

TELLING OUR STORIES: STRATEGIC MUSEUM PLAN: 2023-2028



TELLING OUR STORIES: STRATEGIC MUSEUM PLAN: 2023-2028	1
Our Planning Process	2
Consultation	2
2023-2028 Update	2
Implementation Plan	2
Monitoring Progress	3
Current Context	3
Mandate, Mission and Vision	4
Mandate	4
Mission	4
Vision	5
Strategies	5
Strategic Directions	6
A. Protection and Preservation of the Collection	6
B. Effectively Interpret, Educate, and Incorporate Technology	6
C. Capacity and Opportunities for Outreach	7
D. Awareness of the Regiment, the Museum, and the Collections	7
E. Ensure Effective Governance and Management	8

Our Planning Process

Development of a 5-year strategic plan for 2017-2022 was approved at the Museum Board meeting held on 26 May 2016 and Board member Jim Lutz agreed to lead the process.

Consultation

During the Fall of 2016, steps were undertaken to gather input for this planning process from museum visitors, museum volunteers and the broader Regimental community:

1. An evening workshop facilitated by an external consultant was held for museum volunteers and board members at Casa Loma which had 15 participants. This exercise resulted in a large number of potential undertakings grouped in a series of suggested goals.
2. An email request for plan input and ideas was sent to 19 people identified as key members of the QOR community and 6 responses were received.
3. An in-person survey was conducted by museum volunteers with 13 visitors during the November 2017 QOR Day at Casa Loma.
4. Participation in an online survey was promoted on the museum website and Facebook page. This survey was open to anyone who wanted to contribute and 59 submissions were received, again with a variety of ideas and input.

The information collected from above was then compiled into a draft plan by a team consisting of Mr. Jim Lutz (Museum Board member), Mr. Alex Meyers (Museum volunteer), and Maj (Ret) John Stephens (Curator) for presentation and approval to the Museum Board on June 1, 2017.

2023-2028 Update

A slimmed down process was undertaken in 2022-2023 to update the plan for another 5 years. Members of the museum volunteers, the Museum Board, the Regimental Trust and the Regimental Senate were asked to review and provide input online on the five Strategic Directions using Google Forms. Twenty-two responses were received and on the whole continued to support them going forward.

Subsequently museum volunteers and Board Members were asked to suggest specific action items to implement the Strategic Directions - again online using Jamboard to post ideas. There were only a few suggestions but they have been incorporated into the plan. Also incorporated are numerous action items carried forward from the previous plan which had not been all or fully completed - generally as a result of COVID restrictions in 2020-2022.

Implementation Plan

As with the previous plan, after approval, an annual Implementation Plan with timings and responsibilities, will be created to guide specific tasks needed to execute the strategies.

Monitoring Progress

The Strategic Plan progress updates (using the implementation plan) will be added as a standing item on agendas for the **Board of Governors**.

Museum reports to meetings of the **Regimental Trust** and **Senate**, will also include updates on the Strategic Plan progress as appropriate.

The **Board of Governors** will review both plans annually (prior to the June Trust meeting) to revise timings and priorities in keeping with approved resources.

Current Context

A Regimental Museum had been formed by the Regimental Executive Committee in 1956 and was maintained by the Regimental Depot at Currie Barracks in Calgary, Alberta. However when the Regular Force battalions were rebadged and reduced to nil strength, the Regimental Depot was closed and the contents of the museum shipped to Toronto to the care of The Queen's Own Rifle Trust Fund. The museum was opened on the third floor of City of Toronto owned Casa Loma on 7 June 1970, with former Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel W.T. Barnard, ED, CD as Curator. In 1988 Barnard was succeeded by his assistant, Captain Peter Simundson, CD who served until 2012 when Major John Stephens, CD took over. In 2023, Major Stephens was appointed the Museum Director and CWO Shaun Kelly, CD (Ret'd) became the Curator.

In 2014 the operation of Casa Loma was contracted by the City to the Liberty Entertainment Group (Liberty) for 20 years. Liberty has verbally confirmed a home for the museum at Casa Loma for the duration of their contract.

The QOR museum is accessible to all Casa Loma visitors during regular opening hours which are currently 9:30 am to 5 pm every day except Christmas Day. Pre-COVID, over three hundred and fifty thousand visitors are welcomed annually. In addition guests are sometimes provided access to our space during events hosted in the evening and during Casa Loma run evening programs during certain nights in the summer.

Since 2012 the museum has run its "QOR Day at Casa Loma" which brings a large number of both re-enactors and serving soldiers to animate our space, and provide a "then and now" experience for visitors.

In addition to its physical space, the museum maintains an extensive website with timelines, biographies, transcriptions, research and archival materials, and a blog. The site has received over 845,600 page visits by almost 329,000 visitors since February 2012. The site currently contains 871 pages and 246 blog posts.

The museum also operates active social media accounts on Facebook (6.3K followers”), Twitter (870 followers), Instagram (1.9K followers) and Flickr (Over 18K photos) accounts. This outreach accounts for a large percentage of current artifact acquisitions. For the past year we have also made our museum’s catalog available online which includes artifact information that has been entered into our database and is updated immediately any changes are made (4450 objects.)

Led by the Director and Curator, the operation of the museum is undertaken by an active team of volunteers who regularly meet on Thursday evenings. Much of their work is focused on detailed cataloging of the collection, and documenting new acquisitions. This has taken a back seat during the last year or so to enable the upgrading and maintenance of exhibit cases. Other work includes, scanning, transcription, responding to research inquiries, updating exhibits, planning new temporary exhibits, and making upgrades to storage spaces. A volunteer recognition night is held annually to thank the team for their efforts and is important in thanking our volunteers.

Mandate, Mission and Vision

Mandate

The Museum was established in 1956 under the authority of the Regimental Executive Committee with the following mandate:

“to encourage the study of Canadian military history and in particular the history of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada, to rescue from oblivion the memories of its members, to obtain and preserve narratives in print, manuscript or otherwise of their travels, adventures, labours and observations, to secure and preserve objects illustrative of the civil, literary and military history of the Regiment, and to maintain a museum and a library.”¹

Mission²

Permanently housed within Casa Loma, which was built by former Commanding Officer Sir Henry Pellatt, the QOR Museum and Archives will preserve the records, photographs, and artefacts of the Regiment, and present the story of Canada’s oldest continuously serving infantry regiment, its association with Casa Loma, the City of Toronto, and to the public, in a modern and engaging manner.

¹ The museum’s interest also includes the six First World War Canadian Expeditionary Force battalions perpetuated by The Queen’s Own Rifles.

² The Mission and Vision were approved by the Museum Board of Governors.

Vision

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Museum and Archives will be a modern, historical, educational and rewarding experience to "all" who visit Casa Loma, and continue to be known by peers as the best example of a volunteer organized and managed "specialized" museum and archival collection.

Strategies³

The planning team identified five strategies to achieve the mandate, mission and vision:

1. Preserving the regiment's history
2. Promoting the regiment's history and current mission to the public
3. Serve the interests of a wider community through outreach and digital presence
4. Support and benefit from Casa Loma's tourist business
5. Ensure the effective governance and management of the museum to accomplish the above.

³ Strategies were developed by the original Strategic Plan Team.

Strategic Directions

The action items listed are to be prioritized and scheduled in the Implementation Plan.

Description	
<p>A. Protection and Preservation of the Collection</p> <p>Create plans, procedures and process, and undertake actions to ensure to effectively protect and preserve the museum’s valuable museum and archival collection.</p>	
A1	Create and implement an Integrated Pest Management Plan
A2	Identify and prioritize significant items that require conservation work.
A3	Create a plan to continue to digitize books and other items in archival collections based on priority, and make them available online (either in catalog or website) as a reference for researchers and to protect items from over-handling.
A4	Ensure that the necessary materials and supplies (such as archival boxes, mylar clothing bags, photographic envelopes, acid free folders, etc.) are available to support the preservation of the collection
A5	Work with the Trust to make a decision on insurance for the collection.
A6	Regularly identify items for possible deaccession.
A7	Complete an full inventory of the collection to identify materials that have not been cataloged and/or accessioned.
A8	Prioritize incoming accessions to ensure they are processed and to clear backlog.
<p>B. Effectively Interpret, Educate, and Incorporate Technology</p> <p>Implement steps to expand educational resources and opportunities, enhance interpretation methods, and incorporate technology where possible to support both.</p>	
	<i>Interpret</i>
B1	Ensure interpretation reflects current historical thinking
B2	Continue to upgrade current exhibits, exhibit cases and interpretive panels and create new exhibits where possible. (WWII exhibit, Cadets)
B3	Improve exhibit artifact labels to provide more information and consistent look and feel
B4	Identify and implement more ways to incorporate personal stories in our exhibits, website, and other aspects of the museum
	<i>Educate</i>
B5	Create an historical “card deck” as an education tool for new members of the regiment

B6	Develop a variety of presentation programs for museum tours
<i>Incorporate Technology</i>	
B7	Rejuvenate a video project of veterans interviews for use in exhibits and on the museum's YouTube channel
B8	Complete the digitization of our collections 16mm films, load to YouTube and our website, and integrate into our exhibits and online catalog.
B9	Explore options for online exhibits.
B10	Explore the creation and installation of interactive touch screen displays with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timelines of significant events in QOR History 2. Map of world showing QOR deployments 3. Biographies of QOR members

C. Capacity and Opportunities for Outreach

Create capacity to provide, and identify opportunities for, museum outreach beyond the museum at Casa Loma, and to bring traveling or temporary exhibits to the museum.

C1	Complete pop-up banners and exhibit materials on various periods of QOR history for use by the outreach team and for pop-up or temporary exhibits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South African War ● Cold War/Regular Force ● Afghanistan ● Airborne tasking ● Jewish Soldiers in the QOR (Rob Chan) ● Indigenous Soldiers in the QOR
C2	Consider at least one additional “event” each year to draw visitors to the museum.
C3	Continue using PastPerfect Online, our website, and other social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) share stories, information and digital images of our collection to the world.

D. Awareness of the Regiment, the Museum, and the Collections

Working with others as necessary, undertake steps to increase awareness of the regiment, the museum, and the museum's collections.

D1	Cross-promote with historical celebrations that are related to the regiment
D2	Examine opportunities to promote through mainstream media
D3	Continue to work with the Regiment to ensure new recruits understand the history and tradition of the Regiment through tours of the museum, and that the current catechism is up to date.

E. Ensure Effective Governance and Management

Review and implement an effective governance model, supported by updated, best practice policies and standards, to best accomplish our vision and mission.

E1	Update/revise museum terms of reference and collections policies
E2	Complete inventory of archival material
E3	Create Operations Manual for the museum to ensure consistent operations and facilitate future volunteer transition.