loss in revenue ranging in the area of \$9000. In order to be allowed to open the museum to the public a sanitization program was required and daily sanitization was conducted by the summer staff. This included a sanitization of all flat surfaces in the display areas, mopping the floors and daily accounting of visitors' information. An hour per day was allocated to this requirement and resulted in an additional reduction in visitors time as well.

In addition to COVID impacts, we were also faced with the temporary closure of the museum's storage site at RHQ in Moncton while building renovations were carried out and this came with special challenges to be detailed later in this article.

I am pleased to say however that thanks to three excellent summer student employees partially funded by the Province of New Brunswick and the Federal Government and the

efforts of the museum volunteers who contributed over 1000 hours of volunteer time we were able to be open to the public when many museums locally were closed for the summer.



Dylan

Hayden

Matt

Once we got all of the pandemic requirements established and operational, we opened on 30 June 2020. The arrows were on the floor, the hand sanitizer bottles were full and the warning signs were on the doors.

In addition to their daily responsibilities, the staff started off on a summer museum to do list, the first of which called for the development of 10 blogs relating to the history of the Regiment including battles in which are now emblazoned on the guidon. This was successfully completed by mid August and these blogs are currently being posted on the webpage, one per month until May 2021. Check them out.

<http://www.8chassociation.com/blog>

Next on the list was an effort to advertise the museum locally in an effort to entice more visitors with videos featuring an artefact with its story. Five “Did you know” videos were



posted to Facebook before the museum closed for the shortened season. These are still available on the Museum Facebook and have contributed to a late surge in attendance at the end of the summer season. These videos were produced entirely by the summer staff. <https://www.facebook.com/8thHussarsMuseum/videos/322530015536785>

Running parallel to the production of the advertising videos was the development of more Lest We Forget videos honouring 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars war time casualties. First envisioned by the museum VP Stephen Wilson, these videos are available on line and will be uploaded locally at the museum as well during this coming season. Feedback from Facebook viewers has been exceptionally positive after the upload of each video. Even some families of these wartime casualties have responded.



A challenge that faced the museum volunteers this past summer was the required closure and relocating of all the museum stored artefacts at RHQ to allow for a complete renovation of the buildings heating lines. The storage area contents and many artefacts displayed at RHQ needed to be moved to temporary storage and then returned to the original site upon completion. This move entailed moving 110 storage tubs, 11 full size lockers and two racks of historic uniforms, not to mention the dozens of displayed items at RHQ.



Upon completion of the renos the same process needed to be done in reverse ensuring that every tub and locker was returned to its original place. The reason for this is that all our artifacts are registered with Canada Heritage including tub number, shelf number and room number. Errors in returning the items would require a complete inventory review to be conducted on the more than 4000 items in storage. We also appreciated that soldiers volunteered to assist in the moves which made our work load more tenable for the older volunteers and it gave them a chance to learn more about the Regimental history as they assisted in moving the stored artefacts. Security checks and condition assessments were also possible during the duration of the moves as well.

It should be noted that at this time a funding request to Heritage Canada for Covid 19 assistance was approved and we received \$5000 to offset some of our losses which at this time when all is accounted for, appears to be in the range of \$3500. Another successful grant application for \$1300 at this time will allow us to develop 5 more videos over the wintertime for advertising purposes once the museum opens in the spring. A number of significant donations were also received from Association members due to the appeal from the Hon Col Jim Lockyer. These will be acknowledged elsewhere in the Sabretache. We greatly appreciate this support and our thanks goes out to all our supporters who donated to the museum during the fundraiser.

Our kit shop sales have improved considerably this summer with the addition of the t-shirts and then the license plates. We still have stock left so if you have missed out please feel free to contact the kit shop with an order. One issue that has cropped up was the lack of the ability to accept e-transfers to purchase items and we are currently addressing that issue. <http://www.8chassociation.com/museum-gift-shop.html>

The volunteers who are currently keeping the museum operational are as follows;

|                         |                           |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Darrell Zinck, Director | Borden McLellan, Director | Mary Jane Sare, Director  |
| Rod Belliveau, Director | Brian Clancy, Director    | Dominique Hache, Director |
| Perry Fullum, Assoc Rep | Ann Taylor, Director      | Carol Carr, Treasurer     |
| Gail McLeod, Secretary  | Stephen Wilson, Vice      | Tom McLaughlan, Chair     |

The following members are volunteers;

|              |               |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cathy Spicer | Darren Spicer | Wayne Fogarty |
| Doug Sare    | Gina Kaupp    | Diane Lutes   |

It should be recognized that these volunteers have contributed over 1000 hours to the museum in the last year.

A number of significant artifacts are donated yearly and this year was no different. One of the many interesting ones that were received this year, was transferred to our museum from the Seaforth Highlanders Museum in Vancouver. This was a brass plaque commemorating the capture of a German tank during the Battle of Coriano on 14

Sep 1944 by C Sqn who were supporting the Irish Regiment of Canada in that battle. That tank was recovered from the rubble intact and presented to the GOC of the 5<sup>th</sup> Arm Div, MGen Hoffmeister. That story is told in both of the Regimental histories. The plaque is engraved to commemorate that event and was made from a German 15 cm shell. This event is also marked by a painting that was presented to the museum by the artist, Cpl (Ret) Pat McLaughlin. It should also be noted here, at that time, C Sqn was commanded by Major C McEwen, the father of one of our board members, Mary Jane Sare



Looking forward to summer 2021, we have started planning and applying for the necessary government employment programs to staff the museum for the summer as well as some grant monies to expand our displays. Yes -expand is the word. The Town of Sussex has opted to move their tourist information facility out of the train station to a new location uptown and have offered the existing floor space to the museum, which we have gladly accepted. With it comes some responsibilities and some concerns but the additional space will allow the museum to plan and implement at least 4 new displays. Our concerns center around the fact that the tourist bureau drew a large number of visitors who then would drop in to the museum which provided us with revenue that might not be so available under the new system. Time will tell.