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Calgary Alumni & Friends Dinner to feature Marc-André Bernier and inside story of Franklin Expedition discovery

It was only fitting that Marc-André Bernier, his team and their partners, Canadian modern-day explorers, would finally solve one of the greatest secrets of Canadian history – and breathe new life into the story of the long-lost Franklin Expedition.

The expedition has long been a part of Canadian lore but its full story had never been uncovered. In 1845, John Franklin sailed from England with HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, looking for the Northwest Passage. Both ships were abandoned in 1848, and the crews walked to their deaths across the Arctic. In the decades that followed, searches found relics of the expedition and documents detailing its grim fate, but the final resting places of the ships remained a mystery – until 2014.

Bernier, the Chief of Parks Canada’s Underwater Archaeology Team, will share the inside story of the exciting discovery of the HMS *Erebus* and what it means to find this lost piece of history when he speaks at the 2016 Calgary Alumni & Friends Dinner, April 6, 2016 at the Westin Calgary.

“The tragedy of the Franklin Expedition is a fascinating slice of Canadian history and we’re very excited to get an inside look at this discovery through Marc’s first-hand experiences,” says University of Lethbridge President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mike Mahon. “Discoveries such as these and others his team has helped uncover contribute to defining our country and what it is to be Canadian.”

Born in Kapuskasing, Ontario, Bernier’s great interest in history and archaeology led him to pursue a Bachelor and Master of Arts in Greek Archaeology. He also holds a diploma in education, which aligns with his passion for sharing archaeological stories with the public.

Since joining the Underwater Archaeology Team in 1990, Bernier has worked on and directed many shipwreck projects in Canada and abroad, including France, the United States, Mexico and Argentina. Their list of discoveries is long and storied, including the excavation of the shipwreck of the *Elizabeth and Mary*, part of Sir William Phips’ fleet

that besieged Quebec City in 1690, and the archaeological survey that led to the discovery of a Second World War American plane in the St. Lawrence River.

One great mystery was still out there – the full story of the Franklin Expedition. After a six-season search, HMS *Erebus* was finally located and Bernier was one of the first people to see and dive on the long-lost ship. He has since participated in two return archaeological expeditions to the *Erebus* and is eager to share his insight into the extraordinary discovery and the collaboration of public, private and academic sectors that made it happen.

The Calgary Alumni & Friends Dinner was established in 2010 with the goal of bringing alumni together in fellowship and offering attendees a compelling and engaging speaker who reflects the values and goals of the University of Lethbridge.

A limited number of tickets are available for the April 6, 2016 dinner, priced at \$175 each or \$1,400 for a table of eight. Tickets are available online at www.uleth.ca/conreg/calgarydinner.

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Contact:

Trevor Kenney, News & Information Manager
403-329-2710
403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca