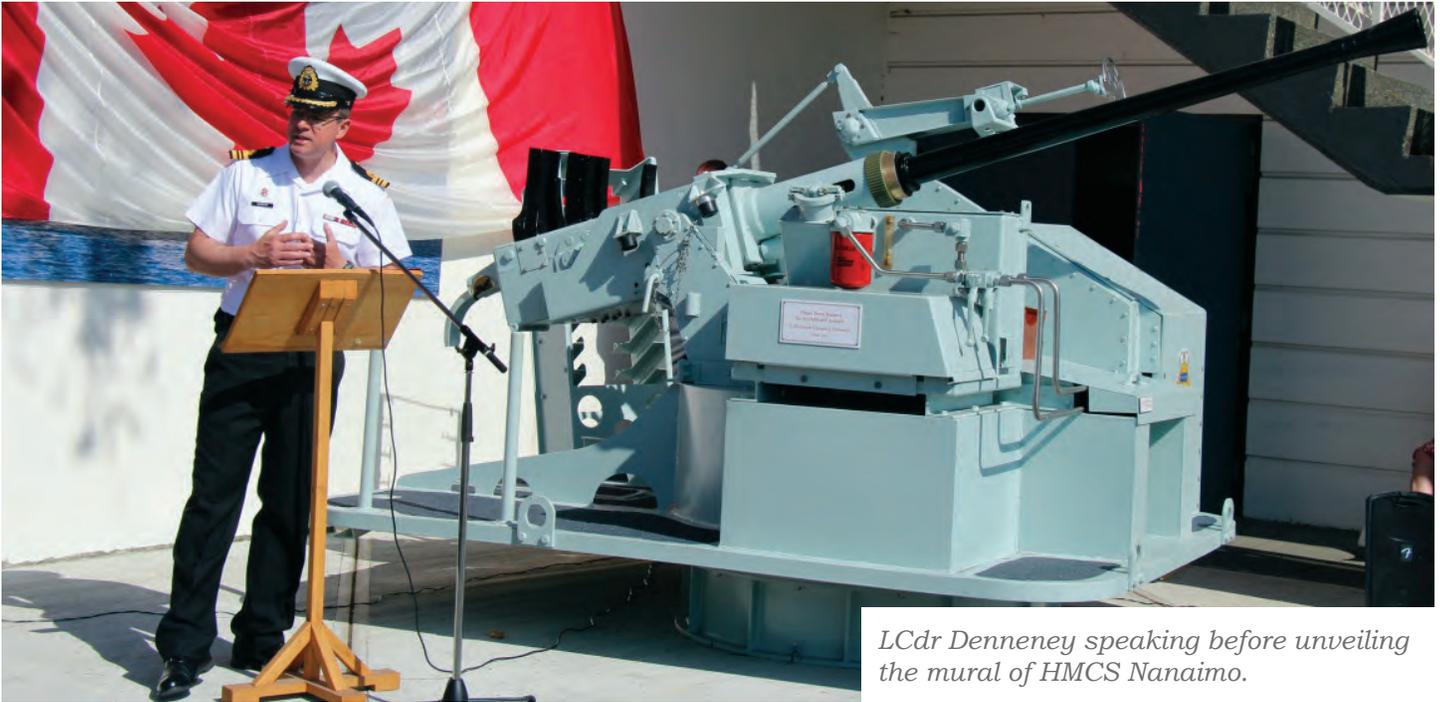




VIMM Newsletter

Summer 2017

Vancouver Island Military Museum



LCdr Dennene speaking before unveiling the mural of HMCS Nanaimo.

A Day of Celebration and Dedication

On July 1, the VIMM celebrated Canada's 150th birthday, the 20th anniversary of the commissioning of HMCS Nanaimo, and the dedication of the 40mm Bofors gun from HMCS Nanaimo, now on display beside our Wall of Honour. VIMM President Roger Bird led the museum team that arranged for the donation of the gun and its installation. On hand for the ceremonies were MP Sheila Malcolmson, MLA Len Krog, Nanaimo

Mayor Bill McKay, and a large number of the dedicated volunteers who make the museum possible.

Lieutenant Commander Shane Dennene, commanding HMCS Nanaimo, lead a contingent of the ship's crew to attend the dedication. He spoke to the assembled crowd before unveiling the mural of HMCS Nanaimo mounted on the museum wall behind the gun.



The Bofors gun is the museum's first artifact to be displayed outdoors, and by far the largest piece in our collection. We have other mementos from HMCS Nanaimo already on display alongside artifacts from the original HMCS Nanaimo (1940 - 1945).

Message from the President

We are six months into 2017 and already are 429 visitors over the number we had at this time last year. Four cruise ships (Explorer of the Seas, Celebrity Infinity, Norwegian Sun, and Europa) visited Nanaimo and we attracted many of their passengers and crew. Also, there has been an increase in international visitors and tour groups from out of town, which is very encouraging.

Phase three of our "Wall of Honour" is sold out and ready for installation. The surplus DND 40 mm Bofors Gun from HMCS Nanaimo was installed Tuesday, June 20th. Also, a mural of the ship is being completed and will be on the wall directly behind the gun. Brian and Pat have installed a small diorama on Dieppe in the army section which is the first installment on a larger display on Dieppe to be completed later this summer.

The museum is planning to have a summer BBQ this year with dates TBA. As in past years, we will try to book one of the Legions for this event. Bruce Davison has volunteered to take over the duties as volunteer coordinator which has been administered by Gord Buch for many years. A hearty "Bravo Zulu" to Gord for his fine effort and hard work over the past years. As always, I would like to thank all the directors and volunteers for their dedication and super effort in keeping the museum functioning to a high standard.

Roger Bird



The transfer of the gun from CFB Esquimalt. Roger Bird spent months organizing the acquisition and transfer.



MP Sheila Malcolmson and crew from HMCS Nanaimo.

VP Brian McFadden addresses the July 1 crowd, with President Roger Bird on deck (below).



In the year 2016 over 9,200 man hours were contributed by our volunteers!

The Vancouver Island Military Museum would not exist if not for its team of dedicated volunteers. In our 32 years not a single penny has been paid in salaries. The board of directors and tour guide docents all work to recognize Canada's amazing military history. We all do it for the love of sharing history and honouring the price paid by those who have served in the Canadian Military, the Merchant Marine, and the RCMP. The museum receives no government funding. We rely completely on donations and the generosity of local businesses, a B.C Lotteries grant, and those who choose to support us. Volunteers are always welcome and we look forward to discussing your ideas to improve what has become one of the most significant military museums in Canada. In this issue, we present a short profile of 5 of our volunteers. The remaining volunteers will be presented in future newsletters.



Roger Bird

Roger Bird - Museum president
Roger has been part of the museum for 22 years. He is an RCAF veteran having served for 34 years from 1962-1996. He served on Nanaimo Crime Stoppers on the Advisory Board and is responsible for the museum's finances and administration.

Phil Harris - Board Member

Phil has been with the museum for 18 years. He is a former RCMP member having served 41/2 years starting in 1961, then he spent 31 years with B.C Tel. Phil has volunteered with *Meals on Wheels* and *Lifeline*. Phil is responsible for all the Court Mounting of Medals at the museum and is an expert in the field.

Logan Scheer – Reception & Docent

Logan has been with the museum for 5 years. He served with the Royal Canadian Army Cadets for 5 years. He is now training to become a journeyman Electrician. Logan works the Saturday shift and is our youngest volunteer.

Norman Davis - Reception & Docent

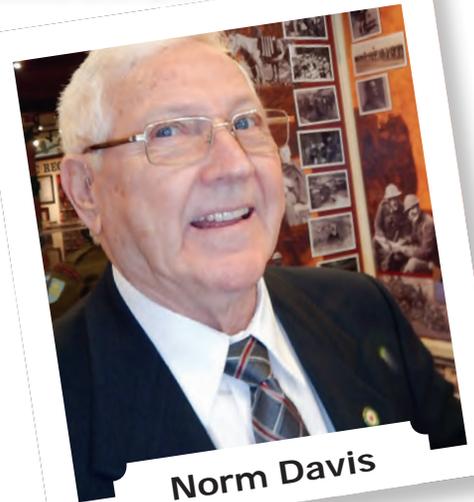
Norman is a Korean War vet who served in 1RCHA, 1950-1953. He has been part of the museum since 2013. He worked for Wajax Manufacturing in Montreal and then as a senior administrator with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in Ottawa. Norman works the Tuesday morning shift.

Brian McFadden - Vice President

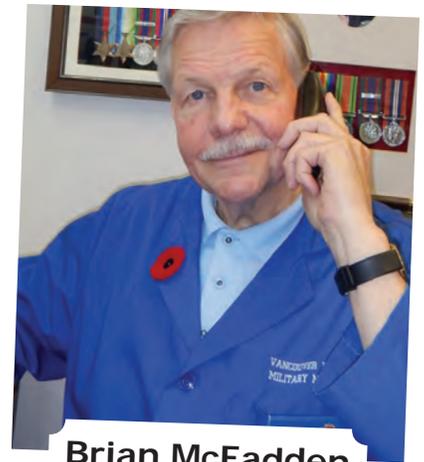
Brian has been part of the museum for 19 years. He spent 9 years in the RNVR, and RNR. Brian was part owner of a business machine manufacturing company for many years. Brian is responsible for marketing and public relations, and also creates most of the displays in the museum.



Phil Harris



Norm Davis



Brian McFadden



Logan Scheer

Nearing our 32nd year All Thanks to Volunteers

By Pat Murphy

When Ted Brothers first conceived the idea of a military museum, he never imagined in his wildest dreams that it would grow to what it is today - a well-established popular destination located on Nanaimo's dynamic waterfront, one of Nanaimo's major tourist attractions, and one of Canada's finest military museums.

Ted had paid a visit to the Duncan Legion and was impressed by their displays of firearms, helmets, pictures, and interesting military artifacts. For Ted, it was



the way a Legion should look. Ted suggested to Branch 10 Legion in Nanaimo that they should do the same thing. His idea fell on deaf ears.

Not giving up, Ted and a couple of other like-minded indi-

viduals sat around the coffee table at Ted's home with a few military items they owned and considered the possibilities of a small museum that would honour the history of the Canadian military and those who served. When Ted shared his dreams of a military museum in Nanaimo with others he was encouraged. Many offered to help while others made donations of military items or cash. All offered suggestions on how to proceed. Ted and his colleagues were passionate about the idea and they spoke of it to anybody who would listen - and they spoke often.

Soon more items were being donated just on the strength that something would happen. It became obvious to Ted that interest was high and if he kept talking to people he believed a building or a location would be offered. Once that happened the museum could start to develop into a reality.

Jack Blair, the manager of Rutherford Mall in Nanaimo and an aviation enthusiast, contacted Ted and offered him a table in the Mall during Remembrance Day week in 1983. Ted arranged for a few volunteers to work the table. The display consisted of one military rifle, one helmet, a few books and framed pictures, some medals, and a few other military items. The table was a popular place for people to stop and share military stories and drop off more military items. Rutherford Mall management was aware of the popularity of the table full of artifacts, but nobody had any idea the display would be the start of one of the finest military museums in Canada.

Ted noticed an empty store front in the mall. He and Jack Blair discussed the idea of the museum (still without an official name) moving into the store front. Jack Blair turned on the lights and Ted signed a lease. It stated that Ted would leave the spot on 6 days' notice if a retail outlet wanted the space. More artifacts came in, the displays became larger and soon the growing museum had outgrown the store front and Ted moved to a 3,600 sq. ft premises within the Mall. In mid-1986 the name was registered and the Vancouver Island Military Museum was born.

The popularity of the museum attracted more volunteers. Soon regular hours of business were established with two daily shifts of 3-hour duration. Some shifts had up to 5 volunteers on duty conducting tours of the museum and sharing stories with the many



Year nteeers

visitors who dropped in to see the ever-growing displays.

As the museum became better known on Vancouver Island, the donations continued and at times placed considerable stress on the museum's volunteers. During the 25 years that the museum was at the Rutherford Mall, the availability of display space was always a major concern. At one time the museum

had to rent 3 storage lockers just to store the many donated items. Things were tight.

Then came the big change. The Mall gave the museum notice to vacate. We were fortunate to have the old municipal museum on the Nanaimo waterfront offered to us for a reasonable rent. We signed a 10 years lease and started packing. The new downtown location gave us an additional 1,500 sq. ft and it was put to good use.

The new building was completely renovated and painted entirely by volunteers, who also built the new exhibits. The work took 9 months and on Sept 2, 2011 we opened the doors to the new Vancouver Island Military Museum.

Today the museum has over 300 military firearms in its inventory. About 85 are on display, the balance of the collection is securely locked up in the armory vault. Firearms are still being donated and the museum encourages anybody with an historic firearm to donate it to the museum and receive a tax receipt for its value. The museum receives about 10 donated firearms each year.

second is a Canadian 1937 dollar bill signed by famous RCAF/RAF Spitfire ace George "Buzz" Beurling. F/L Beurling was the highest scoring fighter pilot in the RCAF. He saw service in England, Malta, and Northern Europe.

All displays are created and built in-house by volunteers, usually under the direction of Brian McFadden. The museum is fortunate to have a well-equipped woodworking shop and



We have well over 700 uniforms in storage and about 90 are on display. Uniforms arrive at the museum on a weekly basis. New space in our storage area is being created to accommodate expected new arrivals.

The museum's library has well over 2,000 military books, and donations arrive almost daily. About 6,000 books, excess to our needs or duplicates, have been donated to the Rotary book sale.

Two items that are part of our immense donated inventory are unique to our museum. The first, a signed 1939 Christmas card from Adolph Hitler to his command structure, is in our "captured German Items display." The

volunteers with the skills to complete the projects.

The museum also has gained a reputation for its fine court medal mounting service - some say the finest in Canada. Phil Harris is creative, skillful, and helps the museum make a little profit with his fine work. People from all over Vancouver Island and British Columbia use our medal mounting services.

Without the endless support of the hard work by the board members and the Docents, the Vancouver Island Military Museum would still be an idea sitting on a coffee table. Q

“Déjà Vu All Over Again?”

The Cold War

By Angus Scully

On Monday April 24, 2017, RCAF CF-18s intercepted a Russian bomber approaching Canadian airspace.

In 1945 there were hopes in many countries that an enduring world peace could be established. The Soviet Union (Russia) however, imposed Communist governments on the countries of central and eastern Europe that it had occupied. The Russians also embarked on a program of spreading Communist revolution beyond the Iron Curtain. Soviet spies were found in Canada, the USA, and the UK. Indeed, another war seemed imminent, and these fears were amplified by the Korean War and Soviet testing of nuclear weapons. The new United Nations also seemed to be inadequate to the task of keeping peace, and out of this chaos, Canada joined the USA and the countries of Western Europe to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for mutual defence. Thus began the long Cold War. It would dominate Canadian foreign and defence policy for over four decades. Many Canadians today believe that peacekeeping was the cornerstone of Canadian policy in that period, but it was the Cold War that consumed the vast majority of the defence budget.

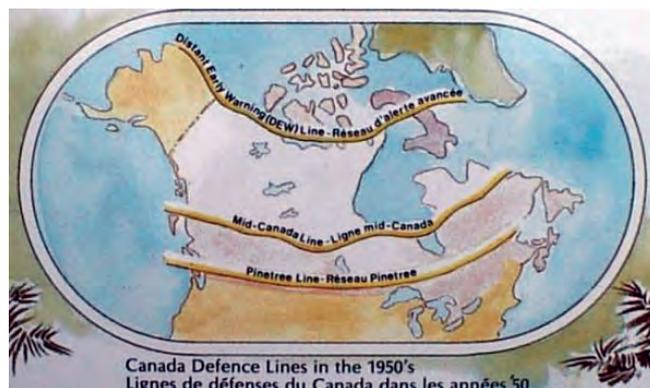
Defending Canada From Air Attack

Once the Russians had atomic bombs and long range bombers, the Canadian government faced the challenge of defending a huge area, and that meant finding new aircraft, building radar bases, and working in partnership with the Americans.

Early warning of a surprise bomber attack by the Russians and direction of interceptors required three lines of radar. Furthest north was the DEW Line (Distant Early Warning), then the Mid-Canada Line, and, on roughly the 52nd parallel, the Pinetree Line. RCAF and USAF interceptors based across the continent could be sent to destroy attacking bombers before they reached major population centres.

The Pinetree Line - Vancouver Island

The US and Canada co-operated on the construction and staffing of the 33 Pinetree Line radar stations. By the early 1960s the RCAF had taken over responsibility for all of the stations. On average, there were 300 people at each station, about one third civilians. The whole Pinetree



Cold War radar sites

Line was closed in 1988 as NORAD concentrated on perimeter defence and switched to the automated North Warning System. There were three Pinetree stations on Vancouver Island.

Tofino

In operation for only two years, it was replaced by improved radar at Holberg (see below). The site is still open today as part of the National Park. Visitors to Tofino should look for signs to Radar Hill, on the west side of the highway near the north end of the Park. There are beautiful views of the Tofino area from the old site at the top of the hill, and there is wheel chair access (although it is steep). Also on the site is the Kapyong Memorial, remembering the heroic battle of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in 1951 during the Korean War. (The VIMM has on display a Chinese Army bugle from the battle.)

Comox

Comox was central to the defence of western Canada and the US during the Cold War. In 1954, RCAF 51 Aircraft Control and Warning (radar) Squadron was formed at CFB Comox as part of the Pinetree radar line. The Pinetree function of Comox ended in 1958, with CFS Holberg's upgraded radar taking over (see below). RCAF 409 "Nighthawk" All Weather Fighter Interceptor Squadron began operating at Comox on 1 November 1954. This squadron flew CF-100 and then CF-101 fighters, directed by the Pinetree stations and SAGE. Today RCAF 407 Long Range Patrol Squadron operates from Comox, and CFB Comox serves as a forward operating base for temporary deployments of the CF-18 Hornet fighter-interceptor. The Comox Airforce Museum has on display aircraft from the Cold War.



*Search Radar
Tower, Tofino 1956*



*The Kapyong memorial on Radar
Hill, Tofino, B.C.*



*A 409 Sqdn CF-100 from Comox
on patrol over Georgia Strait, BC*



Holberg

In 1950, construction for CFS Holberg began on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. The station was operational in 1954, with RCAF 53 Aircraft Control and Warning (radar) Squadron. The radar site was on Mount Brandes, with base facilities in Holberg at sea level. The station became the primary Pinetree station on the west coast, not closing until 1991.

Holberg was a remote place. Typically, arrivals had endured a plane trip from Vancouver, a bus ride of 16 miles, a two - hour ship ride, and then 4 miles by bus again. There was also 3900mm of rain per year on average. The domestic site had barracks, married quarters, a school for 150 students, a bowling alley, hospital, radio station, gym, pool, and a Hudson's Bay Store. About 1000 people lived on the Base.

Cold War RCAF Barracks at CFS Holberg, on Vancouver Island.



Holberg Radar 1970

On Display at the Museum

The Cold War

Royal Canadian Air Force – Protecting Canada

The Korean War

Museum Directors & Staff

Roger Bird, President
 Brian McFadden, Vice President,
 Public Relations & Media
 Phil Harris, Secretary/Treasurer
 Pat Murphy, Models and Displays
 Pat Patterson, Armoury
 Jack Ziebart, Computer/Archives
 Gord Buch, Volunteer Coordinator
 Bill Brayshaw, Acquisitions
 Angus Scully, Newsletter Editor

100 Cameron Avenue, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 0C8
 250-753-3814 | oic@vimms.ca | www.vimms.ca