

# NCR LAD #104 – RCEME BIRTHDAY NEWSLETTER 2021



## The President's Corner

Bob Vincent, President

### Presidential Ponderings

I was recently asked to consider two questions. "Why should I belong to the RCEME Guild?" and "Why should I be a member of an LAD?"

I'm taking advantage of this column to share some of my personal thoughts. The fact that you are reading this implies that you have already answered both of these to your own satisfaction. Somehow, during our military careers, by choice or luck or fate, we became members of RCEME - a Corps whose name was kept alive even when it became a Branch designated LORE then LEME then EME and then once again the Corps of RCEME.

**Why should I belong to the Guild?** RCEME gives its members a career. It develops technical, leadership and management skills which can be put to use in a military or civilian environment. It is challenging and rewarding work. It is not boring. I have never met a member of the Corps who can't point to an occasion when they haven't had to face challenges which they met but were beyond the narrow confines of their strict equipment specific technical training. The Guild provides an opportunity to give back to the Corps. It helps support members who are in difficulty. It helps maintain the Corps' heritage. It looks to the Corps' future through its support of cadets and the bursary program. The LADs pursue Guild objectives in a local area.

**Why should I be a member of an LAD?** The LAD provides a social setting in which retired and serving Corps members can enjoy each others company and share experiences. There are many issues being experienced today that are not new. Socializing between and within the generations of RCEME personnel benefits us all. Old friendships are maintained and new ones developed. LAD membership can also open the doors to new careers as people move from the military to civilian life by providing networking opportunities.

In the National Capital Region our LAD has some unique challenges made greater by the pandemic. Our retired members are a distinct group within the LAD who generally are more able to get together and socialize - something currently achieved by Zoom meetings. There is a lot of informal passing of information which helps maintain a sense of community. What our LAD lacks is a strong presence of serving members and those on second careers. Our challenge

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is to broaden our active membership in the post-pandemic future. Until then, stay safe, get vaccinated and encourage RCEME friends who are not LAD members to join.

Incidentally, I have four copies of the 75th Anniversary RCEME Journal which I will happily send to a good home. Requests can be emailed to me.

For all of you 'golfers', word just received is that the planning for the RCEME Golf Tournament in Borden, is underway. The primary dates requested are August 4,5 and 6<sup>th</sup>. Barry and his hearty team are awaiting Corps approval to proceed.

*Bob*

*Did you know...* As incredible as it sounds, men and women took baths only twice a year (May and October) Women kept their hair covered, while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool. They couldn't wash the wigs, so to clean them they would carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell, and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term 'big wig.' Today we often use the term 'here comes the Big Wig' because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.

### **Secretary/Treasurers Perch**

Terry White, Secretary/Treasurer

### **LAD MEMBESHIP DUES AND BENEFITS Part 1/3**

Reference: CONSTITUTION OF THE GUILD OF THE CORPS, BY-LAW NUMBER ONE

First, let's start with the lawyer talk (due diligence), By-Law One should be consulted for full details of the benefits.

The cost to maintain your membership in the RCEME Guild is \$24 each year. These dues maybe paid directly to the RCEME Guild or to your local LAD by e-transfer, cheque or cash. The LAD forwards the \$24.00 to the Guild. At year end the Guild reimburses the LAD \$12 LAD for membership.

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The Guild uses the money to fund Corps activities. Upon completion of Development Period 1.1 new NCMs and Officers are provided with RCEME accoutrements such as RCEME buttons and slip-ons and a CANEX gift certificate. A one-time bursary is available to immediate family of guild member for post secondary education.

Loans and grants are also available. An Educational Short-Term Loan up to \$5,000. interest free repayable over 2 years is available for members for academic or technical upgrading. Hardship Grant up to \$3,000. non repayable is there for financial distress. Benevolent Loan not to exceed \$5,0000. interest free with repayment terms.

Emergency fund of \$200. may be requested and repayment is not required

The dues also support RCEME Sporting Events. The intent of this benefit is to provide support to the RCEME Sporting Events which allows the organizers the ability to offer a reduced entry fee for Guild members or prize draws. Regional events may receive \$400. while National events may receive \$800.

The Guild Membership Award is to encourage and reward membership in the guild. Eight draws per year for \$250. consisting of \$150. cash and \$100. for a Kit Shop gift certificate for members in good standing.

Loyalty Coins in the form of Bronze for 7 years, Silver for 14 years and Gold for 21 years of continuous membership.

This is only a few of the benefits the next newsletter with have part 2/3.

*Terry*

*Did you know...* Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some ale' and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

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## VETERAN'S AFFAIRS OMBUD

Col (Ret'd) Nishika Jardine CD, Veterans Ombud

After having served 37 years in the Corps of RCEME and learning to enjoy the freedom of being retired, being appointed the new Veterans Ombud on Remembrance Day last year was an amazing moment for me. Since then, it's been an incredible learning curve!

Before this, and perhaps like many of you, I had no idea that there was an Ombud for Veterans, and really, little understanding of what an "ombudsman" is or does. Basically, the primary role of an ombudsman, or ombud, is to provide a place for people to go when they feel they have been treated unfairly. And so, when a Veteran – War Time, CAF or RCMP - or their family member is having difficulty with accessing benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), they can contact the Office of the Veteran Ombud for assistance.

We operate independently of VAC, and we do our work in an impartial manner. What this means is, we do not take sides. When a Veteran, or their family member comes to us with a complaint against VAC, with their permission we access their VAC file in order to take a fresh and impartial look at their case, and we do this through what we call the Fairness Triangle (or lens):



Essentially, we look to see whether the Veteran was treated fairly, that their case was fairly processed, and that the outcome is fair. Where we find otherwise, we work directly with VAC to advocate for fairness on behalf of the Veteran. Sometimes, a Veteran just needs more information in order to submit their claim to VAC, or they may actually need a referral elsewhere. Our front-line staff are also able to help in these ways.

A second part of the Ombud mandate is to investigate barriers or gaps in the way that VAC administers or delivers benefits and services to Veterans and their families. When we find unfairness here, we can publicly make recommendations for change directly to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

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As the Veterans Ombud, I feel privileged to have been afforded this opportunity to be of service, and I believe this mandate allows me to be helpful not only to individual Veterans but also to the broader Veteran community. Over the past few months, I have made it a priority to learn about our community, and I've met with over 40 Veterans, advocates and stakeholder groups, and I would be happy to hear from anyone who has something to say about our Veterans and VAC. Most importantly, if you or someone you know is having trouble accessing benefits and services from VAC, please encourage them to contact us:

Telephone (toll-free): 1-877-330-4343

Email: [info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca](mailto:info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca)

Fax (toll-free): 1-888-566-7582

Mail: Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, P.O. Box 66 Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K2

To learn more, please visit our website at <https://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca> and subscribe to our newsletter *Focused on Fairness* at <https://ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/en/media/newsletter>. Also, please follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

*Nishika*

*Did you Know...* Common historical entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the 'Ace of Spades.' To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't 'playing with a full deck'.

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## **MUSEUM UPDATES**

### **Leader and Trailblazer of 2021**

By Col (Ret'd) Gilles Nappert CD

The RCEME Museum is closed but a virtual meeting took place earlier this year to review the 2021 submissions for the Leaders and Trailblazers award. There were three submissions, and one was selected. The submission selected was CWO Faulkner Ellory (Lee/Leroy) Morton Faulkner, MMM, CD2.

Born in Ostrea Lake, Nova Scotia on 17 September 1932, CWO Faulkner joined the Army on 21 September 1949, initially with RCEME. He transferred to Infantry (1RCR) in June 1950, fighting in Korea (1952/53) where he earned a 'Mention in Dispatches' for distinguishing himself in combat, and received a battlefield promotion to Sergeant. He re-mustered back into RCEME in 1955 as a Fire Control System technician. He was appointed a 'Member' of the Order of Military Merit in 1985, and he retired in 1988.

CWO Faulkner's legacy as a 'trail blazer' in the RCEME Corps is attributed to his successfully expanding career opportunities. He demonstrated exemplary leadership attributes and proven soldiering skills. He was rewarded with senior non-traditional RCEME appointments. He was the first RCEME CWO appointed as RSM of a Service Battalion. He was also School Chief Warrant Officer of Canadian Forces School of Aerospace and Ordnance Engineering (CFSAOE), and Command CWO at Canadian Forces Training Command a first for the Corps at the time.

In retirement he served in the Supplementary Ready Reserve, represented RCEME and the RCR on two separate visits to Korea, founded the Korean Veterans Association Branch for Nanaimo, and helped Korean veterans get disability pensions. He is a lifelong member of the Masonic Lodge, Legion, and RCEME and RCR Associations.

In many appointments CWO Faulkner was a trailblazer of the Corps.

### **The RCEME Book of Remembrance Project**

The purpose of the RCEME Book of Remembrance project is to update the "EME Honour Roll" done by Col Murray Johnston in 1991-94 and digitize the information. During the validation phase of the information, done by Col (ret'd) Graham Lindsay, a number of errors and oversight were corrected, additional deceased RCEME/RCOC names were found and names of RCEME members who died since 1994 were added.

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During the search and validation of the information done by Graham Lindsay he used many source databases. These include: The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), the Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM), Canada's Seven Books of Remembrance and the Canadians Post-War Military and Dependents Graves (CPW & DG) list. Concurrent with these activities, many efforts were launched to find the names of visitors in photos contained in the "EME Honour Roll" as well as recent deceased members of the Corps. Thanks to the support of many serving and retired member of the Corps, the majority of visitors names were found.

Statistics of interest to date include:

- The EME Honour Roll has 239 entries,
- 22 additional RCEME or RCOC names were found in the various source databases
- 17 members need additional research to confirm some of the information, and
- 13 names of deceased Corps members who died after 1994 were added.

The number of members in the updated digital version of the RCEME Book of Remembrance is now 274.

Finally, initiatives have been launched to have photos taken of over 80 gravesites that do not have visitors.

*Gilles*

*Did you know...* At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the term minding your 'P's and 'Qs.

### **RCEME raison d'être**

By Major (Ret'd) Doug Knight CD

It was a time of chaos. The Canadian government decreed that the Canadian Army would use British organization, doctrine and equipment, and their system was a shamble. Equipment maintenance during the First World War had been largely carried out by unit tradesmen. Only three Canadian Ordnance Corps workshops supported the entire Canadian Corps: two light workshops that supported two divisions each, and the medium workshop that supported the Corps heavy artillery. These were not large organizations; a light workshop had an Inspector of Ordnance Machinery and about 20 craftsmen.

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By the Second World War, little had changed. The RCASC owned the transport trucks, and had their own first, second and third-line workshops. The vehicles in the combat arms units were owned by the Master General of the Ordnance, and were repaired by unit tradesmen supported by the RCOC workshops. RCASC workshops competed with and duplicated RCOC workshops. Unit tradesmen took the same trades tests as the RCOC technicians, but were infantrymen or gunners. At the recruiting level, the combat arms, the RCASC and the RCOC all competed for skilled men. The army competed with the navy and air force.

The British knew that the system was not working. During the “Phony War”, before the withdrawal at Dunkirk, more than 60 percent of the transport in the British Expeditionary Force was unserviceable. They formed many committees, which mostly called for the formation of a single Corps to handle all the British army repair and maintenance. Finally, in October 1942, the British formed the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Eighteen months later, in February 1944, after months of opposition by the highest levels of army leadership, Canada followed suit, and engineers and craftsmen from more than 70 trades formed the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The sun rose in the east, the instruments moved into alignment, the radios spoke the word, the guns began to fire, and the vehicles began to move forward to victory.

Today, those 70 trades have slimmed down to the four well qualified, competent trades that we know today. For 77 years, RCEME (under all its names) has ensured that the Canadian Army equipment is functional and ready to carry out the mission. RCEME engineers, artificers and artisans have a high esprit, they are well motivated, and highly respected. RCEME doctrine and procedures have stood the test of time as well as the changing conditions of modern warfare.

Happy Birthday, RCEME

*Doug*

*Did you know...* In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall, and was used for dining. The 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Occasionally a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board.'



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## **VP RAMBLINGS**

By Phil Whitehead V Pres

Since the start of this pandemic, some 17 months ago, we knew that maintaining effective communication with our membership would be a challenge, because nothing replaces the comradery like face-to-face meetings. It appears that between zoom media and the temporary cobbling together of the LAD newsletter, that we have been somewhat successful. That success has been a direct result of the co-operation and efforts of our article contributors as well as our hard-working zoom co-ordinators, Paul Hamilton and Howie Higuchi. 'To each and everyone, we say a heartfelt 'thank you'. Hopefully, in late September, we will be able to meet in person to celebrate and make those 17 months a memory.

## **OUR NEW VIRTUAL REALITY.....BUSINESS AS USUAL?**

by BGen (Ret'd) Bill Brewer CD, Col Commandant, Corps of RCEME

It's a pleasure for me to pen a few words as we celebrate the 77th Anniversary of the Corps of RCEME. In contemplating what to include in this update, I quickly decided on a theme..."Our New Virtual Reality...Business as usual?" and will use it to focus on the many positive things that are happening and continuing to happen in a very difficult Pandemic year.

When the Pandemic first hit in 2020, it was like hitting a brick wall. The Corps and Corps Community scrambled to find a way ahead in un-chartered territory and in typical fashion we have weathered the storm with initiative, professionalism and an esprit de corps second to none. It may not seem like that because face to face personal communication took a serious hit making it more difficult to do things "normally". Like communication. But we found the ways to make things happen.

Welcome to the world of Webex, MS Teams, Zoom, etc. As incredible as it may seem, things have ticked along over the past year: the Corps continues to support operational missions both at home and abroad, Corps Council and the Guild Board of Directors have mastered the art of MS Teams, LADs across the country have started using Zoom to stay in touch, our Army cadet Corps on several occasions have used Zoom to integrate senior Corps leadership into their annual reviews and our Foundation continues to make progress thanks to Zoom in a big way! For sure the world of IT can never fully replace the need for on-the-ground face to face communication...but we have done well sustaining momentum on a wide front of always interesting challenges. Both Corps and Guild senior leadership look forward to the day when travel will once again be allowed to facilitate the generation of those things that we hold most important, including our incredible esprit de corps.

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A couple of words on the RCEME Guild. The Guild continues to focus on improving members benefits, while concurrently finding ways to recognize those individuals who have made huge contributions over many years. More recently, the Guild appointed seven new Lifetime members to the RCEME Guild in recognition of outstanding and exemplary service. The Guild needs the feedback of its membership to continue providing the best benefits possible but also to continue recognizing those that have gone the extra mile so that the Corps and Guild continue to excel in moving the yardsticks. If you have any ideas, send them along through your LAD President...no stone will remain unturned.

In closing; I am also very pleased to report that we recently have “found”, yet another one of our WW 2 heroes, Craftsman(ret’d) James Lawson. He lives in Rosetown, Sask and had his 100th birthday very recently. I spoke to his granddaughter who could not believe that the Corps would search out her grandad. I told her that once a member of the RCEME family; always a member and never forgotten. One thing is for sure... both the Corps and Guild will continue to do what is necessary to support our great country and our incredible Corps Community, at the same time recognizing the many outstanding individuals who have created our incredible legacy.

Arte et Marte

*Bill*

Happy 77<sup>th</sup> Birthday to the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers - May 15<sup>th</sup> 1944