

# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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## 1814: The War in Europe Winds Down

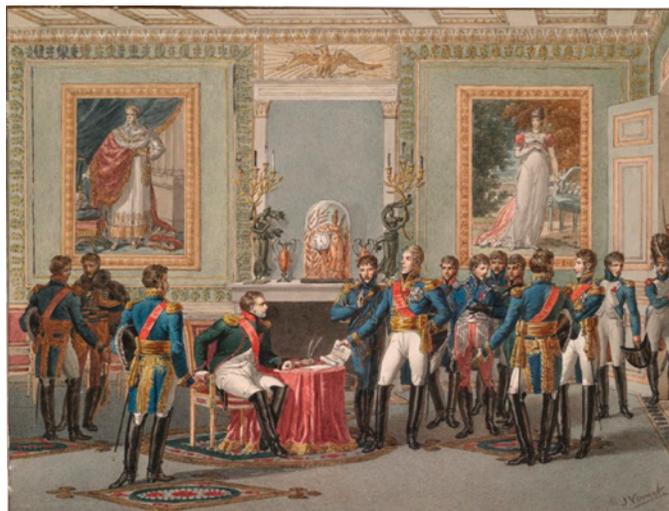
by Fernando Souza

On 1 January 1814 Napoleon received a note from his brother Joseph Bonaparte expressing the hope "that the year which has just finished has exhausted all your ill-fortune." The Allied armies were already on France's frontiers. Napoleon would again have to demonstrate his prodigious military talent and lead a small army against overwhelming numbers to try to save his throne, and defy fortune. Yet it was not enough, and by 4 May 1814 he found himself aboard HMS *Undaunted* bound for the island of Elba.

The passage of two centuries makes it difficult to appreciate the extent to which Europe was convulsed by Napoleon's wars. The French Revolution had ignited a revolutionary ideology that together with mass conscription allowed for wars on a scale unknown before that time. Europe was almost continuously at war during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The War of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States was occasioned, in part, by these wars. Britain fighting a desperate and, at times, lone battle against Napoleon found it militarily expedient to engage in practices that antagonized the United States. These actions included the impressment of American sailors and the blockade of European ports. The result was that the United States declared war in 1812 when it felt that its rights had too often been breached.

Napoleon was still the master of Europe in 1812 when he made the fateful decision that year to invade Russia. Of some 600,000 soldiers he led into that vast country it is estimated only about 120,000 survived. The campaign took a heavy toll on the Russians too. Historian Adam Zamoyski has written: "... between the Grande Armée's cross of the Niemen at the end of June 1812, and the end of February 1813, about a million people died, fairly equally divided between the two sides."

Napoleon survived the Russian campaign by abandoning the survivors of his Grande Armée and returning to Paris. He was able to raise a new army for a campaign in 1813. But



Jules Vernet, *Napoleon's Abdication at Fontainebleau*, watercolour, 1814. Credit: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, Providence, RI.

after initial success, he gambled on winning a military victory though greatly outnumbered. In October near Leipzig his new army faced the armies of more than twenty European nations in what was to be the largest battle to that time, and unmatched until World War I. There were nearly 500,000 soldiers from almost every nation of Europe on the battlefield of Leipzig. The battle raged for three days and ended with a decisive defeat for Napoleon. Again, he was forced to retreat into France, his power in the German states and Poland broken.

Over half a million French lives were lost in 1813. Discontent with the privations of war and constraints imposed on continental trade began to grow and the year ended with opposition to Napoleon's rule becoming vocal. France was now surrounded by its enemies on all sides. Wellington had already crossed the border from Spain late in 1813. With his Anglo-Portuguese-Spanish army he tied down Marshal Soult and more than 40,000 French troops that Napoleon could have used elsewhere. Wellington arrived via the Pass at Roncesvalles ('valley of thorns' in Spanish) where Roland, a leader under Charlemagne, had died heroically in 778 and was celebrated in the *Chanson de Roland*. One of Wellington's officers, Colonel

Walter O'Hara, who later immigrated to York (Toronto), named Roncesvalles Avenue after this Spanish pass.

When the two Allied armies crossed into France in the northeast in early January 1814 Napoleon had no choice but to give battle. The Allied Army of Silesia was composed of Russian and Prussian corps commanded by Field Marshall von Blücher, seventy-one years old, fearless, and driven by a profound hatred of Napoleon. The Army of Bohemia was made up mostly of Austrians and Russians. It was commanded by Prince Schwarzenberg of Austria, aged only forty-two and supreme commander of all the Allied armies. Accompanied as he was, however, by the monarchs of Austria and Prussia and the charismatic Czar Alexander of Russia, Schwarzenberg's authority was always subject to being overruled.

Napoleon was also aided by the fact that the Allies had divergent interests. The Austrians were reluctant to see the end of French power because it would leave Russia unchecked in Europe. Nor could they forget that Napoleon's wife, Marie Louise, was the daughter of the Austrian Emperor, and her son might someday inherit Napoleon's crown. In January 1814 Napoleon shrewdly noted "... it is not the interest of Austria to carry matters to extremities; one step more, and that power will cease to be the principal character."

The campaign was fought in one of the coldest winters in living memory. Temperatures in Western Europe were so harsh that the Thames froze over and Londoners revelled in a riotous Frost Fair on the ice. In total, the Allies had over a million troops but widely dispersed. Napoleon's main hope was to engage in a war of manoeuvre where speed and surprise would be able to negate the Allies' larger numbers. He had the advantage of knowing the terrain, and fighting on French soil. The Allies played into his hands by keeping their armies divided as they marched on Paris.

Success came spectacularly and quickly for Napoleon at the beginning of the campaign. On February 10 Napoleon defeated the Russians at Champaubert; on the following day Russian and Prussian forces suffered the same fate at Montmirail. On the 12th Napoleon defeated the Prussians at Château-Thierry before turning back to overcome Blücher at Vauchamps on the 14th. While these victories were brilliant and the Allies found them unsettling, the Army of Bohemia continued to move closer to Paris along the Seine. Undaunted, Napoleon drove the Allies from Mormant on the 17th and Montereau on the 18th of February, forcing them to retreat in disarray eastwards towards Troyes.

In under ten days Napoleon had been repeatedly victorious, manoeuvring with speed that left the Allies stunned and fearful of where he would strike next. The distances he was able to have his troops cover are extraordinary. Historian Andrew Uffindell wrote admiringly: "During his two months in the field Napoleon covered at least 1,100 miles or the equivalent of travelling right through the United States from the Canadian Border to Mexico." Count Langeron, who served with the Russians corps in 1814, said: "We believed that we could see him everywhere."

Mutual recriminations arose among the Allies with every Napoleon victory. At one point Blücher suffered a breakdown, where light caused him great pain. Napoleon seemed ascendant as February gave way to March, although his successive victories had pushed back the Allied armies but had not destroyed them. They continued to regroup and be reinforced. Napoleon's overconfidence led him to believe that he could not be defeated and did not need to compromise. He wrote to his brother Joseph: "... as long as I live, I will be master everywhere in France." This overconfidence meant that he did not try forcefully enough to translate his tactical victories into a diplomatic success. Earlier he had given orders to negotiate whatever terms possible for peace, but he withdrew these instructions as he won his victories. The Allies in their turn, guided by Metternich, were able to continue their broad co-ordination.

At the end of March, Napoleon gambled on a new manoeuvre to draw the Allies away from Paris. He would march eastwards behind all their forces hoping to induce them to follow in order to protect their lines of supply and communications. The strategy might have worked, but Czar Alexander intervened to persuade the Allies to continue to advance on Paris. The Allied armies arrived outside its gates on March 29, and attacked and captured the city the next morning. On March 31 Alexander marched into Paris with the King of Prussia and Schwarzenberg. Napoleon, realizing that his grand manoeuvre had failed, marched back towards Paris. At this point he still led an army of some 70,000 men, but his political support had collapsed. More fatal, his marshals told him that the army would not fight. So on April 4 Napoleon abdicated in favour of his son, the King of Rome. The Allies, fearing this would mean a regency where Napoleon would remain as the real power and continue to exert influence, rejected it out of hand. Oscillating between defiance and dejection, with some claiming that he even attempted suicide, Napoleon finally agreed to the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau on April 11. He would abdicate unconditionally and be exiled to Elba in the Mediterranean.

Napoleon escaped the island in 1815, and for about one hundred days roiled Europe again until his end came on the battlefield of Waterloo. The bicentennial of this event will be marked next year by the British and Germans, and viewed in uncomfortable silence by the French. His defeat also paved the way to ending the War of 1812. Peace negotiations between the Americans and British resulted not only from the American failure to capture and hold Upper and Lower Canada, but also from the mounting and ruinous expense of the war. As well, the Americans rightly feared that the end of conflict in Europe meant Britain could direct her full military might against them. Lord Liverpool, the British Prime Minister, even discussed sending Wellington to North America. While the negotiations at Ghent, Belgium, would not conclude until December 1814, Napoleon's defeat foreshadowed an end to the war in America.

*Fernando Souza is a lawyer who has an interest in history. He lives in Toronto with his wife and son.*

# Toronto's Near-Forgotten Veterans of Crimea

by Stephen Otto

*The preparation of this article and appearance of Crimea in the headlines the last few weeks was an unplanned coincidence, but reminds us that it has been a place in contention for a long time.*

On 22 June 1897 tens of thousands of people poured into the streets of Toronto to mark Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. The big attraction was a parade, 15,000 strong, including the militia, fire brigades, and religious and fraternal societies. However, it didn't include the Army and Navy Veterans Association. When they weren't invited to head the procession, they held their own march from St. John's Church in Victoria Square to Moss Park. Downplaying the slight, the *Daily Mail and Empire* dutifully listed the names, ranks, regiments, decorations, and years of service for every veteran in the parade, seventy in all. Some two dozen of them had fought in Crimea.



*In July 1902 members of the Army & Navy Veterans Association gathered beneath their handsome flag in Victoria Memorial Square to lay the cornerstone for a monument to those who fought in the War of 1812. It would take another five years before Walter Allward's bronze bust of 'The Old Soldier' crowned the base to complete the memorial. Credit: Library and Archives Canada, PA 138519*

The Army and Navy Veterans Association, founded in Toronto in 1887, aimed to foster comradeship and provide mutual assistance. It wanted also to raise a monument in the old military cemetery in Victoria Square (now part of Fort York National Historic Site) to those buried there. The project proceeded slowly; not until 1899 did City Council grant \$100 towards it. Architect Frank Darling was then commissioned to design the monument and its cornerstone was laid in mid-1902. A photo taken at the ceremony probably shows some of the same men who marched in the jubilee parade, their Crimean medals proudly pinned to their chests, along with other veterans and dignitaries.

Among the few native-born Canadians who fought in Crimea was Lieutenant Alexander Roberts Dunn. For his heroism in the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava he received from

the Queen herself one of the first Victoria Crosses awarded. Celebrated in verse by Tennyson, the charge became a classic example of vainglorious military sacrifice. Dunn's connection to Toronto was somewhat like that of Frank Gehry; he was born here but moved away at an early age. Most Torontonians who fought in the Crimea, however, were British-born soldiers who settled here after their discharge or came later as emigrants. At one time there were probably a hundred or so of them in the city.

They included Private Joseph Coulter of the 13th Light Dragoons whose horse was shot from under him early in the charge at Balaklava; he found another mount on which he returned to battle and, against the odds, to his regiment. He died at Fort York from a heart attack in 1869, aged 38, and was buried in the Strachan Avenue cemetery. Private William Edward Beetham of the 17th Lancers was a 'charger' too; later he served six years in India. Leaving the army in 1864 he was a policeman in Birmingham until, aged 57, he emigrated with his family to Toronto. He died here in 1893 and was buried with military honours in St. James' Cemetery. The last of Toronto's heroes of Balaklava to expire was George Pearce, a driver with the Royal Horse Artillery. Having a supporting role to the front line had its advantages: Pearce's Crimea Medal had four clasps, one for each of the major battles. He succumbed in 1913 and is buried in St. George's On-the-Hill Cemetery, Islington.

Some veterans had only three clasps or fewer. Sergeant Thomas Tyler joined the 30th Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1842 and served in Ireland and Malta before embarking for the Crimea to fight at Alma, Inkerman, and Sebastopol. He came to Canada about 1880 and ran an auction room in Toronto. A founder of the Army and Navy Association, he was its president at the time of his death in 1905.

Michael Brophy of the 62nd Wiltshire Regiment had only one clasp, for Sebastopol, but served with such distinction that he received both the French Médaille Militaire and Turkish Crimean medal. Because of his outgoing manner Brophy became the city's best known Crimean veteran. He had come to Canada with his regiment, later joined the Royal Canada Rifles and settled in Toronto after his discharge about 1870. After working for two decades as a labourer he took a job about 1890 as a gardener at Loretto Abbey, a girls' school and convent near Victoria Square. This led some years later to the extraordinary coincidence of a reunion with



*All British soldiers who fought in the Crimea received this service medal, usually with their names engraved around the edge, and clasps for the particular battles where they were present. This example is 'fully loaded' with all the clasps it was possible to secure. Credit: website of the Gentleman's Military Interest Club*



Michael Brophy is seen bedecked in his medals about 1918. His cap badge is that of the Irish Regiment of Canada and he's wearing sergeant's stripes. Judging by the tent in the background he may have been doing some recruiting. Credit: Private collection

his sister who was a member of the Loretto community. He hadn't seen or heard from her since she left their home in Kilkenny, Ireland, some 53 years before. The story was reported in the *Toronto Star* and picked up by newspapers as distant as Chicago and Galveston.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 Brophy came into his own as a recruiter. His Crimean medal was like catnip to high-ranking dignitaries visiting Toronto. "Ah, I know where you have been," said the Duke of Connaught, the governor general, inspecting soldiers at Exhibition Camp, Toronto, in 1915. This was the third time Brophy and the Duke had met. A year later the Duke of Devonshire, also conducting a review, shook Brophy's hand "while the movie men hastily cranked their machines." That film does not seem to have survived, but in one made when the Prince of Wales visited Toronto in 1919 Brophy appears briefly at the 10:50 mark. <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/prince-of-wales-in-canada-2/query/toronto> At a banquet for returning soldiers in 1919 one of them remarked to Brophy whose khaki tunic was ablaze with medals: "And you're still a soldier!" The aged veteran replied in his warm brogue "I'll be a soldier till the wor-r-rums get me."

The worms had only a little more than a year to wait. Michael Brophy died, aged 88, in June 1920 and was buried in St. Michael's Cemetery.

## Bicentennial Timeline: April to June 1814

**Apr.** 691 people lived in the Town of York while 730 resided in nearby York Township.

**Apr. 6** Napoleon abdicated and is exiled to Elba in the Mediterranean off Tuscany, inspiring the famous palindrome (coined in 1866): "Able was I ere I saw Elba."

**Apr. 12** From his headquarters at Kingston, Lt. Gen. Gordon Drummond issued a declaration of martial law to enable His Majesty's troops to procure needed supplies.

**Apr. 14** Two warships, *Prince Regent* and *Princess Charlotte*, were launched at Kingston Dockyard. Under Commodore Sir James Yeo, they blockaded the American fleet in Sacket's Harbor and captured Oswego, restoring Canadian control of Lake Ontario in the War of 1812 and ending the threat of US invasion along the St. Lawrence.

**Apr. 24** Lt. Gen. Drummond announced to the militia of Upper Canada that a convention for the mutual release of all prisoners of war had been entered into by representatives of the British Forces and the US Army.

**Apr. 30** Amos Smith of Scarborough was charged with selling spirits without a licence. Witnesses at his trial said he saw no necessity to get a licence because, he said, times might take a turn shortly and anyone might sell liquors without one, i.e. the Enemy would soon be in possession of the Province.

**May 13** John Cameron, King's Printer, began to rebuild the printing shop destroyed in the Battle of York the year before. Lieutenant Kemble of the Glengarry Regiment brought him a press (in need of repair) and several incomplete fonts of type.

**May 15** Col. Ralph Bruyeres, RE, a Canadian-born military engineer who laid out Fort York in 1813 for rebuilding following the Battle of York, died at Quebec City, aged 49.

**June 3** This day was officially appointed by proclamation for a General Thanksgiving to acknowledge "Glorious Victories over the Forces of the Enemy." *A Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving* was printed as a sixteen-page pamphlet by Stephen Miles at Kingston, the only press operating in Upper Canada.

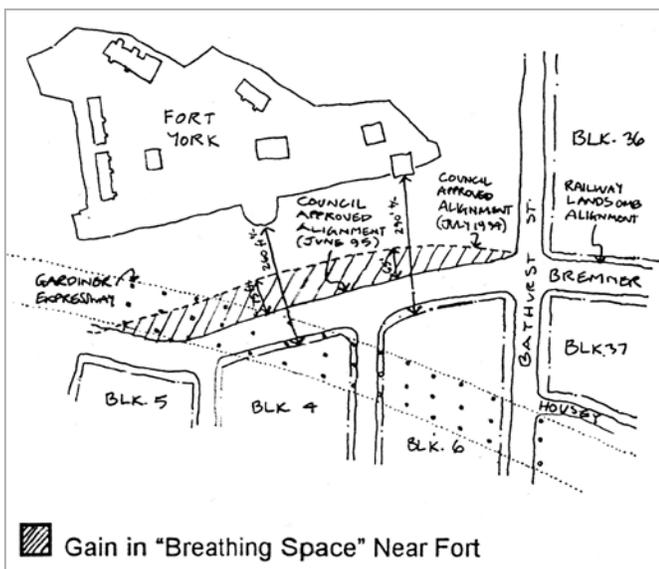
# The Friends of Fort York Turn Twenty

In April 2014 The Friends will look back on twenty years' involvement with Fort York. When we were organized the fort was at a low point, a tired site among former rail yards on the cusp of redevelopment. Several official plans were on the table, and many parties were anxious to stake out opportunities for investment in the surrounding area. But no one, least of all us, knew how things would turn out or how quickly they would happen.

It's been an interesting and challenging two decades. Through trial and error, we've come to hold the following as long-term goals that we've pursued and realized often, if not always:

- engage in precinct planning and development issues
- support the Fort York Guard
- publish an electronic newsletter
- maintain a good website and operate the Resource Centre at the fort
- support new displays through funding and research
- organize fundraising and fellowship events
- co-operate with the fort's staff on hosting Citizenship ceremonies and Parler Fort talks

Joe Gill, our esteemed and long-serving past chair, thinks our most important contributions came in pursuing the first goal. During 1994-97, as the City rezoned the lands surrounding Fort York, defining it anew, The Friends worked to see no fewer than 9.9 acres included within its bounds, or 23 per cent of its area, that might otherwise have gone for other uses. In 2000 we widened our focus to publish a landmark planning study, *Fort York: Setting It Right*, and to defend the Official Plan for the Fort York neighbourhood before the OMB when the City itself lost its resolve. Then in 2002-03, working with



Sketch by Robert Allsopp to show how Fort York Boulevard might pass under the Gardiner Expressway with greater advantage to the fort. Courtesy of Wittington-Garrison Creek Newsletter, July 1995



View of Fort York from the CN Tower, Summer 1994. Note the blue tarps and orange fencing at 28 Bathurst Street as environmental remediation proceeds on that heavily polluted site. Courtesy of Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Toronto

Toronto Culture and Parks Canada, we led a submission to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada that, in turn, moved the Government of Canada to recognize Fort York as a National Historic Site of 43 acres. And in 2011, after we pressured the federal government for several years, it transferred Victoria Memorial Square to the City, the last parcel of Toronto's Military Reserve owned by the Crown continuously since 1793.

Recently we've strengthened our watching brief on good development in the fort's precinct by forming an Advisory Committee of experts both outside our board and within it, to work with Community Planning staff at the City, the owners of adjacent lands, and others to secure the best environment for the fort.

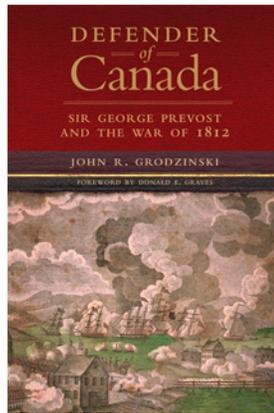
If one of The Friends' proudest monuments will be a new park in the crowded southwest downtown, we may also be remembered with gratitude by a generation of university students—30 to 35 each year—to whom we gave summer work and satisfaction after we revived the Fort York Guard and Drums in 2000. For a decade upwards of three-quarters of its cost was covered by revenues coming from our parking operations. But now that we no longer park cars on the lawns during the CNE and other events at Exhibition Place, we've created an Investment Income fund from our accumulated cash reserves that will let us continue to support the Guard in partnership with the City of Toronto and the private sponsors we hope will come forward.

While our fifteenth birthday was marked by cutting a cake in the shape of a blockhouse, our twentieth will be celebrated by a guests-pay buffet supper to which both present and former directors and some of our oldest supporters are invited.

# In Review: *Defender of Canada*

by Brian L. Dunnigan

John R. Grodzinski. *Defender of Canada: Sir George Prevost and the War of 1812*. Foreword by Donald E. Graves. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 360 pages. \$34.95. ISBN: 978-0-8061-4387-3.



History is full of examples of leaders, military or political, whose achievements have been overlooked or overshadowed by controversy created by some unfortunate event during their service. Such would seem to have been the fate of Sir George Prevost, governor general of Canada for the duration of the War of 1812. Prevost's treatment at the hands of contemporary military and naval figures and by later historians has branded him as a timid and overly cautious commander whose strategic vision was flawed and whose most important military operation, the Plattsburgh campaign of 1814, ended in a British naval defeat and an embarrassing retreat of the army he was leading in an invasion of the northern United States. Comparisons of his performance to that of more colourful and charismatic senior officers such as Isaac Brock and Gordon Drummond have pushed Prevost into the background, when his planning and leadership had much to do with the preservation of Canada through three years of war.

Such is the argument of John R. Grodzinski in *Defender of Canada*, a thoroughly researched and well written book that reveals much about Prevost's planning and execution of a strategy that successfully repelled repeated American incursions into Britain's sprawling North American possession. Faced with defending an enormous area bounded by a watery frontier of rivers and lakes, the governor drew on whatever forces he could find—British regulars, Native American groups, Anglophone and Francophone militias, and perhaps most important, the Royal Navy—to counter the threats. He possessed, as well, an understanding of the importance of logistics and the vessels and waterways that made it possible to move provisions and military stores along his extended line of defence.

The author presents a useful account of Prevost's early military career, particularly in the West Indies where he learned to operate successfully with mixed-quality troops. This was of use to him in his pre-war planning for the defense of Canada. Grodzinski explains Prevost's preparations as well as their execution once the conflict had begun. In explaining the results of Prevost's strategy, the author presents an account of

each campaigning season's events and provides a history of the war on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence border region from the perspective of the governor general.

Much of Grodzinski's narrative treats naval activities on the lakes. He credits Prevost's decision to request the assistance of the Royal Navy as one of his most important decisions and at the same time the source of much aggravation, eventually leading to court martial charges. His lucid account of the Plattsburgh campaign explains a complex operation, and his analysis of events leading up to Prevost's abortive court martial is equally clear.

This is a fine book with few errors (William Hull was still governor, not former governor of Michigan Territory in 1812 – p.69), and a must for any War of 1812 library. Grodzinski ably demonstrates his belief that "Prevost was a capable wartime leader," who "strove to achieve the best possible results given the limited resources and restricted courses of action available to him." The author has succeeded in restoring him "as a central figure in the history of that conflict."

*Brian Leigh Dunnigan is associate director and curator of maps at the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.*



*Théophile Hamel, Sir George Prevost, oil on canvas, 1864. Copy after Robert Field (1808). Credit: House of Commons, Ottawa.*

## *A Legacy Gift to Fort York from George Waters*

For more than forty years George Waters made history at Fort York, first as a uniformed interpreter, for some time as curator, and not least as deputy director of the Toronto Historical Board which once administered the fort. His involvement as a volunteer with The Friends was long-standing, productive, and meaningful. When he died last December, George did not forget Fort York, but instead bequeathed \$50,000 to the Fort York Foundation. The Friends have recommended to the City that the library in the new building be named in his honour.

The Fort York Foundation is leading the *Fort York Invigorated* Campaign to raise funds to help the City of Toronto open at Fort York the first Class-1 museum facility at any of the City's museums. This state-of-the-art building will finally allow remarkable artifacts from City of Toronto collections to be displayed and interpreted in a secure setting. The Visitor Centre will also enable City of Toronto Museum Services to borrow material from anywhere to help us tell the story of Fort York, the place where urban Toronto was founded in 1793.

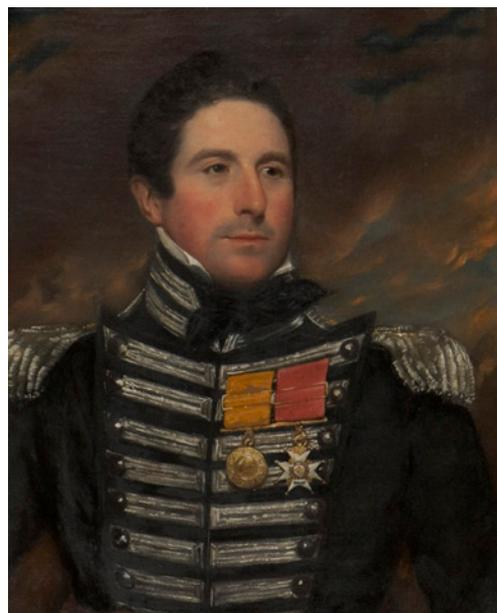
## *The Fort York Acquisitions Fund*

Over the years artifacts important to Fort York have come up for auction, usually in Canada or the United Kingdom. By and large, City of Toronto Museum Services has not been in a position to bid at auction since the mid-1990s when its acquisition budgets were cut to nil. Hence, the fort has little flexibility when objects are offered on the open market, and must depend instead on gifts. The Friends have attempted to step into the breach, but they too lack the ready means.

To illustrate, a recent opportunity to acquire an important oil portrait of Frances Battersby at a Toronto auction house was missed for want of funds (see *Fife and Drum* July 2007). During the War of 1812 Battersby was the lieutenant colonel of the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles who fought under his command at York in April 1813. His horses are famously buried in Victoria Square, today part of Fort York National Historic Site.

Now, thanks to the foresight of a friend, the **Fort York Acquisitions Fund**, seeded with a generous initial gift of \$10,000, has been permanently established within the Fort York Foundation. Chief Curator of City of Toronto Museum Services Wayne Reeves has expressed gratitude and delight, saying that this fund is vital for Fort York. Not only will it allow City of Toronto Museum Services staff to be nimble in bidding at auction for artifacts deemed important to the fort's story, it will also support conservation of these items. We encourage additional donations to augment the Fort York Acquisitions Fund, and make us competitive in the market for pieces of our history to be exhibited in the new Visitor Centre and throughout Fort York National Historic Site.

*Lt. Col. Francis Battersby by Levi Stephens, c.1816.  
Courtesy: Ritchies Auctioneers, Toronto.*



## *TD Bank Group Donation*

In addition to their \$50,000 donation to support War of 1812 Bicentennial education programs at the City's historic sites, TD Bank Group will be donating \$100,000 to support the revitalization of the Garrison Common. This donation enhances the \$1 million gift from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation to the Fort York Foundation for the Garrison Common.

The focus of the TD Bank Group's donation will be on the west end of the Common and in the area of the Strachan Avenue Military Burial Ground, the focal point of our annual Remembrance Day Ceremony. Improvements to this area will include new walkways, interpretive signage, tree plantings, and re-surfacing in the area surrounding the memorial wall and flagpole. Work is expected to be underway, if not complete, by the end of 2014.

## Generosity Comes in Threes

Near the end of 2013 the Fort York Foundation received three particularly meaningful gifts towards the building of the Visitor Centre. One came from Mrs. Marianne Girling; another from her daughter and son-in-law, Karen Girling and Bruce MacLellan; and a third from the Upper Canada Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Marianne Girling who gave securities valued at well into the five-figure range is a great-great granddaughter of Capt. John Denison. Her link to Canada and Toronto dates from the eighteenth century when Capt. Denison immigrated here at the urging of Hon. Peter Russell. His descendants now number several hundred in the Toronto area and beyond.

Bruce MacLellan and Karen Girling made their first gift to Fort York two years ago. But after visiting the site with Foundation Chair Andrew Stewart, Executive Director Susan Perren, and Chief Curator Wayne Reeves in autumn 2013 they made a pledge equally generous as Mrs. Girling's gift. Speaking as one, the donors shared their hopes for an expanded role for the fort: "Our family believes in the importance of making Canadian history accessible to people. Starting as newcomers in the 1790s, our Denison ancestors played a part in building and defending Canada, including at the Battle of York. Newcomers from all around the world are still building Canada and this visitors' centre will help them learn about our great country."

The Upper Canada Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is part of a patriotic service organization founded in 1890 for American women. In November 2012 three of its members visited Fort York, and toured the site, including the kitchens, before presenting a cheque for \$1000 to Andrew Stewart. The DAR's generosity is much appreciated and takes its place alongside other acts of goodwill to, and American interest in, Fort York, for example, a memorial plaque to Gen. Zebulon Pike erected in 1934 by the National Society of the United States Daughters of 1812, and a sugar maple planted along the south ramparts in 1968 by the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.



The crest of the Denison family issued to Marianne Girling's grandfather, Charles Leslie Denison, by the senior officer in the UK College of Arms. Credit: John Denison, Erin, ON.

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## Renewing The Friends' Board of Directors

While the board of The Friends is elected at our Annual General Meeting in June, the process of renewal also continues throughout the year. When individual members leave the board between AGMs, the board appoints their successors as our bylaws allow so we are not left short-handed. As a hundred per cent volunteer organization with no support staff, we must get all our work done by members of the board or others who want to help.

Examples of this were the retirement last August of Matt Blackett, a highly-valued, six-year veteran of the board, followed sadly by the death in December of George Waters who had been a director since 1996. After much discussion and consideration, the board acted in January 2014 to appoint Jeff Evenson as a director, confident that his interest and ability would bring strength to our organization. Other appointments are being explored currently.

Jeff lives in the Fort York neighbourhood where he works too as a vice-president of the Canadian Urban Institute, a post he has held since 2002. Few people have his breadth of

city-building experience spread over thirty years as a former chief of staff to two mayors (Eggleton, Rowlands), director of Central Waterfront Projects for the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, and one of the developers of Toronto's 2008 Waterfront Olympic bid. He was off to a quick start with us when he opted recently to join the Fort York Precinct Advisory Committee which exists to encourage good development in the fort's environs.

Currently the board is looking to identify a new director who can take over from Nancy Baines the duties of membership secretary. Nancy, who also curates our Resource Centre, wants to spend more time there as it moves into the new Visitor Centre later this year. The tasks of the membership secretary include mailing out membership renewal reminders and processing replies; increasing our numbers by promotions and outreach; and creating incentives to join The Friends through members-only benefits and activities. Anyone who'd like to explore joining the board as membership secretary should contact the Nominations Committee at [info@fortyork.ca](mailto:info@fortyork.ca).

*News From*

# *The Birthplace of Toronto*

*Contributions from the Staff at the Fort*

## Manager's Report

*by David O'Hara, Site Manager*

As part of Fort York's usual calendar of events, 2014 began with Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball on January 18. The day included afternoon dance workshops, a presentation by Chief Curator Wayne Reeves, and a Georgian inspired buffet supper. After hosting a cooking class on Georgian desserts in early February, staff and volunteers of our Historic Foodways Program worked closely with the Culinary Historians of Canada on the eighth annual, and sold-out, Mad for Marmalade, Crazy for Citron! on February 22.

Also in February, as part of Black History Month, we were extremely grateful that Lt. Danielle Pittman, Canadian Armed Forces, was able to join us to present *Moving Mountains: The No. 2 Construction Battalion and African Canadian Experience during the First World War*. The No.2 Construction Battalion, a predominantly Black unit, served with distinction overseas during the 'Great War.' This was the first of many events and programs that we expect to roll out over the coming months as we begin to do our part in commemorating the centenary of the Great War.

In late January / early February we hosted a new artist-in-residence program. This was the first of four artistic

residencies by Toronto modern dance company *pounds per square inch*. Their site-specific *Art of Peace Project*, to be created over the next two years on site in the fort's Blue Barracks, will be performed in February 2016.

Our 2014 calendar is a full one. In addition to many core events, we have an exhibition by visual artist Phil Cote scheduled in April, along with one of our annual Citizenship ceremonies on the 25th, and community clean-up day on April 26th. Our main event season kicks off in late May and early June with Doors Open, The Grid Burger Festival, the Arts and Crafts Field Trip, and our own Indigenous Arts Festival.

Construction of the new Visitor Centre is moving along, with recent work on all mechanical systems, framing, and the roof membrane finished and the building fully enclosed. Interior work, including drywall and door installation, is underway and the building is scheduled for occupancy in late June/early July. Although subject to change, the current plan is to open the building in September with a series of events and inaugural exhibitions and installations related to the Great War. Several of the permanent exhibits will be installed in early 2015. While a major phase of the landscape master plan will be implemented in 2014, most of the work will be undertaken later in the year when the Visitor Centre is complete and the major event season has concluded.

## David O'Hara Named Manager of Expanded Fort York Operations

*by Michael Williams*

The City's Economic Development and Culture Division recently announced a new organization structure to better reflect its strategic directions and to best marshal its resources. One element is an expanded unit to run the larger Fort York operations with the dramatic Visitor Centre nearing completion. This is part of a special Section created to focus solely on Museums. David O'Hara has been named the Manager of Fort York which is a well-earned promotion. We all know him to be a very hard-working and devoted advocate for the City's history and for the Fort.

Congratulations David.

*Mike Williams is General Manager, Economic Development & Culture Division, City of Toronto.*



*David O'Hara has welcomed Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor, David C. Onley, and Mrs. Onley to Fort York on eight or nine occasions. Credit: Kathy Mills, 2008*

# A New Exhibit: How Soldiers Spent their Time Off

by Wayne Reeves



*Lady Eveline Marie Alexander, Grand Military Steeplechase, London, Canada West, May 1843, lithograph by Rudolph Ackermann, London, 1845. Credit Library & Archives Canada, C-041205*

Thanks to the generous support of The Friends of Fort York, a new exhibit is now on display in the Great Room of the Blue Barracks. *At Ease: The Military at Play in Nineteenth-Century Canada* comprises nineteen images on thirteen framed panels which capture some of the leisure-time pursuits enjoyed by off-duty officers and soldiers during the 1800s.

Officers had more opportunity than most people to relax, enjoy themselves, or contribute to the world around them, especially during peacetime. Georgian and Victorian society encouraged them to engage in activities appropriate to their status as ‘gentlemen,’ such as concerts, balls, organized sports, and amateur theatrics. Some officers recorded their time off in sketches and paintings.

## From the Gallery

Among more than 150 images in the Gallery on The Friends’ website [www.fortyork.ca](http://www.fortyork.ca) is this view of the fort from the east by Benson J. Lossing. An American journalist and artist, he popularized US history through many books and magazine articles. Material for his *Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812* published in 1868 was gathered years earlier. Lossing visited Toronto in August 1860 as escalating tensions with Britain anticipated the US Civil War. Hence, when he entered the fort and began to sketch a blockhouse the fort’s adjutant told him abruptly that recording British fortifications—Canada was still garrisoned by Britain—was illegal. So Lossing found another vantage point at the foot of Bathurst Street where he obtained this sketch which he considered “much more interesting.”

Soldiers had fewer recreational options. Drinking was a key activity— in barracks and canteens within the garrisons, and at taverns in town. Canteen profits were used to buy reading material for garrison libraries and “apparatus for games” like cricket, soccer, and skittles. Some posts provided recreation rooms as another way for officers to keep an eye on their men.

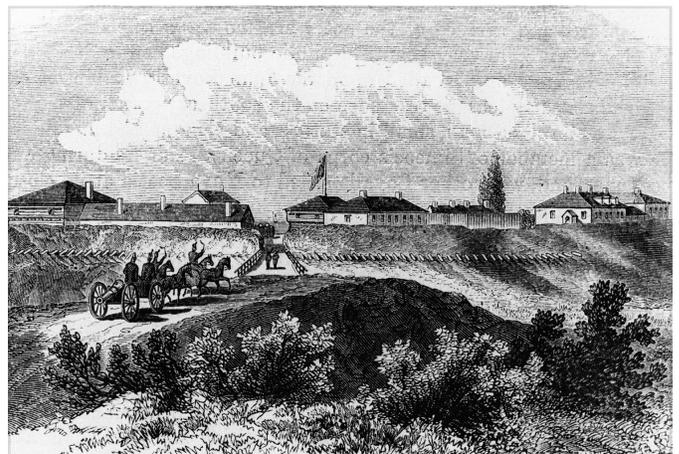
The driving forces behind this exhibit were Steve Otto and Michael Peters of The Friends and Chris Baker, exhibition coordinator for Toronto Culture. Others, particularly Jim Burant of Library & Archives Canada, helped identify a remarkably rich lot of images to choose from, in spite of the modesty of Canada’s pictorial record.

In selecting images, balance was sought in terms of how many images represented officers/soldiers, indoor/outdoor settings, and each season; broad geographical and temporal coverage and a wide range of leisure activities were other objectives. Success proved elusive on most fronts. Officers and outdoor scenes outweigh soldiers and indoor scenes two-to-one, the time span runs just from 1827 to 1887 (with nearly two-thirds of the images coming from the 1840s and ‘60s), and only Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Ontario are depicted.

We shouldn’t be surprised by some of these outcomes. They reflect the pattern of military development in Canada and an abiding British interest in the Canadian outdoors—especially fun ways of coping with winter. More unexpected was the appearance of women in many images. Their finely-attired presence at “regimental entertainments” could be taken for granted, but their participation in skating, sleighing, and tobogganing parties shows how the public realm presented a more level playing field for gender relations.

Both decorative and educational, *At Ease* is a wonderful addition to the most important room in the Blue Barracks.

Wayne Reeves is chief curator, Museum Services.



# 2014 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Richard Haynes

**Due to construction, on-site parking is limited. Visitors are encouraged to walk, take transit or bike to the site.**

## APRIL

### Fort York Cooking Class: "Ah, What an excellent thing is an English Pudding"

**Sun. April 13, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm**

Sweet or savoury, baked, boiled, or fried. We will make a variety of puddings in cloths, basins, or plates.

Admission \$75 plus HST

Pre-registration required. Call 416-392-6907.

### Art Exhibit: Illinois, Land of Warriors Mon. to Thur. April 14 to 17

A special exhibition featuring nine new posters of legendary Indigenous leaders by visual artist Philip Cote.

Included with regular admission.

### Canadian Citizenship Ceremony at the Fort Fri. April 25, 11 am to 12 noon

Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, in partnership with Fort York's volunteer Citizenship Committee and Fort York National Historic Site, will host candidates for citizenship. Prior to the ceremony, community round table discussions will be convened. The event includes guest speakers, music, and a reception.

Free admission until 12:30 pm.

### Community Cleanup Day Sat. April 26, 10 am to 12 noon

Help us with spring cleaning of the Garrison Common. All equipment will be provided.

Contact David Juliusson @ 416-392-6907 ext. 233

A free Family Pass will be offered to all volunteers.

### Battle of York Commemoration Day Sun. April 27, 10 am to 5 pm

Discover Fort York National Historic Site and commemorate the 201st anniversary of the Battle of York fought on 27 April 1813. Enjoy War of 1812-era drill and musket firing exercises; Battle of York, Fortification, and 1812 Barracks tours; demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking techniques. Step into the Soldiers' Barracks brought to life by period animators. Children can learn the marching and musket drill practiced by the Upper Canada Militia in 1812. Learn about English Country dancing with the York Regency Dancers. A **special walking tour** focusing on the Battle of York will begin at the entrance to Fort York at 11 am and 2 pm. Using the Fort, Garrison Common, and areas of the original shoreline it will highlight the dramatic battle that took place here 201 years ago.

Regular admission.

### Toronto District School Board History Fair Tues. April 29, 10 am to 2:30 pm

View history project displays from the West District of the TDSB.

Included with regular admission.

## MAY

### Fort York Historic District Walking Tours in association with Jane's Walks

**Sat. May 3, 10 am to 2:30 pm**

Explore the history and evolution of Fort York, the Garrison Common, and the nearby Lake Ontario shoreline from the early British colonial era to the present day.

Free admission to Fort York following the tour.

### Ontario Model Soldier Society Show and Sale Sat. May 3, 10 am to 4 pm

All ages will enjoy Fort York as it hosts the Ontario Model Soldier Society's annual show and competition. Demonstrations of casting and painting; displays of connoisseur figures, dioramas, and tableaux of more than a thousand pieces. Many vendors will be offering toy soldiers for sale.

Free with regular admission.

### Victoria Day Mon. May 19, 10 am to 5 pm

What better way to celebrate Victoria Day than to visit the birthplace of Toronto. Tours, kids' activities such as soldiers' drill, demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking techniques in one of the oldest kitchens in Toronto, English country dancing.

Regular admission.

### Doors Open Sat. and Sun. May 24 and 25, 10 am to 5 pm

Fort York will open its doors for this annual celebration of history and architecture. Enjoy special tours of some of Toronto's oldest architecture and original War of 1812 buildings or stroll the grounds of this National Historic Site.

Free admission all weekend.

## JUNE

### The Grid Burger Day on Garrison Common Sun. June 1

A day of fun, sun, and the most inventive sliders the city has to offer.

Visit <http://www.thegridto.com/burger-week/> for details and ticket prices.

**Please note: Fort York will be closed to the public from June 6th to June 8th for the following event. Visitors to the Field Trip Music & Arts Festival are encouraged to walk, take transit or bike to the site as parking will be limited during this period.**

### Field Trip Sat. and Sun. June 7 and 8

A world-class, two-day boutique music and arts festival highlighting the community's best culinary offerings, as well as collaborative explorations of art, photography, technology, fashion, and more.

Visit <http://www.fieldtriplife.com/> for details and ticket prices.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9FYf1T6CUc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9FYf1T6CUc)

### Indigenous Arts Festival Fri. to Sun. June 20 to 22

A celebration of traditional and contemporary Indigenous art and culture centered around National Aboriginal Day. Featuring *The Honouring* by Kaha:wi Dance Theatre; *The Ministry of Grace* by Article 11; drum songs, dance, and storytelling by the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation; music, crafts, food, and more.

Free admission.

Visit our website at: [www.fortyork.ca](http://www.fortyork.ca). Learn more about Fort York, subscribe to the [free newsletter](#), become a [member](#), [donate](#) or browse our [historical image gallery](#).



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Regular Admission to Fort York (all prices include taxes)  
Adult: \$9.00, Senior (65+) & Youth (13-18): \$5.50,  
Children (6-12): \$4.25, Children (5 and under): FREE

The Fife and Drum is a quarterly publication of the The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common