

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

The Buzzer

Volume 52 – issue 6 NOVEMBER 2023



This Machine Gun Corps Cap Badge was recovered by Andy Coward in June of 2023.
The Corps was created in 1915 and decommissioned in 1922.

The Buzzer is published by and for the membership of the CMDC –
Canada's oldest active metal detecting club.
Visit us on the internet @ www.cmdc.org.

GPS CENTRAL SEEDED HUNT & BBQ EVENT

On September 23, 2023 – GPS Central did it again. They pulled out all the stops, and provided the Alberta metal detecting community with an exciting, seeded hunt event. The GPS Central / RadioWorld Central seeded hunt started at 10:00 am at Elbow Park in Calgary, followed by a BBQ lunch.

The staff of GPS Central was hard at work early in the morning. By the time detectorists started arriving between 9 and 10 – the hunt area had been liberally seeded with silver coins, police memorabilia pins, and foreign coins. GPS Central also planted marked MineLab tokens that would provide a chance to win special prizes. Every hunter was also given some swag, and a ticket for entry into the draw for door prizes to be awarded after the hunt. Most of the detectorists who attended were from the Calgary and Southern Alberta area, but detectorists also attended from Red Deer and the Edmonton area.

At 10:00 am the time arrived for the event start. Everyone chose walked onto the field and chose a start spot, and waited with their coils up in the air until George Valentine of GPS Central started the event. Within moments happy detectorists were busy swinging coils and digging targets. There were happy smiles, and detectorists thrilled to be digging up some pretty cool finds. The hunt lasted about an hour and a half, and then was called for great BBQ lunch. Many of the buried coins were over 50 years old. There were multiple silver 50-cent pieces, silver quarters and dimes, cool foreign coins and police pins recovered from the park.

During the BBQ lunch detectorists chatted with others in the hobby, talking about recent hunts and favourite finds. After lunch, George Valentine and the GPS Central crew drew the door prizes, which included water bottles, metal detector starter sets, and pinpointers – as well as other items. Then George called for the detectorists who had recovered the marked tokens. Those who recovered the marked Minelab tokens were the lucky winners of new detectors, pinpointers, and two gold coins. Two of the tokens were marked K1 and K2 for kids – who won child-sized detectors. As usual, it was a great event.

The Calgary Metal Detecting Club is very fortunate to have GPS Central as one of our club sponsors. GPS Central not only has a brick and mortar store, but provides online sales and shipping. They are dealers for several different detector manufacturers. I urge the CMDC members to continue the development of this great relationship by making sure to shop there.

A Big shout-Out, and our thanks to George Valentine, and the staff of GPS Central for a great event.



WWI Medal Return to Family

This story begins a century ago when a young Canadian soldier returned to Canada after years on the battlefields of Europe. Walker Jones returned to Peterborough Ontario with a British War Medal. He wore it only on Remembrance Day, but after a few years the medal went missing – until the Fall of 2019.

Detectorist John Quackenbush was detecting a small park in Peterborough's south end when he got a solid sliver reading about 8 inches under the ground. When he dug down he recovered Walker Jones' WWI medal, with his name and ID number inscribed around the edge.

Quackenbush wanted to locate the family and return the medal, so he contacted the Trent Valley Archives. Archives researcher Shelagh Nick was able to determine that Jones lived into his 90s and passed away in 1989. He had no children, but Nick was able to discover nieces and nephews. One grand-nephew of Walker Jones, Christopher Ferguson, who lived out in BC took a particular interest in the find. Ferguson was proud of his family's military history. He had a collection of war memorabilia from different family members, including Walker Jones' photo and war diary. Christopher Ferguson had even named his son after his late great uncle.

In December of 2019, Christopher Ferguson flew out to Peterborough to meet with John Quackenbush and Shelagh Nick. Ferguson was very emotional when he received the medal from John Quackenbush. He was thrilled to reunite the medal with the other memorabilia from his great uncle, and to put it away for his son.



MEMORIAL CROSS RECOVERY

In November of 2022, detectorist Stephen Kellar was detecting a vacant lot in downtown area of Moncton, New Brunswick when he got a sweet silver signal. Digging down six inches, Stephen was astonished when he pulled up a silver Memorial Cross. The Memorial Cross, more commonly known as the Silver Cross, was created by the Canadian government as a memorial of the personal loss and sacrifice and awarded to widows and mothers of Canadian soldiers killed during the First World War.

Finding a Memorial Cross was astonishing – but after Stephen Kellar started researching, he found out just how astonishing this particular find was. This was not an ordinary medal – this Memorial Cross was awarded to the mother of the youngest New Brunswick soldier killed during active duty in the First World War. Private Clifford Oulton lied about his age and joined the Canadian Expeditionary force in 1916. He stated on the enlistment form that he was 18, but was only 14-years-old at the time. Oulton was killed before his 16th birthday, at the battle of Passchendaele on November 1st 1917.

Stephen Keller could not find any living family members of Clifford Oulton, so he decided that the best thing to do was donate the Memorial Cross to then Albert County Museum in Hopewell Cape, NB. He contacted the museum to see if they would be interested in the historic medal, and made arrangements to place the historic item into their care. Local historian Stuart Liptay was excited to hear about the recovered Silver Cross. "This is a huge piece of our history," Liptay said, and a "huge piece of New Brunswick history. To find this just before Remembrance Day is really significant."

Kellar has been detecting the area around Moncton for over 5 years. He said that he was pleased with the historic find, and that "I'm going to be keeping my eyes out for a little more than just the one relic. If I do find something else, I'm definitely going to donate it to the Albert County museum."

Lake Chaparral Hunt – Tiffany Ring Return

CMDC Water Hunt Director, Rod Gow, released information about a short notice hunt to be held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023. Lake Chaparral had provided permission for a 2-hour window of hunting between 10am and noon for a limited number of hunters. The hunt was to be only in the water and on the beach area, and CMDC members who had time available were quick to sign up.

Everyone at the hunt found coins, but there were lots of toys, jewellery and other miscellaneous finds dug out of the sand on the beach and out of the lake. Paul Barker dug up earrings and fishing weights. Susan Durksen recovered a red toy car and spoon. Kevin Niefer found coins and “bling rings”. All agree that the find of the day was the Tiffany platinum and diamond ring that Chris MacDonald dug up on the beach.

Chris did some research to try and find the owner. He searched various social media sites for mentions of missing rings in the area with no luck. One of the methods Chris used was contacting Tiffany Corporate. They were able to tell him that the ring sold for approximately \$14,000 and that there were less than 10,000 of that particular design in existence. They were able to pass on a message from Chris MacDonald to those in the Calgary area who had purchased that design.

It did not take long before Chris had a phone call – the ring, along with a wedding band, had been lost at Lake Chaparral the previous year – and the owner had all but given up hope they would ever be located. They were thrilled to hear of the ring’s recovery.

A date was set for the ring return. Chris MacDonald met with the family who lost the rings on October 7th, 2023, at Lake Chaparral. Chris wanted to look for the missing wedding band, but his detector is out for repair. Chris MacDonald asked for help, and Clayton Blancher saved the day with a quick hunt. Clayton was thrilled to be able to lend a hand and was able to retrieve the missing wedding band. The entire family were happy to have both of the missing rings back, and Chris was provided with a hand drawn “Thank You” card from the family children, and a gift card for “the Keg”.

Chris went way beyond what most of us would do in order to try and locate the owner of the ring. Thank you to both Chris MacDonald and Clayton Blancher for helping reconnect this family with their precious sentimental items, and for showing our metal detecting hobby in such a positive light.



BUZZER CONTEST 2023

Send in a story or article to "The Buzzer" For a chance to win a Silver Dollar

It's time for the 2023 Annual Buzzer contest.

Write a story or article for the Buzzer and submit it for a chance to win a silver dollar. Every story or article received between October 15th and December 15th, 2023 will be entered into a draw for a Canadian Silver Dollar.

That's right – you can write more than one article and have multiple chances to win. With the colder weather starting to keep us indoors, this is a great time to try your hand at story writing. Take some time to sit down and write down an article about the hobby, or a fun story about your metal detecting experiences. Every story submitted for the Buzzer before December 15th, 2023 will be entered into the draw for a chance to win .



Record a memory - write a story about a favourite Metal Detecting recovery. The story can be a find from any year, past or present, or any category. You can write a story about your most memorable detecting / hunt experience. The story only has to be two or three paragraphs, although longer is welcome. Provide a photo if you have one.

Help others in the hobby - write an article passing on information to others in the hobby. It could be a write-up of tips for newbies, or about a technique you use for cleaning recovered items. It could be about researching tips. In the past we have had articles about using aerial photos to find hunt sites, cleaning coins, and online research tips. Write an article to pass on information and help out others in the hobby.

You are not limited to just one entry, so send in as many stories as you want. Every entry will have a chance at the prize. It is a random draw, so even if you think you can't write well - give the contest a try. The winner will be announced in the January 2024 Buzzer. Any interested reader is invited to take part. If you don't live in Calgary, the prize will be mailed out to you. In the past we have had submissions from CMDC "Ex-Pats" that have sent in stories from other provinces, EMDC members, and other Alberta detecting hobbyists.

Every story that is entered will likely be published in some future issue of the Buzzer. Don't worry about spelling or grammar - editing is provided free of charge. Could there be a better result? Not only do you get a chance to receive a beautiful silver coin – but you become a published author, and help the editor put out a better newsletter! Join in and take part in this amazing opportunity.

Send your story or article by email to kempp@telus.net with Buzzer Contest or Metal Detecting Story in the subject line, and you will automatically be entered into the draw – and be entered into the draw for a chance to win that silver dollar.

Final date to make an entry is December 15th, 2023.

Dating Canadian Military Recoveries

Finding Military cap-badges or buttons is always exciting, but the next question is usually “how old is this?” The Crown design associated with the item is one of the simplest ways of dating a military item. Most military badges and buttons will have a crown in the design. The “type” of crown is an indication of the age of the cap badge, as it is related to the monarch who was reigning. Key dates in cap-badge dating are 1901 and 1952 as that is when the shape of crowns on badges changed.

Not all military badges and buttons have crowns, but if they do, they are designated as QVC, KC or QC. There may be a few exceptions to the rule, such as the Guelphic crown (family crown of Prince Albert) during Victoria’s reign, or a few QC type crowns during George VI’s reign – but for the most part, these are rarities. Of course, with the death of Queen Elizabeth and the coronation of King Charles, there may be a new crown design utilized in the future. At present, the QC is still in place.

A QVC is the name given to a crown design used during Queen Victoria's reign. The design is based on “St. Edwards Crown”, and there were several variations used on cap-badges or buttons during the reign of Victoria, including an angular crown, a rounded crown, and a more flat-topped crown (shown below). Note that the QVC crown often has a very wide center-post and wide side-posts.



QVC (Queen Victoria's Crown) indicates pre-1901.
The RNWP button to the left showing the QVC was recovered by CMDC member Randy Joy in 2004



The designation KC is the name given to a crown on a badge during the reign of Edward VII. This crown is a domed design, and quite different in shape to both the QVC and QC crowns. The Kings Crown was used by the next two Kings after Edward VII. It will be found on cap-badges and buttons associated with the First World War under George V, and those associated with World War II under George VI.



KC (King's Crown) indicates 1901-1952, and is also called a “Tudor Crown.” It was in use during both World Wars.
The WWI era cap badge to the right showing the KC was recovered by CMDC member James Belke in 2009



The QC crown was used on badges and buttons after 1952 when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned. The design is based on the “St Edward's Crown” and is a dropped centre design. Unlike the QVC which has several variations, the QC badge used during Elizabeth the Second’s reign has changed very little. Note the side-posts and center post are of a much more delicate design than the QVC.



QC (Queen's Crown) is post-1952.
The Royal Canadian Legion pin to the right showing the QC was recovered by CMDC member Dale Downing in 2010



A look at Metal Detecting and Science

Most people don't think about the science involved in metal detecting – yet in a way, we are all involved with science when we metal detect because we are using science to make ourselves better detectorists.

Biology and Meteorology (weather) is in action when jewellery and coins work their way into the ground. Isn't it amazing how something dropped on the surface is recovered 10 or 20 years later buried 6 inches down. That is all biology. In a relatively short period of time, a coin gets covered by decaying leaves, grass, twigs, and wind-blown dust. The freeze-thaw cycle of winter and spring will also move objects underground. For the first few years, targets will remain closer to the surface, but between seasonal changes, biology and gravity, targets will gradually become deeper under the ground.

Geology is another important factor - you will need to learn the soil type in your region. It may be sandy, loamy, or hard-packed clay. The soil affects not only your digging, but also your detector settings. If your detector has the feature, ground-balancing is helpful in a lot of areas. Some soils may also be highly mineralized. Personally, around Calgary – I find that targets on the hardened soil of natural prairie land or unsprinklered parks will have targets closer to the surface than watered and lush parks with softer soil.

Electronics is always going to be a science that affects detecting. After all, the whole idea of detecting is using an electromagnetic field to locate metals under the ground, and bounce those signals back to be deciphered by the detector. Each target produces a specific electronic signature that the detector recognizes. You can learn a lot about how to detect better by learning how your own detector deciphers those signals.

A lot of detecting is a learning curve – and we can make ourselves better detectorists when we consider all the “science” behind detecting. As we learn our metal detector, and how to interpret the geology and biology of an area – it is likely that we will find ways to figure out where those targets might be hiding.



Calgary Historic Parks – Earl Grey Park

Earl Grey Park in Upper Mount Royal is a little park with a lot of history. The park was originally on Hillcrest Avenue and 8th Street Southwest. It was further developed in the early 1930s when the hillside area was transferred from the CPR to the city for use as a park. The park was basically developed from wildland in the early 1930s. In the park's early years it hosted landscaped areas for picnics, rustic bridges, a small ski hill and a ski jump. The ski areas appear to have been removed in the mid-1940s.

Further development of the area with lots sold by the CPR for new houses changed an existing road to Earl Grey Crescent, named after a nearby school. While portions of the park remain on Hillcrest Avenue, more of the wild areas of the park are off Earl Grey Crescent SW. The East end of the park is a natural grassland area not far from Cliff Bungalow. The park areas closer to 8th street are mostly flatland, near Earl Grey School. Earl Grey Park hosts a couple of sports areas (baseball and soccer), and some beautiful walking trails.

Earl Grey School was built in 1912, and started out as one of the six-room sandstone schools that were popular in Calgary at the time. It was named after Earl Grey, who was the Governor General of Canada at that time. The park areas immediately adjacent to the school were called Earl Grey Park by the neighbourhood. In 1951 the remainder of the Hillcrest Park area was also renamed and remains “Earl Grey Park” to this day.

Tips on Cleaning Brass and Copper

When you find a nice brass or copper item in the ground, how you clean it will depend on the shape it is in when you find it. Some people want the patina of the item and will do minimal cleaning – others want to polish it up. You can make a brass item look brand new with a bit of care. There are commercially made products for polishing brass or silver - but here are a few natural options you can use or make yourself.

It is important in any of these methods to start with a “clean” object. First of all, remove dust and grease particles from the brass before trying to remove the tarnish. Give your brass a good scrubbing in the kitchen sink with grease-busting dish soap and hot water. After you are done with the base cleaning , rinse it with a damp cloth, and dry it well. Note that all of the mentioned methods use an acidic substance as a part of the polishing. Any acidic substance can damage brass if left on the surface for too long - so with all of these methods – pay attention to timing, and make sure to wash well after the polishing procedure is completed.

One well-known way of cleaning brass and copper is baking soda and vinegar. Make a cleansing paste by mixing a half cup of baking soda with 1/8 of a cup of distilled white vinegar in a small glass bowl. It will fizz for a moment, but when the fizzing stops, spread the paste on the brass item with an old toothbrush or cloth. Let the mixture sit on the brass item for about half an hour, then dampen a soft cloth and gently rub the brass to loosen the tarnish. Make sure to rinse the item well in warm water to cleanse the paste and the vinegar from the brass. After completion, buff the brass item with a clean dry cloth. You should notice an improvement, but if the brass is heavily tarnished, you may need to repeat the process.

Another method for cleaning is to use a lemon and salt. Note that this method is for tarnished items, and only works when the item is clean. First remove dust and grease particles from the brass or copper by washing with dish-soap and hot water. Try to get as much dirt off the item as you can. Then you slice the lemon in half , dip it in salt and rub the cut side of the lemon over the surface of the brass. After you think you have scrubbed the entire item with the lemon-salt mixture, put it aside for 15-minutes to 30-minutes, and then scrub the item with a damp sponge. Rinse the item thoroughly, and buff dry with a microfiber cloth to polish.

The last method sounds crazy, but it works. Ketchup contains acids that can break apart tarnish on brass or copper. Since the acid level is lower than lemon juice or vinegar, it can take longer to work. Give the item a good scrub with soap and water, rinse thoroughly, and then spread ketchup over the entire surface of the brass item. Set the item aside for 1 hour and use a damp sponge to scrub away the ketchup and tarnish. Wash the item thoroughly again in hot soapy water. Rinse well, and buff dry with a microfiber cloth.



Tips and Tricks –

Don't stop just because you find one target when you dig. Take a few extra minutes to rescan the hole and dig a little deeper. You can also use your pinpointer to see if there are any other targets in the near area. Andy Coward once found a Morgan Dollar, but when he rescanned the hole – he discovered a pocket spill including two more silver coins.

Practice – if you are a newcomer to the hobby – take your detector for a test spin in your own back yard. You can place metal items on the ground (coins, jewellery, brass items, etc). Then swing your detector over them so you can get a feel for your machine. You can also create a test-garden, burying objects at different depths so you can also get a sense of how your detector reacts to different target locations. It's a great way to learn your machine before you are out in the field.

CAP BADGE DONATION TO MUSEUM OF THE REGIMENTS

In March of 2015 CMDC members Brett Buchan and Al Cotterhill were out for a day of detecting around the community of Bridgeland. Later that evening Brett made a Facebook post in the CMDC group page about the finds he made during the hunt. Brett's treasures included some mid-century coins and a WWI era Military cap badge that had been modified into a ladies Sweetheart Pin.



The brass cap badge was for the Canadian 63 Overseas Battalion out of Edmonton. The 63rd Battalion (CEF) was an infantry unit for the Canadian Expeditionary Force during WWI. The Battalion was created in April of 1915 – and embarked for the European battlefields in early 1916. It provided reinforcements for other regiments until it was absorbed into the '9th Reserve Battalion, CEF' in summer of 1916. The battalion was disbanded in September of 1917.

Brett wanted to know more about his find, so he contacted the Museum of the Regiments, a local Calgary Museum housing information about Calgary's Military history. The senior curator, Rory M. Cory, was thrilled to hear about Brett's cap badge find. His email to Brett stated:



"The badge is a WW1 badge relating to the 63rd Battalion out of Edmonton. I haven't seen this particular variety for the 63rd ... it would have been a fairly early badge for the unit and thus relatively rare." Mr. Cory also said it was "Interesting to speculate how it got here – the 63rd were training at Sarcee Camp (where Westhills is now), so it's possible one of the soldiers from the 63rd lost it while on leave in the Bridgeland area."

In April of 2015, Brett Buchan met up with the curator and museum director of the Calgary Museum of the Regiments and donated the 63rd Battalion ap Badge he recovered to the museum. Many other CMDC members have donated recovered military items to the museum, including Paul Barker and Mike Potter.



Calgary Military History

Brett Buchan's Cap Badge was a great find – but it is only one of many military items recovered by members of the Calgary Metal Detecting Club. Calgary has a long military history, starting with the arrival of the NWMP in the 1870s. Calgary sent units to fight in the Riel Rebellion, the Boer War, and both World Wars. The city also hosted numerous training camps that were built on what were then considered the city "outskirts". The city has changed, and most of those camps are now within city limits. There were also air training centers near Glamorgan, near Shepherd, at the current airport, and near Renfrew. A few years ago, the CMDC arranged a hunt at the old Airdrie Airport, which was at one time a WWII training center. Peggy Kemp came home from that hunt with brass propeller ends from two vintage training biplanes.

CFB Currie and Base Sarcee are no longer active Canadian Forces bases, and are now on private property. There were military training camps in other locations, including Pearce Estate Park, Glamorgan, Signal Hill, Inglewood, and near Baker Park. Calgary still has Reserve Forces units that are active. We are sure to have more military items still waiting for our coils to swing over them. It is not as uncommon as one might think. I know of at least 10 members who have recovered various military items, including badges and buttons this year. I believe we will see many more of these items recovered by the CMDC.

Metal Detecting Tips for Parks

The Calgary Parks Department made an early decision to mandate green space and park areas. As a result, we have some parks in Calgary that date back over 100 years. This is important, as many of those parks have a lot of history but are not designated as historic sites. The Buzzer sometimes has articles with brief looks at Calgary's historic parks, including this month's article about Earl Grey Park.

There are some tips for detecting parks that may be helpful. The first tip is to look at where events may have taken place. If you have the opportunity, research the park to find out what events occurred in the past. For example, several parks in Calgary had a band stand. People would often sit in the surrounding area enjoying the music. Those seating areas might be a great area to detect.

Even in modern times, take a look at what the park is used for. There are often seating areas around ball fields and volleyball courts for family members to use as spectators for games or tournaments. These areas may also have a bit of garbage, but we all know that you won't have any finds if there weren't people there to lose them;. Other areas in common use are basketball hoops, and picnic tables. In general, when people are on the move and active, it is not uncommon for coins or jewellery to be lost. These could be great hunting areas.

Take the time to imagine where people might have spent some time. I find that some of my best finds come in the shady areas under trees. On a hot summer day these are favourite places for picnics and other outings. Another area that is popular is a site that gives a view of the area – detecting on top of hillocks or berms can often provide some great finds.



Some larger parks will have concession stands or attractions where people would have gathered for years. A local community hall had several fire-pits that people used for years, sitting around them on benches. Going home in the dark, any number of items could have been lost. Bow Ness used to have a small amusement park with rides, a carousel, and still has a miniature railway that traverses the area. If you can find out where these areas were, you might be able to find a few old coins. Many parks sold hot chocolate around the old skating rinks. Take some time to hunt around those areas, and a treasure or two might find its way under your coil.



LOCATION AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Although in person meetings are being scheduled for the upcoming months – and held at the Horton Road Legion, planned for the first Thursday of the month. The meeting dates will be published on the CMDC.org website calendar, on the CMDC Facebook group page, and emailed out to the group. We look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

<p>GPS Central & RadioWorld Central Metal Detectors, GPS Units, Radios, and other electrical equipment & tools. Visit them on the web at gpscentral.ca , or the store at: #8, 711 - 48 Avenue SE Calgary AB Canada T2G 4X2 403-239-1400</p>	<p>The CMDC's yearly dues are:</p> <p>In-town membership: \$30.00 Out-of-town membership: \$25.00 Family Membership \$45.00</p> <p>Contact the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDC) c/o 6201 Penedo Way SE Calgary, Alberta T2A-3N2 email: cmdc.club@gmail.com</p>
<p>CIR Realtor – Relocation Specialist</p>  <p>Kevin Niefer <i>See Below</i> <i>Finding Houses - Creating Homes</i> 403-968-1496</p> <p>To find out more information send Kevin an email @ kevin@kevinniefer.com, or give him a call at 403-968-1496</p>	<p>YOU COULD BE A PUBLISHED AUTHOR! Do you have an interesting story, idea for an article, or a comment that you would like to see in “The Buzzer”. Write it down and email it to kemp@telus.net with METAL DETECTING STORY in the subject area.</p>
<p>SMI PROSPECTING & ELECTRONICS</p> <p>The SMI Prospecting & Electronics web site offers a wide range of products to metal detectorists, gold-panners, prospectors, and other outdoor enthusiasts.</p> <p>Based out of Langley BC, SMI Prospecting provides an on-line presence. Visit them on the web at</p> <p>smi-elec.com</p>	<p>ANDY COWARD Custom Coin Jewellery COINS2RINGS</p>  <p>Facebook - coins2rings2 IG - @coins2rings Email coin2rings2@gmail.com</p>
