

Acquisitions Policy

The Military Communications and Electronics Museum is interested in collecting exceptional artifacts and archival material to enrich its holdings. That being stated the Military C&E Museum will only pursue the acquisition of artefacts which conform to its mandate. Currently the Museum has a passive acquisitions program due to the sheer volume of its current collection.

The mandate of the Museum is to collect, preserve, and display artifacts and documents pertaining to the Military Communications and Electronics Branch or its predecessor organizations.

The decision to acquire any and all new acquisitions shall be made by the Curator in consultation with the Director and if required, the CO of the Museum. Generic Canadian Military artifacts which would have been used by members of the Military Communications and Electronics Branch and its predecessor organizations are also included in the collection focus.

Value of the Artifact:

The following points are used to assess the value of an artefact and whether it should or should not be acquired for the Museum collection:

- ~Provenance (whether it is directly or indirectly related to the history of the Military Communications and Electronics Branch or predecessor organizations)
- ~Condition (whether or not the item can be safely displayed and/or stored without complication. If the item is very fragile and the Museum can not provide adequate care for the item then the Museum must ethically decline the donation. As well, any item which may consume a large portion of the Museum's monetary expenditures and staff attention must have a major historic connection to warrant accessioning.)
- ~Ownership (the donor must be the legal owner of the item and they must sign the legal ownership in its entirety over to the Museum)
- ~Cost for conservation and storage (Space is very limited at the Museum and unfortunately what space remains has to be utilized for those rare items that are not currently part of the Museum collection.)

Methods of Acquisition:

The three accepted methods of acquisition for the Museum collection are via donation, purchase and transfer. Transfer is the main method for items on the Military DA. Donation is the main method for items retained on the NPF DA. Purchase is the method used least often as there is no budget for purchasing artifacts. When the third option is used it should involve the Director, Curator, and CO of the Museum. Donation is the method which has been and will likely remain the most popular method for the acquisition of artifacts.

NPF and Public funds cannot be used for the purchase of any artifacts.

For all items of historical value not related to the mandate of this Museum the staff can direct the donors to another institution where the artifact may be acquired.

For artifacts that are large in size, require funding for display or immediate conservation a case by case discussion between the Curator and Museum CO is necessary.

The responsibility to adequately document, preserve, exhibit, interpret and store an artefact according to accepted and approved museological standards when acquired, rests with the Curator and the Curatorial staff.

Monetary Valuation:

All artifacts accepted as a donation must have a monetary appraisal completed for insurance purposes. Those items perceived to have a fair market value exceeding one thousand dollars must be appraised by a professional appraiser and it is up the donor to seek these services. The services of a professional appraiser must be provided in writing and the costs associated with the appraisal much be paid by the donor.

For items perceived to have a fair market value of less then a thousand dollars it is up to the Museum Curator and the Curatorial Staff to complete the appraisal.

No volunteers will make an appraisal. Volunteers can be called on in an advisory role during the appraisal process. Volunteers will not accept donations of artifacts and will not make promises to relatives and friends on behalf of the Museum. Only the Curator or Curatorial Department will accept any donations. Each donation will be considered on an individual basis and it is up to the Curator whether or not an item will be accepted and whether special conditions will be accepted.

The donor must indicate if an income tax receipt is required for their donation at the time the donation is made.

Basic Guidelines for Acquisition:

The Curator will ensure that all artifacts that are accepted for donation are free and clear of restricting conditions as to use, and future disposition, unless such conditions, placed in writing, are agreed to by all parties (on behalf of the Museum this includes both the Director, Curator and when necessary the CO of the Museum).

All donations and the issue of tax receipts must adhere to DND regulations, the laws of Ontario, Canada and international laws between Canada and other countries.

A deed of gift and donor record must be completed for all donations. Some form of written receipt may be provided to the donor (photo copy of the previous mentioned forms). Staff and volunteers will follow accepted accessioning procedures, artefact handling procedures and collection management procedures as dictated by the Curator. Accepted procedures are found in the Collections Management Policy.

Trophies, plaques, presentation pieces and awards are not always considered artifacts unless they, in themselves, define a watershed event, place or person in history, or possess an intrinsic value, setting it apart from other similar objects. Such items must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Due to the commonality of these items in the military community and the comparatively small interpretive nature associated with them, their acquisition should be very limited.

The Military Communications and Electronics Museum is under no legal obligation to accept items left by bequest.

Items indirectly related to the history of the Branch are not considered as important as those directly related to the Branch and therefore the items must be accepted in limited quantity. Again these items will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Deaccessioning:

Deaccessioning and disposal are a legitimate part of responsible collections management. Prudent collections management includes a judicious consideration of appropriate deaccessioning and disposal. This not something done on a regular basis and careful consideration is taken. When it does occur the following is used for guidance.

Deaccessioning is the selective disposal of an accessioned object from a Museum's artefact collection.

There are three main reasons for a Museum to deaccession an object:

Duplication. The primary reason to consider the elimination of duplicate objects is storage space. As a rule, the Museum should hold no more than five identical objects, unless they are highly significant to the history of the Branch.

Condition. Objects which have deteriorated and cannot be restored for use or an item whose current condition is affecting surrounding objects should be deaccessioned. Any object which is a physical hazard to humans will be deaccessioned.

Unrelated to the Museum's Mandate. Any object which does not relate to the mandate of the Military Communications and Electronics Museum may be deaccessioned from the

collection. Also, items for which the origin and use are unknown and can not be connected to the mandate also fall into this category.

Rare reasons for deaccessioning are:

For objects of sacred or ritual significance to Aboriginal peoples, foreign government or religious entities may be considered for deaccessioning. The concerned parties must provide evidence of the validity of their claim. The Museum will assist in a responsible and compassionate manner in the repatriation of these objects.

An object that has been accidentally lost, stolen or irreparably damaged may be deaccessioned. If theft has occurred or illegal wrongdoing is suspected, the MP on Base must be immediately notified.

There are three main methods for disposal:

Transfer. This can be easily accomplished with another recognized Museum. Or in the case of the Military DA there is a form to transfer an object from the Museum's Military Account to another Military Account. In very rare cases an artifact may be transferred to an individual, but this must be on a case by case basis and include the Curator, Director and CO of the Museum in the decision making process.

Sell. This is rarely used by Museum's internationally and a very good reason must be provided for it to even be considered by the Museum. In order to proceed with such an action the Curator, Director and CO of the Museum must agree.

Destroy. "Disposal" means termination of ownership and the physical removal of an artifact from the collection. The typical reason is that the artifact's condition is dictating this action. The artifact has, due to time deteriorated to a state where it no longer resembles its original state, or the object has become contaminated and there is a clear risk to the rest of the collection becoming contaminated (mold, insects, etcetera...). This contamination may also prove dangerous to the staff and public and in this case disposal becomes a necessity.