

Introduction

Welcome to this e-publication containing material that could not be squeezed into The Torch and as time permits will be hosted on the Friends website. Once you have finished read-

ing, take a minute and have a look through some of the other exciting features found on the site.

These two photographs were taken by Tim Smith during his ICCS 1970-1971 tour and through the magic of Google Maps it is possible to visit the same locations some 50 years later.



What Our Members Are Up To

In response to our segment published in the May edition of The Torch, Jacques Faille has very kindly provided us with some information on his work with the Friends.

Jacques has been a Friend of the Canadian War Museum since 1988, a Friend of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation since 2006 and a continuous Associate member of the Legion since 2012.

More than 25 years ago he found himself quite often at the former Canadian War Museum, located on Sussex Drive, where he spent many weekends as a non official guide. From those days, he has found memories of the Museum itself, the staff and the many visitors.

Shortly after joining the Friends of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, he became the Design Advisor for "The Beechwood Way", a newsletter

published quarterly. Between 2009 and 2017, he was the Editor and he is now the Copy Editor of the magazine.

During the years he was the Editor, he made a point of publishing many articles about the National Military Cemetery, the War of 1812, FWW, SWW and Korea. Included were articles about Canadians such as Army Generals Andrew G. McNaughton, Henry D. Crerar and
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Charles Foulkes; RCAF's Air Commodores John E. Fauquier and N. W. Timmerman; RCN's Lieutenant commander Horatio N. Lay and nurse Mary K. Gallagher, one of many Canadian women who gave their lives during the First World War.

For the last five years, or so, he has been a tour guide volunteer with the

National Military Cemetery being of special interest. In that capacity, he has welcomed people from all walks of life and interests including school children, and Canadian Armed Forces' cadets.

The National Military Cemetery is a national focal point which recognises the men and women of Canada's Armed Forces who have served their country

with distinction in war and in peace.

Jacques encourages all the Friends of the Canadian War Museum, and their families, relatives and friends, to pay a visit to this national site of recognition, unique to Canada.

Lest We Forget

Tom Fuller

By: Gerald Cann

There are no extraordinary men, just ordinary men who are called upon to do extraordinary things.

Winston Churchill



I am not sure that I agree with him. Some people are simply larger than life. Tom Fuller from Ottawa was one.

Tom was a successful large-scale contractor prior to the Second World War. My company rented a suite in one of his buildings and I used to pass him in a hallway now and then. I knew that he had been an RCN officer during the war but that was all I knew. One day an article appeared in the Ottawa Citizen about Tom's just-launched second brigantine. The first was the well-known Blackjack. This latest was the Fair Jeanne, named after his wife.

An expatriate Nova Scotian, who had crawled over ships like his when I was a kid, I was curious. I drove out to Britannia Bay that afternoon to have a look at her. Mr Fuller was there. We talked for some time and he said "You seem to know something about these things." I mentioned my background and he invited me aboard. Thus began a rewarding acquaintance with a Canadian naval legend.

The fact that he was a millionaire before he was thirty tells you something about the nature and competitiveness of the man. When the war broke out Tom, then 34, set out to enlist. As far as officialdom was concerned, he was a great deal more valuable to the war effort building airfields. As far as Tom was concerned, he had no intention of missing his great adventure. He promptly sold his business to his brother for a dollar, went back to the recruiting office and said, "I'm not a contractor anymore." The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) took him as a sub-lieutenant.

Tom made it to England early in the war and like several other RCN men at that time of the war, found himself in Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs); fast, heavily armed craft about 115 feet long. He was soon given a command and later wound up with his own flotilla. The MTBs patrolled the English Channel and North Sea, ranging as far over as the French and Dutch coasts. Their

chief adversaries were the German E-boats, larger and better armed than the MTBs of that period. But fast and agile, the MTBs made their presence known and proved their worth.

Frequently in contact with the enemy, and operating mostly at night, any action would find a flotilla scattered, with the attendant problem of sorting out who was who. There was always the danger of shooting up a friend. Between themselves the skippers devised a rather clever method of identification which Tom called ICU. If a boat loomed out of the darkness a short-coded message would be sent, say, ICUO45. If it was a friend back would come the reciprocal bearing ICU225. Another, or no reply would signify the boat was an enemy. He described with some glee the 'civil war' they created among the E-boats. One method they used to create it was to get between two E-boats, shoot at one and then sneak away at low speed in the dark while each E-Boat assumed the other was the enemy, with consequent results.

Tom won his first Distinguished Service Order (DSO) when caught alone one night in the English Channel. A single vessel, he battled 22 E-Boats - and survived. On another occasion in the Bay of Biscay, two U-boats attacked his flotilla. Surfacing simultaneously, they collided. On yet another he engaged a destroyer and held off attacking enemy fighter aircraft while fighting off three E-Boats. The MTB was an offensive craft and like ace fighter pilots Tom, along with other

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RCN 29th flotilla Motor Torpedo Boats in line-abreast formation in the English Channel, with MTB 460 in foreground. LAC Photograph CT-321

successful skippers had a flair for attack. They were also lucky; they survived.

Tom eventually transferred to the Mediterranean in 1943 and was based on the Greek island of Vis. Thus began the events which led to his fame as The Pirate of the Adriatic. Commanding a half dozen MTBs, he was detailed to liaise with and resupply Marshal Tito's Yugoslavian partisans. Once, when the Germans invaded the Greek island of Leos, he and his crew were captured. He led an escape group, commandeered an Italian admiral's barge and made his way back to Allied lines. For this and several previous escapades he was awarded his second DSO.

His flotilla captured several German and Italian ships intact. He had obtained the German recognition signals and, operating with Englishman Mad Jack Churchill, (who had once captured a German ship at sword-point) and his company of Commandos, successfully boarded schooners, patrol craft and finally a full-rigged 400 ton brigantine. The brigantine was loaded with sauerkraut and ten tons of butter, a scarce item at that time. Tom sent three cases of butter to every flag officer in the Mediterranean, "with the compliments of Tom Fuller." He claimed this was insurance against anyone who tried to court-martial him for looting.

He told some hair-raising yarns about the partisan's approach to war which have since become more believable in light of the 1990's conflict in The Former Yugoslavia. Capturing 35 Germans on one occasion, he delivered them to the partisans. They announced that they would hang them in the town square. This news, relayed to Britain, brought a protest from Churchill: under no circumstances would they be executed in the town square. The partisans hung them from apple trees behind the square instead.

The flotilla became expert at camouflage. He showed me an air photo of a harbour in Vis in which he said, six MTBs were berthed. There was no sign of a boat in the photo.

An example of the Tom's audacity lies in this story which

later led to trouble. Late in the North African campaign Tom decided that heavier armament was needed. He wanted 40 mm Bofors guns installed. In true supply style his request was ignored; he had his quota. Soon after he was called to see Admiral Cunningham on another matter. On his arrival the admiral was busy in another meeting and Tom was told to wait. Left alone in the outer office and somewhat bored, he said began playing with some rubber stamps. He came across one which was Cunningham's signature. Without any idea why, he said, he stamped a half dozen blank pages with the signature, folded them and put them in his pocket. Returning to his boat, he thought about the refusal of the cannon he wanted. He sat down at a typewriter and wrote a letter to Supply over Cunningham's signature authorizing their installation. Tom used to chortle about how he had the best armed flotilla in the Med. It also got him in trouble, but he said it was worth it; he had the guns.

Tom claimed to be the only sailor ever sunk three times in the same day. His MTB went under and the crew was picked up by a destroyer (possibly HMS Dulverton L63) which in turn was sunk (off Kos in November 1943). A boat from an aircraft carrier (difficult to confirm) rescued them yet again. Then the carrier was torpedoed and sunk.

Tom ended his wartime service as a full Commander with a DSO and two bars, a flock of lesser medals from various countries, and two courts martial to his credit. He went back into contracting on a large scale with his head office in Nepean. At the front of the building he had a ship's mast constructed complete with a yard arm from which he flew the White Ensign. He designed his own company flag and every time Fuller Construction won a new contract that flag went out on the yard arm.

When Tito (President (later President for Life) (1953–1980) of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) died in May 1980 Tom Fuller was the only Canadian invited to his funeral. Not the Prime Minister or any other government official. Just Tom.



A surrendered German E-Boat underway to Gosport in 1945.