

The Friends of the Canadian War Museum
ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal year 2019/2020



Friends of the Canadian War Museum
www.friends-amis.org

1 Vimy Place, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0M8
(819) 776-8618

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends of the Canadian War Museum (Friends). As I write, we find ourselves in one of the most difficult health and wellness challenges facing Canadians in more than a century. Across the country businesses and services are operating under severe constraints and our own museum is closed for the foreseeable future with essential leadership personnel working from home. We the Friends face similar challenges with access impossible and without the ability to conduct conventional face-to-face meetings of your Board of Directors (BOD) . Nevertheless, we strive to move ahead attempting to manage the affairs of the federally incorporated registered charity secretarially and remotely by telephone and by video conferencing. In support, a committee comprising of the Corporate Officers and Committee Chairs (COCC) has been instrumental in sustaining the effort in the face of the pandemic.

In any event, on behalf of the Board of Directors (BOD) I would like to express our appreciation to all Friends for your continuing support throughout the year. The Friends was founded in 1985 and was federally incorporated as a registered charity in December of 1987; it is managed by a BOD and depends almost entirely on volunteers to accomplish its objectives. We strive to be a pan-Canadian corporation with national appeal and support. It is my pleasure to add that since October 2018, the Friends now enjoys the patronage of the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada.

Looking back over the year, I am proud of the hard work which has been invested in supporting projects of the Canadian War Museum (CWM) by way of a formal contribution agreement embracing a financial donation of more than \$100,000.00. Our strategic and operating frameworks supported by the comprehensive and focussed improved committee structure introduced during the year are working as anticipated to equip us well to support the museum.

THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATING FRAMEWORK

In difficult times we rely on our established mission statement, strategic objectives and formal concept of operations to facilitate dealing with unforeseen challenges and threats. We, the Friends, are fortunate to be supported by a well conceived, well structured and rigorous governance and operating backbone to guide us and retain focus in these uncertain times.

Mission and Vision

Our mission is to promote and support the CWM in its role as a vital Canadian institution. In this regard, we envision ourselves as a pan-Canadian organization supporting the museum through fundraising, volunteering and program participation.

Strategic Policy Statement

In all endeavours, the Friends is guided by the **fundamental strategic aim of building constituency and strengthening financial position**. The Friends leadership and its supporting committees are empowered to make appropriate choices within this framework for ensuring support to the CWM through effective operations in the context of accountability to our members.

Strategic Objectives

We have established four strategic objectives which support our mission and our vision. These are:

To raise funds;

To build constituency across Canada;

To optimize support directed to the CWM; and,

To govern and administer the Friends organization effectively and efficiently.

The BOD and Supporting Committee Structure

At the heart of our work is the BOD. Elected by the general membership it is empowered to manage the business of the Friends. Its membership includes those with the commitment, skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the mission and the needs of the CWM. The BOD membership is refreshed or renewed annually at the Annual Members Meeting (AMM) and at that time chooses its corporate officers.

The BOD provides oversight, approval and direction in the context of policy and procedures. The BOD is also deeply involved in operational matters. In this regard, in order to operationalize delivery against the strategic objectives, committees of the BOD have been struck. Each member of the BOD, in addition to his or her oversight function is a member of at least one of the operational committees. The FCWM BOD has no directors without portfolio.

The following committees of the BOD have been struck: Museum Support; Ways and Means; Communications and Marketing; Governance; and, Corporate Services. Additionally, during the year, lateral communications have been facilitated through the support of an *ad hoc* committee the COCC; mentioned earlier in this report this committee has been extremely helpful in oversight, framing the effort, communications and leadership.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

General

The many successes of the Friends are entirely attributable to the efforts of its volunteers. Dedication, professionalism, competence and creativity are common attributes of those who

devote time and energy to the support of the Friends. With the diligence of the BOD secretary we have been able to quantify the volunteer hours with reasonable accuracy. This past year some 10,800 volunteer hours have been contributed. This is an enormous effort of which we are extremely proud and represents a fundamental contribution to the CWM and a material cost-avoidance for Canadian tax-payers.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the strong synergistic relationship which has been fostered and developed between the Friends and the CWM; it is a fundamental underpinning of the fiscal year and it continues to mature. Nowhere was this more evident than in the development of the fiscal 2019/20 Contribution Agreement which formalized the particulars of the both the financial and volunteer support to the museum.

Selected Highlights

Let me now touch upon some representative highlights from the past year. I frame these remarks in the context of the aims of the aforementioned committees of the BOD.

Museum Support

Ultimately, all efforts by the Friends are intended to support the aims, programs and activities of the CWM; in this regard, the fundamental purpose of the Museum Support Committee embraces the responsibility for relationships, personnel and financial support as they pertain directly to the CWM. In this respect, Museum Support may best be considered the product line where the entire volunteer effort is formulated focussed and delivered.

This committee is unique in that among its members is a senior official of the CWM, at present the A/DG. This affords a valuable opportunity for the sharing of viewpoints and for crafting the way ahead on a joint basis. A principal product of this co-operative approach is the contribution agreement which sets out the particulars of the Friends support of the CWM, The 2019/20 Agreement to which the Friends have contributed \$100K in support embraces 7 specific projects almost all of which have an educational theme; among them is the Second World War Supply Line Project which has enjoyed enormous success in reaching schools and students across the country.

Together with the CWM leadership, we are now examining opportunities for the fiscal 2020/21 contribution agreement which may well include support to a CWM internship project.

Ways and Means

The Ways and Means Committee has as its purpose identifying internal and external funding opportunities, developing sponsor relationships and growing the Friends constituency. The committee accomplished a great deal in its analysis of the fundamentals of our branding, messaging and carrier services in support of outreach. Working cooperatively with the Communications and Marketing Committee, it has drawn the attention of the BOD to what

needs reinforcing and where our efforts in the past may need refining and strengthening to better serve our approved purpose as a registered charity.

In terms of strengthening financial position, once again this year the Book Room warrants particular mention; through its interaction with visitors it acts as a genuine goodwill ambassador for the CWM. Its direct financial contribution exceeded \$30K but, in addition, many books were not sold to the reading public but were passed directly to the Military History Research Centre (MHRC). Many hundreds of books received from major donors were considered of particular value to the MHRC in support of its research holdings and thereby represent a direct contribution to CWM clients. Many of the donations were in the French language and helped fill significant gaps in the MHRC holdings.

Of interest, some of the books were of such value that they would otherwise not have been affordable within the MHRC acquisitions budget!

Communications and Marketing

The Communications and Marketing Committee has as its purpose developing and supporting the carrier and communications services to promote the Friends, to support recruiting, donor connectivity and outreach and to conduct supportive research.

Of fundamental importance has been the work to develop a new website to serve as the flagship carrier service. Under commercial contract and with the project leadership of the COCC this initiative is well along in delivery. At the time of writing, the discovery, website planning and content structure phases have been completed and the visual design phase is a work-in-progress. In any case, your BOD will be briefed on progress once this phase is completed. Furthermore, notwithstanding the constraints' imposed by Covid 19, the project team has been conducting its work using ZOOM and has become quite adept and efficient!

Many initiatives of the Friends over the year benefited through Communications and Marketing support including the Friends Forums and The Torch. As we advance the work on the new website it will become the anchor communications platform and may also furnish readers some of the material currently positioned with the Torch. As for the Torch, in the fullness of time consideration may be given to refining its concept and scope. In any event, such changes will be considered by your BOD at some future date. One major change recently approved by the BOD is to discontinue the printed edition of the Torch; this decision was taken with full consideration of the associated benefits and risks. In any event, this decision will liberate some \$6K per annum towards our charitable purpose of supporting the CWM

Governance

Compliance with the strategic objective of governing and administering ourselves effectively and efficiently calls for continuous vigilance, scrutiny and due-diligence. This year witnessed the introduction of the new committee structure developed last year and the roll-out has gone

relatively smoothly. The BOD and committee efforts have been strengthened with the introduction of supporting Policies Procedure and Guidance which, while not fully complete, have been adopted on a user-trial basis which will lead to the necessary refinements.

In addition, on the governance front a comprehensive BOD questionnaire was developed which was completed by all BOD members. Its findings were consistent and generally favourable as to how the BOD conducts its business. One area which will be given further attention is that of BOD training particularly for those joining the BOD but also refresher training in responsibilities accountabilities for those more seasoned directors.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Committee function embraces all of the activities which serve to enable the business of the Corporation, namely: general administration, financial management, human resources, procurement, information management and technology. The corporate services function is a continuous business with volunteer support regularly resident in the CWM.

Over the past year, the level of Corporate Services support has been of the highest order. The secretariat, administrative, and treasury functions have been steady and reliable and we close the fiscal year in a solid financial position to help us through the current circumstances. The newly established positions of data management and volunteer co-ordination have been particularly helpful in supporting member communications and providing us with a path to access the skills, knowledge and experience of our membership. The unfortunate loss due to illness of our previous membership director also drove us to develop a degree of cross training and depth of volunteer support to provide sustainability in our data management capability.

From the technology perspective, our hardware and operating software have been upgraded to further strengthen capability. From both the database and operating software support perspective we are now able to rely more on volunteer effort and less on costly external sources.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Looking Ahead

As I write, we are well into the month of May in the first quarter of fiscal year 2020/21 and with the continuing threat of Covid 19 and the current lockdown the future is far from certain. In my most recent discussions with the CWM leadership the focus is on increasing the CWM presence online with the re-opening of the Museum unlikely before the autumn.

Nevertheless, I believe that we must take a positive attitude and build on our depth and our strengths. We are in a reasonable financial position with the strength of a good constituency of support. Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances, your BOD continues with its work to sustain our support to the CWM. As mentioned earlier in this report, we will continue the effort to

develop a meaningful and supportive contribution agreement for the current fiscal year and the website renewal will not only equip us for the future but support us in these difficult times.

Together with the unprecedented challenges imposed by the current situation we retain those which have confronted us for some time; namely, building our constituency and strengthening our financial position in support of our charitable work. As a federally incorporated registered charity we rely on our revenue stream to continue our support of the CWM so this means encouraging and sustaining potential donors and sponsors. There is enormous competition for very scarce financial resources so this matter will demand creativity and hard work on behalf of us all.

As for constituency, this matter is linked to our ability to reach out and inspire interest in the Friends from a broad demographic. At present our support is largely limited to an older demographic. Expanding the scope of our constituency is a challenge that we face and one we share with the Museum. The hugely successful Supply Line project to which we contributed financially and mentioned previously in this report is moving us in this direction but much more is needed. So, dear readers, we welcome and invite your insights, counsel and suggestions!

Final Remarks

It is a requirement of the Canada Not-for-Profit Societies Act that we conduct an Annual Members Meeting (AMM). Quite aside from this regulatory expectation, the event has been a welcome opportunity to gather as a body of members, to socialize, to be briefed on matters and to renew the BOD and its officers.

That we will hold such an AMM is a given; as to when and in what form remains an unknown at this time. Nevertheless, on behalf of your BOD, I offer the assurance that we will continue to work on your behalf in line with our strategic objectives to support the CWM, a national treasure. With any good fortune, by the time you read this annual report matters may be improving.

Be well, stay safe and stay with us ... we need you more than ever!

Yours aye

Robert Hamilton

President