

Helmets To Hardhats

PART THREE

SPECIAL INSERT



MAX STALHBAUM

CARPENTER'S REGIONAL COUNCIL

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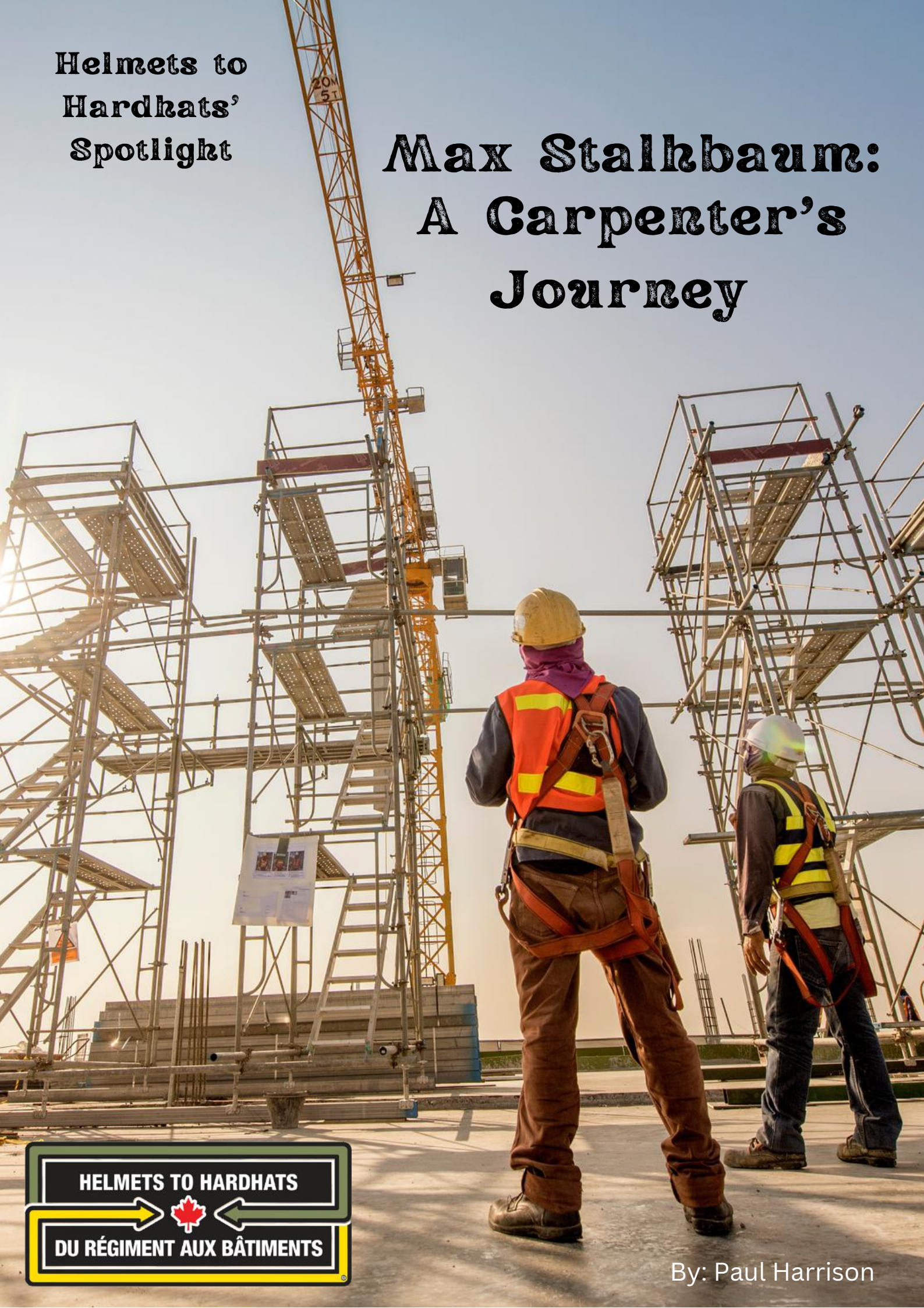
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**Helmets to
Hardhats'
Spotlight**

Max Stalkbaum: A Carpenter's Journey



HELMETS TO HARDHATS



DU RÉGIMENT AUX BÂTIMENTS

By: Paul Harrison



Max Stalhbaum: A Carpenter's Journey

The Early Years:

Our coverage of Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) would not be complete without at least one detailed spotlight on a Veteran who utilized the program to help him transition into a well-paying, unionized job in the construction industry. Max Stalhbaum sat down with us on Thanksgiving weekend of 2022, to share his unique story:

Growing up in Ajax, Ontario, Max had a regular life. As a teenager, Max would work at his grandfather's marina, repairing the boats housed there. With his grandfather's tutoring, Max learned carpentry skills, and came to love the work he was doing: "[My grandfather and I] did a lot of wood boat restorations. I really enjoyed working with wood and seeing the process of something that didn't look good transform into something beautiful when we were done with it. That's where I got the passion for working with wood."

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"I just wanted to pursue a dream I had since I was a child and I made it happen."

Growing Up:

As Max reached adulthood, he used the skills he learned in his youth to find a career: "When I was 19 or 20, I started working for a builder, installing windows and doors. I did that for years. It was easy work, and I felt a sense of fulfillment doing it; you would start at the beginning of the day with something that didn't look too good and at the end of the day you'd be giving someone a completed house with new windows and new doors. It's a good feeling to be able to think 'look what I did for you. I hope you enjoy that.'" Eventually, Max moved into framing custom homes. "We built some really beautiful houses at that time." But despite the satisfaction Max was feeling from his work in carpentry, there was another calling echoing in his ears.

Princess Patricia Beckons:

"I don't know exactly how I came to join the military. I had a passion for it since I was a little kid. I don't know if it was external influences that made me think that way or what. But I didn't have any family members who had been in the military. I was the first one in my family to join. My family was, at first, a little shocked but, at the same time, proud of me for doing it. I just wanted to pursue a dream I had had since I was a child and I made it happen." Max's decision to join the military was not typical in that he did not sign up at age 18. He explains: "the military seemed like it had a lot of structure, and I was very curious about that... but I did not join the military until I was 28. I'm 35 now so I've been out for 2.5 years. I waited until later in life (to join up), but it felt like something I really wanted to do."



Princess Patricia Beckons, *Continued*

So it was that Max left the comfort of hearth and home in the Durham Region of Ontario and headed west: "I was stationed in Edmonton. I was with 3 PPCLI (3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry), which was a light battalion. I was in a mountain company for the infantry." During his time with 3 PPCLI, Max learned many new skills. Obviously, he was trained in combat, but many of his skills were far more mundane, and applicable to everyday civilian life.

Life Skills Learned in the Military:

Max holds that the most important of these skills was the ability to prioritize tasks. He explains whether it's simple things, like "brushing your teeth in the morning" or more complex things, like "thinking five steps ahead of where you have to be:" this kind of thinking was ingrained in Max during his service. "That has been my biggest benefit from the military; just knowing all these little things that I have to do before they need to be done. This makes the things I'm doing that much simpler and run that much smoother: to be able to have seamless transitions from one task to the next, like getting up in the morning, getting your bed made, getting ready for work, and everything like that. Before I was in the military, I made my bed maybe two days a week, and then, I'd come home at the end of the day, make my bed, tidy up – that kind of thing. But now I get up, make my bed immediately and put everything in order. That way, if you ever have to go back to your bedroom during the day, or at the end of the day, everything is in order exactly as you left it. I would say the biggest thing (I learned) was to be able to order and compartmentalize things – being able to have everything stored in a perfect sequence in my brain. I was able to do this a little bit before I joined the military, but the military definitely helped me to be able to concentrate on these kinds of skills."

"I would say the biggest thing (I learned in the military) was to be able to order and compartmentalize things – being able to have everything stored in a perfect sequence in my brain."

Life Skills Learned in the Military, *Continued*

Beyond this, Max believes that the ability to follow orders and understand the necessity of rank and hierarchy are other important skills he learned while in the CAF. "In the construction industry, I found I related to [being able to follow orders]. I was in the construction industry before I joined the military, but afterwards, being on bigger jobs than I was before [I served] and seeing their structure – supervisors, down to foreman, down to the individual workers – it was a lot like the military: seeing how all those different factors work together to create an end goal. It made it easy being able to follow orders and listen effectively to your superiors. It made it that much easier for the people that I worked with; they love me because I can hear them, and I can understand what they're saying and what the end goal is. If I didn't have that perspective of structure and rank, it would not have worked the same as it did. I don't think I would have had the same respect for how important this person's job is to make my job at the bottom, or in the middle, or wherever I am, work, because it all works together. But having served my time in the military, where you have people above you and people below you, you understand that these people are all here for a reason, and their reason is to get the job done... All the guys work, and you are a cog in the wheel. It's like a well-oiled machine. Moving forward in my career, this is a great thing to understand; understanding rank structure – to be able to apply that as I move up to higher responsibility levels, or to a foreman position: this is invaluable."

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Calm, in the Face of Adversity:

Reflecting further, Max adds that he's noticed that the military also instilled in him the ability to approach pressure with a kind of stoic resolve. As Max tells me about his preparation to write his red seal exam for carpentry, he states: "[the test] is probably going to be the hardest academic test I've ever done." Pausing for a moment, he quips: "But not the hardest thing I've ever done! There's another great thing from the military too! Going back to school, I see all the guys I am going to school with, and they don't have that same ability to remain calm, cool, and collected in a stressful situation, or in a situation that increases your anxiety levels. Whereas the military definitely helped me to learn to control my emotions and my thinking or thought process, while other guys get more anxious writing a test. But so far, through all my levels of schooling, I haven't had any issues; I'd like to think that maybe that's because I was in the military. Because they train you to deal with stressful situations and to be able to think easily in a stressful situation."

Max continues on the theme of stress management: "even at work too: you get all this stuff dumped on you during the week. Let's say it's a Thursday and all this stuff needs to get done (by the end of the week): our bosses are stressed about it themselves. But personally, I don't take any of that stress home [on such occasions] because it doesn't feel like stress to me. It is more a case of 'we have all these jobs; they need to get done; there's no need to worry about them. We've just got to get them done.' Nothing is the same [as the stresses of military work] in the civilian world, that's for sure."

Lions, Bulls, and the Edmonton Oilers:

Of course, the military was not only following orders and respecting hierarchy. Max reminisces of some of the fun and exciting moments during his time in service: on one occasion, while training with the U.S. Marine Corps in the mountains of California, Max and his fire-team partner had ascended the side of a cliff. While in position, they received a radio call from a Marine Corps sniper team. Max and his partner were told to "look directly below, 60 metres." Peering down the cliff face, lying in the warmth of the sun beneath them, they saw a mountain lion.

On several occasions, Max and his fellow soldiers, were called to Rogers Place, home of the Edmonton Oilers, to take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies at a hockey game and at a rodeo. "As I said, I was in the mountain unit." Max reminds us. "So, they would always get some of their best rappellers to go to the Oilers' games. We did an Oilers' game where we rappelled down from the Jumbotron, right into the middle of the arena. We brought the puck with us and I gave it to [Connor] McDavid. We also did a rodeo that was at Rogers Place in Edmonton, where we rappelled down from the Jumbotron, and did the big Remembrance Day event for them."





Lions, Bulls, and the Edmonton Oilers, *Continued*

Max recalls with excitement: "It was 160 feet from where we rappelled! We would have our rope stop about eight feet in the air. They were dynamic ropes, so by the time they stretched just a little bit, you would be six feet from the ground. You would literally just drop to the ground for the last couple of feet. That way you're on the ground right away and ready to move, so you can put on a cool show...We landed on the ice too! That was a lot harder than doing the rodeo show, where we just landed on dirt. Landing on the ice and staying on your feet when you have all your weapon systems on you without sliding...then moving into the centre – it was all choreographed. We weren't allowed to drop anything at all, otherwise they would have to do a commercial break to fix the ice. And it would end up costing thousands of thousands of dollars. I think it was something like \$30,000 to stop the show for 30 seconds! Needless to say, if you drop anything, it's a major faux pas. You have to land on your feet and then go to the centre and that's it." Laughing, Max adds: "After doing something like the hockey game, stress is easy to handle. You don't mind something like: 'we need four pieces of wood cut.' OK that's no big deal."

Discovering Helmets to Hardhats:

Max explains: "When I left the military, I did all these programs they make you do, so that when you leave the military you don't just go and become jobless. They teach you resume writing, interview techniques, etc. These were courses you could take when you were getting out of the military. One of these courses included a meeting with all these different employment venues, one of which was Helmets to Hardhats. They played their video and I thought to myself: 'well that's great. I already have the experience and all the hours. I might as well do something like that if I need to.' It never left my brain after I saw their video."



Discovering Helmets to Hardhats, *Continued*

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“When I got out of the military, it wasn’t much of a thought to return to carpentry. I knew about Helmets to Hardhats, but [in the first 10 months out], I didn’t know if I wanted to approach them because I already had connections in the [non-unionized] construction industry. So, I went back to work about a week after leaving the military; there was no delay with that. But after some time, I realized that I needed something that had more structure and, in the long run, a pension and benefits so I could take care of my family when I’m not able to work anymore – just like in the military, where I had all those benefits and pensions. Once you don’t have that, you want it back again. So, I started thinking: ‘I need to look into this Helmets to Hardhats thing and see if I can get into one of these unions. Maybe I can better my career that way.’ It was probably ten months later when I called them. They had so many different options for where I could go, so I thought about that for awhile. And then I met Mike Humphries. And the rest is history.”

Becoming a Union Man:

Max went to H2H and applied to join the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario. “I was doing carpentry already, so [joining the union] was a natural fit. I figured that I might as well do carpentry at a different level. I applied with Mike Humphries and I literally got a phone call the next day! It was December 16th, 2019, when I contacted Mike. The next day he had me come in for a meeting and interview, and I was signed up to the union that same day. I didn’t begin doing unionized work until March 2020 because I had to finish up all my safety training and also finished some work for my previous employer to get a few jobs done. I could have begun working for the union even sooner and started with them in early January, right after Christmas, if I had really pushed myself, but it was a seamless transition regardless.

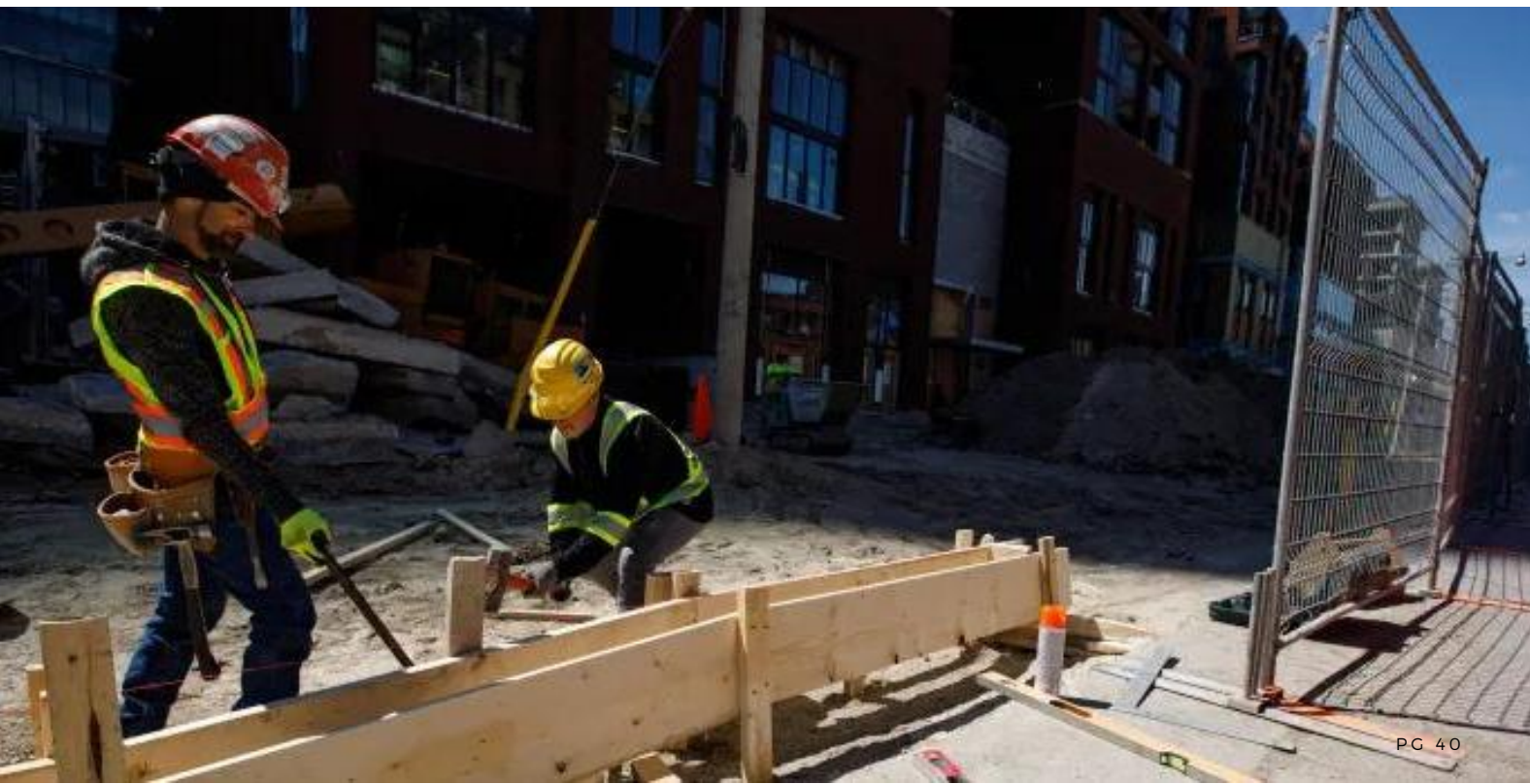
Becoming a Union Man: *Continued*

“After I got into the union, and because I had a lot of experience already, Mike got me to begin working for a cool company, doing timber framing. This is prestigious work in the carpentry trade: timber framing compared to [the more traditional] forming concrete [method]. I did the timber framing job for a little bit, but then I reached out to Mike because Covid was just starting. Jobs were slowing down as there were no foundations being dug (because of Covid). So, I contacted Mike and asked if he knew if anyone was hiring and he told me: ‘yeah, I can get you a job starting tomorrow.’ Mike Humphries put me with this company, and they really liked my work. They promoted me almost right away. The company went from paying me as a second term to a full fourth term apprentice. Normally this would take a few years to get to that level.”

“From there I started working for a big builder in downtown Toronto. For two years, I did tons of work for them. I enjoyed doing the hours, but I was working so much overtime. I was working 70+ hours a week; I got all my hours for my apprenticeship this way. Now, I’ve just been attending school since I got all the hours for my apprenticeship. I just wanted to do all of the schooling combined; that way, it would stay in my mind, and I wouldn’t forget anything. Otherwise, you essentially do school and then you’re off working for two years, then you do more school, and you’re off working for another two years; that’s what a lot of people end up doing. I wanted to do it all together, so it would stay in my mind. Now I’m just nearing the end of my schooling. I have two weeks left, and then after that, I’ll be a full-fledged, ready-to-go [red seal] carpenter.”

Without Helmets to Hardhats’ help, Max’s landing in civilian life would not have been as smooth and seamless as it was. As Max’s story shows, Helmets to Hardhats was there to aid a Veteran looking for more in his post-service life. H2H put Max in touch with Mike Humphries at the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario, which was in the same region in which Max lived and had him enrolled in the union within 24 hours. This opened new doors for Max, giving him better employment opportunities than he had had before. When he needed a new job, the union was there for him, and placed him into something immediately. This afforded Max with the chance to complete his entire apprenticeship at high speed, then put him through school at a faster pace, and be on track to earn his red seal. All of this was done in less than three years of first calling H2H. Max’s story outlines the way in which H2H serves those who served their country.

Since the time of Max’s interview, he has completed his final exam and is now a red seal carpenter.





THE SOLDIER & THE CARPENTER



**AN INTERVIEW WITH MIKE
HUMPHRIES FROM THE
CARPENTERS' REGIONAL COUNCIL**

HELMETS TO HARDHATS

DU RÉGIMENT AUX BÂTIMENTS

By : Greg Akeson



The Soldier & The Carpenter: An Interview with Mike Humphries from The Carpenters' Regional Council

Mike Humphries is the Veteran Liaison Representative for the Carpenters' Regional Council. His role is to assist Veterans, who are transitioning into the trade, anywhere from Ontario to British Columbia. Formerly called the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario, it was renamed just recently when the Ontario council merged with several other councils located throughout Canada's western provinces to form the Carpenters' Regional Council.

Mike is himself a Veteran and served with the 3rd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment. He was posted from Winnipeg to Germany and served in Bosnia with the U.N. during the early 90s. He decided to make the transition to civilian life in 1995 and started an apprenticeship in Toronto with Carpenters Local 27 where he worked for a variety of companies and contractors. He was always active as a job steward as well as an on-site Joint Health and Safety Committee member. It was his responsibility to make sure that every job site was safe. When the time was right, he became an Organizer, a position he held for seven years. As an Organizer, his job was to recruit and to promote the Carpenters' Union to companies not already signatory to the Union. He then became a Business Representative, where he looked after memberships, on-site issues, jurisdictional issues, and dealt with lawyers and contractors. He has been in his current role as a Veteran Liaison Representative for the past two and a half years. As Mike describes it: "the role was created to assist Veterans, who are transitioning from the military, or who are still actively serving in reserve units. We've now extended this to our Afghan interpreters or anyone who had an enduring relationship with Canada during the Afghan conflict and who have now come to Canada. We are going to help them as best we can."



Helmets to Hardhats

Mike heard about Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) and how it was running in the U.S. roughly 15 years ago. A few years later, Joe Maloney announced H2H would be starting up in Canada. The Carpenters' Union jumped at the chance to work with H2H and Mike has been a supporter ever since and helps to promote the use of Veteran hires to other Locals. Mike is a trailblazer in his work as a Veteran Liaison Representative in that his position is unique in the trades. His role is the first of its kind within a union organization in Canada. He feels H2H can play a significant role in aiding with the growing demand for labour in the construction industry. He states: "It's going to be a huge task but I believe this is the number one avenue for meeting the demand."

While there are currently over 60 Veterans, who have come through the H2H program working in the province of Ontario, there are a few who stand out to Mike: Max Stalbaum, whose story can be found in this very issue of the Canadian Construction Journal, and Curtis McNeil. Curtis made a successful transition from military to civilian life and is now working for the scaffold and work platform company, Summit Access Solutions Inc. Summit has hired about eight H2H Veterans and Curtis has been mentoring the new recruits to success. Summit has been a great supporter of the H2H program and is always happy to work with Veteran hires.

"[H2H] now extended [its mandate] to our Afghan interpreters or anyone who had an enduring relationship with Canada during the Afghan conflict and who have now come to Canada. We are going to help them as best we can."

Veterans in Construction

Veterans are becoming sought after in the construction industry as they have unique and much needed skill sets. To Mike, they bring a sense of timing and punctuality to the job. Time restraints are an ever-present reality in the trades, and this is an area in which Veterans are particularly proficient. Everybody wins on a job site where tasks are completed on time so that other trades can also finish their jobs on time. As Mike explains “whether you were deployed or not, you were always put in stressful situations and worked as a team. It’s the same on a construction site; everyone has to work together as a team to complete a build. It’s not one person who can complete the task.”

Another initiative, which is close to both Mike and the Carpenters’ Union is Camp Maple Leaf. Camp Maple Leaf is a special camp set up to help the children of military families, who are dealing with the inherent challenges that come with military life, such as constant relocation, family members on lengthy deployments, and dealing with grief and loss. Counselors are there to help children navigate through these challenges. Mike got involved with the camp through Team Rubicon. Team Rubicon is a group of Veterans and first responders who do volunteering in communities with a focus on disaster relief. They work right across Canada and into other parts of the world and boast hundreds of volunteers amongst their ranks, including some H2H members. They assist at Camp Maple Leaf by cleaning up the camp and getting it ready for summer. Last year, they installed accessibility ramps around the camp to make the camp wheelchair accessible.



“whether [Vets] were deployed or not, we were always put in stressful situations and worked as a team. It’s the same on a construction site; everyone has to work together as a team to complete a build. It’s not one person who can complete the task.”





Mentorship Program

Currently, Mike is involved with launching a mentorship program through the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. The program aims to pair mentors with mentees in the trades for a year-long commitment. Mentors are provided with training in order to prepare them for the role of mentor. Mentees are not required to be trained prior to signing up for the program. Candidates are paired up based on their application forms and how well they fit with each other.

Mike Humphries is proud of the work he has done in forging strong ties between H2H and the Carpenters' Regional Council. Whether it is through placing more Veterans into unionized jobs, or through hosting future H2H galas at their event space in Vaughan, ON, the Council will be there to support Veterans entering the construction industry.

For more information on the Carpenters' Regional Council visit: <https://thecarpentersunion.ca/>

Team Rubicon is a group of Veterans and first responders who do volunteering in communities with a focus on disaster relief. They work right across Canada and into other parts of the world and boast hundreds of volunteers amongst their ranks, including some H2H members.



Joe Maloney

National Executive Director of H2H

Joe talks to us about the services Helmets to Hardhats now offers, and where the organization plans to go in the coming years. As always, Helmets to Hardhats connects Veterans with construction jobs, and employers with dedicated, hardworking employees.

By: Paul Harrison



“The problem we have in Canada is that a lot of people don’t think about our Veterans the way they should. Most people think about Veterans on Remembrance Day. They think: ‘a Veteran? Oh my God! That’s an old individual. That’s World War II, Korean War, that kind of thing. They don’t understand that a Veteran is somebody who has served in uniform, and they could have served for 5 years,

10 years,

15 years,

but they’re still a Veteran.

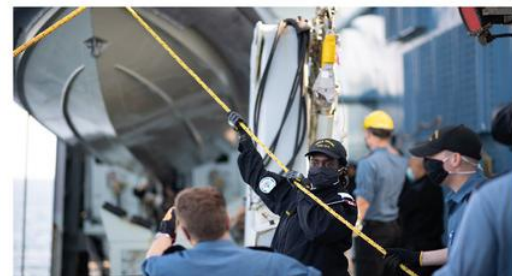
The average age that we place a veteran into the construction industry is 32-34 years old. So, they’re not old people. These people have served their country, and now they’ve decided to have a new chapter in life and they’re going in a different direction; they have a whole working career ahead of them. So, we talk to them about the construction industry

...and we get them into an

JOE MALONEY



opportunity.”



Helmets to Hardhats Canada, Part 3: Building the Future

Joe Maloney outlines H2H's plans for the foreseeable future.

In their quest to reach every Veteran, Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) has developed a dedication to finding Veterans who have fallen between the cracks after leaving the service. "Unfortunately, we have a very high percentage of homeless Veterans in this country," Maloney laments as he elucidates: "They served their country, and for whatever reason, - for whatever issues came into their lives - when they were released, they ended up homeless or near-homeless."

H2H is committed to seeking out homeless Veterans and getting them into housing and meaningful job opportunities. To do this, H2H has a partnership with Good Shepherd Ministries in Toronto. Good Shepherd provides meals, shelters, showers, medical and psychological assistance, and education to the homeless population in Toronto. While they serve both civilians and Veterans alike, they keep a watchful eye out for Veterans on behalf of H2H.

Joe lays out how the process works: "Good Shepherd identifies the Veteran. And then, they will get them to a point where their addiction or issues are under control. They get them into residence. Then," Joe pauses, before announcing with a tinge of pride: "at that point, we get them into an opportunity." Prior to the covid lockdowns, this program was "going along pretty well." But then "the pandemic hit and that slowed everything down because Good Shepherd Ministries has in-room dining, where people come for their lunch everyday. And they had to shut all that down." Thankfully, things are picking up again and H2H is "hoping to get more homeless Veterans into construction industry opportunities as we move through 2022." Many of these initiatives from H2H have been made possible through a grant from the Ontario Government's Skills Development Fund.

"Unfortunately, we have a very high percentage of homeless Veterans in this country"



G O V E R N M E N T B A C K I N G

H2H has applied for project specific grants from the federal and provincial governments from their inception. Joe tells how H2H's relationship with government has only grown stronger over the past decade: "Working with Veterans Affairs Canada has been absolutely spectacular. They are very supportive of the program. We deal with them on a regular basis. Minister MacAulay is really good to work with because he truly supports Veterans, and he really understands our industry and he understands the assistance it gives to Veterans. And this Ontario Government, under Doug Ford, has given spectacular support to Helmets to Hardhats. They support us on a variety of grant applications we put forward, specific to Veterans and the construction industry."

The governments of Canada and Ontario pledged their continued bipartisan dedication to the program on 5 May 2022 at the 10th anniversary gala for H2H in Vaughan, Ontario. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs for Canada, and Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour for Ontario, were both in attendance, voicing their strong support for the work H2H has done, and continues to do.

With over 700 people from the public and private sectors in attendance – including many captains of the construction industry in Canada – the gala was a great success. Alex Lolua, the general manager of EPSCA (Electrical Power Systems Construction Association), and Susan Bird, President of McAteer Group of Companies, kept the patrons entertained and informed as they emceed the evening.





Government Backing, *Continued*

Other highlights included speeches from: Jamie McMillan, who is also employed with H2H, spoke about her life as a trailblazing woman in the once male-dominated iron work industry; several Veterans from the H2H program, who spoke about how H2H helped train them and find them work in the trades; and Terry Kelly, who inspired the crowd with his stories and songs.

Most importantly, the gala celebrated the successes of H2H over the past ten years – including the referrals of over 2,500 veterans into the trades in that time – while looking forward to the next ten years. Expansion into the nuclear industry, providing training in safety disciplines prior to placements, and closer work with women, LGBTQ2+ and Indigenous Veterans are all developing initiatives for H2H in the coming months.

"Veterans are very resilient people, and they are very smart and creative. And they get out there and just get it done."





Plans for the Future

Maloney's plans for the future remain focused on the bedrock of the skills and values Veterans bring with them to the workplace: "Veterans are very resilient people, and they are very smart and creative. And they get out there and just get it done. They don't whine and complain about things in life. And the training they get in the military is just amazing." In the next decade, Maloney is certain that a proliferation of Veteran-owned construction companies will come as a result of H2H's program: "Once this thing comes around full circle, you are going to see down the road, Veterans who open up their own construction companies. We are looking forward to that."

But despite any new plans that come down the pipe, the core vision of H2H has remained constant since Joe first dreamed up the idea in Washington, D.C. two decades ago. The retired boilermaker proclaims: "Being a construction worker is a great way to make a living. I mean, you make great wages. Yeah, it's physical work! So what?! [Veterans] are used to physical work. And they make great wages for their families, they have benefits, and they have pension plans. And that's what we all need in life. And we, in the industry, are getting some special, valuable people."

Beyond this, Maloney ultimately sees H2H as a moral obligation: "For what [Veterans] have done and continue to do for us, offering them opportunities when they come home is just the right thing to do. We've got to say thank you. We've got to pay more respect to our Veterans. I like to tell people: if you're not going to stand behind your veterans, then try standing in front of them."





“THANK YOU SO MUCH. I HAD NO IDEA THIS WAS AVAILABLE TO ME. AND NOW I’M STARTING A CAREER AS A CARPENTER, OR AS A BOILERMAKER, OR AS AN ELECTRICIAN OR AS A PIPEFITTER. AND IT’S HELPED ME AND MY FAMILY.”

FROM THE TROOPS: MILITARY TO CARPENTER

BRENT DEWELL, 32 CER
COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENT



HELMETSTO HARDHATS.CA



Plans for the Future

Considering that the majority of H2H’s employees are Veterans, with three decades of service under each of their individual belts, it is no wonder why they too are so devoted to assist their comrades-in-arms. They know the hardships that can come with transitioning to civilian life. It is one of the highlights of the job to know they help fellow Veterans every day. And Veterans have been incredibly grateful in return. Maloney hears from those who have been through the program frequently. Many tell him: “thank you so much. I had no idea this was available to me. And now I’m starting a career as a carpenter, or as a boilermaker, or as an electrician or as a pipefitter. And it’s helped me and my family.” For Joe, “that’s what it’s all about. That makes the whole program a success.”

For more information, visit their website at:
<https://www.helmetstohardhats.ca/en/home.htm>

The 3 parts of H2H's story will be published all in one special issue, along with all other H2H content we have released.



Industry, Integrity Progress: Helmets to Hardhats and the CLRA



CONSTRUCTION
LABOUR
RELATIONS
ALBERTA



By: Greg Akeson



An Interview with Joe Fadyen from CLRA

CLRA History

For over 50 years, the Construction Labour Relations - An Alberta Association (CLRA) has led construction employers through labour negotiations. Representing over 200 contractors and the largest employer organization of its kind, CLRA works on behalf of contractors to administer all their collective bargaining and to bring forth legislative changes. It also provides training and support programs and helps to craft solutions that keep pace with ever-changing trends in the construction industry. Simply put, CLRA is the umbrella organization that acts as the collective voice of the contractors, while the various independent unions act as the voices of their respective employees. Most recently, the CLRA was involved with changes to the Alberta Industry Training Act, now called the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Training Act.



As the current president of CLRA, Joe McFadyen's role is to oversee the organization on a corporate level. He is a secretary of the Board and also participates as secretary of the Coordinating Committee, a group consisting of the heads of numerous registered employers' organizations (Boilermakers, Electrical Contractors, etc.), in order to discuss industry issues. As secretary of both the Committee and the Board, Joe's role is to carry out decisions and consult with contractors and to make recommendations on different paths forward. In addition, he oversees the entirety of the CLRA.

The CLRA is the umbrella organization that acts as the collective voice of the contractors, while the various independent unions act as the voices of their respective employees



Joe McFadyen's Work

Joe brings many years of experience to his current role as president of CLRA. He started in the airline industry, working as a station attendant providing ground support. While in this job, he became a shop steward in the union, representing ground support personnel and aircraft mechanics. Over the course of 20 years, he worked his way up to president of his local and represented them on national committees. He then went to work for the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, where he represented the instructors as labour relations officer, a role he held for nine years. In 2003, Joe transitioned to CLRA, where he began as a labour relations officer and finally transitioned into the role of president in 2019. Though Joe has spent his career working in different industries, he has always been involved in labour relations. He brings not only experience but education, both which he acquired over the course of his storied career.





Joe Discover H2H

When Joe transitioned into the role of president of CLRA, he became a member of the board of H2H, a role that came very natural to him having grown up in a family where his father was a career serviceman. Joe knew first-hand what Veterans have to offer the construction industry. While some Veterans leave the service having acquired skills applicable to the construction industry, they more often embody the sought-after qualities necessary in an always labour-hungry market. Veterans are mature, they have a sense of strong discipline, they know what hard work is and how to be engaged in work. As Joe says, “they know how to work, and that’s the important piece. They know how to get the job done, whatever that job is. I mean they seem to be very well skilled and very well suited to our industry.”

As in other parts of the country, the construction industry in Alberta is also experiencing an impending skilled labour shortage. H2H is a great resource to help mitigate this shortage. Even for those veterans who do not bring a particular skilled trade with them, the opportunity to become educated in a trade exists for those transitioning from military to civilian life. Both trade schools and union schools provide the necessary training to succeed in making the transition. Joe says about the trades, “I always say about the tradespeople, they are extremely creative. They always seem to have this creative mind, and they figure these things out, and they can put things together, and yes, a lot of it is a learned skill, but it’s a different kind of mindset and I think that has been, to some degree, misunderstood – (just) how creative and how talented and skilled these people are.”

“[Veterans] know how to work, and that’s the important piece. They know how to get the job done, whatever that job is...they seem to be very well skilled and very well suited to our industry.”



The Future of Construction Labour in Alberta

The challenge facing Alberta's construction labour market at the present time is that of building a homegrown workforce. In the past, Alberta's labour came mainly from different parts of the country as people from as far away as Newfoundland would move temporarily to Alberta for work, and then, when work ended, they would move back to Newfoundland. In cases like that, both money and labour leave the province, thereby having a negative effect on the local economy. As Joe says, "there was a lot of fly-in-fly-out in Alberta, so individuals, who would work in our province, lived in different provinces across the country. That's fine, but what you're really doing is you're stealing labour from a different part of the country, you're not really building that labour up. I think the challenge for Alberta is to build an Alberta workforce."

As Joe reflects on his career over several decades, he remembers the many periods of "boom and bust" within the various industries in which he worked. It is during the periods of "bust," when things are at their bleakest, that a leader shows his true mettle. For Joe, the most important thing is to find resolve and be part of the foundation that brings about stability as it serves to assist people through difficult times. "I want to do what's best for my contractors, but I also want to do what's best for the industry... if we can do what's best for industry, everybody benefits."

For more information on the CLRA, visit their website at <https://clra.org/>



By: Greg Akesson



TLA: Military Precision Meets Housing Development in Edmonton and Salt Spring Island, B.C.

The History

Tired of the “buyer/seller dance” so often encountered in the corporate world? So too are Chris Bradley and Troy Grant, Managing Partners of TLA Developments, and this is the reason their “no bullshit” approach to doing business resonates so well in the construction industry. As Veterans both with over 20 years of service in the Canadian military, Chris and Troy take pride in TLA, which started only two and a half years ago and already has a portfolio of 10+ projects under their belts: an impressive accomplishment for a company with 13 employees, four of whom are military Veterans. As Chris explains: “When you come out of the army, everyone expects you to be something like Gunnery Sergeant Hartman from Full Metal Jacket, always yelling and screaming at people, but the truth is, the army is a very collaborative place, built on mutual trust and respect...you are honest, forthright, and frank with each other because you need to be.”

After retiring from the army as a Major, Chris began his civilian working life as a defense contractor for Allied Container Systems. As Chris jokes, “Though Allied Container systems sounds like the name of a trucking company,” it really offered support to “the Canadian Army, American Army, British Army and US Marine Corps.” This project was unique: “we built fake villages, and then we populated fake villages, and we brought movie-level practical and special effects to Army collective training.” This is to say that they constructed villages to train military personnel in simulated real-world environments; live explosions were commonplace on the jobsite, which had the feel of an action movie! But more importantly, working at Allied allowed for Chris to maintain work in the military field but from a civilian role. It also gave him the opportunity to learn about modular building, which was commonly used in the construction of these “fake villages.”



Chris Bradley & Troy Grant

With a growing interest in modular building, Chris went from Allied to join “probably the largest volumetric modular building companies in western North America: Guerdon Modular Buildings in Boise, Idaho.” Though he was more on the sales side, he learned what is involved in building hotels and apartments at Guerdon. Chris’s journey continued to Horizon North (now NRB Modular) as Director of Sales, then on to Octaform in Vancouver, and finally to TLA Developments.

Like Chris, Troy joined the Army as a young man in the 1980s, rose to the rank of Captain, and retired in 2010. He set up a leadership and organizational design company, which was a successful endeavour with many clients from British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and even down to California. He was then invited by Sturgeon County, near Edmonton, Alberta to be their General Manager of Public Services. His portfolio included land use development, land use bylaws, land use planning, as well as economic development. Though he enjoyed his time there and it was extremely important to his development, both personally and professionally, he felt he did not fit as a bureaucrat.



It was by luck that Troy was invited by a large land development company in the capital region of Alberta to be their president, and discovered he loved it even more in the private sector. He set up a land development company and undertook a project north of Edmonton. This incentivized him to better understand the financial, marketing and sales side of things. He moved into working as an owner’s rep for some larger projects in B.C. and some in Alberta. Then, two and a half years ago, he began TLA, purchased some land, and invited Chris to partner with him, and the rest is history.

Military Skills Transferable to the Construction Industry

In keeping with their “no bullshit” philosophy, TLA’s hiring policy is quite simple: hire for fit, train for trade. As Troy says Veteran hires are top of the list, followed by family, friends of employees, and finally pe: “no matter which TLA team member you speak to, you will always get the unfettered truth” Just like the army of today, TLA’s workforce is extremely diverse. Staff come from a variety of cultural backgrounds; more than half of the directors are female, and several of the team members are Indigenous. Worthy of note are two very special employees, Dexter and Mando (their dogs), whose presence helps to keep the staff at TLA grounded and free from stress. It makes sense, considering TLA is a supporter of SCARS (Second Chance Animal Rescue Society), a not-for-profit organization.

As a Veteran-owned-and-operated company, both Troy and Chris agree that there are major advantages to hiring military Veterans. Troy says: “coming out of the Army, there’s a damn fine chance that you’re a hard worker and a good team player. What company doesn’t want that and doesn’t need that?” The skills learned in the military are directly applicable to TLA and what they do. Veterans show up and give everything they have to be successful; they look for leadership opportunities, they look for opportunities to make the people around them better, they look for opportunities to challenge themselves, they look for opportunities to work smarter and not harder. As Chris so aptly puts it: “the construction world lives by discipline, lives by scheduling, and you need to be able to rely on your people. Well, that’s the Army, right? Instead of grabbing your rifle, you’re grabbing your tools and applying the skills sets and training you have just to a different environment.”



And although Troy and Chris never worked with Helmets to Hardhats during their transitions out of the military, they like what the organization offers. Chris states: “I think it’s fantastic that you have groups and initiatives like Helmets to Hardhats, helping Army guys to make that transition because, unfortunately, some of the Army guys do get institutionalized into the organization. Then, they don’t realize how transferable their skills are into the civilian market, and construction in particular. So, it’s great to have an organization (like Helmets to Hardhats) to make that move.”



THE FUTURE OF TLA DEVELOPMENTS

“TLA builds primarily in the B.C. and Alberta capital regions. They use traditional build-styles and introduce sustainability factors where they can, based on regional requirements. In British Columbia, the company has handled projects as big as a 50 unit, six-storey family condo and as small as a 12-unit custom subdivision on Salt Spring Island, B.C. In Alberta, they typically handle rental projects. The biggest project they have in Alberta will be the construction of 360 rental units in St. Albert, Alberta in partnership with the St. Albert Housing Society, a not-for-profit that helps families find safe and affordable housing.

For achieving such resounding success in only two and a half years, Troy and Chris remain humble and do not boast any awards or accolades but prefer to fly under the radar and be honest and “less polished.” What lies ahead for TLA? They will continue to provide a soft-landing place for Veterans and family members. As Troy puts it: “it’s very important that guys like us, in our position, help those coming out of the Army to make the transition to companies like ours. In fact, I feel we are obligated to do so.” They will continue to take on three to five new projects per year and build great homes for Canadians, as well as continue to provide a great place to work.

For more information, visit TLA's website at <https://www.tladev.ca/>





COMMISSIONAIRES





Commissionaires – Valuing the Skills and Experience of Veterans and Their Families

By Capt (N) Paul Guindon (Ret'd)
Chief Executive Officer, Commissionaires Ottawa

This is Part 1 of a three-part series about the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires (“Commissionaires”). This first part explores the history of Commissionaires as well as its social mandate, numerous community causes, and some current projects it is working on in the construction industry. Parts 2 and 3 will appear in future editions of Canadian Construction Journal.



When you think of a commissionaire, what kind of person comes to mind? How old are they? Where do they live and work? Are they a family member, friend or neighbour?

When you think of a soldier, sailor or aviator who is transitioning out of the Canadian Armed Forces, or an officer transitioning out of the RCMP or police services, what kind of person comes to mind? How old are they? Where do they live and work? Are they a family member, friend or neighbour?

Whether the decision to transition to civilian life and pursue a second career happens in their 20s, 30s, 40s or later in life, thousands of veterans are also commissionaires.



Commissionaires – Led by Canadian Veterans, for Canadian Veterans

Commissionaires is Canada’s largest private sector employer of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and RCMP veterans. It was established in 1925 to help veterans transition to civilian life—a social purpose that has expanded across Canada and today, benefits 22,000 employees of all ages and backgrounds.

Modern-day commissionaires are “everywhere”: commercial, high-tech, industrial or government buildings; international and local airports; colleges and universities; hospitals and seniors residences; financial institutions; tourist and shopping destinations; police, RCMP and military buildings; and embassies around the world.

The fact our organization is led by veterans is a critical element in understanding the unique experiences of veterans and their employment needs as they transition to civilian life. We are veterans serving veterans. Board directors and senior management are overwhelmingly veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP and police services.

We also hire civilians. The civilians who join our organization often have a connection with the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP and police in some way:

- They are immediate members of military families, such as spouses and adult children.
- They are descendants of commissionaires, or were referred by commissionaires.
- They share a passion to protect WHO and WHAT Canadians value most.
- They don’t want any job. They want to work somewhere that has a purpose.

“Commissionaires’ not-for-profit structure enables more than 90% of spending to flow back to employees in the form of wages, training, benefits, and employee-centric programs.”

Our Purpose: Giving Back

When you hire a commissioner, you are doing business with a private sector, self-funded organization that is Canada's only national, not-for-profit security organization.

Our not-for-profit structure enables more than 90% of spending to flow back to our employees in the form of wages, training, benefits, and employee-centric programs. The very reason we exist is to protect the communities we serve and in the process, take care of our employees and their families.

Awareness and recognition about who we are and what we do is ongoing, and we are grateful. In 2022, Commissionaires was honoured with a Veteran Employment Champion Award at a Celebration of Service event on Parliament Hill hosted by Members of Parliament across party lines.

Beyond providing meaningful second and third careers, Commissionaires' social purpose extends to giving back to veterans and their families in our communities—such as through national surveys, advocacy and awareness campaigns, veteran task forces, and volunteerism.

Giving back to veterans and their families also includes donations and sponsorships, and Commissionaires has been active on those fronts. Recent beneficiaries of donations include:

- **Perley Health: \$3 million to improve the quality of life for our aging loved ones—** Perley Health is a unique and innovative campus of care for more than 600 seniors and veterans living in independent apartments or receiving long-term care. Perley Health is also a centre for research, education, and clinical and therapeutic services for Canada's seniors and veterans. In the form of major gifts, Commissionaires (Ottawa Division) donated \$2 million toward the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care, the first of its kind in Canada, and \$1 million toward the creation of an assisted-living residence that over 150 seniors and veterans call home today.
- **Veterans' House: \$1 million to take veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness off the streets—** Veterans' House, a Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI), received a lead campaign gift of \$1 million toward their Heroes' Welcome campaign to build a three-story, 40-unit supportive housing facility at the former CFB Rockcliffe Air Base. Veterans' House combines safe housing with essential onsite rehabilitation services. Four more homes are planned across Canada.
- **Military Family Resource Centres/Military Family Services: \$500,000 to support military families who have sacrificed so much—** Commissionaires has donated over \$500,000 towards family and children's respite programs, providing financial aid and services to families coping with the absence of a deployed loved one. Some of this funding has been redirected by Military Family Services to Support Our Troops.
- **The Pepper Pod Retreat Centre for Women Veterans: \$90,000 to connect women veterans and their experiences—**The Pepper Pod offers women veterans a safe place, tools, resources, and a network of new friendships. This haven was created to prepare and support women veterans as they transition out of the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP and begin to adjust to a civilian way of life. The program gathers women veterans across Canada.





Our Purpose: Giving Back, Continued

Specific to sponsorships, there are many examples. One that we're excited about is our title sponsorship of a 2023 PGA TOUR Canada event—named the Commissionaires Ottawa Open—an official Fortinet Cup tournament conducted by ClubEG.Golf.

The Commissionaires Ottawa Open will run from 17-23 July 2023 at the Eagle Creek Golf Club in Dunrobin, Ontario. Proceeds from the Commissionaires Ottawa Open will benefit Soldier On, a Canadian Armed Forces program that contributes to the recovery of ill and injured CAF members and veterans. Soldier On delivers opportunities and resources through sport, recreational and creative activities—a great match for this tournament.

Our Ties to the Construction Industry

Commissionaires work hand in hand with many construction companies across the country. For example, more than 100 commissionaires are providing a range of security services for the Centre Block Rehabilitation project in Canada's National Capital Region. This project alone includes oversight of a thousand contractors and several heritage buildings sprawled across acres of land. As one of our highest profile projects, our contract was recently renewed and the estimated completion date is 2030.

Another example of our work is in Petawawa on the Mattawa Plains Compound, with more than 30 security guards and dozens of construction workers. Launched in 2018, this project is estimated to require 10 years to complete.

In addition, we are helping secure the construction site of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project that links the Windsor-Detroit region. There are about 25 commissionaires supporting this major construction project.

Working closely with construction companies, commissionaires ensure the safety of thousands of construction and trade workers across Canada, so they can do their job safely and securely. From contractor escort services to mobile alarm response, we offer vigilance and responsiveness so you can focus on the job at hand.

**“Commissionaires work hand in hand
with many construction companies across
the country.”**

More Than Security

Beyond traditional security guarding, the spectrum of innovative employment opportunities offered to our commissionaires has diversified substantially during the past couple of decades in particular. Our service offerings also include:

- threat risk assessments
- computerized monitoring and surveillance
- outsourced police services and by-law enforcement
- comprehensive security training programs
- security systems installations
- IoT network convergence
- software and simulation solutions for the defence and public security sectors
- cybersecurity
- and operation of the largest fingerprinting and criminal background checks infrastructure in the country

We'll tell you more about those services in Part 2 of this series, in the next edition of Canadian Construction Journal.

***To learn more about Commissionaires, please visit:
commissionaires.ca***





CONTRIBUTIONS DIRECTORY

National Scholarship Program



Special thanks to the Staff and Management at the OTTAWA MARRIOTT for donating space during the initial stages of this launch.

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SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

National Scholarship Program



A life in the military brings with it certain unique challenges and circumstances that can arise due to the very nature of the job. It can bring absence of military members away from their families, it can bring relocation across Canada and the world, and it can bring transitions such as illness, injury or transitioning from military to civilian life. All of these challenges can affect a service member's entire family.

Support Our Troops, the official charitable cause of the Canadian Armed Forces, was established in 2007 to help meet these unique needs and special challenges of military service people and their families. Support Our Troops offers a variety of grants and programs to assist military members and their families. One program in particular, The National Scholarship Program, was born from a growing need to reduce significant barriers for military families in order to pursue their academic dreams.

The National Scholarship Program was launched in 2015 in response to the unique circumstances faced by military families. A significant barrier for many Canadian Armed Forces families is the securing of funds for pursuing post-secondary education. The National Scholarship Program works to remove some of those barriers by providing scholarships to military dependents.

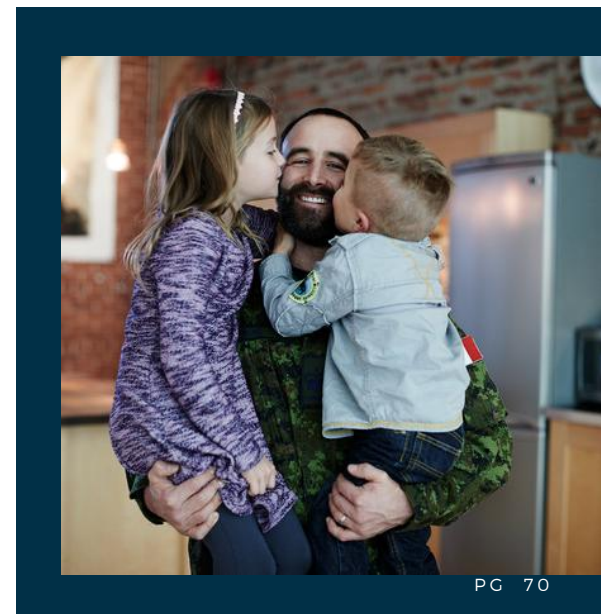
The National Scholarship Program has grown immensely since the launch of the program, thanks to generous donors. Due to the efforts of those involved, the Scholarship Program raised an impressive \$200,000 last year alone, signaling the success of the program.

To donate, visit:

<http://weblink.donorperfect.com/HindenBoyd.ca>

The application process for the National Scholarship Program is straightforward and involves an essay component. The purpose of this is for applicants to tell their stories; for instance, the effect military life has had, both positive and negative challenges faced, and what future aspirations lie ahead. While Support Our Troops funds the program, it is Military Family Services who are the facilitators and who ultimately assess each application.

As part of our spotlight on Helmets to Hardhats and Canadian Veterans, The Canadian Construction Journal is proud to donate a percentage of our profits to the Support Our Troops National Scholarship Program.





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Black & McDonald: A Multi-trade Service Provider Backed by a Century of Experience

Black & McDonald's mission is to do work and build relationships that stand the test of time.

Our company was founded in 1921 as an electrical contractor by two First World War veterans. Throughout the century since B&M was established, we have evolved into an integrated, multi-trade service provider that safely delivers high-quality construction, facilities management, and technical solutions to government, institutional and industrial clients.

Today, our multiple business lines have grown to employ more than 5,000 people working out of 30+ offices across North America. Throughout our more than 100 years in business, we remained driven by our founders' philosophy to "Do things right," and "Deliver lasting value." That simple promise remains at the core of everything we do.

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Facilities Management

Black & McDonald is a flexible contractor that works in consultation with our clients to understand their needs and meet their facility goals. We offer our clients a complete range of hard and soft services that optimize essential operations and enable you to focus on your primary business functions. We deliver planned and predictive programs that generate positive and measurable business outcomes. Our integrated facilities management includes hard and soft services, such as:

- Planned and Predictive Maintenance
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- Asset Management
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- Grounds Maintenance and Snow Removal
- Project management and delivery

Our facility services experts are available to help you identify opportunities to enhance the operation of your facilities and to develop a tailored solution to meet the specific requirements of your facility or property portfolio.

As an integrated, multi-trade facility service provider, we understand facility owners have specific needs to achieve their day-to-day operational requirements, and B&M collaborates with them to provide streamlined technical solutions.

As well, our solutions are data driven. We leverage the information coming from your buildings and assets, so we can help you manage risk and optimize your operations, energy use, and productivity.

To provide support when it is required, B&M operates a 24/7/365 central contact centre and a fit-for-purpose computerized maintenance management system that offer powerful reporting tools and dashboards, giving our customers total visibility into their asset performance.

B&M is hired by our clients as a partner to ensure the facilities under our care are operated safely and efficiently for all building users, and that service excellence and best value is delivered through the life of our agreement.

“To provide support when it is required, B&M operates a 24/7/365 Central Contact Centre”



Sustainability

An important segment of the technical solutions we provide is a focus on sustainability and energy conservation. With the pressing threat of climate change, facilities are taking a more urgent course of action as they sharpen their focus to include decarbonization strategies.

The Energy Services & Sustainability (ESS) team at B&M helps facilities develop a path to net zero emissions that operates in accordance with their facility's requirements.

Integrating energy management into our facility services solutions enhances our capabilities for more in-depth asset management information for major systems, assets, and loads. This is achieved by combining analytics from energy management tools with work order information, maintenance costs, and maintenance frequencies.

Our ESS team ensures a measured approach to maximizing opportunities found in operational efficiency, leveraging industry partnerships for best-in-class low-carbon technologies, and utilizing all available funding and incentives.

In addition to reducing environmental impact, B&M's energy services equip facility managers with innovative tools and strategies to mitigate rising energy costs. B&M's dashboard-driven system utilizes data, trend analysis and predictive modelling to find and reduce energy waste. This insight allows B&M to deliver professional services such as energy audits and recommissioning, real-time energy intelligence using data dashboards, greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting, energy modelling and planning, and P3 energy performance management.

“B&M helps facilities develop a path to net zero emissions...”



Construction

Black & McDonald safely delivers turnkey electrical, mechanical, and utility construction solutions to clients in the commercial, industrial, institutional, government, and utility sectors.

Our multi-trade teams bring together trades, technicians, and professionals to create a true single-source service provider. We provide expertise in:

- Turnkey Construction
- Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC)
- Design Build
- Public Private Partnerships (P3)

From tender to construction, Black & McDonald's cross-functional teams cooperate with clients and consultants to develop solutions aimed at meeting scheduling and budgetary parameters established by the contract.

Black & McDonald is also capable of delivering fabrication and modular construction.

Our sheet metal and custom fabrication groups provide sole source and specialty metal solutions for every form of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, exhaust, and environmental challenge. Our team works directly with design consultants to co-develop integrated models for both electrical and mechanical systems.

Our fabrication capabilities reside in our Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, and Saskatoon facilities.

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