

# Canadian War Museum offers a true educational experience for people of all ages



CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM PHOTO

An armored personnel carrier on display at the Canadian War Museum.



MIKE COHEN PHOTO

A jeep used by the Canadian Army

**MIKE COHEN**  
FYi

OTTAWA — The Canadian War Museum is Canada's national museum of military history and one of the world's most respected for the study and understanding of armed conflict. I recently made my first visit and spent three hours in awe of what I saw.

This museum traces its origins back to 1880, when it consisted primarily of a collection of militia artifacts. It opened at its new location on the LeBreton Flats site in downtown Ottawa on May 8, 2005. The opening not only marked the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe (V-E Day), but also the 125th anniversary of the museum itself. Since then, the facility has welcomed approximately 500,000 visitors every year.

The museum's exhibition galleries and public programs have been designed to emphasize the human experience of war. The Canadian Experience Galleries present the military history of Canada from earliest times to present day, as well as Canada's history of honoring and remembrance. Each gallery highlights defining moments in Canada's military history and the ways in which past events have shaped the nation.

The museum's collections are among the finest military holdings in the world, including rare vehicles, artillery, uniforms, medals, personal memoirs and 14,000 works in the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. In total, the collection comprises more than three million artifacts, specimens, works of art, written documents and sound and visual recordings. The Military History Research Centre houses the George Metcalf Archival Collection and the Hartland Molson Library. These extensive collections of primary and secondary research material document Canada's rich military history.

A visit here represents a true educational experience for people of all ages, most notably students.

Gallery 1 focuses on the early wars in Canada, from pre-contact warfare and colonial Canada to Louis Riel and the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Here you will discover how wars of the First Peoples, the French and the British shaped Canada and Canadians.

In Gallery 2, guests witness Canada's sacrifices in and contributions to the South Africans and First World Wars. Learning more about the South African War was a real eye opener for me.

The display that asks whether you have what it takes to join the army was interesting: be at least five feet tall; clear vision; healthy feet; and strong teeth to handle rock hard army food.

There is a presentation on Laura Secord. Not the line of chocolate shops. The real Laura Secord was in fact known throughout Canada as a heroine of the War of 1812 for her 20-mile journey to warn the British. After the American army invaded Upper Canada in May 1813, the U.S. controlled the area along the Niagara River from Fort George to Fort Erie.

Gallery 3 details World War II, beginning with an introduction to the aggressive and expansionist regimes of Germany, Italy and Japan and then leading to Canada joining Britain and France in declaring war on Nazi Germany.

Finally, Gallery 4, goes from the Cold War to the present. This includes Canada's commitment in Afghanistan from 2001 and 2014 and bringing democracy to that country. Regrettably, as we all know, American troops left the country and The Taliban simply returned to power.

Naturally, the present Russian invasion of Ukraine is not included. I imagine in years to come we will see presentations in the museum about this as well.

There are travelling exhibitions you can learn about on their website at <https://www.warmuseum.ca>.

## NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MONUMENT:

Located across the street from the Canadian War Museum (corner of Wellington and Booth streets), the National Holocaust Monument, entitled *Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival*, ensures that the lessons of the Holocaust, as well as

**MUSEUM**

Cont'd from page A4

the remarkable contribution Holocaust survivors have made to Canada, remain within the national consciousness for generations to come. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. I took a quick look but will have to go back for a proper visit on my next trip.

**CINESTARZ:** I went to the CinéStarz theatre complex at the St. Laurent Shopping Centre for the first time to see the motion picture *The Fablemans*. The CinéStarz movie theatre chain, owned by businessman Bruce Gurberg, also has facilities in nearby Orleans and others in Burlington, Ontario and three in the Montreal area — Côte Saint-Luc, Côte des Neiges and St. Leonard. The St. Laurent Shopping Centre theatre remains very popular. There is a very large parking lot and access is easiest via the Goodlife Fitness entrance. Just head down the elevators and you are there.

This theatre first opened under the Odeon banner back in 1967, became a five-plex in 1991, closed in 2001, reopened again in 2005 as Rainbow Cinemas/Magic Lantern Theatres and soon after CinéStarz. Gurberg is a hands-on owner who always has his customers' best interests in mind. His manager here, Rob, literally does it all. On our visit he was cleaning the theatre, wiping down seats and even running the projection room.

The concession stand offers the signature CinéStarz popcorn. You can even get their food delivered via Uber Eats and Skip the Dishes. General admission is only \$8; \$6 for children and seniors and \$5 all day Tuesday. Gurberg has been in the theatre business for 20 years now.

For more information go to [www.cinestarz.ca](http://www.cinestarz.ca).

**A BITE AT ZAK'S:** Readers of my stories on Ottawa will be very familiar with the fact Zak's Diner has become a true "go to" stop in the Nation's capital. Established in 1986 by John Borsten and some partners, one of whom had a son named Zak, there are now five separate locations for this '50s-themed eatery: the happening Byward Market, Elgin Street, Carleton Place, Kanata and now the Westboro Village area at the spot that previously housed the once popular Savoy Brasserie.

Besides serving breakfast all-day, Zak's has the perfect comfort food menu with items such as soups, salads, burgers, wraps, sandwiches, poutine, vegetarian and plant-based alternatives, extraordinary desserts and variety of shakes from the traditional to lactose free and even vegan. At Zak's, kids eat free Sunday to Thursday from 4 pm to close for indoor dining (holidays excluded). The way it works is you will get one free kids meal (10 and under) with the purchase of one adult meal and beverage.

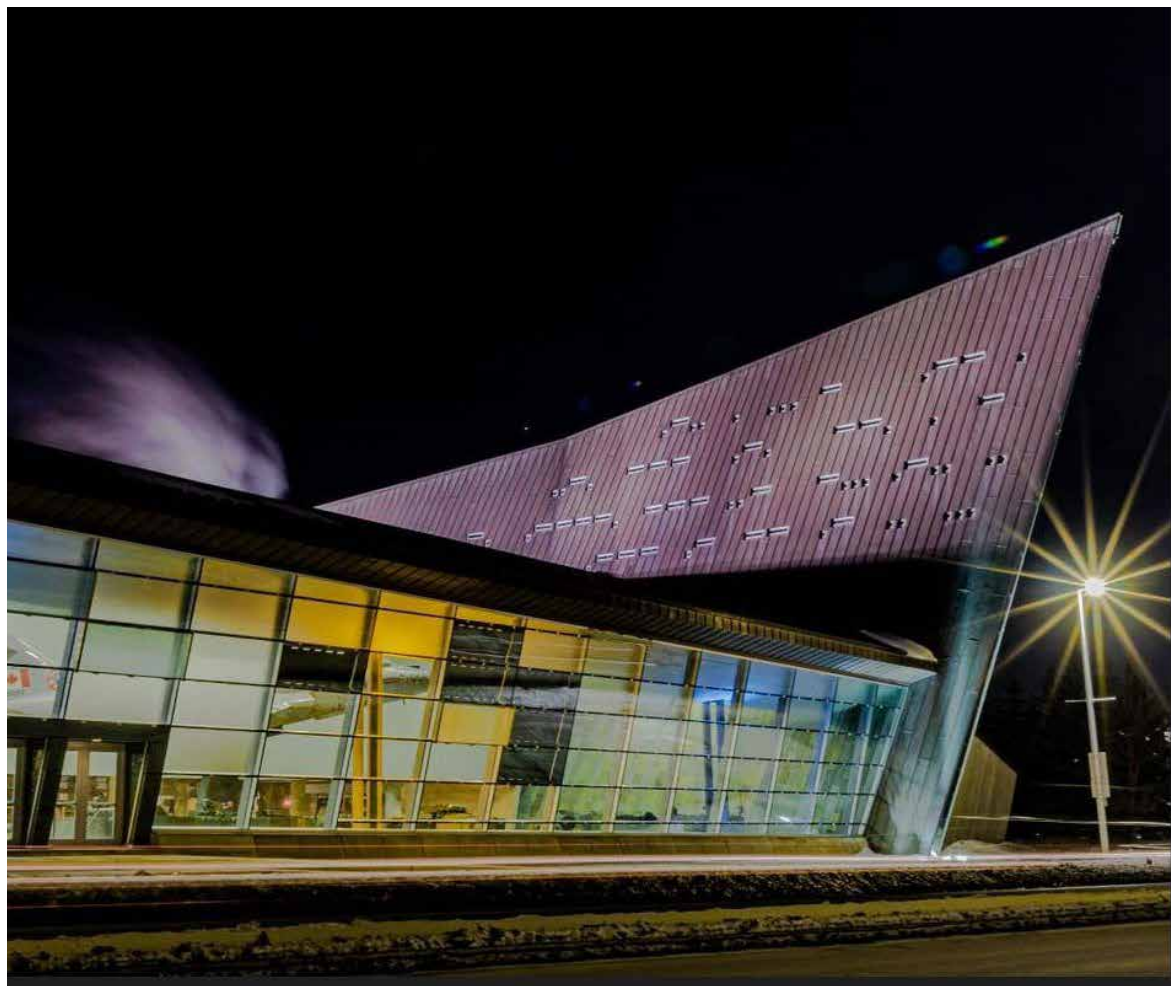
Having previously experienced the Byward Market and Elgin locations for dinner and breakfast respectively, I was invited to join Calvin Borsten for lunch at the new Westboro location. Calvin, presently completing his studies at Queen's University in Kingston, is the 22-year-old son of John Borsten. When his dad decided to purchase the Savoy property, he asked if he could become a managing partner for 20 per cent and dug into his own savings to do so.

"I have been coming to Zak's all of my life," Calvin told me. "I started to work at the location in the market at the age of 13 and from that point on it gave me an excellent opportunity to really learn the business."

John Borsten owns a number of other successful restaurant properties in Ottawa. His wife Sofia splendidly oversees the marketing end of things, so this is indeed a true family operation.

Located on the main Westboro drag of Richmond Road, the newest Zak's can accommodate 100 diners inside, in addition to a seasonal terrace. Roger McKee, who has been part of the Zak's team for over a decade, is the manager. Former Savoy servers like Nathan Bouchard have stayed on to maintain continuity. There is plenty of on street parking and this spot is only a 10-minute drive from Parliament Hill. In the summer it is a great street to take a walk. Not only is this location within walking distance from the Borsten home, John Borsten actually opened the Savoy back in 2013.

I enjoyed my smoked meat sandwich on pumpernickel bread with curly fries and the soup of the day, a piping hot Mexicali. For dessert I cheated on my dietary standards and ordered the



The exterior of the Canadian War Museum.

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM PHOTO

decadent rocky road brownie. It came dripping with hot fudge, marshmallows and nuts and is served with vanilla ice cream. I also grabbed a few take-out items: the Lox & Cream cheese, containing smoked salmon, lettuce, tomato, red onion, capers, bagel and cream cheese and a crispy chicken wrap, made with lettuce, tomato, mayo and your choice of BBQ, honey garlic, or hot sauce. I opted for the honey gar-

lic.

Zak's Diner Westboro is open daily from 7 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. The address is 334 Richmond Rd., You can call (613) 369-5002 for reservations of groups six and over, e-mail [westboro@zaksdiner.com](mailto:westboro@zaksdiner.com) or log on to [www.zaksdiner.com](http://www.zaksdiner.com). ■



Bruce Gurberg

MIKE COHEN PHOTO

FYI • APRIL, 2023 • A5