

A Brief History of 17 Wing Detachment Dundurn

The interesting history of 17 Wing Detachment Dundurn provides a better understanding of the area served by the DMFRC Inc.:

17 Wing Detachment Dundurn is located 4 km west of provincial highway #11, roughly 40 km south of Saskatoon. The Detachment is situated on a parcel of land approximately 22,000 hectares (90 square kilometres) large. It consists of a built up area of approximately 50 hectares with close to 220 permanent buildings plus an Ammunition Depot. The Depot occupies an additional 367 hectares. The remaining grounds are used for various ranges and training areas. The role of the Detachment is to support the Ammunition Depot (CFAD), and to provide support, training facilities plus ranges for Saskatoon District and other LFWA units.

1858: First historical reference; Ronde Prairie near present community of Dundurn was used as a wintering camp by Metis hunters and their families.

1880-1900: Area was surveyed into Townships (one of the major causes of the Northwest Rebellion) in the 1880's. Most of the surrounding area was settled during the turn of the century. The area that is now the Detachment was declared a forest reserve and therefore not settled.

1927: Boundaries were surveyed and bush clearing begun. The first militia summer camp took place the following year.

1929: Yorktown Infantry was ordered to attend camp at Dundurn after a confrontation with the Ukrainian paramilitary group in their training area.

1930-1931: Local labour was hired to clear land at 25 cents/hour. Tent camps were set up either side of what is now the golf course.

1933: Unemployment Relief Camp was set up under the supervision of Capt (later MGen) Chris Volkes to clear and develop the main camp. Up to 1000 men were employed at any given time. Ranges, an airstrip and 45 permanent buildings were built along with roads, railway spurs and several bridges. In 1935, a near riot and strike was staged by workers on the camp intending to join the "On to Ottawa" trek.

1936: A Field post office was set up and the air corps (RCAF) participated in manoeuvres for the first time.

1939-1946: Dundurn became a major training centre and a RCAF bombing range was opened. The ammunition magazines were expanded to become a full ammunition compound. The camp became a transit and holding area for troops awaiting demobilization immediately after the war.

1947: No. 6 OAD (Ordinance Ammunition Depot) was formed.

1953-1958: During this period, the Ammunition Depot was expanded with the addition of 35 magazines and related workshops. Married quarters including a water treatment and sewage facilities were added.

1966: With integration and immigration and unification of the Canadian Forces, Camp Dundurn became a satellite of CFB Moose Jaw, (now 15 Wing) and became Detachment Dundurn.

1998: Detachment Dundurn's support base became CFB Winnipeg (17 Wing) vice Moose Jaw (15 Wing). With the change in support bases, Detachment Dundurn's responsibilities were increased.

1999: Maj S. Brownrigg assumed command of CFAD and Maj H. D. Otchenash assumed command of #17 Wing Detachment Dundurn.

2001: Maj A. R. Haines, MMM, CD assumed command of CFAD.

2002: Maj J. E. Kiteley, CD assumed command of 17 Wing Detachment Dundurn.

2003: Maj. J.L. Rosso assumed command of CFAD.