

Cramahe bladesmith notches milestone in 14-year career

BY JOHN CAMPBELL

Cramahe Township – For his 1,500th handmade knife, bladesmith Steven Tedford had it in his mind for quite some time to produce a commemorative piece.

Then a customer came to him who also “wanted something special” -- two Bowie knives made from the “most advanced steel” available on the market.

“I don’t get an opportunity to make knives like this very often so it just happened to be the perfect combination of customer and desire to do it,” he said.

The customer, a knife collector who lives near Campbellford, also asked that it be forged – heated and hammered into shape -- “to increase its value,” Tedford said.

And he provided moose horn and musk-ox ivory to give the handles a “special look.”

It took him 50 hours to make the pair whereas normally it takes him no more than six hours to make one knife.

He appraised their value at \$1,500 apiece.

“They are the most expensive pieces I’ve ever done,” Tedford said.

His price range normally runs from \$200 to \$500.

There are “thousands and thousands of Canadians” who make knives by hand, but there might only “a couple of dozen” like himself who do it full-time.

His “most popular knife” is a fillet knife, which he, as a “passionate fisherman,” is fond of making. He also makes “a really, really nice bread knife” that is very sharp.

His large survival knives can be used for multiple purposes, such as to cut wood or build a shelter.

Tedford uses high-end modern steel to produce blades with a “fantastic edge ... that never really go dull.”

He carves the handles from different materials, taking his time to make sure each fits in the hand perfectly. He produces sheaths as well, his preference being wood.

The most unusual item he ever made was a double-ended knife that was “super dangerous, you wouldn’t want to try to use it.”

It was only good for hanging on a wall, he said.

Tedford said he developed “an affinity for knives” while a child and acquired the skills to turn his fascination into a livelihood working in his parents’ machining and fabricating shop north of Port Hope. Now 41, he started his business when he was 27 “and I’ve never looked back ... This has just been a dream.”

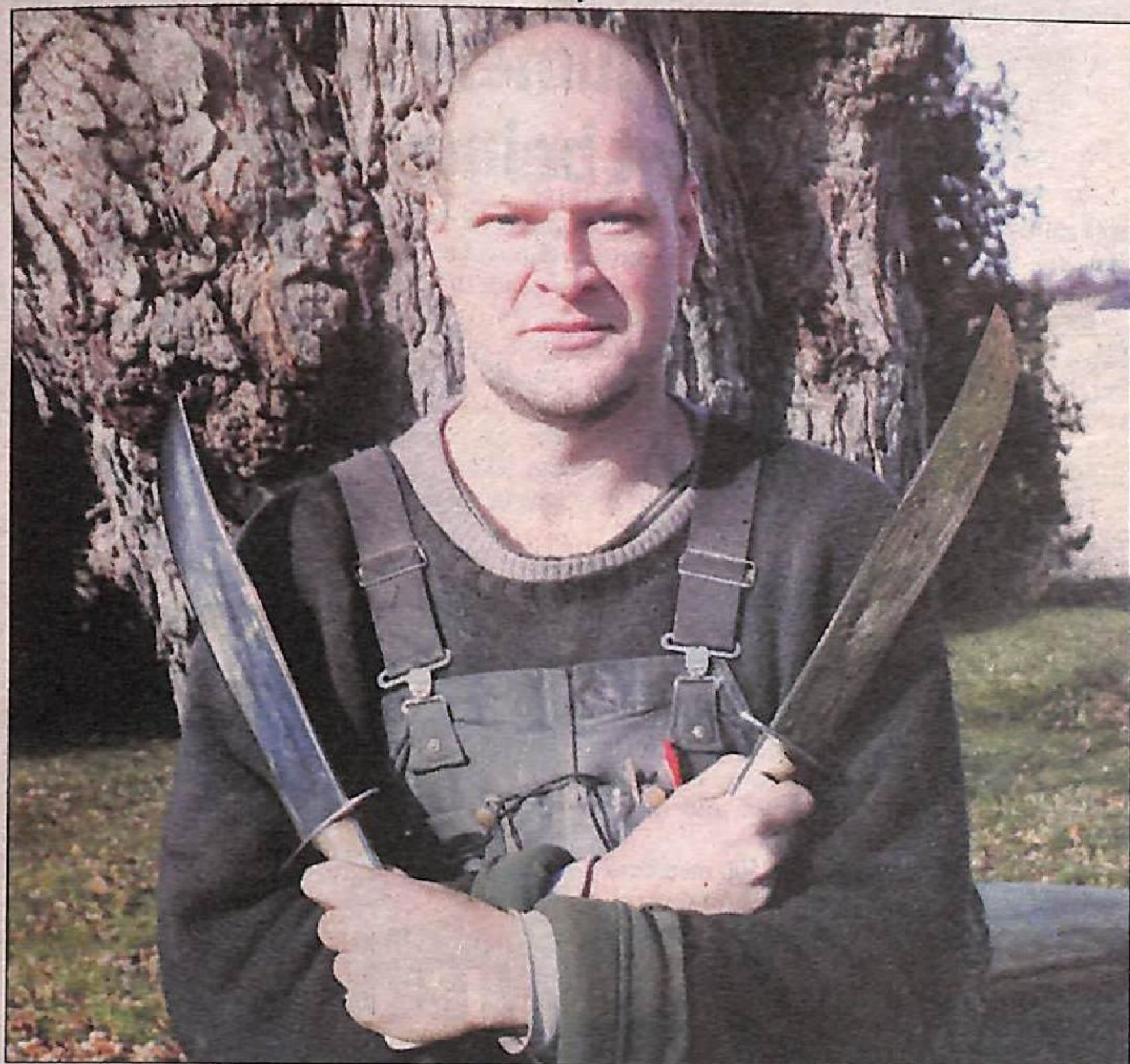
Tedford uses the Internet to sell his knives in 36 countries; he has “a following with some navy officers in Australia,” he said.

He also holds shows every weekend at his home at 14238 Telephone Road north of Colborne. He moved there three years ago.

It’s “been life-changing for me and my career,” Tedford said. “The local community has really embraced me.”

His goal is to make 500 knives a year – he’s on pace to produce about 300 this year – but “it’s physically demanding,” he said. He has “some pain issues” in his arms, wrists and hands, owing to “the nature of the work.”

To learn more about his work, search his name on Facebook or email him at firebornswords@yahoo.com



John Campbell/Metroland

Steven Tedford made a pair of Bowie knives for a collector, and surpassed the 1,500 mark in the number of knives he has made in his career.

BRIGHTON INDEPENDENT DEC. 1/16

EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY UNTIL DEC. 12



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Colborne Art Gallery member artists’ own artwork is featured in a group exhibition titled Past, Present and Future, on display through Dec. 12. This selection (pictured) from Bob “Omar” Tunnoch’s Organic Hors d’oeuvres series is a playful piece in oil. See more examples of the members’ artwork in next Thursday’s Colborne Chronicle pages as well as online at www.northumberlandtoday.com.

NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY DEC. 1/16

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Cramahe prepares to celebrate Canada’s 150th

MANDY MARTIN
FOR NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY

CRAMAHE – Plans for celebrating Canada’s 150th anniversary in Cramahe Township next year have received a \$50,000 boost.

The Canadian federal government, through the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, allocated the maximum funds allowed, council heard at its Nov. 15 meeting.

The Heritage Cramahe Canada 150 committee had asked for \$73,000 but will now plan which of the proposed activities it planned will now get the go-ahead with the money received Heritage Cramahe committee, chair Jim Williams reported.

To receive the funds, an agreement must be signed by the municipality with the federal minister of Canadian Heritage. A bylaw to authorize municipal representatives to enter into the agreement will be passed.

“The main event will be Aug. 4 to 7 (2017), the Civic Holiday weekend,” Williams said of planned activities. “Sixty per cent of the funds will be funding for that. We will be working over the next few

weeks deliberating on which of the exciting events we will come up with. Now, the real work begins.

“Of, course, we need to add members to our committee,” he hinted.

The federal funding is being received as follows: \$8,500 in 2016-17 and \$41,480 in 2017.

Heritage Cramahe currently has two very well-received Remembrance Day exhibits (one at the Colborne Art Gallery, the other at the Art Gallery of Northumberland in Cobourg) featuring WWI memorabilia sourced. Off-shoot displays are also part of a Northumberland-wide, co-operative initiative organized by volunteer contributions.

As part of the Colborne Art Gallery display, a 12-minute video enactment of the contributions of Colborne native Charles Rutherford, VC, starring Barrie Wood was produced by Heritage Cramahe.

“We plan to have 30 minutes of video time” in total featuring local people of importance for 2017 Heritage Cramahe 150 Committee member Chauncey Perry said.