

Remembering Marie-France Comeau

Wreath laid in memory of servicewoman killed by Russell Williams

By Frank Moses

On Sunday, Nov. 11, townspeople in Brighton, Ont. and military personnel from CFB Trenton gathered to remember those lost in service of their country.

In a poignant reminder of another loss, two members of 437 Sqn. placed a wreath at the cenotaph in memory of Marie-France Comeau, a servicewoman who died in Brighton at the hands of Russell Williams, former Base Commander at CFB Trenton.

Williams pleaded guilty in 2010 to the murders of Marie-France Comeau and his second victim, Jessica Lloyd of Tweed. He was also found guilty of two sexual assaults and 82 counts of breaking and entering.

Ms. Comeau was 38 years old when she died on Nov. 25, 2009. From a military family, she served as a flight attendant with 437 Sqn. Her father was a career soldier and her grandfather had flown Spitfires in the Second World War.

Friends and colleagues remembered her as a fun-loving and outgoing person who had a great zest for life – she had a boyfriend, a cat – and many close friends.

“She was an absolutely beautiful person and friend. She was always so happy and positive and I am truly saddened by this horrible tragedy,” Kim Hill Chornaby said in a Facebook memorial in 2009. “Her smile will forever live on in the hearts of those who knew her and were lucky enough to call her a friend.”

Military members and veterans were shocked by the crimes committed by the most senior officer at CFB Trenton. For the close-knit military community, the realization that their commander was a rapist and killer caused many to question their core

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beliefs.

Within the military, the highest duty of service is the protection of one’s fellow women and men. Williams’ ultimate betrayal of his obligations as a leader – and a human being, shook not just the military, but the country, to the core.

Comeau’s death did serve to bring about some change within the military. Servicemen in particular, were forced to re-examine the way in which women were regarded and treated in the forces.

In 2014, General Jon Vance, the Chief of Defence Staff, made it his signature mission, with Operation Honour, to bring about the end of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the Forces.

In 2015, former Supreme Court Justice Marie Deschamps authored a report on sexual misconduct within the Forces which indicated, “...the existence of an underlying sexualized culture in the CAF, which if not addressed, is conducive to more serious incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault.”

Since the launch of Operation Honour, service women have been coming forward in large numbers to tell their stories of rape, harassment and ill treatment at the hands of colleagues and supervisors.

A memory of Marie-France Comeau is kept alive because the members of 437 Squadron honour her each year at the cenotaph in Brighton.

If not for the actions of a twisted soul, Comeau would still have attended Remembrance Day ceremonies, standing proudly with her colleagues in the name of freedom.



Photo by Frank Moses

Two RCAF members place a wreath in honour of Corporal Marie-France Comeau, who was raped and murdered in her home by Col. Russell Williams, former Commander of 8 Wing CFB Trenton. Comeau has been honoured in Brighton every Remembrance Day since her death in November 2009. For more Remembrance Day photos, see page 4.

Course re-evaluates police methods

By Sam Brown

There have been numerous incidents around the world and closer to home when victims of mental illness have either died or were roughly handled by police officers.

“There’s no shortage of examples on the internet, where you can watch people being tasered, people being shot, people suffering from mental health episodes, who die at the hands of police,” retired OPP Inspector Pat Finnegan explained.

Even though the violence in these incidents was not necessarily malicious, and investigations have absolved the officers involved, Finnegan acknowledged that there is still something wrong in the fundamentals of policing when it confronts mental health.

“You still can’t help but step back and say to yourself: ‘OK, but could we have done something differently,’” Finnegan said.

In moving forward and addressing police encounters with victims of mental illness, there is a recurring question: ‘Could something have been done differently?’ This question seems to drive the re-evaluation of policing methodology when it comes to mental health, and underlies new programs in police education like the mental health and police response course Finnegan has designed and teaches at Loyalist College.

In the fall semester last year, Finnegan introduced the course in the police foundations program at Loyalist.

The key purposes of the course are to overcome the powerful stigma surrounding mental health, and to foster empathy, compassion and understanding to establish real human connections between the responding officers and those suffering from mental illness.

Recognizing the stigma around mental illness and combatting it is essential to the course. “We never stop focussing on stigma,” Finnegan said.

In a new exercise Finnegan added to the course this year, students are required to research individual cases of victims and delve into the personal struggles with mental illness to build the sense that such disorders are pervasive throughout society.

Finnegan explained that because the individual subjects researched were successful, functioning members of society, the exercise helps get rid of the idea that people living with mental illness are



Photo by Sam Brown

Retired OPP Inspector Pat Finnegan is the architect of the course on mental health response at Loyalist College.

non-contributing burdensome members “outside” of society.

Feedback on the exercise was hugely positive. “It helped us realize that mental illness impacts everybody,” Finnegan said. “It really helps get rid of the stigma.”

Students are also trained to recognize signs of mental illness and identify different kinds of disorders.

“We aren’t going to try to make them experts,” Finnegan explained, but even a modest knowledge

of mental illness goes a long way to help a police officer resolve a mental health situation without relying on forceful tactics.

Police need to be concierges of their municipalities, said Finnegan, adding that this is how he likes to think of the role of police today.

“It’s not enough to just say, ‘You know what? I’ve got a gun, I’ve got handcuffs, I’ve got a pepper spray, I’ve got a baton, I’ve got a taser,’” Finnegan said.

Police officers cannot merely be symbols of enforcement, he said, and at Loyalist, students are

learning to consider de-escalation strategies.

They are learning to take the time and make the extra effort to show empathy, compassion and attempt to connect with people suffering mental illness and work alongside other services in the community (such as psychologists and addiction centers) to find the best solution to these kinds of situations, Finnegan said.

“Never has this emphasis on the shared responsibility been stronger than it is in Ontario right now.”



Photo by Sasha Seftor

Community members fill the Empire Theatre in Belleville to the brim as they await the announcement of the winner of the Kraft Heinz Project Play prize. The announcement was made live during the halftime show of a TSN broadcast CFL game.

Field of Dreams to come true

By Sasha Seftor

Local organization Field of Ability is sprinting towards home in its efforts to bring a fully accessibly baseball field to Belleville.

On Saturday Oct. 28, the Empire Theatre in Belleville was packed to capacity with excited residents eager to learn the outcome of the Kraft-Heinz Project Play contest. The Project Play contest called for cities across the nation to nominate and vote for their favourite local organizations with projects creating a positive change within their community.

A local organization, Field of Ability, has become a finalist out of thousands of entrants across Canada to win a \$250,000 prize to go towards completing their project. The project would see a complete revitalization of an existing baseball field in Parkdale Veterans Park in Belleville.

Modifications will be made to create a fully accessible playing field for individuals who would otherwise not be able to access and play the game. Modifications to the current field would include accessible dugouts and bleachers, a completely rubberized playing surface

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Field of Dreams Co-ordinator Lisa Newman Chesher

and a fully fenced in field to increase safety.

This would be the only fully accessible baseball diamond of its kind between Toronto and Ottawa.

The winner of the \$250,000 prize was announced via live stream during half-time of a CFL game between the Toronto Argonauts and the Montreal Alouettes, the emotions of the crowd were evident as cheers and tears were being shed ahead of the big moment. As the announcement was made and Belleville was declared the winner, the roof blew off the Empire theatre and an ocean of happiness and relief seemed to crash over the crowd.

Field of Ability Co-ordinator Lisa Newman Chesher was cheering louder than anyone in the crowd as she is one step closer to bringing her vision of fully accessible baseball to her community.

“Now we can get going,” she said when asked what winning this prize means to the project. “We had already raised \$150,000 and now with this \$250,000 we can finally break ground in the spring.”

The organization plans on bringing fully accessible and barrier-free baseball with a completed field to Belleville by the end of 2019.



In a then and now comparison, Photo Editing student Mari Hiramoto takes viewers back in time to 1930 on Front St. in Belleville. The “now” version shows the recently completed final phase of the “Build Belleville” initiative to rebuild infrastructure downtown in the Friendly City. While Century Place stands where the iconic Tip Top Tailors building once stood on the corner of Front and Bridge Streets, Belleville’s city hall remains a constant on the streetscape. The 1930 photo takes viewers back to a time when every one travelling from Montreal to Toronto had to drive through downtown Belleville along Highway 2.





Photo by Deepak Sharma

Loyalist College organized a cultural event to show its diversity and to reconnect international students with their culture. Shown at the recent event are Priya Sharma, Navjot Kaur, Amarinder Singh, Prince Garg and Atul Jindal.

Loyalist’s diversity celebrated

By Deepak Sharma

Culture represents the characteristics and knowledge of a group of people, language, religion, music and different types of food. Loyalist College in Belleville organized a cultural event at the Shark Tank Pub on Oct. 2 to bring awareness to campus about Loyalist’s diversity. It was the first time this event was held for international students to reconnect them with their own culture and learn something about some other cultures. It was started at 12 p.m. and finished at 3 p.m. The whole event was a joint initia-

tive of the International Centre and Student Government of Loyalist with the help of 14 student volunteers. Madhulika Potukuchi, an international settlement officer, was the main organizer of the event. “It’s a break from hectic school and work schedules, and reconnecting to their own culture, and learning something new about a new culture makes students more crazy about the event,” Potukuchi said. About 100 students from 20 countries took part in the cultural event. Free food from different countries was also prepared for students by organizers. “The integration of student body

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Madhulika Potukuchi

and celebration of muticulturalism on campus was the well-liked part of this event,” Potukochi said. Students from India were decked out in their tradition dress which is salwar kameez for women and kurta pajama for men. There was also an area for students to dance and DJ was playing songs of their choices. “We are very happy to get different cultures on our campus from 20 other countries,” she said. There were girls from India who were putting mehndi on the hands of other students. Mehndi is a kind of art in India and a kind of celebration feeling in which girls apply mehndi on their hands. Students of Canada were very excited for that thing and they were also taking part in it. “We had not organized any dress or dance competition because this event was totally focused on cultural learning and student engagement,” Potukochi said. With the end of last song played by DJ, whole students thanks organizers and gave their review about the event that how much they enjoyed the event. Some of the students request international center and student government of Loyalist College to organize a similar kind of event every semester so that they can reconnect with their culture and gather some memories from Loyalist.



Photo by Damon MacLean

A crowd member hops on stage with Moon Sugar to do some lipsyncing with the microphone stand.

Signal Brewing Company celebrates Halloween

Fireworks wrapped up the night of festivities

By Damon MacLean

Signal Brewing Company hosted All Hallows’ Eve Oct. 29 at the brewery plus the newly acquired property next door, Henry’s. Admission included access to both buildings and a complimentary drink for one of the in-house brews on tap. The venue also rented out a shuttle bus that made two pick-up rounds throughout Belleville to bring people to and from the venue. The event required those attending to dress up in costumes, which added to the fun. In the main building, the creation section was open where patrons could see the technology used for brewing. There were also ping-pong tables set up next to the machinery. In the main venue, Moon Sugar, a pop rock/party band from the Quinte area, consisting of Jordan Thomas (guitar), Logan Dillion (bass) and Sean Doyle (drums), played multiple sets of covers. These were well-received by the audience who sang along and danced

the night away with the band. One audience member hopped on stage dressed up as an elderly woman and rocked out, pretending be the vocalist of the act. In Henry’s, people gathered in the more intimate venue with a fireplace, smaller stage and bar. Bands that performed on the stage included Bad Tractor, Hayley and the Pirate Queens, and The Grievous Angels. These acts were catered more to a more mature audience and the genres of the acts were very folk-esque. In the backyard of Henry’s, in front of the river, there was a fireplace that burned away all night, even in the small bit of the damp snow. After the bands finished, owner Richard Courneyea invited everyone to the back patio for a fireworks show. After the fireworks, a DJ played classic Halloween tracks and the crowd danced on. The event was attended by over 200 people, with a large age range. The atmosphere of the event was very open and safe.

Remembering



Korean War veterans Jack Shirley (right) smiles brightly at Korean War veterans appreciation day, held in Kingston on Nov. 10. Eleven Korean War veterans participated in this annual event.

Photo by TaeHyeong Kim



(Above) Sgt. Wade, a Royal Air Force Cadet, exhales as she stands guard at the cenotaph in Trenton, Ont. on the night of Nov. 10, 2018. She and her peers took shifts leading up to the morning of Remembrance Day on Nov. 11, 2018.

Photo by Andrej Ivanov

(Right) Guy Mandeville, C.D., awaits his turn to speak during the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Aboriginal Veterans Memorial in Confederation Park in Ottawa. Mandeville served in the military for 42 years.

Photo by Shelby Lisk

(Bottom) Loyalist College President Dr. Ann-Marie Vaughan speaks at the Loyalist Remembrance Day ceremony. Vaughan is Honourary Colonel of 426 Squadron at CFB Trenton.



A women pauses briefly after laying her poppy on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier following a Remembrance Day ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of WW1 at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Photo by Matthew Botha

