

CFB Chilliwack Saluting Base To Be Restored as a Memorial

The CFB Chilliwack Historical Society and Retired Sapper Reunion committee have embarked on a project to retain the heritage of the former Base Chilliwack. This project involves the restoration of the Saluting Base. A plaque will also be installed to acknowledge the heritage of the area. The project was given the go-ahead by Branch Council at its November 2012 meeting and this project compliments the very successful Legacy Trail that the Society undertook with Canada Lands Company. See: <http://www.clc.ca/properties/garrison-crossing>.



The saluting base was constructed at Camp Chilliwack in July 1949 and this picture shows it in all its glory in 1992. As part of the restoration, the wrought iron 'UBIQUE' inserts are being provided from the CME Museum where they were being held. The cast CME Hat Badge had been salvaged by Capt Peter Pitcher, Commanding Officer, Construction Engineer Flight 192 (Aldergrove) and it has also been donated by that unit.



While much of the surrounding area of the former base has been significantly modified to meet the needs of the new occupants, the Saluting Base still retains a prominent position. This picture shows the saluting base as it looks today with the newly constructed road – looking North West. This land is now owned by the University of the Fraser Valley who graciously preserved the saluting base and is giving authorization for us to refurbish and landscape the area.

192 CEF and 54 Fd Engr Sqn, will assist in the restoration by providing Engineer personnel, skills and equipment. CFB Chilliwack Historical Society and the Retired Sappers Reunion committee will organize, plan and fundraise. Work will commence in summer 2013 and we expect to dedicate the memorial on Thanksgiving Weekend 2013.

A plaque will be included on the site to describe the history of the camp (see below). In addition we intend to create and display a plaque naming those who gave their lives in training and in the service of peace while on duty at the base after WW II.

Significant fundraising will be required to realize this project. For donations please contact Jim Harris jimharris@shaw.ca

CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHILLIWACK MEMORIAL
UBIQUE – EVERYWHERE

This Plaque recognizes the history of its surrounding area as a former Military Camp.

In 1942 the government of Canada, in response to the perceived threat of an attack on the coast of British Columbia, authorized the establishment of an Army Camp in the vicinity of Vedder Crossing. For the first half of its existence, Camp Chilliwack was the Home of the Royal Canadian Engineers, comprising: the Royal Canadian School of Military Engineering, that trained officers and engineer tradesmen for the Army; a Field Engineer Regiment and/or Field Squadron; and the Royal Canadian Engineer Band; plus various other support elements.

In the late 1960s, with the Unification of the Canadian Forces, the Camp was re-designated Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack with an expanded role that now included Military Engineer training for officers and engineer technicians for the former Navy, Army and Air Force. In addition, the Canadian Forces Officer Candidate School was established here to assess and give basic training to all officer candidates for the Canadian Forces. The Army field unit that remained here was eventually re-named 1 Combat Engineer Regiment.

Following the end of the Cold War, the Base was selected for closure in 1997 as part of the reduction of the Canadian Forces and its role was minimized to an Area Support Unit to support Regular and Reserve units in mainland BC. But the Support Unit was also closed in 2013.

During its lifetime the Base was the area's second highest employer and also provided vital support to the local communities in times of crisis or difficulties.

In 2006 this portion of the former Base lands was acquired by the University of the Fraser Valley that preserved the saluting base, enabling the installation of this Memorial so that all may realize the rich, proud military history of this site.