

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

# *The Buzzer*

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## Special Remembrance Day Edition



Photo of Memorial flags left by Canadian visitors to Juno Beach.  
Juno Beach was the designation for the beach in Normandy  
that the Canadians were assigned to assault during “D-Day”

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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](http://www.cmdc.org).



November 11<sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Day

CMDC member Andy Coward suggested that we create a special Buzzer issue in honor of Remembrance Day. He thought that there would likely be enough stories of military finds from around the Calgary area to create a special edition. Calgary has a long military history, and it is not uncommon to see a military item show up on the “Finds of the Month” table at a CMDC meeting.

The November Issue of the Buzzer usually contains a few stories of Military recovered items, and military themed articles – but we put the question out and requested CMDC members to send in their stories about military finds. I also scoured old Buzzers and our Facebook group page for a few stories or articles that might fit in with the theme.

So here we have our first “Remembrance Day” special edition of the Buzzer



# Calgary Military History

The area around 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.

Calgary hosted many military units over the years – most of them based out of CFB Calgary, Base Sarcee or our of Mewata Armoury. Some of those units included the Canadian Mounted Rifles, 15<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, Fort Garry Horse, #1 Signal Squadron, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada, the Calgary Highlanders, and Lord Strathcona’s Horse light infantry – as well as numerous others. Some of these units were transferred to other CFB bases when CFB Calgary and Base Sarcee were decommissioned.

CFB Currie and Base Sarcee were bases within Calgary city limits until the mid 1990s. They are no longer active Canadian Forces bases, and are now private property. There were military training camps in other locations, including Pearce Estate Park, Glamorgan, Signal Hill, Inglewood. Baker Park was not only a training location, but was the site of a veteran’s hospital, built just after the First World War. The hospital remained in use for over 50 years. When it was demolished in the 1980s, the area was turned into a park. Cap badges and buttons have been recovered from the area.

Alberta was viewed as prime training ground for World War II Allied Forces pilots. 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 from the Airdrie hunt, and John Patterson made numerous finds (with permission) to the site of an air-training base near DeWinton. Other WWII air bases and training bases around Calgary included bases in the local Calgary communities of Renfrew, Glamorgan, Ogden, the current Airport area, and Shepherd. Bases in other towns around the area included Airdrie, High River, Sprinkbank, DeWinton and Vulcan.

Calgary has Reserve Units that continue to be active within the city, including a Naval unit at the HMCS Tecumseh building, military Units at Mewata Armoury, and some based out of what was once CFB Currie. These include the Kings Own Calgary Regiment, 746 Communication Squadron, 14 Service Battalion, the Calgary Highlanders, and a few others. There are also numerous units of army cadets, naval cadets and air cadets operating through-out Calgary.

With this proud history, it is not surprising that Calgary detectorists often find military items under their coils. CMDC members are always delighted to recover something from our military past. At least 10 CMDC members recovered various military items, including badges and buttons this year. I believe we will see many more of these items recovered by the CMDC.



Sarcee Training Camp – Calgary 1915. Located near the community of Glenbrook.



# WW II Cap Badge Returned to Family

by JOHN PATERSON

This is a great story about a Calgary find on Tom Campbell's hill that was sent into the Buzzer in late 2016, and published in November of 2017. Thanks to CMD C John Paterson for giving us this great story to remind us of the significance of some of the military items that we find, and for taking the time to ensure that a family received their bit of Canadian history back.

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Back in the middle of March 2016, the ground was still mostly frozen but I just had to get out for a hunt. I had just picked up a new coil for my XT 505: an 18.75 kHz, 6 inch double-D coil - and I figured it would be perfect for a few junky areas in my neighbourhood. I headed over to the Tom Campbell hill, as the slope faces west and there was a fair chance that the upper slope would have thawed out enough to hunt.



Sure enough, there was a narrow band of unfrozen soil just along the crest of the hill so I started hunting through the bottle caps and pull tabs for treasure. After about 30 minutes I was cold enough that I started heading back to the car when I got a lovely silver response from something about 4 inches down. I cut the plug and a small badge fell from the bottom, and into the hole.

It's always nice to end a hunt with a good find. When I got home and cleaned it up, I discovered that it was indeed, silver and was a General Service Badge from WW2. The Government of Canada web site had the following information:

### **1940 Award Criteria**

On Friday, March 29th, 1940 Canada's Administrator in Council, W. Duff, signed Order in Council P.C.1022. This established the War Service Badge "Service" Class. This was for members of the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada who have declared their willingness, or who have engaged, to serve in any of the said forces on active service beyond Canada and Overseas, during the present war, and who have been honourably ceased to serve on active service:

1. After not less than three months of continuous paid service
2. By reason of physical disability

So that was pretty cool. Then I noticed that, on the back, was a serial number, indicating that there should be a record of who received the award. The next day I started trying to get the badge back to its original owner. Initially I contacted Veterans Affairs as they had an Awards and Honours section and I thought that they might have a record that would tie a serial number with the recipient.

Unfortunately, Andre Daoust, who is the Awards and Honours department informed me that they don't have such a list and were usually tasked with replacing, rather than returning awards. He suggested that I contact them to see if they could help me. A quick visit to the Archives Canada web site told me that the information I needed wasn't available online, so I just gave them a phone call. I was told that I'd have to make a telephone appointment or come in person to the archives and talk to an archivist about the award lists unless, of course, they had been digitized and were available on-line. Unfortunately they hadn't been digitized. This is likely due to the fact that a number of the servicemen and women from World War Two are still alive and the government is loathe to release information about living people (WW1 veteran information is all digitized).

## WW II Cap Badge Returned to Family - continued

Luckily, my sister, who has lived in Ottawa most of her life, has a friend who regularly visits the Archives in the course of his research and she was able to put me in contact with him. Ian said that he'd be happy to add the service records to the batch of files he'd look at on his next visit, which was only a couple of weeks away.

Ian emailed me back as he was looking at the record and told me that the General Service Badge #1451\*95 had been issued to G. J. Frost (not the real name), RCAF, service #R145551 on March 13, 1945. After a number of dead-end Google searches (initials alone are not enough to go on), I called Andre Daoust at Veterans Affairs to see if he could add any information now that we had a service number. A couple of days later, he called me back to say that Graham John Frost had passed away in 1984 in Williamsburg Ontario and that his wife (for whom no name or location was recorded) had stopped receiving survivor's benefits after she passed away in 2000.

Although no internet records exist for obituaries from 1984, the Williamsburg cemeteries do list the names of the departed and the names of the next of kin. Graham John had been interred in plot X13 of the New Union Cemetery and his wife's name was Georgie P. A quick Google search of Georgie P. revealed that she had passed away in Ottawa and that she was survived by Philip of Scarborough, Heather of Halifax and Vickie of Sackville. Canada 411, before the advent of cell phones, used to be a very good resource. It no longer is; no phones were associated with the children in the locations given. I had to resort to Google and Facebook

As the eldest child, I decided to track down Philip first. I discovered that he had been a writer for the Huffington Post, but was on medical leave due to a battle with cancer. I then found that he had passed away in 2014. This was disappointing in that I thought that he would be very pleased to have the badge back. On the off chance, I checked his Facebook page and found both Heather and Vicki listed on his Friends List.

At that point I sent Heather a message on Facebook. I also noticed that her profile picture showed her performing a christening wearing United Church vestments. On the chance that she was a practising member of the clergy, I tossed Heather Frost United church into a google search and discovered that she was the minister at St. John's United Church in a small Ontario town.

At this point, the simplest thing to do was to phone St. John's church and speak to her directly. Unfortunately she was out of the office for the day but the church staff, after a long explanation on my reasons for wishing to talk to her, gave me her phone number. So I phoned Heather... and left a message. Two days later, not having heard anything back, I phoned during office hours and went into a bit more detail about why I, a total stranger, was calling her from Calgary Alberta.

It turns out that she (and her sister, who was visiting at the time) thought that they were being set up for some kind of scam so they didn't contact me. It took a bit more explaining to win her over, after which, she was very excited to have a piece of their father's history returned to the family. I posted the badge away on April 22nd and now it's back with the proper owner's family – 71 years later. Hopefully they won't misplace it again.



# CMDC Military Finds Stories

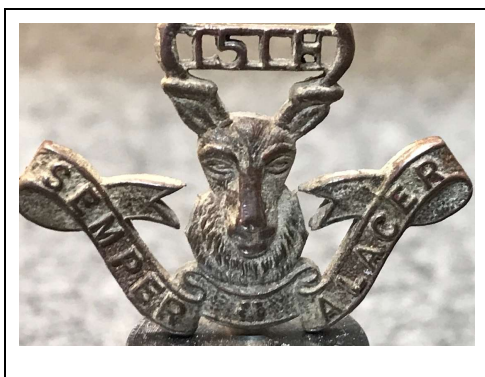


Dan Dingley was doing a modern playground hunt in High River in early October of 2023 when he came upon something that astounded him. There among the wood-chips lay a WWI era cap badge for the First Depot MN British Columbia Regiment.

This regiment was a training unit formed in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1917. The depot battalions were used to train troops, and were thought not to be necessary after the conclusion of World War I. The depot battalions were only in existence a few years. The First Depot BC Regiment was shut down in 1919.



Officers of the First Depot BC Regiment – photo from 1918



Andy Coward recovered this cap badge at Baker Park in 2008 during a CMDC club hunt. It is the cap badge or collar tag from the 15<sup>th</sup> Alberta Light Horse battalion. Andy Coward said that this badge has a very special meaning to him, as it was the first bit of “militaria” that he recovered. .

Andy’s research about the cap badge, found that “It dates to between 1905, when the 15th Light Horse was raised in Calgary and commanded by its founder Colonel James Walker, and 1920 when it was redesignated the 15th Canadian Light Horse.” Andy’s badge is missing the top portion comprised of the King’s Crown.



15<sup>th</sup> Alberta Light Horse at their first Camp, near Inglewood bird sanctuary.



## More Military Finds



Peggy Kemp and Kyle Ost both found examples of the same military button this Fall. Peggy found hers in a mid-century Calgary Park, and Kyle found his button in the North Saskatchewan River near Edmonton.

This crossed sabers design for the Canadian general service button was approved in 1946. The fact that both buttons had the “Kings Crown” dates the buttons to between 1946 and 1952. After the Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation the “Tudor Crown” (also called Kings Crown) on the CGS button was replaced with a Queen’s Crown, similar to those on Victorian items.



Ken Kittlitz purchased his house in Sunnyside over two decades ago. He detected the yard when he moved in, and found some cool items. In 2014 he decided to detect his back yard again. The Canadian Expeditionary Corps cap badge he recovered was a surprise to him. It was a very deep target and was next to some nails – which probably masked the target during his first hunt.

The CEF cap badge design was approved in 1915, and remained in use during the rest of World War I. Although some units continued to use their own cap badges, like the PPCLI – most of the CEF troops were issued the generic maple leaf badge. If lost, they were replaceable for the princely sum of 10 cents. At the time that would buy dinner for two at a nice restaurant.



Linus Hollman found a beautiful example of the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) shoulder badge in summer of 2019. The designation Royal was added to the NWMP in 1904 – and the organization became the RCMP in 1920, so this shoulder badge dated between 1904 and 1920.

At first Linus thought he found a replica shoulder badge because of the fused M and P on his badge, but it was later confirmed that this was a RNWMP shoulder badge variant by the RCMP Historical Collections unit. Linus Hollman was very pleased to have found such a beautiful example of Canada’s RCMP history.

## More Military Finds



This is a great find from one of the oldest Calgary regiments, even though it is no longer based out of Calgary. Tracey Neal recovered this beautiful Queen Elizabeth II era cap badge for the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) in March of 2016.

The regiment (familiarily called the Strats) was created by Lord Donald Strathcona in January of 1900, with Sam Steele as the commanding officer. The unit was shipped off to its first major engagement in the Boer War in April of that same year, where it won several honours. The Lord Strathcona's regimental home base was in Calgary until CFB Base Curry was decommissioned in 1998. The Strathcona's are now based just outside of Edmonton. It is now a tank regiment.



On a chilly day in November 2023, Randy Poirier met up with some other detectorists for a hunt in Bowness Park. The weather was above freezing, but still pretty cold, and the ground was fairly muddy – one of the many of cool items Randy recovered from the cold ground was this very early Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) cap badge.

The Canadian Airforce was formed in Canada in 1920 as a militia force. In 1924 it was granted the designation "Royal" to become the RCAF. This particular variant of the cap badge uses the King's Crown, and was in use during the 1920s and 1930s.



In late October of 2018, CMDC Hunt Director Paul Parker set up an incredible hunt at a wooded area near the old Currie barracks. The area was set for demolition in order to build some new houses, and we all knew that there was a good chance of digging up some military items. CMDC members found buckles, old coins, jackknives and a whole swack of expended cartridges. One of the military items recovered by Jeff Budd was a "dummy mine" that was left over from a military exercise in the wooded area.

The colour blue on the mine indicates it's non explosive nature, and certainly makes one of the oddest military finds any member of the club has come up with. The dummy mine was turned it to the Museum of the Regiments after the hunt.



## More Military Finds



In March of 2015 Brett Buchan was detecting around the community of Bridgeland. One of his finds that day was a WWI era cap badge for the Canadian 63 Overseas Battalion out of Edmonton. The battalion trained around Calgary (at Camp Sarcee) before embarking for Europe.

Brett contacted the Museum of the Regiments for more information, and discovered that the battalion was created in 1915, and was absorbed into other units as reinforcements. The unit was disbanded in September of 1917. The cap badge was likely lost when a soldier was on leave.

Brett Buchan met up with Museum of the Regiment curator and director, and donated his cap badge to the museum in April of 2015.



In June of 2016 Paul Barker dug a nice USA armed forces military button, with the “great seal of the United States”. The button can be dated between 1902 and 1920, but it is not the first US Military item that has been recovered in and around Calgary by members of the CMDC.

Most people do not know that there were US armed forces personnel based around Calgary for many years. During World War II there was a small US air force base on west side of the current airport, and US military personnel located on and around CFB Sarcee and CFB Currie. However, there is also a US consulate in Calgary. The consulate was established in 1906, is still running, and has always had some US Military personnel associated with it.



CMDC member Wayne May recently dug up this beautiful example of a “Trench Lighter”. He dug it up on the edge of fish creek park, using his XP Deus 2. It was about 8 inches down. The trenches in World War I were a brutal place, consisting of miserable damp living conditions, and long periods of waiting for the battle call. One thing that was quickly determined was that matches did not work well in the damp conditions.

Soldiers knew that if they wanted “a light” for their tobacco, or even for a damp fuse – they would have to come up with it themselves. Their solution was to use piece together a lighter that worked in the damp, made out of spent bullet casings, cotton, fuel and a sparker. The lighter was called a “cartridge lighter”

and was used on both sides of the trenches.

Soldiers made quite elaborate trench art, making mugs, ash trays, coal shuttles – out of whatever brass they could get their hands on. Some of the cartridge lighters were very elaborate. They were made on both sides of the trenches, and Wayne May thinks his recovered trench lighter might be a German example.

# Andy Coward's CMGR Cap Badge



Andy Coward attended the Confederation Park CMDC club hunt in early July. He was up on the hill when he heard a deep copper signal – Andy dug down over 8 inches to recover this WWI era cap badge for the Canadian Machine Gun Regiment. Andy said that this badge is very special to him. It was his second military badge recovery, but he later found out that he had a great uncle that served with the “Emma Gees” in WWI. .

The Canadian Machine Gun Regiment was formed as a temporary unit of the CEF in 1917. It became a permanent brigade in June of 1921, but was disbanded in November of 1923.

The unit used “Vickers Guns”, which are a “heavy” machine gun. They are also the gun image impressed into the cap badge that Andy Coward recovered..



## Military Based Toys found in Calgary

Military themed toys are another aspect of various conflicts. It did not take long during the First and Second World Wars for war-themed toys to become a popular request around Christmas and other holidays. Manufacturers were quick to respond. Parents also reacted favourably, as they associated the toys with patriotic attitude, and wanted to encourage that in their children. The following toys are just a few of the military-based toys that have been recovered around the Calgary area.



Late 1950s toy plane (Gloster Meteor)  
Ian Paterson



WW II era toy gun  
Dan Dingley



Toy Cannon  
Ken Kittlitz



Lead soldier  
Ken Kittlitz



1950s dinky toy (C-47, aka DC-3)  
Paul Barker



Toy army jeep  
Brett Buchan



# Military Items found by the CMDC



**137 Battalion WWI Badge**  
Jeff Budd



**QE2 Era Cap Badge**  
Dale Downing



**WWI era Cap Badge**  
James Belke



**Victorian RNWP Button**  
Randy Joy



**WWI Expeditionary Force**  
Ian Paterson



**Royal Canadian Legion Pin**  
Dale Downing



**WWII Cap Badge**  
(FOTY 2004)



**Military Belt Buckle**  
(FOTY 1994)



**WWII Era RCAF Bracelet**



**WWII era Artillery Cap Badge**



**WWII era RCAF Button**



**WWII Women's Service Corps**  
Donated to CMoTR



**QE2 RCME Button**  
Royal Cdn Electrical Mechanical Engineers



**WWI Era Cap Badge**  
17th Battalion Highlanders



**QE2 Era Corporals Chevrons**  
Yulia Mee



**WWII Era Army Service Corps**  
Ian Paterson



**WWI Era Cap Badge**  
63rd Battalion Edmonton



**US Naval Button**  
Kieth Hoffart – found in BC





**WWII Era Overcoat Button**  
Peggy Kemp



## 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.

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<p>CIR Realtor – Relocation Specialist</p>  <p><b>Kevin Niefer</b> <i>See Below</i> <i>Finding Houses - Creating Homes</i> 403-968-1496</p> <p>To find out more information send Kevin an email @ <a href="mailto:kevin@kevinniefer.com">kevin@kevinniefer.com</a>, or give him a call at 403-968-1496</p>	<p><b>YOU COULD BE A PUBLISHED AUTHOR!</b> 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 <a href="mailto:kempp@telus.net">kempp@telus.net</a> with <b>METAL DETECTING STORY</b> in the subject area.</p>
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