

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
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**CANADIAN MASONRY IN NORTHWEST EUROPE**

Worshipful Master and Brethren, my talk tonight is about Canadian Masonry in Northwest Europe from the period 1951 to the present. But first may I give you my background.

I am an officer in the Canadian Forces and I have served with our NATO Brigade in Europe for thirteen years, during the last thirty years. My last tour ended in 1980 where I was a member of DOMINION 848 A.F. & A.M. in Baden Baden, West Germany under the American and Canadian Grand Lodge of Germany within the United Grand Lodges of Germany. Canadian Masonry first arrived in Europe on a permanent basis with the deployment of the Canadian Air Division to France and Germany in 1951. The members of the Air Division were posted overseas for a minimum of three years. Very shortly after their arrival, members of the Craft found that to attend local Lodges presented a language barrier. This barrier in language caused the first Canadian Lodges to be founded in 1955.. Five Lodges in all were instituted during this period at Baden Baden, Zweibrucken, West Germany, Marville, Metz, and Grostenquin in France. All were instituted under the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario and used the Canadian work

Most of these Lodges first held their meetings on the Air Stations and in later years moved into established French and German Lodge Temples in the local community.

As distance from Canada became a problem for Grand Lodge, in the late 1960's the Canadian German Lodges joined with their American Brethren in NATO in making the American and Canadian Grand Lodge of West Germany. To this day 44 American and 2 Canadian Lodges make up this jurisdiction. In North Germany, the Canadian Army which was deployed. with British Army of the Rhine, brethren traveled to local British Military Lodges which were numerous in the area.

In 1961 the policy of two-year postings to Germany was changed for the Army to a minimum of three years. Naturally following the policy change "MAPLE LEAF LODGE" was formed at Soest, Germany. This Lodge remained a Canadian Lodge until 1970 when it was turned over to the famous 7th Armored Division of the Brits "The Desert Rats" on the reorganization of Canada's Military Commitment to NATO in 1970.

I believe that "Maple Leaf Lodge" which is still going today was the first Canadian Lodge to be given to the Brits. Maybe then, this will help repay our debt to the Grand Lodge of the United Kingdom for giving Masonry to Canada many years ago.

I would also like to make note of' Masonry in Germany. In 1934 Germany under Hitler banned all Masonic Lodges. As Mason's and Masonry cannot be legislated out of existence, it went underground. To assist brethren in recognizing each other during this time, German Masons adopted the blue forget-me-not flower. This emblem which I wear was adopted by German Masons officially in 1947 when the German Grand Lodge was reformed as their official emblem.

When I reflect back on my years in Europe, one cannot but be impressed with the flexibility of Masonry and Masons. This period of time demonstrated to me that our teachings which have survived throughout the ages, has the depth and

flexibility to meet the challenges of the future, what ever they may be.

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UPDATE

As we have seen in the past two years many changes have and will take place. The Canadian Forces, Europe to be reduced to 1,200 strong and located with Allies will mean the demise of the two Canadian Lodges, thus ending 40-some years of Canadian Masonry in Europe.

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