

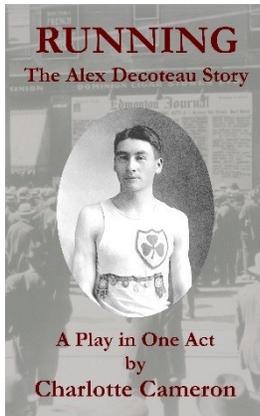


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gabriola Playwright Launches Book about an Aboriginal WWI Hero

“Meticulously researched, this play brings Alex Decoteau—the man, his life, his death— before us. A man of ability, ambition, and integrity. At root: a true warrior, and one who was ultimately sacrificed on the altar of futile tactics.” — Major (Retired) David Haas, CD, RMC

Gabriola Island, BC – Local playwright and retired Edmonton schoolteacher [Charlotte Cameron](#) is launching her book, [Running: The Alex Decoteau Story](#), at the Gabriola Branch, Vancouver Island Regional Library, on November 8 at 1 p.m.



Published by [Fictive Press](#), the book contains her one-act play, *Running: the Alex Decoteau Story*, first produced at the 2001 Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival to positive reviews. The book also includes an historical note about Alex Decoteau, archival photographs, and a fascinating introduction to the play and to the Alex Decoteau Run. The run, held in Edmonton, Alberta, from 2001 to 2010, brought this aboriginal role model to the attention of hundreds of schoolchildren.

Running: the Alex Decoteau Story, a one-act play for six actors, tells the sad but uplifting tale of a true Cree hero. In 1911, in Edmonton, Decoteau became Canada’s first aboriginal police officer, famous for chasing down and ticketing speeding vehicles on foot. A champion runner and popular figure, Decoteau raced for Canada at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. He fought for Canada in

World War I and was killed, in 1917, while running a message at the Battle of Passchendaele. He was only 29 years old.

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great War, Major (Retired) David Haas, CD, RMC, who wrote the book’s forward, explains the play’s significance in his [review](#):

“The title of this play has a double meaning. Alex Decoteau was not only a champion foot racer, he served in the army as a regimental runner. In an era before radio existed for infantry battalion communications, and with telephone lines being susceptible to being cut or tapped into, messages between the levels of command were carried by hand—the duty of a soldier called a ‘runner.’ This was hazardous duty in the extreme, and performing it is how Alex Decoteau died.

“He fell nearly a hundred years ago, in the cauldron of the Battle of Passchendaele, the worst of Field Marshal Haig’s repeated failing offensives along the Western Front in Belgium and France. He lies nearby, at the Passchendaele New British Cemetery which contains about 2,101 graves and commemorations from the late 1917 fighting in the area.

“At the time of his enlistment on April 24, 1916, at age 28, Alex Decoteau was already a man of public accomplishment: an Aboriginal at a time when racist sentiment in Western Canada was strong and open, he had joined the Edmonton City Police and risen to the rank of Sergeant. A top calibre long-distance runner, he had won a place on Canada’s team for the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. It may be added that his army enlistment was voluntary—Canada did not have conscription at the time, and when it did later his police status would have exempted him...

“The play ends with Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden’s blunt threat to his British counterpart David Lloyd George, to withhold Canadian troops if there was any repetition of the futile butchery of Passchendaele. The passage is quoted from Borden’s nephew, who witnessed the conversation, and—as a prominent Toronto lawyer years later—repeated it. That battle featured the bloodiest 24 hours in the history of the 49th Battalion (Edmonton Regiment) and its successor The Loyal Edmonton Regiment. It was then that Alex Decoteau died. This book will tell you how that happened, and what manner of man he was.”

Fictive Press was launched in 2011 by [Morri Mostow](#) as a division of [BizNet Communications](#), a corporate and marketing communications firm that she and her husband, Doug Long, have been running since the early 1980s, first in Quebec and, since 2005, on Gabriola Island. *Running: The Alex Decoteau Story* is Fictive Press's seventh title.

Fictive Press's first title (published in 2012), *The Fool Who Invented Kissing*, by [Doug Long](#) is a collection of compelling micro-stories, whimsically illustrated by Gabriola artist David Botten, each with setting, characters, plot, conflict, climax and resolution told in exactly 55 words. Fictive Press has since published two poetry collections and a philosophical-religious work in translation by [Per K. Brask](#); as well as a meditation on death, and an historical novel by award-winning children's author [Carol Matas](#).

To arrange an interview with Charlotte Cameron, to download a review copy of any Fictive Press title, or for more information, contact:

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