

RCE Memorial Established in UK

Recently 6 Fd Engr Sqn Museum (39 CER) has been cooperating with Headley Down Nature Reserve Trust (HDNRT) to create a nature park and a memorial to Canadian Engineers who in 1941 built a 400 man detention facility called Camp Erie at Headley Down in England.

At the end of WW II housing in the UK was in great demand and for many years the de-commissioned camp buildings were used as temporary housing.

Also in later years some of the land occupied by the former Erie Camp became overgrown with invasive vegetation and some land was used as a refuse landfill. HDNRT took on the task of reclaiming the land as a nature preserve while at the same time recognizing the wartime presence of the Canadian army and in particular Canadian engineers.

See more details on HDNRT at headleydownnaturereserve.org.uk

Our museum's historian, LCol (Ret'd) Vince Larocque researched the history of Camp Erie and found the following.

Four R.C.E companies were heavily involved in the construction of Erie Camp. Namely:

- 6th Field Company R.C.E.
- “C” Company of the 2nd Battalion R.C.E.
- Number 1 Road Construction Company R.C.E.
- Number 1 Canadian Base Units Construction Company R.C.E.

Three more R.C.E. companies provided people for varying periods of time. Namely:

- 7 from 1st Corps Field Park Company R.C.E.
- 4 from 2nd Field Company R.C.E.
- 5 from 18th Field Company R.C.E.

For several months dialogue continued between our museum's Vince Laroque, Col (Ret'd) Bill White and the chair of HDNRT, Angela Jackson. Gradually the scope, the content and the execution of the project evolved.

June 9th was the official opening of the site. Bill White and Vince Larocque were able to attend the opening and they were joined by many locals who were children during the war and remembered the Canadians of Camp Erie. Also attending were many who, as children, grew up in the camp buildings after the war when the camp was used as temporary housing.

CMEA joined the museum in sponsoring the costs of a memorial stone at the entrance to the site.



Left: the official party led by Vince Larocque and Bill White followed by the public is piped to the ceremony

Right: An area of reflection consists of a bench built around a Canadian maple tree and memorial storyboards explaining the origins of Camp Erie.



Right: The marker at the entrance to the site consists of a cement block from the original camp and recognizes the Canadian presence during WW II with the inscription "In Memory Of The Canadians Who Served At Erie Camp During The Second World War".

Pictured are Angela Jackson, Bill White, Vince Larocque and local piper Mairi Mason who happens to be Canadian.

