

## **The 78th Fraser Highlanders Pipe Band**

WW1 Henderson bagpipes which played next to each other in WW1 found themselves 105 years later, next to each other at the [Northumberland Scottish Festival & Highland Games](#) in Ontario, Canada this past weekend!

It was a chance encounter. Pipers James 'Julz' Sawyer (78th Fraser Highlanders P/B piper and vintage bagpipe aficionado) and Cheryl Pulling (Smith Falls Gordon P/B piper and new owner of some vintage Hendersons) happened to be standing next to each other (out of about 300 musicians) as they awaited opening ceremonies and the two pipers engaged in conversation. Sawyer complimented Cheryl on her pipes, noting they were the same Henderson make and era as his.

The markings on Sawyer's pipes directly link them to their involvement in WW1, the battalion, and the soldier who played them in war. Even though it was an extremely rare chance, Sawyer inquired if her pipes had some unusual engravings like his. To both their astonishment, Cheryl's pipes did.

Sawyer had been tracking down other sets of WW1 Henderson bagpipes from what started as the 236th Battalion for over a decade because of their superb sound, clearly identifiable markings, and Canadian legacy. This Battalion later became part of other regiments, including the Black Watch). About 18 sets should be in existence around the World today; Sawyer knew of 3 sets, and after meeting Cheryl, now 4.

Cheryl mentioned that she just got her pipes (set #13) but they had been in an attic for many years. Upon closer inspection, Sawyer joked that her pipes looked like they had not seen the light of day for about a century, they looked brand new compared to Sawyer's (set #9), which look like they have been through the trenches. For health reasons, Cheryl had not played first massed bands (where the 2



pipers met) in 15-years, but said that she was inspired to do so that day for an unknown reason.

This chance encounter was further amplified by the win of each band that the WW1 Hendersons' played in that day - both the 78th Fraser Highlanders and the Smith Falls Gordon P/B won their grades, with both pipes playing victoriously off the field at the end of the day, like they had done so many years ago.



According to Sawyer, the last time those pipes were played together was November 11, 1918 (Armistice Day) as they marched through Mons, Belgium, celebrating the end of WW1; photo attached. In addition to looking for a set for his son, Sawyer's research goals are to document the history of the group, share their story, and to one day get the known sets together to play again. If anyone has an old set of bagpipes, please contact James Sawyer of Oakville, ON, Canada.

