

Museum items

War vehicles collected in Nassagaweya

by Jennifer Barr

Bill Gregg missed World War Two enlistment by two years. He was considered one of the lucky ones but an entire boyhood of war training and preparation ("we never had phys ed in high school, we had drill") left its mark. Dr. Gregg has a museum collection of 30 Canadian war vehicles at his Nassagaweya home and has recently published a book entitled "Europe WW2" describing Canadian military vehicles.

A whole generation of Canadians have no recollection of WW Two. Although the war museum in Ottawa covers war time artifacts broadly, there is no Canadian war vehicle museum even though Canada played a significant part in vehicle production for Britain.

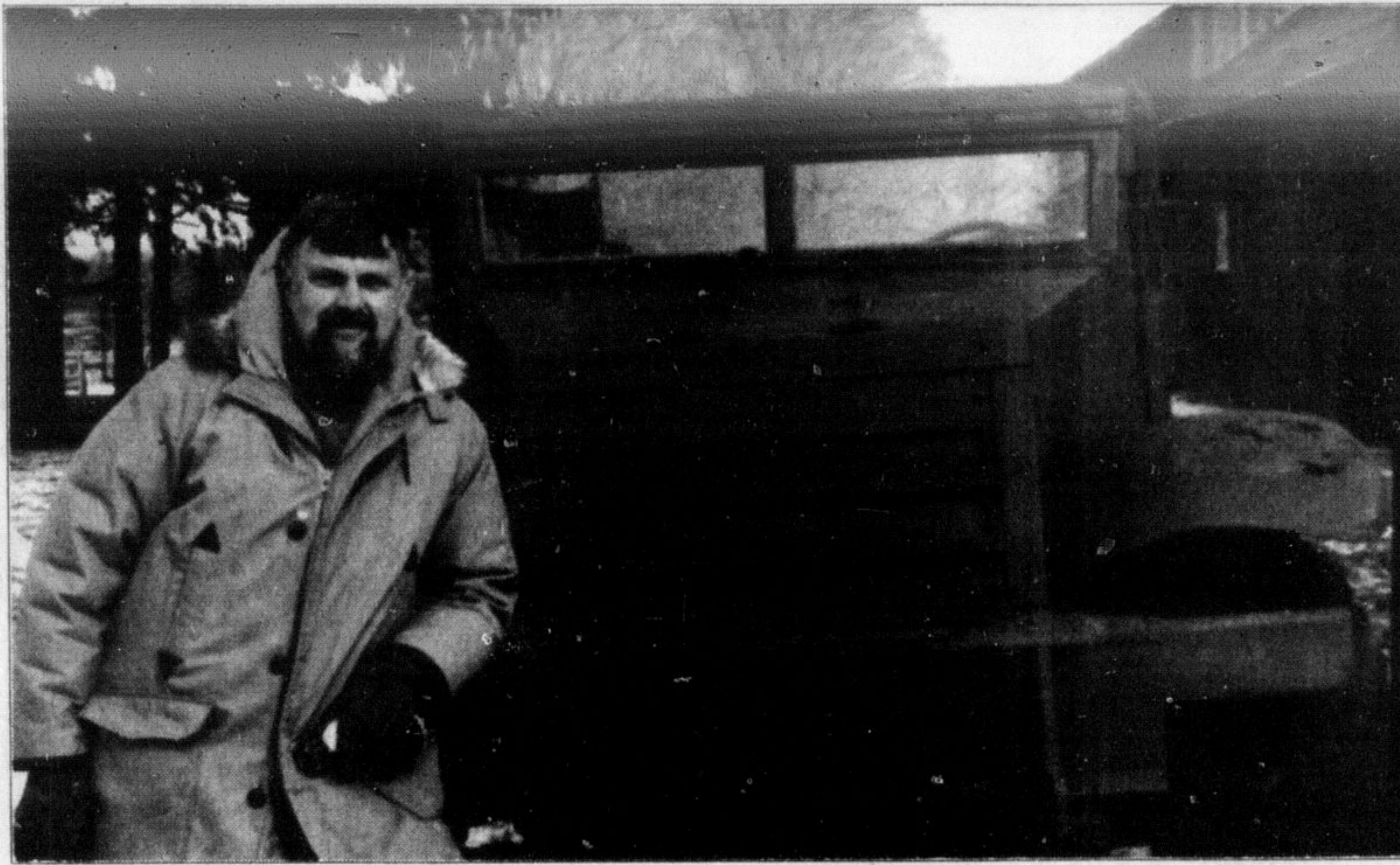
Dr. Gregg feels strongly that it's up to somebody to make sure these vehicles are preserved for the education of future generations.

"We need to toot our horn for our country and do something portraying history for our kids," says Bill.

With that view in mind, he, his wife Carol, sons Andrew 16, Anthony 13, and Peter 11, father Angus, and a few friends started the Canadian Military Historical Society which is now incorporated, non-profit sharing, and under direction of a diverse group of people.

It's for this organization that Bill published the book, one in a series on military vehicles. Proceeds from publishing are required to support the museum. Government intervention and red tape have prevented the museum from becoming a charitable organization able to provide tax receipts for donations. So Dr. Gregg has to finance the whole thing himself.

Therefore acquisition is a priority at the moment—saving as many restorable vehicles as possible from scrap piles and junk heaps. Dr. Gregg would like to see CMHS (Canadian Military Historical Society) attract members interested in restoring these vehicles.



BILL GREGG poses proudly beside one of his recent acquisitions for his military vehicle museum in Nassagaweya—a White Half-Truck armoured carrier for

war personnel. This vehicle served with the Canadian forces in WW2 and survived the intervening years as a road grader.

Teaching is Dr. Gregg's main interest and he encourages school groups and interested parties to view his collection "such as it is." Teaching comes naturally to this ex-University professor, lecturer, public speaker, businessman, veterinarian and farmer who always has time to talk about his vehicles.

The collection is based on vehicles used by Canadian forces in the first and second world wars. Although Britain went into WW Two with the ability to produce thousands of war vehicles, rapid expansion

changed the picture. She lost 80,000 vehicles in Dunkirk alone, bringing back only 5,000 and most of those motorcycles.

Canada, possessing the largest motor industry in the Commonwealth, was called into production by 1940 and went on to supply more than 800,000 vehicles, most of the British vehicles and those used by India, Australia, New Zealand and Russia.

Fortunately a few farsighted Canadians had been doing research for just such an emergency. Many innovations came out of fast production during both

wars such as the first practical four wheel drive vehicle made by the Four Wheel Drive company in Kitchener for WW One. Bill possesses an FWD munitions carrier from the first war built by this company and calls it a "highly significant vehicle".

"We can't disregard the good wars did in pushing things through," comments Carol Gregg, referring to the necessity for rapid invention and innovation.

The Gregg collection is based on CMP vehicles or those of Canadian Military Pattern. These were distinctive in design but Dr. Gregg also has some MCP vehicles, or Modified Conventional Pattern, where military specifications were added to civilian trucks and cars. He also has some vehicles made in the U.S. but used by Canada before the States came into the war.

Some of the vehicles Bill owns that particularly excite him include a 1942 "Otter", General Motors' first attempt at an armoured wheeled vehicle. It's a light reconnaissance car of which 1500 were produced and used mainly in Sicily. Only two are still in existence.

Another treasure is a Type One Ford field artillery tractor, the first type produced here to pull a 25 pound artillery piece. To Bill's knowledge it is the only Type One to survive intact and served postwar as a wing vehicle for a gas well rig in Simcoe.

Bill has several CMP vehicles and some MCP's such as a standard pattern 1943 Ford fire truck recently acquired from the Alton Fire Department.

The only airplane in the museum is a 1942 De Havilland Tiger Moth that served as a primary trainer at the Elementary Flying School at Windsor.

The collection is housed in a 5,000 square foot building reconstructed from its original use—stabling horses waiting for their church-going families in Dornoch, north of Durham.

Residing near the museum, Angus Gregg, Bill's father, is using a room in his house for a collection of war related items such as uniforms, saddles,

magazines, books and weapons. Mr. Gregg served in WW One with the Canadian Field Artillery as part of the 55th battery from Guelph. He served with an 18 pounder field gun and wishes to acquire one. He managed to buy the German counterpart in December.

One of Dr. Gregg's fantasies is to have a group of restored war vehicles ready for local parades being driven by the soldiers who actually drove them in the wars. With this in mind he visits the various Canadian Legions in the area speaking and drumming up support.

Now that the military museum has led to the publishing of a book, Bill finds himself very busy. Not only did Bill engineer the book but he is now in partnership with Denis Cardy and his wife, former Acton resident Gabe Strachan of Paisley, in a publishing business called QUAD Publications Inc.

The book, a description of specifications of Canadian produced military vehicles, is an updated reprint of the original war manual.

Photographs in the original book, one to every page, were unusable so Bill spent many long hours in the National Archives in Ottawa digging out negatives. He looked at 200,000 contact prints before choosing 500. He was told he was only the second person to ever show interest in viewing these pictures.

He found over half of the original negatives from three different locations. The remaining pictures were substituted by similar ones of the same vehicle. In some cases the original had to be copied.

The book is sold by direct mail from ads placed in special interest magazines. Four hundred copies were sold two weeks after the book came out. It is the first of a series of related books.

Interested museum viewers, school groups, or those who wish to order a book may contact Dr. Gregg at RR 2, Rockwood, 853-2776. He would also like to hear from people interested in joining the historical society, donating vehicles and restoration.

Bill Gregg sums up his keen interest in military vehicles by saying,

"I feel strongly about making a contribution to our heritage and I enjoy doing it through activity."

From the sky

Police lay traffic charges

By Alex Matheson
The "fighter" banks steeply and dives, doubling its speed in seconds as it closes on its prey.

The "tail gunner" gets the enemy in his sights and presses the button. Within a minute the "interceptor" closes and the pursuit is over.

No, the scenario is not dogfights in the sky between enemy aircraft. It is the Ontario Provincial Police combating traffic violators from the sky.

Police recently laid 26 charges against motorists in a three kilometre strip of the Queen Elizabeth Way between Bronte Rd. and Trafalgar Rd.

The most common infraction is speeding but tailgating and careless driving charges are also frequent, said OPP observer "tail gunner" Constable Bob Kollee.

Going too slow will also get you in trouble with the law in the air, as one bus driver found out.

He was charged Saturday with driving too slow in the left lane.

Although he was travelling 98 k.p.h. only 2 k.p.h. under the limit, he was holding up traffic, said Const. Kollee.

On the other end of the scale, a driver was finally apprehended behind the Ford Motor Co. after he had been clocked at 160 k.p.h.

"It is hard for speeders to get away because we can track them easily from the air," Const. Kollee said.

The Cessna 172s used by police are capable of over 130 m.p.h. and don't have to follow roads or contend with much traffic.

Pilot Gene Williams flies the plane 1,000 ft. above the ground and 1,000 ft. to the side of the traffic.

This day the spotlight was on eastbound traffic. Williams would cruise west at about 70 m.p.h. on the north side of the QEW.

Whenever he or Const.

Kollee would spot a likely offender he would turn sharply and dive to gain rapidly on the motorist.

As soon as the car reached one of the yellow triangles the policeman, sitting in the back seat, would start one of the two stopwatches at the top of his clipboard.

When the car reached the next marker a half-

kilometre later he would stop the first watch and start the second one.

The motorist would be timed again.

Patrol cars or bikes, called "interceptors", assigned to the same stretch of road, pull over offenders based on information radioed from the plane.

"It makes it easier to

be impartial.

"The observer in the plane doesn't know who is being charged and the interceptor who lays the charge is not making the decision," Const. Kollee said.

Although police will charge on one clocking they like two and then go to court on the lowest.

A legal motorist covers

the half kilometre in 18 seconds or less.

However, in the passing lane most drivers exceed 100 k.p.h. and in fact the average speed is about 112 k.p.h., said the constable.

Police are usually more concerned with your driving relative to the traffic, he added.



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