



EXHIBIT MANUAL

FERNIE AT WAR: THE MORRISSEY INTERNMENT CAMP

Introduction

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Title:

Fernie At War: The Morrissey Internment Camp

Text:

The Dominion of Canada entered the Great War with Great Britain on August 4, 1914. From then to the end of the war on November 11, 1918, over 1,100 men from the East Kootenay served King and Country.

The Elk Valley also played a much darker role in Canada's war effort.

Between 1914 and 1920, 8,579 male "enemy aliens" were detained under the *War Measures Act* at one of twenty-four internment camps located from Nanaimo to Halifax. Morrissey, an abandoned coal mining town just thirteen kilometers south-west of Fernie, became the site of an internment camp in late September 1915. Here, over 800 men of German and Austro-Hungarian origins in total were detained until the Morrissey internment operations ceased in October 1918. The 290 men initially detained at Morrissey were local Elk Valley residents, many of whom had immigrated to Canada to escape the oppressive rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

This exhibit explores a painful period in Canada's history, illustrating how a war fought on the front lines of Europe, Asia and Africa would have a profound impact on the lives of people thousands of miles away in the coal mining communities of the Elk Valley and the Crowsnest Pass.

Photos and Captions:

- Morrissey Internment Camp, August 19, 1916 | FM 1184

Camp Command

- Major General Sir William Dillon Otter
Commander of Internment Operations, 1914-1919

War Museum of Canada, 19910162-005

- Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Mackay
Recruiting Officer, 107th Regiment, Commander of the 225th Battalion

Vernon Museum and Archives,

Chart of other commanders

Local and Provincial Government

- Tom Uphill
Mayor of the City of Fernie

Tom Uphill was elected as Fernie's mayor in 1915. Mayor Uphill personally did not feel that there was justification for the internment of Austro-Hungarians, and many of those that would be interned at Morrissey were personal friends of the Mayor's.

Fernie Museum, xxxxx

- William Bowser
BC Attorney General

Advocates and Ambassadors

- W.R. Wilson, Superintendent of the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company
Glenbow Museum, NA-
- Samuel Gintzburger, Consul of Switzerland for the Provinces of British Columbia and Alberta
Jewish Museum and Archives of BC,

Title:

Terms Used in the Exhibit

Enemy alien: also referred to historically as “alien enemies”, “illegal enemy citizens”, “enemy nationalities”. These terms have been placed in quotation marks to denote the historic usage of the term.

Austro-Hungarian:
(map)

Dominion of Canada: From the time of Confederation until 1932, Canada was a Dominion of the British Empire. In 1932, the Statute of Westminster was enacted, giving Canada control over its foreign affairs. The federal government is therefor referred to as the Canadian government or the Government of Canada after 1932, particularly within the Canadian military.

Privy Council:

Order-in-Council:

Habeas corpus: a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, especially to secure the person's release unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention.

Title:

1897 to 1914

Full Steam Ahead: Immigration to the Elk Valley

Text:

Between 1897 and 1914, numerous communities grew and prospered around the Elk Valley mines. As Canada boomed, the mining companies of the Elk Valley and Crowsnest Pass met the seemingly insatiable demand for coal and coke that was fuelled by rising immigration to Canada, stoked by increasing industrial development and transported to market by both the Canadian Pacific and Great Northern Railways.

(map of communities and mines in the Elk Valley)

Between 1901 and 1911, 1.5 million immigrants of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds arrived in Canada, of which nearly 1.3 million settled the Canadian West. Fernie's population in 1911 was just over 6,000 people.

Fernie was the social, political, and economic hub of the Elk Valley. Devastated by fires in 1904 and 1908, Fernie rebuilt itself by 1910 with substantial brick and stone commercial buildings and new residences for the mine management elite, the prospering commercial and professional middle class and a growing population of miners and loggers, both single and with families. As in many mining communities, these each lived in distinct areas of the community. In Fernie, the Annex and East Fernie housed most of Fernie's immigrant mining population, the mine management on the west side of town, and the middle class right in between.

Photos and Captions:

- Ukrainian Immigration Advertisement, "160 Acres of Free Land for All Settlers", published by the Department of Immigration. Library and Archives of Canada, c-6196
- First scheduled passenger train in Fernie, c.1899. | FM 1270
- Austro-Hungarian immigrants in Fernie, 1914. Like many immigrant miners, Martin and Catherine Ulrich (pictured 2nd and 3rd from the right with their infant son, Joseph) lived in the area known today as the Annex, located north of the highway through Fernie. | FM 3964-DO

Title:

1901 to 1913

Morrissey and the Morrissey Mine

Text:

The Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company operated several mines in the region, opening a mine at Morrissey in 1901. The mine was named after James Morrissey, an early miner who worked with Michael Phillips, Peter Fernie and John Ridgeway on the Crowsnest Trail between the Crowsnest Pass and Elko.

Located thirteen kilometers south-west of Fernie, the remote location of the Morrissey mine resulted in the establishment of four communities: Morrissey, Morrissey Mines, Carbonado, and Swinton. These quickly grew to a total peak population of over 1,500 by 1903.

The town of Morrissey was a true company town, with the land, buildings and waterworks owned by the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company and with the mine also supplying electricity to the town. The town included three hotels, a four room school house, a post office, a small brewery, several service businesses, a sawmill and the *Morrissey Miner* newspaper. Further up near Carbonado, Fernie's Trites-Wood department store ran a general store. The Morrissey-Fernie-Michel Railway provided both transportation of coal to market and passenger service to the remote community.

The mine company, deterred by several mine accidents and the unsuitability of the coal for coking purposes, closed the Morrissey mine in 1910 and abandoned the town. Some of the houses were moved to Coal Creek. The 1911 census shows only 120 people living in Morrissey and by 1914, Morrissey was a ghost town with only nine families remaining in the area.

Photos and Captions:

- Blueprint of Morrissey town site, showing the layout of the community at the peak of its population in 1903. | FM 1208
- Morrissey with the Lizard Range in the background in 1910, when the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company closed the Morrissey mine. | FM 0987
- Morrissey train station, utilized by the Morrissey-Fernie-Michel Railway Company. | FM 0989

Title:

August 1914

A Nation At War

Text:

On August 4, 1914 Germany invaded Belgium with the intention of marching armies through Belgium to invade France. Britain had long pledged to defend Belgium's sovereignty and issued an ultimatum to Germany demanding the withdrawal of German troops. When the ultimatum expired at midnight August 4 without a German retreat, Great Britain and Germany were at war. So too was the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada and the independent colony of Newfoundland.

As a British dominion, Canada had no control of its entry into the war. It did, however, have the ability to determine the size and nature of Canada's war effort.

Over 630,000 Canadians enlisted, or were later conscripted, in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), of which 424,000 served overseas as part of the Canadian Corps that fought on the Western Front. The 107th East Kootenay Regiment was headquartered in Fernie and enlisted 1,100 men. The Regiment would send the 54th and 225th Kootenay Battalions as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to fight overseas. 80 of these men would perish in the war and many more would come home injured, some suffering the effects of "shell shock".

The 107th East Kootenay Regiment would also provide militia for local protective services. This included the provision of guards for local internment operations.

Photo and Captions

- Members of the 54th East Kootenay Battalion recruited in Fernie. Photo taken on the steps of the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company office in Fernie, BC. | FM 0718
- Departure of the 54th Kootenay Battalion from Fernie on June 11, 1915. | FM 9362-DO
- Men from Coal Creek serving in the 225th Kootenay Battalion, taken at the training base in Vernon, BC. | FM 1202

Title:

August 1914 to June 1915 The War Measures Act and Enemy Aliens

Text:

Immediately following Canada's entry into the Great War, the government passed the *War Measures Act* on August 22, 1914. Under the *Act*, Canadian authorities were given the right to arrest, detain, censor, exclude, deport, control and capture all persons and property considered as potential threats to Canada. Any resident not naturalized who had been a native of the now enemy nations were considered de facto "enemy illegal residents."

A public notice was published on September 2, 1914 informing "all persons in Canada of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality, so long as they quietly pursued their ordinary vocations would be allowed to continue to enjoy the protection of the law and be accorded the respect and consideration due to peaceful and law-abiding citizens and that they would not be arrested, detained or interfered with, unless there was reasonable grounds to believe that they were engaged in espionage or engaging in, or attempting to engage in, acts of hostility".

However, on June 26, 1915 this changed when the Privy Council enacted a new Order in Council that formally authorized the apprehension and internment of "enemy alien civilians" where there was "serious danger of rioting, destruction of valuable works and property and breaches of the peace involving the loss of life or personal injuries" and in the interest "of the general public and those concerned who are of enemy nationality". The order denied internees the right to have their detention reviewed by a judge.

The *War Measures Act* and the 1915 Order in Council enabled Canadian authorities to detain 8,579 male "enemy illegal residents", confiscate all their assets and intern them at one of 24 camps located from Nanaimo to Halifax between 1914 and 1920. Of these, 3,138 were classified as prisoners of war under the 1907 Hague Convention. The remaining 5,441 internees were civilians of German and Austro-Hungarian (including Ukrainian) origins who Canada welcomed with open arms as new immigrants but now classified as a threat to national security.

Images and Captions

- Map of camp locations
- Chart of camp operations
- ATTENTION poster (registration poster, to come)
- 1914 War Measures Act (paper copy only)

Camp	Dates of Operation
Amherst, Nova Scotia	April 1915 to September 1919
Beauport, Quebec	December 1914 to June 1916
Banff-Castle Mountain, Alberta	July 1915 to July 1917
Brandon, Manitoba	September 1914 to July 1916
Edgewood, British Columbia	August 1915 to September 1916
Fernie-Morrissey, British Columbia	June 1915 to October 1918
Halifax, Nova Scotia	September 1914 to October 1918
Jasper, Alberta	February 1916 to August 1916
Kapuskasing, Ontario	December 1914 to February 1920
Kingston, Ontario	August 1914 to November 1917
Lethbridge, Alberta	September 1914 to November 1916
Monashee-Mara Lake, British Columbia	June 1915 to July 1917
Montreal, Quebec	August 1914 to November 1918
Munson-Eaton, Alberta	October 1918 to March 1919
Nanaimo, British Columbia	September 1914 to September 1915
Niagara Falls, Ontario	December 1914 to August 1918
Petawawa, Ontario	December 1914 to May 1916
Revelstoke-Field-Otter, British Columbia	September 1915 to October 1916
Sault-St-Marie, Ontario	January 1915 to January 1918
Spirit Lake, Quebec	January 1915 to January 1917
Toronto, Ontario	December 1914 to October 1916
Winnipeg, Manitoba	September 1914 to July 1916
Valcartier, Quebec	April 1915 to October 1915
Vernon, British Columbia	September 1914 to February 1920

Title:

1914 and 1915 Falling Coal Production and Rising Racial Tensions

Panel Text:

The year leading up to the Great War was one of economic hardship for many Canadians. Following a long economic boom that allowed Canada and certainly the Elk Valley to prosper, a severe global economic recession began in 1913. The recession hit the Elk Valley mines hard just prior to the outbreak of the Great War.

In 1913, Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company production peaked at 1,331,720 tons of coal, with 1,965 men working on the company payroll. The recession forced the mines to reduce output to 955,183 tons in 1914 and to 852,572 tons by 1915. The mine's payroll fell by 782 men to 1,183 by 1915.

Of the 1,183 men working at the Fernie mines in 1915, 600 were British, 350 Belgian, Italian and Russian, 125 Austrian and 25 German, and 83 of other nationalities.

The promise of steady pay, housing and meals contributed as much as strong British patriotic fervour to the number of able-bodied men enlisting from the Elk Valley to serve King and Country at the outset of World War I. A total of 1,100 men from the Elk Valley served between 1914 and 1919.

For those left behind to work in the mines, rising British patriotism and diminishing work brought long-simmering tensions between the British and "foreigners" in the Elk Valley to a boiling point. On June 7, these tensions would finally boil over and quickly set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the establishment of the Morrissey Internment Camp. They would later spill over to the Hillcrest Mine in Hillcrest Alberta a week later on June 15.

Images and Captions

- Enlisted miners from Coal Creek mine in front of the Coal Creek tippie. | FM 1856

Title:

June 7 and 8, 1915 Uprising at the Coal Creek Mine

Text:

On June 7, a group of Fernie miners met with mine officials, objecting to working with alien enemies. As per government orders, the miners were told to report any complaints regarding enemy aliens to the BC Provincial Police.

The following day, June 8, the miners at Coal Creek refused to work in protest and upwards of 600 miners gathered in the Pellatt Avenue Square in Fernie at 2:30 pm that afternoon. In a heated meeting chaired by Mayor (and miners' union Secretary) Tom Uphill, the miners, the union and the mine company argued about how to treat the German and Austro-Hungarian miners employed by the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company.

The English, Belgian and Italian miners voiced fear of their German and Austro-Hungarian counterparts sabotaging the mine workings. The subtext of their argument was that there were good unemployed local miners loyal to the Allies' cause who deserved the jobs being held by miners on the wrong side of the war yet on this side of the ocean.

Two leaders of the United Mine Workers of America, William Phillips and David Rees, tried to persuade the miners that a split along ethnic lines would seriously weaken the union. However, it could be that the miners wanted just that, as Ukrainian and Austro-Hungarian miners were very active within the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) both in Fernie and in Hillcrest.

When put to a vote, the miners broke rank with their union's management and passed a resolution demanding all German Austro-Hungarian miners be dismissed by the mine company. The Crows' Nest Past Coal Company refused to comply. Faced with an increasingly volatile situation, Lieutenant Colonel Mackay, the recruiting officer of the 107th East Kootenay Regiment, telegraphed military headquarters in Victoria for instructions. The need to maintain peace within Fernie and the safety of those on both sides of the situation was also conveyed to provincial and Dominion politicians.

Photos and Captions

- Miners at the Coal Creek Mine. | FM 0032

Title:

June 9 to 19, 1915

Internment Begins in the Elk Valley

Text:

On June 9, 1915, following two highly charged days and a flurry of discussion with the BC Attorney General's office, local men of German and Austro-Hungarian descent who were single or married without families yet living in Canada were ordered by Attorney General William Bowser to report to the Fernie Courthouse with blankets and belongings. Married men with families living with them in the Elk Valley were not required to report for internment.

108 men reported to the courthouse under the order and supervision of the BC Provincial Police.

Once assembled, the men were searched for alcohol and weapons, and their money was confiscated. They were then moved to the Fernie Skating and Curling Rink, located at the far west end of Fernie along the Elk River, until the men could be transferred to the internment Camp in Lethbridge. They were under the guard of thirty men that Lieutenant-Colonel Mackay had hastily assembled.

Within ten days, the population at Fernie Skating and Curling Rink grew to over 290 as 90 men from Michel, 67 from Natal, 28 from Coal Creek, 4 from Cranbrook and a small number from Corbin and Morrissey arrived. A few special cases of men either ill or under medical care for injuries were placed under the watch of local police until they were sufficiently healthy to be taken to camp.

Internment at Fernie was initiated peacefully with two exceptions:

- An attempted escape from the provisional camp occurred on June 11.
- On June 19, Fernie residents Martin Bobrovski and Stefan Jansten refused to report for internment and filed a suit for "illegal detention and arrest without due process of law". With local lawyers refusing their case, habeas corpus proceedings would later be scheduled in Victoria with Cranbrook lawyer F.T. Mecredy acting on their behalf. It was the first legal challenge of the internment at Fernie.

Photos and Captions

- German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners at the Fernie Skating and Curling Rink. | FM 1183
- William John Bowser, Attorney General of BC
"Two purposes will be served by the internment of the enemy aliens which have been employed in the mining camps of British Columbia – a menace to the peace of the community will have been removed and an opportunity created for the employment of a considerable number of deserving men who find themselves out of work at this period".

William Bowser, BC Attorney General | June 9, 1915

Title:

July to September 1915 Life Within the Fernie Camp

Text:

The rink at Fernie was inadequate for the purpose of interning hundreds of prisoners. Under the command of the BC Provincial Police, the internees quickly turned it into a makeshift camp that would suffice until the men could be transferred to an internment camp elsewhere. Within the week, the swelling number of prisoners dug and built the latrines, cleared a field for the camp yard and prepared a post and barbed wire fence around the yard. When it became apparent that the internees would not be transferred within short order, a shower room was built and a field kitchen set up.

The prisoners had to cook and prepare their own meals consisting of bread, porridge and tea for breakfast and supper and a meal of meat and potatoes for lunch at noon. The men slept on their blankets on the floor of the rink as there were no beds.

Camp life quickly settled into a pattern of relative ease. Relatives of the men interned at the rink brought them food hampers. The *District Ledger* reported that "a feeling of light-heartedness prevailed" and the *Fernie Free Press* wrote that the men appeared to be "quite undismayed at the prospect of confinement". Many of the men were able to bring their musical instruments, and often music could be heard by Fernie residents living above the camp.

The camp guards and the internees settled into an easy relationship, though apparently a bit too familiar on occasions. In early July, a guard who accompanied two internees to a christening returned to camp as intoxicated as the prisoners in his charge. The guard was dismissed.

Photos and Captions

- Interned Austrians and Germans at the Fernie Skating and Curling Rink, Summer 1915. By June 25, 1915 321 men would be interned at the Fernie Internment Camp. | FM 1183

Artifacts:

- Tuba

Title:

July to September 1915

Dominion Government Assumes Responsibility of Elk Valley Internees

Text:

With a legal challenge mounted and winter coming, the provincial and Dominion governments had to arrive at a consensus about the Fernie internment operations. The Lethbridge camp was full, as was the closest camp in British Columbia, Vernon. The Dominion government was not convinced that the internment at Fernie was entirely legal. The provincial government countered that for the peace and safety of all residents of the Elk Valley, including those interned, continued operation of the camp was warranted.

On June 26, the Dominion government made its decision. It quietly issued an Order-in-Council that stripped all rights to habeas corpus from those held in internment camps and on July 1, assumed control of the camp under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Mackay.

A resident of Fernie, Mackay was opposed to the internment in principle. On taking command of the Fernie internment operations, he immediately released seven men and began a thorough review of each prisoner's file. By July 15, he had released half of the men, leaving 7 Germans and 157 Austro-Hungarians in the camp.

On August 14, the Fernie Board of Trade, Mayor Tom Uphill, and W.R. Wilson of the Crows' Nest Past Coal Company met with Major General Sir William Otter, the commander in charge of internment operations in Canada. They urged him to consider keeping the local internees close to Fernie. Otter toured both Morrissey and Carbonado the following and determined that the Morrissey site was better suited. Mackay was ordered to prepare the vacant Alexandria Hotel and other surrounding outbuildings for full-scale internment operations within six weeks.

Photos and Captions

- Amos. B. Trites
Both Amos Trites and Wood, partners in the Trites-Wood Department Store, were strong proponents of moving the operations to Morrissey. The company would later supply both clothing and food for the internment operations in Morrissey and "luxury goods" to the camp canteen. | FM
- The Morrissey camp entrance, 1915-1916. This was the only entrance into the camp. | Swiss Federal Archives, 1 Kap5 V3 Grautufen

Title:

June 1915
Tensions at the Hillcrest Mine

Text:

June 19, 1914 – Hillcrest Mine Disaster kills 189 men. Blame placed on Austro-Hungarians for the disaster, a rumour that proves false.

June 15, 1915 - Hillcrest miners go on strike demanding the exclusion of Austrian and German miners.

June 19, 1915 - Hillcrest Mines resume operations. Tension escalated when 150 German and Austrian miners report for work.

The Ledger: long article in mid July bluntly referred to the political error the miners had made, but pointed out threat the mistake had occurred at only two of the districts twenty union locals – Fernie and Hillcrest.

Quotes:

There are many local Canadians out of work in some of the mining camps in which alien enemies are employed. It is, therefore, natural that there should be complaints from certain quarters. ... The men employed in the mines have won their positions by their work, and so long as their work is satisfactory to their employers and their conduct satisfactory to the public, it would be grossly unfair for anyone seeking personal interests to ask that [enemy aliens] be refused employment.

Canadian Mine Journal
June 1915

Hillcrest Mine Disaster:

42 Great Britian
39 Scotland
7 Wales
17 Nova Scotia
2 Western Canada
4 United States
9 Belgian and French
1 German
1 Swedish
35 Italian
42 Austro-Hungarian (Bohemia, Bukovina, Galicia, Hungary, Slovakia)

See Snowing in June. Ukrainians were quite involved in the United Mine Workers of America union, and being quite militant and organized. Could this be the reason that the English and Italian miners broke the Union??

Title:

October 1915 to January 1916 Internment Operations Begin at Morrissey

Text:

On September 20, militia from the 107th East Kootenay Regiment arrived at Morrissey to transform the abandoned town site into an internment camp with quarters for internees, quarters for single and married guards, and a canteen for both guards and prisoners. Two layers of fence were built around the internees' quarters, with a single gate to enter from the road. There was only one entrance to the camp, with a guardhouse and a gate positioned at the main junction of the road entering Morrissey. The Morrissey School was resurrected for the guards' children.

The prisoners were housed in the Alexandra Hotel, quickly nicknamed "the Big House" by the internees. Although sparse, the conditions were superior to the rink. The main floor of the L-shaped hotel contained a kitchen, dining room, guardroom with offices, washhouse and recreation room. On the second and third floor, the 42 bedrooms, some as small as 10 feet x 12 feet, were each shared by 3 to 4 men. The second floor also housed a small hospital and dispensary.

On September 28, a small number of internees moved to the camp, with the remainder following on October 2. With 153 Austro-Hungarians, 8 Germans and 100 guards, the Morrissey Internment Camp was now in full operation.

Pictures and Captions:

- Inspection, Morrissey Internment Camp, 1915. These internees were being guarded outside the "Big House" while the guards inspected their rooms. | FM 5322
- Internee holding a child behind the barbed wire fence. Though no families were interned at the camp (*that we know of*), two German internees had families living outside of the camp confines. Each night the families would be taken to their homes by guards. | Library and Archives Canada, Department of Militia and Defence fonds, PA-046200
- German and Austro-Hungarian internees posing at Morrissey. | FM 1182

Title:

1915 to 1918

First and Second Class Prisoners

Text:

Given that the initial prisoners at the Fernie and Morrissey Internment Camps were from the Elk Valley, the population of the camp was relatively stable following the initial voluntary handover and the subsequent round up of enemy aliens. When Major General Otter visited Fernie in August 1915, there were 157 Austrians and 7 Germans. When the internees were moved to the new facilities at Morrissey in October 1915, there were 153 Austro-Hungarians and 8 Germans.

The summer of 1916 brought a major influx of German internees into the camp, which required Major General Otter to separate the camp into two groups, First Class and Second Class internees. The First Class internees were comprised of Germans who were better educated and considered a greater threat to national security. Second Class comprised of working class Austro-Hungarians and some Germans.

When the US Vice-Consul visited the camp in May 1916 there were a total of 164 internees. 96 Germans and 62 Austrians were living in the main building rooms and an additional 14 First Class German internees were living in the hospital.

From summer 1916 to October 1918, the population of the Morrissey Internment Camp was in constant flux with prisoners being transferred to Morrissey as other camps closed, with anywhere from 70 to 240 prisoners interned.

Photos and Captions

The First Class and Second Class internees were clearly distinguished by their dress.

- Fritz Cohn (no. 409), Morrissey Internment Camp.
FM3900-DO
- Austro-Hungarian internees at Morrissey Internment Camp, 1918
FM3884-DO

Title:

1915 to 1918

Guarding the Camp

Text:

The guards' working conditions and pay at the Morrissey Internment Camp were not great. Generally, the average guard at the camp earned \$1.10 a day.

Guards at each of the 24 camps across Canada came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Militia. Major General Otter had no say in who was sent to the camps to act as guards. He was therefore "saddled with staff of questionable character and ability". He notes that "the majority of NCOs and men detailed are as a rule of the poorest possible description; therefore quantity has to meet the defects of quality". Troops assigned were often middle-aged and married, had been rejected for overseas duty or suspected of seeking to avoid overseas duty.

The relationship between the guards and the internees from 1915 to 1916 was relatively civil. Following the release of many of the local internees in fall 1916, an influx of new prisoners from across Canada arrived at the camp. At the same time, returning soldiers that had served on the war front were posted at the camp starting in early 1917. This mix immediately brought sharp differences and significantly heightened tensions.

Images and Captions:

- Guards' Barracks, Morrissey Internment Camp, 1915. | FM 2289
- Guards morning roll call in front of Guards' Barracks, Morrissey Internment Camp, 1915. Private Harold Black, Bugler on far left. | FM 2292
- Guards at Morrissey Internment Camp, c. 1915. | FM 3891-DO
- Winter view from the "Big House", showing 107th East Kootenay Regiment Barracks, 1918. | FM 3897-DO

Title:

1915 to 1918 Prisoner Work Conditions

Text:

Strict rules under the Hague Convention governed the use of internees for labour both within and outside internment camps. Labour from internees was one way the camps were financed, and the Morrissey Camp was no exception.

First Class German internees were prohibited from performing manual labour outside of cooking and cleaning in their own quarters and were initially given an allowance of \$1.00 per month to purchase tobacco and other goods at the camp canteen; this allowance was eventually stopped.

The Second Class Austro-Hungarian internees worked both inside and outside the camp for which they were paid 55 cents per day for an eight hour day, from which 30 cents was docked to pay for their food and housing. The remaining 25 cents pay was divided in two, with half being paid out to spend at the canteen and the other half kept to be paid out on their release. The pay was a far cry from the \$2.50 to 3.00 a day they earned while working in the mines.

Work was the only way the Second Class internees could afford luxury items, such as tobacco, which made life within the camp tolerable. If this enticement was not enough, the Swiss Consul reported "In many cases the refusal to work would be followed by physical coercion on the part of the guards resulting in protests by Prisoners and strong language, the consequence being aggravated punishment".

A number of Second Class internees worked on local roadwork projects between 1915 and the summer of 1916. Outside work stopped shortly after a group of internees escaped when doing roadwork near Cranbrook.

Photos and Captions

- Internees chopping wood for the camp kitchen, 1915-1916. | FM 5325
- Internees sawing wood in camp yard, 1917-1918. | Swiss Federal Archives, 6 Kap5 V5 Graustufen
- Back side of the "Big House", showing the washrooms and laundry, 1917-1918. Note the presence of a camp guard at the lower right of the photograph. | Swiss Federal Archives, 2 Kap5 V5 Graustufen

Title:

1915 to 1918

Daily Camp Life

Text:

The internees' daily life within the Morrissey internment operations is not well documented. What we know can be found in pictures and letters found in archives, as well from copies of the *Morrissey Mentions*, a weekly camp newspaper published by Private Randolph Stewart that ran from June 1916 to January 1917.

Daily Chores

The Hague Convention permitted light labour that would directly benefit the well-being of the internees. As a result, the internees were scheduled for daily chores within the compound, including chopping firewood for the washhouse and kitchen, cleaning their own rooms and common spaces as well as doing their laundry. Some of the internees were also allowed to grow their own vegetables in a camp garden.

Meals

Meals for the internees consisted of eggs once a week, a hot meal for dinner, and a cold meal for supper. Meat was provided for each meal, including bacon for breakfast though fresh meat supplies were limited during the summer months. A coal stove with an oven was installed in January 1916 that enabled the internees to have fresh bread and other goodies as could be baked using their limited rations. Food was supplied by the Trites-Wood store and the Burns Meat Company in Fernie.

In June 1917, as Canada was experiencing food shortages, internees not engaged in heavy manual labour saw their rations reduced.

After a visit to the Morrissey internment operations on August 25, 1917, Swiss Consul Gintzburger supplemented the meager rations through funds provided by Germany and raised from wealthy Germans in the United States. In correspondence, he claimed that the food supplies in the internment camps were worse than what Canada supplied criminals in prison.

Clothing

The Dominion government, acutely aware of its obligations to the well-being of prisoners within the internment camps across Canada, supplied clothing and basic necessities for the internees. They were careful to create a visual distinction between the First Class and Second Class prisoners. As a general rule, the Second Class Austro-Hungarian prisoners were dressed in khaki overalls and coat or jumper and flannel or flannelette shirts. The First Class Germans wore cloth suits and negligee shirts with soft collars. Underwear of medium and heavy weight was supplied

as well as hose of a serviceable grade, as was logger shoes with hobnails. The Trites-Wood store supplied for all First Class and Second Class internees.

Visitation

The remoteness of the Morrissey camp shortly led to an “out of sight, out of mind” mentality among Fernie residents, though the occasional visitor broke the monotony of camp life. With the Fernie-Morrissey-Michel Railroad now abandoned, visitors could come to the camp via a small horse-drawn cart that travelled on the railway lines, known somewhat tongue-in-cheek as the Morrissey Rapid Transit Company or the Morrissey Express.

Two First Class German internees received frequent visitors from their family living near the camp. One was Leon Sauver (no. 219) whose wife and two young sons were allowed to reside in Morrissey. The other was E. Rosenhagen (no. 224) whose mother-in-law and child also lived in Morrissey. Rosenhagen, his family and two other First Class internees later escaped Morrissey.

Photos and Captions:

- Dining hall of the Alexandria Hotel, the “Big House”, which housed Second Class Austro-Hungarian and working class German internees, 1917 | Library and Archives Canada, File R112-1966-088 NPC #13
- Washrooms, located in the Second Class internee compound, 1917. | Library and Archives Canada, File R112-1966-088 NPC #14
- Hallway in the “Big House, 1917. | Library and Archives Canada, File R112-1966-088 NPC #16
- Kitchen of the Second Class Austro-Hungarian and working class German quarters with the chief cooks, 1917. | Swiss Federal Archives, 7 Kap5 V3 Graustufen

Artifacts

- Spoon and Fork, Morrissey Internment Camp | Private collection
Each internee was provided with a spoon and fork, engraved with their number. This set belonged to XXX, no. xxx who was interned at Morrissey in xxx.

Title:

1915 to 1918

Recreation and Sports at the Morrissey Internment Camp

Text:

The Morrissey Internment Camp was remote and provided few pleasures. As a result, internees and guards alike struggled with boredom and the monotony of camp life. The recreation room in the "Big House" provided them a few recreational activities, chiefly cards and board games. The internees that brought musical instruments would sometimes play. Some did woodwork, creating elaborate models or carvings. These wood crafts were occasionally gifted by local internees to a guard or camp commander.

A variety of intellectual and physical activities were initiated to provide an outlet for prisoners and guards.

Baseball, tennis and soccer were introduced, with Swiss Consul Gintzburger contributing equipment and prizes for tournaments between the internees and the guards. Unlike those at the Vernon Camp, the Morrissey internees were not as interested in sports.

In September 1917, the YMCA established a school and recreation facility for use by both the guards and the internees. They supplied a phonograph and a movie projector. Seventeen language, bookkeeping, engineering and math courses began in January 1918 with the internees acting as teachers; half of the internees signed up for classes. A small library was set up with books donated by Swiss Consul Gintzburger, with one of the internees acting as librarian. The YMCA also helped establish a small orchestra among the internees.

A separate school was opened by the YMCA in April 1918 for the guards.

Photos and Captions

- Articles made by camp internees, 1917. | Swiss Federal Archives, 9 Kap5 V3 Graustufen
- The German Kriegsgefangenen Kapelle camp orchestra. | FM 3888
- Guards' costume party, July 1916. Standing: Sergeant Jim Meek, Lieutenant Corporal George Goole, Sergeant Cecil Minton, Sergeant Bill Black. Front row: Corporal Arthur Harrison, Bugler Bill Edwards. | FM 3885

Title:

1917 to 1918 Discipline and Abuse

Text:

Prisoner abuse appeared in many forms from the petty to the harsh. Order in the camp was often maintained by punishing the entire camp for the actions of a few. Violence against prisoners peaked wherever there was a hint of rebellion.

As punishment, prisoners would be beaten or put into solitary confinement, or both. Anton Denisker (no. 195) was beaten so severely on January 17, 1917 while in solitary confinement that he had to be taken to the Fernie Hospital instead of being treated within the camp; four guards attested under oath that no guard had touched him.

Solitary confinement was referred to as "the black hole", cells two feet wide and twelve feet long, containing no furniture except for a swing down door for a bed and only bread and water given for days at a time. Corporal William Tipper, in a sworn statement dated March 15, 1918, said that in these confinement cells, the internees could be exposed to sleep deprivation by a bugle "sounded for the first two days every half hour and for the last two, every hour".

Even severe illnesses did not protect one from the guards' wrath:

"The civil prisoners at the Morrissey Camp are not allowed to lay down on their bunks during the daytime, even if they feel ill or hungry, without a permit of the medical sergeant, who gives his opinion whether the prisoner is sick or not. Prisoners found on their beds at daytime were punished with as much as 6 days in the cells at half rations and in spite of their feeling unwell immediately arrested and forced to do humiliating work for the guards at the guardhouse. Anyone refusing to do this was treated with bodily punishment."

Secret letter to
Samuel Gintzburger, Consul of Switzerland in Vancouver
April 2, 1918

Photos and Captions:

- Letter to Samuel Gintzburger

Title:

1917

Deaths and Suicides

Text:

Tuberculosis was rampant in British Columbia in the early 1900s. The *Morrissey Mentions*, the camp newspaper, describes "Le Grippe" sweeping through the Morrissey internment operations before Christmas in 1916, filling the hospital with no fewer than 27 cases.

Three of the four known internee deaths at Morrissey occurred from tuberculosis: Mike Katalnick (no. 335), Harry Smeryczanski (no. 424), and Tom Ruzich (no. 322). Hermann Rellman (no. 257) died from chronic Bright's Disease and valvular heart trouble. Oral histories and some archival records suggest there may have been two other internee deaths.

All were originally buried in the Morrissey Cemetery. The German War Graves Commission later arranged to have Hermann Rellman's remains (or a portion thereof) re-interred in the German War Graves Section of the Woodland Cemetery in Kitchener, Ontario. One of the two unmarked internment graves at the Morrissey Cemetery likely belongs to Hermann Rellman.

The guards also suffered from the conditions at the camp. There were two recorded deaths among the guards. William Edwards, a soldier and the infamous bugler at the camp, passed away on January 25, 1917. On April 30, 1917, Private Frederick Halliday committed suicide. Both are interred at the Fernie Cemetery.

Photos and Captions

- Bell tents used to quarantine sick internees during the fever, Morrissey Internment Camp, 1915. | FM 3890-DO
- Even in death there were clear distinctions made between First Class and Second Class internees.
Top: Grave stone of Hermann Rellmann, First Class German internee, at the Morrissey cemetery. | FM 3886-DO
Bottom: Grave marker of Harry Smeryczanski, a Second Class Austro-Hungarian internee. | FM 0984-b

Title:

1915 to 1917

Escape From Morrissey

Text:

The first escape attempt occurred on June 11, 1915, just 2 days after the start of the Internment Operations at Fernie. Mike Nykyforck (no. 170), a local miner from Fernie, was quickly apprehended and punished.

In spring 1916, after Captain Shaw assumed command of the Morrissey internment operations, a large number of internees escaped while working on a road project near Cranbrook and fled to the United States. The escape prompted Captain Shaw to cancel all work projects outside of the camp.

On October 27, 1916, three more internees escaped and on November 12, 1916, E. Rosenhagen (no. 224) escaped with two other First Class internees. On November 15, three from the Second Class compound escaped. This rash of escapes sparked Major General Otter to request an investigation into the Morrissey internment operations.

In January 16, 1917, the most notorious efforts to escape were discovered. Four Second Class internees tunnelled 45 feet from the basement of the "Big House" to a pile of wood outside. According to the Fernie Free Press, "consternation reigned among the internees when they learned that their secret was known to the camp authorities, and that a condition approaching mild mutiny prevailed. The situation, however, was promptly taken in hand by the guard and suppressed by the enforcement of more rigid discipline". (January 19, 1917)

The last escape attempted was on April 15, 1918 by Mike Taranaveski (no. 450). He was recaptured and reinterned at Morrissey.

Photos and Captions

- Escape at Morrissey article | Fernie Free Press, January 19, 1917
- Morrissey Internment Camp looking out from the "Big House", January, 1918. | FM 3897

Title:

1916 to 1918

Advocate for the Internees

Text:

Prisoner abuse took place in many forms and Samuel Gintzburger from the Consulate of Switzerland in Vancouver became a strong advocate for the internees, helping to improve living conditions at the camp.

Gintzburger visited the Morrissey Internment Camp twice. His first visit to the camp on August 25, 1917 was in response to letters from internees complaining of excessive punishment, poor living conditions and food. Following this visit, he sent books for the camp library as well as sport equipment to help alleviate boredom among the internees.

Conditions had deteriorated further by his second inspection of the camp on February 8, 1918, which initiated this response:

“On the recommendation of the Commanding Officers of the camps, I immediately sent a shipment of flour, macaroni, evaporated apples, dried prunes, cheese, mustard, as extra rations for the men in these camps. Now, Sir, what I sent are not luxuries, but just ordinary necessities, which prisoners in criminal institutions receive, and the fact that the list was made up by the Commanding Officer himself, proves that the unfortunate prisoner do not receive a sufficient variety of food. I think that some wealthy Germans in the United States should provide me with about \$200.00 to \$250.00 per month so that I may be able to alleviate the conditions of their countrymen in the prison camps.”

Letter from Swiss Consul Gintzburger to Dr. Paul Ritter
February 21, 1918

On one occasion, Gintzburger submitted letters of complaint from internees directly to his government, bypassing the censorship meted out by officials in Ottawa. This caught Canada and the British Empire off guard and caused a *note verbale* and threat of retaliation by German against British and Canadian prisoners of war from Germany should the conditions not improve.

Photos and Captions

- Report from Consul General Gintzburger to the Swiss Consul General in Montreal Following his inspection of the Morrissey internment operations on August 25, 1917, Gintzburger prepared a full report outlining the conditions he found and a series of recommendations to improve conditions for the internees. | DSCN 8201, Library and Archives Canada. RG6 Vol. 765 File 5294

- Internees at the Morrissey Internment Camp, taken during one of the two visits by Samuel Gintzbürger to Morrissey, 1917-1918. | Swiss Federal Archives, 3 Kap5 V4 Graustufen

Title:

1918

The Morrissey Internment Camp Closes

Text:

In September 1918, orders were received to close the Morrissey camp. Seventy internees volunteered to work on railway construction in Munson, Alberta. The remaining internees left under guard on a special train from Morrissey to the internment camp in Kapuskasing, Ontario.

On October 21, 1918, the Morrissey Internment Camp was closed. By 1923, the entire Morrissey town site was dismantled, including the remainder of the camp. The town site was bulldozed in 1964 with the intention of building a sawmill; the sawmill never materialized.

Many municipalities in BC passed resolutions to deport all alien enemies. On February 27, 1919 Mayor Uphill with Aldermen Gates, Graham, Robichaud, Beck and Rutledge moved to support the Dominion government to "direct the expulsion, removal or deportation from Canada of all undesirable aliens".

Between 1915 and 1918, many of the local Morrissey internees were released to work again at the Crows' Nest Pass Coal Company. Others were released to work on railroad construction elsewhere in Canada.

Internees dealt with the trauma of internment in several ways. Some were angry and resentful of the Canadian government after their release. Others, either ashamed of their arrests or fearful that they may be arrested again, rarely spoke of their ordeal, if at all.

"My father said that my uncle had funds owing to him but he said no don't talk about it, he wanted to forget about it and he would not apply for these funds. That would have opened it all up to his children that he had been a prisoner of war and he did not want to do that".

Ukrainian-Canadian Man, interview July 7, 2014

In 1954, the Archives of Canada destroyed thousands of records pertaining to the World War I internment camp operations.

Photos and Captions

- Release document
- Abandoned camp site
- Order to destroy records (Luciuk 2006)

Title:

Lessons from History

Text:

Canada incarcerated immigrant Canadians not once, but twice during wartime. Shortly after Japan's entry into World War II on December 7, 1941, the Canadian government created a restricted area along the West Coast and ordered the removal of over 21,000 Japanese Canadians 100 kilometers inland. Small towns in the BC Interior, such as Greenwood, Sandon, New Denver and Slocan, became internment quarters primarily for women, children and the aged. To stay together, some families agreed to work on sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba where there were labour shortages. Those who resisted and challenged the orders of the Canadian government were rounded up by the RCMP and incarcerated in a barbed-wire prisoner-of-war camp in Angler, Ontario.

"B.C. is falling all over itself in the scramble to be the first to kick us out from jobs and homes ... it has just boiled down to race persecution, and signs have been posted on all highways ... JAPS ... KEEP OUT. We are tightening our belts for the starvation to come. The diseases ... the crippling ... the twisting of our souls ... death would be the easiest to bear."

Muriel Kitigawa in a letter to her brother, 1941

There are no easy answers to the questions surrounding the internment camps of WWI and WWII. The solutions are still difficult to find today as lawmakers grapple with what measures to enforce to combat terrorism on Canadian soil.

Lessons can be learned from what happened in Fernie during the Great War a hundred years ago. We hope that this exhibit, *Fernie at War: The Morrissey Internment Camp*, provides some sobering insight on how Canadians have taken their fears too far in the past. With this reminder of our history, we have the opportunity to find better solutions that respect all Canadians.

Laurie Hawn, Conservative MP from Edmonton and a retired Lieutenant Colonel with the Royal Canadian Air Force, on the shooting on Parliament Hill on October 22, 2014:

Edmonton MP Laurie Hawn: Round up everyone on the terror watch list

Conservative MP Laurie Hawn wants everyone on the federal government's terror watch list rounded up and taken into custody after the recent killings of two Canadian soldiers on home soil.

The suspects in both cases were on the list, which includes roughly 90 people. "Speaking strictly personally, I think we should round those guys up, every single one of them, and bring them in for an extended chat," Hawn said Thursday, the day after Cpl.

Nathan Cirillo, 24, was fatally shot on Parliament Hill while guarding the National War Memorial .

"Every one of them, in my personal view, should be taken into custody. Here's two of them that have committed the most violent acts possible, and there's at least 88 more out there that we're watching, and I think we need to watch them close up," he added.

Kevin Maimann

[Edmonton Sun | October 23, 2014](#)

Photos and Captions

- Japanese Canadian evacuees arriving in Picture Butte, north-west of Lethbridge, Alberta, 1942 | Galt Museum & Archives, 19790283009
- Takeyasu family in a sugar beet field, topping beets with beet knives, ca 1941-1945. Left to right: Nobuichi (father), Mutsuko (youngest daughter), Shizujo (mother), and Shigeto (son). | Galt Museum & Archives, 19790284005
- Bill 51 Online Petition | Progressive Conservative Party Facebook page.