



# HERITAGE VIEWS

history and heritage  
in Crowsnest Pass, AB

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Editorial/feature photo
- Heritage Partner News
- Did You Know...
- Articles: *Blairmore Legion* and *Wartime Letters to Mother*
- Book Review: *The Boy Who Couldn't Die*
- Q&A: Cemetery research
- History Hike: Coleman Airport
- News: 75 years ago
- Sign of the Times
- Local Heritage Attractions
- Newsletter Archives

## Issue #60, September 2020

It seems that most issues of this newsletter coincide with the anniversary of an important local event. This month is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War Two. Hardly a “local event,” but Pass residents have participated in every foreign war Canada has waged, starting with the Boer War in 1899.

War itself should not be glorified, but it is hard not to remember with some emotion the stress and sacrifice made by the men, women, and children who were involved, voluntarily or not. World War Two has been described as “the war that had to be won” and many Canadians fought with that sentiment in mind.

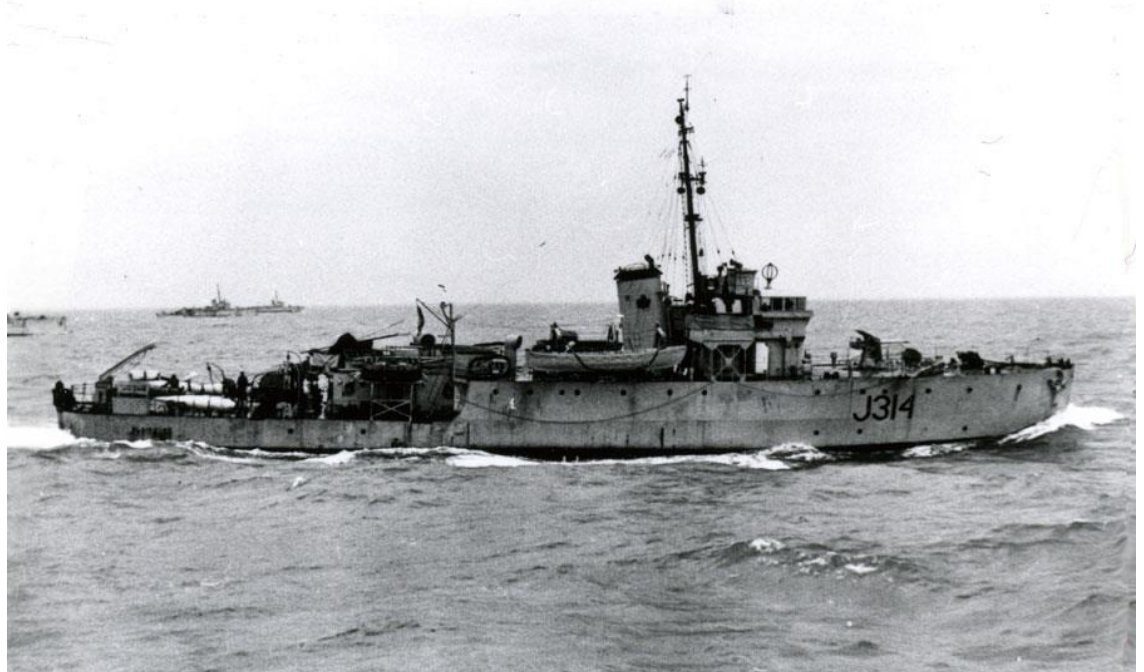
- Ian McKenzie

*HMCS Blairmore* in the North Atlantic, ca 1943.

Canada's Bangor-class minesweepers were named after towns whose citizens bought the most war bonds.

*HMCS Blairmore* carried town gifts and received weekly editions of the *Blairmore Enterprise*.

Photo: Crowsnest Museum and Archives, CM-MI-18-107



*Heritage Views* is a publication of the Crowsnest Heritage Initiative. We are a cooperative committee of local heritage organizations and interested individuals who seek to promote the understanding and appreciation of heritage within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. For more information on who we are and what we do, click here: <http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca/crowsnest-heritage-initiative/>

This issue was edited and produced by Ian McKenzie and proofread by Isabel Russell and Ken Allred. Inquiries, comments or submissions can be sent to [heritageviews@shaw.ca](mailto:heritageviews@shaw.ca). Future contributors should send in their articles in MS Word or something similar, with any photos sent as separate jpeg files. Do not embed photos into your document; we will just have to strip them out and reinsert them into our newsletter format.

## Heritage Partner News

An expression of interest from an outside organization has prompted the **Municipal Historic Resources Board** to take a renewed interest in Old Maude, the vintage steam locomotive across from the Blairmore post office. This may lead to much-needed cosmetic restoration.

Individuals have partnered with the **Crowsnest CanDo Society** to see if the old Roxy Theatre in downtown Coleman can be reopened as a film and performing arts venue.

The **Crowsnest Historical Society's** annual Harvest Of Memories fundraiser will be virtual, due to Covid 19. Check [www.crowsnestmuseum.ca/hom](http://www.crowsnestmuseum.ca/hom) for details on how to participate.

The **Crowsnest Museum** is now displaying the famous pocket-watch, key evidence in the capture of train-robber Ausby Auloff. They've also partnered with **United Riders Of Crowsnest** to move large artifacts from the museum yard to a new kids' mountain-bike park.

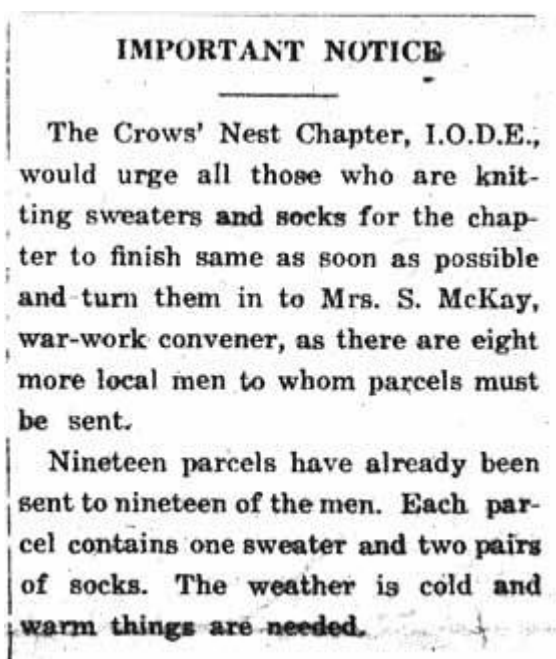
The **Frank Slide Interpretive Centre** has produced the seventh in their historical comic book series, this time on the Lost Lemon Mine legend.

This year's mostly-virtual **Doors Open and Heritage Festival** included prerecorded and live-stream videos, which can still be seen through <https://www.facebook.com/cnpheritagefest/>. This new method (for us) of delivery included extensive regional news media coverage, including radio interviews and a video clip aired on the [CBC Calgary News](#).

The heritage community was saddened to learn of the closure of the **Nippon Institute of Technology's** Blairmore campus and the probable sale of all four of its heritage buildings. NIT staff, students, and organization all contributed to heritage preservation in the Pass.

A blog post on the restoration of the **APP Barracks** building is found [here](#). An earlier post *The Butterfly Effect* is about upgrades at Blairmore's historic courthouse.

An online keyword search on the **Crowsnest Pass Municipal Library** website like [this](#) will include their local history shelf in the basement. The library can also link through the Chinook Arch interlibrary system to bring in things they don't have in the building.



*Blairmore Enterprise, January 19, 1940*

### Did you know...

... *HMCS Blairmore's* bell was once displayed on Blairmore's main street?

... the first Pass enlistment for WW2 was William Knight, former mayor of Blairmore's 'communist' town council of 1933-1936?

... in WW2, coal miners were discouraged from (or were even refused) enlistment?

... our local Legions each have displays of wartime artifacts, donated by its members?

... the Crowsnest Museum has a military exhibits room?

## History of the Blairmore Legion

by R. W. Harold Pinkney (1893-1961), secretary of the Blairmore Branch of the GWVA, and charter member of Blairmore Legion #7

It's a long trek back to the year 1918, but it was then that the first Veteran's Association of any kind was founded in this section of the Crow's Nest Pass. A mere handful of First World War Veterans from the towns of Coleman, Blairmore and Bellevue decided it was time to form a War Veterans Association. These were some of the men who had returned home prior to the cessation of hostilities, through injuries received, ill health and for other reasons. They held a meeting and banded themselves into what was to be known as the Crow's Nest Pass Branch, Great War Veteran's Association and applied for a charter which was issued to them in due course. A building was purchased by them on the eastern outskirts of Blairmore, where they could spend pleasant hours swapping yarns about their experiences and play the odd game of checkers and rummy.



Lethbridge B & M bldg, ca 1910.  
Crowsnest Museum and Archives

After the Armistice, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, large numbers of the battle scarred veterans began returning to their respective communities and by the fall of 1919 nearly all had arrived safely home. It was then thought advisable to dissolve the Crow's Nest Pass Branch, Great War Veteran's Association and each town to form a branch of its own. With the return to Blairmore of seventy-two veterans, the boys got together, and at a meeting held in the old Lethbridge Brewery building, now known as the Corner Pool Room, formed the Blairmore Branch of the Great War Veteran's Association and a charter was granted them. This was in the winter of 1919-1920. The late Mr. Fritz Sick of the

Lethbridge Brewing and Malting Co. offered to sell them the building for \$6000.00, \$2000.00 of which had to be paid in cash and the balance \$1000.00 a year without interest. The membership accepted Mr. Sick's proposition and fifty two members subscribed the sum of \$2600.00. At this time the members were very optimistic, possibly over optimistic, but the road ahead proved to be not an easy one, and they found in the months to come, through the departure of some who had not settled down and through other causes,



Brunetto Bldg (Variety store), 1922.  
Crowsnest Museum and Archives



Blairmore Hotel and Cosmopolitan Hotel, ca 1913. Crowsnest Museum and Archives

that obligations coming due could not be met. They turned the building back to the owner and found new quarters, moving into premises just east of the Blairmore Graphic Building which is now occupied by the Variety store. Undaunted and undismayed, they stayed in this location until late 1924, and felt it would be to their advantage if they had Club Rooms nearer the centre of town. It was then that they moved into the building at that time known as the Blairmore Hotel Block and owned by Dr. R. K. Lillie. They rented the west portion of the building which now houses Mr. Reid's Men's Shop. At this period of the Organization's history, Mr. W. J. Fisher was President and Mr. Harold James

Secretary. In the year of 1926 all the branches of the Great War Veteran's Association throughout the Dominion surrendered their charters and became a part of the Canadian Legion, British Empire Service League and it was on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1926, that the Blairmore Branch #7 B.E.S.L. came into existence. Mr. George Meffan was President at this time and Mr. Harold James, Secretary. Members names appearing on the Charter of Branch #7 are W. J. Fisher, Harold Pinkney, D. A. Howe, D. Kemp Sr., Jas. Turnbull, J. W. Gresham, E. Royle (deceased) N. Private, C. Thomason, G. Meffan, W. Barnacal and G. A. Vissac. The Legion branch, like its predecessor the Great War Veteran's Association, experienced many trials and tribulations. It was a struggle to carry on at best. In 1929 Mr. J. Angus McDonald was elected President and held that office throughout the depression years until 1940. It was during his term that the Branch really began to get on its feet. In 1932, Mr. Charles Sartoris made them a very generous offer to purchase the building owned by him, which is now the home of Branch #7. The sum involved was some \$7000.00 which could be paid off in monthly installments as rent. So it was in 1932 that the Legion moved to its present quarters. By 1940 there was very little indebtedness left on the building which speaks well for Mr. McDonald's administrative abilities. At long last the Veterans of Blairmore had a place they could call their home.

With the commencement of World War II in 1939, many of the members serving in His Majesty's Forces joined the Local Branch, adding greatly to its strength and numbers. At the Annual Meeting in 1941, Mr. Ben Hobson was elected President and guided the destinies of #7 for the ensuing five years. This was the period during which the Branch made remarkable progress through capable leadership and more prosperous times, freeing itself from all outstanding indebtedness, besides participating heavily in every issue of Victory Bonds. An average of \$100.00 per month was provided to see that every person from Frank and Blairmore, serving in a theatre of war, received a monthly ration of cigarettes. In addition, the Branch generously augmented the funds of the local chapter I.O.D.E. each year thus helping the ladies provide Christmas parcels for the troops overseas.



Legion building, ca 1940. East of present-day CIBC bank. Crowsnest Museum and Archives

Mr. Hobson declined to accept re-nomination for President in 1946 whereupon Mr. Jack Davis, a member of the Executive and a Past President of another branch of the Canadian Legion, assumed the office for the year 1946. Mr. Davis had a very successful year during his term of office. At the Annual Meeting in 1947, Mr. Davis felt that the time had arrived when some responsibility for the Management of Branch #7 should be placed on younger shoulders and some of the younger veterans should hold office. Mr. Glyn Rees was elected President for 1947 and re-elected again in 1948 which speaks well for his stewardship with the Legion. Mr. E. G. Montalbetti is the Secretary-Manager. Since Mr. Rees took office, the Branch has made splendid progress. It was in 1947 that the new Executive, composed of young and old veterans felt that the Club premises in their present condition were entirely inadequate to meet the requirements of the ever increasing membership. (Blairmore Branch has grown over a period of years from a membership of 70 ... ). With no indebtedness and with \$16,000.00 in bonds and cash built up over a number of years, Mr. Rees and the new Executive got down to

work. They gave a contract to Mr. J. S. D'Appolonia of Coleman for the extension and renovation of the premises. The building was extended to the back lane, thus providing more Club Rooms and making the main room considerably larger. The interior was renovated from ceiling to cellar. The old lighting system was discarded and replaced throughout with the very latest in fluorescent lighting. A two tone effect in asphalt tile covers the floors and adds greatly to the surroundings. The very best in chairs, tables and other furnishings has taken the place of other outmoded pieces. All in all, the home of Blairmore Branch #7 is something for the eye to behold and is a great credit to the Executive and members. The writer regrets that time and space has not permitted him to name all those members who have served faithfully on the different executives from year to year and given their President loyal support.

The Ladies decided in 1947 to form a Women's Auxiliary ... The Auxiliary, since its inception, has been a source of help to the Branch and participates in many of its functions. A recent occasion was when the T.B. Travelling Clinic visited Blairmore, when accommodation was provided in the Club Rooms. The ladies gave unselfishly of their time and rendered any assistance they could.

Yes – Blairmore Branch #7 of the Canadian Legion, B.E.S.L. since its small but slow start in 1926 has had its ups and downs, but today is marching, surely and steadily along, and now is well established. "From a small acorn has grown a mighty oak".

\* \* \* \* \*

*Editor's Note: The above account was written shortly after the end of World War Two.*

*The Great War Veterans Association of Canada (GWVA) was a national organization with over 800 branches, formed in 1916-1917 and later a member of the international British Empire Service League. It was a driving force behind the amalgamation of Canada's many diverse veterans' organizations into the Canadian Legion in 1925-1926. The GWVA organization of independent local branches under provincial and national headquarters was adopted for the new Legion. Although the new Legion absorbed GWVA provincial and national assets, local branches were left alone and each branch applied for its own Legion charter, after the granting of the Legion's national charter in 1926. Coleman Branch #9 was the earliest charter granted in Alberta by the national headquarters (Dominion Command) on October 6, 1926 (applications were received and branch numbers probably determined at the provincial level, with Dominion Command apparently approving and dating them in a slightly different order). However, as all Crowsnest Pass Legion branches can trace their ancestry back to the GWVA, each can claim its origins in the 1918 Crow's Nest Branch of the Great War Veterans Association of Canada.*

*Blairmore Legion Branch #7 closed in 2018, after a century of service and comradeship.*

Additional reading:

*Service: the Story of the Canadian Legion.* Clifford H. Bowering, 1960.

*Growing Pains.* Jonathan Scotland, <http://activehistory.ca/2018/12/growing-pains-the-great-war-veterans-association-early-poppy-day-campaigns-and-the-seeds-of-commemorative-tradition/>

*The Bonus Campaign, 1919-1921: Veterans and the Campaign for Re-establishment.* Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Canadian Historical Review, 1983.



# Wartime Letters to Mother

compiled by Ian McKenzie

We used to live in Frank, in a little house which belonged to a Czech family in the 1940s. In the attic of a small backyard shed we discovered mouse-chewed, coal-dust-encrusted piles of paper from that time – West Canadian paystubs, Borden Milk labels, raffle tickets, a couple of photographs, and a handful of letters. They were so dirty that I just put them into a box and into storage. This spring, during the “Covid confinement,” I finally had a closer look.

Most of the letters were addressed to Anne Vysohlid, wife of Jerry Vysohlid, and were from two of her children who were away during the war – her son Milan joined the Navy at age 17, and her eldest daughter Annie was working as a telephone operator in High River. The difference in handwriting, from siblings who attended the same school in Frank, is interesting and somewhat stereotypical; Milan’s is heavy and rough though quite legible, while Annie’s is thin, neat, and even. Milan’s letters are short in length and information, while Annie’s run up to ten or twelve pages and offer interesting glimpses into wartime life in small-town Alberta. One has the impression that Annie wrote regularly, while Milan did not.

Here is the uncorrected text of a letter which a cocky yet homesick Milan wrote after arriving at the Esquimalt naval base for training, in 1943:

*Ord/Sea. M. Vysohlid O.NV62212  
c/o F. M. Officer  
H.M.C.S. Givenchy*

*Dear Mom and Dad.*

*Here I am writing you as soon as I arrived at the West Coast. To begin with I’m not back at Victoria yet. I’m writing this letter from Aunt Marys in Vancouver. I decided to take a couple of days of in Vancouver the heck with the Navy they can always wait for me. I’m not a scared of any of there punishment. I can take it as fast as they can dish it out. I really should have taken a couple of days off more at home or an extra week. I’m sorry I didn’t, you know I’m really homesick again and worse than ever. Oh well it won’t take long till I’ll come marching home again and maybe stay home for good eh.*

*When I left on that train from Frank to the coast I left with a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. It really was hard for me to say good-bye to you and dad but I tried to keep it back as much as possible. Oh well like I said before it won’t take long before I come marching home again. I heard Churchill speak to-day and he says this war will end in 1944 but it is going to cost a lot of blood. I was wondering if Churchill sons are in any of the armed forces if they are they stay in pretty safe places. Like I said before this war is just a racket and we got to make it so that it will be for our benefit and not for some slave runner. I hope daddy aint working on that fire anymore as I’m worried about him.*

*To-morrow I’m going to look for a nice radio in Vancouver and if I find one I like I’ll have it sent home. Tell dad as soon as I can get to Victoria I’ll get that rifle. To-night I was at a show called Lassie Come Home and then I and the Lenco[?] boys went to a dance. It sure is late now its about 3 o’clock in the morning 20<sup>th</sup> of this month right now.*

*I sure would like to see Annie Drazdick once more you know I like that kid and I know shes a swell girl.*

*Aunty Mary treats me as if I where at home I don’t know how I’ll ever be able to repay her. Aunt Mary wants you to send a picture of yourself to her. I showed her the one you gave me and shes nuts over it so send her one eh. Times up so I’ll be shoving off.*

*Love,  
Milan  
WRITE SOON PLEASE*

Most of Annie's letters have pages missing, so these are only a few excerpts. They indicate her affection for young Czech pilots training in southern Alberta:

High River  
February 16/43

Dearest mother,

... That book you have "Wings in Exile" must be very good and I'd appreciate greatly if you will send it to me. When Josef was down last month he brought his picture album, and I saw pictures of his plane etc. I suppose you know he was badly wounded, shot through the knee and chest, and his nerves were affected (I mean they were weak and he was on the verge of a breakdown). Josef thinks the world of Pres. Benes [exiled head of the Czechoslovakian government], and I saw many pictures of the two of them, and pictures of Benes decorating Josef (and he's a hero, a real one). How I sincerely hope and pray that our boys will come through to victory unharmed, and those who have sacrificed their lives have not done so in vain.

Now what is this gossip concerning Karel and Bena Daddy is implicated in? Must be pretty good if Dad's in it – honest he's worse than an old lady at times, and by the way is he wearing his uppers? (teeth) ...

... Mother, here is something to enlighten your mind. Josef is not a married man. I told him about it, and in no uncertain terms. At first he laughed + thought perhaps I was joking, and then he said of course he wasn't married and he couldn't understand why those boys (the one who said it, it was a fellow who Josef doesn't know very well) said he was married. And then it dawned on him. They had him confused with some other Czeck flier – I think the name was Stalnik, or something similar. Apparently he married some English girl, who turned out to be pretty cheap, and didn't live with her, and was quite unhappy. Josef thinks he's here in Canada instructing, and Josef said he wouldn't marry an English girl, because for one thing they don't appeal to him in any sense, and besides he said they're not very clean – their necks are dirty! He said much more, but it's too much to put in writing, so rest assured that the rumor was all tommy-rot.

I haven't answered Karel's letter as yet and I won't tell him about Jindra. After all he'll find out and can do his own guessing.

Jindra writes to me every day, and I do likewise – only I send one letter for every few days. I haven't much to say, but always manage something. He writes long letters and is very interesting, and you'd be surprised how much alike we are in our thoughts. We are waiting till the war is over, and this will be a test for our love. However more about this later.

On February 21<sup>st</sup> Jindra is graduating along with other Czeck, Pole, and United Nations boys. They are going to receive their wings, and for the boys it will be the happiest day in their life. Soon after, perhaps two or three weeks, they are leaving for overseas. Dorothy, the Chief Operator, told me to-night that if nothing turns up this week, I can have Saturday off, as well as Sunday, to go to M. Hat in. I don't have to come back till Monday night. Jindra invited me down, but he himself did not know what date the grad was, and I found out to-day by reading the paper. It's going to be a surprise for him, and I know we'll both be very happy to celebrate this occasion together. Now I'll have a chance to wear my gown, as most likely there will be a great party afterwards.

But Mom, as you already know by now, the trip will cost me a little more than I thought it would, and I'm asking you, once more, and honestly I should be ashamed, if you could possibly send me \$7.00. My expenses are as follows:

Fare from HR to Cal	2.40
“ “ Cal to M.H.	13.50
Room –	5.00
Miscellaneous –	<u>\$5.00</u>
	\$25.90 or say \$26.00

Well I have about \$17, now that my board is paid, and I haven't put any money down on my bills (There isn't much to pay anyway) but the stores can wait. I wouldn't accept the money from Jindra and I know they don't get much, and besides it's against my pride. I'd sooner not go. This would be the only time in my life I'd ever have a chance to have such a week-end for it means, or would mean so much to Jindra and myself ...

... This is all for now, so till I hear from you + hope its soon, its love + kisses

High River, Alta  
Good Friday evening  
[April 23, 1943]

Dearest Mother, Dad + Kiddies,

... I do hope you have written Jindra already and if not please do. It's only a few lines if you do, and it means a lot to him.

Guess what? On Saturday afternoon I received a telegram from Jindra. He arrived safely overseas and sent his love. It was dated April 12<sup>th</sup>. The telegram was forwarded from Montreal. I certainly am relieved now knowing the boat got over safely. And I'm also happy ...

... Yes Mother I know you're right in your way of thinking about love + romance these present times. I realize more than ever now that after this war that jobs will be scarce and I'd hate to be tied down to a kid or a few, perhaps my husband would be killed, invalided, or unemployed. Since I've been in H.R. I haven't met a fellow yet that would please me as a suitor or husband. So why shouldn't I wait? God only knows what lies ahead for me, and I place my fate in his hands entirely...

There seems to have been a period of time when Annie did not hear from Jindra, and she sent a telegram inquiring after him. For reasons of wartime brevity and security, telegrams to enlisted men consisted of just three numbers, each corresponding to a standard sentence, all listed on the back of the telegram form. Annie's three numbers were: 15 "No news of you for some time;" 76 "Please telegraph that you are well;" 44 "Fondest love and kisses."

Wartime order form for the telegram from Annie to Jindra.  
Date unknown, but probably May or June of 1943.

Dear folks,

Am going to write you to-night so will drop you a few lines this afternoon with the parcel.

Guess what? I heard from Jindra to-day – I'm so happy that I cry and laugh at the same time. He has been in an accident, is still in the hospital but is recovering. I'm so glad, Mother, I didn't give up hope for him, because I knew he was alive and thinking of me.

I'm going to write you to-night and send you his letter also... I haven't been so happy as I'm today for such a long time it seems.



The dates in another letter suggest that Jindra's injuries were serious and his recovery took several months, and perhaps affected his mood.

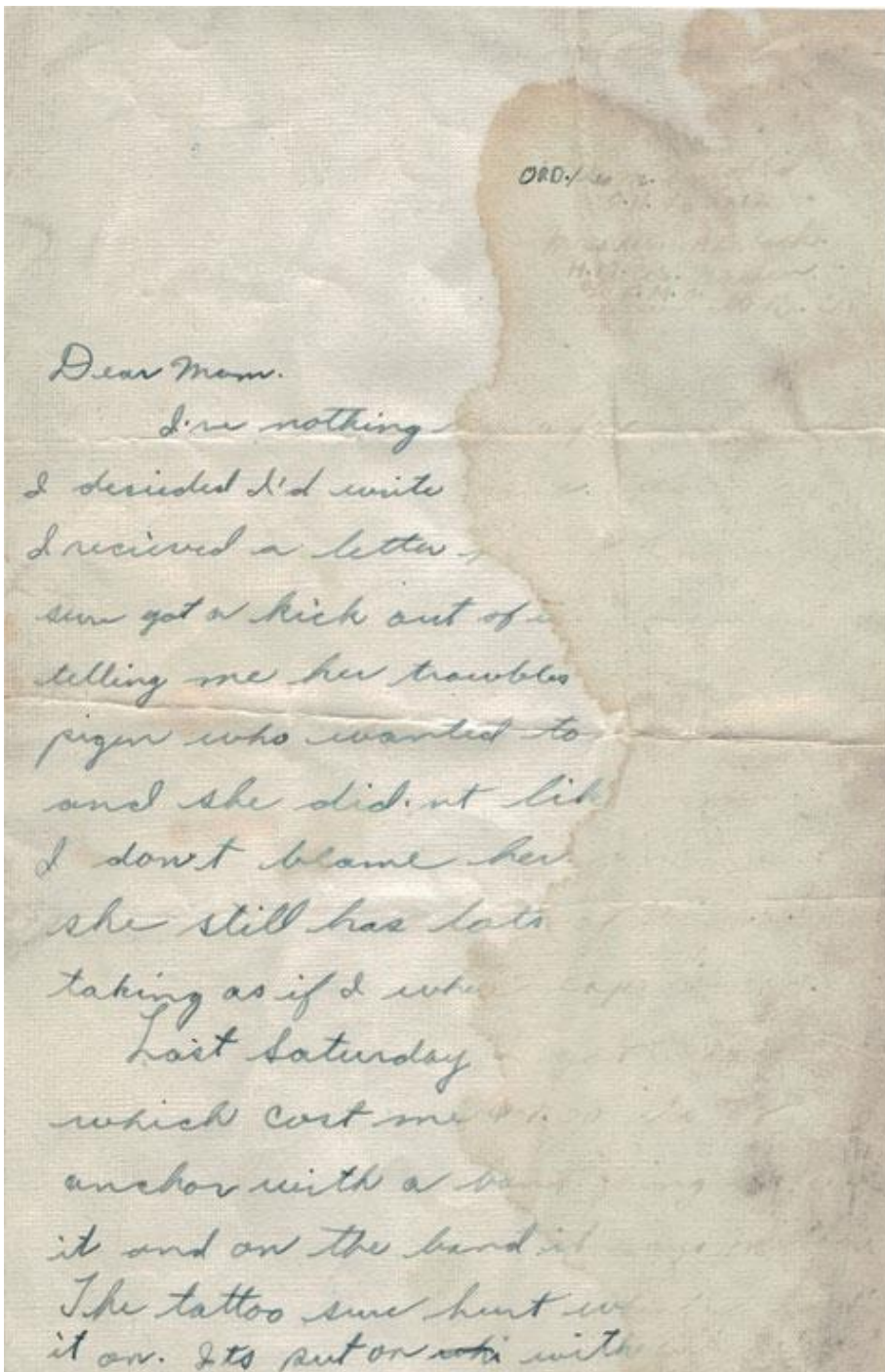
Monday afternoon

Nov 22/43

... I heard from Jindra last Saturday as you already know. His letter was very interesting and he's getting more like himself. He told me about his birthday (I asked him in one of my letters) on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Mother this was the day you arrived in H. River. He was quite sick + as yet unable to move around. The nursing sister saw to it he had a cake (A very small one) and a small glass of beer. It was his first birthday celebration since he left home. Gosh. I do wish he receives my parcel ...

Jindra (Pilot Warrant Officer Jindrich Landsmann, 788129) was killed on June 15, 1945 when his Spitfire collided with another plane during a training exercise off the English coast. He was 23 years old, and the last Czech airman to lose his life with the Royal Air Force.

These letters have probably been unread for over seventy-five years. Their surviving fragments offer a limited glimpse into the lives of Pass people during the Second World War. Though the writers and recipients are long gone, these paper artifacts remain – or at least parts of them.



A water-damaged page from another letter from Milan to his mother in Frank. The second paragraph appears to say "Last Saturday I got a tattoo which cost me \$7.00 its an anchor with a band going around it and on the band it says Mother. The tattoo sure hurt ..."

## Book Review

### *The Boy Who Couldn't Die* by Rick Gillis (2017)

Review by Ian McKenzie

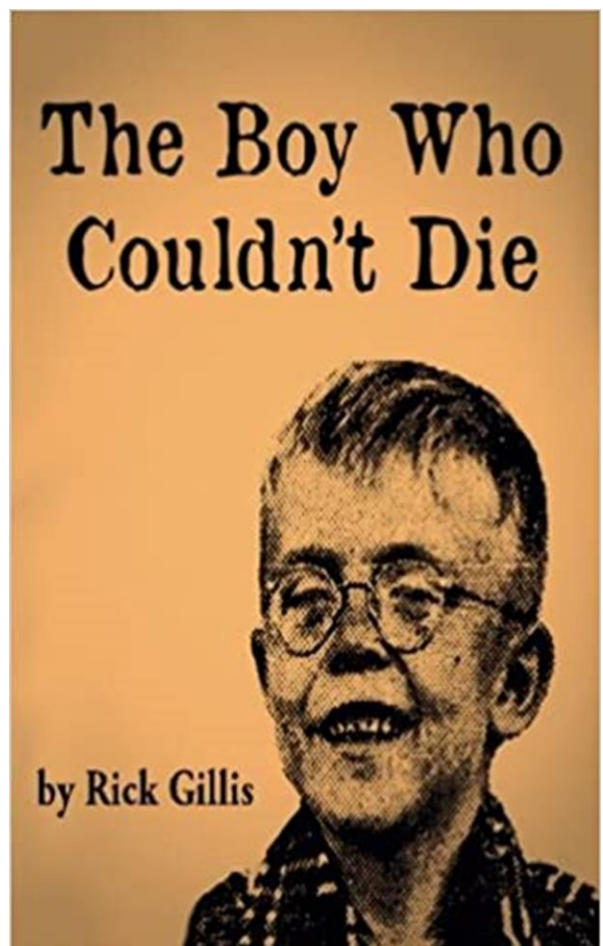
The definition of what is history, and our heritage, is constantly changing. As time marches on, it drags history along behind it. As a youngster I remember thinking that things weren't really old unless they came from the 1800s, but today many of us find that things from our own childhood are now considered "historic," and even have their own "mid-century" heritage label: things like chrome kitchen tables, cars with fins, and television that went off-air at midnight with a test-pattern accompanied by our national anthem. It was a time when locals still used the archaic "Crow's Nest Pass" to describe the collection of rough, independent, rival towns and villages in this valley. Maybe it's not classic Pass history, but the postwar 1950s are rightly beginning to creep into our local legends and into our museums.

*The Boy Who Couldn't Die* evokes that era, a time before "helicopter parents" where kids grew up with considerable freedom, which came with a certain degree of personal risk, and with the occasional severe discipline administered both at home and at school. People love nostalgia and the old memories of their own youth, and this book will evoke that in readers-of-a-certain-age who grew up in small towns.

Although this book is a work of fiction, local readers will readily recognize names and landmarks from Crowsnest Pass. Incidents in the story were influenced by Gillis' recollections from his own childhood, and thus ring very true. I wonder how many of them *are* true? Some incidents are pretty wild, but all are within the believable scope of a young prankster sixty years ago. Readers will undoubtedly agree that such youthful antics would be unthinkable in our modern era of Facebook and cellphone obsession.

The majority of the book is a pleasant and humorous recollection of a boy's experiences growing up in the Pass. But Gillis throws us the first curve-ball by telling the story with a female voice, through the eyes and writings of little Ricky's older sister. Things get decidedly weird in the final two chapters, with a hard twist that no reader could see coming. At the end, I found myself pondering the power of personal existence and the many chance events which can take that away with only a moment's notice. That's not what I expected from a fictional novel about a little kid in the Pass.

*The Boy Who Couldn't Die* is for sale at the Crowsnest Museum in Coleman, and Crockets Trading Company in Bellevue. It should also be available through most libraries.



# Cemetery Research: Q&A with Heather Williams and Wendy Schultz

Volunteers, Alberta Family History Society

## *What is the Alberta Family History Society?*

The AFHS is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year so we're very pleased to have this opportunity to tell your readers about our society. The AFHS is a Calgary-based non-profit organization, supporting worldwide family history research through education and the encouragement of preservation of information. The Society's largest resource is our library of approximately 11,000 items related to genealogical research. The collection covers many parts of the world but does have an emphasis on materials pertaining to Alberta, the rest of Canada and the United Kingdom. The AFHS has a monthly publication – *Chinook Arch*, which highlights the society's activities, monthly meetings, and SIGS (Special Interest Groups), as well as containing interesting genealogical news, research tips and links, stories of the past, etc. Cemetery recording has been done throughout the years the society has been active - all Calgary cemeteries are recorded as well as many rural ones in Southern Alberta.

## *What projects have been undertaken here in Crowsnest Pass?*

One of our former AFHS members, Doug Stobbs, now deceased, was born in Hillcrest; you can read about the Stobbs family in *Crowsnest and Its People* (Millennium Edition). Doug offered his enthusiasm as a family historian and genealogist to Janet Morgan (the first Projects Chairperson of AFHS), volunteering on her cemetery recording project which involved Calgary and southern Alberta cemeteries. Janet was outstanding in creating the framework for AFHS' program of transcribing and documenting cemeteries of interest. The Crowsnest Pass cemetery recording began in the early 1980s. Doug was most enthusiastic, no doubt because of his familiarity with the Pass area, his awareness of resource material available at the time, but also his knowing the various town officials, church leaders and funeral home operators and being able to approach them to document records and to obtain answers for queries received by AFHS pertaining to names or markers in the various Pass cemeteries.

The AFHS online database already contains the earlier information about Pass burials gathered by Janet Morgan, Doug Stobbs and the many other volunteers – we're now adding to it. The current research on the Crowsnest Pass, Cowley, Livingstone, Lundbreck and Hill Spring cemeteries is on an Excel spreadsheet, which eventually will get uploaded into the AFHS cemetery database. At this point the spreadsheet has over 12,000 names – not 12,000 individuals as married women are included twice (once with their maiden name and once with their married name, to facilitate family group research). As we started this project we realized that, thanks to the Provincial Archives putting Alberta's historical birth/stillbirth/marriage/death indexes online a few years ago, AFHS now had a wonderful opportunity to add valuable information to the names and dates recorded for the cemeteries. So we began using the PAA indexes, newspapers, local history books, Ancestry.ca records, B/M/Ds from other provinces, census records, the Find A Grave website, cemetery websites, photos we volunteers had taken, and any other sources we could find to supplement the collective knowledge about the people buried in the Pass. Documenting of the sources has been done so that we can direct other researchers to this historical information as well. We plan to complete this project in the coming months.

## *What happens to the information?*

Anyone can search AFHS's cemetery listings at no cost – you don't need to be a member, although of course we'd love new members! What a researcher would see is the deceased

person's name, years of birth and death, and place of burial. For additional information, the researcher can get more details by submitting a query for a very nominal fee, by visiting our library here in Calgary at 712 – 16<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, or by joining AFHS. The new Pass research will be uploaded to the database in the coming months.

*How have you personally been involved with this project?*

Heather Williams: I have been an active member with AFHS since early 1990's. Upon joining, I immediately offered to help on the Projects Committee and eventually became its Chairperson. Cemeteries have long been a fascination to me. The markers tell us so much about our earlier pioneers, residents of any given village, town or city. As an Albertan, our history is so interesting and cemeteries capture a great deal – we see the result of tragedies that happened – such as epidemics, primitive health care in many areas, industrial dangers and accidents, but not all is tragedy. The peacefulness, the love, respect for individuals and families can be found on all cemetery grave markers – designed by creative artisans, using local and imported materials. I remain interested in learning more about many of the



residents who now are remembered in our cemeteries and wish their stories not to be forgotten. AFHS has digitized all of our cemetery databases/transcriptions and recently photographs of individual markers. As part of these efforts, I was always busy participating in the activities related to documenting cemeteries – transcribing, typing info into our Excel spreadsheets, organizing volunteer groups to continue to enhance our cemetery resources, and conferring with the City of Calgary parks managers and their cemetery staff as we worked in the various cemeteries.

Wendy Schultz: I've been a genealogist for over thirty years but have only been active in AFHS for four years. At one of the first monthly meetings I attended, Heather asked for volunteers to help with proofreading cemeteries and I put my hand up! I subsequently helped her with updating the burials in both Queen's Park and St. Mary's cemeteries in Calgary, which together total roughly 100,000 names, in Excel spreadsheets. When I asked Heather what else I could help with, she handed me the Crowsnest Pass cemeteries for updating, and asked me to take the lead on this file, with her proofreading this time around.

My personal mission was to identify as many of the maiden names as I could, as those names are so often lost over the course of time. Few things are more frustrating to researchers than being stumped by markers that state "wife of James", for example, with no hint as to the woman's personal identity!

Heather and I, with her husband Dennis as the driver, took a trip to the Pass in late September last year when the beautiful scenery was showing its best fall colours. We visited the Crowsnest Pass Museum, Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, chatted with the nice folks at the CNP Municipal Office, CNP Provincial Building, and more. We walked through most of the cemeteries, taking photos of the newer markers, and generally thoroughly enjoyed ourselves as only genealogists in cemeteries can do! We plan to return this summer or early fall to walk the remaining cemeteries, and learn more about this beautiful area of Alberta.

\* \* \* \* \*

Job Interviewer: And what would you say was your most important supervisory position?

Applicant: Cemetery researcher. I had a lot of people under me.

## Coleman Airstrip Hike

The naturally flat and open Jim Good Flats was occasionally used by aircraft, starting with a Curtis JN-4 “Jenny” biplane which put down there in 1920. Between 1933 and 1935 men from a Great Depression work camp built a proper grass airstrip here. This was part of a chain of emergency airstrips for commercial flights between Lethbridge and Vancouver. The strip was originally manned by a radio operator and was also used by private planes and has seen a couple of plane crashes, one with a loss of life. The strip was closed in the mid-1950s, and most of it was covered by a natural gas and sulphur processing plant which opened in 1961. Plant demolition began in 2012 and it looks like site remediation is almost finished.

The short (1.2km, one way) easy Coleman Airstrip walk starts at the old Devon gas plant sign (it says nothing now). Drive west on Highway 3 and turn left (south) directly opposite the Allison/Chinook road, and immediately park at the old sign. The walk starts down the road that is closest to the highway, which heads east a bit before swinging right (south). Avoid a left branch which goes to private property, and head downhill to the wire gate onto the Fleming Ranch conservation property. It’s a little easier to cut over to the other road with the pipe gate, either way you follow that road to the railway crossing. (On your left, between a grey Atco Gas box and an old corral, you should be able to pick out the old wagon road which ran between Coleman and BC; it was surveyed in 1909, but parts of it may be older.)

Guy and Jeanette Fleming purchased this ranch in 1928 and began to raise a family here. When his family moved to Calgary in 1932, Guy stayed behind and lived a squalid bachelor’s life until he died on the ranch in 1960. He worked on the airstrip construction as a contractor, and later I wonder if the occasional landing plane annoyed him or if he enjoyed being “buzzed” by them. In recent years the property has been owned by various conservation groups and most recently has been partially restored by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. It’s nice Mountain Bluebird habitat but apparently bears and elk like it too.

Cautiously cross the railway towards the airstrip. On your right you can immediately see the long flat airstrip and the stone retaining wall that defines its northeast corner. At present the actual airstrip is out-of-bounds until site remediation is complete, but views can be obtained from outside its fence and from the surrounding Fleming Ranch conservation area. Take the track which cuts east (left) back into the conservation area through a wire gate, although the fence is down just a few metres to the north. Now follow the fence south until you encounter another fence at right-angles, where you have an attractive view of the Crowsnest River. Again, the fence is down 20 metres to the east (left), and over that way is a cool old airfield marker lying on the ground. Continue around the perimeter of the airstrip fence, swinging west (right) and observing another retaining wall at the airstrip’s southeast corner, and a massive pile of rocks to your left, cleared off the strip with hand labour. Turn back when you encounter another fence, and retrace your steps to your car.



As with any hike, please treat both the natural and historic landscape with respect. It’s an easy walk, but you should wear suitable footwear, and watch out for barbwire on the ground if stepping over downed fences.

# News, 75 Years Ago – the End of World War Two

The *Blairmore Enterprise* reported excitement in the Pass upon the end of the war in Europe in May, but a more subdued response to the end of war in the Pacific in August/September.

May 11, 1945: “The entire Crows’ Nest Pass was enfeite on Wednesday of this week in celebration of the Allied victory in Europe. In the forenoon citizens were busy lining up floats, etc., which gathered first at Coleman, from which point the great procession of thousands by motor and on foot wended its way to Blairmore, where they were greeted by a thousand more of men, women and children. At the bandstand a programme consisted of an address by His worship Mayor E. Williams, followed by Rev. W. E. Brown, Rev. James McKelvey and others. The procession continued on to Frank, Bellevue and Hillcrest, where similar services were held. Included in the parade were several bands and a large number of floats.

Returning from the east the crowd reassembled in the Blairmore athletic grounds at about dusk, where a most brilliant display of fireworks was staged and children treated, followed by return to Victoria Street, between Fifth and Seventh avenues – specially blocked off for the occasion – where dancing continued till the midnight hour.

An added feature of the evening was a large blazing V on the face of Turtle Mountain.

Never in the history of the Crows’ Nest Pass has such a turnout of citizens been seen, and such good order maintained. Those in charge of the programme deserve the highest commendation for a job well done.

Space will not permit us going further into detail, but we doubt if any place in Alberta could have staged a bigger display in comparison to its population.”

\*\*\*\*\*

August 17, 1945: “The Second Great War ended on Tuesday evening of this week when Japan decided to accept the Allied surrender terms. The occasion was fittingly observed throughout Canada on Wednesday, which was observed as VJ-Day.

Next Sunday will be a day of prayers and solemn thanksgiving for the victory over Japan and the ending of the war.”

“Clubs and organizations planning welcome home celebrations for returning servicemen cannot claim extra rationed goods, the Wartime Prices and Trade Board states.

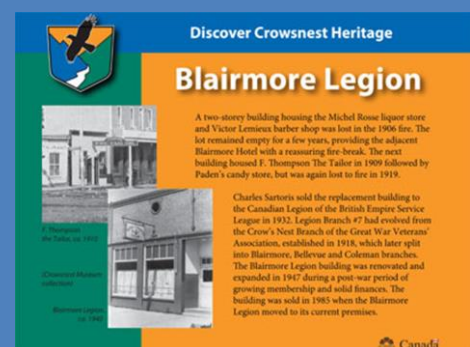
Much as the Board sympathizes with welcome home receptions, it cannot afford to allot extra rations. Canada’s ration system, based on supplies available and anticipated production, could not stand the strain of such additional pressure without a decrease in present consumer rations.

Organizers of such receptions must, therefore, use individual members’ ration allowances if they serve refreshments involving rationed foods.”

## Sign of the Times

The Crowsnest Heritage Initiative has installed four information kiosks, about fifty signs, and over a hundred building plaques, each revealing a small piece of our diverse history.

There is a plaque on the left side of the old Pharmasave building on Blairmore’s main street, the site of the Blairmore Legion between 1932 and 1985.



Have you read it?

# STEP UP and STEP OUT ... IN A UNIFORM!

**Be a Man  
Among Men!**

You'll feel like a million dollars the minute you step out in that fine new uniform now ready for you. You'll be a man among men, a vital cog in Canada's great mobile war machine. You are needed to handle guns, tanks, armoured cars and other motorized equipment. Canada is waiting for YOU to spark them to victory. Canada wants ACTION. You want ACTION. This is your chance to get it.

The Canadian Active Army requires men for Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Armoured Cars, Tanks, Infantry, Transport and Supply, Medical and Ordnance and other branches of the Service. The Army is prepared to teach many trades and to train you to efficiently handle Canada's weapons of war.

Go to your nearest District Recruiting Office. Find out about these Units; how they work, what they do. See just where you'll fit in. See where any particular skill you possess can best be utilized. Then join up for ACTION!

**You are needed NOW for ACTIVE SERVICE**

**RATES OF PAY IN THE RANKS**  
\$1.30 per Day with Board, Lodging, Clothing, Medical and Dental care provided. EXTRA: (1) Rates varying from 25¢ to 75¢ per day for skilled tradesmen while employed. (2) Dependent Allowances in Cash: \$15 to wife, \$11 each per month for 2 children—only 3 dependents per soldier.

Apply to nearest  
**DISTRICT RECRUITING OFFICE**  
or any Local Armory  
**DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**  
CANADA

# Here's the ACTION! you've been wanting!

**JOIN UP without delay**

There's a place for YOU at the wheel of a roaring tank; behind a spitting Ack-Ack gun; astride an armoured motorcycle... and YOU are not the man to hang back. It's YOUR fight; the weapons are being forged; the way prepared. The call is to ACTION from the minute you step into uniform. You and your PALS are needed NOW. Canada and the Empire, your home, your loved ones, must be protected; get into the fight.

The Canadian Active Army requires men for Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Armoured Cars, Tanks, Infantry, Transport and Supply, Medical, Ordnance and other branches of the Service. The Army is prepared to teach many trades, and to train you to efficiently handle Canada's weapons of war.

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Between 1939 and 1945, most newspapers and magazines across Canada ran patriotic wartime advertisements. Here is a small sampling from the *Blairmore Enterprise*, for military recruitment (above) and for civilian Victory Bond sales (below). Other advertisements encouraged wartime frugality, and announced that hoarding was illegal. The government also advertised for donations of rags, paper, rubber, bottles, and scrap metal (spent shaving cream cans and toothpaste tubes, for example) for remanufacture into military equipment, and even collected bones, fat and grease for explosives and ammunition.

## To Every Mother Wife and Sweetheart .. Beware of the Vanishing Atlantic!

**HELP TO KEEP THE "FRONT LINE" AWAY FROM YOUR DOORSTEP**  
**Urge Your Menfolk to Buy Victory Bonds NOW**

You can no longer depend upon the Atlantic Ocean for protection. Any day between Newfoundland and Mexico, a bombing plane can fly from Greenland down our Maritime and Quebec—a mere matter of 5 hours to Winnipeg in less than 9 hours, to Vancouver in 10 1/2 hours. From German-occupied France, bombing planes can carry destruction to Toronto, Niagara, Ottawa and Montreal in less than 10 hours. Night and day, in the British Isles and on the sea, in and out of uniform, men defend your home from attack as surely as though they stood and fought at your own doorstep. Will you help to supply them with tools to carry on the light—your fight? Will you help to make certain that there shall never be an "occupied" Canada?

Your Government needs some of your savings to buy more ships, planes and tanks—millions of war that will carry the return of our men to their homes, lance out way of life. Lend your money by buying Victory Bonds NOW!

The money you invest in Victory Bonds will come back to you with interest. Lend your money. We must win this war. Lend to preserve the things that money cannot buy. Urge your menfolk to protect your home by investing in Victory Bonds now. All that you hold dear is threatened.

**HOW TO BUY**  
Give your order to the canvasser who calls on you. Or place it in the hands of any bank or any bank, or place it in an authorized company. Or send it to your local Victory Loan Headquarters. Bonds may be bought in denominations of \$50, \$100, \$200, \$500 and larger. Canvasser, bank, trust company or your local Victory Loan Headquarters will be glad to assist you every assistance in making out your order form.

**HELP FINISH THE JOB!**

**BUY VICTORY BONDS**

# Lend to Defend our way of life!

**DOWN THROUGH THE AGES**  
Britons fought and suffered and died in order that their children and their children's children might be free. Today the forces of darkness threaten to engulf us once more. Shall we give up those rights which our forefathers won?

Today our country must arm. No time can be lost. We must build the greatest war machine the world has ever known. We must accomplish in two years more than the enemy has accomplished in seven.

That is why Canada needs your savings—not as a gift, but only as a loan. Canada's army must be maintained and equipped with the most modern fighting machines. Scores of warships and merchant vessels must be built. Thousands of planes, thousands of pilots must be rushed to the scene of conflict.

So Canada needs the use of your money now. Later on, Canada will repay you in full. In the meantime, you will receive regular interest on your loan.

When you buy Victory Bonds, all Canada is your security. These Bonds are more readily turned into cash than any other.

**HOW TO BUY**—Give your order to the canvasser who calls on you. Or place it in the hands of any branch of any bank, or give it to any trust company. Or send it to your local Victory Loan Headquarters. Bonds may be bought in denominations of \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1,000 and larger. Headquarters will be glad to give you every assistance in making out your order form.

**HELP FINISH THE JOB**  
**BUY VICTORY BONDS!**

## Our Local Heritage Sites (inquire about open schedules and rates)



- **CROWSNEST MUSEUM and ARCHIVES** - 7701 18th Avenue, in Coleman National Historic Site. 403-563-5434, [cnpmuseum@shaw.ca](mailto:cnpmuseum@shaw.ca), [www.crowsnestmuseum.ca](http://www.crowsnestmuseum.ca). Glimpse the rich social, economic and natural heritage of Crowsnest Pass from 1900 - 1950 in two floors of themed rooms. Gift shop features local and regional books, and many other items. Tours and educational programs available.



- Close to the museum, the newly-restored **ALBERTA PROVINCIAL POLICE BARRACKS** includes exhibits and artifacts on prohibition, rumrunning, and the legendary shooting of Constable Lawson and the subsequent execution of 'Emperor Pic' and Florence Lossandro. 403-563-5434, [cnpmuseum@shaw.ca](mailto:cnpmuseum@shaw.ca), [www.appbarracks.com](http://www.appbarracks.com).



- **BELLEVUE UNDERGROUND MINE** - off Main Street in Bellevue, 403-564-4700, [www.bellevuemine.com](http://www.bellevuemine.com). The only authentic historic underground coal mine tour in western Canada offers a family-oriented experience of what miners from a century ago saw and heard at work each day. Pre-booked tours also available.



- **FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE** - off Hwy 3. 403-562-7388, [www.frankslide.ca](http://www.frankslide.ca). Knowledgeable staff share fascinating stories of the Frank Slide through dynamic interpretive programs and presentations. State-of-the-art interactive displays and exhibits focus on the infamous Frank Slide of April 1903, Canada's deadliest rockslide.



- **HILLCREST CEMETERY PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - Hillcrest. Visit the mass graves of the 189 victims of the Hillcrest Mine Disaster of 1914, and many other historic graves. Interpretive signs explain it all. The **Millennium Memorial Monument** is Canada's homage to miners killed across the country. The **park** features interpretive signs about life in Hillcrest and the effect of the disaster, and picnic tables. All free.



- **LEITCH COLLIERIES PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - Highway 3, east edge of town, [www.leitchcollieries.ca](http://www.leitchcollieries.ca). Stabilized ruins of a century-old coal processing facility explained through interpretive signs; on-site staff during the summer. Check out the nearby **Burmis Tree**, probably Canada's most-photographed tree; free.



- **COLEMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** - downtown Coleman. Free map and pamphlet for a self-guided tour of this authentic coal-mining town amongst buildings from 1903 - 1986; most have interpretive building plaques. Glimpse the ruins of the mine plant and coke ovens, walk or drive through the "miners cottage" neighbourhood of West Coleman. An interpretive booklet can be purchased at the museum. Later, walk the pleasant **Miners Path**, retracing the steps of miners on their way to the McGillivray Mine. All free.



- **LILLE PROVINCIAL HISTORIC SITE** - A 6km long trail leads to this remote site. <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=11391>. Ruins in or near this former mining village include the powerhouse, hotel foundation, and coke ovens. Interpretive signs on site. Enquire at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, 403-562-7388. Free.

For more information on these sites, plus heritage walks, drives and hikes, and much more to see and do in the Crowsnest Pass, go to [www.crowsnestheritage.ca](http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca).

### Newsletter Archive

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