REMEMBER

NEWSLETTER OF
THE LOYAL EDMONTON REGIMENT MILITARY MUSEUM

2023-4

Editor's Comment

This is the thirty-eighth in a series of quarterly newsletters originally recognizing 100th anniversary events of the First World War, with emphasis on Edmonton's 49th Battalion, and 75th anniversary events of the Second World War, with emphasis on The Edmonton Regiment/The Loyal Edmonton Regiment. These stories came to an end with our 2019-1 and 2020-3 editions respectively.

Having reached that point, we changed our emphasis from, but certainly not ignoring, the two major wars. There are still many stories to be told about our regiment, past and present, including our newest series of articles on our regimental commanding officers. We have also expanded our focus on the museum itself with articles related to more current events and with stories about some of the interesting artefacts and archival materials in our collection.

Major portions of Remember are summarized from unit and brigade war diaries, the regimental history "A City Goes to War", articles published in the FortyNiner magazine, Library and Archives Canada soldiers' personnel files, London Gazette citations, and small extracts from other sources as indicated.

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NEWSLETTER STAFF: Ian Edwards and Don Miller

Colonel James Riley Stone, CM, DSO (and Two Bars), MC, CD

By Ian Edwards



Colonel James Riley Stone was one of the most decorated and noteworthy soldiers to serve in the Canadian Army. During the Second World War he rose from the rank of private to Lieutenant Colonel and later commanded the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Light Infantry in Korea. He was born in Winterbourne, Sodbury, Gloucestershire, England on 2 August 1908. While attending school in England he took some cadet corps training, which gave him an initial advantage a dozen or more years later. "Big Jim" Stone (he was 6 ft 2 in tall) immigrated to Canada by himself, arriving at Quebec City on 4 June 1927, to take up homesteading north of Grande Prairie, AB. For the next 12 years he worked in ranching and the Alberta Government Forestry Department, often residing in the Blueberry Mountain community.

On Friday 1 September 1939 mobilization orders by Ottawa were issued across Canada by telegram to pre-selected units. The Non-Permanent Active Militia 1st Battalion, The Edmonton Regiment was to mobilize a battalion for the new Canadian Active Service Force (C.A.S.F.). Within the first week after mobilization, a travelling medical board and recruiting officers went to

Peace River district and approximately one whole company was recruited in the region. Stone, given the "regimental number" M16021, was the 21st man to enlist in the new battalion, with a date of enlistment of 1 September.



Pte. Jim Stone, circa September 1939. Note the General Service cap and collar badge and the regimental shoulder title.

He was promoted to the rank of corporal effective 16 November. On 14 November the first of several advance parties left Edmonton for overseas. One party consisting of a lieutenant and four corporals embarked from Montreal on 16 November on board the SS Duchess of Richmond for a school of instruction in England on the Bren gun and 2 inch mortar. S tone was one of the four corporals.

On 15 December, with no suitable winter training facilities available in Canada, the "Eddies", as part of the 1st Canadian Division, left Edmonton in two trains. The regiment did not leave Edmonton without fanfare; about 10,000 citizens gave the soldiers a rousing sendoff. The battalion, 26 officers and 805 other ranks, boarded the Polish liner SS Batory on 19 December and paused in the Halifax Basin while the ocean convoy completed its assembly. The Edmonton Regiment reached Glasgow on 31 December 1939 and on the first day of the new year arrived by rail at Morval Barracks, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire, England in the area familiarly known as Aldershot. Corporal Stone, having passed his course of instruction on 2 January, rejoined his battalion. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant on 15 January 1940 and posted to D Company, the Peace River company, that ultimately gained the nickname "Steady D". On 1 March the battalion moved to more commodious quarters at nearby Morval East Barracks. Sergeant Stone attended a Canadian Corps Junior Leaders School from 18 May to 7 June 1941. Results: "distinguished." Stone was appointed to the position of company sergeant major on 8 June 1941.

Stone's first action against the enemy came when he, within an augmented company of Edmontons, took part in Operation Gauntlet (see Remember 2016-3). This was an operation to deny the Germans the possible use of the strategic island of Spitsbergen in Norway's Svalbard Archipelago, 600 miles from the North Pole. The operation was successful. No Germans were encountered but key shipping and other infrastructure was destroyed, as well as the vast coal resources, rendering the island less useful to the enemy. The operation took place starting 17 August 1941 and Stone and fellow Edmontons returned to the battalion on 9 September.

On the last day of April 1942, newly commissioned (7 March 1942) Lieutenant Stone returned from the officer cadet training unit he had been attending since 16 November 1941. He was promoted to captain effective 26 November 1942.

Sicily

On 17 June 1943 the Durban Castle weighed anchor at Gourock, Scotland at the mouth of the River Clyde with The Edmonton Regiment, C.A.S.F. aboard. The troopship left the British Isles on 28 June. The battalion was to take part in Operation Husky, the combined amphibious Allied (American and British, including Canadians) invasion of the Italian island of Sicily. Sicily was considered the "soft underbelly of Europe", however, under Mussolini and occupied by the Germans, it made it difficult for Allied shipping, being a natural barrier in Central Mediterranean.

The Edmontons were still part of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division. Along with the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, they were now part of the British XXX Corps of the famed British Eight Army. The Canadian's first D Day saw them landing on the Pachino Peninsula in southeast Sicily early in the morning of July 10 to take part in Operation Husky. After incurring initial minor opposition from the Italians, Stone's battalion continued with a long dusty and often bitter battle against the Germans. In one month of battle the regiment suffered 54 killed and 162 wounded. They then went for 23 days of "rest".

And on to the Italian Mainland

On 4 September, the main body of the Edmontons (four rifle companies), continuing within 2nd Canadian Brigade, embarked from Santa Teresa, Sicily, and crossed the Strait of Messina to the mainland of Italy at a landing point near Reggio. The Canadian's then moved north up the Italian boot. After many increasingly difficult battles against German forces, the 1st Division, including the now Loyal Edmonton Regiment, had reached the Moro River and the coastal town of Ortona. Captain J.R. Stone had been appointed Acting Major with effect from 29 November 1943 and was again with D Company. Ortona

was to become a difficult and deadly urban battle and Stone and the Loyal Edmonton Regiment were to play an major part.

Military Cross: First Gallantry Award earned by Stone

Acting Major Stone was cited for gallantry by his Commanding Officer Lt.-Col. J.C. Jefferson. The action for which he was commended reads:

> *"On the 23 Dec 43 Maj. Stone led his company into the attack astride the main street of the fortified city of ORTONA (MR 3316).*
>
> *Very severe and confused fighting ensued, particularly at the entrance to the city square, from which the main coast road leads north-eastward. In this square an enemy 75mm anti-tank gun was concealed. Maj. Stone leading a detachment of his men into this sniper-infested area, came under heavy fire from four enemy machine guns.*
>
> *Placing his men under cover, Maj. Stone skillfully worked his way forward under intense fire to within grenade range of one of these guns, destroyed the crew and captured the gun. This feat enabled his company to drive the remainder of the enemy out of the square and opened the way for immediate exploitation by the regiment supported by tanks.*
>
> *Maj. Stone's gallantry and skill were an example to all his men and greatly assisted the operation of driving the enemy out of ORTONA."*

Stone's 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade received the recommendation on 7 January 1944 and passed their recommendation up the line the following day. The document was subsequently signed as approved by Lt. Gen. O.W.L. Leese, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Eighth Army and then by Gen. H.R. Alexander, GOC-in-C of 15 Army Group on 1 March 1944.

Beyond Ortona: 1944

For reasons that are not clear in Museum records, A/Major Stone was admitted to hospital on 26 January 1944 and discharged and taken back on strength of his regiment one month later. The day of his return he was appointed second-in-command of the Loyal Eddies. Now Major J.R. Stone, M.C., left the battalion on 6 May 1944 and proceeded to Benevento, Italy, to take a Unit Commanders (Infantry) Course. On the afternoon of 26 May Stone was recalled from his course at Benevento to take temporary command of the battalion the next day. On 6 June 1944, Lt. Col. Henry Pybus "Budge" Bell-Irving, DSO, arrived to take over as CO, while Maj. Stone again resumed the position of battalion 2ic. Bell-Irving had served with the sister battalion, the Seaforth Highlander of Canada, during the Sicilian campaign.

Stone's Second Gallantry Award

The following commendation for gallant action by Stone was received by brigade headquarters on 24 September 1944 for his valour on the attack on the Gothic Line:

> *"On the night of19/20 September 1944, The Loyal Edmonton Regiment attacked over the CASTELLACCIO- S[an] LORENZO feature, the last one dominating the RIMINI gap.*
>
> *Strong enemy defences were encountered on the crest of the CASTELLACCIO ridge but the rifle companies successfully penetrated in a single file in the dark and reached their objectives, causing complete confusion behind the enemy line. Enemy tanks had been seen firing at the forming up point in daylight, from the crest and were still active all over the area. It was obvious, therefore, that to hold the battalion objectives in daylight, anti-tank guns must be got forward.*
>
> *Major James Riley STONE, MC, second in command of the battalion was in charge of rear Battalion Headquarters, and the dispatching of the "R" Echelon vehicles. Realizing the importance of getting guns ahead he finally persuaded the Commanding Officer to allow him to go forward to reconnoiter the road through the enemy CASTELLACCIO line. Major STONE drove forward in his jeep, through intense shell fire and in immediate proximity to enemy tanks. He established "F" Echelon on the steep slope, largely inside the enemy defensive fire. He set up the Regimental Aid Post in the same area in a place where it later handled most of the casualties in the sector. He arranged for repair and removal of obstructions on the route, driving right up to the crest within the enemy position in order to reconnoitrer. Having established the route, Major STONE, still under heavy shell and machine gun fire, continued to dispatch and control vehicles without any thought whatsoever for personal safety.*
>
> *Major STONE's action was largely responsible for getting the attack through the line in time to save this most vital objective."*

For this, Major Stone was granted a Distinguished Service Order in December 1944 by Field Marshall H.R. Alexander, now Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean Theatre.

Lt.-Col. Bell-Irving returned to his Seaforths on 4 October 1944 and Maj. Stone received promotion to lieutenant colonel and took command of the Loyal Edmontons effective three days later.

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While in army reserve during the month of November 1944, a group of senior Loyal Edmonton Regiment officers take a break during a mess dinner in Riccione. Stone is on the right.

Stone's Third Gallantry Award

Stone earned an award of a Bar to his Distinguished Service Order for his gallantry on two very separate and distant conflagrations. The actions for which he was commended for the Bar read:

"On the night 16/17 October 1944, 2 Canadian Infantry Brigade had faced up to the PISCIATELLO in ITALY, with orders to assault the river and advance as quickly as possible. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment with Lieutenant-Colonel James Riley STONE in command were given the task of establishing the bridgehead.

Lieutenant-Colonel STONE decided, after making a reconnaissance on the main axis, that crossing there would be most hazardous. He therefore made a detailed reconnaissance of the river for a distance of approximately one mile under heavy shell fire and machine gun fire from the enemy, who were entrenched on the far bank. Finding a place where tanks would cross at map reference 635063, he quickly formed his plan and commenced the assault.

His great disregard for personal danger during the reconnaissance, his initiative in quickly forming his plan upon his view of the land and his personal leadership during the assault greatly contributed to the success of the operation."

The commendation continues:

"On 14 April 1945 The Loyal Edmonton Regiment with Lieutenant – Colonel STONE in command were ordered to seize intact 2 bridges over a canal north of HOVEN at map reference 912968 and 909965, sheet 1/25,000 ZUTPHEN HOLLAND. The enemy were dug in on a railway embankment – the only high ground in the area -approximately 200 yards in front of the bridges.

One company of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment which was assaulting the position had very heavy fighting and after some casualties was forced back and was somewhat disorganized.

Lieutenant Colonel STONE, because of his vast battle experience, was able to gauge the exact moment when his presence was most needed and went forward at that time. As a result of his prestige with his men and the confidence which they all have in him the Company was quickly reorganized, assaulted again and this time captured the position, killing many enemy.

There have been many instances throughout the actions in ITALY and HOLLAND where Lieutenant -Colonel STONE's personal leadership has been the contributing factor in the success of the battle. His initiative and courage are unsurpassed. He is highly regarded throughout the whole of 1 Canadian Infantry Division as a keen, capable and courageous commander."

On 7 May 1945, the Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of all German forces. The agreement stated that all hostilities would cease at midnight. The following day was designated as Victory in Europe Day, (abbreviated VE-Day) and marked the end of the Second World War in Europe.

From the East to the Far East

On 6 June 1945 Lt. Col. J.R. Stone, DSO, MC, left the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Canadian Active Service Force, to take up command of a new battalion destined for the war against Japan. The new battalion was mobilized on 1 June 1945. It was titled the 3rd Canadian Infantry Battalion (The Loyal Edmonton Regiment). The Battalion was to become part of the Canadian Army Pacific Force (CAPF) for the invasion of Japan. Lt Col J.R. Stone, arrived at Shilo, Manitoba on 3 August to form and command the new battalion. Drafts of men previously stationed in Canada arrived on the 4th (21 other ranks), 5th (185 all ranks) and 6th (51 all ranks), and the unit was formed into five platoons. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August brought the Far Eastern theatre of the war to a close before the 3rd Battalion was needed. The Japanese surrender was noted by the Battalion at 1800 hrs (6 p.m.) on the 14th. Two days later the first draft of six volunteers from overseas reported for duty, followed by 67 more during the next three days. The 3 LEdmnR was disbanded on 1 November 1945.

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Lt. Col. J.R. Stone, DSO, MC, says goodbye to his men on leaving to take up a command in the Canadian Army Pacific Force.

After returning to British Columbia during the post-war years, he commanded the Rocky Mountain Rangers, headquartered in Kamloops, as a Militia infantry unit of the Canadian Army. During his part-time service with this unit, Stone partnered with Lt-Col. Syd Thomson, DSO, MC, who had just commanded Stone's counterpart battalion, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Battalion (The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada) to build a tourist resort Sandy Point at Salmon Arm, B.C. Both soon bored of the business and sought new challenges. Thomson joined the United Nations Military Observers Group on the Indian-Pakistan border region in the 1950s. On 2 April 1946 in Edmonton, James Riley Stone married Esther Margaret King, a stenographer with the Alberta Government.

During the Korean War, Stone was chosen to command the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He led the 700 men of this battalion, including many former Loyal Eddies, in defence of the strategic Hill 677 against the fierce assault by a full division of about 20,000 soldiers of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army during the Battle of Kapyong in April 1951. The UN position on Hill 677 prevented the enemy from breaking through to Seoul and potentially surrounding the U.S. forces in Korea. He received a second bar to his DSO for his leadership in this famous battle together with other actions during the 1951 year. His drive for high standards in himself and in his troops is notable; under his command, only 10 Canadians were killed, where the enemy saw over 2000 causalities. In December 2016, the Government of South Korea's Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs designated Stone posthumously as an official Korean War Hero. The citation stated, "with their victory in the Battle of Gapyeong [Kapyong], Stone and his soldiers are remembered as the Legends of Gapyeong to this day."

Colonel and Provost Marshall

Colonel Stone later commanded the Canadian Army's 1953 coronation contingent in London and on his return to Canada was appointed Chief Instructor at the Royal Canadian School of Infantry. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel and appointed Provost Marshal in August 1954 in command of the Canadian Provost Corps, remaining in this post until being seconded to the Department of Justice in November 1958. He retired from the army in October 1960.

Member of the Order of Canada

In 1956 Stone had received sobering news; his daughter Prudence Moira Stone, born 6 April 1949, was stricken with cancer of the eye, resulting in blindness that eventually led to her death on 12 June 1956. Stone founded the Military Police Fund for Blind Children. (MPFBC) in 1957 in direct response to the need he saw from other parents and their children. One of the very notable aspects of the MPFBC is that it is run and managed totally by Military Police volunteers. The MPFBC continues to specialize in assisting visually impaired children up to the age of 21.

After 38 years, in uniform and later in civvy clothes Colonel (Retd) James Riley Stone was awarded on 19 October 1994 and invested on 1 March 1995 as a Member of the Order of Canada (C.M). Remarks concerning the investiture include:

> *"A true humanitarian and one of Canada's few remaining highly decorated soldiers from World War Two and the Korean conflict, he founded the Military Police Fund for Blind Children in 1957, bringing happiness to these very special youngsters. Under his guidance and life-long patronage, the Canada-wide fund expanded its activities over the years to Europe and the Middle East, providing medical equipment as well as educational and recreational assistance, otherwise unavailable to the children."*

Jim Stone was predeceased by his wife, Esther in 1990 and children, Moira (1956) and James (1958) He was survived by his children, Shelley, Victoria Patricia, and Michael. Jim Stone spent his last three years in The Lodge at Broadmead in Victoria, BC, where the remarkable staff enabled him to live and die with dignity. Stone died in Victoria on 24 November 2005 at the age of 97.

Commemorating Colonel Stone

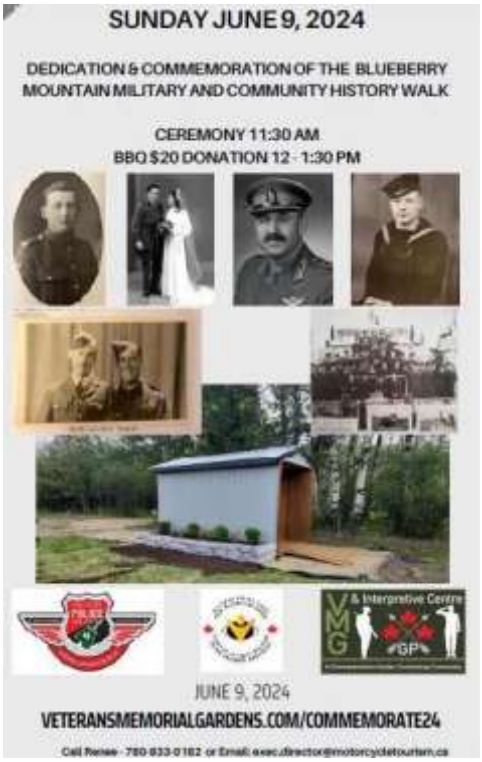
By Renee Charbonneau

Col. James Riley Stone began his Canadian story in Blueberry Mountain, Alberta. He was a well-liked young man who played a pivotal role in spearheading the construction of the first community hall and nurses' residence in the area. He worked hard, loved to play ball, sing and socialize.

He rode the 60 miles to Grande Prairie on his saddle horse Mabel in 1939 and joined the Edmonton Regiment. Affectionately known as "Big Jim," he rose to the rank of commanding officer within five years. His leadership skills were evident during the Second World War and later in the Battle of Kapyong during the Korean War.

Later, he assumed the role of Provost Marshal of Canada and, during his tenure, initiated the Military Police Fund for Blind Children—a registered charity unique to the Canadian Armed Forces. This philanthropic effort was motivated by his daughter Moira's blastoma diagnosis, and he was disheartened by the financial struggles faced by many children in similar situations who couldn't even afford a treat from the tuck shop, let alone go home for Christmas.

We invite you to come and share the exemplary life of Col James Riley Stone as part of a commemoration event like no other. The hosting of a three-day commemoration weekend, honoring our fallen, remembering the brave, and supporting children, will now become an annual event.



Hallway of Heroes

By Leila Flowers

For the last seven years, Baturyn Elementary School in North Edmonton has been privileged to partner with the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum to create a Hallway of Heroes. As the school is located close to the Edmonton Garrison, they celebrate how community heroes have contributed to Canada's military - both past and present - during the month of November. Posters have been made and displayed in the hallways which celebrate the contribution of staff, relatives of staff and students, and members within the community at large. Students create artwork and writing with themes of honour, bravery, sacrifice, valour, and peace each year, which are displayed alongside the posters of serving members (past and present) within the community.

Special displays each year honour the contributions of Indigenous Peoples who have served, the role of animals during conflict, and "then and now," which shows pictures of the devastation of WW1 and WW2, alongside what those places look like today. The Hallway of Heroes also includes three display cases at the entrance to the school. Various artifacts from the museum have been showcased for students, staff and parents to see and appreciate. This has allowed students to develop an understanding of the conflicts that the military has engaged in, in a way which is more concrete than just reading about them, or watching videos.

Thanks again to the LER Museum (especially Kathleen!) for lending us some artifacts every year and making it even more special.



Museum Today

Citizenship Ceremony Held

On 9 November 2023, The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum (LERMM) hosted a Citizenship Ceremony, with sponsorship by The Rt Honourable Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society of Edmonton. In attendance were an estimated 80 persons, including 38 Candidates for Citizenship from 10 countries, with their guests. On arrival, candidates were met with relaxing harp music while registering with IRCC staff and visiting the museum galleries as time permitted. Members of the platform party were invited to speak, contributing in their own way their personal congratulations upon the candidates receiving their certificates. Following the ceremony there was a reception with food and refreshments and more harp music. Gallery visits also continued. The significance of the Citizenship Ceremony being conducted during Remembrance Week, at this venue, was not lost.

Remembrance Day Opening

For the second time since COVID the museum was open on Remembrance Day. Many guests (300+) enjoyed the opportunity to visit our galleries, view other displays, and take part in special activities. The Valour Park Association had several vintage military vehicles on display outside the building. As always, everyone paused at 11:00 to remember the fallen.



Joe MacDonald explaining the Battle of Vimy Ridge to a visiting seniors group.

Visitor Highlights

Individual and group visits to our museum have continued to increase, especially during the Remembrance period in November. We have had 13 groups visit since August. Several individuals or families have come in for a review of a relative's service.

Regimental Association Events

Our Regimental Association used the museum as a backdrop for a community BBQ in August celebrating the 115th anniversary of the formation of the 101st Regiment, Edmonton Fusiliers and for the association's AGM. The museum also provided support for the association's annual dinner.



Joe MacDonald with Brad Marshall, great, great nephew of Alex Decoteau.



Lem Mundorf with a group of young visitors.



Joe MacDonald with the family of Sgt. R. Skitch, 49th Battalion. Their grandfather was awarded the Military Medal for bravery at Parvillers and added a bar to the medal at Thilloy.



Hans Brink and John Matthews with a group of special guests from New Zealand attending our Remembrance Day opening.





A special thanks to the Valour Park Association for bringing their vehicles to display for Remembrance Day.







The candidates, with their families and friends, attend the Citizenship Ceremony held at the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre. Joining them in the front are representatives from the museum and the unit. Immediately behind are representatives from the Churchill Society and the Regimental Association.



Members of the platform party look on as The Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, The Honourable Salma Lakhani, shares her unique and inspiring perspective and sterling example.



As host Rick Dumas is interviewed by CTV, our new Canadians enjoy food and refreshment at the post-ceremony reception.



The key players: In the front row are IRCC Clerk Teresa Lin; Host and Presiding Official Rick Dumas; The Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, The Honourable Salma Lakhani; Indigenous Co-Advisor to the Commander of the Canadian Army MWO Sheldon Quinn (Kihew Napew); Member of Parliament Ziad Aboultaif; Member of Legislative Assembly Lizette Tejada; and Edmonton City Councilor Karen Principe. In the back row are the supporting cast members from the RCMP, the museum, the association and the serving unit.

Can You Contribute?

Having ended our series of articles on the 49th Battalion and The Loyal Edmonton Regiment in the two world wars, we are looking for more interesting stories related to our regimental history or to the military history of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, dating back to the 1874 arrival of the North-West Mounted Police and forward from 1945 to the present.

We need your help. Can you contribute an historical article for Remember (under your by-line, but helped, if you wish, by our team)? We will be looking for vignettes or articles up to 1,000 words – with images if possible. Larger articles will be considered for inclusion as serial articles. Photos are preferred in jpeg format, with highest resolution possible, and sent as separate attachments, not embedded into the article. Articles should have source citations for possible footnotes.

Suggestions for possible articles would also be considered.

Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum

Open weekdays 10 am – 4 pm (Except Holidays)
See website for current Covid-19 restrictions

Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre
#118, 10440 – 108th Avenue, NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 3Z9

Phone: (780) 421-9943

Website: www.lermuseum.org

Museum Email: lermus1@telus.net

Remember Newsletter Email: lermusm@telus.net

Facebook: Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum (https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Loyal-Edmonton-Regiment-Military-Museum/203117963074315) and Les Tock's timeline (https://www.facebook.com/les.tock.9)

Twitter: @49bnlermus Instagram: lermmuseum

Previous editions of *Remember* are available on our website at

https://www.lermuseum.org/items-of-interest/27-remember-newsletters