

OPENING OF 'THE BROCK' - 1812 - CANADA EXHIBITION



General RILEY opening the Exhibition. Jill Makepeace-Warne (Left)

On Friday 23rd March, 2012 a new exhibition was officially opened at The Rifles (Berkshire and Wiltshire) Museum. The exhibition is primarily based around General Sir Issac Brock and the 49th (Hertfordshire) Regiment (later 1st Bn, Royal Berkshire Regiment) in Canada. The exhibition is titled 'The war of 1812'. This year is the 200th anniversary of that war and it was a military conflict fought in Canada between the forces of the United States of America and those of the British Empire. The Americans declared war in 1812 for several reasons, including trade restrictions due to Britain's ongoing war with France. As a result of the research it was ascertained that Major Piers Dunn (Ex R Berks Regt & DERR) had a distant relation, one Thomas Dunn who was General Brock's opposite number in Canada at the same time who signed the proclamation that in effect started the war. To date General Brock was missing from the display and this was an opportunity to rectify the matter. Bob Scott (Society of Friends member and Ex R Berks Regt) lobbied for a long time to remedy this anomaly and he has at long last been rewarded. A number of events coincided which led to the exhibition, the 200th Anniversary and the publication of Jonathan Riley's book which eventually led to the exhibition as we see it today. Bob used all his many contacts in Canada and worked tirelessly to assemble the information. Owing to lack of space it was clear that an alternative method of display should be explored and the Society of Friends agreed to fund

the purchase of a touch screen display machine. Mike Cornwell took charge of the technical aspect of this (learning on the job) and Martin McIntyre carried out the research and put it in some sort of order. Once the historical research was complete it was handed to Jackie Drydon to complete the display boards and to arrange the display.

The exhibition was opened by Lieutenant-General Jonathan Riley CB DSO PhD MA who is Director General and Master of the Armouries and the author of 'A Matter of Honour' the story of General Brock. The reply was made by General Derek Crabtree, a former member of the Royal Berkshire Regiment and Colonel of the Regiment (DERR). Dr Jonathan Riley was appointed Director-General and Master of the Armouries in April 2009 after 36 years in the Army, latterly as Deputy Commander of NATO ISAF in Afghanistan. The exhibition also includes a replica 49th Regiment of Foot uniform which was made by Jill Makepeace- Warne and her team of NADFAS ladies.

In addition Bob and Mike assisted by Lt Col Vernon-Powell had contact with the six Nations in Canada whose forefathers fought alongside the 49th Regiment of Foot and General Brock. As a result they gifted to the museum an indian headdress to be used in the exhibition. This is the equivalent of their colours. In return Mike had a copy of General Riley's book bound in the colours of the six nations which has since been presented to them.



The mannequin of a soldier of the 49th (Hertfordshire) Regiment of Foot 1812