

UPPER CANADA NEWS

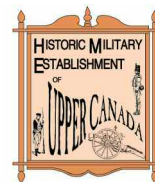
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Historic Military Establishment of Upper Canada Royal Newfoundland Regiment, Bulger's Coy

Registered Charity - Not-For-Profit Living History Organization



When Hobby Becomes Reality - Chris Downer

Chris joined the Royal Newfoundland Regiment re-enactment group in 1992 at the age of 11. He participated in parades and on the battlefield as a standard bearer mainly, while he practiced and learned his military drill to join the line with a musket.

His desire in becoming a member was sparked by an interest in history and through regular drill sessions, he became proficient and for quite a period of time was the right marker for the line at most re-enactments and demonstrations.

Chris was a member of the group for many years, took part in almost every group activity, as well as working on a series of movie shoots that the group was active in.

His first re-enactment was the groups first – the Battle of Lake Erie at Put-in-Bay on South Bass Island. That naval/military engagement sparked his interest even further.

His interest in all things military didn't end with our re-enactment group and in 2004 he joined the Canadian Armed Forces and completed his Basic Training and Skills training at CFB Borden. Chris joined Logistics and became a Supply Technician, posted to the 1st Service Battalion, Western Land Force at CFB Edmonton.

It didn't take long for his military service to get more exciting. Chris was dispatched to Chilliwack, B.C. to assist with flood management in the Fraser River Valley. From that posting he moved directly into training at Shilo, Manitoba; Dundurn, Saskatchewan and Wainwright, Alberta for deployment to Afghanistan.

Chris deployed in March of 2008 with the Canadian Forces Task Force 1-08 and spent 6 months at the Kandahar Air Field (KAF) as part of the International Task Force.

His job was combat supply, so he regularly traveled in convoys (outside the wire) to Forward Operating Bases (FOB's). For those familiar with the lay of the land in Afghanistan, some of the FOB's

he visited were Spin Boldak, Masum Ghar and Camp Nathan Smith. According to Chris, two of the most difficult things to deal with on the tour were the enormous dust storms, and the 60 degree Celsius heat.

Chris has returned to Canada, and is presently continuing to serve at CFB Edmonton.

The members of Task Force 1-08 held their "Salute to the Fallen" ceremony at CFB Edmonton to pay tribute to the 19 members of the task force who were killed during this mission.

On a more pleasant note, Chris and his fiancée, Suzie, who is a Medic in the military, were married in Quebec City on December 20, 2008. They are presently planning for the arrival of a baby boy, their first, and a third grandchild for Nancy and Lyn.



Our Newest Recruit!!



Congratulations to Mike Hall and Elizabeth Woodley-Hall on the birth of their son, Benjamin. New recruits are always welcomed no matter what the age!

Share Our Heritage... Bring History to Life!

Note from the Chairman

This past year has been a tremendously active one for HMEUC in Simcoe County.

Our first event was the *Spring Tonic Festival* at the Tiffin Conservation Area. We were blessed with two beautiful days of warm, sunny weather with a huge turn-out on both days. Our education programs have been a great success providing hands-on history to classes staying at the *Wildfire Outdoor Education Centre*. This has also helped with our bottom line.

Our group has been busy with the heritage movie industry this year, both with tent rentals and two productions: *Death or Canada*, a movie airing on the history channel March 16, about Irish immigration during the potato famine. (not quite our time period). This was filmed at Discovery Harbour using our members, tents and redcoats as well a lot of extras from the community. We also supported a small short for the HDTV network titled "*How Do You Live*".

This year saw a number of historic milestones, the major one being at Discovery Harbour for the opening of the new Officer's Quarters. We figured prominently demonstrating historic camp life, weaving, musket and cannon firing. This was the first time since the *Battle of Georgian Bay* that a re-enactors' tent peg was driven into the ground there. Discovery Harbour also saw "*The School of the Sailor*" organized by Tom Hurlbut, and the Provincial Marine. We supported the event by providing safety officers and logistical support.

David Brunelle completed our groups Black Powder and Encampment Safety Procedures based on Parks Canada guidelines. This makes us the first and only re-enactment organization with a full documented safety procedure. I thank him for his effort. This document will put us in a strong position with fundraiser and organizers when we propose and execute our many events. I believe into the New Year we will be required to heighten our approach to safety in the hobby.

Our involvement with *Fort Willow* and the *Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival* has increased as we put on a successful education day in the fall with over 800 students attending on the Friday, and over 2,000 people attending the Festival on the Saturday. With "*Celebrate Barrie*" in the spring and the success of the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival, the City of Barrie wants to do more work with us and expand these events.

We have purchased a three pound cannon and are using it in conjunction with the US 25th who has supplied us with the carriage. It has been a great asset for Wildfire as well as for events such as the Officer's Quarters Opening and the Dufferin County Museum.

In order to provide better support for large events such as *Wasaga Under Siege*, we purchased a 36 by 24 foot marquee tent. This will also come in handy for movie rentals as the anniversary of the War of 1812 comes near. We now own the largest piece of canvas in southern Ontario, possibly Canada.

We did an encampment at the *Dufferin County Museum*. It was somewhat lightly attended due to rain, but was a fun and relaxed event, although they said it was one of their best turn-outs. The Museum is state-of-the-art and the curator gave us a special tour of their archives.

Our crowning event of the season was *Wasaga Under Siege* which again ran with amazing precision and well-loved by re-enactors as well as the general public. This year broke all records for public attendance and was delightfully rain-free except for early Saturday morning.

None of these events would have been possible without your strong support and commitment to our group. My deepest thanks go out to all our members and volunteers who gave their time and expertise.

As our redcoat numbers are limited we have participated at the larger events as part of the Glengarry Light Infantry making a strong showing at events such as Fort Erie, Backus Mills, Longwoods and Fanshew.

Even with the purchase of a cannon and a gigantic tent and other tents, we still have come through the season in a balanced financial situation.

Dave Brunelle as our administrator has done an amazing job in co-ordinating events, organizing and controlling assets, writing proposals, keeping up the books, keeping up correspondences and generally moving the group forward. Thanks to his prudence and fiscal responsibility we have kept solid balanced books. I thank him for all his hard work and the huge amount of time he has devoted to us.

Planning is going strong with the *Friends of Fort Willow* to capture more funding to develop the sight in preparation for 2012. The Fort committee would appreciate any support you can give. We will continue to support our local events and build on the successes of our marquee events such as the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival and *Wasaga Under Siege*. We will work to making these events larger and more effective as we move towards the *War of 1812 Bicentennial*. Equally fun are the "smaller" events like *Midlands Winterfest*, the *Maple Syrup Festival* and *Dufferin County Museum*. They are little more low key events where we can get out and show our stuff.

Although some of us drill with other groups we should see if we can start a drill and social schedule up again, possibly with the US 25th. We are now in possession of a fair bit of historical assets and should also consider an event in the spring where we organize, fix and repair our equipment. Another thought would be for a round-rolling bee and or a shako or equipment bee, where we would get together and make and repair our personal equipment.

Recruitment is always problematic, however we should continue to demonstrate our hobby at events and take committed people. People join the re-enactment community for a number of reasons whether it is the sense of community,



desire to create (build, craft and sew) or the military aspect. Whether you want to be involved occasionally or fully committed to all the events, HMEUC is committed to supporting your involvement in the hobby in the way you want it to be.

The hobby does require a bit of an initial commitment in terms of weaponry and uniforms. Our new cannon offers the opportunity to get involved without an initial outlay of great expense.

It has been our philosophy to present our group, present our events and welcome those that want to join. Part of joining any group involves a commitment in terms of time and money. Ours is not different. There will always be a commitment to kit, drill and events. If it is not there, we can't help you!

Looking back on the year I am overwhelmed by the number and high quality of events that we participated in. I hope I have managed to touch on most of them. Please forgive me if I have left out one of your favourites. Along with our regular events such as *Wildfire*, *Tiffin*, *Celebrate Barrie*, *Wasaga Under Siege* and *Fort Willow*, one never knows what else may come up. As we move towards the *200th Anniversary of the War of 1812* we will see more events and the scale of those events expanding. Who knows, could another *Battle of Georgian Bay* be possible? From the 1812 Bicentennial committee we can see glimmer of expanded facilities and greater events funding. We will be positioning ourselves to take advantage. We look forward to another exciting and action packed year.

Ed Kristufek, Chairman HMEUC

Membership Update

As many of you are well aware we are always looking for new members to join the group. Current membership sits at 42 adults and children and we would also like to welcome our newest members Evan & Sue Miller from Creemore, Robin & Barb Upton from Jordan Station, Carol Trainor from Barrie, Bill Longo from Don Mills, Mike Anderson & Elena Grishin from Toronto and Constance Meredith-Purvis from Scarborough.

We look forward to seeing them and our present members at all our upcoming local events as well as re-enactments outside the Simcoe County area. I have provided a list of our current membership including e-mail addresses if there is anyone you would like to get in contact with. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining please have them come out to an event or contact us for information. *God Save the King!!*

Allan, Bob & Rosemary	allanharps@hotmail.com
Anderson, Mike & Elena Grishin	MAAnderson@globeandmail.com
Brookes, Kevin	leevin@sympatico.ca
Brunelle, David, Lisa & Family	davidbrunelle@rogers.com
Cockburn, David	dcockburn@suncor.com
Downer, Lyn & Nancy	nancy.downer@sympatico.ca
Flint, Andrew, Teresa & Family	aflint.06@gmail.com
Hall, Karen	kkassfeldt@sympatico.ca
Hall, Mike & Elizabeth Woodley	dzylyz@mwdatcon.com
Hayward, Mary & Rick	m_r_hayward@yahoo.ca
Kristufek, Ed	ekristufek@elcan.com
Kristufek, Nancy, Heidi & Leah	macarena@csolve.net
Longo, Bill	bill.longo@glegarrylightinfantry.ca
Meredith-Purvis, Constance	tanzietea@hotmail.com
Miller, Evan	um_hi@hotmail.com
Miller, Sue	sue_miller@rogers.com
Monahan, Peter	petemonahan@sympatico.ca
Mount, Peter	pmount@sympatico.ca
Romat, Barbara	lszabo@grahamfrp.com
Szabo, Les	lszabo@grahamfrp.com
Trainor, Carol	o_islander@hotmail.com
Upton, Robin & Barb	admin@coghlinandupton.com
Wardle, Ewan	regwardle2@netscape.net
Wardle, Roland, Jacqueline	regwardle2@netscape.net



RNR Members - Dufferin County Museum
September 2008



Candy Cannon

Dufferin
County
Museum

September 2008

Events and Activities

Confirmed Local Group Events 2009

Spring Tonic Festival	April 4th & 5th Tiffin Conservation Centre, Utopia
RNR Garrison Weekend	May 8th & 9th Fort Willow Historic Site, Barrie
Celebrate Barrie	June 5th & 6th Waterfront Park, Barrie
Wasaga Under Siege	July 24th - 26th Nancy Island Historic Site, Wasaga Beach
The Invasion of Beaverton	Aug 14th - 16th Waterfront Park, Beaverton
Nine Mile Portage	Sept 18th - 19th Fort Willow Historic Site, Barrie

For a list of War of 1812 re-enactments and events taking place outside the Simcoe County area, please visit the following website:

<http://royal.scots.tripod.com/warof1812eventslist/>

Meetings

A general group meeting/social will be held a minimum of every three months. Between that time, group decisions and anything that needs to be voted on will take place via e-mail. General group meetings will take place at the Bull & Barrel located in Barrie unless alternate locations have been decided upon by the group. Tentative general group meetings/socials for 2009 are booked for:

March 29th	7:00pm	Bull & Barrel
June 14th	7:00pm	Bull & Barrel
September 14th	7:00pm	Bull & Barrel
December 29th	7:00pm	Bull & Barrel

Drills & Socials

Musket, as well as cannon drills, will commence in May starting with our *Garrison Weekend* on *May 9th & 10th*. All drills will take place at Fort Willow, weather permitting, and usually followed by a social.

Drills will take place on the following Wednesdays in 2009.

June 17th	July 8th	July 16th
August 5th	August 26th	September 9th

New Website

The Historic Military Establishment of Upper Canada has a new website and it can be accessed at www.hmeuc.com. Thanks goes out to *Bill Longo* who volunteered to design and upkeep the site. Over the next few months we will be attempting to consolidate all our event and group websites under our new one which will act as an umbrella or gateway site for all our other sites which presently include:

- The Royal Newfoundland Regiment-Bulger's Coy
- The Battle of Georgian Bay 2001
- Wasaga under Siege "A War of 1812 Experience"
- Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival

We are still in the design stages of the new website and if you have any suggestions regarding the development of our new site please let us know. Your input is greatly welcomed and appreciated.

Member Spotlight - Lyn Downer

Each newsletter features a short spotlight on one of our members and their involvement in the group. This member spotlight features a look at Lyn Downer or sometimes referred to as "The Old Man". Lyn is the only original founding member of the organization with a wealth of information and I asked Lyn to give a brief history on the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and its growth, challenges and achievements and this is what he had to say:

When Bill Byrick, General Manger of Discovery Harbour, and Jack Contin held the first meeting to establish a local living history group - I believe it was 1991, there were 35 interested people that turned out. When we met two weeks later 3 people showed up - Rudi Steinacker, Vicky Lamb and myself. That's how the group started. After that, Ray DesChenes joined; Pat Crowe was the first Sergeant for drill purposes. Then in no particular order there was Gary Robertson, Mike Newark, John Mc Callum, David Brunelle, Rex Toews - a teacher buddy of John's whose name I can't remember, Peter Monahan, Tom Hurlbut and even his brother for awhile. We approached the Penetanguishene Legion for support and made a deputation to the membership for tents. They donated \$1,000.00 and that started us off with 3 of our own tents. Up until then we were borrowing tents from the Royal George.

MUSICAL RIDE
*Lyn always marched to
a different drummer!*



The original members of the group all threw some money into the hat to purchase materials for the group, and we had Caroline Laco make the first uniforms. We made our own shakos (the original blue tinged ones) and leather. The first re-enactment we took part in was the original Battle of Georgian Bay back in 1991 and we were dressed as sailors because we didn't have any uniforms yet. I seem to remember myself, Rudi and a young Dave Brunelle opposing the entire Royal Yorkers on the right flank of the battle.

Achievements of the group are many from hosting re-enactments to Halloween programs and other public events. Our group, as many of you know, has always enjoyed hosting other re-enactors - first foray into that was the river cruise in 1995 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Regiment. We tried to do everything we could in the period, even the food we ate. In some ways, that early cruise down the river remains my favourite - probably because it was the first river cruise, we gained support from the NVCA and exposed them to our group, and we brought other re-enactors north to see what we had in this area and what we could offer. I was raised on the Nottawasaga River and spent thousands of hours fishing on it with my Dad, and to recreate that epic journey of the Regiment in my old home town was very special to me.

The Battles of Georgian Bay remain highlights because of the scope and the drive of a certain Mr. Brunelle. When I look back at photos of those re-enactments, it's then that you realize just how special they were. The present Wasaga Under Siege is special because of the history the group has with Nancy Island. Our first re-enactments at Nancy Island consisted of one tent set up and about 4 or 5 of us would show up for the weekend. To see that grow into the present re-enactment with 400-500 on the Island is very gratifying to someone like me who was raised with the story of the Nancy.

I've been very proud of the group's willingness to conduct education programs to bring our heritage to the front for kids. We've always seemed to have had strength in bringing the story forward in an interesting and fun way to involve the public. My greatest single satisfaction, however, does not involve a re-enactment or an education program - it involves the group itself and its ability to sustain itself. We've always managed to evolve into a group that has a few key members that work together to keep the group going and now is no exception. I think I was most proud of the group when confronted in 2001 with an unreasonable manager at Huronia Historical Parks and being expelled from Discovery Harbour. We still banded together to produce the Battle of Georgian Bay for the benefit of the surrounding communities. The aftermath of the expulsion was hard on the group, we foundered for a bit trying to find a place to establish ourselves, and we really boiled down to a very small but determined few that would not be bullied or forced to give up. We persevered, and in the end, other groups have come to know that we were right all along. We've seen the results of our determination over the past few years, we have recovered and continue to recover as a group, and we have spread out our events to other municipalities and are better known and stronger for that effort. We have also seen new members come on

board that have added new skills and determination to the group - so we move on. As the last remaining founding member of the group, it gives me great satisfaction to see the group move forward - still bringing our heritage to life, still telling our story.

Lyn Downer



Share Our Heritage... Bring History to Life!

Board of Directors

Chairman Ed Kristufek
Vice-Chairman Andrew Flint
Treasurer Peter Mount
Secretary Elizabeth Woodley-Hall
Business Administrator David Brunelle

Cost of Membership

\$15.00 per musket person/adult
\$25.00 per immediate family
(Includes only one musket person)

National Firearms Membership

\$3.00 per member

National Firearms Association

Liability Insurance \$7.95 per member

Events and Activities

If you have a community or special event you would like our group to attend, please let us know.



Travelling Recruitment Display

The Historic Military Establishment of Upper Canada publishes a semi-annual newsletter to help keep our members and friends informed on what is going on within the group and the re-enactment world in general. If you would like to contribute some editorial or photos, please contact the business administrator for more information.

Mailing Address and Contact Information

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Penetanguishene, Ontario L9M 1W4
Phone: 705-549-0463
Fax: 705-549-0463
E-mail: HMEUC1812@rogers.com

Group Equipment & Resources

Just a reminder that the H.M.E.U.C. has period historical equipment available to its members upon request and approval.

These items include: period tents, muskets, cannons, flags, historical clothing, mugs, plates, fencing, candle holders, lanterns, furnishings, tables, chairs, accouterments and other historic period goods and wares.

For a complete listing of equipment available please contact the business administrator.