

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

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These military items belonging to the Canadian Machine Gun Corps were found by Andy Coward hundreds of miles away from each other. See the story in this month's Buzzer, and Andy's personal connection to them.

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.

2025 CMDC CLUB MEETINGS

The Calgary Metal Detecting Club holds “in-person” meetings on the first Thursday of every month. We meet up at the Horton Road Legion. The CMDC meeting will start at 7:30 and is planned to end by 9:00 pm. The Horton Road Legion is easily accessible from Deerfoot Trail, MacLeod Trail and Heritage Drive. The address for the Legion is 9202 Horton Road SW.

If there are changes and the meeting is not able to be held on the first Thursday of the month, or is to be moved to another date, the details will be published on the Facebook group page. They will also be emailed to club members.

CMDC Annual Awards Banquet

The Calgary Metal Detecting Club Annual Awards Dinner will not be held in November or December. The CMDC has decided the Banquet will be held, but the date will be sometime during early Spring. For the last couple of years, the CMDC Annual Awards dinner was held at the end of the metal detecting season, but as the club executive found that there was not enough time to arrange for the voting for “Best Finds of 2025” at a meeting, it would be beneficial to move the date to the beginning of the next season. More information will be coming, but we will probably have the dinner in March or April and vote for Best Finds at the CMDC meeting the previous month.

There will be a few new categories for “Finds of the Year” voting – they will be announced at a later date. Everything found during the 2025 Metal Detecting season will be eligible for entry for FOTY voting, but only one entry per person in each category.

❄️❄️Off-Season CMDC Themes❄️❄️

The 2025 Calgary Metal Detecting season may be ending - although there are a few hardy souls that enjoy the detecting hobby every month of the year - even in the winter. I still remember Andy Coward boasting that one of his best gold ring finds was recovered from a snowbank in January.

Don't forget that our club continues to meet during the winter months, to share coffee and conversation about this hobby we all love. From December until March we give up on “Finds of the Month.” Instead the CMDC has monthly themes, and club members display items found in any year that fall into that category:

DECEMBER ~ MILITARIA and PARAMILITARY MONTH – Bring any items found during the year that have a military theme. It could be a cap-badge or military button – or that sweetheart bracelet or cigarette lighter with a military emblem on the side. Bring it on in. Scouts, Fire Department, Police, EMT and other Paramilitary units are included in these displays.

JANUARY ~ TOYS MONTH – Bring those great toys recovered over the years. They can be modern or ancient. In the past we have had cast iron horses, lead soldiers, cracker jack toys, up to modern “hot-wheels”. We are talking childhood related items from any era.

FEBRUARY ~ SHOW AND TELL MONTH – Whatever your favourite finds were during the year, bring them on in and share them with the group. Some people will bring one or two special items, others will bring a box-full – it is all up to you.

Metal Detecting story from Newfoundland

As some of you may know, CMDC member David Roberts used to spend half of the time in our fair province, and the rest at his home in Newfoundland. David retired and relocated home to Newfoundland about ten years ago, where he has enjoyed boating, detecting, and travels with his faithful pup.

He has done some detecting on his own property, and that of friends, and has come back with some pretty cool finds. In November of 2012 he shared one of those amazing finds with us, when a 1813 George III "stiver" showed up on our CMDC Finds of the Month table. It was found near his home on "the Rock." Here are some stories David sent for the Buzzer a few years back. They were originally published in 2016.

In Newfoundland this summer we had a weird summer weather wise, June was only fair, and July was a disaster of cold and rain. I hardly got out detecting at all. The fall was unusually good, but I had other projects keeping me busy.



However, I did add to my collection of musket parts. I found most of a barrel, without any fittings of any sort. It is about 30" long of which 18" is octagonal. The rest is bent and rusted very thin and it seemed to have ended its life as a stake hammered into the ground before being discarded into a shed which collapsed long ago. That is where I found it. There are signs on it that show somebody tried to cut the barrel but failed. The butt end is hammered, and the touch hole is still visible.

And I got me some moose! By virtue of a moose hunter losing his 3rd wedding ring. He was in trouble.



The short story was that he knew about where it was, and it was not in the gut pile. He pointed to where he had wiped his hands in the grass. 3 minutes later I found it about ten feet away. For the hour spent getting to and from my house I was given 6 pot roasts and 4 steaks weighing 15.7 lbs. Yes, I got me some moose, bye!

Metal Detecting – Tip of the Day

If you find a path in the woods or across the prairie that appears straight, your best bet would be to check it out. Wildlife like deer and moose meander and rarely leave a straight path. It is likely that any straight path would be a man-made trail.

Most paths are not new. Some date back over a century. If there is evidence that a path has been there a while, it is worth hunting. Many old coins and relics have been found along footpaths through wooded areas. These paths might even date back to pioneer, or pre-settler days.

Also, note that old trails were eventually made into roads. Searching near an old road or trail could lead to some great finds. When people travelled along roads years ago, they would often move off to the side to rest, or have a bite to eat. Keep a lookout for overgrown paths, and old wagon ruts. Sometimes an early air-photo may show a walking path or an old wagon trail. It might give you a new place to search.

Iron Age tool hoard Recovery by Teen Detectorist

In August of 2019, 13-year-old Milly Hardwick was on a detecting adventure with her father. The duo were detecting an area near their home in Suffolk when they discovered something remarkable. Milly got a very strong signal on her detector, calling out to her father to join her. He set aside his own machine to help with Milly's recovery and became part of an amazing and historic find.

Milly's father, Colin Hardwick, said they thought it was probably just an axe that someone had forgotten about years ago – little did they know just how right they were. The father-daughter duo found over a dozen bronze axes and reported their discovery to the local authorities. A team of archaeologists were sent to the site.

Milly and her father recovered around 20 Bronze Age tools – most of which were axes. Hardwick's mother, Claire, rightly called it a "once-in-a-lifetime find." The archaeologists uncovered another 45 tools, and over 200 other artifacts. The archaeologists estimate that Milly's tool hoard dates to approximately 1300 BC.

Milly hasn't given up on her hobby. "Whenever I go out, I find stuff," she said. "I've found a gold-plated button and an Elizabethan coin." It's just nice being in the field for hours. You get a signal, and it could literally be anything." She is hoping to become an archaeologist when she graduates.

Andy Coward's CMGR Cap Badge

The Canadian Machine Gun Regiment (CMGR) cap badge and shoulder flash pin from the cover of the Buzzer were both recovered by CMDC member Andy Coward. The cap badge was recovered in Calgary, and the pin hundreds of miles away on a property near Sundre.

Andy Coward attended the CMDC club hunt held in Calgary's Confederation Park in July of 2023. He was up on the hill when he heard a deep copper signal – Andy dug down over 8 inches to recover the WWI era cap badge pictured below. It is from the Canadian Machine Gun Regiment.

Andy was thrilled when he pulled this little cap badge out of the earth. It was only his second military badge recovery. Andy later discovered that he had a great uncle that served with the "Emma Gees" during World War I, which made this find even more special.

Go forward a year – in September of 2024 CMDC member Jerry Leussink hosted the CMDC and a few special guests for a special seeded hunt on his rural property near Sundre. Andy was digging in an area near an old barn when he retrieved a shoulder flash pin for the CMGR. He was shocked to have found another military piece belonging to this unit, especially with such a special family connection.



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 and was disbanded in November of 1923, so both items have a very limited time frame.

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.

BUZZER CONTEST

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

It's time for our semi-annual Buzzer Story contest. Try your hand at writing a story or an article for the Buzzer, and you could win a silver dollar. With the colder weather at hand, now is a great time to sit down and write down an article about the hobby or a story about your own metal detecting experiences. Every story submitted to the Buzzer before December 15th will be entered into a random draw for a chance to win a Canadian Silver Dollar coin. There are two available options for the Contest.



Option One - 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 could also write a story about your most memorable detecting / hunt experience. The story only has to be two or three paragraphs, although longer is just as welcome. Provide a photo if you have one.

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

Every entry will have a chance at the prize, so even if you think you can't write well - give the contest a try. The winner will be announced in the January 2026 Buzzer. This contest is not just for CMDC members. We publish the Buzzer on our Calgary and Area Facebook group page, which has readers across Canada. 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 live in Newfoundland, EMDC members, and other Alberta detecting hobbyists.

Send your story or article by email to the CMDC email address @ cmdcclub@gmail.com with Buzzer Contest or Metal Detecting Story in the subject line, and you will be entered for your chance to win that silver dollar. Every article sent in gets a chance at the prize, so if you mail in more than one article, you will get a draw ticket for every story received.

As I am sure you have guessed, anyone who enters the contest will most likely find their story published in some future issue of the Buzzer. Don't worry about spelling or grammar - editing is provided free of charge when necessary. 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.

Final date to make an entry is December 15th, 2025.

WWII Compass Button found in South Alberta

A few years ago, I wrote an article in the Buzzer about the special compass buttons developed for the RAF and RCAF during World War II. With the distinct possibility of being shot down, the armed forces had to consider providing their soldiers with a means of navigation through hostile territory. They also had to consider design, for this escape arsenal must not be detected and confiscated by their captors.

Scientists and inventors came up with a simple, but effective, solutions. Maps were hidden in decks of cards, game boards, and in uniform linings. They also created "compass buttons". The British were the first to invent this useful tool. One button on every Royal Air Force (RAF) tunic screwed off to reveal a miniature compass. There were British, Canadian and American versions of the compass buttons. The RAF and RCAF version was threaded, and the American version had a hinged cover.

Military buttons are becoming quite scarce, so imagine the excitement when Tom Cowie, who lives a few hundred miles South of Calgary, found a World War II era uniform button earlier this fall. The brass button was almost eighty years old, and it took a fair bit of cleaning took a bit of cleaning to get into the beautiful shape shown on the Calgary and Area Facebook group page.

Even more remarkable – when Tom began to research the maker on the back of his recovered button, he discovered that his button was very unique – very few are left. The manufacturer's name on the back of this spectacular RCAF button showed that it was one of those rare compass buttons developed as an escape tool during WWII.

Great recovery, Tom – you saved an important bit of history!

Cleaning your Finds in the Field

You've dug that treasure up out of the earth. It may be a coin, or a bit of jewellery. There will be that initial joy, and the temptation to run off the mud with your thumbs or on the grass. Try to resist the temptation – you don't know how precious this find is yet. This very action could produce more scratches and damage to your recovered item.

One trick many people use is to carry around water in a small spray bottle (sometimes called foo-foo water). A trick is to put a bit of dishwashing soap in the bottle, and to carry a very soft toothbrush. Using the water, detergent and the toothbrush will cause less damage than rubbing off mud with your fingers. If it is a soft metal coin like silver – don't even use the toothbrush. Dab at the soapy coin with your finger, spray again, and dab. It takes a little bit longer - but is a lot better for the coin.

If you don't have a spray bottle, drinking water will do the trick. Place the coin in your cupped hand, and pour the water over it, and then dab at it with your fingers. Rinse and repeat. You will get better details in no time.

This is a good time to mention that it is a great idea to keep a special container for transporting special items after you find them. Most people will have a pill bottle with cotton balls, a small tin or some other place to transport their "special" finds without scratching up against other recovered items. I use an old aluminum credit card wallet with plastic envelopes for each card. Rings, coins and small pendants all fit nicely.



WWII Military Medal Returned to Family

After a tornado passed through Holt on April 27th, 2011, Margaret Krallman prayed for a miracle to help find her mother-in-law's lost possessions. Her mother-in-law, Thelma Bennett Krallman, died in the storm at the age of 89 when her house was blown off its foundation and scattered across a block-wide area. The only remains left from where the house once stood were the front steps.



Two precious items that were lost during the storm were a Purple Heart medal awarded to Margaret's father-in-law, Staff Sgt. George H. Krallman for his service in World War II and the folded American flag awarded to his family after his death. These items meant more than anything else to Thelma Krallman and her family. They sifted through the debris for weeks after the storm in search of them. They even used a metal detector to try and find the military medal.

After a few weeks passed without any luck the rest of Margaret's family began to lose hope. "Everyone had given up, but I said as long as there was dirt, I wouldn't stop," Margaret said. "My husband said he couldn't dig anymore, but I felt like I was supposed to go," she said. "I reached for what I thought was one of her jackets, and the flag just fell into my hand. It was wet and had become unrolled, but it was the prettiest red and white you've ever seen. The plaster and dirt was pounded into it on the outside, but we brought it home and just started scrubbing it."

One precious item down, but her father-in-law's cherished medal was still missing. Some time passed. In February of 2012 Margaret was still walking around the property searching for the lost medal. A man driving past waved at her, then stopped to ask what she was looking for. Margaret explained the story and that the Purple Heart was still missing. The man, whom Krallman knows only as "Mr. Washington," said he had found a Purple Heart with his metal detector a few miles away. He brought it to the Krallman's the next day and the family was once again in possession of their treasured item. What was once thought to be lost forever, was found.

WWII Identity Bracelet Returned to Family

Gabriele Pavolttoni was detecting in the woods near his home near Pisa in Italy during the summer of 2022. Italy has a lot of history, and Gabriele has found artifacts dating back to the roman era – on this day he found something a lot newer.

When Gabriele heard the solid silver sound, his heart was racing. He dug, hoping for a silver coin. What he pulled out of the earth was a sterling silver identity bracelet with a allied soldier's name and dated 1943. The name of the bracelet was Lt. Ernest Holzclaw, a member of the U.S. Army's 34th infantry division.

Gabriele Pavolttoni knew he wanted to return this special item to Holtzclaw's family. He was able to locate the man's grave in Boston. Gabriele's mother arranged for a trip to the USA in early 2023. She and Gabrielle were able to locate the grave in Mount Hope Cemetery in Boston.

A couple of cemetery workers noticed the duo, and were able to help them locate Ernest Holtzclaw's family. The Pavolttonis approached the Holtzclaw family, gifting them with the lost ID bracelet, a tangible token of their father's military service over 75 years lost, and now in their hands.

❄️❄️ Winter Metal Detecting ❄️❄️

Many of you will have seen versions of this story, before. I usually publish something like this at the start of the winter season – as a reminder that we don't have to give up our favourite hobby just because it is winter, but that we should "play safe."

There are always a few hardy souls in Alberta that go out detecting every month of the year, and come home with some pretty spectacular finds. Even in winter there are treasures to find, and there are people to be helped. Several of our Calgary Metal Detecting Club members have taken time out of their busy lives to locate a missing wedding ring lost shovelling or sledding, lost pendants, or set of keys lost in the snow.



In Calgary we do get nice chinooks and very sunny days in the winter. A lot of folks will go out to detect South facing hills during a chinook. Even though the ground can be pretty hard to dig into during winter around the Calgary area - there are still some nice finds to be made.

If you do go out metal detecting during the winter months, there are a few basic rules for warmth and safety. It is important to dress for the day's weather. Remember to plan your hunting wardrobe not only for the weather of the moment, but also to be prepared for the weather in the forecast. Remember – this is South Alberta. If you

don't like the weather, you know it will change. The day might start out nice, but keep winter gear at hand.

Before you go out for a winter hunt, familiarize yourself with the signs of hypothermia. Watch yourself, and those you hunt with. Make a plan for a break someplace warm if someone's health seems at risk. Dress in a way that eliminates wind, and use water-resistant clothing. Nothing speeds up bone-chilling cold more than being in "wet gear".

Always have a cell phone with you, especially on a trip to an isolated area. In the case of an unexpected event (an injury, or getting stuck in the snow) it is crucial to have a way to get help. If you find something fabulous, it also provides a way to get some photos. If you plan to detect in an isolated area, make sure someone knows where you are. Better yet, in an isolated area in winter, hunt with a partner. Remember that not every remote area has cell phone coverage, so it is important to let someone know the general area you will be hunting.

Plan your winter treasure hunt as a recovery of surface or near surface finds. Winter chilled earth will require vigorous digging, and if you are trying to retrieve something deeper, that may damage whatever you are trying to find. If you suspect that deeper object has historical value, or is a precious metal, make a note of landmarks or of the GPS location and plan for recovery when the weather is warmer, and the ground softer.

Spring will be here soon. We have already seen the back of the shortest day of the year, and are less than four months to the beginning of our Calgary metal detecting season (we hope). So while winter doesn't necessarily mean the end to our season – it also a great time to do research and make plans for future hunts.

If you are like most people, the most valuable commodity we have is time. Wouldn't it be great to have a number of potential good sites all lined up and waiting for you to hit in Spring? Use time while the ground is snow covered and frozen to do some research. Read some local history, dig out some old maps, or visit a historical society or local archives.

Remember the CMDC still meets during the winter. It's a great time to get together and talk about our hobby. I hope to see you all out at the next meeting.

A Blast from the Past

This article was written by CMDC member Jerry Hall many years ago. It was originally published in the October 1995 issue of the Buzzer. The stories all have the theme of returning a recovered ring, which is something most of us would like to be able to do.

I would like to share with the Club a story of three successful hunts I engaged in over the past year.

Last Fall, I received a call from a lady west of Calgary who lost a \$2,200.00 ring while cleaning up her garden. She carried plant tops from the garden to the horse pasture and was afraid the ring would be trampled. However, after searching for 20 minutes, I recovered the ring from a hole in the garden where turnips had been pulled. She was, of course, delighted.

I serve as Chairman of the 4-H foundation of Alberta. I visited the 4-H Center at Battle Lake this summer, and learned that a young camper lost a valuable ring in the beach area of the lake. The general area the ring was lost in was known, but this seemed like a real needle in the haystack hunt. However, a friend and I started hunting over an acre of beach front. After an hour and a half of hunting, I recovered the ring in a grassy area about 100 feet from the lake. The ring was a 10kt. gold band with a three diamond setting. Since 4-H had a record of all the young people at the camp, the owner was soon in possession of her ring.

In late August, I received a call from Charbonneares Gold and Gem shop, asking for help in searching for a valuable custom-made ring. A lady in Calgary lost it while transplanting her flower garden. This was a tough assignment since she had moved plants in an alley and in her neighbour's yard, as well as around her own yard. I scanned all these areas with no luck. The lady went back in the house while I double-checked the most likely spots. I finally got a good signal near the base of a tree. The ring had been transplanted under a shrub, about 7" deep. When I went to the house and dropped the ring in her hand, the look on her face was worth a fortune!

Finding and returning these valuable items is one of the most rewarding experiences of our hobby. Over the past year I had five calls for assistance and was successful on these three. That is probably not a bad average, but you feel badly about the ones you miss.

Here is a tip for new members: When searching for these valuable items, keep your discrimination very low. High karat gold items discriminate out very easily unless alloyed with silver. Certainly our experienced members know this, but it may help a newer member make a good find.

Some parts of this story were lightly edited, for readability, and size, to fit in the available space.



LOCATION AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

CMDC meetings will be held at the Horton Road Legion and are scheduled for the first Thursday of every month. The meeting dates will be published on the CMDC.org website calendar, on the CMDC Facebook group page. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting.

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The CMDC annual membership renewal cost is:

In-town membership	\$30.00
Out-of-town member	\$25.00
Family Membership	\$45.00
Out-of-town Family	\$35.00
Senior's Membership	\$20.00

Contact the Calgary Metal Detecting Club (CMDC)
By email at cmdclub@gmail.com

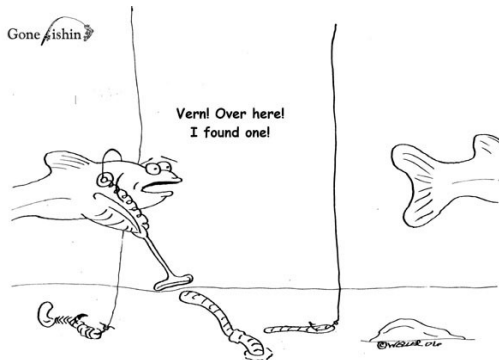
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