

Legion

SASKATCHEWAN COMMAND



**MILITARY SERVICE
RECOGNITION BOOK**

ALWAYS REMEMBER.

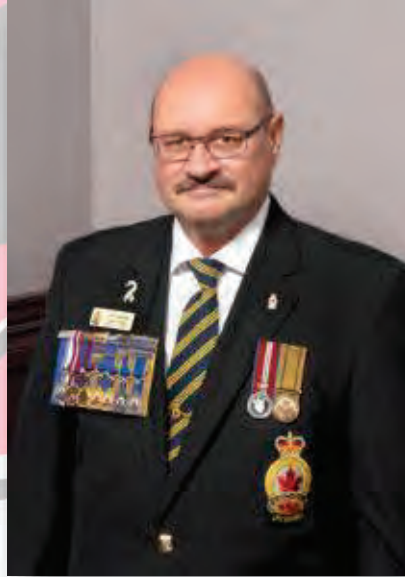
Brandt supports the Royal Canadian Legion, Veterans, their families, Remembrance Projects, Youth Development Programs, and the communities that benefit from the Legion's efforts. In solemn gratitude – **we remember.**

Thanks a Billion!



Brandt

President's Message



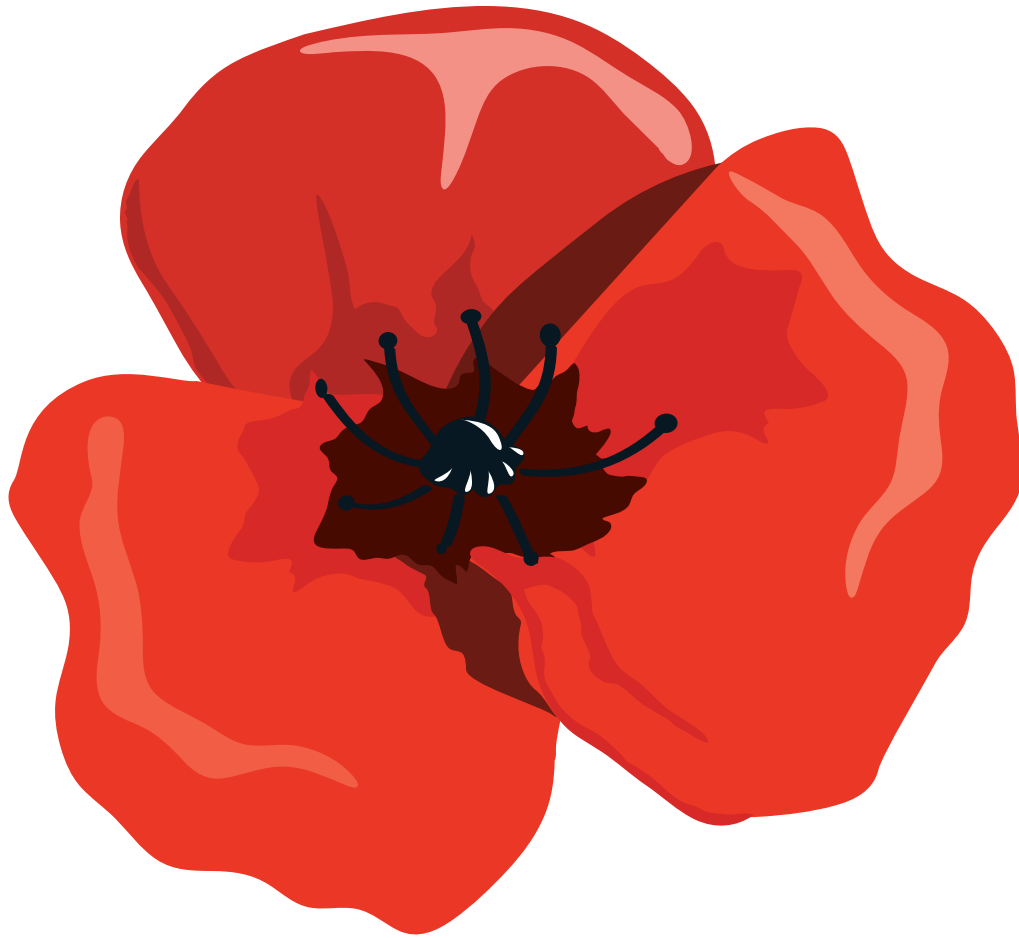
On behalf of Saskatchewan Command of The Royal Canadian Legion, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to our twelfth edition of the Military Service Recognition Book. With your support The Royal Canadian Legion in Saskatchewan, continues to fulfill its role as "Keepers of Remembrance" and continues to educate the youth of our province in the history of our province. We do this by providing schools and libraries with copies of the publications. As a native of Saskatchewan, I am most proud of the military history of our province and the people who have served and are serving today.

In this book, you will find the faces of those from Saskatchewan who have served this great nation of Canada in its armed forces. Many of them made the supreme sacrifice during their periods of service while some of them came home and went on to be the leaders in our communities and province. They built our province with the same dedication and effort they gave to serving our country. Whatever their distinction, we owe them a debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid. In this publication we pay tribute to them by way of ensuring that they are not forgotten.

Our Veterans truly believed that "Without freedom there can be no enduring peace and without peace no enduring freedom". It is with gratitude that we acknowledge that in Saskatchewan, we live in peace and freedom that our Veterans gave to us.

Lorne Varga
Provincial President
Saskatchewan Command
The Royal Canadian Legion

*At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
we will remember them.*



Thank You.

We are proud to support and honour
the Saskatchewan Veterans
who serve our country.





Legion 

**Saskatchewan Command
Executive Council and Staff
2017-2019**



Left to right, back row: Patti Paul (TVS/TVA Rep & District 3 Commander), Lavern Sobus (District 4 Commander), Darrell Webster (District 1 Commander), Al Hemingway (Past District 3 Commander), Chad Wagner (Executive Director).

Left to right, front row: Carol Pedersen (Vice President), Roberta Taylor (Vice President), Keith Andrews (1st Vice President), Lorne Varga (President), Ken Box (Past President), Ray Marjoram (Chairman).

Missing: Les Trayhorne (District 2 Commander), Rossell Marion (Service Officer)

Salute our Veterans on Remembrance Day!

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that they have made.

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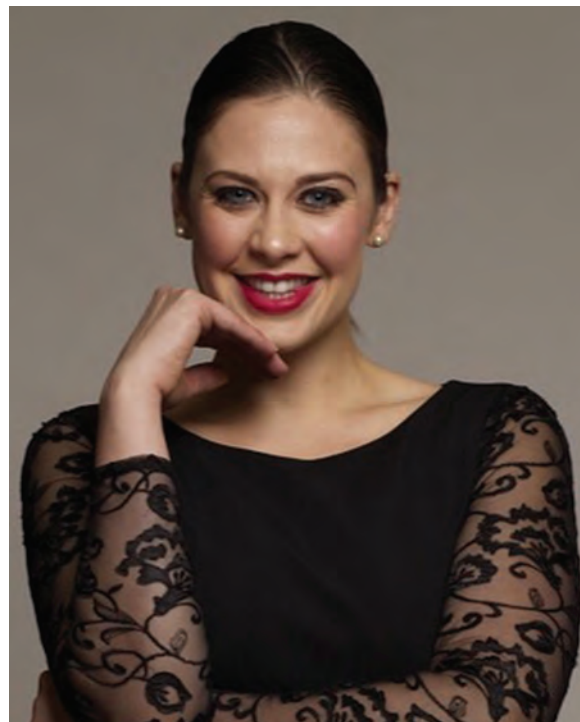
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Victoria Avenue East
(located at Victoria Square)

WWW.VICTORIASQUAREHEARING.CA



Candace Fischer
Audiologist



Keshia Peter
Audiologist



The Eagle Feather

The placement of a feather within a Veteran's story indicates their Indigenous culture.

Many do not realize the contribution that Canada's Indigenous peoples made to our country in times of conflict. In earlier days and even today, Indigenous peoples have not necessarily been treated as equals. Yet, many of them participated within the military to defend our country without hesitation, putting aside their differences. The Muskeg Lake Veterans story is a prime example of this.

The Eagle represents strength, courage, freedom, and honesty.

There is believed to be a special connection between the Eagle and the Creator.

**As the eagle flies higher, and sees better than any other bird,
it brings perspective of all creation.**

"We are all walking the same direction, it is time we all walk the same path."

- Philip Ledoux, Mistawasis First Nation, Canadian Army Veteran

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The Front Cover

The photo on the front cover was taken by Maria Rieger. It was taken at Thomega Canada Remembers: A Veterans Reunion in 2011.

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WHAT DOES THE LEGION DO?

Veterans | Remembrance | Community

First, we want you to know that at the Royal Canadian Legion, veterans are defined as currently serving and retired Canadian Armed, Allied Forces personnel and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Next, we want you to know that, by observing the Legion's three pillars – Veterans, Remembrance, Community – Saskatchewan Command, as the Saskatchewan arm of the Legion, is an active presence in communities across the province. But how, you ask? Well, read on to discover how the head office in Regina works closely with its Executive Council, 165 branches around the province to support Veterans, Remembrance and Community.

Remembering yesterday. Serving today. Adapting for tomorrow.

Veterans

Veterans requiring support of any kind can contact their local Legion Branch in confidentiality which will put them in contact with a Branch Service Officer. Veterans can also contact the Provincial Service Officer at 306-525-8739 or toll-free at 1-866-471-8387. Service Officers conduct needs assessments and based on the results, develop a plan for the veteran to move forward which often includes a community and team effort of businesses, health professionals and other service organizations. A plan could include the Service Officer assisting the veteran to fill out paperwork from Veterans Affairs Canada, the Service Officer acquiring furniture for the veteran donated by local businesses, and the Service Officer connecting the veteran to health professionals.



Here are some of our programs that your donations go toward so that veterans receive the care, benefits and support that is the mandate of the Legion.

Leave the Streets Behind- In 2012, the intention of the Royal Canadian Legion in the creation of the Leave the Streets Behind program was, and still is, to build partnerships with community resources, while connecting veterans with Veteran's Affairs Canada and any available benefit that our veterans qualify for. Our mission is to ensure that every veteran who is homeless or near homeless has the help they need through programs like Leave the Streets Behind.

Discovering the Power in Me- This program was designed to counsel our veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) by helping to create a future of strength and hope for a bright way ahead and to assist them in regaining control of their lives and the lives of their family and friends. We have reached many veterans through our annual seminars. At each seminar, approximately 17 veterans can benefit from the presentations and connect with other veterans who are experiencing the same issues.

PAWS for Veterans – This program matches Service Dogs to qualifying veterans suffering from operational stress injuries such as; anxiety, depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Injury. PAWS for Veterans has a double mission; to raise much needed public awareness about Service Dogs in society, and to raise funds to enable the Legion to provide Service Dogs to Saskatchewan Veterans.

WHAT DOES THE LEGION DO? ...*continued*

OSI-CAN – OSI-CAN is an Operational Stress Injury/Post-Traumatic Stress Support Initiative. Created in January 2016, as a partnership between the Royal Canadian Legion Saskatchewan Command and the Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division. This network of Service Supports includes; referrals into Centres of Excellence, professional counselling, life skills training, addictions programs, equine assisted therapy, service dogs, PTSI Coach Canada mobile application, psychosocial rehabilitation, vocational training, pharmacist assistance, recreation programs, housing supports, family preservation services, veterinary support for Service Dogs, spousal support, supportive websites; such as, Mood Disorders Canada, PTSI support and much more.

Recovery is the process of gaining control over one's life and the direction that one wants that life to go.

Remembrance



Poppy Campaign – The Royal Canadian Legion, since its inception in 1926, has become known for its annual organization of November 11th Remembrance Day services and events, held in many communities across Canada to honour veterans. Along with Remembrance Day is the Poppy Campaign, which always runs from the **last Friday in October through to November 11th** – this period marks the time when the Royal Canadian Legion distributes poppies and encourages the public to wear them as a reminder of the service given by our veterans.

Poster & Literary Contest – For over 50 years, the Royal Canadian Legion has sponsored annual Poster & Literary Contests that are open to all students in the Canadian school system. The youths who participate in these contests assist the Legion in one of our primary goals – fostering the tradition of Remembrance amongst Canadians. This contest starts at the branch level in October, with winning submissions moving up the Legion ladder until finally, 14 entries from Saskatchewan students are sent to The Legion Foundation in Ottawa for judging.

The names and work of all the National winners are published in a booklet sent out by Dominion Command. First place winners are also displayed in the Canadian War Museum from July 1st until May 1st of the following year. Second place winners and any honourable mentions are displayed in the foyer of the House of Commons during the annual Remembrance period in November. The Legion also sponsors a trip to Ottawa for the senior winners to attend the National Remembrance Day Service where they place a wreath on behalf of the youth of Canada. At that time, they are given the opportunity to meet and visit with the Governor General.

Teaching Guide – To help Canada's youth educators develop an understanding and appreciation for Remembrance Day, and encourage youth to participate, The Royal Canadian Legion created a teaching guide to assist primary and secondary schools in teaching students about the tradition of Remembrance and our military history.

The guide addresses the following subjects; Brief notes on Canadian military history and the Royal Canadian Legion, important Canadian symbols, remembrance themes in stories, songs and poems, information about the annual Poppy Campaign and how the money donated is used, information concerning our National Poster and Literary Contests, and suggested school Remembrance activities.

WHAT DOES THE LEGION DO? ...*continued*

Thomega Entertainment Presents: Canada Remembers – Thomega's premier documentary (one of seven war related) produced since 2000, Canada Remembers: A Veterans Reunion aired nationally on various productions. This project has earned recognition nation-wide for its in-depth and sensitive approach to our Canadian War Veterans. The program was endorsed by the Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray with a special public presentation made to the producers and is now a key curriculum tool in schools across the country. In 2002-2005, Thomega Produced a thirteen-part television series (49 shows total), titled Entertainment West.

Amongst the many other ways our branches Remember is by maintaining the many cenotaphs and monuments around the province.

Community

Track and Field Camp – This five-day summer camp welcomes up to 200 high school aged athletes from across the province, after which, some go on to compete at our National Camp hosted by Dominion Command. Our Track and Field Camp offers athletes to go through introduction sessions and proceed to spending time on two specialty areas before the camp starts. The camp includes daily team building sessions, group warm ups/cool downs and various classes. All meals are paid for as part of the camp fee and a banquet is held the last night of the camp. Legion Opening and Closing Ceremonies are held on the first and last morning of the event.

Scholarships and Bursaries – Each branch has an opportunity to offer its own scholarships and bursaries, but Saskatchewan Command offers the Jack Moore Scholarship and Burgess Bursary to qualifying students entering their first year of post-secondary education. These students must be a child, grandchild or great grandchild of a veteran. These scholarships and bursaries can make a difference for veterans' families and offers these children an opportunity to further their educational goals.

Branch Sports – Branches may offer sports such as; bowling, cribbage, curling, darts, 8-ball pool and golf. Provincial Command also has branches host zone, district and provincial sporting events. It is a great opportunity to bring members together to socialize.

Our branches also support their local communities by volunteering, donating funds, hosting various events and any other diverse activity.

To become a member, locate a branch nearest you or for more information about the Royal Canadian Legion – Saskatchewan Command, feel free to call us at 306-525-8739, email admin@sasklegion.ca or visit our website at sasklegion.ca





Operational Stress Injury / PTSD

Support Initiative

Partnered with:



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Saskatchewan
Mental health for all



Current Peer Groups

Regina

Meetings on Wednesdays 7:00 pm
Knox-Metropolitan United Church
2340 Victoria Avenue

For more information, contact Leigh Bishop
at -306-726-8092 (cell) or email
l.bishop@sasktel.net

Saskatoon

Meetings on Tuesdays 7:00 pm
Royal Canadian Legion #63
606 Spadina Crescent West

For more information, contact Mark
at 306-280-9372 (cell). Texting is best or
call and leave a message

Moose Jaw

Meetings on Wednesdays 7pm-8pm
Riverview Collegiate
650 Coteau St. W.

For more information, contact
Jeremie at 306-681-3987 (cell)

Prince Albert

Meetings on Sundays 7:00-9:00 pm
Cornerstone Free Methodist Church
2200-15th Avenue East,

Use parking lot entrance - sign posted.
For more information, contact Michelle at
306-981-6083

Weyburn

Meetings on Thursdays 7:00 pm
Grace United Church
210 3rd Street

For more information, contact Tricia at
306-861-2052 or email
OSI_PTSDcoord@cmhask.com

Estevan

Meetings on Wednesdays 7:00 pm Royal
Canadian Legion #60, Jubilee Room 1317
4th St.

For more information, contact Frosty
at 306-421-7772 (cell)

North Battleford

Meetings on Mondays 7:00 pm
Cadet Rentals, 792 111th St.

For more information, contact Byron
at 306-480-2778 (cell)

Tisdale/Humboldt/Nipawin/Melfort

Meetings on Sundays 7:00 pm-8:00 pm
Tisdale Pentecostal Church
717 100th St.

Tisdale, SK S0E 1T0
For more information, contact Chris at
306-873-7513

LaRonge

For meeting times please contact Jack at
306-519-2556

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Saskatoon, SK S7H 5H9
Phone (306) 861-2103
www.goldenhealthcare.ca

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Table of a Fallen Soldier

The tradition of setting a separate table in honour of our prisoners of war and missing comrades has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The manner in which this table is decorated is full of special symbols to help us remember our brothers and sisters in arms.

The Table of a Fallen Soldier is set in the hall or dining room, where guests can see it, but where it will not be in the way.

The table is smaller than the others

symbolizing the everlasting concern and remembrance for our fallen comrades.

The white tablecloth

draped evenly represents the purity of their motives while answering the call of duty.

The empty chair

representing the missing comrade.

The single place setting

represents your wish that the fallen men and women of the armed forces could be present at the happy occasion with you.

The white candle

representing the light of hope/light of life.

The single red rose

represents the blood shed/the families who love and keep faith with the men and women who serve.

The ribbon

represents loyalty in waiting for those who are serving away from home, while a red ribbon symbolizes the memory of and search for those missing in action.

The slices of lemon

on the bread plate represent the bitter loss of the life of the fallen soldier.

The salt upon the bread plate

represents the tears of their families.

The inverted wine glass

placed to the right of the plate, represents the fact that the fallen comrade will not be able to participate in the happy toasts at this event.



SPRING INTO ENRICHED SENIOR LIVING

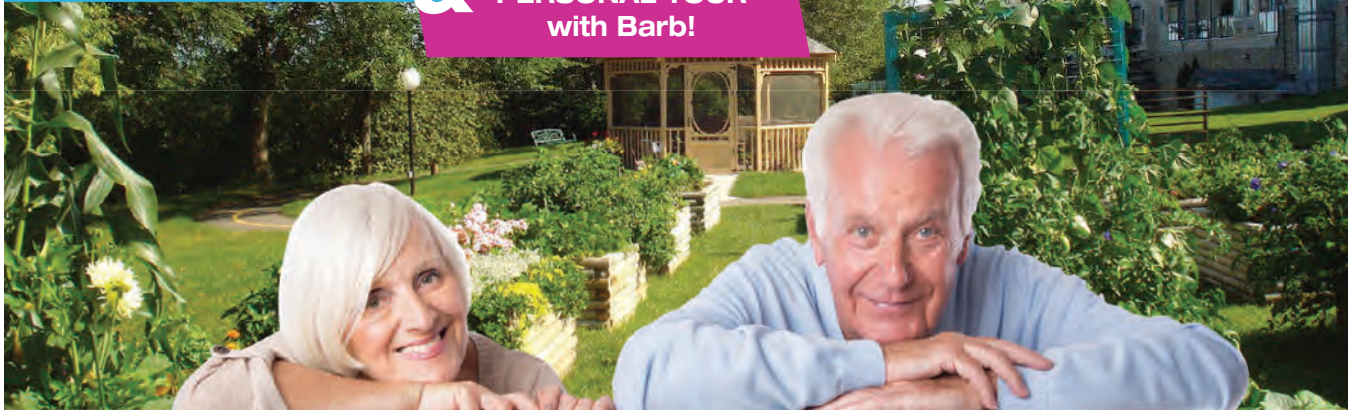
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Together we honour
those who have
sacrificed so much
for our country.





Proudly honouring **THOSE WHO SERVED**

WE ARE DEDICATED to serving the brave men and women who have served this country. In honour of and appreciation for our Canadian heroes, your Dignity Memorial® providers are proud to offer a special Veteran's Package including the following complimentary services:

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Canada Remembers

Since 2001, this project has proudly provided students and schools across Canada with historical knowledge and an emotional insight into the service and sacrifice of our Veterans.



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Endorsed by the Royal Canadian Legion's National Poppy & Remembrance Committee.

For every set secured by your Legion, one additional complete set will be donated by Thomega to a recipient of your choice (elementary or high schools, libraries, secondary schools, Veterans care homes, community learning centres, etc.). A portion of each set's value will be reinvested into the development of subsequent historical documentaries and learning plan updates in applicable presentation formats conducive to educational needs in the future.



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*Hymn used by the 10th Can. Battalion
after Vimy Ridge at their Thanksgiving
Service May 13/17.*

Great God of nations, at Whose Will,
Proud sceptred Empires wax and wane
Defend our Empire's people still
Unsheathe Thy sword for us again
For liberty and right we stand
O God arise stretch forth Thy hand.

Great God of battle steel their heart,
Who serve by land, and air and sea;
With honour let them play their part,
With duty let their service be,
Gainst cruelty and wrong we fight,
O God arise put forth Thy Might.

O God of pity be Thou nigh,
Where lurks the sunk death-dealing mine,
Where blazing roof-trees flush the sky,
In reeking trench and shattered line,
For Motherhood and King we fight,
O God arise maintain the right.

O God of mercy be our shield
And hear our dear ones far away;
For thym we stand on blood stained field,
For us they wait at home and pray,
To Thee we turn, to Thee we cry,
O God lead on to Victory.

Amen.

This poem was first recited at a Service, 13 May 1917, only three weeks after Vimy Ridge: 10th Battalion, First Canadian Division. This hymn was found in the personal possessions of Brigadier-General Danial Mowat Ormond. At this time he was still a Lieutenant-Colonel, 10 Battalion, CEF.

A museum quality replica was donated to Saskatchewan Command by Dr. Paul Kavanagh in an effort to provide the best opportunity for everyone to view it. The original copy of the hymn is held at the Canadian War Museum.



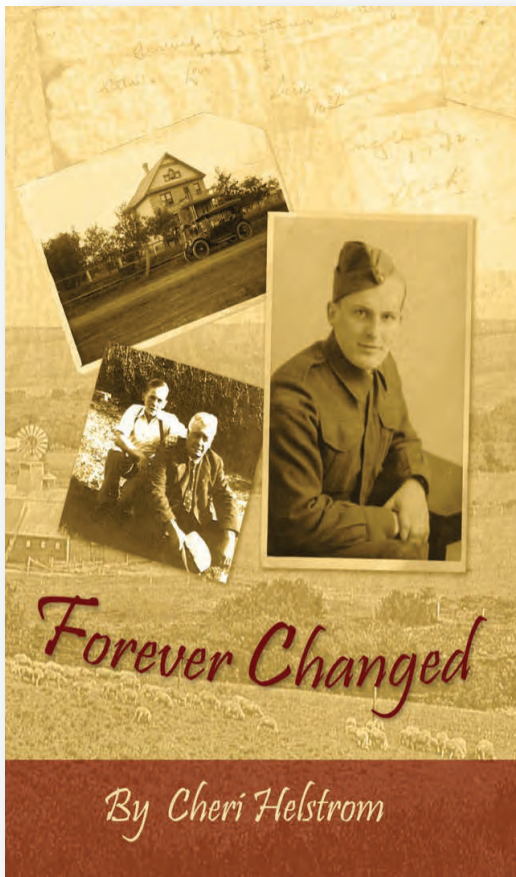
Thank You.

We are proud to honour
Saskatchewan's veterans and active
military personnel.

Saskatchewan NDP MLAs

(306) 787-7388

Forever Changed



Forever Changed is a book centered around the major, traumatic events in the life of Alameda-born Ritchie Scott which led him to sign up for military duty when he was nineteen.

Ritchie's daughter, Cheri Helstrom, tells the story through Ritchie's eyes, using Ritchie's words, taking the reader from rural Saskatchewan to the north, to eastern Canada (Toronto), across the Atlantic to Britain, to the battlefields of Italy during the Second World War, to an English military hospital and, finally, home to Canada.

The resulting post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) had far-reaching effects physically, emotionally, and socially.

Forever Changed honours Ritchie's life and times and celebrates his accomplishments.

Cheri is a retired teacher who lives with her husband, Dave, on a farm near Gray, Saskatchewan.

Cheri does speaking engagements in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and would be very happy to attend your Legion Branch, school, or library as a guest presenter.

For booking a presentation or ordering a book, please call Cheri directly at 306-779-0016 or 306-537-4683.

PLEASE NOTE: ONE DOLLAR FROM EACH BOOK SALE IS BEING DONATED TO THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGION FOR PTSD PROGRAMS AND THERAPY (PAWS FOR VETERANS).

Get your signed copy and visit with author Cheri Helstrom

www.driverworks.ca for more information



Concrete Sealant: *for concrete as resilient as you thought it should be.*

Wood Sealant: *wood as confident as the Petrified Forest.*

CCA Sealant: *protection from preservative.*

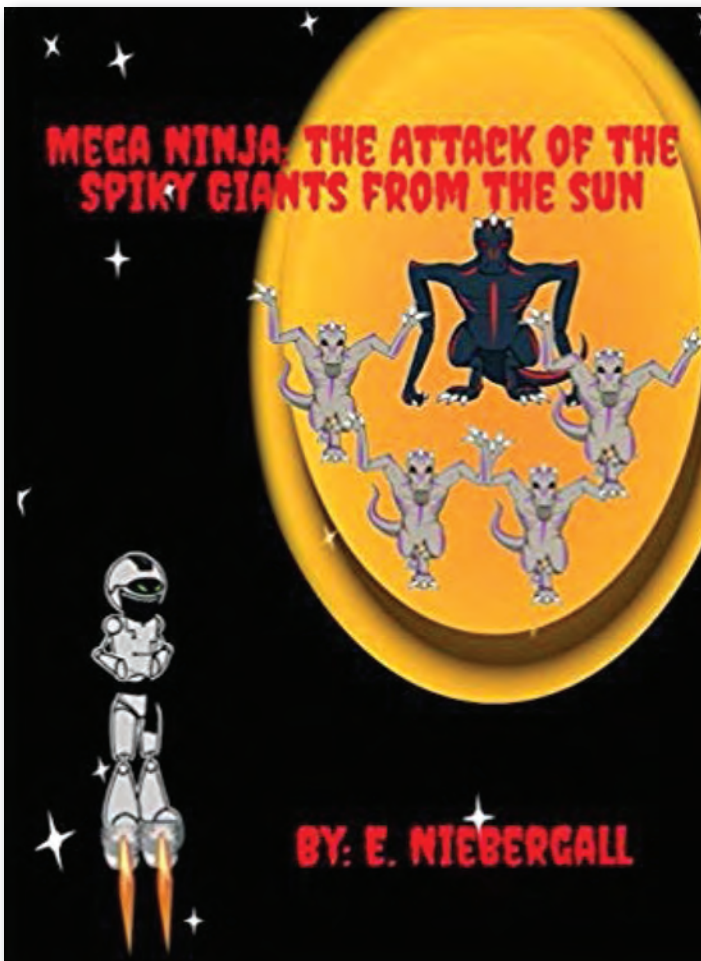
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Proud to Honour our Veterans



Mega Ninja: Attack of Spiky Giants from the Sun

is a continuation in the **Mega Ninja Mini Adventure series.**

After fireballs hit earth, Mega Ninja finds out he is in for a battle.

A new type of robotic hero...

The book is funny, mysterious, and sometimes just plain weird. From the mind of a little boy in grade 3, the book has imagination and uniqueness that could only come from a seven-year-old.

About the Author-Designer

E. Niebergall is a seven year old boy in grade three that loves to create stories. He has made hundreds of mini stories in little books. He spends his time playing drums, piano, baseball, hanging out with friends plus other activities, and a lot of time creating his own comic books. He has decided to donate any profits from this book to The Royal Canadian Legion.



Outside of writing stories of Mega Ninja using his powers for good to fight evil, this 7-year-old is donating \$2 from every book sold to The Royal Canadian Legion's "Discover the Power in Me" program - a transitional program that provides tools and coping skills for our Veterans to help them with their mental health struggles from injury and transitional issues. So far, Saskatchewan Command has placed 125 individuals through the program and all 125 are still alive.

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 and put my stick out by the door.*

All the hotel hallway games we played or slap shot on the bus.
 There wasn't anything in this world that meant that much to us
 We'll use your tears to flood the ice and your prayers to keep us warm
 This wont be our last game we're still Humboldt Strong

Illustration by Andrea Dedrick

*Repeat chorus... Royal Canadian
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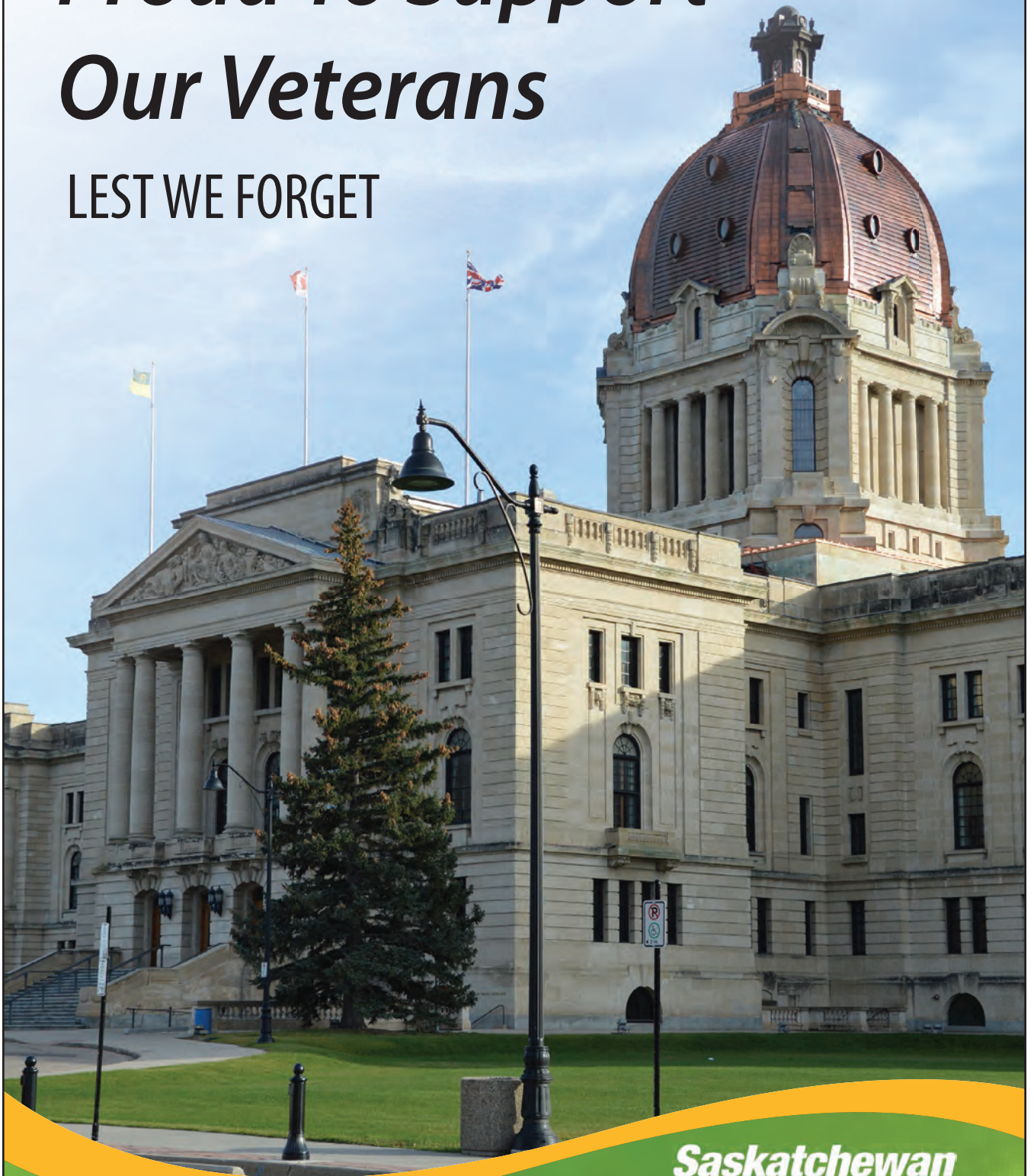
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Legion 

Veteran Stories

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Air Force Harry Acton Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

First of course in Mountain View, just out of Trenton, Ontario. From there I went to [Royal Canadian Air Force Station] Fingal and we flew, the base flew, I was an armourer, on Bolingbroke [trainer aircraft], which probably very few people have heard of. And we did training exercises for air crew over the lake, particularly operating turrets and firing machine guns. And I finished a tour there and I was transferred overseas. And part of my story I'm going to tell you today comes in.

Probably what motivated me, my father was with the South Staffordshire Regiment, an officer during World War I. Sort of being semi-Brit I guess, I joined up for, because they had a war going on over there and why I got into the business I did, because I was a machinist and they were looking for people in that type of business to join with the armament. I ended up as a Fitter/ Armourer, General during the war and there was very few fitter/armourers because you had to be, have a machinist background to be a fitter/armourer.

Well, first of all, we took a course on armament guns, on all the machine guns from Thompson submachine guns, to .303 [inch] machine guns and 50 calibre machine guns. And after that, we took a course on all the bombs and all the various fuses for them. And then the fitter/armourer part comes in because I was a machinist. I received training as a machinist in civilian life. Oh, I did that in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and I did it out of school, out of high school. And they taught you how to run lathes, shapers, milling machines.

Well, this chap and I, we both joined up at approximately the same time. And we were transferred to Mountain View to take our basic courses in armament. From there, we went to Fingal, Ontario and we were flying, as I mentioned earlier, Bolingbroke aircraft. And but we arrived there, never [having] been around aircraft before. And after supper, the first night we were there, Gordon and I went down to look at the airplanes and not knowing anything about them, we were speculating on what everything was. And we'd seen a T-handle, a red T-handle hanging out the back of the wing, the trailing edge of the wing. And we speculated on what that probably was but never having been around aircraft, we had no idea and we thought, well, it's probably the choke for when they start the engines.

Continued...

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Air Force Veteran Stories

Harry Acton

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

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Continued...

So we looked at it for a while and we gave it a pull and what happened was, it wasn't that at all, it was a release for a dinghy which is under a bubble on the wing. And this huge dinghy inflated itself. You can imagine how popular we were and they didn't have anybody that could repack it so they had to bring somebody from British Columbia to repack it. So that's one of our first experiences.

Well, initially, I served in Yorkshire of course. And just outside of the town of Darlington [England]. My specific duties were loading bombs basically on the aircraft and maintaining the gun turrets. Well, it was long hours and hard work. And a little dangerous at times.

We had a few accidents during the war. We had, right towards the end of the war, one young chap who had just come overseas, was bringing a load of bombs out from the bomb dump out to the airplanes and one slipped off and skidded along the tarmac a little bit and I guess it must have generated static electricity or something. Anyway, he went around put it back on again and he touched it and it didn't completely blow up but it blew enough to kill him. Yeah. Which is kind of sad, because he'd just got over there. Yeah.

Well, it's basically knowing how to do it and putting on the proper carriers and checking the fuses and at that time, initially, we had the hand winches and the particular aircraft we were on, the Halifax, held twenty-two 500-pound bombs. So bringing them up by hand was a lot of work, hand winches. And we'd, we worked any time of day, night, whatever. It has to be a four man crew. I worked with the different crews and finally, I became a crew chief and then I had my own crew.

Well, there's one I do remember and it was, what squadron was it, I guess it was 415. And it was ...415 squadron. And my mid-upper gunner was Sammy Bannister and the pilot was Bill Lane. Well actually, I ended up in Germany and we had three squadrons of Spitfires and I arrived there as a corporal. And then squadron leader, I was a fitter/armourer of course, and which are very rare. And squadron leader, guy by the name of Jacques Taché. I was out looking at a Spitfire as a matter of fact, I had never been around Spitfires and he came out and he said, you're a fitter/armourer? And I said, yes sir. And he said, well, you're now the sergeant, we need a sergeant. So I ended up as a sergeant and I ended up running the maintenance, things, to show you how the ranks changed, running the maintenance for fleet squadrons of Spitfires, all trades.

I don't know, I think I was pretty good at what I did. Particularly when I, you know, later on, I had a lot of people working for me. And we always had excellent results. You don't want to hear about the stuff about when I, I ended up with nuclear squadrons and I was the guy that looked after all the load crews in the nuclear squadrons and trained the load crews and we loaded the nukes in Germany. And this is after the war of course, yeah.

And I found a great deal of satisfaction in that job. It was one of the most precise and interesting jobs I ever did.



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Veteran Stories

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“ And we could hear the bullets go zip, zip, as they went by. ”

Army Stanley Anderson Southey, Saskatchewan

I was 25 when I joined the army, it was in 1943. I thought when they needed me they'd say so and they did. I was working in a logging camp up in British Columbia when I got a letter requesting me to join the army. When we went into action, it was through a wheat field where we couldn't see the enemy at all, and probably they could see us because we were walking upright with our bayonets on our guns and they were shooting at us because our job was to take out a machine gun nest. That's our, eight of us in a section. And of course, they didn't miss everybody.

I heard something, looked around and there was a young guy that had joined us just before we started in there. He was laying face down and big grin on his face and a little puddle of blood under his arm. I told him he'd better try and get that blood stopped. And I picked up his rifle and stuck the bayonet in the ground so the butt of the rifle stuck up above the wheat, so other people could find him. But I couldn't help him because I had to catch up to the other guys. And then another fellow, I could, he said, I've got it too Stan, or Andy, he called me Andy, short for Anderson I guess. And I told him they'd better get together and see if they could help patch each other up. And then I had to run a little to catch up to the others.

And we could hear the bullets go zip, zip, as they went by. And they all had wheat head falling on the ground. That's the way it went until we got up to this place where the machine gun nest was supposed to be. It looked to me like the rest of them were going to go right on by. And of course, we were supposed to take it out and it wasn't much good to go by because we might get shot in the back. So I tippy-toed over with my rifle cocked and aiming at the place, I thought the first thing I'd see was a helmet. And the closer I got, the further I could see down in the hole and finally, I could see the bottom but nobody was in it! And then I could see where they'd gone off into the wheat to the left, they trampled down the wheat. I couldn't see very far because it wound around so I went around to see further up and it just went the other way. And I thought, we can't go too far that way or we leave a gap between us and the next, rest of the regiment. So we went on from there.

Continued...



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Army Stanley Anderson Southey, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And we crossed the road and somebody looked down the road and saw a guy coming up the road. So the Corporal, he said, "Get down." So I just dropped, I didn't look to see what was, anything. And the Corporal and another fellow crawled over to the edge of the wheat because the road was here. They crawled over so they could see out, and waited until they got up there and then they stood up with a gun pointing at him and took him prisoner.

The Corporal had somebody take him back to headquarters I guess. That would be our battalion headquarters I think. I wouldn't swear to it, I don't know. Anyway, they took him someplace. But in the meantime, our section was getting less and a little fellow got two fingers, got shot through two fingers. I think one was his trigger finger. He didn't want to quit because he thought that was too little. He stayed I think overnight one night maybe. But anyway, the Corporal finally sent him back because he was no use to anybody, he couldn't even dig his own slit trench, and he sent him back.

And about the next day or so, we had to dig in of course, and we dug into the ground. There was about this much dirt and then it was kind of a stone, but like limestone, but not very, maybe heavy chalk or something. You could chip up a little with your pick. You'd pick enough and then you could scrape up a little and throw it out. It took a long time to get down. Overnight, you could get down far enough so if you laid down, they wouldn't be able to see you. So when this other guy came up, he had been shot in the leg and he didn't want to quit I guess. He came up, and the Corporal had him dig in next to me. I helped him dig in because he couldn't manage very good, and he got thirsty and I gave him my water bottle and he drank that. And he was hungry, so I gave him my can of some kind of spam [pre-cooked meat product] or something I had in my billet pouch. And he ate that. And then about the next day I guess, we heard somebody ask for help and we looked out and there was a first aid man, he was patching somebody up out there, but a shell had come over and exploded and hit the first aid man too in the back. He had his shirt up, was trying to put a bandage on his own back and wasn't able to do it I guess. So this here guy, his name was Green, the guy that moved up, he had been shot in the leg. He crawled out to help and he got hit with another one. I suppose the first aid man too maybe, I don't know.

And I tried to pull Green back into his slit trench, but he wouldn't let me, he said it hurt too much. And so I was going to crawl out and see if I could help him, he said, "No, stay down. There's no use you getting hit too." So I did, I thought it made sense. You know, I wondered how these guys would ever get out, but when I was in England, I went to several hospitals before I ended up at the convalescent hospital. And there was Green. He said he was going back in, he had a score to settle with them guys.

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Veteran Stories

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Army Joe Bodie Melville, Saskatchewan

“There was no such thing as, “No sir, I won’t, I can’t and I didn’t.” Everything was, “Yes sir, I will, I can and I did.”

We were born on a farm 15 miles north of Melville [Saskatchewan]. That’s just east of Regina or east of Saskatoon here, southeast. And we moved off the farm in 1942 and then in 1943 we got inducted into the army. And then in 1944 we went to Red Deer, Alberta for 10 weeks of training, five weeks of basic, five weeks of advance. And then unfortunately I landed in the hospital and the 10 weeks was supposed to be my full complete training and we were supposed to be shipped out, but I was 54 days in the hospital and then they kept me there for quite a while as an instructor for transportation because we were in the transportation department. And we were only 18 and a half years old, we were just kids.

Then in November of 1944 we went over to Debert, Nova Scotia. We were there until the 18th of December. They put us on the [RMS] Mauretania boat. We landed in Liverpool, England, Christmas Day. We had Christmas dinner on the boat. And the funny part of it is on the 18th of December I got my induction call in 1943. 1944 on the 18th of December, the same day, I got on the boat to go overseas.

Even in the front lines when we used to get our parcels, I got a parcel today, we split it. Anybody in the outfit, we did it. You’re not going to drag a parcel around on the front lines you know. Next day if somebody else got a parcel – cake, mostly we got fruit cake and stuff like that. It tasted good. We were never hungry. We were tired a lot of time. We were never cold because you were always shivering, you were scared. Kids used to ask me, he says, “Were you ever scared in the army?” I said, “You were always scared” – and I mean a different scared because, there goes one, there goes another one – it’s got your name on it you know. Like I say, we were just kids and we took a lot of it in stride. The only thing that was always on your mind, how long am I going to be there? You know. What’s going to happen tomorrow?

Continued...

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Army

Joe Bodie

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Legion

Veteran Stories

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Continued...

Because many a times we just slept in shell holes, and between January and end of February [1945], it wasn't the most pleasant thing because you got up in the morning, you'd have to use your bayonet to punch a hole in your ice, so you can shave. And we'd have little mirrors. They were only about this big... We used to hang them on a tree, but the sergeant would [say], "Don't you hang that on the tree." He said, "That's reflection," he said, "the Germans can see it when they're flying over." So we just had to go like this...? And hygiene was number one. Discipline and hygiene were number one. We never had a breakout of disease and there was no such thing as, "No sir, I won't, I can't and I didn't." Everything was, "Yes sir, I will, I can and I did." It was challenging at times.

Just about a month before the end of the war, it was April, because the war quit in May [8th, 1945]. In April we had a big job to do to put three bridges across the Rhine River between Mannheim and Rees [Germany]. And my brother and I, we were hauling equipment for these two bridges, the Waterloo and the Bailey and the Blackfriars. It was the Waterloo, the Bailey and the Blackfriars, they were all pontoon bridges. It took them 48 hours to build a bridge. Over here it takes them four years. Those bridges – they'd hold 42-tonne tanks bumper to bumper and they'd never sink because they were all on pontoons. The pontoons were about the size of this. They put the back-to-back and then they put their planks over top of them. But that was all done by engineers but we helped the engineers by supplying transportation and food, anything that moved. It was pretty well our outfit to move it.

We just did what – they'll say, "Well today you're going over there, you're going to be hauling pontoons or you're going to be hauling timber for the beachhead," or whatever, you know. You never knew what you were going to do – when you get up in the morning. If they say, "You're going to go driving ambulance today, help the Red Cross" – because they were short drivers. And I was only out once, that was enough on that. And then we had to go pick up dead bodies sometimes, frozen beside the road there. The funny part of it was looking at a body on the side of the road during there, I don't know whether we were hypnotized or subconsciously minded or something, it never bothered us, it was just like seeing a dead bird on the road, you know, or something. We had prisoners, did all the work for us. All we did was drive. Then we took all these people, these dead bodies, we would take them to a disposal point. Now, we had no idea where they took them from there, but we had to take them there. We never asked questions. We just dropped them off. I guess they took them into the graveyard and buried them respectively. It didn't matter whether you were French, Dutch, German, a body was looked after the same way. And same with – we were hauling parents, with young kids, from Holland into Belgium, kind of into a safety area. Of course the war was over in that area already but they had to take them some place because they had to have kind of a survival camp.

We never knew what we were going to do from day to day. Haul gravel one day.

The war ended when we were in Sogel, Germany. And the best part of that was it happened so fast and they told me, he said, "You take the truck and you tell all these people that the war is over." And I had it in writing. I run into a Polish convoy and I couldn't understand one word they were saying and they couldn't understand English. By the time we got finished with them, we understood each other pretty well. The best part of it was this Polish convoy was carrying a bunch of German wine. They stopped and they got into it. I wouldn't even want to finish that story. I'm telling you. It was unreal.



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“ Every 11 November, I remember Charlie and I eventually fall asleep, watching him and his three buddies endlessly climb the ladder and especially, the sailor who closed the hatch. ”

Navy Donald Bowman

Neville, Saskatchewan

You may have wondered or may not have wondered what veterans think on Remembrance Day on 11 November. At this stage in my life, I've experienced 60 some 11 November services and for me, 11 November is a day with a fixed routine. Wake up, breakfast, daily devotions, shave and dress for the Remembrance Day ceremonies at a local arena. There is a 50/50 chance the day will be overcast or cloudy. And it is certain to be on the chilly edge of winter. It is also certain that the bad memories will bundle up and come along, especially the memory of Charlie.

At the arena I join with the other vets, who will march in a platoon in the parade of presently serving armed forces, police and cadet corps. Our platoon is a mixed bag of all three services. The marching is ragged because we're old and the air force never could do it right. I thrilled to the skirl of the bagpipes and the whump, whump, whump of the big bass drums. My heart goes out to the poor sods who drew sentry duty at the four corners of the cenotaph. Their heads bowed and arms reversed, motionless for a long time. It is an amazing feat of physical endurance. Last year, one was a woman. It is likely they're dedicated volunteers.

Continued...



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Navy Donald Bowman

Neville, Saskatchewan

Continued...

For me, the enemy is there as well, even though I never saw a live or dead enemy in the war. They're the ghosts of the 30 or 40 German sailors who perished when HMCS Edmundston attacked U-877 [German submarine] on 27 December 1944. I wonder, were those men willing members of the monstrous evil regime we were fighting or were they conscripted? Either way, they died a horrible death. Two minute silence for those who gave it their all; those who never heard the chill, clear notes of Taps or Reveille at a Remembrance Day service. It is over and my wife, Muriel and I, are taken out for lunch by members of our family. After a lunch and that, and then I prepared to greet a host of memories for the rest of the day.

And then I remembered Charlie. Charlie and I literally bumped into each other on a street corner in Saskatoon about a year after war's end. I met Charlie in basic training at Cornwallis in Nova Scotia. He was tall, athletic, blonde and friendly. When I looked at him on the street corner, I wasn't certain it was Charlie. The confident Charlie was gone. The new Charlie was haggard and untidy. It was nearly noon and I invited him home for lunch. Muriel always gracious, welcomed Charlie and adroitly adjusted the menu. When coffee arrived, Charlie's hands shook so much he required both hands to raise the cup to his lips. Gradually I coaxed him to tell us what happened to him.

After Cornwallis, Charlie joined HMCS [HMS] Nabob, a baby flat-top [escort] aircraft carrier. Off the coast of Norway, the ship took a torpedo. Charlie was ejected from his bunk. When he picked himself up from the deck, water was up his ankles. Charlie was first on the ladder and three friends were following. As Charlie emerged through the hatch, the command 'close all white watertight doors and hatches' boomed from the loudspeakers. As seamen stationed at that point slammed down the cover and tightened the turnbuckles. Charlie's screams of protest were ignored and he was physically restrained from opening the cover.

Nabob was severely damaged, but kept afloat. It took 10 days to be towed to harbour. There were about 30 fatalities, mostly caused by drowning. It was a navy version of death by friendly fire. Militarily, the captain acted wisely. The rating who closed the hatch acted properly, instantly obeying an order. The captain was probably commended for saving the ship. Every 11 November, I remember Charlie and I eventually fall asleep, watching him and his three buddies endlessly climb the ladder and especially, the sailor who closed the hatch.



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Legion 

Veteran Stories

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Air Force John Campbell Bethune, Saskatchewan

Got a ticket from Victoria to Halifax and it took seven nights and six days to make the journey. And I got 10 days leave at home, on the way. And we were only in Halifax, we were about one day and the next day, we boarded the ship and the crossing was rough because it was in March 1942. I believe we were on D Deck, that was the lowest deck and right at the back of the ship. When the sea got rough, the propellers would come up out of the water and when they came down into the water again, they'd hit as if they were hitting a block of concrete. We knew we were on the bottom deck because every time they needed a sack of potatoes or some turnips, or something like that, they'd open a trapdoor in the bottom of our deck and get them out of the hold. And you could see down there, there was ingots of lead in the ship to provide the ballast [stability].

In London, I was able to meet my maternal grandmother.

We were air frame mechanics and we were given a course on aerodrome [airfield] defense. The British army had an RAF [Royal Air Force] Regiment that did the defense for aerodromes, but they were short of personnel because they were likely overseas, so they trained the ground crew airmen to act as infantry men, you might say. I was employed on what they called servicing aircraft on, on the flights, you see. And they were dispersed around the airport on dispersal points. And we would ride out there on our bicycles to go to work and ride home to the mess hall at noon and at suppertime. Then if there night operations on, we'd have to go back and see the aircraft off. So the pilot could see that he wasn't going to be able to climb over that, so he decided to crash it before he got to the bomb dump. And it had a 5000 bomb on it and all around it were incendiary bombs [designed to start fires]. And so when it crashed, white lightning appeared because it, it burned with a very hot white flame. And then a few seconds later, the 5000 pound bomb went off and it blew the thing to smithereens. Six men went that way, except I did hear that the pilot survived because he had a steel armour plate under his seat and behind him.

Continued...



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Well, it was certainly an experience I never want to see again. But it gave me some indication of what a bomb was like when it went off.



Continued...

He got blown up in the air and he was injured, but he survived. The rest of them were little bits of skin and hair; and windows blown, broken in the hangars half a mile away on the other side of the field. And it dug a hole the size of a farm dugout, if you know what that was like. So I was at the starting end of the runway that night. There was an officer, he was there and he shouted to everybody, get down, get down, so I laid on the ground and I could, there were about two or three waves of warm air flack go over us.

So that was ... Well, it was certainly an experience I never want to see again. But it gave me some indication of what a bomb was like when it went off. We started work about 8:00 and very shortly after that, they saw a little vehicle drive along beside the runway. And he was trailing an oily cloth, a rag behind him that had fire on it. And every time he went by a nozzle along the runway, it would ignite a gas flame. And they did that on both sides of the runway and then they turned on the fuel and flames shot up about 28 feet in the air and pretty soon, a rectangle opened in the clouds and there was blue sky and sunshine up above.

And the next thing we saw was a squadron of American bombers come in for a landing in close succession, one after the other. And that was called FIDO [Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation], that's the acronym for fog inversion dispersal operation. That was so secret, I had never heard of it before.

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Thomas Charchuk

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

In 1952, I was given the opportunity to re-muster for pilot's training, which I did and I took my initial pilot's training in Currie Field in Calgary, in 1952. Like I went to operational training in Montreal, for multi-engine training, and after that, I was transferred to the squadron, 426 Transport Squadron in 1953. And the squadron at that time was already on operations for the Korean airlift which was known as Operation Hawk. Now, the squadron got involved in the airlift in July of 1950 and on the 25th of July, they were flown at that time, three aircraft were flown to Tacoma, Washington, which was at the McChord Air Force Base and the senior officer at the United States Air Force said, well, we will give you seven days to prepare to start the airlift into Korea and Japan. And our commander, he said, well, it'll be ready to go in 36 hours. And sure enough, on the 27th of July, three aircraft were sent out, one after another, to make their first run into Japan, into Haneda, Tokyo. At that time, we were not permitted to fly into Korea, into Seoul Kimpo [airport], which is the outside base and that was the decision made by the Canadian government. But on occasion, a special permission was given, so some of our aircraft did fly into Kimpo base but the majority of our flights on the Korean airlift were to Haneda airport in Tokyo, Japan.

Continued...

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Thomas Charchuk

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

Continued...

We completed 600 round trips during our entire operation, we airlifted 13,300 passengers and we carried 700 million pounds of freight and cargo. Our operations in the Korean airlift, which is known as Operation Hawk, was completed on June the 9th of 1954. Our squadron during that time at operations, we were flying, usually the aircraft took off from Dorval, which is Montreal, and across Canada into Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver and then on to McChord Air Force Base. The aircraft were loaded and they would go the northwest staging route which was the latter portion. They'd go to Anchorage, Alaska, from Anchorage, Alaska, along the Aleutian chain, to Shemya, which was about, I think it was the last island, second last island on the chain going westward. From there, they would go to Haneda Airport if the weather was favourable, the winds weren't too strong, or they would land north of Tokyo and about two hours and 15 minutes away because of the strong winds. Now, our flight legs from McChord Air Force Base to Elmendorf air force base in Alaska would be around 7.5 hours and then close to eight hours from Elmendorf to Shemya. Now, the big long leg was from Shemya to Tokyo, that was about 10.5 hours. And our aircraft didn't have much more endurance beyond that. So if the winds were really strong, they would land north of Tokyo at an airbase there and then about two hours from there onto Tokyo. The aircraft that we had was [Canadair] Northstar, which was, originally the air frame was a DC4, but we had four Merlin Rolls Royce engines on them. And where the American had the same airframe, they called it C-54s, but they had radial engines on them. The American aircraft were much slower in speed because they didn't have power on it and I remember one occasion that on one of the flights, from Elmendorf, I believe Elmendorf back to McChord Air Force Base, we had an engine failure and so the Americans sent up a C-54, which was a search and rescue aircraft, just to accompany us back to McChord. And we were flying on three engines and our speed was faster than the American C-54. So we had to throttle back on three engines in order that our escort aircraft could keep up with us. So that was a bit of a humorous side of the air. For a long time, the Americans thought we had a whole fleet of airplanes. They suspected we had around 30 airplanes because we would make eight flights a month. Initially we started, we were making 15 flights a month but all we had was eight to ten aircraft. But because of the servicing and maintenance abilities that we had, we were able to keep our aircraft going.

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Legion

Veteran Stories

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Army Stanley Creelman

Nipawin, Saskatchewan

We got some new trucks. Rumours were we were going to Norway, but we ended up with new uniforms. They were all short sleeves and short shorts, so we knew we weren't going to Norway. And one day we got some new trucks and then shortly after that, some of us had to take our cabs and windshields off our trucks and leave them behind. We drove from Glasgow to ... Wales, and then loaded on a ship there and loaded on that boat and headed for Sicily. The second night in Sicily, I was told that we were going to get our trucks put in a barge, to go to a shore. My truck was the first one to go over the side into the barge. And I was with it. We were there for a while, waited, waited and there was two other trucks with guns on behind. We waited and waited and finally they informed us that the crane had broke down and that there would be no more trucks and that we were going to head for shore. It was about 2:00 in the morning when we pulled away from the ship. We went into the water up to our waist and headed for shore. My waterproofing was pretty good because I made sure it was water up to my waist. I didn't see the rest of the outfit for all of the Sicily campaign. I was on the, driving for Hasty Ps, Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment for Ontario. I ended up driving for them. Without the windshield, that was pretty dusty. The roads were bad. We had quite a time. I would go up with a load of stuff and they'd give me a list of what they wanted. And I go back down to the, where the landing was and this was where supplies were all coming to shore. They would take my truck and load it, check it for oil and gas and I'd lay down and have a rest. And then I'd hit the road again. We pulled into this place and they had gone across this river, but the Germans had pushed them back. And we arrived with supplies. Our sergeant got out of the front truck, I was back farther in the convoy. And he got out, said he'd go find a place to see what we were going to do with these supplies. And a shell hit right in front of the truck that he'd just got out of. Killed the driver in that truck. And then, well, everything happened a couple of times. And we'd get supplies up and we'd go them to them with 88s [millimetre], they were a wicked shell. Well, not much we could do, try to get out of the, park someplace. I drove with my doors open most of the time. Because it was easier to bail out and get out of there if something happened. So winter of 1943, we had that terrible battle at Ortona [Italy]. And it was Christmas day and we were looking forward to our Christmas dinner.

We got called out to go and pick up reinforcements for Ortona because they never had such a battle... they needed reinforcements. So anyway, we got up there and got the drop off and then we helped them back out some of the wounded. Then we got back to camp, we got supper about 10:00 at night. But it was good, after eating hard tack and bully beef and stew. We loaded our barges at different places in Italy and we landed there and driving from there to Holland. Rotterdam was just being liberated. There we got lucky and set up camp there and we were all in supplies from the ships that came in there to the town in Holland, as they were being liberated. I never seen anything so... starving people in my life. It was terrible the conditions them people were in. And that's what I did for the next few months. And what did happen, I was coming back after I delivered supplies and when I got in the camp, they said the war was over, they signed the treaty and they said, "Oh, there was somebody looking for you." And I said, "Oh, where?" He said, "He's over in your bed sound asleep." So I went over and pulled the covers back, it was my brother. I hadn't seen him for four years. So we went down to Rotterdam that night. I don't remember too much about it. We had a good time anyway.

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The Americans had asked for help our retreating troops get out of that area. So we were sent up to help with what we could. We had to go up the river into Chinnampo Harbour at night and it was quite an experience because we didn't know if it was mined or anything like that.



Jim Dockstader

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Well mostly we were plane guards for aircraft carriers and just different patrols up and down the coast. And on a couple of occasions we went ashore, a certain number of boats crew go ashore and on a couple of occasions we found civilians in pretty rough shape. So our captain, Jeffrey Brock, started a movement to bring food to the different islands. He got commendations for that.

I was waiting for my course on Torpedoed Anti-submarine, so when I got to the [HMCS] Cayuga I was called NQ, Able Seaman NQ, and I wound up on gun batteries. AA [anti-aircraft], I was on a 40 millimetre on shore bombardments or the like. I was on X-gun, twin four [inch guns], on x, near the quarterdeck. I was a load member. Well, it was picking up the 4-inch shells out of the ready-use locker or the hatch, and then putting it in a gun, loading it.

Very early August, we did a bombardment at Pusan in the perimeter around Pusan. We went in and stayed a couple of miles out and whatever the targets were, I wasn't specifically knowledgeable but we carried out bombardment with A and B guns which were twin 4-inch guns.

Well, we did a lot of incidental bombardments of targets on different islands and different and I guess our big one was Chinnampo. That would be in December of 1950.

We had in about October, we thought that the war was basically over, so they got us ready to go back to Canada but we went to Hong Kong and we were there about a week when the Chinese entered the war and then we were ordered back.

And one of the things, Chinnampo, the Americans had asked for help our retreating troops get out of that area. So we were sent up to help with what we could. We had to go up the river into Chinnampo Harbour at night and it was quite an experience because we didn't know if it was mined or anything like that.

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*All we have of freedom, all we use
or know - This our fathers bought
for us long and long ago.*

~ Rudyard Kipling



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Air Force John Eaton

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Things were not too good on the Prairie in the 1930s and, I guess, all my friends were joining up, I think that's one of the main reasons [I enlisted], and I got the urge, I wanted to go anyway. I wanted to see a little more of the world, I think. And so I joined up in November of 1941. The air force appealed to me more than the army, and the navy I didn't want, because I got seasick. [laughs] I got an overseas posting. I was there for seven months, then I was sent to, moved to [Royal Air Force Station] Wick in Scotland to [No.] 404 Squadron [Royal Canadian Air Force]. And I moved around with them quite a lot, but that's where I ended up the war was with 404 Squadron. We moved about every few months actually, to different stations in Scotland. I was in armament, that entailed guns and bombs, you know, servicing guns and bombs.

The 404 Squadron carried 12 rockets under the wings and they had four 20 mm cannons, that was on [Bristol Type 156] Beaufighters [long-range heavy fighter], that was. We eventually converted to [De Havilland DH-98] Mosquitoes [fighter-bomber aircraft], which made all the pilots very happy; and they carried rockets and 20 mm guns. The Mosquito was easier to work on; the guns were easier to get out, take out and service. But they were big guns, of course. Took two men to get them out, take one out, service them and put them back in again. And then you had to load the ammunition. I didn't mind it. It was interesting to a point of mechanical. When I joined up, they asked me what I wanted to do and what trade I wanted; and I said I didn't want anything too fine. I'd like something mechanical.

Continued...

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Veteran Stories

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Air Force John Eaton

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

“ I was in armament, that entailed guns and bombs, you know, servicing guns and bombs. ”

Continued...

So that's how I got into that. We were in Wick and there was a Canadian squadron, an Australian squadron and an English squadron; and they took turns leading, like the Canadian would lead one time, the English the next time, Australia the next time. And this time it happened to be the Australian was leading and they were flying off the coast of Norway, on anti-shiping. And usually, they would go in and fire their rocket at the shipping and get out because the Beaufighters weren't very fast. And they had to get out because they had [German] fighters there. Well, this time, the Australian tried, decided to run in, take a look and then come around, and hit them on the second run. And it was too late. They got 11 out of 12 were shot down by German fighters. Only one plane came back. And some of the guys landed on ice floes and stuff in Norway; and there was a few of them came back after the war. But that was the worst incident we had.

We didn't lose too many of our groundcrew. There were very few accidents there. We lost a lot of pilots and aircrew. Well, after the war, I'm going to put this in there, after the war, there was nothing to do. So they put us all into any sports we wanted to go into. So I used to play a lot of horseshoes at home, so I took up horseshoes. And I got a partner from Ontario. And all we had to do was practice horseshoes. And we practiced every day and we got pretty good. And we had to go to London [England] for the playoffs. So we went to London and we, for the air force championship, and we won it. Then, they wanted me to go over to Holland to play the winner of the Canadian Army over there. And in the meantime, my repatriation papers came through. They said, well, we'll put you on the next boat after that. But what if you lose that, those papers? Now, I didn't go to Holland to play the army. I had stuck with what I had, I came home. And glad I was to do that.

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and the country grand they wrought for,
is their monument today, and for aye.

- Thomas Dunn English



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Army Bill Ford

Regina, Saskatchewan



When I went into the army, I could already drive, so that's what I was stuck at doing.



My name is Bill Ford. I was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan and I was in high school when the war broke out [in September 1939]. I got up as usual and picked up my little lunch bag and books and I headed off for school. I kept on walking until I got to the armouries and enlisted in the army and it didn't take no time at all. If you could walk and breathe, well, you were in. When I told them [my age], well, you had to be 19 to go on active service, they always lifted their eyebrows and said, "oh yeah." So I was in when I was 17. And I was 19 when I came out. I was always interested in equipment, like most kids, I guess. In those days, there wasn't too much automotive stuff around, so to ride in a car or a truck was something to do. When I went into the army, I could already drive, so that's what I was stuck at doing. But I was in an accident and wound up in the hospital again. Then I got better and I was shipped to Toronto [Barrie, Ontario], Camp Borden, and there was further training there with different equipment. The same thing happened again, I was down and sent back into a military hospital where I spent quite a bit of time and I got healed there. And then I wound up in Fort William [Ontario], attached to The Lake Superior Regiment. I was there for five months or something like that and then I was discharged for a disability and that was it. But it was a good life, actually. You got good training and you met a lot of first class men and women. But you were always busy doing something or on the move. So I covered a lot of territory actually, but it was all in Canada.



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Air Force Robert Fox Regina, Saskatchewan

“ I went down and I did a dive bomb and then let my bombs go and then when I’m going up, I watched him go down, and his aircraft exploded, and we lost him right there. ”

One mission was, I think it was a three-day mission, at there – Portsmouth, on the south coast [England], before our boys are in the squadron. We were asked to fly low. All the ships around Portsmouth are waiting for D-Day [6 June 1944], and we were to fly low and give the gunners practice in firing. And, we did that for three days and it was wonderful, because we were doing a lot of low flying then.

The Typhoon was a very, very good aircraft, very fast aircraft, and it had four cannons. And we carried a thousand-pound bomb under each wing in most operations, and it was all mostly dive bombing. And, we were dive bombing the German troops, and things like that. They gave us times to go out after... and, I joined the [No. 438] Squadron about ten days after D-Day in France.

We had a special way to attack, which we would be flying about 8,000 feet. Never, never any higher. It was always about 8,000 feet, and, when we were ready to make our attack, we’d make a wing over, and down we’d go and do a dive bomb, and release the bombs, and, also fire – if there was enemy firing at us, we would fire our guns as well. And, when the bombs were released, we would pull up, and back we’d go to the [aero]drome.

The worst time I had is one day this one fellow said he’d never flown with me, he would like to fly with me, and I said, “Well, I need you to squadron today, and you can be my number two.” So we went to the target. I went down and I did a dive bomb and then let my bombs go and then when I’m going up, I watched him go down, and his aircraft exploded, and we lost him right there and I felt pretty bad about that because he was a pretty close friend. And, he was killed and I still don’t know what happened – the bombs went off and boom.

Four of us were coming back from a mission and there’s eight Me 109s,* came up, and we never saw them, and they came up behind us, and never saw them at all. And, finally just before the range of fire, one of the other fellows saw them, and they shot one of our guys down, and the three of us all ran away. And, it was our only experience with the Germans.

*Messerschmitt Bf 109 German fighter aircraft



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We were kind of lying down in the landing craft. We went out in so many intervals between them. They called it 'waves.' The first fellow, he got up, got hit and fell off into the water. The second guy, he got hit in the arm and he lay down on the gangplan.



Army Bill Halcro

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

I had a cousin that was up on the ship and I talked to him. He had his hair cut that day. We passed the time cutting one another's hair. So he had it shaved on both sides and trimmed off the top like- they called it at that time a 'little beaver's haircut.' So I said, how come you went and got your hair cut like that? I said, what is your girl friend back in England going to think of you, you come back with hair cut like that? He said, oh, I'm not coming back. Oh, I said, that's a stupid way to talk. I said, I figured I was coming back. I said, what's your girlfriend going to think? She probably figured on getting married and going back to Canada. Well, I said, if you're not coming back, I said, how about you give me her address and her picture; and I'll go see her and maybe I'll take her back to Canada with me. He said okay and started pulling out these pictures. I said, I was just kidding you. I said, I didn't mean it. I was just trying to cheer you up a little bit. No, he wasn't coming back, he said. He was going to get killed. Anyway, that was how I left him, anyway, that was the last time I spoke to him. He got killed all right.

We [The Regina Rifles Regiment] got near to the shore. They were shooting at us all right. We were kind of lying down in the landing craft. We went out in so many intervals between them. They called it 'waves.' The first fellow, he got up, got hit and fell off into the water. The second guy, he got hit in the arm and he lay down on the gangplank there. Then it was my turn. I was the third guy out. They had to holler at me a couple of times because I was petrified. I couldn't move, you know. I had to get out and step over that guy that was laying there, jumped off into the water; and I made it onto the beach.

Continued...



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Army Bill Halcro

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Continued...

There were explosives that blew kind of a bit of a hole in the ground and I got down and crawled in one of those holes. I thought I'd be pretty safe in there. There was another guy who crawled in there with me. While we were in there something seemed to tell me that we had to move. I told him, I said, we've got to get out of this hole right now; and we'd just got out of there and didn't go too far, and another mortar shell landed in the same hole. He said, how did you know that one of those mortar shells was going to land in the same hole? Well, I said, I don't know, something seemed to tell me that we had to move.

About three o'clock in the afternoon we ended up at a graveyard of all places. We were supposed to assemble there for a count; and this Armstrong, he had got wounded and he was still wanting to go. They finally had to tie him and load him in a jeep. I was laying there watching all this; and I thought, he's still wanting to go? I thought if I could get out of here I would be gone so fast you wouldn't have to tie me! [laughs]

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Army John Hall

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

I don't know if I would ever really be ready for what we went through, but then you may not go through what you think you're going to go through, so how could you be ready? You couldn't just train for one specific thing. We had to train for a lot of different applications. Within you, you had those fears that you're not going to make it. You're worried about the training; it might not be the right type. You're worried about your friends not making it. You are probably worried more about some of them than you were yourself.

We were in the big boat first [Landing Ship Infantry] and then it was called off. The next day we got into the LCAs [Landing Craft Assault], the smaller boats and headed for France.

A lot of thinking and a lot of praying. We had to sleep some, but you didn't sleep much with that on your mind, knowing what might happen, what could happen.

I was with D Company [The Regina Rifle Regiment] and D Company went in, as much as got there, but we were all shot up. We lost half the company. The company next to us was also shot up and what they'd done, they joined us together to make one company as a fighting unit.

Yes, I personally was very happy we made the beach head. I'm happy to know that we had gone a little farther and looked forward to seeing maybe that was the start of the end of the war, I would think.

I've tried to forget. It's been over sixty years, so a few things fade away, but then something happens or questions are asked that relive the situation. That's perhaps why we've had trouble getting the war to the younger people. As you know, young people are not fully aware of what happened in the war and that's the veterans' fault, I would say. Although, we don't want to talk about it because it is so upsetting and so terrible. We could never, never tell little kids actual things that happened. If you can't tell them, how are they going to know?

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“ I felt fear, yes. Anybody who says they weren't afraid, I don't believe, because the commotion and the noise and the shells landing, and mines being set off, you had to be afraid, but you wanted to get on to shore. ”

Army Percy Howard North Battleford, Saskatchewan

I'd seen the coast, yes. I'd seen the planes. I'd seen the shells starting and then everything was just so noisy and so crowded that you wondered how anything would... Even in the air, and the noise was horrific. That moment is when you really realized then, when shells started landing and things were blowing up, you realized then it was for real. I've always said you either grew up that day or you didn't grow up at all.

I felt fear, yes. Anybody who says they weren't afraid, I don't believe, because the commotion and the noise and the shells landing, and mines being set off, you had to be afraid, but you wanted to get on to shore.

There was no eating time, no sleeping time. Day ran into night, and night into day. You just kept going. When we got to Bretteville, we'd taken Bretteville, the town of Bretteville, but that day they had bombarded us all day, with shelling steady all day long and all night. That can get to you after a while—the steady shelling. Then that night the tanks broke through in Bretteville. They got right through the town. I was in a trench and dug a hole over here. Our headquarters were just across the road, and there was like a street. When I came out in the morning there was a German tank sitting there that had got hit. The driver, as I said before, was lying half out of the tank, burning. You wouldn't get me in a tank. But they had got in that far. My wife's brother-in-law was killed that night too. I thought I'd go across and check on them, so I got out of my hole, went over; and it was a mess. There was a hand laying there, an arm laying there. It was a real bad night. They told us all, you know when this happens, you're going to see things that aren't nice. But, I guess we were like anybody today when we say to most people well, you know this happened; and it kind of goes in one ear and out the other. It really doesn't sink in until you're there. Then it sinks in. Yes, you do see a lot of things. I still see things.



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“ You could only do convoys up to Murmansk from, say, late September-early October through to March. ”

Navy Andrew Irwin Regina, Saskatchewan

Andrew Irwin, Navigator's Yeoman, Royal Canadian Navy, HMCS Algonquin

“Navigator's Yeoman”

Well, when I first got aboard, I was in the galley, peeling spuds; and for some reason or other, I guess the navigation officer figured I could do better than that, so I became navigator's yeoman and that meant that I was looking after all the charts and making all the admiralty changes to them that came in on a fairly regular basis. When we were operational at sea, myself and another chap who were assigned to the navigator, we would, whenever we were laying on a course, we would tell the bridge when they had to zig and when they had to zag, and so that was the prime function. It was much nicer sitting in a navigator's cabin than sitting out in the cold on a B gun [one of the ship's anti-aircraft guns], in watch station.

"HMCS Algonquin"

When we first went up there [on the Murmansk Run, escorting convoys of supplies to the Soviet Arctic port of Murmansk], we were doing operations up and down the Norwegian coast; and most of our work was escorting aircraft carriers that we would go up and lay off Altafjord in Norway because that's where the sister ship, Tirpitz, to the Bismarck [German battleships], was holed up. And a real danger would happen if it was ever allowed to get out and get into the sea lanes. So it had been created inactive in November of 1942 and three two-man subs got inside and did some pretty substantial damage to it. But in the spring of 1944, intelligence had found out that they were getting ready so that they could go back to sea, so there was a concerted effort on the part of the Home Fleet to keep it holed up in there.

Continued...

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Navy Andrew Irwin Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued...

"Murmansk Run"

We did two or three runs up to the Murmansk. You could only do convoys up to Murmansk from, say, late September-early October through to March because there was, in the period in between there, between March and September, there was so much daylight that you were exposed to enemy aircraft for long periods of time; and it just wasn't in the books to be caught in that particular situation. Once the convoys were able to have some aircraft running with them, it changed somewhat. But the biggest problem was because you're going up around the north cape of Norway and then down into Murmansk, and you're pretty close in shore. I mean, you're maybe 70 miles or 75 miles off, but yeah.

"Convoy Under Fire"

I think it was in early October of 1944, just over around the North Cape [Norway]. We had aircraft on two different occasions, but it didn't amount to very much. And, of course, we were in the position then where we had one of the small aircraft carriers with him, so they could put up some defense that we hadn't had on earlier runs.

"Convoy in Bad Weather"

We were coming back, we did a convoy over Christmas-New Year's of 1944 to Murmansk and coming back, we ran into a storm with force eight winds, which is getting up there. Nine and ten are the worst. We were running force eight, and we couldn't keep the convoy together and they broke up. And then, when it subsided, we were trying to round up the ships and get them back in again. But that was the worst experience we had on the Murmansk Run. We had some aircraft problems once in a while, but that was minor compared to this one.

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It was very secretive, and we were not allowed to tell anybody the frequencies or if we were ever caught by the enemy, to divulge anything about radar.



Air Force Peter John Maidstone, Saskatchewan

I was signed up as a radar technician in the early part of 1942, and we went to exhibition grounds in Toronto for basic training, as an aircraft second class. And in the fall, went over to the University of Toronto for our radio test. And we had to put together what they called a pentode radio, that's a five tubed radio. They had all the pieces in a box, so the tubes and resistors, capacitors, things like that. And they took two of us together and we had to make a radio out of it so that it would work. And we succeeded in that fine, and then after that, we graduated, only about 40 to 50 percent of the class graduated from there because it was a pretty tough thing.

None of us knew anything about radio, putting it together, except to turn a knob and you get a station. After that, we went to Clinton [British Columbia] for six weeks I believe it was, I'm not positive but I think it was six weeks, where we learned about radar there. And we were told the frequencies of certain equipment and how we would work on it and do it and it was very secretive, and we were not allowed to tell anybody the frequencies or if we were ever caught by the enemy, to divulge anything about radar, where we were going or anything like that. So they had a date for me to go to Halifax and go over to Great Britain and that was it until the early part of 1943, they sent us to Halifax to go overseas to Great Britain. And they dropped me off, just one of us at a time, at a Royal Air Force [RAF] station. And this place was in a place called Wigsley in Lincolnshire, 1654 conversion unit. And that's where I met another English corporal and he showed me the ropes and things like that.

Continued...



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Air Force Peter John Maidstone, Saskatchewan

Continued...

There was a sergeant in charge of our section, radar section, Sergeant Mervin. And after about five months, they made me a corporal. Just before the D-Day, I'd say a few months before D-Day, in the latter part of 1943, they said we were going over, they wanted a corporal and six to eight men, two corporals and the sergeant. We were going over there to destroy a building, a radar building. And that's what they told us, and I went through a training, I forget where it was at, I think it was a place called Syerston, put aside for training, and we went through a pretty rough training schedule there with machine Bren guns and 303s [rifles] and bayonets. And one thing that stands out in my mind was we had to cross a river, this is cute, and it was about, oh, 150 feet wide. And they said, "Now, it's not too deep in the middle, you can walk across." We said fine, we straggled in a line and halfway across, the water was up to my mouth. And the sergeant hollered back, "Don't worry, that's as deep as it gets!"

All of a sudden, I felt somebody on my back. I said, "What the hell's going on!" And somebody was on my back, and he said, "Don't worry," he says, "I couldn't breathe." It was a little Welshman who was in our crew. He jumped on my back because the water was too deep for him, he was only about five foot two. So we got across alright and he thanked me and he said, "I couldn't help it, I'm sorry." But it was the cutest thing I've, I wish there was a picture taken of it. Here he was on my back with one hand up hanging on to me and another hand to hold his rifle up because we couldn't get our rifle wet. And I would have laughed if somebody had taken a picture of that.

We were off by ourselves a bit at the end of one of the runways, and of course with planes taking off day and night, it got to be a bore. So I had, let's see, about six guys were under me and they did a darned good job. We got a couple more Canadians, and one day, one of the sergeant came in with a girl. He said, "She's trained, use her." I said, "Oh, great!" So I put her on one of the inspection tours. She did alright, she was a pretty good girl. She knew what she was doing. The war was over before very long and then we had a big party of course. I agreed with my girlfriend that, when she said she wouldn't go over to the colonies, I said, "Well, when I leave here, that's it.

Well, I won't even write you and or keep in communications, so what's the point." So we never wrote to one another, I have no idea what ever happened to her or what. But she was a very nice young lady. She was in the WAAF of course, Women's Auxiliary Air Force. She was a motor transport driver, an MT driver. Oh, she brought somebody over to the section one day and I met her that way and there was another corporal in our section and he had a girlfriend too, a Canadian too, incidentally, from Whitehorse. Very nice fellow. And we chummed around together, the four of us.

We had a big party in the mess that night and had a couple drinks of course and said goodbye to everybody. It was a great, great night. I know I was happy, after almost three years, of getting out of there. Yeah.

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I guess, before the war I had a tender spot in my heart for human beings and that sort of thing and the war kind of took that away.



Army Lloyd Jones

Quill Lake, Saskatchewan

It turned out there was a one-shoe repairman for every company and D Company had been formed and deformed and reformed and taken apart again. And they were on a new phase of rebuilding it because they were building up the regiment to go over to Italy and spin on to anybody except the higher echelon.

So long and the short of it I had to have a test and I passed my test and so on and I became the shoemaker for D Company. And I can't remember just when this happened, but I got transferred to B Company a while later. And there's, the company commander was a fellow by the name of Major Harold Snellgrove and I'm eternally grateful for him because the story went around and whether it was true or not that there was no place for a shoemaker in an infantry company.

But I guess after the First World War I guess infantry everybody rode horses, I don't know. But there was no horses in the Second World War and the fellow walking around wearing shoes and they all needed to be repaired. And so when we went every day we went to our shoe repair shop and worked on shoes and the other guys, they would learn how to do battle.

So when the crunch came, we went into action. It was at the discretion of our company commander what happened to us. And Major Snellgrove thought I had made a heck of a good helper for the cooks. So I became the cook's helper while we were in, went into battle. I will be eternally grateful to that man for all my life.

Continued...



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Army Lloyd Jones

Quill Lake, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Our first action was in Ortona in Italy. And Ortona was one hell of a battleground. And they had pushed the Germans back a ways from Ortona and how far the actual front was from where our headquarters were I never did know. But there was one guy, he was a fellow shoe repair fellow from C Company, Jimmy Hyde, he was about the same age as I was. And we became pretty good friends and the morning after when the troops were coming out of the front line, there was my friend Jimmy Hyde.

I didn't recognize him. And that it just, I don't know, just I can't explain how I felt but I was awful glad it was him and not me. And I never saw Jimmy again. I felt that he was, whether it was too much for him and he couldn't take it, he was shell-shocked when I saw him. But I never seen him again.

I guess, before the war I had a tender spot in my heart for human beings and that sort of thing and the war kind of took that away. I was, you got kind of callous and hard about the matter of death and so on. You see people that were being, I remember one time in Italy, I forget where it was, but I never knew where I was in Italy because I didn't know what my directions were.

And we were in this little town. There's some fellows there that were digging up two soldiers that had been buried there. And they'd been buried for a while and it wasn't a very nice site to see or smell. But I kind of shrugged it off and go, "This is life."

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“The pilot made the decision to try a landing and I think I recall to this day that he said, “Hang on chaps, this is liable to be a controlled crash.”

Air Force William Kondra Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

I am William Kondra. My part in World War II was with the Canadian air force, which subsequently I ended up being a crew member in a Lancaster bomber. Not everybody could or should be a pilot. There are other categories of air crew that were required as well. As things turned out, I was eventually... I gradually did as a bomb aimer, front gunner and assistant navigator.

Oh, we were terribly excited that we were trained on a Lancaster. Its performance was just outstanding. We were sent to 100 Squadron in one group, at an airbase called Waltham, Waltham air base, Grimsby, on the east coast of England. We were initially equipped with early bombsight, which wasn't practical when we started night bombing. There were too many manual settings and insufficient light in the aircraft for accurate settings. So we were equipped with a new bombsight for night bombing. Some of the manual settings that I did on the old bomb sight were taken right from the aircraft instruments.

As we approached the target, all I had to set on my bomb sight was wind speed and direction, which was... the navigator... they tried to get as accurate a wind speed direction as they could. Therefore, some of the planes were sent on weather reconnaissance and they would broadcast an estimated wind speed direction to the radio officer, who then received it in Morse Code and then passed on to the navigator and myself.

Our targets were in industries. Any factory that was involved with armament production was a target and we were to destroy it. It's impossible to identify a target from 20,000 feet at night, so we had planes who flew ahead of us, called the Pathfinders. And they released markers to mark the target. They had a little more sophisticated in navigation aids than we did, so we relied on their accuracy. Over the target, I aimed at those target markers that were released by the pathfinder aircraft.

Continued...



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Air Force William Kondra Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Actually, a bombing mission was a terrifying experience because you're trying to get to your target, the enemy defenses are trying their best to destroy you before you get to the target. If you do succeed to get to your target, it is ringed with anti-aircraft guns, by just patrol the perimeters, so it's just a very dangerous situation. But you don't dwell too much on that, you are involved in carrying out your duties, so you try and complete your bombing mission.

The one that will live with me was a mission to Berlin. Now, Berlin was a very different target, very heavily defended. However, planes from our squadron... Now, at one time a squadron consisted of 24 Lancasters, in peacetime I understand it's only 12. But a squadron was, a wartime squadron consisted of 24 aircraft. All our aircraft from that particular mission returned safely. However, during briefing, because you're briefed before every mission, the weatherman spoke of some atrocious weather that we would experience upon our return. But he said that, now he used a different word but that is what he meant. Told us at briefing that we would just beat this atrocious weather, meaning that we would land before it really affected our landing. That didn't happen because on our return, the whole area was under heavy fog, deep clouds, drizzle. Wartime bases were not lit up. Runway lights were hooded, so that a pilot could see it on his approach at a certain angle when he lands.

Now, upon return, we couldn't even identify our landing base. It was under heavy cloud. And also, you're only given 15 minute fuel safety margin. Meaning, you have about 15 minutes of fuel when you return. That fuel was rapidly decreasing, the control tower's stacked us up 500 feet above each other. We circled... Finally, the flight engineer told the pilot our fuel gauges are reading empty, so pilot had to make a decision as to what to do next. They even laid a searchlight along the runway for us to aid us in landing. That didn't help much because all it gave us was a glow. The pilot made the decision to try a landing and I think I recall to this day that he said, "Hang on chaps, this is liable to be a controlled crash." However, it wasn't. He set that Lancaster down and we came to a screeching halt about a few feet from the end of the runway and landed safely. However, two Lancasters trying to do the same thing collided, trying to land. Two more came too low, hit some high ground and crashed. And next morning, we had 26 dead airmen. There was only two survivors. That particular bombing mission will live with me until my days are over.



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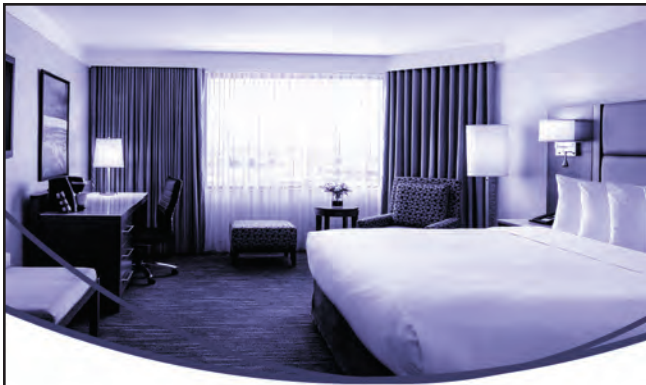
Army Howard Love Yorkton, Saskatchewan



I was there with the Seaforth Highlanders as an artillery observer and they had, in a 12-hour period, even the cooks and the drivers, they had to throw everybody into the battle.



I was one of the first hundred Canadians on shore when we invaded Sicily. And I got wounded in Sicily, wounded in the leg but I kind of hid it. I bandaged myself every day. Well, I went to the dressing station. We were with the British infantry at the time. And they bandaged my knee to start with and then I just kept bandaging myself because I didn't want to leave the regiment. So I just looked after my own wound. We were mortared. The major I was with got badly wounded but I just got a splinter of mortar in my leg. Then after we conquered Sicily, 40 some odd days, a very short period to conquer Sicily, the 3rd of September, 1943, we crossed the Straits of Messina, the Canadians were in the vanguard [the foremost part of an army advancing] in that and landed on the toe of Italy. Then we proceeded to follow the Germans, they were retreating. We followed them all the way up in Italy to, a quarter of the way up Italy. Very little action until Christmas of 1943. The enemy had a defensive line across Italy and they held out, and we were in a real tough battle in a place called Ortona. Of course, after Ortona, we had so many casualties, we had to rest and retrain people until about May, 1944. We were on the Adriatic side of Italy, went across to the other side, the western side, and took part in the Battle of [Monte] Cassino. You've heard of the monastery of Cassino, high up on the mountain, the Germans were there and they could see everything that went on down below in the valley. So we slept every night and didn't do much in the daytime, just didn't move around, so they couldn't see what was going on. Then we surprised them by attacking them, they didn't know we were there. And we broke through their defense, which was the Sangro River. And from there, we carried on. Then they had a strong defensive line between Cassino and Rome, called the Hitler line. And I was there with the Seaforth Highlanders [of Canada] as an artillery observer and they had, in a 12-hour period, even the cooks and the drivers, they had to throw everybody into the battle. But then the next big battle was back on the Adriatic [Coast], called the Gothic line. Well, we surprised the Germans there too, they didn't have their line completely fortified when we got there and broke through the line very easily. And from there, we carried on until we got to, around Christmas, a series of rivers. That was very difficult to get across and muddy and Italy, it never rains in the summer, just rains all winter. So we were bogged down there for, until spring of 1945. At which time we went from Italy over to France and Germany, northwest Europe.



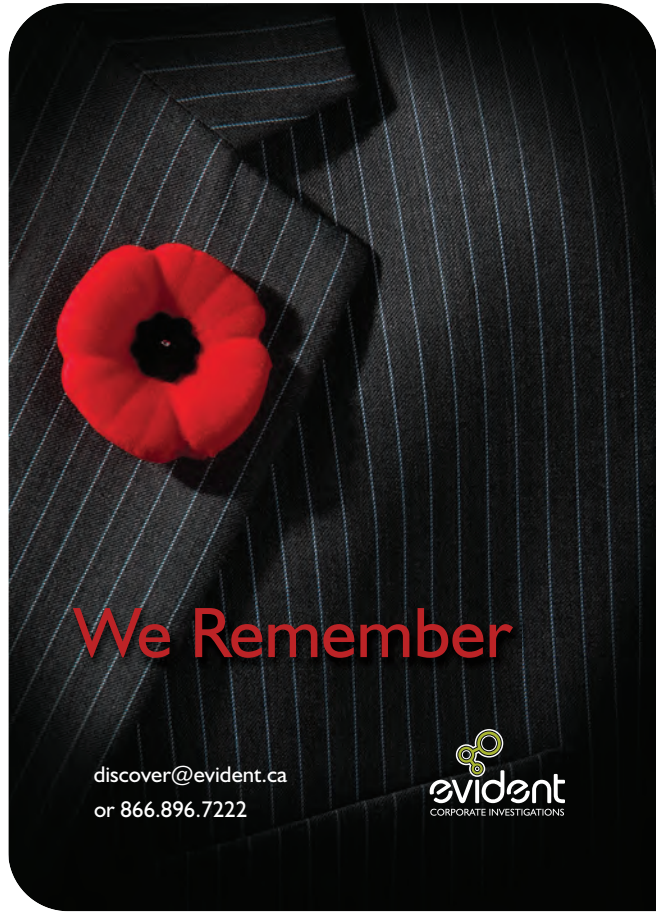
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Well, one night, Hill 355, the RCRs [the Royal Canadian Regiment], they got run over. And the FOO [Forward Observation Officer] at that time called fire right down on his own position to keep the [North] Koreans from coming in.



David Lucas

Wilcox, Saskatchewan

When you leave to go into one of these arguments, you've got to grow up within five minutes. And I just turned 19. I had to wait as a matter of fact for two years because I was 17 and they wouldn't take me until I got 19. And I was pretty well trained but you didn't really understand what was going on. They send your sit reps [situation reports] and all sorts of stuff and they point their finger at you, pack your bags, you're on your way, then you start thinking. You get on the boat and it took 21 days on a troop ship. And then you've got to go ashore by landing barges. So you've got a whole bunch of stuff in there rattling around. And by the time you get to the front, you have, like I say, you grew up within 21 days. But again, being on that ship, there was some of the older vets and they kept talking to us and keep the morale and it worked. Operation point one is to get rounds on the ground to defend the infanteers. In order to do that, is what we just discussed with the Second World War guys, they had us sharp as tacks. So our artillery was, I'm not going to say it's the best, but there was no better. Well, one night, Hill 355, the RCRs [the Royal Canadian Regiment], they got run over. And the FOO [Forward Observation Officer] at that time called fire right down on his own position to keep the [North] Koreans from coming in. And it was Hill 355. You see, when you lay down your plan of attack, you want to get control of highest parts possible. So if you're sitting down here and there's a little tiny hill in front of you, you can't see. If you're way up there, you can see the flats or you can see these guys coming and where they're coming from.

Continued...



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David Lucas

Wilcox, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And you can have rounds on the ground same time as they hit there. We're so close or far, we actually count the seconds that that round is in the air. So it's fire at target, minus 1-5 time of flight. So that round is going before them guys are moving. And when they're moving, when they make the attack, it's there waiting for them. When I got off the airplane in Seoul [South Korea], if I would be taken [in the present day], if I was taken in there blindfolded and got off the plane and said, where do you think you're at, I would have never said Korea. It was, everything's so beautiful over there now. And you know, there's a line, 38th parallel and these guys, now, we put bombs on there and killed a lot of the foliage, they carried trees up the hill on their backs and you could see the line just as straight as the green here, yellow on the other side. It's just fantastic how these Koreans come back. They just refused to quit. And I really appreciated them and it's going on still. You walk into a café, I walked into one, well, there was four of us, and one of the guys said, there's an oriental one, let's go down there. So we walked in, Jesus, they come over the counter and everything. Canada, Canada, I said, I know, them are Koreans. Yeah. And they never forgot. And there's one in Brandon [Manitoba], they invite us in every year for supper. So they appreciated us and it's nice to see that they did appreciate it. You know, and it's, they were really nice people and they had, it was about, I'm just saying roughly, 15 years that they were beaten and bald because prior to the Second World War, there was some Japanese in there and they really gave them a hard time. Well, they stayed there through the six years and then when the war was over, they were just starting to get back on their feet and they come down from the north [when North Korea invaded the south on 25 June, 1950. And then they got throttled again. So when the UN [United Nations] went in there, and put the line up and held it and you know, they're there, they just can't thank you enough.

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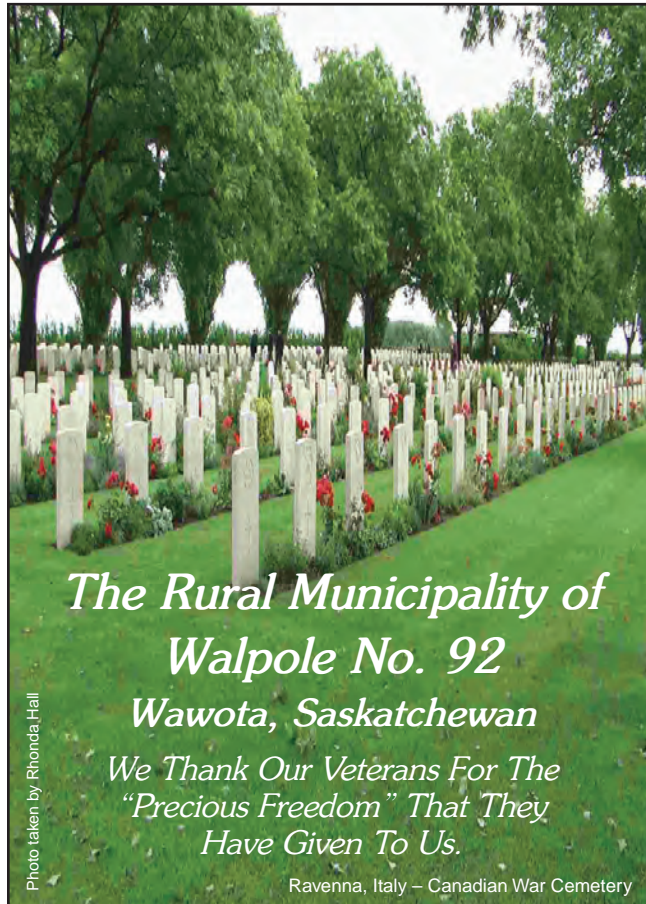


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And yeah, that was kind of fun too because had the sub surfaced of course, the first thing they'd do is shoot out the searchlight. And you've got your arm on that. So it wasn't a favourite spot.



Navy Henry Mason

North Battleford, Saskatchewan

My name is Ben Mason, which is a nickname of course. But I was born in the Prairies. Joined the army when the war broke out, in North Battleford and thought I was on my way. The particular unit that I joined became [the] South Saskatchewan [Regiment] and ended up in Dieppe which was - fortunate for me I got discharged because I was underage. So I thought, well, you can keep your army, I'll go and join the air force or the navy or something.

First place I went was the navy in Saskatoon and they said, you know, we're looking for a signalman with good eyesight in the North Atlantic convoys and although you're underage, we're going to send you off to signal school. And I said, well, I don't know anything about signals. And they said, we'll teach you.

So off I went to Saint-Hyacinthe, they called it "Sainty-a-Saint", in Quebec. And at the end of that, I thought I would be heading off to where we thought the war was. But they sent me to the West Coast and it was disappointing because I thought I was going to be a big war hero there. The idea of the West Coast was they needed to have a telegrapher and a signalman on each one of the so-called fishery [Fisherman's] Reserve boats, which were little wee fish boats. Their purpose was to screen traffic but mainly to ferret out any fuel storage tanks that the Japanese had deposit because [there was] a huge Japanese population on the coast. And they weren't all on our side.

But you know, the fishermen knew the coast, and still do, fishermen, they knew everybody and everywhere and this was great. But it wasn't what I thought I was joining as the navy. So I protested a little bit and they said, we'll fix that. So they shipped me off to Halifax and onto the [HMCS] Napanee, which is one of the corvettes and you probably know about corvettes. They were 205 feet long, very seaworthy but they were rough in bad weather. And our purpose was to screen the convoys over to Europe, mainly England, keep the subs and warn them and chase the subs and keep them away from the ships...which in those days was quite difficult to do because they would form wolf packs [German U-boat tactic designed to attack convoys] and we didn't have many ships to start with.

Continued...



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Navy Henry Mason North Battleford, Saskatchewan

Continued...

But corvettes were easy to build and they built a tremendous number of them. I've forgotten the numbers now but the numbers of ships in the Canadian Navy during the war made us the third largest navy in the world. And little old Canada, which is farming country.

You know, speaking of farming country, the majority, well, a lot of the sailors on the ships, like myself, were prairie boys, never seen a ship, never really seen any amount of water. And I presume there must have been a romantic something or other there as well as the, knowing that we had to do something about this. Because if Hitler had got England, that would have been it. And the amount of stuff that came over from America to Europe was just staggering. Convoys would be made up, they tried to make them up of ships that had relatively close to the same speeds because we liked to keep them in a group, they were so much easier to protect if there was no stragglers hanging back there. Sometimes, stragglers had to be left to their own devices if they couldn't keep the speeds.

But the navy, we would zigzag around the perimeter of the convoys, searching for sub contacts and if we found them ... People have often asked me, how many subs did you sink? And it's impossible to say because once we threw depth charges at them - the idea being to break them up underwater - they would sometimes shoot up you know, an old pair of overalls and bits of junk to make us think that they had been damaged. And you lost contact while them depth charges are going off.

So you really and truly, unless they actually surfaced and you got hold of them, you didn't know if you had them or not. We were scared but you wouldn't ever let on that you were scared. We were as much scared, you know, lots of times of the weather as we were of the enemy but if you were a signalman, as I was, on watch, you stayed right where you were, on the bridge. If you were an off-watchman, which meant that you hightailed it to the aft and the searchlight there was right by the pom-pom [anti-aircraft] gun, huge big searchlight, you turned it on -behind shutters of course - and kept it on the bearing that they thought they had submarine contact. And yeah, that was kind of fun too because had the sub surfaced of course, the first thing they'd do is shoot out the searchlight. And you've got your arm on that. So it wasn't a favourite spot.

Tankers that got torpedoed and fire and burning oil everywhere. And some guys still alive, their heads bobbing in the burning oil and screaming... We couldn't stop, we just couldn't stop and pick them up. So yeah, those memories do come back and you can't help it. I try to put them out of your mind but you can't. I'd call them nightmares. But that was a tough thing. But there were good times too, you know. You'd get ashore and learn how to drink Newfie Screech, which is bad rum. And Newfoundlanders used to say, oh yeah, we've got Screech. We'd send our poor codfish down to Jamaica and they'd send their poor rum up to us here.

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Clifford Maze

Unity, Saskatchewan



Just then we heard a plane coming over and things going boom, boom, boom, getting closer and closer, and so we dived into the ditch. And here is a plane dropping anti-personnel bombs; they're just small bombs but they throw shrapnel everywhere. And we'd have been all right if it had landed on the ground but it landed on the stone wall and came swooping down and hit me in the arm and the leg.



They unloaded us on what they called a Rhino [ferry]. That was a big, flat platform made of big steel tanks all fastened together with two motors on the back and you unloaded onto that and then it could go close enough to shore where you could drive off. We'd just nicely drove off the shore and something went "wham!" and hit our truck, and I was driving a white scout car, and it hit our truck. It scared the devil out of us; we didn't know, we were pretty new at it. Pretty soon it happened again and then we saw here there was two big armoured – Greyhound armoured cars next to us, and they'd put waterproof [material] around the turret and put explosives around behind it, so when we got to shore they could push the button, blow it off, be ready to go. Well, that was what was hitting us, but we didn't know then.

Then we went on in. I don't know where, for sure, several miles anyhow in. We were there for five days and then my brother – we were never far apart, he was, we were both, all with anti-tanks, so – he come over and said he was going back to the beach, they'd put in a parts depot back there. He wanted to know if I wanted to go, so I checked around and found out what all we might need and got a list and went back with him. It was in a big bunker, near the coast, that the Germans had, and I was talking to the guys there and they said, "You never saw such a bloody mess." He said, "The [Régiment de la] Chaudière took it," and he says, "I don't think they fired a shot. All they used was a knife." He said they had quite a time cleaning it up.

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Clifford Maze Unity, Saskatchewan

Continued...

But anyhow, we got our parts, but by that time it was starting to get dark, and we went to go back, but the military police wouldn't let us go back the road we'd come down, they'd narrowed the road so they'd made two one-way roads. So they put us on another one and they wanted to know where we were, and we weren't even sure where our home was, anyhow.

So anyhow, we started off, going along at night, and it was me and my brother and another fellow of his was called Shorty, and we come to a Y in the road with a sign up there and we thought, "Well, we'd get our map and see if we could see what the sign says" – the Germans hadn't had time to take it down.

While we were there, a British jeep came up with two people in it, and they were lost too. Just then we heard a plane coming over and things going "boom, boom, boom," getting closer and closer, so we dived into the ditch. And, here's a plane dropping anti-personnel bombs – they're just small bombs but they throw shrapnel everywhere. And we'd have been all right if it had landed on the ground but it landed on the stone wall, and came swooping down, and hit me in the arm and the leg. But Shorty, it took a chunk about an inch wide and six inches long out of his steel helmet and part of his head with it. He went back to Canada.

One of the British guys, he was laying there and, I never saw a dead man in my life, but I said to my brother, "It looks like he's had it." And, I didn't even know, I'm wounded, I felt it go "wham!" and I bounced on the ground and I had my steel helmet on, my arms around my side like this to protect me, and then this – we took Shorty – we heard some voices up above and they sort of said something, and we said, "Do you happen to have a stretcher?" And they said, "Yes." So I went up and got a stretcher and came down and my brother and I put Shorty on and carried him up and here, of all places was an air force surgical unit, just setting up there – they'd just come in that day and they just had a tent set up and so we set Shorty up there. And then went back, and then the Englishman this time was moving around. I thought he was dead but, so we carried him up there, and he later died. And we took him up there, and then I come down and then I felt something squishing in my boot and I pulled my sock up and there was blood running down my leg. It didn't really hurt that much. So then I showed that to Joe, so Joe said, "Well, we'd better go up again."

So, we went up again and, then I found that I had blood running down my arm. It's a good thing that I had my arms around there because it hit me there and it would've hit my face if I hadn't. And so we were in there and they bandaged it up and probably gave me a shot, I don't know. The next morning, they put me out on a table and cut kind of like a groove – oh my God – and then they put sulfa [an anti-microbial chemical] on it, which was just new, and they probably gave me penicillin, which was also pretty new, and they bandaged it up. You know, they never looked at that for four days. I lay there for four days and never worried about it.



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I felt a rumble, like an explosion or something in the water. I grabbed my lifejacket I guess and I ran up onto the quarter deck. We looked back at the convoy and we could see one of the ships was sinking down from the front of the bow.

”

Navy Donald McIntosh Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

My name is Donald McIntosh. I was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, December the 29th, 1922. That makes me 86 right now. I was on a Corvette and it's a single screw engine. In other words, one propeller on it. It's a boiler room where you generate the steam to run the engine and if I would open the throttle on the engines that would go and the engines would turn over and the number of revolutions that they wanted from the Bridge.

When you're at sea, you're on that throttle and answering any commands from the Bridge. They want so many revolutions, you give them that many revolutions on the engines. The engines were four cylinder engines and the water [steam] pressure going to those engines would be 300 pounds.

All the different sections have their own mess. Like the Stoker's Mess, the Seaman's Mess, the officers of course have their quarters. And the chiefs and POs have their mess. And they sleep and eat in that very, very confined quarters, you know. However, everybody gets along good and there's a great deal of comradeship there, which is exemplified itself all around through the years, we've kept in touch, so all these 60 odd years, you know.

And they, we have what we call watches, that's when you go on duty. In the engine room, we have two, four-hour watches in 24 hours. The watch I was on was, say, from 4 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock in the morning and then I'd be off 4 o'clock in the afternoon until 8 o'clock in the evening. That would be my two watches. That was 7 days a week. There was no days off. There was no days off except when you go in to harbour for water [boiler] clean or something like that, you get a few days off. And then it's back again.

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Donald McIntosh

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Continued...

I had one particularly good pal. He was an engine room artificer from Canmore, Alberta. And his name was Joe Hellis. And Joe was on duty when the ship was torpedoed and of course, he died. Everybody in the engine room and boiler room died, nobody made it out. But Joe was a particularly good friend of mine.

I felt a rumble, like an explosion or something in the water. I grabbed my lifejacket I guess and I ran up onto the quarter deck. We looked back at the convoy and we could see one of the ships was sinking down from the front of the bow. We went back. I guess the intent was to take the survivors off the ship. And this was a 10,000 tonne liberty freighter. So we went back there and we were standing on the Quarterdeck of our ship, watching the ...the ship was called the Ezra Weston and it was a United States liberty freighter. And it was going down slowly by the bow. And there was a deck cargo of trucks, cars and everything and as the angle increased, the vehicles were rolling off into the, the water. It was quite a sight to see. So, in a few minutes, we saw a lifeboat coming from the Ezra Weston and it had the entire crew of the Ezra Weston on it. And they were rowing towards us. And we were standing still, waiting for them to come, and all of a sudden, this tremendous explosion. Un, unbelievable.

We were later told by these fellows sitting in their rowboat, would sit and watch this, debris flew in the air and by the time it came down about 30 seconds, there was no sign of our ship at all. It just blew up. I was just on the Quarterdeck and I remember the explosion, great white sheet, and that's all I remembered until I was in the water. So I must have been blown off the ship, I didn't go off myself. Way down in the water, I really thought this is it, but all of a sudden, I popped up to the surface and I very fortunately had my lifejacket on, because I can't swim a stroke, never could.

We couldn't comprehend the magnitude of what had happened really, this tremendous bomb and we didn't think too much of it when they dropped the first one but then a day or so later, we heard that they'd dropped the second and Japan had thrown in the towel. We were sort of glad it was over because it became obvious, if we would have went to the Pacific, there would be tremendous casualties, I guess that's what influenced President Truman when they weighed the, the casualties that would be on both sides, the best thing would be to end it the way he did. And which I say God Bless Harry Truman. I think he made the right decision. In fact, I think a lot of us agreed that maybe some of us wouldn't be here if Harry Truman hadn't dropped the bomb.



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Navy Arthur McKellar Regina, Saskatchewan



If you got the ship and the front half of the ship was gone and the crew - a lot of the surviving crew - were still there on deck, wanting to be transferred off.



All we did was from Londonderry, then we went to patrol and down between Ireland and England, down through the channel there and go down as far as Southampton and along the south coast of England. Well of course, the German submarines were in that area. Well, I suppose their, the submarine was damaged by some anti-submarine equipment that was, would be on the bottom of the ocean there. And so the crew members, they were in life rafts you see, so we took them onboard and took them prisoner back to Southampton.

I suppose it would be in the Irish Sea that the ship, the frigate, it had been torpedoed. Like if you got the ship and the front half of the ship was gone and the crew - a lot of the surviving crew - were still there on deck, wanting to be transferred off.

And our captain wanted to go in and pick them up but we were advised to stay clear because we might get hit by a submarine. So that's, I can just see these men standing right just as I can look at you right now. So that's the most graphic experience we had there.



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“ You don’t worry about getting hurt or whatever but you worry about being afraid and showing it, I think. ”

Malcolm McLeod

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

I think really what you were afraid of was that you will be afraid and show it. That’s what you worried about, you know. When you’re that age, particularly. You don’t worry about getting hurt or whatever but you worry about being afraid and showing it, I think.

We were on the outskirts of Caen, there was a river there to cross. There had been a lot of heavy bombing there. The first night we got there, on our side of Caen, looking down over the city sort of thing, the sergeant told me there was a recruit had come in and we were supposed to sleep alongside a hedgerow that night and he was complaining there was a grenade where he was supposed to sleep, he thought. So the sergeant told me to go get rid of it. So I went, it was a German concussion grenade. I threw the thing as far as I could. The only piece on the grenade that could hurt me was the base plug. But one chance in several million, it came back and hit me in the jaw. So I got sent back to England then.

Not too sure what our objective was but we had to cross a pasture and cross some more, about two or three miles we had to go, cross some open land, farmland. There was a lot of machinegun fire at us. We sort of got broken up. I wouldn’t say we were lost but we weren’t in real units anymore. I know my section, my Bren gunner disappeared and I don’t know where he was, I had no idea where he’d got separated from us. And we finally come to a canal where everybody was pinned down, at a dry canal. The machine gun fire was just vicious over top and one fellow lost it, apparently. He was walking around through this, it’s amazing he didn’t get killed. And everybody’s trying to get him down and he wouldn’t come. Finally he got close enough that a lieutenant grabbed him by the boot and hauled him down and he was just plain out of it. That really shook me — to see how somebody could really lose it.

I may have been 15 days at the most. When I got back, the platoon that I was in, there was one person left in that platoon. The rest were all, something had happened to them or for some reason or other, they were all strangers. Well, there were big farmyards with big houses that the Germans seemed to like to take over as command posts.

Continued...

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Malcolm McLeod

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan


Continued...

Usually a platoon-sized job would go out and clear these. And usually when we showed up, the back door sort of thing, they'd be gone out the front. But one time, they didn't go, that's where I got hurt. We had a new lieutenant that day, I had never seen him before, I suspect that was his first bit of action— I'm not too sure— because, just the way he acted. And he was eager to go sort of thing, you know.

We come up on this, it was this big home and some other buildings and so on, we come across a pasture. And it just wasn't right, it was too quiet, there was no action anywhere. We were down in the pasture of course in little pits, low ground, waiting to see what would happen and somebody around the side would probably stir things up. And there was some branches cut off a tree, which normally, nobody would be trimming a tree in that, you know, under those circumstances.

So I just was squeezing a shot into a pile of branches when he stood up to see what was going on or what would happen and he shouldn't have, of course, a bazooka must have hit him right in the head and he was ahead of me, oh, five, ten yards or so ahead I guess; the explosion knocked me out. And when I came to, his head was just absolutely gone. There was no blood or anything. I went to roll over and my foot stayed where it was so I rolled back on my face again. And then I kept passing in and out, that's where I got hurt.

In fact, I came to the next morning and I think near Antwerp somewhere it was, there was a nun, full habit, looking down at me and I was on the stretcher on the ground. And sort of nodded as if I was, I was all right.



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Army John McNiven Regina, Saskatchewan

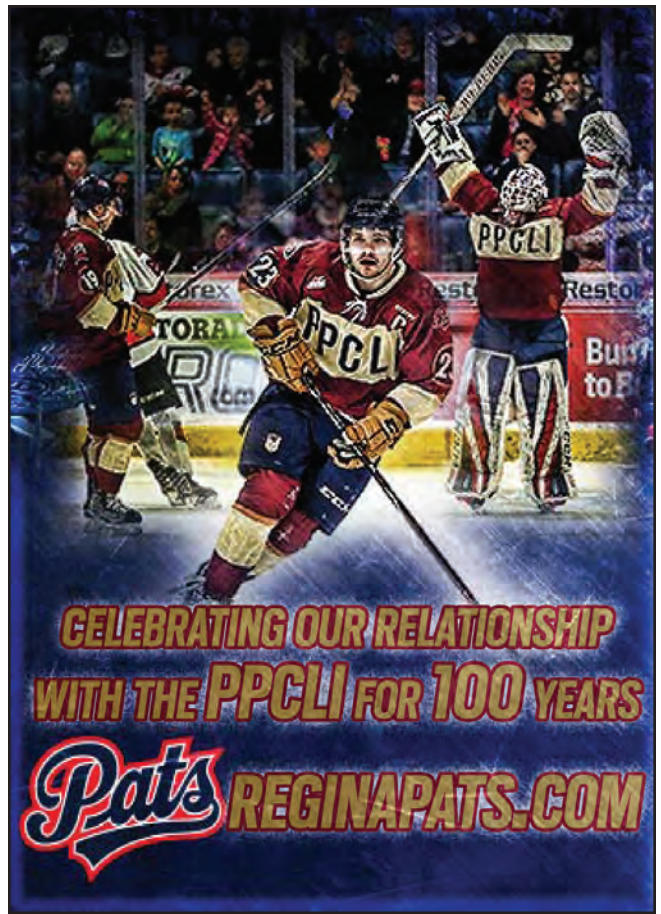
I think it was the third day, at night. We loaded at night and I had come in early in the morning and it was dark, and the beaches were fairly clear, thanks to our 3rd [Canadian] Division. They had cleaned them up pretty good so we didn't have a lot of trouble then. So then, I had to go and find Signal Corps. I found them and they give me a Jeep. Then another person will meet you, he's gonna get in with you and away we'd go. And then a sniper by the name of Lee, he talked us in to take him in behind the enemy lines and drop him off where he wanted to go. And then he stayed with us quite a bit. So quite a few times we were very fortunate that we had him. About 13 months of that or whatever it was, I don't know how long we were there because we did not keep track of time. People say, "What date was that?" We didn't have a calendar and we didn't care. We knew it was light and it was dark. We knew that in the day time we couldn't show ourselves and at night we could go out and snoop around. Our job was to spot German tanks, tire tanks, and to know about them and to spot troop movements, convoys, anything in Germany that we could find out, either radio back or bring back as quickly as we could. But I had to get them in and get them out, that was my job. I had to be a mechanic and I had to be a driver. My job was to get them in there and get them out, but I could go on the radio, I was also trained in that and the phones, you know, plug it in, wind 'er up, give my code and then they would answer me. There was lots of not so polished guys in the army. But that's what fights and wins a war. It isn't the fit, nice guys, it's the guys that get in there. But I was scared to death all the time. People say, "Well, you know, macho?" I was no macho guy, I was scared after. I thought I was until I got over there and then I found out that I really was scared. And another thing, the war part I didn't like. Soldiering, I liked. The war part is horrible. We were in Nijmegen [Netherlands] Christmas 1944. Some of the guys with Jeeps went in and got radios and brought them to the people in Nijmegen. Factual, factual, factual, they know it. So we went in to Germany and any people in Holland that had radios, big radios and big houses, the army would go in and take their radios away from them and give them to one little guy, Josh was his name, he wanted to hear Bing Crosby at Christmas. So I went and got some radios. It felt good but it wasn't easy. The one thing that I liked, really enjoyed so much and I never got a chance to enjoy but did see – we had to get out of there and go faster and all – was when we took over a town in a country that the Germans, our enemy, had left, and how happy the people was. That made me feel good. I have to say the good things. That is what's kept me alive. I had nightmares. My wife will tell you through all the years I never sleep at night. I wake up all the time – had horrible nightmares. But that's the best thing I can tell you. I can just tell you it's nice to see those little kids and everybody so happy that they were free again. You have no idea what it's like to be free like they felt. So that was the happiest moments of my life, to see them.



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The young Van Doo corporal called the shot. I was doubtful. Guy turned to me and I said, “What am I going to do?” And Guy said, “I’m not out in the black of the night, the corporal is. If he wants it, give it to him.” And we did and they got the whole patrol back without loss.



Andrew Moffat

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

The B Company of The Royal Canadian Regiment, the RCR, was overrun by the Chinese, in a very surprise move, and that meant that immediately the core of the Operations people at Brigade Headquarters, that is, the brigade commander, the brigade major, and the artillery commander, and myself, got together immediately at the Operations van. And, this was a matter of coordinating any support that the RCR required. From my point of view this was artillery support.

The adjutant at the regiment controlled the supporting fire of the guns of our own regiment, the 25-pounder guns. I, on the other hand, was responsible for coordinating the support of all the other guns, around, that could be brought to bear in support of the RCR. This is a brand new young lieutenant. Can you just imagine the scope of responsibility?

Now, my CO [commanding officer], the son of the famous General A.G.L. McNaughton, Teddy McNaughton, was my CO in Korea. And, I learned one of life’s great lessons that night. Because he just turned to me and said, “Monty, deal with it.” And he sat there and watched me. And, through the entire battle, I was controlling the fire of the guns of the rest of the division. American 8-inch guns, even naval guns that could reach from the shore, and, all of this, and providing the supporting fire. He left me to decide – our fire was not, sort of close in to the RCR. That was left to our regiment to do.

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Andrew Moffat

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Continued...

But it was, to pick the areas in the middle of the night, from the map, and from my knowledge that the Chinese were probably using as their routes in and out, where their supplies were, where their reserves would be located, and to fire on those, to try and isolate the battle position.

That went on for probably five, six hours. And throughout the entire time, Colonel Teddy never interfered once. Never gave advice once. He watched. He listened. And, his silence was approval of what I was doing. Can you imagine what that does for a young officer? It was an amazing experience. But a huge step in military education: how to command, how to treat your subordinate, how to monitor and run a battle, it was a fantastic experience.

Now, the other side of the coin, in the OP [observation post], the forward observing role, here it was a matter of being entirely on your own. Your only connection with other artillery personnel was via radio, sometimes landline if it was operating. But you were the sole individual responsible for the supporting fire, both pre-planned and spontaneous – when required, to support a company of 150 or more men, in probably the most dangerous and exposed period of their lives. Again, this was – you look back on this and realize how much responsibility it was. At the time you don't look at it that way. An example, Guy and I were sitting – actually we were playing a little game of dominoes. The two of us lived together, in a hole in the ground. And, with a lantern, we were playing dominoes, a very famous Van Doo [Le Royal 22e Régiment] game. And, there was a patrol out. And the patrol – a young corporal radioed in that he was in trouble, he'd been surrounded by the Chinese. He'd been caught in an ambush. And, he wanted some supporting fire to help get out of this loop. And so he called for something and I put a couple of rounds down. And, he came back and said, "No, no, that's too far away. Move it in here." And I knew where he was, because Guy was able to point on the map exactly where he was. And, so, I actually made the decision to bring the fire down to less than 50 yards from where he and his patrol were.

Now, the error of the fall of artillery is greater than the 50 yards. So, the decision had to be, do we take a chance on injuring our own people, or do we take the chance and get them the hell out of there safely?

The young Van Doo corporal called the shot. I was doubtful. Guy turned to me and I said, "What am I going to do?" And Guy said, "I'm not out in the black of the night, the corporal is. If he wants it, give it to him." And we did and they got the whole patrol back without loss.

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Air Force Victor Mulhall Weyburn, Saskatchewan

In a wartime situation, I don't care whether it's the air force, the army or the navy, there is so much calamity that sooner or later, an individual is going to start being afraid. How this happens to different individuals, I can't speak. I can speak how it happened in my case. As a result of this, and I'll go into a little bit of detail, I formed the opinion that fear has two components. It has a mental component and it has a physical component. Certainly, in my experience, you can learn to control the mental component, not easily, but you can control the mental component sufficiently that you can still be a functioning individual in a wartime situation. But you can't control, at least certainly can't control completely, the physical component. So that physical things will happen to you such as trembling, such as weak legs, such as vomiting and possibly hand shaking. I did a total of 57, what I understand is now called sorties, we called them ops [operations]. Not all were bomb carrying ops because I count the first trip where I navigated the bomber overseas: aircraft were being lost in attempting to cross the Atlantic; crews were being lost, so that it's quite logical to count that trip as a first operation. When it was that I had my experience of total fear, I had completed six operations rather uneventfully, and was preparing that night to leave with my crew on the seventh operation. For some reason, the feeling that yes, this was really truly dangerous work, it had not occurred to me before. This was really and truly dangerous work; and you could be killed, but you could be torn to pieces, you could be burnt to a crisp. The end of your life could happen and it could happen in the most dreadful manner, just overwhelmed me. I began to shake and, of course, I was preparing my maps and my charts and my astrograph [instrument for astronomical mapping], and my star work, getting it all together, getting ready to climb aboard the crew bus out to the hard standing [paved area for parked aircraft] to get on the aircraft. This feeling of fear overwhelmed me to the extent that, as I mentioned previously, I couldn't speak properly. I was stammering, my hands were shaking, my legs could hardly bear my own weight, never mind the weight of all the equipment which I had to take with me to the aircraft. Various members of several crews were climbing aboard the bus. I managed to stagger out to the bus. I was climbing the steps into the bus and I thought, everybody was looking at me and knew how terrified I was. Somehow, I managed to cover up the fear that I was feeling. I sat down quietly in the midst of all my equipment; and when we got to the aircraft, I got off the bus. I climbed on the aircraft and I began to assemble my equipment correctly at my navigator's desk. The pilot ran up the motors and checked the magnetos [electrical generators], and moved away from the hard standing to the runway; and we took off. It was the quietest, most serene trip that I had ever taken. And this reassured me that the fear that I was feeling had built up inside me and that there was no reason behind it. I came back from that trip, my seventh trip, and never again felt that extreme fear. I did frequently throw up, as I have mentioned, as one of the indications of an inner fear, a physical fear. But at no time was I ever consumed by the mental fear.



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Air Force Roy Ogburn Battleford, Saskatchewan



I know at 21, you had to automatically get called up, so I didn't want to go into the army. I wanted to go into the air force. So I joined up at that time, although dad didn't approve of it at the time.





Well, I enlisted in Saskatoon in the spring of 1943. I did nothing to enlist earlier due to dad requiring help on the farm, and my brother, Jim, had been in the army for three years at that time. I know at 21, you had to automatically get called up, so I didn't want to go into the army. I wanted to go into the air force. So I joined up at that time, although dad didn't approve of it at the time. Where I started from was [RCAF Station] Brandon at landing school. And that I was selected there for air crew and I ended up being in the hospital there, just at the end of my basic training. I went in on a Friday to complain about a sore throat; and the next day he said come back and see what's going on, and I had mumps at that time.


So they sent me up to the Brandon airport in the isolation hospital the next day. The next day they discovered I had pneumonia and after that, pleurisy [inflammation of the linings of the lungs and/or chest cavity]. So they started treating me with sulfa drugs, which I believe was prior to penicillin. Unfortunately, I was unconscious, I guess, for the next two weeks. My brother came up from [Camp] Shilo [Manitoba], he'd been stationed there after Fort Benning [near Columbus, Georgia, United States] training, and I have no recollection of him being there at all. I know I came to a couple of weeks later, they said.

The nurse was suctioning all the phlegm, I guess, out of my throat and mouth, but after that, I was in that hospital, I think, for at least a month or six weeks, I don't know. They sent me back home for six more weeks on sick leave.

Continued...





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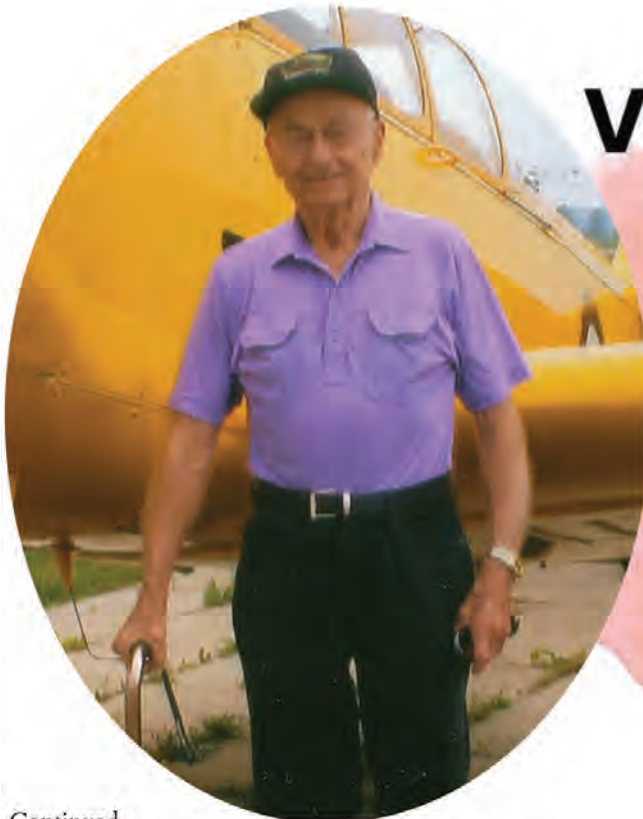


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Air Force Roy Ogburn Battleford, Saskatchewan

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From then, I returned to Brandon, Manitoba and they said my basic was completed anyhow, so they sent me up to [RCAF Station] Edmonton to further my education up to air force standards. We went to the, we called it 'Wet- P,' but it was WETP [War Emergency Training Program]; and I still don't know what that stood for. But we lived out there and we boarded out, but we learned the rapid calculation math, physics just to bring up my education.

I guess we also took English and whatnot. From there, I was transferred to [RCAF Station] Regina, out to ITS, initial training school. We had, well, a little bit of everything there. Of course, everybody knows about that, anyhow. But one of our last exams was in navigation and it was a three hour air plot. They passed out the night before a few of the old air plots that we had been doing for practice and stuff. And fortunately, the plot that I had refreshed myself on the night before came up on the exam. And I got a very high mark naturally, just everything flicked right into where it should be.

My ETA [estimated time of arrival] was right on the button when I got done. Anyhow, I graduated out of ITS, but I had to wait another six weeks there, due to a backlog for pilots going to elementary flight training. They sent me with train tickets to [RCAF Station] Mount Pleasant, PEI, for operational training, which was basically a rehash of what we had done in [RCAF Station] MacDonald, except it was advanced bit more. And we were back on [Bristol Fairchild Type 142M] Bolingbroke [maritime patrol aircraft] again and whatnot. That winter in PEI was terrific for snow.

They had put the bulldozer right through one of the drifts and you could go through it as a tunnel, it was so bad. Anyhow, we were waiting to be selected for overseas after that and the medical officer, when we went up to the last review, he discovered I had a hernia and he operated on me the next day. When I was in there, the whole draft was cancelled because it was VE [Victory in Europe] Day and some of the boys came back to the hospital to see me. Of course, they brought a little booze along and I don't know, just everybody was celebrating anyhow. I got pretty well loaded up, I think, and I fell out of bed, but they got me back in anyhow.



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Anyway, I grabbed this spring, which is like an eye of a needle and you should grab it up near the top to lift it off. I grabbed it up here and under the spring. Ah, my hand's caught in between it!

”

Navy Herbert Park Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Yeah, I was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and I joined up in Regina at HMCS Queen. And after basic training, I went to Toronto and Ottawa and Edmonton and Saint Hyacinthe, Quebec. I took a radio officer's course and eventually I transferred to leading telegrapher, shore branch and ended up in Newfoundland -St. John's, Newfoundland. And so I was a land-locked sailor.

I joined the Navy hoping to see the world but didn't have much sea time. Just enough time to get from Port aux Basques [Newfoundland] to North Sydney [Nova Scotia], North Sydney to Port aux Basques, St. John's, Newfoundland, up the St. Lawrence [River] to Quebec City. And that was the total of my sea time. Well, I was on this course, radio course in these various cities, Toronto and Ottawa. I worked at National Research Council in Ottawa in a place called White's Field; that's where General [Andrew] McNaughton [president of NRC] had his private laboratories that we did work on constructing pieces of equipment for radar and didn't know what we were doing of course. But we would turn that over to a project manager who would hook it up to various pieces of equipment to research radar.

We didn't know what we were developing; they would send us down to the metal shop to make a little box and put resistors and condensers in there. And they would then put it onto a piece of equipment and tune it up and it would light up lights up in the corner of the room or whatever. But that was radar, similar to ASDIC [sonar]. In Newfoundland, you know, when you're land-locked, all you're doing is repairing ships when they come into port. They would, over in Newfoundland, my work over there was with WT [wireless telegraphy] maintenance because they had a large bucket and they would lift you up in a crane and you would strap an antenna on the end of the yardarm and you'd bring the coaxial cable to the center, to the mast, take the cable down and you had to get onto the mast and put an electrician's belt around you and drill holes and bolt this cable down the mast.

Continued...



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Navy Herbert Park Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Continued...

The welders in the meantime would weld a hole, cut a hole into the WT cabin and they'd take that cable in and hook it up to what they called transmit between ships, which was an ultra-high frequency set. And the officers and that could conduct ship-to-ship and ship-to-plane conversation. A fairly large ship like a Castle-class, destroyer, or whatever came into port and had to have one of these antennas put on its yardarm. So the Canadian dockyard didn't have a bucket, as they called them, to lift me up with tools to install. So an officer and myself went down to a harbour craft and went down to the American dockyard who had a larger crane that could lift this bucket up to the yardarm, swung me out over the, to do the installation. As they came alongside the jetty, the midshipman onboard hollered to grab this ball which is a woven ball on a rope. And they would swing it around their head; throw the ball out onto the jetty. The junior radio on the jetty would grab this ball if it landed on the jetty and start pulling it ashore. And onboard the ship, they would tie it to a steel spring or a rope spring.

I pulled it up and they said, put the spring on the bollard, which is on the jetty, the bollard is on the jetty. I didn't have that much seamanship training and then the midshipman yelled, ease off and take it off that bollard and move it back to the next bollard because these springs were crisscrossed; there was another ship alongside, the springs were crisscrossed. So take it off that bollard, move it back. And they crank the onboard ship there, cranking up on the winch because they're taking up the slack as the ship eases into the berth. And on the other end, they've got another pair there cranking up, taking up the slack to hold the ship from plowing into another ship. Anyway, I grabbed this spring, which is like an eye of a needle and you should grab it up near the top to lift it off. I grabbed it up here and under the spring. Ah, my hand's caught in between it! And I had my gloves on but I, ah, you know, and they'd back off right away, took my hand out and blood spurting out these fingers. And went onboard the ship and I guess I was white as a ghost but I hadn't passed out. And the Medical Officer, wiggled my hand and said, oh, you've got quite a few broken bones there but you'd better go up to the American dockyard and have it x-rayed. When I went up to the dockyard and had it X-rayed, no bones broken. How lucky. One more crank on that winch and I'd have probably, it would have chopped off my fingers right. That was my close call.

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“ just because he was German doesn't mean he wasn't nice. I mean, he was doing what our boys were doing; he thought he was fighting for his country. ”

Nurse Lillian Park Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

A German prisoner of war wrote that and he was my patient. I had a room with four pilots, four German pilots and they were all prisoners of war. But this one was a very, very nice fellow. And he, you know, I looked after them. I had a soldier [guarding the room] inside and outside. And when I did this fellow, and the fellow beside him, they were very nice. But the two across were German pilots that had been taken prisoners of war and they were very difficult. That's why they had a Canadian soldier go with me across the room and I didn't go and do anything for these patients alone, without a soldier with me, a Canadian soldier. Because they were antag-[antagonistic], you know, they were against Canada. But this fellow and the fellow beside him were very nice; this fellow was a very nice fellow, Ernst Ewers. I forget why he was in the hospital, but he was very nice and he was very intelligent and I'll tell you, he had the most, he had the Iron Cross. And he had the most beautiful uniforms, oh, they had beautiful uniforms. And when I first went in there, he had a book from German to English. It was a lovely book. And he turned out very nice. And when he went out of the hospital, I wasn't on duty when they discharged him. When I got back on duty, I got called to the administrator's office. And they wanted to know what had gone on...., I said, nothing. I said, when I came back on -I had him for about a week or 10 days - I said, nothing.

I was engaged at that time to Walter, overseas, Walter. He was, all my life I'd known him and he was a pilot and he was killed just before he came home. But anyway, and I said, nothing! I said, he was a patient. I said, I had four of them in one room and I said, the soldiers didn't have to come with me with him, [there were] soldiers standing inside the room anyway. I said, they were nice. But the guys on the other side, I said, were antagonistic. That's why ... I said, this was a very nice fellow. And so he was discharged and about three days after the hospital got this [postcard] - to me, mailed to me - they never called me for about three days. They called me down to the office. I was waiting to graduate, I was finished, I was graduating.

Continued...



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Nurse Lillian Park Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And they wanted to know what went on. And I said, nothing went on. I said, they were my patients. I said, the four German pilots were my patients and I said, nothing went on and everything. So they, then he pulled this out and handed it to me. And it's like, my name was Harper, Lillian Harper. And it says, Miss Harler, it's German, you see, and then he wrote this: Dear Miss Harler, Fanny!, he called me Fanny, he didn't know my name and of course, I wouldn't, didn't give my name to any patients.

And this is what he called me. He said, you know that ten days ago, suddenly, I had to quit the beautiful hospital. It was not possible for me to say goodbye to you and Miss Armstrong and to thank you for the kind and troublesome treatment which you had with me during my unforgettable days in the hospital. I wish you and all the other nurses I know a Happy New Year, with the best greetings, I remain yours very sincerely, Ernst Ewers. And he was a German pilot. And I got, I said, well, I said, that's my, my letter. And I felt, they'd kept it for maybe three or four days, they wanted to know what was going, a big office in the hospital, I said, nothing. I said, I had four prisoners of war to look after. And I said, he was just a nice fellow. I said, for goodness sakes, just because he was German doesn't mean he wasn't nice. I mean, he was doing what our boys were doing; he thought he was fighting for his country. I said to Ernst when he was in there, I said, you know, my fiancé, I said, the man I'll marry someday maybe, and he understood that and I said, I hope if he's like you, a prisoner in Germany, that somebody be nice. Because he said to me, why you, why you nice to me? And I said, because you're another human being. You're another child of God and you're another human being. I said, I had no reason not to be nice to you. And that's how I felt, you know.

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And all of a sudden, I was in the army. And I didn't know what to say. I told my grandma I was just going for the day, she said it was okay. And I come back and I had seven days leave.



Claude Petit

Duck Lake, Saskatchewan



Well, I went with my cousin to Regina. I just went for the ride and I got strapped in because I was only 15 years old. And he was going to join the army. I had no money, I was staying with my grandma. My parents were up in Northern Ontario working. And he says, well, come on for the ride. He says, I've got money off my old man to go into Regina. So we went and he was filling in the papers, doing the tests, I did one too but I didn't know what I was ... And all of a sudden, I was in the army. And I didn't know what to say. I told my grandma I was just going for the day, she said it was okay. And I come back and I had seven days leave.

So the Corporal went in and he said, "you go and pick up some blankets, get our blankets changed. They're probably lousy." So we loaded them on a stretcher and brought them back down, they just laundered them. And we were picking up some new ones to bring to the guys.

And as we were coming up the hill, like this kind of gulley here, coming up this way and there's a bunker right at the bottom, an MA [Medical Aid] bunker, first aid person. And put our stretcher down and we started talking to him. I was standing this way and this other guy was standing that way, but I had a bulletproof vest on. Always wore it. We were the first ones to get them from the Yanks, the bulletproof vests. They were about 60 pounds or something. And all of a sudden it's like mortars start coming, whoo, one right between us. The guy who didn't have the bulletproof vest on really got rapped in the back, a chunk about that long, the small of his back. And the MA was standing at the bunker and big timbers, a big chunk of shrapnel about that long right into the bunker. He went white, he said.

Continued...

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Claude Petit

Duck Lake, Saskatchewan



Continued...

And then I was standing there, we were trying to get this guy in, he got hit because he fell forward afterwards, we were trying to get him and we got him on the stretcher and we start cutting his clothes off, his parka off. And then found out where he was wounded and patched him up. And he looks at me and here there was blood running down my arm here. He said, "geez, you're hit too," he says. So he cut my parka off, because my bulletproof vest and I hadn't got hit here, he saw twice [denoting wounds on his arm], mortar. So I was going out too. So he said, well, we'll try to get something, an ambulance in here.

When the RCR got hit, we knew it because they came through our position, the Chinese. And we were bringing it in. And you know, it didn't bother our position, they went through it, they were going to hit the RCRs, to bring in mortars and artillery fire one of our Corporals won a Military Medal for that.

He [enemy combattant] was at the end [of the hill] and he was digging a trench there, I couldn't pick him up good enough with my binoculars. You could see the dirt flying. And I fired there, I fixed lines on him, fired at night, because he was doing something, I think they were digging a tunnel in there. Then I got the Centurion and he was above the hill and woosh. He says, I see him. Then that would stop, a little while later, here he is again.



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““ And he’s got to go up a little bit to make his dive. They blasted him out of the sky. They seen him in their last minute, with all these anti-aircraft guns, and I would say the last minute, and they just blew it to pieces up there. ””

Army Bill Ryan

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

It’s a day in August, something like today. It’s Sunday. 10:00 in the morning, bright sunshine, they send me to take a message and I took a lot, that was my main job. Didn’t want to lots of time to send those messages over the air or whatever because they could intercept them, it was possible. So it’s more reliable for guys like me, although the snipers liked to get us and see what the hell we’re carrying. But anyway, so I go, and I go down the road and I’m finding, I’ve got a message for the [First] Polish Armoured Division. I go and I get just about, oh, half a mile from the camp, I can see them. And here out of the sun comes I’d say probably eight Messerschmitts [Bf 109; German fighter aircraft], right out of the sun, down low. Not a shot’s being fired and I’m looking, “Hey, I’ve got to get the hell out of this,” so there’s a hedge there. And I just went bounding, I mean, I’m going to hide like a rabbit. So they never fired a shot, they never a blast and they’re gone. But I went to see those Polish guys, they were just in shock. A lot of shots being fired now. Maybe down ... So, then alright, it wasn’t the place I was supposed to take the message, it was the wrong ... So alright, I have to go back and see what we can, the location. I’m on my way back, nice day, Norton motorcycle, it’s running nice, but a little more noise than it should be. And I turn and look over my head and here they’re [the Messerschmitts] coming, right behind me, all in formation and actually straddling the highway.

Well, I thought, “You know, I’d be such a perfect target, they could laugh and say, ‘Look, how good a marksman I am.’” And I didn’t want that to happen. So immediately I looked, I just steered into the ditch and over goes the bike and I’m one jump, I was like a squirrel in them days. And the good Lord maybe provided a slit trench, a foxhole and that. And I’m into that. And they never fired again. They go on and I come out, here’s a bunch of Canadians right across the highway, armoured outfit, looked like reconnaissance, I mean, they said, “Hey, are you trained to do that?” I said, “What?” He said, “We watched you making that jump into that ... And he said, “That was the nicest maneuver we’ve ever seen and you must have lots of training.”

Continued...

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Army Bill Ryan

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Continued...

“You know what, I’m trying to save my hide, I’ll do anything.” Now, the rest of it then, they went on down and strafed my headquarters, where I was coming from. But they never, I can’t tell you the story, did we shoot them all down or what, that’s, but I remember that vividly. Because I didn’t like them over my head like that. Okay, bridge in Nijmegen [the Netherlands]. Every time when the Germans retreated, they blew the bridges. They made sure of that. That’s a big bridge, I’d say that’s the Rhine River, I know the river. And so they crossed that, they had it all the electrical stuff ready to blow it but a little kid had come along and pulled the wires apart. When they plunged it, nothing happened. But the allies were right on their tails so they had to leave it. The line was stationary there for about, oh, I’d say two or three months.

We were stationed in two or three miles from the bridge. Immediately, the armies, probably, more, I don’t, Canadians, British, they set up about 50 anti-aircraft guns around the bridge, because they know and the line was stationary, the German border is about eight, ten miles, I think roughly. And they got to have that bridge. And you know, this is stationary, gives them lots of time to get this. And they’re not dumb. And so they line up a boat, they figured out the speed of the current on the river. It’s going from Germany into Holland. They figure out the speed, how fast the water’s flowing, then they figure out exactly how far the bridge is from where they’re going to launch the boat.

They put the boat in, load it with dynamite and put that time fuse in with it, figuring out, “Okay, how close can we come now and send it down the river?” Well, the boat got maybe 100 yards past our moor and then blew up. Well, it blew the building to heck and gone from the sides of the river for, but didn’t get the bridge. Three times, three times they had been caught with engineers, had gone through our lines and onto the bridge with enough dynamite to blow it. But each time, they were captured on the bridge. Okay, they hadn’t got it, they shelled the heck out of it. I was two miles up on there for two or three months, stationary lines in, what would that be? Battle of the Bulge [16 December 1944 to 25 January 1945; major German offensive through the Ardennes mountain region, Belgium] probably somebody told you about that in Belgium, that was taking place at the same time.

So we weren’t called to that, we were only about 50 miles away. And I think I was with the artillery at that time. So one morning, early, on a kind of foggy morning, I don’t know what I was doing out but it was 8:00 or before, I heard a noise. And I look up and here’s a plane coming at just about treetop level. He was under the radar. And he was coming full speed. And in between the wheels was about I’d say a thousand pound bomb, maybe heavier, strapped in between. It was obvious to me that this was a suicide. [The enemy’s thoughts were] “We’re going to get the bridge, we’ll lose the pilot.” He knows that he’s going to go but he’s going to ... So not anti-aircraft firing at all, nothing. And now he’s already within, oh, a minute, say of ... And he’s got to go up a little bit to make his dive. They blasted him out of the sky. They seen him in their last minute, with all these anti-aircraft guns, and I would say the last minute, and they just blew it to pieces up there.

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Army William John Sheppard

Regina, Saskatchewan

I guess I would be in high school. Some of the older fellows, older boys enlisting and that sort of thing, but it didn't interest me too much because they were older than I was and it would be all over by the time I would be ready to enlist. My mother insisted that I complete my grade 12 before she permitted me to enlist and, of course, then it was time to do so. I was 19 years of age. In 1943, that's what everybody did. She knew it was inevitable. She accepted it. I had a very good friend, a school chum. His father had been in the First World War and he advised us, "Stay out of the tank, get into the heaviest artillery you can, that's the safest place to be." And we took it from there. So that's what I did, I joined and asked for artillery. And we were shipped to Petawawa [Ontario], where the heavy artillery and the bigger guns were and everything went on from there.

Took my basic training and artillery training there and went overseas to Ramsholt in England and also was in artillery reinforcement school there and I didn't get over to Normandy at D-Day, but I went over to Normandy as a reinforcement in the middle of July of 1944. I went to a London, Ontario Regiment, gun crew. Early in July, there was the infantry regiments in Normandy had taken kind of a beating and there was lots of reinforcements needed, so they went through all of their camps of other branches of the army and cleaned them out mostly as infantry reinforcements. But for some reason or other, they left a few of us behind to be artillery, which was my training anyway. There was a small group of us and one guy goes here, somebody goes to another gun crew and you just joined with a small group of guys and you made some new friends and took your position to do some shooting. It was a busy place. Still, everything came over the beaches, even though that had been a month or so previous. All equipment, reinforcements and everything had to ... As a matter of fact, it wasn't until they opened Antwerp many months later that they started reinforcements and equipment from elsewhere, other than the Normandy beaches. I was sort of by myself, I didn't go with a group at all because we were just a scattering of reinforcements, one here, two there and whatnot. I hadn't gone through training with a bunch of people. With the type of artillery I was at, you're a little, you took comfort from the fact that the, there were tanks and infantry between you and the enemy. Your casualties came from usually any artillery, that they figured out where you were and you figured out where they were. The shooting towards you was enemy artillery or the Luftwaffe, that kind of thing, rather than direct hand to hand, that kind of stuff. Yeah, there were times, times of, mostly it was just hard work, but it was punctuated from time to time with a bit of terror. I was duty crew on the night when the guns went silent at the end of the Second World War. I was up in northern Germany near Wilhelmshaven and when we knew that the ceasefire was coming. But I was duty crew that night on the gun.

Didn't know we'd fired, already fired our last round, but we were told to be ready to fire in case we were fired upon.

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Selwyn Stephens

Regina, Saskatchewan



And the flak was intense and bursting. We could actually feel it too, the “thump, thump, thump, thump,” you know, as, as the air also bouncing up and down.



In England, a lot of posters and really broadcasts about loose talk, waste material, waste food. And among other things, the watchful eyes of the government, conservation in time, including travel, it was quite tight. Posters everywhere to prompt us to be careful.

Now, there was one there called, “Is this trip necessary?” poster That would take trains and cars and whatnot, if it’s not necessary, don’t take it. But I recall one of our briefing times when a, and I think you probably had this before because I’ve read many this very same thing, really. But the briefing officer asked if there was any questions. We saw the redline from base over to somewhere in Germany, you see. And the briefing officer would ask the question “Any, any questions?” And behind me was my wireless operator and he said a quiet whisper and everybody heard it, “Is this trip necessary?” And which it wasn’t a question of, we just said, “Yes sir. Yes sir,” you know.

But yeah, I think the first time we had Air Vice-Marshal [Ralph] Cochrane, he was head of five group [RAF No. 5 Group], he came down to the squadron. We were going to a placed called Schweinfurt, that was about 50 miles from the German border. And it was a long flight, it was over nine hours. But he was saying that the Americans had been there, they’d got the ball bearing factory. But “It’s your job tonight, your mission tonight.” Well, as a matter of fact, they never used the word raid. It was always a mission. “Your mission tonight is to burn,” and he used an expletive, “you burn them out.” And that was quite something.

Leaving England behind, we headed across the channel and as we approached the French coast, I made my call, “Enemy coast ahead.” And particularly for[...] Red, it’s a navigator to mark on his map, crossing right now. And I, I had written here, although the darkness covered the eyes of the enemy, they knew only too well that we had arrived. Their radar was very effective but easily confused by the dropping of a window.

Continued...



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(Selwyn in the middle)

Selwyn Stephens

Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued...

But up along the coast, searchlights fingered the night sky. We, we could see it all up there and tracers wormed skyward as though stitching in the blackness. It was action and Skipper's quiet voice urging Chris and Stanley to be alert and sharp. Their acknowledgement and then silence. And then Red would call up about the next course change, "Keep an eye for the marker. Use your chandelier or flare that dropped at a distance." And he says, "A turning point it was."

And he come up only 60 minutes from target. This one was on the target at Gelsenkirchen. And I remember it very well too because, as did many others. We called it flak alley. It was a synthetic oil plant in the heart of the River Valley. It's industrial Germany. And it was well within the reach of the RAF [Royal Air Force] by the way too. You could see in the distance the soft glow and the orange glow of a city on fire. Already the bombardment is in progress. And Brian was busy on his gee [navigational radar system to guide bombers to their targets] and us, the radar that spots incoming fighters as small dots racing across his screen, ready to call out if one was on our tail. And the flak was intense and bursting. We could actually feel it too, the "thump, thump, thump, thump," you know, as, as the air also bouncing up and down. And then the skipper, Stan coming across the, he says, "Alright, Stephens, it's yours." And I just call out in "Steady now, in steady, steady." And then, "Bombs away." And you, Uncle, would rise up sharply after six tons of ... And we carried a lot of bombs, six tons normally. With the bomb doors closed and Skip he swings hard to port and we head north across Holland and the North Sea. And about 18,000 feet, Skip put the nose down slightly and "Uncle", that's our aircraft", at 180 miles an hour, as eager as we are to make the dash to home, but we have still the two hours to go, so keep alert.

Chris, Stanley and I constantly rotate our turrets, as our eyes peer into the darkness. We had to be vigilant. "Coast coming up, Red, we'll soon be over water." There's an expression of relief but, and I've written here, "Don't fade off, there are bandits still around. Along the coast, there was this sporadic gunfire but we make it through and we head west and home."



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I was in this square box, as the coxswain steering the ship and we had pads on the outside, anti-shrapnel pads, and had one bullet land right in, about that far from me, that's the closest I ever came to what could have been death.



Navy Lysle Sweeting Gull Lake, Saskatchewan

I was a coxswain on the LCM which is a Landing Craft Mechanized. You would take tanks and trucks. And then there was the LCAs, which was Landing Craft [Assault], just small ones. And the actual first troops that hit the beach would have been on them and for bigger ships, it was the LCTs, Landing Craft Tanks, to put the big tanks on and whatnot; they could take 10 or 12 of those on a landing craft. There was two ships that we were on, on merchant ships; they put the boats over the side and then they put the contents in. There was supposed to have been an officer on my ship and one on the other one, but the other boat was ready before I was, so they took off with, Lieutenant Barclay was the officer in charge, which left me with just... I was in charge by myself. And on the way in, there was a lot of shooting and what it was was the French Foreign Legion, they pretty well owned Algiers [Algeria]. And we were about 20 miles east of Algiers City, at Arzew, was where we landed. But we were being shot at, at the time. I had, I had one shot where a bullet came down. I was in this square box, as the coxswain steering the ship and we had pads on the outside, anti-shrapnel pads and had one bullet land right in, about that far from me, that's the closest I ever came to what could have been death.

It was all pitch black of course and they were just shooting at the sound of our engines. One of my men wanted to shoot back with his gun and I sort of threatened him pretty heavy, if he shot, so would I. But they couldn't hit us; well, they did have one lucky hit. But his name was Mouthy. Landed that craft, tank and his crew and they took off the beach to head for the war. And we went back and forth for two days just carrying the [supplies] in.... there was no port for the ship to go into. So we had to unload the ships with just the landing craft. Then we left the landing craft there and loaned it to the Eighth Army, they were in our area for further jump landings along the North African coast gradually pushing the German Eighth Army back in towards Cairo and eastern Egypt as a whole.

Continued...

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Navy Lysle Sweeting Gull Lake, Saskatchewan

Continued...

We would load them on a troopship ... we went back to Britain and moved around different ports and stuff in Britain for a couple years back and forth, training different army people for landing. And another sad day. While we were there [in Sicily], we were waiting for our landing craft to be filled off the shifts to go back and take them into the shore, we used to swim around the nice warm Mediterranean water and during the day, there was a hospital ship all painted white with a big red cross on it, you could see it for ten miles, with glasses. It was anchored about four or five miles off. Wounded people from the action on the shore were taken on boats out to the hospital ship. And the next morning after, I think it was the second morning, we'd heard some explosion during the night because the Germans were bombing all along the beachhead where the ships or boats were landing. But this hospital ship wasn't there [anymore]; she had been sunk during the night and on the initial landings going in, there was a bunch of marines had gone in by plane prior to our actual landings.

They were initially on the beach. And one of the planes had gone down offshore, hadn't made the shore and it was on the shore, so when we were sitting around, we were, visiting this plane that was in the water on the shore. The next day when we went swimming, we put our hand up on the tail, you know just to have something to hang onto and there was a nurse, his body was laying there and he... one of the other fellows with me put his hand on there and the nurse had been on the hospital ship and sunk that night. And the bodies had washed ashore. But that was rather dramatic to us.



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Navy Henry Trout Regina, Saskatchewan

We [HMCS Montreal, a Royal Canadian Navy frigate] were in the North Atlantic then for, I don't know how long it was. Our watch, we were granted the leave, of which we all were planning on going to London or somewhere in the British Isles. But they cancelled their leaves for no reason at all at that point, but we learned very soon afterwards that it was because of the pending invasion [the Allied Normandy landings on D-Day, June 6, 1944].

Pretty soon, we were put down to channel escort, sailing out of Derry [Londonderry, Northern Ireland], through the Irish Sea to, to the south. And we'd go into port, Falmouth or Portsmouth or Southampton, some of those places, we would be out about a week and go in there for a couple days and replenish stocks, come back out again for another week or so and do the same thing again.

On one of our trips out of the south coast of England, I've just forgotten where, I think it was Portsmouth we were sailing into then, we had just left town and it was quite a choppy sea and kind of cold and one of those miserable days. And we went out, I think it was the following day, we weren't out too long and all of a sudden, the skipper called for depth charges, so we dropped a depth charge. And within a few minutes, out across the sea, there was little white balls floating in the ocean. There was a submarine down below that we had obviously helped to rupture and they came floating to the surface, all these little yellow things were the survivors, the submarine survivors little yellow hats with light balls on them.

So consequently, we then started to do some picking up of the German submarine crew, brought them aboard. We got talking to these people as best we could and I remember one instance, one of the German crew, we got to sort of talking to in sign language, he used a pencil and paper and he drew the south coast of England, indicating where Portsmouth was. And he drew a big square out of Portsmouth. I don't know how many miles square it was but it was, you know, a good little area. And he indicated that that was the patrol area that we were patrolling. And they were fairly right on target, knew exactly what it was. And inside of this square, he drew another one, indicating that that was their area for patrol. And again, it gave you a little kind of a funny feeling when you knew that they knew exactly where we were and what we were going to do.

Continued...



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Navy Henry Trout

Regina, Saskatchewan

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When we did get into Portsmouth rather, the Home Guard [home defence organization of the British Army] was out there on this barge, they started getting off and going on the barge to go ashore and of course, they were all escorted and prisoners then. But when they left our ship, they were waving at us and yelling goodbye, danke sheon, all this type of thing. And we were yelling back at them, goodbye, good luck, etc., things you do. The Home Guard I'm sure were a little bit wondering what side of the war we were on anyway. But you know, it just shows that war is so futile that here's these people, the same as what we are, same ages and everything else, could be real good friends but we were out to do each other in.



War is so futile that here's these people, the same as what we are, same ages and everything else, could be real good friends but we were out to do each other in.



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Air Force Marie Venne

Regina, Saskatchewan

I'm Beatrice Venne and I was born in Leask, Saskatchewan in 1925. Oh, I just wanted to go. Somebody dared me. They said, oh, you'll never get in and I said, I'll show you. Basic training, we had to run, we had to march, we had to obey the rules. We weren't allowed to go after, we had a curfew that we had to be in barracks at a certain time and that was it. That didn't bother me any because we were always running around anyway. You know, like when you're on the farm, you're always moving, you were chasing cows and you're used to heavy work. It's not like you sleep, a person who don't know what it is to do heavy work. I worked for farmers, so they expected you to be up at the break of dawn and work until midnight. So you got used to working hard.

After we finished our basic training, they asked what we would like to do, when we finished. And I said, well, I don't know what else; I think I'd like to cook. And that's where I started, they sent us into Guelph, Ontario. Just like when you're going to school, they'd take you there and one day you're with the bake shop and you'd cook all day there, they'd show you what to do and then every day you did something different. And you learned how to cook and you learned how to cut meat and you learned everything about cooking. And then you had a test after you finished all your training. And you had to pass your test before you got your papers too, then you'd get a little raise. It wasn't much but it was a little something anyway because when you only work for \$10 a month, a little bit of money goes a long way. Nobody treated us any different then. That's what I said, like you didn't know any different, you just went along with everybody else. Nobody treated you different or, because you're a woman, you shouldn't be here or nothing. No, it wasn't like that, everybody had their job to do and you just did it.

Sent us back to [CFB] Rockcliffe, we cooked all the time there, after you finished your course, you went back and you did your cooking there. There are MT [Mechanical Transport] drivers and flyers, and everything in the air force. We cooked for them. We had all around shift, 24 hour shifts. We cooked at night, when the men would come in from flying and we'd have to have meals ready for them when they came in. So we were always busy.

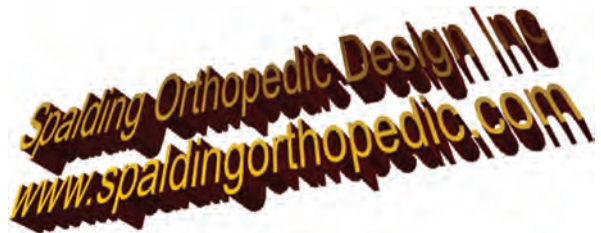
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Air Force Marie Venne

Regina, Saskatchewan



Nobody treated you different because you're a woman, you shouldn't be here. No, it wasn't like that, everybody had their job to do and you just did it.



Continued...

Everybody has their own job. Some days you're on meat, some days you're in bake shop. Another time, you're on soup, another time you're on coffee. You know, everything, everybody has their own job to do for that day. They assign you a certain time to do what you do. And everybody was the same. Breakfast, we always had the cereal and toast, and coffee, and eggs, and bacon, and ham, whatever, and jams. Just like you'd do at home, the typical breakfast. And lunch, we'd have soup and sandwiches or whatever they put on the menu, then you followed that menu and you'd just cook like that. And supper was the same thing: you had roast, potatoes and vegetables and everything.

So some of the veterans, like when they were overseas, didn't get much because there was not much overseas what they had, but Canada was okay because in Canada, people had lots of animals. I don't know if they donated them or they sold them, it wasn't very much. But we always had lots of meat in the service if we needed it, like you know, pigs and pork, and hams. You always had food. I don't think anybody was deprived of food really.

They had movies all the time at the base. You weren't allowed to go downtown unless it was your time off, like maybe a good 48 hour pass. But otherwise, you stayed on the base. You went to dances. We had dances pretty near every night and movies every night. You could go to a movie every night; they always had movies that you could go and see. Oh, I remember going to a bunch of different ones, Mrs. Miniver and oh, gosh, don't ask me all the names of the movies that we seen, the old movies. I still like watching them. *Gone With the Wind*; you know, things like that. We watched all these old movies, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and the dancing and everything; we used to watch them all the time because that's the only entertainment we had. And we'd go roller skating.

Oh, I still have a friend that lives in New Brunswick that last year I went to see her in New Brunswick. Her and I were cooking together. After 60 years, I went to see her last year. And Mary Tibbits. She used to be Mary Demerchant. Good memories. I wouldn't say they were bad memories, no. It was always seemed like everything- we had fun.



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“ He had a radio in his jeep and I was picking up the map, I heard some guy say, the war is over. ”

Army Maurice Whiting Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

My dad said he would drive us up after I convinced him I should join and we went around the drill hall in Regina and we saw these signs, and I saw Regina Rifle Regiment. I said, look, dad, they're recruiting, it looks like it. He says, yeah, you don't want to join those guys, they're beetle crushers. I said, what's a beetle crusher? He says, infantry. He was artillery in the First World War. And so he said, come on, I want you to join the air force. So we went over to the air force and they weren't recruiting that day, so then he spotted another sign that was the [Royal Canadian Army] Service Corps and they were out to lunch; and by this time, we had circled around the hall and back to Regina Rifles. And in the office was Major Scott Calder.

He saw my dad; and he said, hey, Fred. And so when he said that and went out to talk to my dad, who he had known during World War I, Teaser [Eric] Ashton, Roy Lix and I sneaked into the office and were signed up before he could do anything about it. First of all, the battalion didn't go to England until September 1941. And then we, I was with them training in England until 1943. And then I was returned to Canada to go for officers training at Brockville. I graduated in February 1944 in the rank of second lieutenant, promoted to lieutenant in August, and returned to England in December 1944; and rejoined my battalion in April 1945 in the rank of lieutenant.

I can remember reading the casualty list on D-Day and seeing the guys I'd joined up with on the list; and I felt like I had deserted them, you know, that I should have been there helping them. And so it's like if your brothers and sisters were in trouble, you'd want to be there to help them, so I had exactly the same feeling. I think I joined them just after they left Emden [Germany]. And we were fighting holding troops. They were not heavy enemy resistance, but they were delaying troops. And so we kept on the move, you know, we'd have the battle and take over their position and then the next day, we were on the move again. So we finally wound up at Leer, one of the places I remember, but we advanced from there to another town I can't think of, but at any rate, the night before the war ended, we had to do an attack on the U-boat [German submarine] yards in Northern Germany. And while the CO [commanding officer] was preparing his notes for that, he asked me to go get a map out of his jeep; and well, he had a radio in his jeep and I was picking up the map, I heard some guy say, the war is over.

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Army Maurice Whiting Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And so I went back, it was Major Bob Orr commanding because Colonel Gregory was away and I went back and told him. I said, I just heard the war is over. So he got on the phone to brigade and they said, yeah, but keep it quiet, it's not firm yet, so just have the troops stay on guard and nothing else. And so he said to me, don't tell the company commanders about this and he had them in for O-Group [Order Group] that evening and my friend, Captain Buzz Keating who passed away a couple of years ago, was commanding 'C' Company and he was given the job to attack these fortifications and that, would have been a nasty thing. Anyway, Major Orr gave the O-Group and everybody sitting there, and suddenly said, well, that's just for the record, the war is over. And they said to the quartermaster [in charge of distributing supplies and provisions], send a gallon of rum to all the companies and have one sent up here too. [laughs] I was in part of this O-Group and there was a dead silence; and then the guys just shook hands with each other and said, congratulations for making it. And then Major Orr's batman [aide], who was a youngster from Regina, fluent in German and English, and a jack of all trades, we were in a farmhouse, and he saw a pig, so he slaughtered a pig; and so we had rum and fresh pork for breakfast. [laughs]

So that was a night I remember, that's all I remember about that night. I guess I had too many rums! [laughs] Most of my experience was the tail end of the war and after the war. That's when we really got busy with the administration, you know, getting the boys sorted out. Some wanted to stay with the battalion and go home with it, although those that had been overseas for four years had a priority to go home. The wounded, those who had been wounded would have a priority to go home. And they had a priority to go back if they volunteered for the Pacific and those that arrived late in the war were transferred to the 4th Battalion Reginas [Regina Rifle Regiment] in the occupation force [Canadian Army Occupation Force]. After the war, we gave them a leave for England or anywhere they wanted to go, as much as we could, but we still had to maintain a certain number with the battalion just in case something started up again. And then we tried to find some sports outlets, so with the Dutch people we arranged for tennis and parties if we could -dances and stuff like that, you know, to keep them entertained. And the Dutch had, I think, what they called a health spa in Arnhem; and they could go there once a week and for 50 cents, you could have a hot tub and a rubdown. And so we made sure they did the circuit. And then there was a lot of parading too which they hated, of course. [laughs] But we had to, we did a couple of guards of honour, we did a royal guard for Queen Wilhelmina [of the Netherlands], and we did an honour guard for Field Marshal [Sir Bernard] Montgomery while we were there and that took weeks of practice, of course. So those are the kind of things we were involved in.

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Air Force Fred Wihak

Melville, Saskatchewan

This was over Malta at the time. Because after [El] Alamein [Egypt], we went all the way across North Africa, up to Tunis and then to Malta. And from Malta, we went to Sicily and then into Italy. This was the Desert Air Force. But I remember when we was over Malta, we were only there I guess maybe a month, this was just shortly after we got there and of course, the Germans were battering Malta at the time. So we were always on what they called readiness. And then you're made to scramble if there's enemies around, you scramble, you get into a dog fight. And we got into this dog fight and I was a number two for the leader and pretty soon, I lost him, which is, I don't think he will ever forgive me. And then I saw this plane coming at me and it was showing white smoke, and I thought, well, one of our guys that got hit in the glycol tank, because that's what you'd often get. And then it went by. This all happened so quick and here it was a German swastika on it and it was shooting at me. And luckily he missed. But I was really fooled there.

But it was a jumble, everything happened so fast. There was one thing that stays with me all the time. If you were on the morning shift, there would be four or eight of us on. And after we were done, we were off until later in the afternoon or in the evening. And so what we used to do for good reason was we'd go out in a half-ton truck out into the farms and stuff in the countryside - the homes were all deserted - and we were looking for eggs and vino [wine] and stuff like that. So on this one day, our four, we got in one and the other four, they got into another half-ton. And so we were going up. We were usually within six or seven miles of the front line, most of the times. When the front line would move, we would move with it. So we were done for the morning, so we got the half-ton truck and we went out in the country and we saw a farmhouse over to the left. So we got in there and all of a sudden, a captain came in and he was mad as heck. What are you doing here, he says, this is - we just got in here last night, this is our forward observation post. And now they know we're here.

Well, sorry, we didn't know that. And he says, well, the German forward observation post is that farmhouse there about two miles over. I said, well, now that they know you're here, why don't you go and have, phone back to your guns to go and shoot it. So we knew where the guns were coming from and so we got up on a hill so we could watch this. And the first blast came just at the edge of the corner of the house. The next one got the corner of the house and by this time, we've got some cognac ... Well then the, the next one got it dead in the center. And then we saw the German guys running out the back. Okay, so we had a really great time that day and we got back to the [aero]drome and then we waited for the other guys and it was dark and they weren't back yet. And the next day we found out that they were prisoners of war. Because they had gone a little further and into another farmhouse. And they got into the yard and then the German soldiers came out and they were made prisoners just like that. So that's one I always remember.

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Navy
John Wilson
Regina, Saskatchewan



We'd all take our turn trying artificial respiration but normally we couldn't bring them back and of course, then you'd have some burials at sea.



Being a wireless operator, we'd be copying the messages and a lot of these messages came from headquarters informing us of the submarine activity and wolf packs [groups of German submarines that operated together] that might be in our way. So efforts would be made to alter course of the convoy, which is pretty difficult, alter course, so we would miss them. But invariably, we'd never miss them and practically every crossing we had, we met some action from submarines. Most of the crossings, we lost one ship anyway. Later on during the war, it wasn't so hectic but to begin with, with the wolf packs and in 1942, it was the peak of the U-boat [German submarine] warfare, we lost a lot of ships. On one crossing, we lost I think it was 18 ships. But of the 18, there is 13 submarines in this wolf pack. And so they were situated in together under and they waited for the convoy to pass over and then they would come up and start popping them off. And with six escorts, it was impossible to keep them out. So they took their toll. But the majority of our ships, we had convoys 80 ships and so we lost 18. Of course, that was bad because there would always be survivors and of course, we were always detailed, our ships were always detailed to pick up survivors if there were any. And we, first time we picked up in bitterly cold weather and stuffed with ice and we spotted one boat with one person in it and that turned out to be a 15 year old Scottish lad. And we picked him up and he was pretty happy to be picked up but he was almost frozen. And he had a whistle in his mouth and he couldn't even blow it.



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Merchant Navy Clifford Wunder

Sheho, Saskatchewan



And I was terribly seasick for that first 24 hours. I was ready to jump overboard and start walking home.



I joined the merchant navy and was shipped to Prescott, Ontario [for] engineering training and stokehold training for steamships. I know we were shipped from Prescott to Saint John, New Brunswick. We had to enter into what they called the Manning Pool there, until we were assigned to a ship. And I think there was ten of us that were shipped at that one time from Prescott.

We were split up and we were assigned different ships. I was on the SS Rideau [Park]. It wasn't too long, maybe two or three days and they had assembled so many ships ready to go from New Brunswick, from Saint John to Sydney [Nova Scotia]. We went to Sydney for more coal and on the way to Sydney, it was about a 24-hour trip. And I was terribly seasick for that first 24 hours. I was ready to jump overboard and start walking home.

Anyway, got to Sydney, loaded up with coal and then we formed up a convoy. I can't recall now just how many ships was in that first convoy I traveled in but it was quite a number. And we traveled then across to England. And I guess it was about two weeks after we left Sydney, one of the firemen got sick, he couldn't stand the heat. And I was a trimmer, a trimmer was [a person who distributes coal on a steamship], I had to work harder but he was at least out of the heat quite a bit of the time. So they transferred me to a fireman and him back to a trimmer. So from that day on, I was a fireman and a fireman with a real hard, hot working job. You didn't work full, like all the time - you had a break every so often - but you still had to be in the heat all the time.

Our tools consisted of D-handle No. 10 shovel, about a nine or ten-foot slice bar and a nine or ten-foot long, we called it a hoe but it was actually an iron rake. And the slice bar was used for breaking up the clinkers in the fire box and the hoe was used for pulling out, or the rake was used for pulling out clinkers and all the ashes and stuff, every so often.

Continued..



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Merchant Navy Clifford Wunder

Sheho, Saskatchewan

Continued..

We were hauling supplies. Not just war equipment but a lot of food. And building material. We used to have loads and loads and loads of lumber on top of our decks, strapped down. The holds would be full of either ammunition and grain or flour or some type of food, canned milk. Canned milk was one of the things that we took cases, thousands and thousands of cases of canned milk over there [to Europe]. And wheat, a lot of wheat. They used the wheat for packing. They'd drop a great big truck or a tank in the bottom of the ship and then dump a bunch of wheat on top for packing, keep it from rolling around down there. It worked good.

And trucks of all kinds, Jeeps, you name it, guns of all kinds. Oh, and another thing we had onboard was, like I was on what they called the 'black gang' of firemen, we had four and I can't for the life of me remember the proper wording for, for this group ['black gang' refers to a coal-fired ship's engine crew, because of the soot and coal dust in which they work]. But we all called them DEMS, D-E-M-S [Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships]. They were genuine navy gunners. And all our guns were equipped with one cannon and a couple Oerlikons [20mm naval cannons] and a few other odds and ends and they were expected to keep the guns in shape all time we were out at sea. And if needed, they would use them.

They could call on any one of us to assist them if need be. And we were under the, what they called the DOT, Department of Transport. I don't know, maybe that's why they said we were, had nothing to do with the Armed Forces after the war was over but before the war was over, they were only too welcome to have somebody join them because as soon as you got into the merchant navy, they never bothered you anymore to join into the, or to get called up into the Army or the Air Force. You got into the merchant navy, you were there for life if you wanted to be.

We had to sign up for two years or the duration of the war, whichever came soonest. And if you tried to jump ship or whatever, it was mandatory jail. There were no ifs, buts or maybes. All in all, I don't know, I think I done what, I done what I could and tried to serve the country and enjoyed it as much as I possibly could. We had a few good close calls but we survived that, so. Every once in a while, you'd run into a scare from U-boats, submarines, and they'd be dropping these damn depth charges every so often, and sometimes all night. And every so often, there'd be one or two ships disappear and that's where they were, at the bottom of the ocean. But the convoys kept going. And that's what we were all about was hauling the supplies over there for the forces.

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When you thought about it, it was all very deadly stuff that we were dealing with.



Army John Zacharias Herbert, Saskatchewan

I had to learn all about all the munitions. There are small arms, grenades, explosives of all kinds, artillery shells, mortars and so forth. I had to learn all about all of those. And we supplied all the training units in Pacific Command with munitions, whenever they wanted them. And there were some artillery camps on the coast for the defense of Canada; we supplied them with ammunition too.

The office of the ammunition dump would give us the orders from these various army units in training in B.C. and we would have to ship them whatever we had and what they wanted. Yeah. When they finished their training and went overseas, they would send all their remaining munitions back to us and I had to check them to make sure they were okay still. And if they weren't, I had to blow them up. Yeah.

I wasn't as careful as I should have been and I didn't wear anything over my ears when I was doing that. So I ended up being deaf in one ear. I'd have to tape some explosives to the shell I was blowing up and then have a fuse, which I could light after I got out of the way and put a match to that and get out of the way and then eventually, the shell or whatever it was would blow up.

Well, there was one time when the Japanese had occupied the island of Kiska, which is the Aleutian island off Alaska and we had to supply the Canadian Army going up there with all sorts of explosives and munitions. And then most of it was never used because the Japanese fled and it came back in terrible condition. It had been sitting out in the weather and we had to go over it all and dispose of what we didn't think was usable anymore and so forth.

Mortars were quite different from artillery shells in that they were used over a short distance, relatively short distance, where the troops would fire a mortar off against the enemy but they were close enough for these to have some effect. Whereas on the other hand, the artillery shells were for long distance and grenades were used again when soldiers were fighting the enemy at a relatively short range, where you could just throw a grenade over and it would explode and they could do the same with us. Yeah. When you thought about it, it was all very deadly stuff that we were dealing with, but I hope it did some good to the fellows in training to go overseas.



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“ The night before we got instructions to write our last letter home.. Who do you send it to: your mom and dad, or your wife? I addressed it to all of them. That’s a hell of a letter to have to write. ”

Army Roy Armstrong Regina, Saskatchewan

The night before we got instructions to write our last letter home. I was married, young, just married. Very young and married. Who do you send it to: your mom and dad, or your wife? I addressed it to all of them. That’s a hell of a letter to have to write.

The Regina Rifles [Regiment], I think, they scored- they went the deepest in land as anybody did [during the Normandy Landings]; and No. 14 [Canadian] Field Ambulance [Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps] was right behind them. Did you ever see them set up a field ambulance? Four ambulances and they back them all together; and they leave a little hole in the middle for an operating room. Each ambulance will take four wounded men and they operated on them; fix ‘em up, put them in an ambulance, away it goes; and another one backs in.

I saw a guy come into No. 14 Field Ambulance one time. I thought he was saying a prayer. He was sitting like this, and he had a little hole through there for a cigarette. Germans had cleaned the front of his hands off and healed them together.

Do you know why? He was a doctor. He would never operate again. That’s how mean the Germans [could] get. You can’t believe some of the stuff that I witnessed during the war. The Regina Rifles confiscated an ambulance one time. The

Americans just went over and bombed a couple we had. The Regina Rifles turned an ambulance over to us. I got the pleasure of driving this thing down to No. 14 Field Ambulance, put the thing to work, but the mechanics, they got to look it over first. You know what they found- there was a pipe off the exhaust pipe up the back of the ambulance and into the ambulance. Do you know what they did that for? Children and old aged people. When they got to their destination, everybody would be dead in the back of that ambulance. How mean can people get? That’s a hard story to believe, isn’t it? Yeah, I saw that with my own eyes.



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He seemed about a baby-faced 18, but he didn't look near that old. And he was standing there, his eyes as big as saucers, shaking and tried to talk to him and we couldn't talk to him; and finally he said, I saved my hat.



Army Danny "Boone" Arntsen Beechy, Saskatchewan

We got to San Francisco. The liaison officer there was the Captain Sidney Bracey. [He] told us, you're not going any further because this is how secret things are supposed to be. He said, our intelligence knows that the Japanese intelligence knows that you're going to leave there today and so we've cancelled your ship. So we hung around for the longest while and one day, I just happened to be walking down one of the streets in San Francisco right where his office was, so I dropped in and asked him if he had any ideas. And that's when he said, Danny, I've got two problems. I've got the Canadians to get over; and this morning, I was blessed with an American ship, or British ship rather, come over with supplies for Australians short of gunners. So I said, oh, what kind? So he told me what kind, that there was a [Quick Firing] 25-pounder [field gun/Howitzer] forward, there was a [Quick Firing] 12-pounder [anti-aircraft gun] aft, Oerlikons [anti-ship and anti-submarine gun] and Brownies [Browning heavy machine guns] in the sides, oh, I said, I've trained on them (I hadn't). On the heavy artillery, I had, yes. So I still remember when they finished, he poking me in the chest and he says, Danny, you're in the British navy.

And the next morning we pulled out for Australia. We picked up a Japanese submarine on our ASDIC [Anti-Submarine Detection Investigation Committee] and we took evasive action. Imagine, it took us 26 days to go from San Francisco to Sydney, Australia, non-stop, but for dodging the submarine. We was supposed to pull into Sydney Harbour at 7:00 this one evening of the eighteenth of August and we had a terrible storm. And you know, when we hit that big waves, that ship would just howl like you plucked a million violin strings, it would just whine. So we had to turn around and ride out the storm.

Continued...

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Army
Danny "Boone" Arntsen
Beechy, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And I was on watch at the time when they called me back. There was fish already flopping on the deck when we went down and were coming back up again. A screw would come out at the back and nose dive into the water and the rudder would come out and then shake that ship like a dog shaking a rabbit. So, anyway, and the next morning, the storm had calmed down, so we headed into Australia, Sydney Harbour, and just as we were going to go into the harbour, he blew up the ship immediately in front of us. And the four that were saved just happen to land close enough to a boat that people picked him up. Now, you can imagine being blown up in the air and come down and be lucky enough to be picked up. And we went and talked to these boys and one of them was about, he seemed about a baby-faced 18, but he didn't look near that old. And he was standing there, his eyes as big as saucers, shaking and tried to talk to him and we couldn't talk to him; and finally he said, I saved my hat and he turned it over and he looked and he started to cry. He says, it's my buddy's. Of course, that was worth more than his own hat, I think.

We got all the radar sets improved. We had to lacquer them so they wouldn't rust. Every piece had to be lacquered because they rusted when you're in the tropics. Once we got this finished, that's when they came down, looking for people to go into the intelligence. And I was off, away at the time, but Captain Schnell, who knew us very well. He said to them (they wanted twelve,) he said, I'll give you one man, Arntsen, and you pick your 11. And that's how I got into intelligence. We got into Melville Island [Australia] then, just before dinner, and I went for dinner. Two of us went for dinner. I was one of them, the other boys worked. Had my dinner. When we came back, we found out we'd already picked up a message from Timor because that was the furthest south that the Japanese were at the time. It was telling us, sending messages to Tokyo, telling us how many of us had landed. And they were exactly right. So they just said, leave us alone, find out what they're doing and report later. So we picked up a few days later and picked up the reports that they can't crack our code, so they don't know what we're up to. So that's when they gave them the orders to bomb us out. So we just contacted the mainland and they sent up a plane, a bomber and, and I think it was, if I remember right, it was three fighters, it might have only been two. But the bomber was there, flying low to keep out of radar. But they, afraid of, there's a bit of a headwind, they might have been late and they had to be right on the minute almost. So that's how they got into there. And they got in there right in time. They had their planes on the runway. They just dropped the bomb on the end of the runway, so they couldn't take off and then they finished the job.

Interviewer's Note: Mr. Arntsen took the oath of allegiance to Australia and was inducted into the Australian Army and wore its uniform throughout his time in the service overseas.

David Langen

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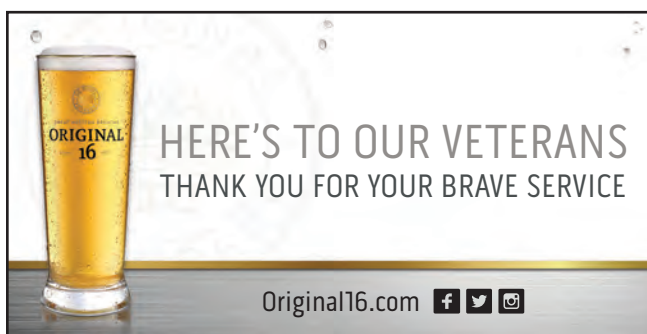
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And he sent everybody out and he went into this building to dismantle this mine and all of a sudden, the whole building just went up, him and the building and everything.



Army Stephen Bandurka

North Battleford, Saskatchewan

The war came along and I was a little under age but I thought I'd like to join the army. And they said I'd have to wait. But I went to Saskatoon and I had a brother-in-law in the reserve. He was a sergeant in the reserve, so he said, if you want to get in the army, I'll get you in. That's how I got into the army. We were in the engineers. Instead of privates, we were called sappers.

Well, they asked where I come from, we lived on the farm and they said, oh, you're a farm kid, so you're in the engineers. The highlight of the engineers, we put one of the nicest bridges on the Emmerich [Rhine River] in Germany, a return Bailey, a huge- it was a work of art. We had to get across the river, and get the seat down for the bridging, and then like get the two seats started and build towards the centre. But we had to do it in the dark because we'd get shot down in the daytime. So a lot of it was done in the dark.

It was on the east side of the Emmerich [Rhine]. The cows were still in the barn and the pigs, so we butchered a pig and a cow and we had fresh meat. (laughs)

The shrapnel was so bad that we had to cover our tires on our vehicles so they wouldn't get shrapnel in them. And then proceeded to build the bridges where we could. But it was a beautiful sight when we got finished. Double Bailey, a return Bailey.

Continued...



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Army Stephen Bandurka

North Battleford, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Some of the boys figured it would be a good time to go over and see what we could find. And they asked me if I wanted to go along and I said, no. So I stayed on the other side and I was looking after the equipment for the bridges. And they went across and I never seen them again because the whole street blew up. The Germans had mined the whole street. So I was happy I didn't go with them or I wouldn't be here. (laughs)

We built bridges, we took infantry across, lifted mines and all the menial works, like getting rid of, pardon me, bodies, some way or another. And clearing the road so that, getting all the mines up, so that the troops could come through. You had to be careful because there was push igniters and there was pull igniters. So if you lifted it and you pulled the igniter, you set the mine off. If you stepped on it, you set the mine off because those were push igniters. And then there was the anti-personnel mines. Even our Sergeant -Major, he got a mine in Belgium and it was a great big round- they were built for big vehicles and that. And he sent everybody out and he went into this building to dismantle this mine and all of a sudden, the whole building just went up, him and the building and everything. So the mining was very important, to know where all the igniters were and you had to dig around sideways, not from the top, because if you pushed on it, or pulled on it, it was different. They had the Polish [Mark I] mine detectors. Like I say, I'd parked my truck on one and I didn't know there was a mine there. But you were always careful for mines, watching for mines.

The Polish detector? Well, I never worked one but it's just things for your ears and it went down and a thing at the bottom, a round thing at the bottom detected the mine and it went up through the hearing thing and you listened to that. I'm not used to describing what I did. And a lot of the times, I hardly talked about it and over the years, it's a distant thing.

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George Andrew (right)



We found that, in most cases, if you used flame properly, we saved lives.



Army George Andrew Bannerman Neville, Saskatchewan

I had an interesting war. I think I did some good with flame, teaching people how to use it because we found that when we used flamethrowers properly, it caused the Germans to immediately give up. We just didn't find many burned Germans because as soon as the first flash of our flamethrowers were used, the people used it, they'd come out of their place and quit firing.

I have one little story about a sergeant of a Canadian unit; and he was in a Flamethrower Carrier [Wasp Bren Gun Carrier], and he was going across the [Leopold] Canal. And there was an 88 [mm German Anti-Tank Gun] across the way, you know that would have blown that little Wasp Flamethrower into kingdom come. And he pressed the trigger and all they got was the little shot of gasoline and a little fire, but all the people on the other side come out with their arms up and he was pretty near dead scared. But we found that, in most cases, if you used flame properly, we saved lives. And I think that if I have any credit for what I did in World War II, was I taught a lot of people how to use it.

It [the Wasp] was a Bren Gun [Universal] Carrier [lightly armoured tracked vehicle] and we mounted this thing; it had a tank at the back and the flame fuel was pressurized with carbon dioxide, pushed it through a heater, then on the carrier, and then went to the gun. So when you pressed the trigger, you got a spark, a shot of gasoline and then the fuel came. So the gasoline was on fire and went right along the rod of fuel, up to 150 yards. And then when it hit, it was, there was flame everywhere. Most times, if the crew got the enemies' heads down by lots of fire, mortars and machine guns, so this tender little carrier could get close. And when it got within say about 100 yards, you'd press the trigger, whoosh and everything quit. Out they came.

Continued...

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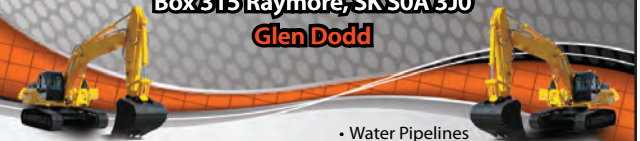


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**Army
George Andrew
Bannerman
Neville, Saskatchewan**

Continued...

It's a great weapon and we couldn't get a lot of commanders to use it, because they thought, oh, it's not a means [for] anything. But the units that did, and I have one special one, the Régiment de Maisonneuve. I spent quite a bit of time with them and, at the end of the war, they held a special mess dinner for myself; and my crew were well treated too by their other ranks. This unit had been so effective that in the last stages of the war, the last five weeks, when we lost a lot of Canadian lads, this unit had hardly any deaths because they used flame every day; and they just had the enemy coming out, and not firing back. It was wonderful.

My mom wrote hundreds of letters. She wrote my dad four times a week and we were in a small town, or she was, and the trains only went twice a week, but there was a merchant that went into Swift Current [Saskatchewan] twice a week. And he also carried letters. And for Gordon [Bannerman - who served in the 17th Field Regiment, RCA] and I, the two sons, we would get two [letters] a week. And then my mother knit hundreds of pairs of socks for the navy guys and always put her name in it; and when any boy wrote back and said thank you, they were automatically on her list. Her idea of writing a letter was a big pad of paper like this and no paragraphs, nothing, just write, turn it over, just write and send it. And so she used more stamps than anybody else in our little village [Neville] in Saskatchewan.

I was working with the Régiment de Maisonneuve; and we were sitting down, a whole bunch of us, you know, I was sitting next to a buck private from the Régiment de Maisonneuve. They took a very great pride and they learned to speak English, because they were a French-speaking unit. A very fine unit at the end of the war. And I was reading a letter from my mom and this soldier next to me said, "is that a letter from your mom?" And I said, "yes." I said, "would you like to read it?" "Oh, yes." And when he read it, he was crying at the end of it; and he'd been joined up against the wills of the people of Quebec, religious I think. And here he was, all I had to do was ask for his regimental number, and I knew his unit, and we would have got, my mother would have written him in a minute. And this stupid old man didn't do it. I've never forgiven myself for that. And I cannot, because I feel my mother was so good to us and to many navy boys with knitted socks. If they wrote back, she always answered and wrote them. So when the war was over, because they'd gone to the coast, there was dozens of those lads came and visited my mom. She was a great mom.

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Air Force

Bert Barker

Craik, Saskatchewan

The big thing in training, it was basically you were supposed to look out for aircraft. And you had two, .303 calibre machine guns but the biggest thing that they put into you was: see the other guy first. If you seen him, and it looked like he had took evasive action or that, it was very seldom that a guy would keep pressing home and attacking if he was going to be shot back at..., which made a lot of sense. So that was basically my job, was to see what was going on, and report it.

The main one I remember, we were coming back one night in cloud, letting down to get below the cloud, just gradually. And I heard the pilot say, "Engineer, engineer, what's that red light?", and then he says, "Okay, I got it." I look out the window and then he says, "Better take crash position, boys." I looked out the [gun] turret and just as I was sliding out of the turret, and I could see trees passing the wings, the starboard wing tip. And a big building on a hill, I don't know what it was, whether it was a farmhouse or what it was, but it was a ... So then I was just about to pull the intercom cord, I was out of the turret by that time and the pilot says, "Okay, I've got it boys, it's okay." So [we] climb back in the turret and we flew on for a little while from there.

Got back on the ground and asked him, "How high were we?" and he says, "Oh, about 300 or 400 feet." I says, "Like hell we were. When I looked out," I said, "there was trees passed the port wing tip." So he says, "I'll tell you later." So that's when I found out, apparently the wireless operator hadn't given the right barometric pressures that were from Base and he'd made a mistake on that somehow or other and so we were flying about 200 feet lower than what the altimeter read, so that was the story about that one.

We never bombed anywhere but Germany, all our bombing was done in Germany because the Invasion was over by the time we ... And so the troops were, they had what they called a bomb line. And you couldn't drop bombs on this side of the bomb line because the Allied troops were in that area, so it was generally about a mile-or-so before, on, on this side of Germany. By the time we were flying, pretty near everybody, the troops were all in Germany. So we really couldn't drop bombs anywhere but in Germany.

Continued...



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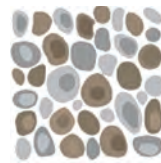
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Air Force Bert Barker

Craik, Saskatchewan



That was just about right because you'd see a burst of flak open and then if you'd seen the next one, you'd probably see a Lancaster in flames.



Continued...

I think I made several nine-hour trips which is a, quite a long time sitting in a gun turret. The intelligence was very good because they'd tell us what we could expect pretty well. We might expect to see from the defenses and they were usually pretty well right on. I remember them telling us watch out for predicted flak [anti-aircraft fire] and if you saw three bursts of flak, to "get weaving" as they called it. Change direction immediately because if you waited for the second one, it'd probably get to you the second time. And that was just about right because you'd see a burst of flak open and then if you'd seen the next one, you'd probably see a Lancaster [bomber] in flames.

When you went in for a briefing, or "debriefing," they called it, they'd asked you to report anything you saw out of the ordinary, one thing or another. And our rear gunner, he was a great guy for telling the stories of what he saw and we used to give him the devil for telling these stories because we had to sit around there and, while this went on and question him. Anyway, and then we'd have a shot of rum, they always used to serve us a shot of rum when we got back, so on your last trip, you could have all you wanted. So I guess I had my share of them and I had a motorcycle; the engineer and I had a motorcycle together. I remember leaving to go to the hut for breakfast afterward and he's standing up on the backseat of the motorcycle waving at the Land Army girls [female farm workers]. So I said, "Sit down, you silly bugger, you're going to get, we're finished our tour off and now you're trying to kill us."

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Navy George Bell Regina, Saskatchewan

66

That's when they had the riot in Halifax, so it's probably a good job we weren't there, we'd have been in trouble!

99

I got put in the engineer's office as a clerk in the office there and I was there for a while. It was a good job, sitting in an office, every weekend off and everything, but no watches, just stand. But being young and dumb, I wanted to go to sea, so I requested a draft and after a while, I got drafted onto the [HMCS] Strathadam that was a frigate.

On that, we went down through the Pacific to the Panama Canal and it was during wartime. So going through the canal, you couldn't take pictures or you couldn't do anything up on deck that... You could watch but very little could you see.

Then we went up the East Coast and we went to Halifax and there I got drafted off. I'd left my good job in Victoria and I had about a month's sea time and back off again into Halifax, into [HMCS] Peregrine there [a naval holding and training camp]. And from there, I got drafted onto the HMCS Charny. And she was an old coal burning ship that had been built in 1914. It was a coal burner, had two boilers and each boiler had two fires. So there was two of us worked each watch and the guy I worked with, he weighed exactly 100 pounds more than I did. I think I was about 120 and he was 220.

But it was hard, dirty work. The fires every watch, you had to clean the fire, which meant you had to break up the clinkers [incombustible residue of burned coal] and clean out the ashes and dump them on the floor at your feet, and then pour water on them to cool them off and all the steam and the ashes would come up around your face. And then if you were at sea, we had a machine on there that pumped them overboard. But that worked fine if it wasn't too rough. And if you were in harbour, you couldn't use that because the engine melded the stuff on the ashes and stuff on the harbour floor, so that you'd have to pile them on deck and throw them overboard next time you got to sea.

Continued...

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Navy George Bell

Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And while I was on it, VE-Day [Victory in Europe] came along and we were in Halifax harbour, the morning it was declared, but the captain, he wouldn't stay ashore anyway, he took us out and anchored outside Halifax someplace. And we spliced the main brace, which is the extra tot of rum for everybody. Even us little ones that were underage at the time.

After we got back, that's when they had the riot in Halifax, so it's probably a good job we weren't there, we'd have been in trouble I guess. But when we got back, we did see some of the damage and everything that had been done downtown, but sailors weren't very popular in Halifax after that.

And after that, got off the [HMCS] Medicine Hat, went back to Halifax and got drafted off of the [HMCS] Beacon Hill and she was from Victoria [British Columbia], named after the park in Victoria. She was a frigate and she was going back and departed Halifax just before Christmas, so we were at sea for Christmas. We could actually see Jamaica in the distance, but they wouldn't pull in for Christmas, we still had to stay at sea. But then we hit a big storm south of that and it was really rough and it smashed the one lifeboat, put a great big hole in the side of it, so we were down one lifeboat.

And in the Pacific, we ran into all kinds of odd things. We had a school of flying fish we went around or went through, and these things are about eight to ten inches long and they have wings and they glide. And they glide right up and land on the deck, which is six to eight feet above the waterline, so they could get fairly high. While we were there, somebody decided we needed fresh fish for a meal, so they decided they could throw a depth charge over and the concussion kills a lot of fish, so they put a longboat out and rode around and picked up the best fish and we had fresh fish for supper then.

Went up to Victoria and into Naden and that's where I was discharged on February the 11th, 1946.



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As it was happening, you didn't worry about it. But once it was over, you kind of realize exactly how bad it could have been.



Air Force Stephen Boczar

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Well, I'm Steven Boczar, I joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941. After my training, I went overseas, did some more training and then I went onto Number 9 Squadron, RAF, where I did my tour.

And there I did 31 trips. The first three trips, we were attacked by fighters. And I was lucky enough not to get hit, but they came awful close. During the tour, I did four trips to Berlin and most of the others were to the Ruhr Valley, which was heavily defended. We were actually hit, my aircraft was hit three times by ack-ack fire [anti-aircraft fire], by shrapnel. During the trip, tours I should say, we would weave, and one of the big things I remember is that when I was weaving to the right, somebody was weaving to the left and we came very close to hitting each other. And we found out when I got back to the station that the other aircraft that came awful close to hitting me was also from that same station. So other than that, one trip to Berlin, when we came in north edge of Berlin, we were picked up by the searchlights. And I could not shake the searchlights until I got right through the south end of Berlin. I don't know how many minutes I was, but it seemed like hours but ... And also, being held by the searchlights and ack-ack coming close, I believe I started to run at about 22,000 feet, when I finished at the south end of Berlin, I was only about 12,000 feet. So it was one of the worst trips during the whole tour, except for the fighters and that.

Continued...

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Air Force Stephen Boczar

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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Continued...

The searchlights were very bright there, especially Berlin. And they really, when you get out of the range of one, another one would pick you up right away. In other words, they passed you on from one to the other. And they had an awful lot of them there in Berlin.

Well, you could see the exploding all around you. As I said, I was hit with flack three times, but not that trip. I was lucky that trip, I got away with it. A lot of the other trips too were shaky, they were all shaky, but because they were well defended, like the Ruhr Valley was very well defended.

The mid-upper gunner saw this aircraft coming at us and of course, he give the instructions where it was coming from. So I would, if he was coming from the left say, I'd go left also, so, try and get away from him. And that time, when he opened up, you could see the tracer between the inner engine and where I was sitting. It was right close it was. And there was only, well, the aircraft, I don't know how many feet there is between the engine and the cockpit, but there's not very much space there. And you could actually see the tracer going through there, and as you're looking at the tracer, it doesn't seem to bother you. It's after the break-off and he disappears that you start wondering, that came awful close.

As it was happening, you sort of didn't worry about it. But once it was over, you kind of realize exactly how bad it could have been. Why it was only attacked the first three trips, nobody seems to know except that we sort of guess maybe they, the German fighter pilots realized who was brand new at the game and who wasn't, and they'd go after the ones that were the first trips. Because there were quite a few crews, especially in our squadron and that was like in the beginning of 1943, that were shot down or missing on the first few trips of their tour. And the other thing, like a tour consisted of 30 trips. On my 30th trip, we bombed Friedrichshafen in Germany [Operation Bellicose] and carried on from there to North Africa, where we landed in North Africa. And we were there, I think it was three or four days, refueling and re-bombing and bombed a target in Italy on the way back. So I actually did one extra trip, but we, we had the opportunity of going home via the North Sea, Atlantic Ocean and North Sea, but we figured it's shorter the other way and might as well do that instead of taking the roundabout trip.

It was one of the nicest aircraft to fly, the [Avro] Lancaster was. Like I had such a long haul also on the [Handley Page] Halifax and flew it, but I preferred the Lancaster. And it was a big aircraft, we had a heavy load but ... Well, we did take, had a scary thing once. We had such a heavy load that, well, on takeoff, we took off, we had a part of the wire fence that we took with us all the way there on the undercarriage. Because as I was taking off, we broke the fence at the end of the runway. It was faster than the Halifax or [Short] Stirling, which were the other two bombing aircraft. And it went good height. It was well maneuverable. Really nice to fly that way, you could really throw it around, shall we say. (laughs) Which you had to do over some of those targets. I was one of the fortunate ones, partly good luck and partly ability and I had a real good crew.

They all knew their work and that, so that helped a lot. And especially the mid-upper gunner, he really cut his eyes wide open so well, so did the rear gunner, but by having a real good crew, that helps.



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Army

Albert Bridgewater

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



I saw some of the young German soldiers who had lost their lives due to the troops, the British and Canadian and American troops advancing. Young, blonde fellows – it was a pain to see them there.



I did a lot of reconnaissance work around in France, Belgium and Holland to gain information for the, the fighting forces. I did not engage in any particular action. I saw many people who had been killed and, of course, and so on, but I did not involve active combat, my work did not involve active combat, other than the risk of being ambushed, or whatever. To make sure I, I found or – got information on important aspects, which would affect the advance of the armed forces. The challenge was getting around to various areas and writing a report, and making sure that the information got to the, to the arm of the services that would require it. As we advanced, of course, we saw the destruction of bridges, which the enemy had blown up. We had to, we would write a report on it and the, the [Royal Canadian] Engineers would have to fix it, fix the bridges. I can remember going across some bridges, which were pretty shaky... Let's see... That's about, about all.

And I was never at any, that I was aware of, any particular risk. No doubt I was observed by enemy forces in my reconnaissance, but I was not, I did not confront the enemy face-to-face. I saw some of the young German soldiers who had lost their lives due to the troops, the British and Canadian and American troops advancing. Young, blonde fellows – it was a pain [hurt] to see them there. I remember them, the people that I knew that were killed or wounded. During the... If I'm at home... When they play the "Last Post,"* or have the moments of silence, I find myself standing at attention and remembering, maybe... but I find I do remember them. I was extremely fortunate, I didn't get a scratch really. Well, I was sick with the flu, with a bit of flu in England for a while, but I was not wounded, and I have enjoyed pretty good health ever since. And my objective now is to reach a 100.

* A military bugler plays the "Last Post" to signal lights out at the end of the day. When played during a commemorative ceremony, the song symbolizes the death of the fallen in battle.

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Forbes Brown

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SC107, which was one of the heaviest [sic] raided convoys of the Second World War. We had 19 ships torpedoed and 16 didn't make it, three were dispatched to Iceland for repairs and so on and so forth. And then we arrived in Liverpool [England] and we spent about a month in Liverpool and getting additional 20mm cannons aboard. We had seven additional 20mm cannons. Not knowing, we were issued great coats with fur lines and this sort of stuff. And then we were detailed off to the Mediterranean to assist in the landings in North Africa [in November 1942]. It was a great mystery to us at the time when we went into Oran, we could see these stacks sticking up out of there and bits and pieces of ships and you didn't know what it was all about. But it was the French fleet that the British sunk because they wouldn't join the Allies. And that was in March, they came back in March of 1943. The first trip into Bone [Harbour], we were there about 15 minutes or so, rather humorous, everybody wanted to go swimming. So we all got decked out with this one chap, a fellow by the name of Bob Boccock. He had dentures across the front and we were in swimming and all of a sudden, Stukas [German dive bombers] showed up. And of course, he opened his mouth and dropped his plate. But he had a lifejacket on because he couldn't swim.

And his teeth are sitting in the bottom Bone Harbour. And on the fifth of June [1944], we had gone out to escort the minesweepers. The HMS Campenfeld and ourselves, escorted the minesweepers into Juno Beach. And on the morning of the sixth of course, we were able to go through, the minesweepers would make a channel for us and we were their support if anybody, E-boats [small German attack craft] or anything, came out to attack. [Note: The following section details Mr. Brown's experiences in Northern Russia as part of a series of convoys known collectively as the Murmansk Run] I was a postman, I was the ship's official photographer, I had a lot of little jobs. And I could pretty well go ashore any time to get mail or something like that. I was ashore one day and I was talking to one of the Russians. We played hockey up there as a matter of fact. And we had no gear except I had skates and we had some hockey sticks. And we played but the Russian stick had a blade and then it went up to the handle as well, part of the blade went up the handle. And we played with a ball, like a tennis ball. And it was interesting. The ice rink was probably a city block and the only person who could speak English and Russian was a woman. So she acted as referee. But they didn't play any body contact at all but we did. And of course, the snow was all up in the side, no sidewalls or anything, and the snow's up on the side and we'd get the Russians near this bank of snow and we'd bump them into the snow.

66

It was a great mystery to us at the time when we went into Oran, we could see these stacks sticking up out of there and bits and pieces of ships and you didn't know what it was all about. But it was the French fleet that the British sunk because they wouldn't join the Allies.

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Navy Don Campbell Regina, Saskatchewan

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One of the funny things about it is that on Christmas, they used the naval tradition, and I being the youngest guy on board, I was Captain for the day.

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I was born in Regina and I went to Saskatoon, and I went to school for first year university. While there, I was in the Reserve, because I joined the UNTD – University Naval Training Division. I didn't bother going further in school; I wanted full time.

I was barely eighteen. At Unicorn in Saskatoon, after some more training there we had a train trip down to Cornwallis in Nova Scotia, then went to Stadacona in Halifax. My training in Halifax was to be a torpedoman, which is a bit of a joke because we really didn't have too many of them. Instead, we were put in charge of the depth charges. It ended up that I now have ear plugs because of it. I should have got them earlier.

The ship I went on was the Brandon. It was sitting down at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, being redone – boiler, engine and everything else. When it was all fixed up we went down to Bermuda, because at that time in the war, what was happening was that Canadian ships were going down to practice up on the equipment with some of us new guys that were there. One of the funny things about it is that on Christmas, they used the naval tradition, and I being the youngest guy on board, I was Captain for the day. While I was there, there was an Italian sub that was being used for us to practice... not charging, but following in the water. So I went through an Italian sub. I'll tell you, I'm glad I was never on those. On the way back up, I got an infection in my leg so I was yanked off and stuck in hospital in St. John's, Newfie, and when I came out, the ship had gone.

At that time, they weren't even getting a lot of people in the forces because they had enough bodies, but I was lucky and I guess I came in under the wire. I went on the Fennel, which is a Corvette also. It was a British Corvette. I had one trip over to Londonderry in Ireland, and back.

Back into Newfie, but thank gosh got out of there again. I went on a Frigate called the Eastview. That's a suburb of Ottawa. I had two trips over and back to Liverpool. When the war ended in Europe, we came down to Liverpool to pick up the ships in the convoy. We had to wait a day because the British merchant sailors, I think most or all of them were drunk, celebrating the end of the war. As far as I'm concerned, war is a horrid thing. There's no glory, no glamour. War matured a lot of us, especially those who went in fairly young. Coming out of it, I feel like brothers to the other services. Not just Navy, but Navy, Army, Air Force.

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Army Frederick Chapman Regina, Saskatchewan

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I just jumped up on my feet and I said, come on you rotten dirty buggers, get over here. And they all moved. And that was my baptism of fire. That was one incident that I never forgot and I was scared to death. 

It was when we landed on the beaches of Sicily, I was in the Sicilian invasion and I didn't land the first flow. The first landing was done on July the 10th, 1943. I landed with my group on July the 13th, 1943. It was three days after. During that night, the German aircraft came over and they were bombing and strafing us and we were wide open on the beaches. And I at that time, was a warrant officer, even though I was only 22. So I was in charge of the men under me and I had to get them over off the beach, into a place that was at least sheltered a little bit by one of these rock fences that they are so familiar with over there. I went to get up, I was frozen stiff, couldn't move. Maybe that lasted for a few seconds but I told myself, I've got to get up and get over here, get those guys over. So couldn't have been very long, maybe only a few seconds but it felt like an eternity with the bombs and machine guns firing and all that sort of stuff.

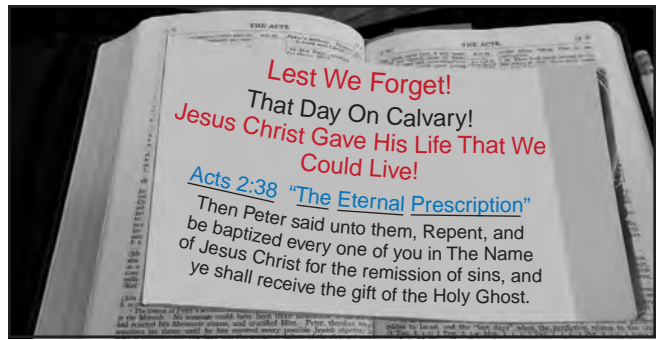
But anyway, eventually, I just jumped up on my feet and I said, come on you rotten dirty buggers, get over here. And they all moved. And that was my baptism of fire. That was one incident that I never forgot and I was scared to death.

I was with the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and we were right there with their headquarters and we'd take charge of anything that comes up in connection with pay, particularly when the soldiers wanted to go on leave or something and when they needed a little money for something or other. There's paymasters for every regiment and a field cashier who was with the division, services all these regimental pay masters. And we look after a lot of things, that it's not just the pay, some of the soldiers would like to send money home to their wives or sweethearts or whatever. That was all done for them by us at no charge to them and we did a lot of other things connected with their uniforms and that sort of stuff. So I had to pay for certain things and this was all taken care of.

Continued...



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(Frederick on the right)

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Army Frederick Chapman Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued...

We, we were there right with the division. We sat at a table under a tent with our rifles right beside us because if the headquarters happened to be overrun, then we got out and fought like everybody else. So we were there, we weren't engaged directly with the enemy normally but the soldiers that were, marched right past our tents. And they were on either side of the road, in formations. So we were right there, we got shot at like everybody else and we got strafed and bombed and suffered artillery fire and all that sort of thing. How I came through it without getting a scratch, I'll never know, but I guess the good Lord was looking after me at that time.

I was the warrant officer in the office but of course, we had an officer too, a major and a captain. And they were responsible for looking after the actual cash because you had to be careful. We, we had with us what we called British Military Authority. That was the facsimiles of the pound and shilling, right, you know, the English pound? And we had them in wooden boxes. The boxes were made of pine wood, they were beautiful boxes, something like what you used to call a butter box. There was absolutely no knots or anything else in them. They were beautiful wood and this money was carried in there. It wasn't actual currency but it was a valid currency for issuance to the soldiers and they could go to the town.

The local people in Italy were quite familiar with this thing that came out, so they were willing to accept it. And the payoff is of course we carried a number of currencies. There was American currency, there was English currency, French currency, Belgian francs, Dutch guilders and this sort of thing. Everywhere we went, we picked up the currency from the local banks and so forth that were there. We were watchful all the time because some of the German aircraft, if they came over, I was in one spot where these German aircraft, what was called a Focke-Wulf. A Focke-Wulf was a better aircraft than the Messerschmitt [fighter aircraft] and was a fighter bomber. And we had an aircraft signal and this went off when I was doing something, I forget what it was, near one of the camps. And I heard this aircraft come over and it came right straight down to me. And I went flat on the ground. But of course, the way the trees and the foliage was, he couldn't stay; he had to zoom and sort of veer off to the right. And I was there and I saw these bullets just tearing up the ground right in front of me. And because he had to move over, of course it went by me with just a few yards. But it was a very scary thing.



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Air Force Ken Christie Rocanville, Saskatchewan



And that was one way of getting away from getting shot down with a German fighter.



We got leave before we had to go overseas. Then went back, went to Halifax and got on a big ship. Ended up over in Scotland, where they used to land them near Glasgow. And we got off there and we went, oh, several places in England. That was the fall of 1943. Me and three more Canadians was lent to the Royal Air Force, because they were short of men. And we had three English then, there was seven in the crew, four Canadians and three English. We would go to the administration office and check the duties for the day, then we'd find if we were flying that night. We would fly two night trips and then we'd get a trip off, let the nerves settle down a bit. If we were flying that night, we'd go get a supper. We'd go out in the afternoon, or if it was daytime, it would be right after dinner or before. We'd go out and check our aircraft all over. We had four mechanics for four motors. Each mechanic had a motor to look after and we had a man that looked after the body and frame of the aircraft, to see that there was no cracks or weaknesses. And we done that ourself as well. We would go and have bacon and eggs for a nice meal, which we liked for before we went on a trip. And after briefing, we had to go out to our aircraft, which was on a dispersal point. They were dispersed all around the drome in a big circle, so that they could only be strafed by Germans, one at a time. And we'd go out and we'd start up our aircraft again, the pilots start the motor, run them up, warm them up and we'd check everything out and if we had to wait long, we'd play poker underneath the machine if it was nice weather. And if it wasn't nice, we'd find a sheltered place until it was almost time for us to take off. In the meantime, that day, there was armourers had loaded us with bombs and checked the ammunition for the guns and everything. And we'd go through another checklist and see that everything was right up to scratch and they'd warm the motor so that when they were told to take off in five minutes, he didn't need to warm them up then. We'd just all get in and away we'd go, hoping we'd get home again. We'd done a lot of bombing ahead of our own troops, our own Canadian Army. We were actually sent to a special duties aerodrome and we done special trips when there were lots of special trips to do, like going in front of the army, the army wanted some weakening done up ahead and we'd bomb. I was in the back, very back end of the aircraft. My turret was bolted on outside the back. I could see half the circle, up or down or sideways. If I saw aircraft coming in, I never let it get up to 600 yards. From one thousand to eight, in there somewhere, I would yell for the pilot to dive to whatever direction that fighter was coming from, whether it be starboard or, what was the other one? Oh, right or left. And we'd go down 1,000 feet and of course, he was coming faster than we were, so he'd overfly us. When we went down 1 000 feet, he'd turn the machine over the other way and come up, back up 1 000 feet. And everything was cleared up, didn't see nothing, nobody there. And that was one way of getting away from getting shot down with a German fighter.

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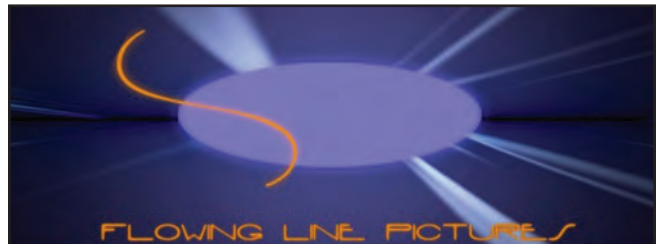
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“ I can remember thinking to myself, I heard that shell, how close it’s at, is it that close that I should be dead? ”

Army John Clark

Kelliher, Saskatchewan

Before I joined the army, I was just an ordinary farm boy. Well, just an average country boy I guess it was at that time. Sicily? Definitely, yes, I was invasion of Sicily [in July, 1943], Italy and then back into Africa and from there, they shipped us home and I was in the invasion of France. Well, we went from Glasgow [Scotland], we loaded in the ships and we sat there for two days and then we went and I think we were ten days from the time we left England until we got over to the area of Sicily, before the invasion. And I was a driver, I had my own vehicle and they took me as close as they could to the shore and then I was loaded in a landing craft I guess. And we drove off in about five or six feet of water. And we kept going and finally we landed on the shores of Sicily. And from then on, it was you, me or somebody else. Well, I guess what kind of worried me to start with, when we got there, there wasn't much opposition when we first landed in Sicily and that and you could hear shells. And I can remember thinking to myself, I heard that shell, how close it's at, is it that close that I should be dead? Dodging or what it was. It wasn't long before we found out how the sound of a shell coming over, how close they were to us. Well, we went there and, I shouldn't be saying this, but we had an officer and he apparently didn't read maps very good and he took us a way up and finished up back in no-man's land. And we didn't know we were supposed to be there and then they [the Germans] started banging the heck out of us, so we stayed that night and the next day, they had to bring in extra troops to get us out of there because the Germans were getting in on us. So there was a whole company of us, about 300, 400 of us at that time. And they come up, we lost a couple of the boys. One minute he's having dinner with you and the next minute, he's not available and he's already gone or that. And another time, there was about nine of us stand, well, I wasn't one of the group and a shell come over and then the whole nine of them were killed with one shell that landed right in amongst them. Well, that kind of shakes you up a bit. Yeah. Well, the invasion [of Normandy beginning in June 1944] was already over by the time we went over in France. They were up in Belgium so we went across in a landing craft and we went from Italy across to Marseille, France, and then we drove up through to France up until we got to Belgium. And then we went and joined the rest of the Canadian troops there. And we were attached to the Canadian First Army then. The only thing that surprised me when I come home was they met me at the railroad station. There was this boy there and he was just a five year old guy when I left, a brother of mine and here he's a grown man when I come back, that's the thing that surprised me most. Yeah, my wife, you know, we corresponded and we wrote letters and that and that for most of four years back and forth. And I was home for about three, four months before we finally got married. It's been a very happy life since then.

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I think it's trained into you but we have to admit, we were scared witless most of the time because of the anti-aircraft fire and at night, the searchlights and one thing or another.



Air Force Martin Cole Coleville, Saskatchewan

The first operation was a daylight [bombing sortie] to Essen in Germany. You know, it was, as I recall, not too bad an operation, a lot of heavy anti-aircraft fire, and one thing or another, but we got a bit of shrapnel damage, but no problem. But, yeah, you just sort of learned as you went. And on these operations, just for your information, there would have been anywhere from, on the average, 300, to the most that was on one our operations, 900 aircraft. So there was a lot of aircraft all funnelled into one base to drop their bombs. So each squadron was given a time over target, like say hours. Maximum aircraft we [No. 158 Squadron, RAF] could put up was 24 and we'd get a time over target say of 10:00 am or 10:00 pm or whatever.

And we were all in theory supposed to go over at the time, which was, we did but was hugely dangerous because they [the bombers] were always running into one another. And then of course, all the other squadrons had their own time coming up behind or before and so there was a huge stream of aircraft going all the time. And we could see aircraft running into one another or having bombs dropped on them, which is rather terrifying to watch. And so, yeah, it was a fearful thing to be exposed to, for sure.

I think it's trained into you but we have to admit, we were scared witless most of the time because of the anti-aircraft fire and at night, the searchlights and one thing or another. But one instance as I say, there was so many aircraft over the target, we were coming up within a minute of our target and my mid-upper gunner said, "there's an aircraft right above us," so the bomb door was open. We were within probably 30 seconds of the target. So all I could do was jink off to the port and I had to go around again. So in all the turmoil of anti-aircraft fire and other aircraft coming, this is the sort of thing you had to do and you just did it sort of automatically. And we managed to do that and get around again and drop our bombs and got safely home. But, yeah, it would shake you up for sure.

Continued...



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Air Force Martin Cole Coleville, Saskatchewan

Continued...

It all scared the wits out of us I suppose, if you want to put it that way. But once coming back, for some reason or other, I thought we were perhaps going to be short of fuel to get us back home and I asked the [flight] engineer to give me an estimate of our fuel that was left. And so he kept a running log of course of this and he was busily doing his calculations, all of a sudden all four engines cut out. And this is a night operation of course, pitch black dark and then cloud. And here we were, dead quiet and no engines. And so I - the way you react immediately - called to prepare to abandon the aircraft and then called the engineer [and asked] what the problem was. And of course, he immediately said, "oh, I forgot to switch fuel tanks," because he was doing the calculations, and so he scrambled around and switched onto a full fuel tank and, miraculously, which hardly ever happens, our four engines start again, we'd lost about 10,000 feet I suppose. They all started and we all worrying and wet from fear over that and got back safely home.

We were given minimal training on what to do in cases like that, training on how to abandon the aircraft and how to escape and before we got on the squadron we were given a commando course as such, supposedly to help us in escaping and that sort of thing. But I suppose it may have helped some of the fellows for sure or I don't know how many actually managed to escape that were shot down, but we had 342 were taken prisoners of war. But we lost 850 men killed in three short years. So yeah, our losses were heavy for sure.

Subconsciously, I think we just, it was never discussed and it was pushed to the back of your mind I think, we didn't want to dwell on it because we thought we might be the next ones. Just come to mind once, we went on a week's leave and when we got back, we'd lost eight aircraft while we were gone. So you don't, but it was never talked about and we didn't seem to dwell on it, our crew anyway sure didn't. And I'm sure this was the same for most crews. And then we tend to kill our fears with booze-ups in the pubs and one thing and another, to hide our fears. And I think we dealt with it that way and just knew we had to carry on.

All military training is character building, for sure. And then of course, whether you want it or not, in my position [bomber pilot], had a huge amount of responsibilities dumped on me as a very young man. The crew was my responsibility plus getting from A to B and back again and so on. So yeah, I'm sure it was good in helping to form a person's character and your outlook on life and we had an unspoken satisfaction that we had some small bit of helping to bring a change in, in the world perhaps and in history and hopefully, the public will remember this. You sometimes wonder. We did the best we could.

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“To me, that was just it, just, that was the end of the world, there’s nothing more to invent. This big silver plane flying over. It was the first time, it was the first trip across Canada.”

Air Force Gordon Colquhoun Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

Well, I was going to high school and it seemed that everybody, all the other kids the same age, were joining up and I thought it was the right thing to do. It still is the right thing to do. I’m convinced of that. We didn’t know really what was going on in the world when this plane came over. And I thought, just my own thoughts, just, that’s the end of everything, for perfection. There is this plane flying, you know on a farm you had nothing but a wheelbarrow to work with. To me, that was just it, just, that was the end of the world, there’s nothing more to invent.

This big silver plane flying over. It was the first time, it was the first trip across Canada. Well, [our job] it was just basically keep that plane up there. You didn’t forget to put some gas in it and keep it in good shape, and look for any problems, if they had any holes in them, Pulled [the plane] out [of rotation]. Perfection is what you had to watch for. After all, there was at least seven members on that plane. That’s a lot of people, with their families. It’s something; and lots of them didn’t come back. I remember on the wing there was a hole that you had to look in there; and you would put your hand in, and it controlled something, I just forget what it was. But, anyway, to save time, sometimes we’d take shortcuts. And this one time, the pilot was revving it [the engine] up and, I think, yeah, you know now it comes back to me.

You had to put your hand in there with a screwdriver probably and tighten something up or loosen it, or whatever it required. But it saved you running the plane up for a real test. The signal we had when [we were working on the planes] was ‘shut it down,’ I mean, anybody I think knows that, ‘shut it down.’ And I kept doing this [signal] and he’s sitting there. I don’t know. Some guys weren’t all there I don’t think, but he kept going faster and higher, and higher. I think that’s what he figured it [the signal] was. But he finally blew me off the wing right back to the, you know, the tail section. I ended up right behind. I was in the hospital for a while with that. I remember near the end, there was, when they increased from their first ... we just had the small bombs, maybe 500 [pounds]. And then they increased it to, I think, up to the 5,000 [pound bombs]. And I can remember standing, it was just in the evening when you could still see. And there was a hill over there and you’d see the plane going up with 5,000 pound bombs on it. You could see it and you could see this happen, and the air controller running straight for the hill. But no, it’s all night bombing.

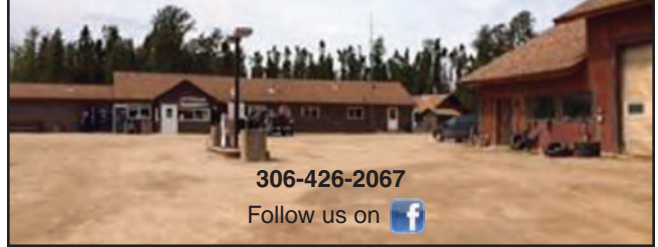
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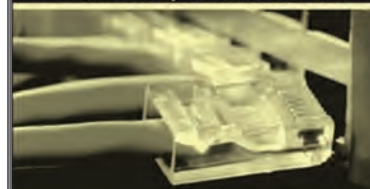
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One of the groundcrew called and said he counted 125 holes that you could put your fist through. Whether that's right or wrong, I never went out and bothered counting. I had enough of that one.



Dalphas "Duff" Couillard

Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

I got posted into the RAF [Royal Air Force] and I've always referred to that, once you leave the Canadian group [No. 6 Group, Royal Canadian Air Force], you're the forgotten air force because nobody, no one knows what the hell we did. We had no idea what squadron we would be posted to, other than that we knew we were flying in [No.] 3 [Bomber] Group, [Royal Air Force] Training Command. And so when our posting came through, we learned that we were being posted to the [No.] 75th New Zealand Squadron which we had no idea what it was, other than it was a New Zealand squadron. The only raid that really stands out in my mind was the raid that we were on on March the 2nd, 1945. That raid was really horrendous for us. We were bracketed by three ack-ack [anti-aircraft] shells. One went through our right wheel and tire, and up through the starboard inner [engine]. It took out the motor and, of course, it took our wheel right off. The tire was gone and everything was gone there. We also lost all our hydraulics. Our pilot was wounded. He got a piece of flak [anti-aircraft fire] in his neck and the doctors told us afterwards that had it gone any way but the way it went in, he would have died instantly either from lack of blood or from having his windpipe cut. We were lucky. We turned over and went straight down for, oh, about 17,000 feet. Our flight engineer unfortunately caught a package [was hit by offensive fire] and I don't remember, I think it was his left leg, just below the knee and I understood it cost him his leg because that was the last trip that Gibby, our flight engineer, made, that's Al Gibby, Al Gibson.

I can remember flying up the Ruhr Valley going south and by that time, we had got down to about 3,000 feet; and Jack Jones, our bomb aimer said, you know, Cologne [Germany] is coming up, and I want to target the cathedral. And he was all set to drop the bombs. We had one 9,000 pounder onboard and we had nine 500s [pound bombs]. He wanted to drop the bomb in the middle of Cologne and see how good he was.

Continued...

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Dalphas "Duff" Couillard

Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Anyway, somebody said, "you know, we're going the wrong way;" and our pilot said, "what the heck's the matter, you know?" And he turned around and we started flying back. But, in the meantime, Jack had tried to drop his bombs, but, of course he found out, because all the hydraulics were gone and a lot of electrical circuits were gone, that he couldn't drop his bombs. He couldn't even open the bomb door.

So we turned around, started back north and we knew we had the bombs onboard; we knew we couldn't land with them because, and we knew we couldn't land on one wheel, so we had to get rid of them. So we got out over the North Sea eventually. Well, we got a fighter attack before we got out there and I had to call to go into corkscrew starboard and that was going in to our dead engine, but our pilot followed instructions and we flew a corkscrew; and both Jack and I opened up on the fighter. I never saw what happened to him, but he took off, went straight up, Jack said, so I guess we scared him a little bit. We went on out over the North Sea; and our bomb aimer came back and chopped holes in the floor where the bombs were, where the manual releases were because everything was jammed back in there. We had flak through us. One of the groundcrew called and said he counted 125 holes that you could put your fist through. Whether that's right or wrong, I never went out and bothered counting. I had enough of that one.

But Jack opened the bomb doors. Jack took and dropped the 9,000 pounder bomb and tripped that one. When that 9,000 pounder hit the doors, the bomb doors, it popped both doors open. Of course, once they're open, they're not going to be closed again. And then dropped that bomb; and we had by that time gained almost 10,000 feet. It dropped on safe. He dropped one after another of the 500s and only one of those bombs exploded. Eight of them dropped safe and one dropped exploding.

We eventually got back to our base; we were late, hours and hours. My mother had even received a telegram because our flight saw us go through the clouds with smoke and flame pouring out our back. After getting rid of our bombs, we got back over our drome [aerodrome: airfield] and how are we going to land, that's the next step. We got one wheel down. The left wing wheel came down all right, but the right wing wheel, all there was was the stub or the oleo [shock absorber] leg that was sticking down. And we knew that once that leg caught the ground, we were going to go spinning. Anyway, we suggested going in with the wheels up and the leg up and just ripping our doors off, but he didn't think that was a good idea; and he was captain and he made the decisions. He said, "we'll go in and I'll put it down on the left wing wheel and the tail wheel, and we'll keep that right wing up as long as possible. When it drops, get ready because it'll be a snap." And so that's how we landed.

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Legion 

Veteran Stories

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Dalphas "Duff" Couillard

Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

Continued...

In my position, a rear gunner, I turned my turret right around so that I was facing that side of the aircraft because I knew if that leg went down, we would pivot the other way and I didn't want to get thrown out. I flew with my doors open always because, I think, on the third trip over there, I got a piece of flak jammed into my channels on the door and I couldn't get my doors open. I flew that way until I got home and then the groundcrew had to come up and pry my doors open. So after that, I flew with my doors open, my back exposed to the wind, but nevertheless, I always felt safer that way. If I had to get out, I knew I could roll out.

And so that's the way I turned my turret around so I was facing to the right side of the aircraft; and we proceeded to come in. We were coming in very fast because we had no flaps and when we touched down, we just settled on that one left wing wheel and eventually the tail wheel came down; and then when the right wheel dropped, of course, we were immediately snapped into ground looping. At that instant, I was so hyper I guess that it hurt, but there was more important things to get was, and it was to get away from that aircraft in case it blew up. So I jumped right up and I must have went, I've always figured about 20 or 25 feet when I collapsed again. And people from the ambulances and that come running out, grabbed me and pulled me over to where they were, where the ambulance was and the fire trucks, etc., etc., the lorries and what have you. And I think what had happened when I jumped and the parachute was locked behind my knees, it was like a nutcracker and it just popped my knees out. And then when I jumped up, I put them back in because there was a medical man that came to examine me because the fellows that had pulled me over there got him, and what his designated title was, I have no idea, but he was with the ambulance. And he come over to me, well, my flight suit was all tore down the left side and he just put his hand in through my, what was my trousers and went down on my knees, checked my knees, both my left and right knee; and said, "oh," he said, "I've seen a hell of a lot worse than that." He said, "you'll be fine in a fortnight or two."

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It was dark, and by this time, the Germans were a little bit slack on their job, not watching, they trusted, they didn't expect anybody to run away. But we did.



Army Paul Delorme

Rocanville, Saskatchewan

I experienced two grenade explosions, one on the ship going to Dieppe [France; on the "raid" of August 19, 1942] and quite a few boys got killed from this grenade. I was lucky to just get a shrapnel through my mouth. I was able to just spit the shrapnel out of my mouth, but I had a big lip the rest of the time that, when I landed at Dieppe. We [The South Saskatchewan Regiment] landed Dieppe at 4:30 in the morning by the way, a little village called Pourville [-sur-Mer], about three miles south of Dieppe.

The Germans, by this time, they were all over the place and we never made it back. A lot of our boys were killed here and there, and got captured before 4:30 in the afternoon. So I became a prisoner of war and so too did a good many others, of the regiment, including the colonel [Lieutenant Colonel Charles Merritt, who would be decorated with the Victoria Cross for his actions at Dieppe]. By midnight, we all got loaded into freight boxcars, horse boxcars, you could smell all the horse smell and dirty; and a few boys died on the way going to Rouen [France]. So when we in Rouen overnight, then the next morning, the colonel was going around and checking to see how many men he had, could talk to and things like that. And by the afternoon, we were all loaded onto a Red Cross train heading for Germany.

I was wounded with the second grenade and I couldn't lift my arm or move a finger, or anything. I had shrapnel on the whole side of my body. But I landed in the hospital in Germany and I got unloaded off the train and then we had to get on trucks to get to this hospital. I was in this hospital for 11 months.

Continued...



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Army Paul Delorme

Rocanville, Saskatchewan

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[I was] sent to Stalag IX-C [located in Thuringia, Germany]. Immediately I got there, I got chained; they put chain on both arms, about a two foot chain hanging between your arms. I wasn't there very long with these chains [shackles] because they was shipping guys out to go to work. I was in the salt [potassium] mine for about six months, I guess, something that way. I made a friend with an Englishman; and we decided we would both run away from that camp together. They had two shifts: day shift; night shift. So when the night shift came along, instead to go in for a shower, we just stood back; and it was dark, and by this time, the Germans were a little bit slack on their job, not watching, they trusted, they didn't expect anybody to run away. But we did.

So I was on the go for three weeks, but my partner gave up on the way. We got captured by a single man, a German, in the afternoon while we were walking through the heavy bush in Germany. I noticed he picked up a stick and he himself was scared as hell; and I wasn't scared because I see that all he had is a stick, so I figured we could knock him out and carry on.

But nevertheless, I just said to my friend, George was his name, "George," I says, "let's not stop for this one man with the stick." I said, "we could handle him pretty good." I says, "if he starts to hit us or something; and he tries to get us to go with him." So we didn't, at least I didn't; and I started to run. I says, "you run behind me;" I says, "as fast as you can." So I kept running and not looking back for maybe five minutes or so. And finally, I come to a big tree; and I went and swung my arm around the tree, just to see where he is. I didn't see him. I thought, well, I'm going to carry on, so I carried on; and I figured he might catch up with me, and I'd wait for him. After I got myself to a distance, I laid down and covered myself with leaves and things like that. I stayed there and he never showed up; and I never seen the man since.

On and on until I come to one place I couldn't find a bush and I was seen getting into a little bush. So then that's how I got captured. And pretty soon, while I was in this little bush, I had covered myself, but when I woke up there, there was a couple guards on horseback, but they were civilians. They just told me to raus out of here, so they took me to a house and I know there was no chance there because they had guns and everything. They didn't know who I was, they thought I was a Russian because they kept asking me and I wouldn't say nothing, what I was. They took me to a house. And pretty soon, they called for the army to come and pick me up.

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Army Edward Dickins Wilkie, Saskatchewan

When I first joined up, here in Kelowna, they started us out on squad drill and I could not swing my arms right when we started our drill. When my right leg went out, my right arm went out. And the sergeant major - Sergeant Major Henry was his name - and he halted the squad and he went off over to the armouries here, there was a big willow tree, weeping willow tree. He went over and took his jackknife out and cut out two branches of that, took the leaves off, cut them off just about the right length. Never said a word to anybody and just come back over and said, Dickins, hang onto these. And I put one in each hand and Lipinski was in front of me, he said, Lipinski, hang onto these and don't let go. By the left, quick march! That's how I learned to swing my arm. I came to Kelowna in 1937 from Saskatchewan, where I was born. Joined the army on the 27th of July, 1940, right here in Kelowna. And did our basic training in Camp Vernon.

We were then going to be the 5th Canadian Motorcycle Regiment. We didn't have any motorcycles at that time. Then we moved on to Victoria and Esquimalt, where we were given motorcycles and we became quite proficient in our motorcycle training, as a reconnaissance regiment. I just might add, I'm glad we didn't go to war in them because you certainly didn't have any protection on a motorcycle. But to qualify as a driver on a motorcycle, you had to be able to drive a motorcycle with a sidecar with a passenger in it and keep the sidecar off the ground and do a figure eight to qualify as your ability to drive. Then we went on, they decided we were going to become a tank regiment. And we were called the 9th Canadian Armoured tank Regiment, the British Columbia Dragoons. And we moved on to Camp Borden where we got some tank training. And got ready to go over to, down to Halifax and got on the boat, the [HMT] Andes. And went over to England and landed at Liverpool where we did most of our training, official training over there with the proper tanks and the rest of the, the rest of the allied troops that were there in England training. We did that, we stayed in places like Crowborough in England and Marlborough. I was selected to go over on an advance party, to go to Africa for some battle training.

Continued...



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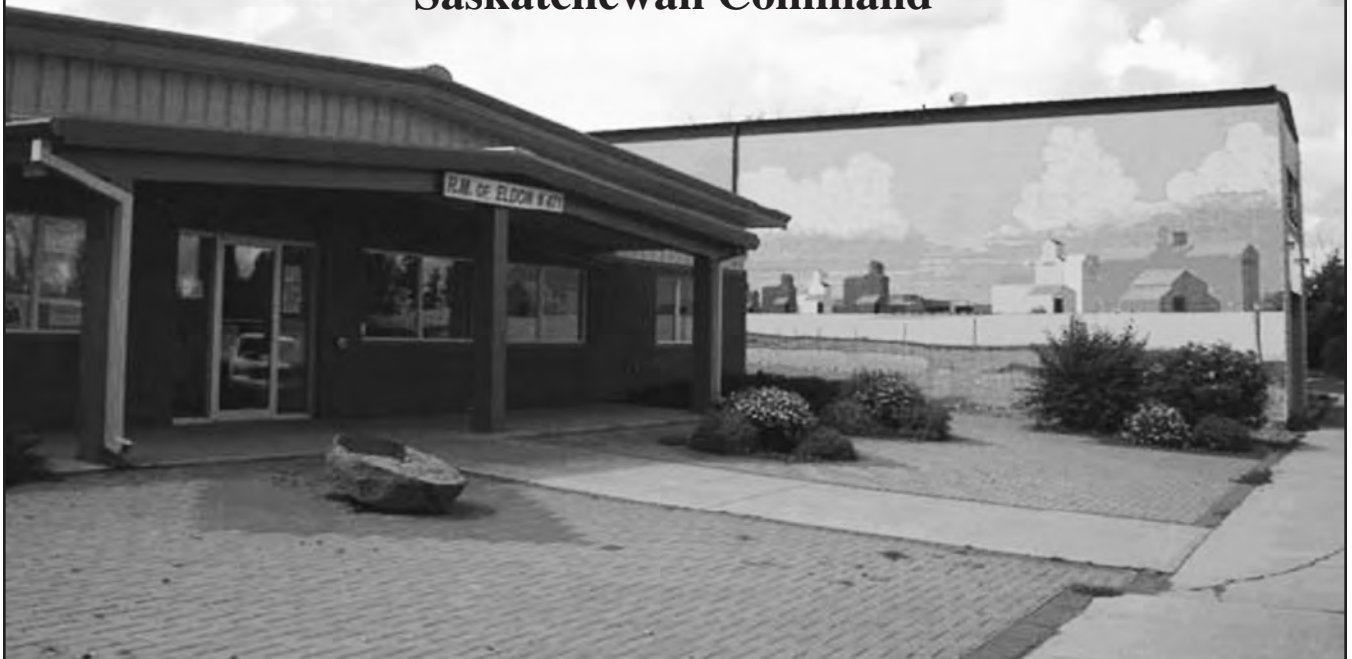
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Army Edward Dickins Wilkie, Saskatchewan

Continued...

When we left England and got to Africa, at Algiers, we found out then that the Canadian delegation was headed for Italy and we joined our regiment right there in Naples. So I didn't go back to England at all from there. And we joined our regiment there and then we joined, we became then the First Canadian Corps. First Division was already there, because they'd come up through Sicily. We joined them there, we were called the 5th Canadian Armoured division with a maroon patch. We were called the, the "Mighty Maroon Machine". That was the nickname they gave us. And they were all tank regiments. In Canada, if you'd have seen the equipment we trained on, you'd wondered how anybody ever won the war with that kind of equipment. It was World War I tanks called Whippets, they were just able to get you, what, that you're in a tank, you're in solid metal and all that sort of thing. That's what you got used to.

Once we got to England, then we got different tanks. We got the Canadian Ram, we got the Churchill and we ended up with the Sherman tank. And that's the best tank we had and we ended all through the war with the Sherman tanks. When we first got them, they were under-powered weaponry. We had a 75 millimetre [gun] on it and we were facing 88 millimetres and we ended up getting 105s and then we could, we could meet them head on with that kind of weaponry. But at first, we were faster. Our Sherman tanks were much faster moving around than the German tanks, the Panzer tanks they had. They were very slow but they were heavily armed and deadly when they got their beat on you. We lost a lot of tanks in a lot of those battles. I was very fortunate. I had an excellent driver and he could take a hull-down position and so I could just peak over knolls or things of that nature. And so we were very fortunate, we were, that we didn't get hit at all during any of those combats.

We went through Italy, through places like the Liri Valley, the Hitler line, the Gothic line was the last big function that we did in Italy. And then we moved over, took our tanks over, ferried them over to the lower part of France, because D-Day had already started. And joined up with the rest of the Canadian forces in Belgium. And then went from there right on through up to Holland, to Delfzijl pocket and places in Holland. At Appingedam, one of our toughest battle certainly in Northwest Europe was the city of Appingedam. As a matter of fact, we were in the northern part of Holland when we got word that the war was, that Germany was surrendering. At that stage, they did not feel there was enough German troops in the area that we were going through or not, we didn't have infantry. We were told, we had been told the day before we were going to be doing this. We were going to advance with our tanks and then we were going to get out of our tanks and become the infantry. And do the house clearing and that sort of thing. And that's the time when we found out that the Germans were surrendering.



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I have to tell you right now that I was exceedingly fortunate. I only ever had one engine damaged by shrapnel and that just about conked out over the North Sea, but it didn't, and I made it to shore.



Air Force Lewis Duddridge Hanley, Saskatchewan

My brother and I got our wings together at Dauphin, Manitoba. Our mother came from Hanley [Saskatchewan] to Dauphin to pin – I think she was the first Canadian mother to pin the wings on two sons at one wings parade.* We got two weeks embarkation leave, and then we went immediately to Great Britain, my brother and I together, and then we were posted to [RAF] Banff, Scotland,** to fly Oxfords.*** And my brother, that's a story all on his own, how did he – he flew fighter aircraft in the war – Spitfires,**** and I flew Lancasters, ^ and the reason for that is because he had lost a thumb in an accident, and so he could not fly the Oxford because there was a little knob that had to be pushed with the thumb of your left hand and he didn't have a thumb, or part of his forefinger was gone, and how he got by the medical people, I don't know, but so that's how he got Spitfires. That's an interesting little part of the story, really. I have to tell you right now that I was exceedingly fortunate. I only ever had one engine damaged by shrapnel and that just about conked out over the North Sea, but it didn't, and I made it to shore. Just to show you what the mechanics were like, that British airport was frantically on the water, and they found beds for myself and my crew, and they changed the engine in the night and, in the morning, we flew back to our base.

One of the things during the war that was obviously hidden and not talked about or disclosed, was the number of accidents that OTU ^ ^ — that's Operational Training Unit — what was the reason? I think the reason was that it was very, very, very discouraging, you would read in later years, in the, say in the last 10 years – people have been telling – You know, and they call the Wellingtons ^ ^ ^ that we practiced, that we learned to fly at OTU, they would make remarks that they were not a great aircraft, but that is not the truth. The Wellington was a very, very fine aircraft, the problem at OTU was that they were pushing us so hard to do the things – you gotta move from being a pilot, to a pilot that's under stress and on bombing runs, and all of the other things that have to be trained, and show that we were...

Continued...



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**Air Force
Lewis Duddridge
Hanley, Saskatchewan**

Continued...

At OTU you were definitely stressed out, and I'm not afraid to say that a number of the accidents at OTU were a result of stress, being tested beyond the ability of some, and it's an awful thing to say, but if you talk to any person who flew operationally in Great Britain during the war, they'll tell you that OTU was a very demanding situation. I come from a little town of Hanley, Saskatchewan, and there were 15 of us went overseas, and my brother and I are the only two living from Hanley out of that. The rest of [them] are buried over in Great Britain or in the surrounding area, so, you know, how did parents – like the barber lost two pilot sons, and another – and a farmer close to the town lost two sons, pilots. How do you cope with that? You know it's a question that – well, you just walk out to the aircraft and you go.

*A wings parade is a ceremony celebrating the graduation of newly trained pilots.

**Royal Air Force Station Banff, also known as the Boyndie aerodrome, was an airfield used by RAF Coastal Command as a base for its anti-shiping operations.

***The Airspeed Oxford was used primarily as a training aircraft by the RAF and the RCAF, with additional service in communications and anti-aircraft capacities.

****The Supermarine Spitfire was a British fighter plane used by many of the Allied air forces during the Second World War. The Spitfire was a single-seat aircraft, meant for short-range flights, mainly to intercept enemy aircraft.

^ The Avro Lancaster bomber was the most widely used Allied heavy bomber in service during and after the Second World War.

^^ Pilots were assigned to RAF Operational Training Units for continued instruction, training on the aircraft they would use in active operations.

^^^ The Vickers Wellington was a medium bomber used by the Royal Air Force for duties such as reconnaissance and anti-shiping.



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It's a hard thing to say, that they said there was no way we could take prisoners because we had no way to dispose of them. So what do you do, you know, if you can't take a prisoner?



Army Ken Duffield Central Butte, Saskatchewan

It was real late at night. I don't know, maybe four o'clock or three o'clock in the morning was when we started to get ready to get in the landing craft and it was really rough. They put what they called 'scramble nets' over the ship. They let down the landing craft that we were in; and we had to crawl down maybe twenty or thirty feet on these scramble nets. You had to be very careful because the water was so rough that when the waves come they would lift the landing craft away up and then let it down; and you had to make sure that when you were going down these scramble nets that you didn't get squashed between the landing craft and the ship.

When we got to the beaches I don't know whether there was orders given; they dropped the front open and you were trained that just as soon as that door opened you jumped out into the water; and you headed for the beach just as quick as you could get there. So when we got to the beach we went around behind and there was a wall there. Just the door was there and there's this wall kind of protecting the door; and we had to come in behind there and we threw a grenade in there. As soon as that exploded, two of us rushed in there with our weapons and anything that was moving we shot. It's a hard thing to say, that they said there was no way we could take prisoners because we had no way to dispose of them. So what do you do, you know, if you can't take a prisoner? Well, we didn't have any choice; and if a German would come out it didn't matter. You disposed of him. That was just it because you had to clean everything out of the way so the next wave of soldiers could come through. And that's the way it was. How we ever got off there without losing a man... I can't remember a lot of the names of the ones that were in my section [of The Regina Rifles Regiment]. There's only the one that I really remember was Fleming. I think he was married; and I think he had two children. The worst part – the hardest part, I found, when he got killed – the thing was before that we agreed that if you got a parcel we divided it in amongst our men. If it was a chocolate bar you chopped it up in ten or twelve pieces and you'd give each one [a piece]. When he was killed, his wife every month sent him a parcel and the part that was the hardest to do was to open his parcel and divide it up. I was delegated to do that and that's one of the hardest things that I had to do.

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Air Force Russell Earl North Portal, Saskatchewan

When I was going to school, especially on weekends, when I didn't have to go to school, if I heard an airplane, I would look around until I found it and followed it until it was out of sight. And at that time, I just felt, boy, would I love to be able to fly one of those.

When I was posted to Skipton [-on-Swale, England], the 424 Squadron, that was on the 30th of May of 1944. On the 7th of June, which was the day after D-Day, we were called over the station speaker system to report for a briefing. We were kind of surprised because we were a green crew and you didn't put green crews on operations. But we went down there anyway and the briefing officer said, this is a very important trip for you. It was a mining trip or gardening they called it, to Lorient, France. Which is on the west coast of France. There was some U-boats in there getting recharged intended to go out into the Atlantic and up into the English Channel, to prey on the supply ships going across for the troops. We had to fly that trip with our bomb doors open because the mines are too big to get the bomb doors closed.

We made that trip and we had to use a GEE [Generalized Estimation Equation], which is a navigator's instrument. But when we got to the English Channel, which we had to cross, the GEE went haywire and it was no good, so the bomb aimer and the navigator worked together to plot the course to an aiming point on the coast. Because below in the moonlit night, you could see the coast of Europe quite plain. We used that and then we, well, when it come to that at any point, we released the mines and we could close the bomb doors then, which everybody was happy about. Especially me, while I was flying that plane.

And we returned to briefing, to the station and we went in for debriefing. They were surprised that we were asked to go on that operation because only crews with 18 operations or more were scheduled to fly that trip. So we felt pretty good about that. And later on, my engineer was in the library looking for a book to read and he came across a book by a German submarine ace. And while he was leafing through the book, he'd come across a chapter by, on Lorient Harbour. And that's that trip we made. So he found out in that section of a book that, those U-boats, did try to go out into the Atlantic and then up to the English Channel and one made it through the mines but was detected by a British frigate and it sunk. The rest of them were so badly damaged in the minefield, they returned to port at Lorient and never tried it again.

And we were very happy finding that out because its the only time we found out about one of our trips that we made.

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MATTHEW 5:9

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“You were 99 Squadron,” and gave me all the details that someone else had given him and the information. And I didn’t have to decide. And I still don’t know what I would do

Air Force Donald Elliott Swift Current, Saskatchewan

In Frankfurt-am-Main, it was a prison camp [Dulag Luft] where they took every air force prisoner initially, kept you in the cell by yourself for about a week and threatened you with being sent to a concentration camp unless you gave them the information that they wanted about your squadron. Well, they wanted to know who your commanding officer was, where you’d been attacking, how many aircraft you’d lost, that sort of thing. You were supposed to refuse, just give your name, number and that’s what I did, but the chap who was interviewing me said that he would let me sleep on it and he would come the next day and I could make my decision by that time whether I was going to help him or not. But when he came, he said to me, “You were 99 Squadron,” and gave me all the details that someone else had given him and the information. And I didn’t have to decide. And I still don’t know what I would do.

When we first got to Stalag Luft III [near Sagan, Poland], we started a tunnel there in order to get beyond the wire. And it’d be two men at the face cutting the sand away would, it was a good area to tunnel because there was chiefly heavy sand, which could be moved. So the two fellows at the face would fill a Red Cross box with sand and for some reason, there was a 90 degree bend in the tunnel at this place, I would pull the sand up, pass it over my body and put it in another Red Cross box, which would be pulled by another man who’d be in the chamber. If you’re going to build a tunnel, you have to start with a chamber because you have to have a place where you can store the sand you can get out of the chamber, you have to have a pump there to pump the air down to the face of the chamber. And you have to have a place to be and, and be ready so that when they opened it up at the top, you can all get out immediately.

Continued...

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Air Force Donald Elliott Swift Current, Saskatchewan

Continued...

So while we were doing this, the two fellows at the face had a light from some sort of a gas contraption of some kind. But anyway, it exploded and filled the whole tunnel with this gas so we all beetled back to the chamber as quickly as we could and operated the pump there that pumped the air in and we changed it so the air came into the chamber. As far as I was concerned that was the end of my escaping days in the sense of trying to get out by tunnel.

We also had the wooden horse there, a vaulting horse, yeah. It was big enough that you could have a man inside it and so we would carry it out every morning and put it in the same place. And the fellow inside would start building the tunnel that had a hole on each side and you'd put a two by four through the holes and four people would carry it, with a fellow inside it, and you'd always put it down on the same spot. He would take the sand off the top of the chamber, open it up and go down and start working. And then when it was time to bring him up, he came up and hung the socks full of sand around the edges of the vaulting horse and you picked it up and carried it into the cookhouse and he got out and you got the sand out and spread it around by putting it in people's pockets that had holes in them. And the sand went down onto their shoes and was mixed in with other sand as you walked around the edge of the prison.

And then the problem was to always have people jumping over it, you see. And so everybody in the camp had to take some time to do that. So there was always somebody jumping over it, regardless of the weather. Eventually, they got the tunnel beyond the wire and three of them went out and all three of them got back to England.

The Germans were delighted to see prisoners doing any athletics because their thought was that if they were doing that, then they didn't have enough energy to be trying to escape.

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Dave Ewart

Regina, Saskatchewan

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The Red Cross went up twice to try and rescue the two wounded, right up in front, but the Germans kept firing on them.



We were sent up to a gully and they called it Vino Ridge. It was actually a gully that went from Ortona to San Leonardo [Italy] and that was a German front line and they were behind this gully. So we went up to support, I think it was the PPCLI [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry], and they made frontal attacks on this gully and the Germans were behind the gully and just wiped them out. And I recall one morning we were up supporting the PPCLI and quite a few of them were wounded. Two were left on the ridge with their legs blown off, or one leg blown off, and they kicked their leg all day. You couldn't get out to get them because of snipers. The Red Cross went up twice to try and rescue the two wounded, right up in front, but the Germans kept firing on them. So they had to come back and those poor guys just lay there all day, kicking their leg and they were rescued at night.

And the other chap came right in front of the tank. I thought he had a red handkerchief hanging down his front, but I found out it was his stomach was hanging out and he fell on the track right in front. We couldn't get out to get him because they just, as soon as you popped your head out of the tank, the snipers would just fire at you. And he only lasted a few minutes and he died. We could see his breaths getting shorter and shorter in the cold weather.

After Ortona, we went to San Leonardo around the side and eventually, that's where we were able to get from San Leonardo into Ortona another way and the Germans pulled out. But there was almost a month fighting around Ortona. The infantry were losing about 20 or 30 men every day, so the casualties were very high.

They took us out for a rest period and we were in a house, Italian house for the winter and it was an old brick house, the Italians stayed in the bottom and our troop occupied the next floor. And for some reason, one of our gunners, for something to do, decided to clean grenades, take the grenades out of the tank and clean them and he made a mistake on the last grenade and pulled the pin before he took the base plug out, and it went off in the house and killed three people. And the Italians down below were very excited, they came up saying, "Mama mia! Mama mia!" And they gave us all that there was left, a rosary, which I still carry today, or keep, as a keepsake. And there was three killed in that and we were fortunate. We just went out the door a few minutes before to get the CBC news from Africa and closed the door and we just got out when the grenade went off.

Then we kept going north, supporting the Canadians, but then we loaded on boxcars and taken back south to the Cassino front and what we call the Gustav Line. And there, we were succumbed to the British Eighth Army, the 1st Armoured Brigade was attached directly to the British Eighth Army, and from there on, we supported the British Eighth and 9th Indian Division from India. This included the Sikhs and the Gurkhas and whatnot. And we supported them in an attack across the Gari River, near Cassino.



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“

When it quits and the guns stop firing, you're not enemies anymore.

”

Army Robert Govan Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

When I joined up, I wanted to go in artillery, but I didn't join the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft [Regiment], but I got to England. Being on... V-1s [rockets] stood out quite vivid because we were just out, we had no buildings, we had no shelter, we had nothing, we were just out about four miles from Dover in England. And the English, the ones that were on the guns, were from the Eighth Army and they were pretty well men that was played out. They weren't much good for military service.

When you went on the guns on 'Doodlebug Alley' [in South London], you went on for 24 hours at a time. They relieved you every 24 hours. So we went on there because these men were playing out. That's really the main reason we were down there. They usually started about 5:30 in the evening. And then they came over mostly from 6:00 until about 8:00. Not too many during the night, but some during the night. They were all the V-1s. They had a motor that shot flame out the back. So you could see them quite plainly at night. Well, we weren't allowed to go into air raid shelters. That was for civilians. You know, they had trenches dug around in different cities and places we were supposed to go into, but we weren't supposed to go into an air raid shelter the civilians were all in.

We had to go down the English Channel to go to France, and they were shooting from Cap Gris-Nez across to England, and also they would shoot at the ships when we were going down the Channel until they put up so much smokescreen, the Allies did, that they couldn't see where we were. And then we landed with landing craft because the boats couldn't get in close to shore, but you know, the fighting was back far enough so that when we landed, there was no problems for us.

Continued...



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Army Robert Govan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And then we moved up to Falaise. Then from Falaise, well, we went up to places like Boulogne, Calais and I think places like that all up the west coast of France. Well, I was called a fuse setter. I'd set fuses on shells. I'd prepare shells ready for firing and I'd set fuses. Also, when I wasn't setting fuses, quite often I was loading the guns. We fired nearly all air bursters. We tried to burst them in the air, just above the ground a little bit, so they would spread out. And set fuses and load guns, that's about all, and maintain it. I spent three years on one gun so I kind of got to know what it was like. Oh, the gun that I was on, that was a [QF] 3.7 [inch AA] gun. It's just called a 3.7.

Our extreme range was 14 miles. And it took nine men for a crew. And we had to dig them in all the time. And if there was a regiment of us, of 24 guns, and you know, that was modern times, and we had 275 shovels. You dug your gun in, then you dug your slit trench alongside, then you went back a little bit behind and you dug a hole to sleep. The hole where you slept in, you tried to cover it up with planks and then get some dirt. Usually it was a door off of some poor farmer's house that went over the top. Then you put dirt over that to sleep in.

At night sometimes, we used to fire on what we called a time on target. So the infantry could try to get some sleep. Our whole line would just fire one shell, then you'd wait maybe half an hour and fire one more, just to keep them on edge, on the other side, so that they never knew when you were going to fire. And you might be firing 25 miles long, every gun, exactly at the same time.

It's the loudest thunder you ever heard. And actually, when we heard it quit, you never heard anything so quiet, nobody talked, they just sat down. You know, the pressure's great and when that pressure was off, well, you just sit down, you don't even talk amongst yourselves. And for two days after, we slept because we were too tired. Can you understand that, no celebration or nothing? Where we were, you're just so tired that you went to sleep. When it quits and the guns stop firing, you're not enemies anymore. Do you get what I mean? Where we were, it was all Wehrmacht, that's the guys in the German army that just as soon be at home and didn't want to be in the army. You know, they're not fanatical or nothing. And they were getting tired. They were very, very tired and dirty and they had no food hardly, the German troops. And they were in bad condition. In fact, we almost felt sorry for them because how are you going to go home, you might be 200 miles from home, there's no transportation, you've got no wages, you've got no food and no place to sleep. And nobody wants you.



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“ About a quarter of a block from where we were astern of us and I was signaling to them and all of a sudden, I saw a poof and they disappeared. They just blew right out.”

Navy Harold Hague Regina, Saskatchewan

Minesweeping is a very dangerous job. They had four or five different kinds of mines. Our minesweeper was, we went in because they had what we called anchored mines. They had mines beneath the water, you couldn't see them. And they were anchored with a chain, a steel chain right down and weighted down there. And we had like what they call a paravane, with these two heavy big steel contraptions that looked like, acts like a knife, a huge thing. And those we dropped, when we think there's mines there, we dropped them down into the water and we have a float and we let them down so far and then we start going ahead. Now it acts like a pair of scissors. It, they hit the steel cord that's holding the mine and cuts it. And the mine comes up and bobs up. And then, of course, the mine floats around and then, of course, it's our duty to explode the mine as soon as we can. But the dangerous part is that those, you've got seven ships all staggered, they're not in line ahead, but they're staggered.

To hit a big sweep, you must have ships at different angles. So it's very difficult for a mine. You have to be wide awake because those mines were floating all over the place. Now, that is only one mine, one class of mine. They also have magnetic mines. And for those mines are, they're down deep, but they're set by a clock and they might set it for eight or seven and that means that seven ships could go over it if it was set for 8:00, but on the eighth ship going over, it would blow up. Those were magnetic mines and they were very difficult to handle. And we were Canadian flotilla. Our whole flotilla was then attached to the Maritime 7th Fleet. And they had of course battleships and destroyers and aircraft carriers and whatever. There was a big fleet. We went out as a minesweeper, our job was to go in ahead of everybody to clear the mines as much as we can for them to come into a landing. And we went into Omaha Beach first.

Continued...



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Navy Harold Hague Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued...

That was a terrible beach as far as loss of lives. By that time, we were going through hundreds of dead, grounded and dead Americans who were either shot from German gunfire or they drowned because it was a rough sea, a very rough sea, a lot of them drowned. If you can picture a soldier getting off a big ship, getting onto a smaller ship and then the waves knocking him all over the place. And they had certain places to go. And don't forget that they have all these packs on their back and guns and ammunition and everything. And their weight is almost double what the person is. I mean, it must have been 50, 60 to 80 pounds. If they were dumped too early, they went into the water, they can't swim. I mean, they just went straight down. It was a terrible scene to see them like that.

We tried to get some, we had a big long boar hooks that, the second time we went in to try and pull some of them in that we thought were alive. But we couldn't stop the ship because it was dangerous for us to stop. Certainly the gunfire would be, although the Germans were not interested in the minesweepers per se, a minesweeper ship didn't mean too much to them, they were after the big ships out in the back, behind us, the big ships like the troop ships and the destroyers and the battleships and so on and so forth. So we were underneath all the hail of bullets going over and coming back. Very fortunate that we weren't wiped right out. We lost two of our ships. And that was something that was really scary.

I was up signaling a message that the senior officer's ship sent to me, to my ship, the HMCS Cowichan (J146) and I had to relay that message to the ship astern of me. And they were astern about, oh, let's say about half a block away maybe from, well, not even that. About a quarter of a block from where we were astern of us and I was signaling to them and all of a sudden, I saw a poof and they disappeared. They just blew right out. That really shakes you when you're trying to signal and you know the chaps on that ship because you're fraternizing with them for three or four months. And so you know, and that ship went down within two minutes.

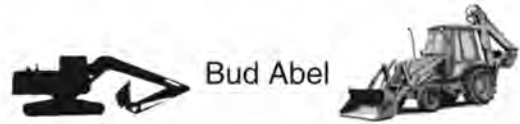


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He said, "There's two Germans in that slit trench, give me a grenade." So he was handed a grenade and he threw it in; and it didn't explode. I think it was an L-shaped trench. He threw in another one, and it didn't explode. But the third one did.



Army John Charles Hall

Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Well, my first action, as I remember it, took two days after I got there. We hadn't gone into action more than half an hour, I guess, when our tank got hit, was disabled. And [it was hit by] only one mortar. We had a [M4] Sherman tank that had twin diesels and one motor was knocked out. Well, a Sherman tank can go about 25 miles an hour with two motors, but with one motor, you can only creep about two or three miles an hour. So we reported it damaged and we were told to return to our base and there was a REME [Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers] centre there that did repairs. The driver just got turned around and the captain in my tank, he was the 2IC [second-in-command] of A Squadron, he said, there's two Germans in that slit trench, give me a grenade. So he was handed a grenade and he threw it in; and it didn't explode. I think it was an L-shaped trench. He threw in another one, and it didn't explode. But the third one did. And then a German rifle was stuck up in the air with a helmet on it. One German wasn't injured, but the other one was. He helped the other guy out and was helping him walk; and my captain called an infantry man over and they took them prisoners.

Anyway, we went back to get a replacement. My next action was at the Falaise Gap. We were lined up, loaded up with ammunition and fuel; and we were told to go 12 miles an hour and not to stop unless we were knocked out or ran out of fuel. So our flares were shot at one minute to twelve, I think, or one minute after, and away we went. Everybody. We had to cross a river not very far away. We had only been going about 15 or 20 minutes and we weren't the first tanks. There was tanks burning all around us. We come to that river, and we had a wonderful driver; his name was Frank Price. Anyway, we hit this bank of this river and we must have dropped three feet.

Continued...



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Army

John Charles Hall

Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Now remember, we had ammunition all over the floor and these 75 mms [tank gun ammunition] come flying up and I was, at this time, I was in the dirt. I was the loader operator and CAC [Canadian Armoured Corps (wireless)] operator. I was afraid they were going to land and explode. But, anyway, they didn't. We got into the river. It was a shallow river. It was late in August and I guess there'd be no rain. It was something like the Don [River in Toronto] would be now, I think. But on the other side was a very steep bank. We started to go up and almost stalled, but our driver, I don't know what he did, threw it into the lowest gear and gunned it. We almost stood on end, but we tipped forward and got over the river. So I was very new. I was still only, that was only about the second or third week I was in action; and my captain says, phone into headquarters and tell them that we are across 'sheep' and everything is tickety-boo [proceeding smoothly].

Well, I knew the name for the river was code name 'sheep,' but I didn't know what tickety-boo meant. I didn't know it was just an expression that they were using, so I phoned in, and I said the message; and I got told to pass my message. I said, we are across sheep and everything is tickety-boo. [laughs] The major who was receiving it, the IC [in charge], I could tell he was laughing. He said, very well, keep me informed. But I thought it was a code word, I didn't know, I was so green. Anyway, we hadn't gone, oh, ten minutes, and once again our tank got hit, but once again, in the motor. This time, both motors seized right up: we stopped dead. The captain says, phone in the report, we're damaged. So I tried to phone; and I said, I can't get through. He says, oh, all our aerals have been shot off, we've got to put those aerals on. So that was my job.

So he got out of my way and I stuck my head out of the turret and there was a stub of an aerial in there. I had to take that out. There was kind of a clip holding it in, and I put it in and I could hear bullets whistling, so I ducked down as soon as I could. I said, well, that's the A aerial, that's the main one, what about the B aerial, which is just a short one to keep us in touch with our war tank troop. He says, we've got to have that on. So I went up and put that on, we got out. But, anyway, we sat there for a few minutes and then the major, over the radio, told the captain, get somebody else's tank and go on, and leave us and we would make our way back. So that's what happened. The captain got into another tank and took over from a sergeant or a corporal. We dismantled the radio and everything, got out and there was another tank going back that was damaged, so we were told to get on the back of it, which we did. I can remember a very nice thing that happened. There was still some wounded German soldiers laying on the field.

Our own had been taken care of. One soldier was laying wounded right in front of this tank that was going back, with us on the back of it. He was going slow too because his tank had been damaged. The driver went around this wounded guy. He didn't run over him, which I thought was pretty good because some of the guys were pretty angry at the Germans at that time because we'd had a bad experience with shooting prisoners, tank prisoners. There was some German general was accused of murdering them.



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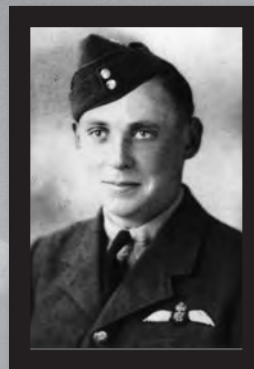
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“ We had just unloaded our bomb load and up came another Lank directly underneath of us. We didn't even see it until it had come in contact with our rear turret.”

Air Force Glen Heisler Rouleau, Saskatchewan

I joined the air force in June of 1943 and selected for air gunner training. I took my Manning Depot at Brandon and did general duties at Souris, Manitoba, which was a service flying and training school, then got posted to ground gunnery in Quebec City. Where we took ground gunnery and then on that completion, was posted at Portage la Prairie. And then from there, went to commando training base at Three Rivers [Trois-Rivières], Quebec.

But from there, we went over to Britain on a posting and by the way, it was the [RMS] Empress of Scotland. And prior to the war, it was known as [RMS] Princess [Empress] of Japan. It was one of the Cunard Steamship lines. Went to 434 Croft, which was known as Bluenose Squadron, along with our compatriot squadron was 431 Iroquois, which is now known as the snowbirds. And that's where we ended up the war. 434 was sponsored by the city of Halifax but the most memorable was one of the trips we went to Chemnitz [Germany]. It was a night fight. It occurred on March 5th and 6th. That was a long flight. It took 10 hours and 55 minutes. But that's where we had a midair collision with one of our own aircraft, right directly over the target. And we had just unloaded our bomb load and up came another lank [Lancaster] directly underneath of us. We didn't even see it until it had come in contact with our rear turret. It put that turret out of whack. You could still fire it but it couldn't rotate.

Continued...



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Air Force Glen Heisler Rouleau, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And at that point in time, I find out now who the pilot was of that particular, it was a chap by the name of Charlie Rouse, he's from Milden, Saskatchewan. But I've got to honour that chap. I would strongly recommend that he's given the Victoria Cross for the simple reason the way he handled that aircraft in such dire straits that I believe that he was in at that particular time. I don't think he had a living member inside of that aircraft with him at the time he was flying it. By the way, the pilot that was in that aircraft that flew it was from Milden, Saskatchewan. He lost his whole crew. Everyone perished. That's sort of weird that all this occurred in my estimation, it probably took a matter of 15 seconds from the time that he struck the rear of our aircraft, right below the rear turret.

And I, at that point in time, my pilot, John Kitchen from Ponoka, Alberta, asked very quickly, what's going on behind the aircraft. And at that point in time, I was looking down at Krouse's [Rouse's] aircraft going down below us and I noticed out of my peripheral vision, I seen something coming up very quickly and he parked his fighter right off about 200 or 300 yards off of our starboard wingtip. So I replied to John, I said, just hold it. Then I had set my turret up to get a better shot at it, delayed telling him to corkscrew starboard, which I eventually told him to, but I had a good shot at the Junkers 88 [German aircraft]. Other aircraft that they seen a night fighter going down, well, they just assumed that I knew. And after the collision, and then the German fighter probably thinking, well, boy, I've got an easy sitting duck here now, that rear gunner, he's dead. So he just parked himself right off of our starboard wingtip and then he finally made his move and come in on us. By that time, I had told John of course to corkscrew starboard and which he did violently.

But he still got a couple of shells in. One of the shells, the armour piercing, hit the oleo landing starboard. Like it didn't blow the tire but it jammed the hydraulic ram. So it only come down part way, that's the reason why our home base wouldn't allow us to land there. They, they figured that we would foul up their runway on taking their home bombers back. So they diverted us to a crash drome which we went to.

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“ When we came back with that Jeep, if there was 30, there was 29 with tears. It shook them. And that was one of our miracles. ”

Army Clifford Hobbis Regina, Saskatchewan

In Kingston, Ontario, we were both there, Ron. He went up a year younger than me. And he was transferred to the infantry and shipped off and I went to the sergeant major and then I had to go to the major to find out why that happened because we wanted to be together. And he said he was just transferred. So they told me that I could claim him, being a senior brother. So I put in the order and did everything I was supposed to do and my brother came back to Kingston, Ontario, mad because he was on his way home for two weeks' leave to see his wife before going overseas. So when they brought him back to Kingston, for a while there, we didn't do too much talking. But Ron understood and was happy because then we were both shipped off to Vancouver for two weeks' leave before going overseas. And in England or was it Belgium - I forget - the same thing cropped up. And I was able to claim him again. At that time, you could claim your younger brother through the army.

We went to our camp, we went to Chilliwack and Vernon and then off to Barryfield. And from Barryfield to Halifax and over to England. Going over aboard ship which stands out so much to me because there were so many sick boys and there was an auditorium and why, they were laying all over. And there was a gentleman in uniform, went up to the piano that was there and started to play Oh Holy Night. And while he was playing this, there was a few fellows came up. And a fellow came up with a guitar and during a few moments, he turned around and started to get into a little more modern and he changed the whole atmosphere of the whole ship more or less. And he stood up and announced himself as a reverend. He was a pastor.

And it was his way of introducing himself to the people and then we started to sing different hymns and it changed the whole attitude. And I thought that was a big thing in my life, going over and seeing - it was just a terrible time, sick all over.

But all the time, I was very comfortable. Both my brother and I, we were not, I shouldn't say not homesick but we really trusted. We had our faith very strong that we were going to do fine. And we were not upset, honestly. We were not afraid. And we did as we were told.

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Army Clifford Hobbis

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Continued...

As time went on, we ended up into, with I think his name was Major Storms. But we ended up in a big building and it was maybe 30 of us that was in this building. And the major's Jeep was on the other side of this open field. And he wanted that Jeep brought back to this building. And, and I think his name was Jack DeGroot. He was from Regina. He was sent out to go across and bring this Jeep back. He got out 30, 40 feet and there was a mine and it blew his foot off. And he had to be brought in and Major still wanted his Jeep. And as true as I'm sitting in this chair, he looked at me to go across and of course, my brother and I were together all the time, he was a year and a half younger than me. And you know, we decided that we were going to kneel and pray. And I pray some of those boys are still alive, that know this. And we kneeled by the door and prayed and we were laughed at. But you know, we went across that field, we brought that Jeep back. When we came back with that Jeep, if there was 30, there was 29 with tears. It shook them. And that was one of our miracles.

We were in Amsterdam and we came across a, a gentleman, his name was Karpal and he was a doctor in Holland.

And he had a three-storey house. And downstairs in the basement, below the basement, he had machines that made ration tickets, underground stuff. I have a couple of those tickets that he was making and handing out. But up in his attic, up on that which I called the attic, he showed us, he moved the carpets upstairs. Under the carpet, there was a hole about three-inch, four-inch hole in this wood. This is how they were feeding a Jew. And when he moved the one slat on the one side, you would hardly believe. It was just like a honeycomb all around this gentleman on each side of him. I don't know how long he was there but they were keeping him alive. And we never really knew whether he died or whether he got out because at that time, we had to move. But that was one special house. And we never forgot for days with this gentleman. And you know, he was talking, this Dr. Karpal could understand in German, we don't know what he was saying. But the gentleman was talking. And we left, we don't know whether they covered him up or what after that. But that was a very hard thing to take, to know that he may die there. We didn't really know.

But we were just in Germany a certain mile, two miles, 10 miles, I forget, and we had to bring some vehicles. And when we were bringing the vehicles back, we had a dispatch driver, a young fellow on a motorbike and he was in front. And all of a sudden, the whole convoy, the whole group came to a sudden stop. And they started to climb out of their vehicles and up the front. And whether it was the Germans, whoever, they had strung a wire and it looked to me like piano wires or a wire like from a guitar or whatever, but very fine and sort of glitter, shiny. And it just ripped his head practically off his body, the dispatch driver.

Well, you never seen fellows stunned. That was in the middle of the war. Because, and then, we found out, he had been in, in the war for about two years. And then we found out, he was about 17 years old when that happened to him. And I never knew his name.

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Legion

Veteran Stories

brought to you by:  THE MEMORY PROJECT

Army Howard Holloway Lashburn, Saskatchewan

You couldn't see a thing. And I remember coming down but I didn't hit the ground, and I couldn't figure why, and I still don't know why, but I think my parachute was caught on the chimney or part of a house. And I come down the side of it. And I jerked my risers to try to release myself but it wouldn't release. And I couldn't stay there because I didn't know what was in that house. Could have been a German pillbox or bunch of guys in there. So I had to get out of there. So I reached up and pulled down, still couldn't, so I hit my release button and I hung onto the harness and I let myself down. My arms weren't long enough to let me hit the ground, so, and my kit bag was over the other side of a big hedgerow. And the hedgerows were so thick there that nothing would fall down in between them. So finally, I don't know how far off the ground I am, so I let go. I fell about that far.

Some of our guys are hanging around it and didn't know what to do or where to go. And all of a sudden, this car come down the road. Everybody opened fire on it. And I don't think anybody hit it. And finally it stopped. And this woman got out of it. She was shaking like a leaf, she didn't know what was going on. She was a nurse or a doctor going to a patient, and she didn't even know that D-Day was on its way. But she was lucky to get out of it alive.

We kept running up against small arms and mortars and their machine guns were terrible. They were just like a rat tat tat tat! And, you knew right away that they were German. So, you had to clear them out. How would you do that?

Encircle them, or creep up to a vantage point and throw in a grenade, or something like that. It was all do what you can, because we had no big equipment. We had no tanks. The only anti-tank gun we had was a PIAT.*

I worked with my dad on little projects and he was my man. And my mother, she was the one that kept us together. I didn't know how I'd react going into action. Would I fold? Would I be able to take it? Would I cower in the ditch like some guys did, I saw. Hiding, so that they wouldn't be shot. It was all very hard on you – for two years, or for over a year, I had that in mind, would I not be able to take it? And, that would be a great disappointment to me, because I'd let my dad down. And he was in the First World War and he was a machine gunner. And he was badly wounded. That was one of the things that I was afraid of, that I wouldn't be able to keep up my end. But you did. The best ability. You did keep up your end.

The best I could, yeah. I always did what I was told to do and did it the best way I knew how.

*Projector, Infantry, Anti Tank (portable anti-tank weapon)



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Veteran Stories

Army Jean Hubbard Canora, Saskatchewan

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My first night in the army, I was in the top bunk when the fire alarm went off and I jumped out of bed, forgetting I was up there, fell on my hands and knees and cracked my nose, which later on, a veteran doctor said, oh, you've broken your nose earlier on. After swearing in, my sister was also CWAC [Canadian Women's Army Corps] and when I got to the room, there she was with the sergeant and the officer and a photographer. And I noticed a cake on the table with one candle on it, which was for my first day of the army and my 18th birthday. That was kind of fun and was a picture for the Winnipeg Free Press for recruitment. The most exciting part I think of being in the army was meeting my future husband on a troop train. As our group went through the men's coach for dinner, they all went, "whoo-hoo, hey, girls!" and our officer said, keep going. Coming back was the same, we had to go smartly back to our coach and the next day as we came back from breakfast, lo and behold, we were allowed to mingle with the men as the two officers stayed at the back of the coach. And I met Tom Hubbard from a little town in Saskatchewan, Maidstone. And we just hit it off so well and when he got off the train at Borden, I had tears and so did he. We corresponded and we met two weekends before he went overseas. I sent cookies and candy and cigarettes and letters went back and forth and he was in the tank corps and innocent me, I thought, oh no problem, he is going to be quite safe in his tank. Well, apparently, that wasn't so but kept me feeling good.

Another thing, a girlfriend and I were down in Niagara [Falls], New York, for a weekend and we saw the parade going across the Rainbow Bridge to Niagara [Falls], New York. And we were in Niagara Falls. So we thought, why not? So we got on the end of the parade, walked across and then we were being waved at and whatnot. Got to the other side, went, just walking around the streets and two burly sergeants came up and said, have you young ladies got a pass to be in the States and we said, no. And they said, well, I think we'd better walk you back across the bridge before you're in trouble. Which they did, took us to dinner, met us the next day for breakfast and saw us to the bus. And we thought that was pretty exciting for 18-year olds. We were young; we were ready for adventure, first time away from home. It was pretty exciting. And I don't think we really thought about the future. I don't think the fellows did. They just knew they had to go to war and they didn't think, I may not come back, really. I may be there for a lot of years. I was a little afraid that I wouldn't remember [him] because we'd only had two weekends together, which were very, yes, they were very -what am I trying to say - very innocent. We went to the service center, we danced and we had, we played the games and things. And so we really hadn't got to know each other that well although he wouldn't let me go to the train with him when he left. And I thought, well, that wasn't very friendly. And a friend of his said, no, he didn't want you to see him cry when he left. And I thought that was so sweet. The soldiers were coming off the train, I knew which one he'd be on and there was a little old lady standing near me who didn't seem to be excited about meeting anybody. And when he came off, he had his kit bag and he put it down and she said, I'll look after the kit bag - go! And so we had our reunion and I thought, oh no, I remember him! But this little old lady was just there to see all the returned soldiers coming back and to be part of it. She probably had lost some in the war, so. But no, it was very special and oh, it was just, ... just a dream come true that he had come back. And he had spoken to one of his friends overseas, who told me this later, he said, he kept saying, I'm going to marry a girl from Flin Flon Manitoba. So I thought, well, that was nice that whatever happened overseas, like in Vegas stays in Vegas, he came back and we were married in 1947.



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- Benjamin Disraeli



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Legion 

Veteran Stories

brought to you by:  THE MEMORY PROJECT

Army Ruth Hurley Oxbow, Saskatchewan

“ It was very interesting and very exciting for a person from Saskatchewan who had never been anywhere or done anything. ”

I lived in [Fort] Qu'Appelle all my life until about 1942-43; and my mother taught me how to be a telephone operator. I went to Estevan first as a telephone operator, and then I was transferred to Oxbow. And one day, this recruiting officer came through and said, we need some ladies to join the army, are you interested? Well, about three or four of us decided that was a good idea, get out of Oxbow, which was a tiny little place, never been anywhere, someplace to go that was different, so they shipped me into Regina. And from there, I went to Kitchener and you'll see by my papers, the date that I was inducted into the CWAC [Canadian Women's Army Corps]. Stayed there for about a half a year, six months, they shipped me off to Vancouver. And, first of all, I was at UBC [University of British Columbia] as an operator and then they sent me down to the hospital, where they had all the huts and everything, the military hospital; and there I was when I met my husband in 1944. And we were married in 1946. It was very interesting and very exciting for a person from Saskatchewan who had never been anywhere or done anything. It was fascinating, I thought. When they brought the stretchers through the hospital, coming from overseas and I saw my husband, I always tell my boys, they always think it's funny, that I'll have that one, when they brought him in, and I married him in 1946. [laughs] It was very exciting. And we went downtown. In Kitchener, they didn't like us, the women. They didn't like the women because it was a German settlement. And I guess there were pros and cons of what they stood up for, you see. So when we went down, there was a whole bunch of us, we were told, when you went downtown in Kitchener, then you stay together. So we did. I went on leave from there to Toronto once while in the area and then was shipped out here into Vancouver. Enjoyed it very much. I would do it again if I was a little bit younger. We were too young I believe. They expected that the women that they took to go overseas were like 24, 25. And I was only 18, 19, 20. So they wanted the older women, I guess more experience in life or something, they wanted them over there. Mind you, when the boys came back, they were hoping that they would send a little bit of younger women, Canadian women, but that was the general's prerogative.

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We got coned in searchlights one night over Berlin, which was rather unpleasant, you can imagine what seems like a hundred searchlights focused on you, you're blinded, you can't see instruments or any damn thing



Veteran Stories

brought to you by:  THE MEMORY PROJECT

Air Force Walter Kasper Leader, Saskatchewan

Canada had 15 bomber squadrons and [No.] 408 [(Goose) Squadron] was the second of these to be activated. We were flying Lancasters on 408 Squadron. These were rather bad days: we lost 936 men in four years of operations. We got coned in searchlights one night over Berlin, which was rather unpleasant, if you can imagine what seems like a hundred searchlights focused on you, you're blinded, you can't see instruments or any damn thing, and you know that the searchlights are focused on you, the radar has you, the flak [anti-aircraft] is geared to the radar and it has your altitude. And the flak they had, all you could see at night was a little red burst. But you knew that that red burst represented a lethal area from where the explosion was of some 40 or 50 feet. So if you were within that radius of that little red, you could sustain lethal damage. You would certainly get some damage and all the stuff coming. So you couldn't see anything, you were blinded and you knew that the night fighters could see you because you were quite visible in the sky with all these searchlights on you. And you had to take and keep, change your altitude so the flak wouldn't get you, you would try to break out of the cone of searchlights and you would have to take and keep moving so that a night fighter couldn't get his gunsight on you and shoot you out of the sky. So it was rather unpleasant until you broke out of that cone of searchlights. But we went in at 20,000 feet and I finally got out of that at 8,000 feet, then we went and did our bombing and went home. But our track home took us between two German cities of Osnabrück and Münster and they had a radar and the radar picked us up.

We had radial engines in this Lancaster and a piece of flak – the radial engines had a chamber, it looked very much like this (gestures) but larger, which wrapped right around all 18 cylinders of this radial engine and picked up all the red hot exhaust gases and fed them off out behind the aircraft. And on this port in our engine, about eight or nine feet from where I'm sitting, a piece of flak hits this chamber and knocks a piece of the metal outside, knocks a piece of this off, and we then have a great big candle, if that's the right word, of odd gases shooting up into the sky as we're driving along. And of course, it's the kind of advertising in Germany that nobody is really wanting. So our options are to fly with the advertising or to shut down the engine. Now, we are already getting a little tight on fuel because we've had to find our way back to about 14,000 feet from the 8,000 feet that we were when we shook off the searchlight cone. And so I have to shut down that engine and so we're going home and we're going across Germany on three engines, as close to the ground as we can get, and we see the first creeping fingers of sunlight breaking through the cloud and we hope that all the German night fighters are out of fuel and home in their berth and we managed to get down as close as we can to the North Sea and make our way back to the emergency landing [aero]drome. And we landed there before we ran out of gas. So some of these things were a little tight, but I'm here.



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Veteran Stories

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Army Philip Kazimir Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

When war broke out, five of us got into a car and drove all the way to London, Ontario, to join the air force. They didn't want us in the air force because we didn't have the education.

So from there, we went all the way down to Chatham [Ontario]. The same thing, they didn't want us in that. From there, we went to Simcoe, from Simcoe to Brantford and then we got to Brantford, we joined the Dufferin & Haldimand Rifles. They asked for drivers and 17 of us put up their arms. Only four of us were qualified with our driver's licenses. That's when I started as a driver and I think I never got any sleep because we were always going for rations, going here and going there as a driver.

Five days from Halifax to Scotland by ship, they zigzagged because they were scared of the submarines and that.

Aldershot in England, Aldershot. More training there and from there, on the boat to the English Channel to Europe. And I got there, Gent [Belgium]. They gave me choice, what regiment do you want to go to. So Argylls were there and I said, Argylls, I was in the same brigade with the Argylls in 1940, so naturally I went to Argylls.

I was in the Argyles D Company. A lot of members there know, gone through in the front lines and all the way through with D Company. We got as far as the Maas River in Holland. And we were under patrol at nights. And one morning they called me and they said, you're going back as a driver.

I recall when we were in Tilbury, we used to stay with people there and they complained that the Germans stole their radio and they had no communication. So when I was in Germany, they said, see if you can get us a radio. So we were out in this field and the two MPs and I said to one of them, there's a farmhouse right there, I can go and see if I could find a radio there.

So I said to Chuck, give me protection with your rifle, I'll go across and see if I can get a radio. So he said, I'll give you protection with a pistol., Not much protection there.

So anyway, Whitey and myself went across the field into the buildings there, house, barn, pigsty and everything else was all there together. So I could still see Ford Whitey climbing up this ladder, looking for eggs. (laughs) I went into the house and a woman was there with kids and a couple of women or so, and I went in there and I saw the radio. So I pulled the plug out.

She, we yackety yack at me, we exchanged a few unpleasant words and I put the radio under my arm, took it back to my truck.

Continued...

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“ And I took the radio to them,
you'd think that, I gave them a
million dollars. ”

Army Philip Kazimir Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Continued...

And we had to back for a rest periodically, you were in the front lines, you had to go for a rest, so got back to Holland to the place at Tilbury where the people had missed the radio. And I took the radio to them, you'd think that they, I gave them a million dollars. The old man went upstairs and found a piece of bacon, give it to me and I said that you've got children to feed, not me, because they used to live on boiled tulips. Poverty. So I did a good deed there.

Our regiment got the call. They were honoured to go to Berlin as a parade. So all the vehicles had to be all cleaned up, washed up and polished up and that being the one day they say polish up the vehicles and that the next day you say, don't do this. So anyway, I think it was two companies of the regiment, we drove the pipe band and that, drove to Berlin and we were stopped by the Russians in the German border because somebody made a mistake and they didn't know that we were supposed to be there.

So we got to Berlin. They had to clean up some of the buildings for a place for us to stay and that. But then we went out to Berlin to the museums and Hitler's Chancellery, We went to Hitler's chancellery. And the British got there before us, they smashed Hitler's marble table into pieces and sent them home as souvenirs. There was the medals, medals, medals and medals by the thousands, all sorts of them. We grabbed them and picked them up. So I had a lot of them but some of them wanted a souvenir so I still had the one swastika. And a few other German medals and that's about all I saved, you know.



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Veteran Stories

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Well, we were always taught to fire around, not over. He made a fundamental mistake- he got up on top of this thing and a German got him right in the middle of the forehead, killed. That was my first dead guy.



Army James Keith Outlook, Saskatchewan

In the summer of 1944, horrible casualties in Normandy, worse than the First World War actually, the casualties per battalion per month. So they ran out of reinforcements and they involuntarily transferred a lot of officers and other ranks from the artillery. Less from the [Royal Canadian] armoured corps, none from signals [Royal Canadian Corps of Signals], they transferred them to the infantry. They called for volunteers and I volunteered. Not because I wanted to be a hero, [laughs] but because I hated signals. [laughs]

There seemed there was a damn conspiracy to keep me away from battle. There must have been. Some higher power there was arranging that I didn't get there. I met two guys I chummed with on this junior leaders course. One was from signals too. It was Jimmy Webster from Ontario. After the course, I never saw him again. I regret that very much because I liked Jimmy. He was a good guy. He had been with the Regina Rifles [Regiment] actually.

I was sitting there and sitting there and sitting there, not getting on draft so I got mad, paraded before the commanding officer from the reinforcement unit who happened to be [Lieutenant-Colonel] Foster [M.] Matheson, "Black Bess." [laughs] And a wonderful man. So I complained bitterly to him about sitting in this bloody Aldershot [England]. So he cried on my shoulder about having got sent back, so we had a mutual crying session, but he got me on a draft.

Continued...



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Army James Keith Outlook, Saskatchewan

Continued...

It felt like coming home because it was a Saskatchewan bunch. Most of the guys were from Saskatchewan. Most of the signals guys were from Ontario and they were some pretty good heads, but these were Saskatchewan guys and it was like coming home.

So I got [No.] 16 Platoon. My introduction to [No.] 16 Platoon was great. First of all, the platoon sergeant was Tommy Tomlinson, Sergeant Tomlinson, who had landed on D-Day, been all the way through and never been wounded, was still a marvelous soldier at the end, cool in battle and really a hell of a good leader. And I thought he would resent me, you know. Here is this green lieutenant, not even infantry trained, coming up to take over command of the platoon from him because he'd commanded it for a couple of weeks. He was in the Moyland Wood, commanded it before that. And he said, Jesus, sir, am I glad to see you. I said, what the hell do you mean? Well, he says, I like to have an officer. [laughs]

We went on into Emmerich and I lost another kid, killed. We went into one factory building. Well, going into the factory building, this was my first attack, my first real attack. I wanted to lead the platoon in. So we were sitting under the muzzle of this [Ordnance Quick-Firing] 17 pounder anti-tank gun and Dick Roberts is telling me my orders. And he knew what I planned to do. So he said, send a section in first. I said, no, I'm not, I'm going to lead the platoon in. He called me Mr. Keith; and he was getting mad at me. He said, Mr. Keith, this is a direct order; you will send a section in first. Well, I said, under my breath, [laughs] you're a ... but I sent a section first. They ran across the road and I led the rest of the platoon across to this building. There's Germans spraying the place with [Maschinenpistole 40] Schmeisser [submachine gun], what do they call them, machine pistols, spraying the air with this thing. So we kept on going, banging away from the hip and bullets ricocheting all from the steel columns all over this place. We got to the other side of this one, we're now on the lane and there's another big building there.

And this one kid from Dollard, Saskatchewan, can't remember his name, rifleman, real good kid. He took his Bren [light machine] gun and he put it on this, there was a mound of rubble. Well, we were always taught to fire around, not over. He made a fundamental mistake- he got up on top of this thing and a German got him right in the middle of the forehead, killed. That was my first dead guy. And that was pretty horrible because the bodies lay out there all day when I was walking back and forth. Tommy Tomlinson ran out behind his shed and grabbed the kid. I saw his chest rise and fall with his last breath. Tommy ran out and grabbed him by the heels, and dragged him in. And then the poor old stretcher bearer, he put sulfa [antibiotic powder] in that hole in the kid's head and put a bandage on it; and the kid was dead, but he tried to, you know, he figured he had to do something. So he lay there most of the day and I had to pass him going back and forth to company headquarters. It was just bloody amazing, somebody must have been watching over me.



James H. Stinn

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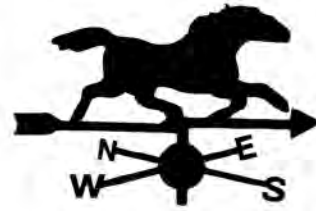
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“

I did a little walk and there was a small cemetery and I looked at some of the names on it and this officer who had come to say hello to me at 2:00 in the afternoon was already buried by 6:00 in the evening.

”

Army Alex Kowbel Melville, Saskatchewan

My name is Alex Nick Kowbel. I was born in Melville, Saskatchewan on October the 6th, 1922. I had a good friend, actually, my oldest brother's wife's brother, approximately my age, about a year older, he joined the, the Corps of military staff clerks. And when he came home on leave, he told me about them and said, why don't I try since I could do typing, etc. So I went to try and I could not join the corps, I was not sufficiently proficient, evidently, for their high standards.

So I just joined the army and I [...] the district depot, #12 District Depot in Regina [Saskatchewan]. And the reason I joined them was they, the Corporal who was the recruiter, found out I could type and he was way behind his work and he persuaded me to advance my date of birth by a year or two in order to get in.

I did land at Juno Beach [in Normandy] off an LST, that's landing ship troops, crawling down rope ladder and wading to shore. Although we were not under enemy fire at the time, we had control of that particular beach at that time. I think that was Saint-Eustache-sur-Mer where we go back occasionally. And then I joined headquarters Two Canadian Agra. Headquarters Two Canadian Agra was under attack when I arrived. The truck stopped about, oh, I would say half a mile from where I could see the action. And he said, 'Sarge [short for the rank of Sergeant], your unit's up that road, this is as far as I go.' So I walked up there and I found a Major, I can tell you his name but I don't ... He was sitting underneath a six foot folding table, trying to call away the...

Continued...

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Army Alex Kowbel Melville, Saskatchewan

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We were being bombed by our own Air Force at the time. It was just a big mistake. Unfortunately, there was a German ammunition dump nearby which was exploding at the same time. I had quite a welcome. The Major said to me, 'Sarge, I tried to report in properly but he said, Sarge, just get undercover. And that was what it was like when I first arrived at the unit.

And from there on in, we moved very rapidly. We moved sometimes two or three times a day and artillery doesn't normally do that. But we did it this time. I think it was about the third, second or third night I was there. The Major and I were plotting our gun and because of the attacks, we'd had our positions previously, everybody was nervous and we put our headquarters into a gully. We tried to do the plotting by the light of a very small wattage bulb, in a gully, in the trees and we covered the maps with the cardboard covering so the light wouldn't show. And we tried to do the work from that position. I remember saying, I'll never be able to do this. But I guess we got through it.

Our job was to clear the [English] channel ports. We went through France, we went through Boulogne, but we were usually outside the cities, not inside. We would be the artillery support outside the cities. I remember, I believe it was Boulogne, we were dug into the side of a mountain that had previously been used for some sort of German manufacturing rocket launching, that sort of thing. But we had, they had little caves dug in, deep in this mountain. I believe that was outside Boulogne and we worked from there.

Also I remember that particular area when I saw the type of barracks, if you could call them that, where the slave labourers worked. So it must have been some sort of industrial complex which housed all these slave labourers. Mind you, there weren't any there when we got there but I could see what pitiful conditions they were in.

Well, one thing in particular when I was in Nijmegen [The Netherlands], I told you I had been a gun Sergeant with the 14th Canadian Field Regiment before D-Day and the battery commander of that was a Major Kibler, KIBLER, and he came to our headquarters outside of Nijmegen. He knew I was in the headquarters and he came and chatted and said hello, this would be about 2:00 in the afternoon. He had been transferred as well out of the regiment and I've forgotten what unit he was with at the time he visited me. And I went out maybe in the evening. I always used to do a, a small walk or just to see whether things had changed.

Anyway, I did a little walk and there was a, a small cemetery and I looked at some of the names on it and this officer who had come to say hello to me at 2:00 in the afternoon was already buried by 6:00 in the evening. His jeep had hit a mine on the way, this is what I was told, and he was instantly killed and buried. It was quite a shock.



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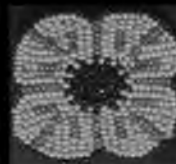


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Air Force J. Roy Leard Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

“And ultimately, our tail gunner, our plane was kind of badly damaged in that, but our tail gunner shot down the German plane at the very last really, because we were down, as I say, to 50 feet when we finally broke off and the gunner shot him down.”

I did my first operational trip on the 23rd of November of 1941. And that was a ship [trip] to Dunkirk [French port on the North Sea]. Now this is Stirling bombers I flew on. So on that particular one, we carried five 1,000-pound bombs and eight 500s on our trip to Dunkirk. You fly night flying and you fly, you navigate your way to Dunkirk, which wasn't very far. Total trip there and back was two hours and ten minutes, because we were in south of England in Wyton [Royal Air Force air station RAF Wyton, Huntingdonshire] actually. So it wasn't a long flight and I don't have anything recorded as a problem actually on that one. The next flight I did was two nights later, an operational trip to Brest [French port], which was on the coast where they have ships come in and so forth. And went to Brest and we got, on that one I have in here, I got caught in searchlights, our port inner motor – of course, the Stirling's a four-engine plane – the port inner motor was shot up and the radio aerial was shot off.

We bombed [in] heavy flak [anti-aircraft artillery fire] with five 2,000-pound bombs and our flight was five hours and 15 minutes. And that's what I have sort of recorded in my book, so, that was, that would be exciting. I was the only Canadian on my crew. The rest were all English. We all had the same purpose, you know. The last one, I can tell you, that we tangled with a night fighter, a German night fighter, and we started at about 17,000 feet and ended at about 50 feet above the ocean or the North Sea. And ultimately, our tail gunner, our plane was kind of badly damaged in that, but our tail gunner shot down the German plane at the very last really, because we were down, as I say, to 50 feet when we finally broke off and the gunner shot him down. And so we then were on our way home. And so we had to sort of determine – we were over, I think it was over Kiel [German Baltic Sea port], July of 1942, and that was my last flight. And I've got here “night ops Hamburg [German city], reached and bombed target, in searchlights for 13 minutes, crossed the coast at 50 feet and last op of our tour.” But I know that our tail gunner shot down this German aircraft, fighter aircraft.

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And there were never any repercussions, you know, it was a momentary thing and we didn't have any psychiatrists or anything like that. So the beer and friendship was how you overcome those things.



Army Bruce Little Lafleche, Saskatchewan

I joined the Permanent Force [of professional soldiers] not just a Special Force for Korea.* So I enlisted for three years and partway through that, I went to Korea. That's what I expected to do, was to go to Korea, but there was, that seemed to be the option at that time, that they hadn't come out with a special service force I don't think, so, I just joined the Regular Army.

And I even thought I might make it a career because my memories of military service [in the Second World War] were fond and I was kind of at loose ends, so I thought I would stay. But my mind got changed again after I came home from Korea.

Into Korea, luckily, it was during the very quiet portion and my role there was, again, I was in charge of, I think five or six electricians, and our job was to keep the 23rd Transport** vehicles mobile as far as the literal part goes. And we also were responsible then for the camp lighting and we had one generator I think when we arrived there and I think when we left, we had five or six that we had scrounged, or repaired, or one thing or another. So it was an interesting period, but, as far as helping the war effort, we were quite distanced from it. And I guess the other thing I would have to say how shockingly poor the people were, and we did whatever we could to help them. But, it was, I guess my role was scrounging for parts and the Americans really loved our boots, and so if you took them a pair of boots, you could trade for nearly anything that the military had.

Continued...

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Army Bruce Little

Lafleche, Saskatchewan

Continued...

I guess this is when I talked about I was going to be mentioned in dispatches then because, there was about eight of us, ten of us maybe, from "Reemee" [Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers] attached to a Service Corps, so we were kind of fostered children. And I think I got some recognition in that when we first got there, I think we had a ration of four bottles of beer, big bottles of beer a week, that you could purchase. But we had a few people that stayed from the previous company and they drank up all the beer the first night or two. So I protested and of course, when you protest, guess what happens? I volunteered then for running the canteen from then on. And that was the end of the nice experience and I say, the Americans had all kinds of, their weak beer, and with a pair of boots and a little money, you could buy beer from them, so - this was our social life, actually, sit around at the edge of the camp, and have your beer after work.

And I don't know, I guess the only other thing I would think of that, there you get to know people very well and it seemed maybe every couple months, we'd have somebody go off the deep end, they'd get a letter from home that was devastating or somebody had died and they'd go berserk. And we found then that when one man did that, it would take six of us to hold him down. And there were never any repercussions, you know, it was a momentary thing and we didn't have any psychiatrists or anything like that. So the beer and friendship was how you overcome those things.

We were a part of the brigade that was run by the British. And the British and I think there was Australians and maybe some New Zealanders and a hodge-podge in there but, we were small numbers and we were associated with Americans and I guess on the upper brackets, we'd be under American command. But we didn't really take any orders from them and we were on the western side [of the frontlines] below Seoul at that stage and that's pretty well where we stayed all the time I was there.

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Army Bruce Little

Lafleche, Saskatchewan

Continued...

It was challenging in the sense that we couldn't get parts for anything until everything was, we had to come up with some kind of a funny idea and we didn't have, couldn't get 110-volt light bulbs or anything like that, until we come up with the idea of taking eight 12-volt bulbs and put them in series and that's how we lit the workshop days. And you know, everybody contributed to this. If you had a problem, everybody put their heads together and we come up with something and then, Eureka, we had solved it and something else is working, so it was a time of challenging mentally, but very rewarding and I think we did all that was asked of us and maybe a little more.

We all took an interest in that, you know, a little kid that be out playing with sticks and stones and this kind of stuff, with nothing much to eat until we contributed toys to them and we had chocolate bars or something like that, that was what we did. And we had house boys and they "lived the life of Riley" because they made more money than their whole family had thought of making. And so those were the small returns.

In the military, the sergeants and above got a whiskey or they could choose a hard liquor bottle once a month. And we had people that didn't drink and if you had a bottle of Canadian whiskey, you could trade, you could buy a jeep with that pretty near from the Americans. So this was the golden currency and we used that but we didn't have much else, boots and the booze were about the only things we had to peddle.

Well, at those times, we had ones that come up above the ankle, and they were maybe 12-inch boots or something like that, you know. And they looked pretty classy and they were comfortable and they were unique, you know, completely different to what the Americans were being issued. So, it seemed to be something that they had favoured. One of the few things in our stuffs that they thought was superior to their own.

Well, that's true and in most cases, they were lavishly equipped and the food, you know, we were on American rations and we thought that was just super because we were attached to a British division and the Brits always had terrible food. Even in Korea, they still seemed to have their own rations more than they had American. And how this worked, I don't know, but we got American rations and bread and pork chops and chicken and steak once a week or something like this, so it was, if you're used to military rations, this was Heaven.

*The Canadian Army Special Force raised in 1950 of volunteers for Korean service

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Air Force John MacFarland Regina, Saskatchewan

We docked at Liverpool [England] and went down into the south of England and well, this was early February while there was roses in bloom at the hotel we were put up in Bournemouth. And it seemed so different to me to what we had just left. From there, I went to a holding depot at Innsworth Lane in Gloucestershire. And that's where I met my wife, future wife, was when I was stationed there. We got going together and corresponding. We decided in mid-November, I think it was, in 1944 to get married and we set a June date. The war ended with Germany, come to an end about in April, and I found out that we were going to be posted back to Canada as soon as arrangements could be made for us to fly back. And that was before our wedding date, and it was very important for us to be married when we came back because then, because the country would bring her out. So we had the wedding advanced from June to May. Married in mid-May and about mid-June, or early June, I flew back to Canada. She had to get two references for me to give them and for them to approve the marriage and I didn't have to give her any references. She didn't think that was quite fair. From there, we went in to Yorkshire on [Avro] Lancasters where four to eight were stationed at Middleton, St. George and that was a sister squadron to 419, the 'Moose' Squadron. 428 was the 'Ghost.' And that's where I did all my operating out of there, until the war ended... Was the first mission, and that was about a 300 plane endeavor on Nuremberg. As far as what I saw, it sticks out in my memory as I immediately thought of the first time I went to Regina [Saskatchewan] as a boy, at the Regina fair, I went to the farm boy's camp, and I saw fireworks for the first time and horse races and what have you. When we came in over the target, it was about midnight and everything was alight. There was searchlights going on, there was flashes of flak over, there was planes blowing up in the air you could see. And I left my death's grip I was in in the dark, and I just left it after that and went back to navigating, I'd seen enough. We went through and bombed the target and came home. But the vision of that sight reminded me of Regina fair fireworks, when I was a young boy. The close friends you made was with your crew and you were very, very close, and you were for the rest of your life. I assessed it after I came back. The fact that I'd been away for three or four years about, from the farm and I'd grew up in the farm and I left from the farm, and when I came back to the farm, it was just fantastic how farming had changed. I left an operation that was being still powered by horses. When I came back, they had a tractor. But we had a light plant on the farm with batteries and what have you, they had switched to a wind charger and stuff. The change was so great, wheat was selling for a good price. There was money to be made. Everybody was working. That work was really interesting in that I was dealing with veterans I'd served with. I knew the problems they'd had adjusting to get back into the feel of things and it was a feeling of success to see them getting ahead, to see their families growing. And for a long time after I left that, I would get letters from them at Christmas time with their Christmas card, kept on telling me how many children they had and that. It kept me associated with veterans though and how well they did. And it was particularly interesting to see how well many of the war brides fitted in on the farm. To me, that was the most gratifying period of my life, was to see helping these boys fit back in and make a go of it.



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When you first come in there, the first wave, they got it; and there were still bodies.

When we came in on the second wave there were still bodies around.



Jim McCulloch

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

That morning we [The Regina Rifle Regiment] were actually the second wave going in [on Juno Beach, during the Allied Normandy landings of June 6, 1944], but it was pretty rainy and foggy. Awful: wet and everything. When we got to the beach it was awful to see the bodies floating around, and different things. We were hollerin' and wadin' in the water trying to get out of there. You had to go up the bank to get out of there. Certain beaches were bad. When you first come in there, the first wave, they got it; and there were still bodies. When we came in on the second wave there were still bodies around.

I was wishing I was back home working in the barn. Oh, it was awful. Pretty scared. I was pretty young then. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what...

Oh, it's always frightening when you hear the bombs dropping, them Moaning Minnies [Nebelwerfer: German multi-barrelled artillery rocket launcher]. Whoop. Boy, they make an awful noise when they come. You don't know where they're going to land. I've seen them land and blow the head off a friend of mine. He was from, actually from Landis [Saskatchewan], too. It was Mike Gartner. All that was left was tags; his tags. Blew his head right off.

But it got worse after we got into Falaise and Caen. Then the worst part, we got into Falaise, we lost three of our [Bren Gun (Universal)] carriers [lightly armoured tracked vehicles]. The Germans took them on us. The sergeant said, everybody bail out. The 12th [Schutzstaffel (SS)] Panzer Division [Hitlerjugend], Germans, they took the carriers away on us. They were bringing them for themselves. I played dead in an oat field and got away from them. The sergeant, he got shot and some were taken prisoner. But that night, we lay in the oat fields. When morning come, there were tanks just coming up. We didn't know... We held our hands up and here were British tanks. They said, "mate, get in the tank, you can have a spot of tea." Then they took us up to the front where headquarters was. They said, "get in the tank and have a spot of tea there, mate; looks like you had a bad night."

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Air Force Robert Morrow

Pangman, Saskatchewan



And at first, she didn't want to go out with me and I hadn't had much trouble getting girls to go out with me, so that made me all the more anxious to get her to go out



You had a chance to apply for what station you would like to go to and I applied for [Royal Canadian Air Force Station] Calgary. Part of the reason was that my brother was Station Sergeant Major at [RCAF Station] Calgary at the time. There were three of us in the air force at that time, three from my family, so I was lucky to get Calgary, which was No. 10 R.D.; it was a repair depot for all of Western Canada. And we went out from Calgary to the different stations and brought their planes up to standard or as close as we could.

Whenever we first started the war and even in 1943, our planes were so far behind, we called the [Avro] Ansons 'flying coffins', that was the Mk I Anson but by the time of the end of the war, those were quite good planes. The Cessna was the main training plane and we had people from Australia, England, some of the stations like Swift Current was strictly an RAF [Royal Air Force] station, which was all English. But we still had to go in and bring these planes up to their standard; so actually, I worked out of Calgary and went to practically every station in Western Canada. The biggest thing I think, I guess that happened to me in the air force is I met my wife. And we've been married for 64 years now. I guess as soon as I seen her, I thought I wanted to go out with her. And at first, she didn't want to go out with me and I hadn't had much trouble getting girls to go out with me, so that made me all the more anxious to get her to go out.

She was also in the air force. She was a steno[grapher]. She had joined up in Vancouver and taken her training in Toronto and eventually got posted to Calgary and she was working in, they had an office in Calgary and I don't know, we started to go together. Next thing, we were married on the third of May in 1946.



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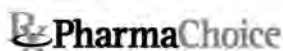
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Navy Lawrence Moskowy

Milestone, Saskatchewan

I was 18 years old and I enlisted sometime in late 1943. I was drafted onto HMCS West York [convoy corvette]. They had a 20 millimetre Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun and I was in charge of that. I was an anti-aircraft gunner. Well, it was quite a thing, the first time when they assembled at St. John's, Newfoundland and the first escort round that I was on, there was 165 merchant ships, and I don't really know how many navy ships there were because you never ever saw them because you couldn't see that far away. But that was the biggest group of ships that was ever escorted across the North Atlantic.

It was quite an experience; and had days, it was rough and had days, it was nice. And it generally took us about 18 days to get across. So we saw lots of different weather patterns and so forth. Whenever anything happened, the bells would ring in action stations and you went to your action stations. But, actually, what that ship was there for was looking out for U-boats. We chased quite a few of them, but we never ever did anything in it because we would stay with them for quite a while and then I don't know where it come from, but another ship would come along and take over; and we would rush back to take up our positions in the convoy.

We got into some tight spots. There was flares and things like that being thrown up and everybody was looking for us and nothing really happened. And one of the amusing things that happened, we dispersed our merchant ships and we were going up the Irish Sea and the Irish Sea was fairly shallow. And anyways, the radar people picked up a signal and we started dropping depth charges on the thing, back and forth. Finally, there was a signal come from ashore and said, get out of there, you guys, that wreck has been there for 50 years.

Continued...

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Navy Lawrence Moskowy Milestone, Saskatchewan

66

I got thinking that U-boat was down below and there was probably guys on it the same age as I was and they were there for the same reason that I was, they were fighting for their country.

99

Continued...

In my time, we made three trips across, back and forth and it was always just back and forth, but we never ever went the same route. Sometimes we would go pretty close to Greenland in the north and then sometimes we would go south past the Azores [Portuguese archipelago] and go up in Bay of Biscay [Spanish-French coast], and into England.

There was lots of good memories. There was some things that you wonder why, you know, because it was a war and I've often thought about things. We were chasing those German submarines and I thought of it afterwards, there might have been a guy, because when we were on ship, we'd get together and sit around in a group, and we would always talk about the day we were going to be able to get home to our parents and things like that.

And after I got home, I got thinking that U-boat was down below and there was probably guys on it the same age as I was and they were there for the same reason that I was, they were fighting for their country. And who knows, I was trying to kill him and yet, maybe if I had met him in later years, in public life, he could have been my best friend. But he was there, fighting for his country just like I was for mine. And I was wondering what the heck this was all about.



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Air Force Doug Mullen Regina, Saskatchewan

“ the Japanese shelled the Estevan lighthouse on Vancouver Island. And so immediately, a blackout was declared and we were given rifles and ammunition. ”

After my first year in university, I decided that I was going to join the air force, but I would give myself a year's break. So I gave my 19th year to me and then I joined the air force. One day when my young brother and I were out walking in a field on the outskirts of Regina, an airplane went overhead and we made up a song like I'll join the air force one day. And as it happens, we both did. (singing) I'll join the air force, far far away, I'll join the air force, some sunny day. (stops) After my training, I was transferred, we were informed when we graduated from radar school at that time, some of us would go to Newfoundland, some would go to Britain and some would stay in Canada. So we drew straws to see who would go where.

And as it happened, I drew B.C., which was fortunate for me because my family had moved to Vancouver. So I was transferred to Ucluelet, B.C. on the 30th of January, 1943.

What happened in September of that same year, my brother had completed his training as an air gunner and he had come home to Burnaby [British Columbia] on his last leave. So I obtained permission to, to go to Vancouver for, for that occasion and when I was there, he told me that the average life of an air gunner was six weeks. So I was dismayed at that possibility and when I got back to Ucluelet, I arranged to re-muster to air crew, which is like a month later at the end of October, 1943. So I appeared before a board and was accepted. There were three of us of the radar unit that re-mustered. But meanwhile, what happened is the, as you may recall, the Japanese had landed in Alaska at Attu and Kiska, and so Canadian troops had been sent north. I'm not sure where they went, we referred to them as zombies, they were soldiers who had been conscripted. At the same time, the same fall, and I don't remember what month, I think October or, the Japanese shelled the Estevan lighthouse on Vancouver Island.

Continued..

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Air Force Doug Mullen Regina, Saskatchewan

Continued..

And so immediately, a blackout was declared and we were given rifles and ammunition and we remained, it remained beside our beds for a week I guess because no one knew if there was one submarine or several or, since Ucluelet is based on the, on an inlet just off the Pacific, whether that submarine might come down to see us. So as a result, all transfers out of the base were cancelled so I didn't get to go to [No. 4] ITS [Initial Training School] in Edmonton until in the new year because of this blanket cancellation of all moves. Since I had been accepted in air crew, I was assigned to the station education officer. And so

I was involved with him in arranging films to be shown in the rec hall because Ucluelet was an isolated base. And we arranged for debates, things of that nature. I became the editor of the, we started a station newspaper, so I became the editor. And while my transfer still didn't come through, I was allowed to go to Vancouver on a couple of occasions and arrange for stencil ink and stencils. People have forgotten, there used to be such a thing as a mimeograph machine today. That's how we printed the *The Western Voice*, I think it was. And so that's the sort of thing that I did, waiting to go to be trained in air crew. Which finally became as I mentioned by going to Edmonton to manning pool all over again in April of 1944. After completing ITS, I was assigned to No. 1 Central Navigation School at Rivers, Manitoba. I found at ITS that I couldn't be a pilot because of my peripheral vision, and that meant that I could also not be an air gunner or a bomb aimer. So there wasn't much of a choice. They sent me to navigation school. I graduated in February of 1945. Ours turned out to be the last class at navigation school. We were actually trained for Asia. We should have gone to India, but our training was delayed for a month in October because there were continuous fog over the lakes. So the class ahead of us got to go, but we didn't. In January of 1944, at Ucluelet, I was sent to Alliford Bay in the Queen Charlotte Islands [British Columbia] to accompany some equipment. And so I arrived at my parents' house at the end of January and where my parents had just received a telegram indicating that my brother had been killed. So that's the last time the balance of our family were all together, the night the telegram came and I had to leave the next morning for the Queen Charlotte Islands, I couldn't stay with my mother.



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“ I had to utilize my Bren gun and it was one of the hardest parts of my life that I had, to turn a Bren gun on those people coming. [...] it's just the way that wars have to end or be resolved by man killing man. ”

Albert John Park

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

There's about three or four major battles that I partook as you might say. A place called the Pimple and it was called Kalikar [Calcar Heights on the Rhine, Germany, February 1945]. And that was really my biggest venture into the war areas. And I went all the way through that I participated in.

We had flame throwers going and we had artillery on us that night. It was like being in hell and you know what it looks, what hell was like, it couldn't be any worse than what it was. The 88s [the German 88mm anti-aircraft and anti-tank gun] from the German forces and the moaning minnies [referring to a serie of German weapons called generally the Nebelwerfer, presented as mortars or rocket-launchers] which they poured on top of our tanks of going through there was just unreal. It's like fireworks were all around you all the time, even though you huddled down in the tanks to get through this passageway.

And it was an entry towards the closing of the gap where the German forces were making a last stand before they had to evacuate and get back across the Rhine [river]. It was called the Pimple.

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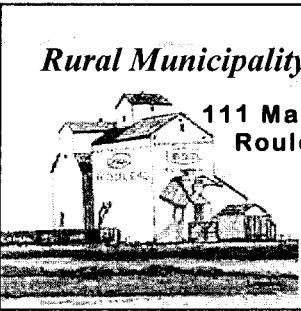
Continued...

And as such, we all walked up a large slope in the hillside after we dismounted from the tanks. Flame throwers were still house clearing in some of the areas where there was pockets of the enemy forces were hiding or sniping and trying to save their nation of course from being overrun. Anyway, as I was walking up, I was an elitist, as a matter of fact, going up this large slope to the top of the hill, the Pimple, and I was carrying the Bren gun [a British infantry light machine gun] and as I got to the top of the hill, I was first to gaze up over this large ravine, this all wooded ravine, there was a stream of enemy soldiers walking down a great big roadway and I would estimate it, it was 200 German soldiers. There were only about 15 in the platoon that I was in, 15 soldiers coming behind me, each with their rifles of course. You were maybe four or five feet behind each other walking up. We all rode in these tanks the night before.

And I said to my sergeant, I said: 'Look it, Sarge, Gerries.' He says, well, I can[^{'t} say his] exact word because it was his words: 'Oh Christ, he says, give us covering firepower.' And of course, I had to put my Bren gun into action of course because had I not, had we allowed that stream of, oh, it must have been 200 soldiers to come down that valley, and come in over the ridge which we reached at the top of the hill, we would have been wiped out so fast, we wouldn't have even been funny.

But anyway, as I say, I had to utilize my Bren gun and it was one of the hardest parts of my life that I had, to turn a Bren gun on those people coming. They hadn't spotted us of course, fortunately. But anyway, that night and two days later, we, finally with artillery and a couple of tanks we ordered up, we drove them out. So they come out waving white flags and surrender. And we took, well, I had a record of it, I had it written down, we took 90 prisoners and it was 80 killed I think it was. And you think about these things. Well, sometimes when you're sleeping and when you wake up and you think of the horrors that was committed, you think of this as being a, it's just the way that wars have to end or be resolved by man killing man. It was a strange part of life, really. One which I don't think that I would have liked to have missed but one which I'd never like recommend to my boys that I want them to go and participate in. I would never have joined myself had I known I had to go through the hell that I went through really.

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David Peat

Loverna, Saskatchewan

David Oliver Peat, born out of Loverna, Saskatchewan, 1922 on the 8th of March. 1942, on the 19th of August, the same day as the Dieppe raid, I picked that date that I signed up or swore in or whatever you want to call it.

Now, I'm going to tell you something just to make it straight. I was carrying my papers, you know, your documentation papers, and in there, they wrote right in the damn thing, plain ink, I'm not suitable for ancillary or materiel. So I never (laughs). I knew where I stood then, I didn't need to worry about becoming a corporal or sergeant or anything else, but that's the way it was, you know.

You asked about basic training. Well, that's just a lot of foot marching around and drill work and stuff like that. Right turn, left turn, wrong turn (laughs). Not wrong turn but that's what it was about. But I learned all the basics about bar and blowing up bridges and everything when I was in the engineers. We also built a timber bridge, we went up in the forest, cut down trees and made a timber bridge. And then we drove, not a tank but a, they call it a Bren gun carrier, drove it on but it didn't cave down so I guess we had it strong enough.

The only thing that happened, one night, somebody thought somebody was there and they woke up and, they were sleeping, and they woke up and started shooting. Before it was all over, there was some Americans dead because they thought there was Japs. Well there wasn't, they proved all day long, true, they went all over the island and there wasn't any Japanese there at all, they were all gone. But that's the way that went. It was a bad mistake but that's the way it is.

I went overseas, that'd be in '43 I guess it was. We came back and then we went, finally went over, overseas to Scotland and landed there and trained for a while. And then I ended up going to France, as reinforcements to the Queen's Own Rifles.

Continued...

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“

Well, they fired, the Germans turned a mortar and a bit exploded and these guys all went down in a group, all over the place.

”

David Peat

Loverna, Saskatchewan

Continued...

Well, I told you, we were stationed, one day we were, you know, in an apple orchard and they just about blew the apple orchard up along with us too. It was a big mortar bomb hit the tree and we were under the tree and you can imagine the explosion, all the branches and apples and everything falling down. And I tell you, we were sitting there holding onto our tin hat. And then when I got wounded, then I was dished out of there and went back to a field dressing station, I always remember that.

There was a Scottish nurse in charge there, she was from Scotland and she had that brogue. And everybody, “Good morning, good morning Jock and how are you this morning?” Everybody was Jock and we were a whole mix of wounded guys and Polish guys that didn’t understand a word of English even. Poor souls.

But they got first aid care, so that was that. And then I was shipped back to the 4th field, general hosp, Canadian general hospital in England. They had to take the index finger off because it was turning green, so the doctors done a lot of talking there and that’s where I was slated for another operation so they just took the next finger right out altogether.

I can see, all I can see that night we went into action, I see one of the men that carries the battery pack for the radio operator. He was laying up on the hill, he was, got it right away. Well, they fired, the Germans turned a mortar and a bit exploded and these guys all went down in a group, all over the place. That’s all I can remember. See, I can see them in my mind’s eye, laying there on the ground and they’d been alive minutes before.



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Jim Peters

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

I was born on February 21st, 1924 in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. And my father had come from Greece and of course, he had opened a restaurant in Saskatchewan. Then we moved to Montreal and the day after I was 18, I was down at the barracks in Montreal. And within a week, I was down in Cornwallis, in Halifax, Cornwall, it's the name of the barracks down there.

I met a guy in the hall, he was crying. Me, I'd been looking forward to being there. I wasn't crying. I said, "what's the matter?" He says, "I got this ticket." And I said, "what do you mean, ticket?" He says, "well, I have to go board HMCS Regina tomorrow." I said, "well, do you want to change tickets?" He said, "yeah!" So we changed tickets.

So I took the ticket, I went aboard HMCS Regina and I spent the next four years bouncing around from ship to ship. All in all, I was onboard four different ships. Someone would always ask for a volunteer and I was always there. Other than my family, which I had later, they were the best four years of my life. I became a man and I loved it. We sank a submarine during the course of the fight. We took aboard 26 Italian prisoners, that you'll see some pictures of later, who were so happy that we'd picked them up out of the water, the ones that were left alive when the submarine popped up to the surface, they all jumped in the water. And we went out and picked them up, as many as we could of them, 26. And we took them into shore in North Africa.

I was starboard lookout on the upper bridge. Strapped in, which everybody was in that position as a lookout, strapped into the place. I look up ahead and I see this wall of water coming at us. It turned out to be a 60 foot rogue wave and I was up to my chest in water. And then the ship shook like mad and worked her way out of it; it's like going up a hill. And we got up the hill at least. But all the windows in the deck below, which was the steering room I guess you call it, it wiped out all the windows, wiped out all the Carley floats and the one lifeboat were all gone.

Continued...



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I look up ahead and I see this wall of water coming at us. It turned out to be a 60 foot rogue wave and I was up to my chest in water.



Jim Peters

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Continued...

I was in charge of the after rail, which held the depth charges. They would call down, set the depth for 50 feet. So you'd turn a little knob on the depth charge and then you'd hear, roll one on the right rail or the starboard rail. So we'd pull the handle and we'd go, roll two. You set the depth and hope, cross your fingers that it worked. And that's what got the German submarine. Well, not German, Italian.

And we went up Murmansk, took a convoy up to Murmansk from Scapa Flow, which is northern Scotland. So we went up along the fjords of Norway and during going up there, out of one of the fjords came a German battleship with guns ablazing. He fired one salvo, maybe four shots or five and it went right over us, we were closer into the shore, they went right over us into the convoy and they hit one ship. So that was it, then they scooted back because they know somebody was going to call the cops, you know, ask for the air force to come out and chase them back in.

So we had it down to take the ship over to, well actually, they were saying we were going to go into the Pacific theatre of war but we were down at the foot of the Red Sea on the cruiser and they turned on all the lights at night. We had never seen lights for four years at night, be otherwise submarines waiting around. And they said the Japanese have surrendered, the war is over. And they lit up the whole ship. That was quite a sensation. I wondered if maybe there was a stray submarine who hadn't got the message yet.

Got our discharge, went home. They'd moved from Montreal out to Pointe Claire, where I didn't know anybody. On the porch were my two sisters, my mother and my father. Then there was another girl there. My father says to me, he says, "there's the girl you're going to marry." Huh? Yeah, sure dad. Two years later, we did. And that lasted, we had our 62nd anniversary last year.

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Proud To Support Our Troops, Past And Present



I had the points to go home early because I'd been in the Army since 1940 but I was young and I had a high rank so we became what was known as the 'Frozen Few.'



John Harry “TQ” Quarton

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

We got our first tanks that early spring [of 1942]. We had a few Valentines and I think we got the first Rams, with no guns on them. And we trained on those and that type of training, because we all had our armoured training at [Camp] Borden, most of us had or most of us senior NCO [non-commissioned] officers. And that summer, as a matter of fact, we were on the water when the Dieppe raid took place in August of 1942. We went into barracks in Aldershot [England] which my, I was in the same barracks as my father had been in before 1900 on his way to Africa. So that shows you the age of some of those buildings that we were in.

So when our turn came, and that's, and when the push actually started, once they got armour built up, then the generals could move forward. But it was to try to get the land and hold it and get enough troops onshore so's you could put in a proper attack. So it wasn't until actually we got into the early part of August [1944] when the breakout from Caen south took place, heading down towards Falaise and Trun and places like that. But it took all that time to build up the strength of the troops and the types of troops.

But I think I had the best job in the Army. I worked with some wonderful people and mind you, I worked under a lot of things that other TQs [Technical Quartermasters] never had to put up with. I had a general to put up with all the time. Some of these that were demanding, particularly, well, right from the days of [Major-]General [Frederic Franklin] Worthington, because General Worthington was a very imaginative inventor of all kinds of things. He invented more things for the Army than anybody I know of. And he was always wanting tanks and vehicles and so on to go out and do some experiment and so on, so he always made life interesting. But you know, at the headquarters, of course, we had a huge headquarters with all the heads of all the different arms at the headquarters and they all had to be looked after and equipped with their proper equipment. They were all looking out for their own like the commander, artillery commander of all the different divisions, not the divisions but the different sections and then we had the liaison officers that had their jobs to do, keeping in touch with the regiments and so on. And I had to keep these people all equipped and armed and ready to go at any time. So it made life interesting.

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John Harry “TQ” Quarton

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

I had the points to go home early because I'd been in the Army since 1940 but I was young and I had a high rank so we became what was known as the "Frozen Few." And we had to stay behind and see the other units out, take their; they would turn in their equipment on their own or the biggest portion of it and then we would take their final equipment away from them and they would go into reparat [repatriation] depot and head for the ships to take them to England. And so we had to gather up all this material at the Arnhem air base and so on for disposal and vehicles had to be categorized, we had our own mechanic, we had a huge section of mechanics that went over all the vehicles and they were categorized A, B and C. Some vehicles, they had hardly any miles were cleaned up and repaired and sent back to Canada for – or prepared to go back to Canada and we never did see them off – for training vehicles for the Army after the war. The second-class vehicles were turned over to UNRRA, United Nations [Relief and] Rehabilitation [Administration] and were given to all the occupied countries to get them started again in their different departments and cities and things like that. And then the C vehicles, they were just scrap.

So we had to look after all this sort of stuff and get the vehicles and equipment away from the troops so they could go home. And so that lasted into I think it was February of 1946. Yeah, I think it was February. As a matter of fact, the day I arrived home, I arrived home in Edmonton on the train and I'd had a telegram from my father, a quick telegram from my father, get home, your regiment's going to have its first reunion. So I quickly got the train back to Edmonton and I arrived at the Macdonald Hotel and here the regiment was having their first get-together and I was the only one in uniform. Everybody else of course has been discharged and were in civilian life. So, yeah, that was the end.



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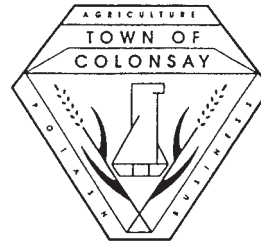


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Army Walter Romanow Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

The war broke out when I was 15 and I went to Technical Collegiate in Saskatoon, grade 9. Immediately across the road from the collegiate was a World War I armouries. And I walked over to the armouries and got talking to them, and they had a unit, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. And they said "If you want to be a boy soldier, go ahead."

So I spent a lot time after school, I'd deak out of school occasionally to learn Morse Code, Semaphore and that kind of thing. And a couple years later I was old enough, just before I was 18 I went over to the Active Force and they accepted me and I took my advanced training in Calgary. And at one point I had completed my advanced training and they called me and they said "Go to the Orderly Office and pick up a train ticket. It'll take you to Kingston, Ontario where the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals is meeting."

So I went to the headquarters building, up the stairs, and I wanted to go through a door and a fellow was on his hands and knees, he was painting. He said "Can't you see I'm painting? You can't go through here." He said "Go around the back door." So I went around the back door and opened it, and there was a big bulletin board. And right in the middle was a big sign that said "The Canadian Army is looking for volunteers to form a parachute battalion. Inquire within." I inquired. The following day I was with them and I went to Camp Shilo [Manitoba] as a member.

At this point their paratroops had come from Fort Benning, Georgia where they had been working with the Americans. And as a group we went overseas and that's when I went to Manchester to take my – but had it not been for that fellow on his hands and knees painting, I wouldn't have been a parachutist.

[Incident with the Soviet troops in 1945.]

Within a day or two they told us to make our way up to, oh I don't recall the history but apparently the story goes that Roosevelt and Stalin had arranged for Wismar, the City of Wismar on the Baltic Sea, to be taken by the Russians. Apparently, and again this is what I heard, what I remember reading, Churchill found out about that and he said "We had better get to Wismar before they do." And they put our battalion in ahead of the British troops and we made our way to Wismar. Took Wismar, there was very little opposition.

On the 2nd of May [1945] that we took Wismar, again there was very little fighting. It was about noon that we took Wismar. An hour or two later a Russian Officer, in his vehicle with a driver, came and said "You fellas get out because Wismar is supposed to be taken by us." And we said "We just did what we were told. You said to take Wismar so we took it and we're going to hold it until somebody tells us to move." And the guy again said "You gotta get out." And we said "Our British have to tell us to get out." That was on the 2nd of May.

Continued...

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Continued...

There's a story that I've written that a couple of days later, on the 4th or 5th, my Company Commander called me in and said "Walter, I want you to speak to these three Russians. You speak Russian." I said "No I don't but maybe my Ukrainian will do."
I said "I speak Ukrainian."

So I went to these three Russians and I began talking to them and one of them said "Where'd you learn to speak Ukrainian?" And I said "Well my mother and dad came from Europe." He said "You speak very well." And my Sergeant Major again said "Tell them that they gotta get out." So I started to talk to them and then one of these Russians said "Never mind", he said – and he came a little closer, he said "We don't want the city." He said "You can keep the city." He said "We want to get into that big wine cellar under City Hall."

And indeed, there's a big wine cellar. Matter of fact, we had placed Canadian guards around the different – we went down and there was kind of a wheelbarrow, a big wheelbarrow, two-wheeled barrow, loaded it up with booze of all kinds. The Russian took it back. And they were leaving, he turned around and he came close to me and he said "Wychodzi z Bogiem". In Ukrainian it says "Go with God." And they left. A couple of hours later we could hear singing from the Russians on the other side.

And a few days later on the 8th you'll recall was the ending of the war in Europe. Russian military people had come in, senior people, met with British people and they exchanged whatever they talked about. And a day or two later we left, back to England and then made our way to Canada.

The war was still on in Japan and we began moving to meet American troops to go overseas, and the war ended in Japan. They sent us back. And shortly after that, I forget the date but it's in my war diary, and we were eventually discharged.

[Life after the war.]

And I went back to Saskatoon, finished high school. So I did go back and finish my grade 10 and 11. And then I went on, took a freshman course at the University of Saskatchewan, took a BA, and then went to the University of – well I went to Eastern Canada and began to studies and eventually made my way to Detroit and took a doctorate at the university in Detroit in Communication Studies.

Then I began teaching at the University of Windsor. I set up a Department of Communication Studies and began teaching. And I developed the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Windsor. And my last eight years were a Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and then I retired.

At that point, one of my sons had moved to Edmonton to do graduate studies in law. And the other three children said "Well if he's going, we're going too." And one by one they followed my son to Edmonton, and the four of them in Edmonton.

Continued...

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Army Walter Romanow Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Continued...

At one point a seven year old grandson phoned one day and said "Granddad, why aren't you moving to Edmonton?" I said "Well Evan, I hear it gets cold in Edmonton." He said "But Granddad you're retired, when it gets cold don't go out." So my wife and I came out to Edmonton.

Shortly after my wife came down quite ill with Alzheimer and the last 10 years she's been in Edmonton General with Alzheimer. She's been there for 12 months. And so I moved to a residence apartment building right across the road from what they call a Continuing Care Centre where my wife is. So I visit her daily a couple of times. But she doesn't know me, she doesn't know the children; it's complete memory loss. And that's my story.

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Air Force Herbert Lyle Shillington

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

My name is Herbert Lyle Shillington. My everyday name is Lyle, I go by my second name. Well, when we first went to Algeria, we were located in a place called Tunisia, in Tunis, and at that time, there were a lot of natives as well as French people, because French was dominant people in North Africa there. But there was a lot of the native people, a lot of poor people too, and they were like natives. In another place, they had trades and stuff like but we, we didn't live in barracks. So we had to provide our own food stuffs, so the local stuff that we were able to buy eggs from the natives. And they couldn't get tea and some of them liked tea, so we started trading tea for eggs. I used to go out on Saturdays in this truck, not by myself of course but I was in the truck and we were in the back of the truck and we would, depending on how many people there were, we might have to start out with a handful of tea. For a dozen eggs or something. But sometimes, there seemed to be a surplus of eggs, so we would trade it and get down and trading a couple of teaspoons of tea for a dozen eggs with the natives. But we didn't have barracks to live in out there.

We lived in private homes - not a private home but they would requisition the homes from people. We couldn't destroy them or anything like that. We took care of them. In our own barracks, we had all our air force people from the warrant officers and down and the officers had their own people as well. They had no separate buildings than we had and this headquarters would become another location. So we had three locations to look at. Got along pretty well with everybody, we had to. But I recall one night, during the hot summer, we started sleeping outside, just under mosquito nets. And one night, we end up, three of us ended up, we're outside. And these mosquito nets, there wasn't enough room to have all your clothes and everything in there, so we wouldn't carry money with us out there. But all our clothes would be just outside of the, of this net. One morning we got up, the three of us and we didn't have a stitch to put on and here, some the natives had picked up our clothes from just outside. We never heard them at all outside of our mosquito nets and there were three bare people having to call out for someone to bring us some pants or shirts - back to the house because we're just around the fence, around our place, like. Also another, in North Africa with malaria fever and was confined to the hospital for a little while. But this was carelessness on our part because we had tablets, our medication on a table, the meal tables every day. But we got a little careless and we would take it or some days we wouldn't take it. Two of us ended up with malaria fever and that was first there, so we thought we might die and the next several days, we were afraid we weren't going to die. But we come out of that okay

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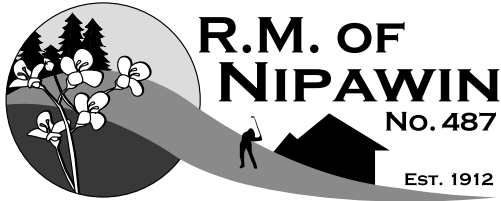
Veteran Stories

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Air Force Steve Trent

Pathlow, Saskatchewan

I went to [RCAF Technical Training School] St. Thomas and took the airframe course. And on graduation, I was posted overseas. I departed Halifax on the 13 December, 1941; and I landed in Liverpool Harbour, Christmas Day, 1941. Santa Claus never showed up. Well, what I'd do is I'd inspect the aircraft to see that everything relating to the airframe [the aircraft's mechanical structure] was serviceable and was in good working order. And I was very critical. If I had any doubts about it, I wouldn't pass it out. One time I was in England and our aircraft landed, our [Handley Page] Halifaxes [heavy bombers] landed at an RAF base; and when I went down there, our regulation was, once you have a tire, if there's a cut through the first layer of fabric, you change the wheel assembly. So I found one that had a cut in it. So I asked this RAF corporal that I wanted a new wheel assembly. The next thing I know is a little short RAF officer with flying orders came up and [asked] me if I was the engineering officer. I said, yes. He said, where is this tire? I said, right there. Oh, he said, I'll get one of my blokes from the tire bay and he can put some rubber on it, and you can sign it out. I said, if you think it's safe, you can sign it out. The poor son of a gun couldn't write. Well, I assume he couldn't write because he got me the tire assembly. I started on torpedo [Handley Page] Hampdens [medium bombers] down at the south coast. I worked on [Vickers] Wellingtons [medium bombers]; I worked on [Fairey] Albacores [torpedo bombers], which were biplanes; and Halifaxes during the war. What I can tell you is in, D-Day was June the sixth, wasn't it? Now a couple, three months before D-Day, we had to go in paint lines on the airplanes, around the fuselage and around the wings. And they were 12 inches apart, these lines with chalk and in our dope store, there was two cans of dope [highly flammable plasticized lacquer], paintbrushes and thinners, so you'd wash your paintbrushes. And we weren't allowed to touch it. On the fourth of June, the order came through to paint those black and white stripes on the airplanes. So that's like for "identify friend or foe." You've seen these war movies, haven't you, of the fighter planes with the black and white stripes? Well, that's when they were painted. The fourth of June, 1944. And D-Day was delayed one day. And I think it was a good job it was delayed because [Field Marshal Erwin] Rommel wasn't there, Rommel would have likely acted before, without calling Hitler. But the general in charge was afraid and didn't, so the guys got a foothold in France before they could call up the German reserves. Now I helped put in what they called an IFF [Identification, Friend or Foe], "indicate friend or foe," which was a mechanical device that sent out a signal, so that the ground and the radar controllers could tell it was a friendly one coming in, not an enemy. I helped put those in the airplanes, Hampdens. And on top of it was what they called a sticky bomb [anti-tank hand grenade]. If they crash land in Europe, they put this bomb on top and melt it, so that they couldn't figure out how it worked. I helped install those. Went in all our airplanes, it was called IFF, indicate friend or foe. And that's what I call the black and white stripes. They were visual IFF, indicate friend or foe. The Americans and the British, and the Canadians: all the fighter airplanes had it; and also [RAF] Coastal Command. See, what happened was, there was a bunch of [Douglas] Dakotas [military transport aircraft] going into Sicily and friendly fire shot down about 20 of them or more. They thought they were Germans coming in. And they were Dakotas. So they had to have a way of stop and preventing that.



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Air Force

Merrill Weicker

Regina, Saskatchewan

It was that relatively new deal they had on German plane. They put a vertical [anti-aircraft] cannon that shot straight up and instead of chasing the stream of bombers, they'd fly underneath it and shoot up. And when it didn't see or hear anything until all of a sudden, just like rattling from the back to the front and then circled around and came back and took another shot. You almost had to fire out the first time around and then we had to abandon aircraft. And both gunners were wounded and both got out but died the next morning, after they were picked up by the Germans and the pilot didn't get out and four of us got out.

Like it was late November [November 19, 1943] and it was in the mountains above the Moselle valley. And I guess it was up to the cloud level, because it was just like ground fog when I went to land in my parachute, I couldn't see the ground. I ended up hanging from a tree. I didn't know whether I was a foot off the ground or 20 feet. And so I finally had to let go, release myself and I went down to about a foot and then slid down about 50 feet down a very sharp embankment.

At morning, I went to climb into a barn on the edge of it and I guess I stirred up the horses because the farmer came out and let out a holler and all of a sudden, there were about six Germans with rifles. I was right up on the Baltic coast, Stalag Luft I [a prisoner-of-war camp for allied airmen located near Barth, in Germany]. Luft is air and Stalag is [short for Stamm-] lager, permanent camp.

When the food was good, it was pretty, not too bad. Because that's sort of annoying being under the gun all the time but we played lots of sports while the food was good enough. And lots of things - everybody took courses of sorts and stuff. And we gradually developed a, not too bad a library.

Continued...

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Merrill Weicker

Regina Saskatchewan

“ There was always tunneling going on and mostly people were involved in sort of diversionary work, if they had you doing something that would draw a crowd and you knew there was something going on. ”



Continued...

But if you came up with a bright idea, you could go to the escape committee and if it sounded good, chances are, they'd say, yeah, but you can't use it, we want to get somebody back to England if possible. And once in a while, you had to have somebody go out with homemade shears and start trying to cut through the wire at night. But we were on a peninsula in the Baltic so usually, you didn't get very far.

There was always tunneling going on and mostly people were involved in sort of diversionary work, if they had you doing something that would draw a crowd and you knew there was something going on. And I did lots of maps on parachute silk. They had other guys that could copy German information slips and stuff very well, yeah.

The best escape attempt was just near the end of the war. Some sergeants that had been there for years had gradually made German uniforms that were good enough to pass and pass us and they lined up 16 guys and got them through the main gate to take down to Barth for eye tests under a couple guards in supposed German uniforms. And they got out and then they went back for another 16 and they got some adjutant-type of Englishman who started raising Cain that these men got permission to leave the camp. So the Germans checked into it and they caught them; they were all still together.

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“

And then about two weeks later, Dog Company [D Company], they had a real bad one where they lost about eight or 10 killed and 30 wounded. They had to pull the company out, there wasn't enough left.

”

Harley Welsh

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

When we went in the lines, I think it was in January [1951], and we were attached to the British 27th Brigade [27th British Commonwealth Brigade]. And there was two British battalions, an Australian battalion, our Canadian battalion [2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry] and the New Zealand field artillery. And we went into the lines and we had several actions working our way up from, until about mid-April was the first time we came out of the lines for a rest. And we'd had several pretty sharp actions. The first one I think, Baker Company [B Company] got in a little trouble there and we had to run ammunition up to them under fire because they were pinned down and had a lot of casualties, four or five dead and 10 or 15 wounded, we had to bring the wounded out after dark because it was under fire there. And then about two weeks later, Dog Company [D Company], they had a real bad one where they lost about eight or 10 killed and 30 wounded. They had to pull the company out, there wasn't enough left. And they were replaced by I

think B Company moving up the next morning and took the hill. That was our initial month before, that was long before Kapyong [the Battle of Kapyong, April 22nd-25th 1951]. It was about the third week of April and we finally come out for a rest and we were only out a day or so before the South Korean Sixth [Infantry] Division [Republic of Korea Army] took over from us. And then I guess they hit with this big Chinese offensive and kind of got overwhelmed and dispersed and whatnot. So they rushed our brigade up to this little junction at Kapyong and said we had to hold it so all the units that were ahead and what was left of this Korean division could retreat through there. And of course, if the units east and west at this junction fell, the Chinese could run through there and get behind them.

Continued...



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Harley Welsh

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Continued...

So it was very important that we held that ground as long as possible. At Miryang, I had been with the, when I was in the reserve army, every NCO [Non-commissioned officer], every unit had to designate somebody for intelligence. So I had taken the course in intelligence for the unit and when they were looking for somebody in Korea, one of the fellows I had taken the NCO's course with had mentioned my name to the intelligence officer and he asked me to come to the intelligence section. So at Miryang, I went to the intelligence section and served the rest of the time with them. At Kapyong, well of course, everybody had a job to do. I had a .30 caliber Browning [the American M1919 Browning medium machine gun] and the intelligence lieutenant and I and our sergeant, we were a machine gun crew. And in between times, when it wasn't too busy, we were supposed to log all the calls, that is, record all calls to battalion headquarters, so when we weren't too busy, when we weren't under actual attack or anything, one of us was supposed to sit with the battalion radio operator and we had headphones and a writing pad and whatnot and supposed to record the messages, as much as possible, for the war diary. This is one of the jobs of the intelligence section. And during the battle of Kapyong, the radio operator that I was working with was wounded I guess by a sniper or something. He went down. Because we were kind of sitting up exposed, we had [...], he was set up on a couple ammunition boxes so we had to kind of sit up, we weren't down in a trench. But anyway, he got wounded and he sort of, you hear the odd snap of a rifle and whatnot. And he turned to me and said: 'I'm bleeding.' Kind of surprised how he was in shock. And then we had to get another radio operator. I was able to operate, I had been in the Reserve Signals, 1942 to 1944, I was in the Reserve Signals.

So I had been trained on the 19 radio set [Wireless Set No. 19, a mobile radio transceiver] anyway. Just generally that they knew there was a lot of Chinese forces there and I guess they sort of could anticipate sooner or later there would be something. And they had reserve, like the American First Cavalry Division was in the reserve at Seoul. And after three days, they were able to come up and help us organize a retreat and so on. They opened the road and covered our retreat. But you know, you don't speculate the exact day or anything, wouldn't tell you. Yeah, we would get these bullets from corps and we would get these corps bulletins and they would say, you know, they've detected this route army, that route army and so on in the area and it looks like a buildup and judge yourselves accordingly and that's about it. Because we were cut off by supplies there for a day or so, the Chinese got behind us and cut the road. They made an air drop of supplies and of course, we'd been pretty busy for a couple nights, no sleep and whatnot, so during the day, we could get out of the trench if there wasn't too much activity and lieutenant and the other fellow wanted to dig the trench a little deeper. So I had to get out of the trench and I was sleeping on the flap and I had taken my jacket off and put it over a little bush so the sun wasn't shining on my head. And unbeknownst to me, the lieutenant and the sergeant had gone on a patrol and they didn't bother waking me up. And one of the pallets of rations came down and they were pretty heavy. They come down with a terrific smash about 12 feet from me. If they'd hit me, I'd have been a pancake. And there was other guys there, I said: 'Why didn't you wake me up?' And they said: 'Well, we figured you were dead, what the hell would we wake you up for?' I come pretty close to getting killed by sea rations.



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Army Kathleen Wyatt

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

There's a thing you have to understand. Most of them on the invasion of Normandy, they were either killed or wounded, or they lived. We got the wounded ones, and they hadn't seen very much action until later on in the summer, in June and July, and they were very young. Well, I thought there'd never be another war. I thought it was terrible. We were a complete unit. We formed up in Nova Scotia, a complete hospital unit, before we went over, and we went on a ship, the New Amsterdam, and we landed in Gourock, Scotland. And then we - as a complete unit, everything from x-rays to pharmacy to operating rooms. All the nurses were all - it was a complete hospital.

And then, as another hospital moved out of Southern England into Belgium, they got a hospital, you know, the field hospitals going, we moved into their hospital and took over. We were half way between London and Brighton, and when we got there, we had missed the blitz of England and London, but they were starting the pilotless rockets. They called them V-1s, and then the V-2s. You could see the V-1s going over. You could hear them, and you could hear them when they exploded, and we were just lucky enough not to get hit. And later on, with the V-2s, you couldn't hear them go over because they were in high arch, and they landed, and you'd just hear the explosion. But with the V-1s, you could watch them. They were these pilotless bombs going over, and you could hear them and see them, and at night, you could see the fire coming out the back, you know, the exhaust. And when the engine cut out, you could count to 18, until you heard an explosion. You weren't quite sure what direction it was, but you knew it was headed for London, and some of them fell short. Yes, we had a blackout every night, a complete blackout.

We made good friends in our group because there were 70. So you just don't get close to all of them. You get close to a few. I got very close. And then, my sister was transferred from Italy in the Fall of '44, after that big battle in Italy, Ortona. A lot of Canadians were sent back to England, and she was one. She came from number 15, and she came, and they sent her, they placed her at our hospital because I was there. So we got to - I hadn't seen her for several years. So that was good.

I didn't think there'd ever be another war. I can remember writing to my mother. She kept the letter saying, there'll never be another war. There couldn't be because this is just a killing war, you know? There were just so many being killed, and they were so young. I mean, I was 24, and most of those boys were younger than I was. And I thought there would never be another war, and they kept going and kept going and kept going, and finally, by the next spring, in April and May, it slowed down and quit first of May.

Continued...



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Army

Kathleen Wyatt

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan



There were just so many being killed, and they were so young. I mean, I was 24, and most of those boys were younger than I was.



Continued...

I actually got married when I was over there. I married a soldier from Alberta, and I came home, but he didn't come home yet. I came home, and I came on the *Île de France*, was the troopship at that time. It was a beautiful ship, and I came home, and there were a lot of war brides on that shipment. And we arrived in Halifax. It was - I forget the day. It was the next year wasn't it? It was a year later. It was the first part of July, I think. I forget the day. And we arrived in Halifax, and the fire boats were out with their sprays, and there was a greeting for the ship when it came in to Halifax. And then we got on a troop train, and it was crowded. And another nurse and I shared a bottom berth because it was so crowded. We got to Calgary, and the train stopped by Mewata Stadium - Mewata Armoury, I mean, and we got off I had a short spell of working for the Americans after I graduated, and they were building the Alaska Highway, and they were hiring Canadian nurses for outpatient departments. And I went north with them for six months at an outpatient department at White Horse. That was interesting, working for the Americans, but then I found out that if I was working - See, they - the American army was in charge of building that highway, and our hospital had military doctors, the one that had the outpatients. And so, I worked there for six months, and then I decided I didn't want to work for them anymore. My first job they gave me was at the prisoner of war camp at Lethbridge. That's where I started. I was in my military career, and I was only there for a month, when they decided they were going to - they needed number 24, then they needed another hospital. And so that's how come I got in on 24 General Hospital.

Well I remember the first night that we were in Southern England, and we were in bed, and the blackout was up. The nurse, I didn't know her, and it was a two-bed room in our quarters, and she was getting ready to go over to Belgium, but it was dark and it was night, and suddenly, the window blew open and a blackout curtain hit the ceiling, and the bed jumped. And I thought, oh my Lord, what's happened? You know? She said, that was a rocket hit barrage balloon, so an explosion, and I thought, oh, how in the world have these people in this country lived through a blitz? It made me shake. That's the only time I ever shook with fright in my life. And then I got used to it.



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BANDUR, Sigmund Bernard

WWII

Sigmund Bernard Bandur was born on September 6, 1915, to Barney and Angela Bandur of Broderick, Saskatchewan. He was an avid reader and lover of good music. Sigmund enlisted as a navigator in the RCAF in Calgary in 1941 and served with the 619th Squadron. He was killed at age 28, along with eight crew members when his plane crashed on May 22, 1944 returning from a bombing mission over Germany. He is buried in Brockwood Military Cemetery near Woking, England.

BAXTER, Walter

WWI

Walter Baxter was born in New Cross, London, England on June 20, 1885. He arrived in the Glenside area in 1912, where he is remembered for planting many trees, a living memory to a fine man. Walter enlisted with the 128th Battalion, CEF in Moose Jaw on December 27, 1915. He arrived in England on August 24, 1916 and was attached to the 50th Battalion in France for twenty months. During that time, he suffered a gunshot wound to his right arm on March 23, 1917 and was gassed at Ypres and wounded again on November 4, 1918. At one point he captured eighteen German soldiers who were hiding in a cellar. When he delivered the prisoners, he is reported as saying, "Take these guys; I want me breakfast." Cpl. Baxter received the Military Medal. Following the war, Walter returned to Glenside where he worked for 45 years as the school janitor, getting up at 5:00 am to stoke the furnace. He retired at age eighty, shortly before he passed away on August 20, 1967. Walter Baxter is buried in the Glenside Cemetery.



BELL, Edwin Orville

WWII

Edwin Orville Bell was born into a family of ten children at Conquest, Saskatchewan on March 11, 1919. He farmed with his parents Orville and Cora Bell until their retirement. On May 8, 1942 Edwin enlisted in the Army and received basic training at Moose Jaw with the King's Own Rifles Unit. In June 1942, he transferred to the 28th Armoured Regiment and went overseas in July where he saw service in Belgium, France, Holland and Germany. He served as a driver and mechanic with the Tank Corp. An injury forced him to return from the front to London but after recovering he was sent back to the front lines. After the war, Edwin returned home where he resumed farming in the Bratton District near Conquest. He married Jean Gustafson in 1946. They had six children. An avid reader, Edwin was also involved in his community. He and Jean enjoyed curling, square dancing and bridge. Edwin was a long-time member of The Royal Canadian Legion. He passed away on March 1, 1994.

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BENTLEY, Harold Cecil

WWI



Harold was born in Yorkshire, England on November 3, 1898. With his parents Henry and Lucy Bentley and sister Lily, he moved to Canada in 1905 where the family eventually homesteaded south of Glenside. He listed his occupation as farmer when he enlisted in the 128th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force in Moose Jaw on November 30, 1915 at the age of eighteen. He was posted overseas to England and saw action in France with the 52nd and 29th Battalions for nine months. Harold was wounded and hospitalized on two separate occasions, first in April 1917 and later in August 1918. He received his discharge in Regina on February 8, 1919 having received a Good Conduct Medal and entitlement to wear two gold stripes and three blue chevrons. In civilian life, he returned to Glenside where he married Eva Baskerville Gomme in 1927. They had five sons and two daughters. Eva died in 1964 and Harold in 1990. He is buried in the Glenside Cemetery.

BUNKA, John

WWII

John was born in St. Julien, Saskatchewan on January 19, 1921. He enlisted in the Army and served with the Regina Rifles Regiment. He served in Canada during the Second World War. John passed away on July 9, 1995.



CARTER, John Charles

WWI

John Charles Carter was born on June 25, 1882 in London, England. He arrived in the Fertile Valley area as a child with his parents John and Elizabeth Sarah Carter. The family relocated to Outlook in 1906. He married Sarah Jessie Sutton in 1910 and they became important members of the Outlook community for many years. J. C. Carter was Outlook's first postmaster and the first editor of the newspaper, as well as being a realtor and town mayor for over fifteen years. He was organist and choir master at St. Mark's Anglican Church. He and his wife had two children: Doris and Phillip. He enlisted in the Army on December 22, 1915 as a member of the 46th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force and transferred to the 15th Battalion. He served in France where he suffered a gunshot wound at Passchendaele. After recovering from his wounds, he returned to Canada, received an honourable discharge on August 18, 1919 and returned to Outlook where he lived until his death at age 88 on February 25, 1970.

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CLEVEN, Kenneth “Tennie”

WWII

Kenneth was born in Ardath, Saskatchewan on April 26, 1919. He served four years in England, France and Germany in the Army with the Highland Light Infantry as a signaller on the front lines. He suffered a shrapnel wound on one arm but remained in the Army until he was discharged after the war ended. As he related to his sister, he considered himself fortunate to have come through the war with only one injury when he witnessed so many of his comrades die beside him. He moved to Edmonton following the War. Kenneth passed away in Outlook in 2007 and is buried in Our Saviours Cemetery east of Ardath.

COBB, Floyd Bryson

WWII

Floyd was born on December 3, 1918, son to George and Agnes Cobb of Outlook. He took his schooling in Outlook and was working in a local store when he enlisted with the RCAF in 1940 and served overseas as a pilot officer. During a training exercise on March 17, 1942 he was killed when his plane, attempting a steep turn, crashed into the North Sea off Redcar, a seaside town in Yorkshire. He is buried in Thornaby-on-Tees Military Cemetery near Thornaby, County Durham, England.



COLEMAN, Gordon

WWI

Gordon Coleman was born in Troy, Ontario on June 8, 1883. He, his wife Margaret and son Jesse arrived by train to homestead (in a sod house) in the Outlook area in 1909. They had two more sons and two daughters. In 1914, when he enlisted in the Army, the family moved into Outlook. George was a member of the 128th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force and served in various fronts in France with different battalions: sixteen months with the 128th, nine months with the 9th and thirteen months with the 1st CMR. He sustained gunshot wounds to his left arm on September 30, 1918. He was awarded a Good Conduct Badge and returned to civilian life on April 29, 1919. It took him considerable time to recover; however, he supported his family by being the ferryman on the South Saskatchewan River west of Outlook.

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COOPER (GRUNERUD), Minerva

WWII

Minerva Grunerud was born on the family farm south of Broderick, Saskatchewan on September 15, 1920. She attended Wheat Plains School with her nine siblings. Minerva was enlisted in the RCAF, Nursing Corp when she met George Cooper, an airman. She continued working as a military nurse until after the war. She and George Cooper were married in 1947. They operated the post office in Keeler, SK where they raised three children: Lloyd, Patsy and Beverley. The couple retired to Red Deer, Alberta. Minerva passed away on April 21, 1993.

DUNLOP, George Russell

WWII

George was born to John and Helen Dunlop in Meaford, Ontario in 1920. He moved out west to Semans with his parents. George married Luella Davis of Glenside. The couple had farmed at a number of locations, including Broderick, before he enlisted in Vancouver. He was serving as a sapper with the Royal Canadian Engineers, 6 Field Park Squadron when he was killed in action on November 6, 1944, age 41. He is buried along with 347 other Canadian Armed Forces personnel at Schoonselhof Military Cemetery near Hoboken, a suburb of Antwerp, Belgium. He and Luella had three children Marjorie, Shirley and George. The inscription on his tombstone reads: "Father, in Thy gracious keeping/ Leave we now/ Thy servant sleeping."



FARDEN, Kenneth Elmer

WWII

Kenneth was born in the West Star District, near Bratton, Saskatchewan on July 19, 1921 to Knut and Olga Farden. In 1942 he joined the RCAF as an aero engine mechanic. He was based at the British Commonwealth Air Training Base, No. 1 Manning Pool in Toronto. It was there that he met his wife, Bern Gruenig, whom he married at Macrorie in 1943. During the war, Ken was also based in Gimli, Manitoba and Boundary Bay, BC. Following the war Ken and Bern purchased a farm north of Broderick where they raised a family of five children. Farming was Ken's passion and he continued to actively farm with his sons Peter and Keith until the final years of his life. Kenneth Farden passed away on June 16, 2007.



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FERRY, John Louis

WWI

John was born in Broadview, Saskatchewan on April 18, 1894, son of Rev. John and Mrs. Isabelle Ferry. He was 23 and working as a farmer when he enlisted in Winnipeg on September 17, 1917, with the No. 1 Overseas CASC. He served in France with the 52nd Battalion of the Canadian Light Infantry at the 1918 Battle of Amiens which sparked the “hundred days” campaign where the Allied push drove the Germans backwards until their ultimate defeat and surrender on November 11, 1918. On August 19, John Ferry was blinded in the left eye and suffered a grave injury to his right eye, as well as a compound fracture to his right elbow from a shell explosion. He received treatment at a field hospital before being transferred to the West Cliff Canadian Eye and Ear Hospital at Folkestone, England. When John Ferry was discharged on September 18, 1919 he listed his address as Outlook where his father and mother were living.

FORSYTHE, George W.

WWII

George was born on June 3, 1923. He served in the Second World War as a Gunner with the 3rd Canadian Anti-Tank Regiment RCA, 105 Battery “L” Troop. George passed away on December 24, 2012.



GIFFORD, John H.

WWII

Corporal John Henry Gifford was born September 21, 1918 to William and Winnifred Gifford of Glenside, Saskatchewan. He farmed near Glenside until he enlisted with the Regina Rifles Regiment in 1942. He had twin brothers, Ray and Ross, who were in the RCAF. John served in England and France. The Regina Rifles, after the D-Day invasion that began on June 6, 1944 they continued to put an end to Nazi-occupied France and were fighting in the Faubourg de Vaucelles area during July. The objectives of the operation were to capture the portions of Caen beyond the Orne River and establish a firm bridgehead. On July 30, 1944 John Henry Gifford died of wounds sustained in battle. He is buried at Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery near Calvados, France. The inscription on his tombstone reads: “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”



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GRIFFIN, Donald Frederick

WWII

Donald was born in Rockglen, Saskatchewan on June 28, 1925. He enlisted in the Army with the South Saskatchewan Regiment and served in England, Germany and Holland. Donald passed away in May 2006.

HOGARTH (HARRINGTON), Edith Eunice

WWII

Edith was born near Glenside on September 27, 1922. She was the eldest daughter of John and Winnifred Harrington. Edith enlisted in the RCAF, Women's Division in 1942. She was stationed in Ottawa where she served as a teletypist and where she met Kenneth Hogarth who also served with the RCAF. They were married in Ottawa. Later they moved to Esterhazy, Saskatchewan where Kenneth worked for the local paper. They had four children, three boys and one girl. Edith passed away on May 1, 1964.



ISAAC, Tom

WWII

Tom was born in Langham Rutland, England on August 2, 1904. He immigrated to Saskatchewan in 1921. He enlisted with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1943 and served in Canada, Holland, France and Germany. He returned home to Saskatchewan in 1945. Tom passed away on October 16, 1966, at the age of 62.

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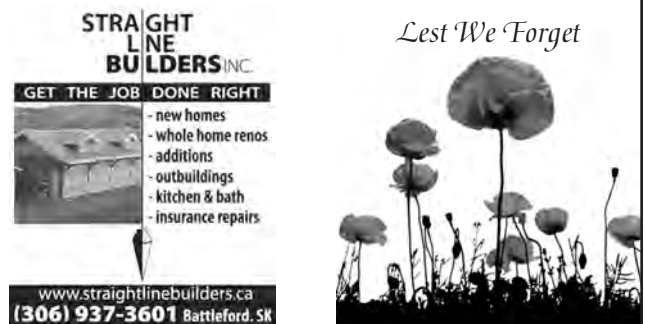
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KALLIO, Alfred

WWII

Alfred Kallio was born at his family's farm in the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1923. At age eighteen, he enlisted in the 101st Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft and served as a gunner with the 8th Canadian LAA in Canada, England, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Upon his release in 1946, Alfred was awarded the 1939-1945 France-Germany Star and the Defence Medal. After the Second World War, Alfred worked 37 years as a Section Foremen with the Canadian Pacific Railway in Tantallon, Hazelcliffe, Bear Creek, Churchbridge and Langenburg. After retirement, he moved to Outlook, Saskatchewan where he passed away on December 2, 2001, six years after a stroke left him paralysed. Alfred was also a trapper and a talented self-taught photographer. He travelled widely in Canada, the USA, Finland, the Philippines, Japan and Taiwan. Alfred joined the Royal Canadian Legion in Moosomin.

NYGAARD, Harold Johansen

WWII

Harold was born on January 3, 1922. He took his basic training in Prince Albert and advanced training in Shilo, Manitoba. He was then sent to Worthington, England, and from there was with the allied forces in Normandy where he was wounded in the left hip. He served from 1942 to 1945 as an Infantryman with the South Saskatchewan Regiment. Harold passed away on September 11, 2007.



READ, Victor Maxwell

WWII

Victor Maxwell Read was born on July 11, 1919 in Rocky Lake, Saskatchewan. He enlisted with the RCAF on May 18, 1940 and served as a sergeant in St. Thomas, Ontario; Mossbank, Saskatchewan; and Lethbridge and Penhold, Alberta. Victor Read received his discharge in 1945. He was an important member of The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 262, Outlook where he served as President and Poppy Chair for a number of years. Victor passed away on February 28, 2010. He and his wife Nellie enjoyed travelling widely in Canada. They are buried in the Outlook Cemetery.



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REZANSOFF, Walter Nicholas

WWII

Walter was born in Kamsack, Saskatchewan on a farm in the rural Stoney Creek district on March 3, 1916. He attended McGillvary School. He enlisted on January 28, 1942 in Regina, SK. He was assigned to the 27th Canadian Armoured Regiment known as the Sherbrooke Fusiliers and served as a driver mechanic. Walter remained overseas for several years and was part of the D-Day expeditions in Normandy, France on Juno Beach. He was also stationed in England, Holland, Belgium, and Germany. He was discharged on February 14, 1946 and returned to Saskatchewan to work on the family farm. He continued cooperative farming with his brothers and did carpentry work in the off-season. Walter was a very well-read individual; had a strong interest in politics and a passion for social justice. He later married and had one daughter. Walter passed away on March 10, 2012 at the age of 96.

ROMULD, Harold Magnus

WWII

Flying Officer Harold Magnus Romuld was born in Dunblane, Saskatchewan on April 27, 1923, the son of Mathias and Eva Romuld. He enlisted in the Army in June 1942 and trained at Edmonton, Saskatoon and Davidson, receiving his wings on June 25, 1943. Harold Romuld left for overseas in July 1943. He was killed while on an operational flight on June 17, 1944 while serving with the 425th Squadron RCAF. He was the only casualty when his Halifax aircraft was hit by flak during a raid on the Sautrecourt V-1pens in France. He is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery near Woking, England. Besides his parents, he left one brother and seven sisters. His funeral was held in the Dunblane United Church on July 3, 1944.



SCHMIDT, Howard

WWII

Howard was born on February 11, 1923. He joined the Canadian Army on June 21, 1943 and served with the South Saskatchewan Regiment in the United Kingdom, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Normandy during the Second World War. He was wounded on July 20, 1944 and returned to service in France a few months later. He was wounded a second time on December 16, 1944 on the Holland border and returned back to the regiment in March of 1945 until the war ended. He returned to Halifax on the Queen Elizabeth Ship with the South Saskatchewan Regiment in November of 1945 and from there, boarded the train to Weyburn, Saskatchewan where they disbanded. He was discharged on January 5, 1946. He was awarded the 1939 – 1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp and the King George VI Medal on discharge. Later, he received the Normandy Campaign Medal, thank You Canada Medal from Holland, Normandy Chest Badge 2004 and WWII 75th tribute pin 1939 – 2014. He was an active member in the Weyburn Legion Branch 47 for 52 years.

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SCOTT, Francis Stewart

WWII

Francis was born in Brooking, Saskatchewan on August 21, 1924. He enlisted in the Air Force on September 23, 1943 and served with the Air Force Ground Crew (motor transport) and served in Canada, England and Germany. He was an Ambulance Driver at Skipton-on-Swale with No 6 Bomber Group. When war ended, he went to Germany for clean-up operations. He was discharged in 1946.

SEVERIGHT, Percy



WWII

Percy was born in June 1912 on the Fishing Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan to John and Violet Severight. He was enrolled into the No. 12A District Depot C.A. The Canadian Army in Saskatoon on August 6, 1941, at the age of thirty. He served in Canada, the United Kingdom, the Central Mediterranean area and Continental Europe. He was discharged on February 21, 1946. He left behind wife Marie, two sons Michael and William and two daughters Mary Rose and Elizabeth Severight. When he returned he resumed farming, hunting and trapping. He was elected Chief of his community on the Fishing Lake First Nation. He was a very spiritual person and very humble to his people. The people made a memorial in April 2013 by calling their Community Hall The Percy Severight Memorial Hall. Percy passed away quietly in his home in March 1985. He was 73 years old.



SMITH, John Clifford

WWI

John was born in Wabigoon, Ontario on August 25, 1898. He moved with his parents John and Minnie to Broderick, Saskatchewan. He was an 18-year-old student when he enlisted in the Army with the 251st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on January 29, 1917 in Winnipeg. His is an unhappy story. Three months to the day after he enlisted, John Clifford Smith died at 7:10 pm of double pneumonia in St. Boniface Hospital. He is buried in the Outlook Cemetery.

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STEEN, Robert C. “Chuck”

WWII

Chuck was born in St. James, Manitoba on December 7, 1924. He enlisted in July 1943 at the age of eighteen, fresh out of high school. He trained in Manitoba and was sent to England on the Aquitania in December 1943 as LAC in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He landed in Avranches, France with the No. 6 Bomber Group for the D-Day landing and went on to Belgium, Holland and Germany. Chuck spent his time supporting the Army as a truck driver/ambulance in the air evacuation unit. In Eindhoven, Holland, they were attacked by the Luftwaffe and received injuries while taking cover under a truck. Chuck passed away on January 18, 2016.

STILWELL, George Alfred

WWII

George was born in 1924 in Indian Head, SK. He originally enlisted with the South Saskatchewan Regiment in October 1939 but he was discharged for being underage. He re-enlisted with the Royal Canadian Navy on January 15, 1942 and served until August 3, 1945. He switched gears one more time and served from December 2, 1953 to January 8, 1973 in the Canadian Army Provost Corp as a NCO in charge of detachments. On his retirement from the military, he was employed at the University of Manitoba as the Deputy Chief of Police. George passed away in 1978.



STILWELL, Gerald W. C. “Jerry”

WWII

Jerry was born in 1916 in Indian Head, SK. He enlisted with the Regina Rifles and en route to Italy his troop ship was torpedoed. He continued his military service with the Westminster Regiment and was wounded twice in Italy. After recuperating in an English military hospital, he returned to Regina. He was a member of The Royal Canadian Legion Regina Branch 1 for 43 years. Gerald passed away in 1989.

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STILWELL, Harry Raymond WWII & Special Duty Area

Harry was born in 1920 in Indian Head, SK. He enlisted with the Artillery Corp in 1940 and served overseas until 1945. He re-enlisted with the Ordnance Corps in 1947 and served until his retirement in the early 1970s. After returning to Regina, he worked at the Pasqua Hospital as Security for twenty years. He was a member of The Royal Canadian Legion Regina Branch 1 for 35 years. Harry passed away in 1998.

STILWELL, Reginald Edgar WWII & Special Duty Area

Reginald was born in 1926 in Indian Head, SK. He enlisted with the Navy in 1943 and served in the North Atlantic until his discharge in 1946 as an Able Seaman. He re-enlisted with the Ordnance Corps in 1950 and served in Canada and Germany until his retirement in 1971 with the rank of Warrant Officer. He received the following medals: the 1939-1945 Star, the Atlantic Star, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, the War Medal 1939-1945, the Canadian Forces Decoration and Clasp and the NATO Medal.



STILWELL, Sidney Leonard WWII

Sidney was born in 1922 in Indian Head, SK. He joined the Army Ordnance Corps in April 1941 and was sent to eastern Canada shortly after. Eventually he was shipped to England later in 1941. He took part in the Invasion of France, Belgium and Holland returning home in 1945. He worked for many years as a salesman for MacMillan Bloedel Building Materials. In 2004 the Western Retail Lumberman s Association awarded a scholarship to honour his name for continuing education. Sidney has been a member of Regina Branch 1 of The Royal Canadian Legion for 42 years.

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*“At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning,
We Will
Remember
Them”*



SUTTON, Arthur Christopher

WWI

Arthur was born on January 17, 1887 in Brighton, England. He came to Canada in 1903 with his parents Christopher and Jane Frances Sutton who settled near Bounty, where the father was a land titles inspector. The family moved to Outlook in 1910. Arthur was a police officer in Victoria, BC when he enlisted on September 23, 1914 but he identified Outlook as his address at the time. He served with the 50th Gordon Highlanders Regiment in England and France. He also served in Siberia. Alexander was wounded in action at Ypres on April 23, 1915 when he was gassed and received shrapnel wounds to his right arm. He was again wounded on February 13, 1917 when he received shrapnel wounds to his face and legs. He rose through the ranks from private to major by the end of the war. He received a number of awards, including the Distinguished Service Order. During a furlough, he married Eugenie Munkley on March 1, 1916. Arthur passed away on September 26, 1970 in BC.

VAVRA, John

WWI

John was born on November 11, 1895 in St. John, Hungary. He enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force with the 197th Battalion in Winnipeg on June 6, 1916 and was sent overseas on January 26, 1917. He served as a sapper in France from October 1918 until January 1919. John received an honourable discharge on March 24, 1919 and returned to the Outlook area. He passed away on February 12, 1953 and is buried in the Broderick Cemetery.



WILLIAMSON, George D.C.

WWI

George Williamson was born on February 27, 1881 at Peterborough, England. After emigrating from England he was working as a farmer in the Outlook area when he enlisted in the Army with the 65th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on November 15, 1915 in Saskatoon. He served with the Northamptonshire Regiment from November 15, 1915 until April 22, 1918. He was gassed during trench warfare in France and seriously injured by a shell explosion in February 1917. George was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field. When the war ended George returned home where he was hospitalized in Regina for several months. He received his discharge at Regina on July 24, 1918. At home, he did various jobs and served as a Boy Scout leader. He and his wife operated the Better Ole Store before moving to Victoria, BC where he passed away on July 4, 1944.

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War Bride



PROKOPIW (BRIGHT), Margarett

Margarett Bright was born in Sheffield, England on May 23, 1926. During World War II, Margarett met a young soldier from the Canadian prairies, Harry Prokopiw. He was attached to A Troop 67 LAA. He had already seen service in Belgium and France. They fell in love and were married in Sheffield on December 26, 1945. Harry returned to Canada in February 1946. Margarett arrived aboard the Queen Mary at Halifax's Pier 21 in May 1946. She travelled to Saskatoon aboard a CNR train, where she was met by Harry. She recalled looking around Saskatoon and thinking, "This isn't so bad." A huge shock awaited her: the house on the farm near Macrorie was a refurbished chicken coop! With grit and determination—and a sense of humour—she and Harry enjoyed thirty years on the farm where they raised seven children. Harry and Margarett moved to Outlook in 1975 where both were active members of Branch 262. Margarett passed away December 18, 2005 and is buried beside her husband Harry in the Broderick Cemetery.

...and Her Husband



PROKOPIW, Harry James

WWII

Harry Prokopiw was born in Mirka, Poland on February 27, 1909. He immigrated to Canada and settled in the Macrorie district. Harry enlisted in the Army at Rosetown in 1941 as a member of A Troop 67 (Rosetown) LAA Battery RCA (A). He trained at Camp Petawawa and embarked for England. During the course of the war he served in England, France and Belgium with the 7th LAA Regiment, RCA. While on leave, he met Margarett Joan Bright, whom he married in Sheffield, England on December 26, 1945. After the war, the couple lived on the farm near Macrorie for thirty years. They had seven children. The Prokopiw family moved to Outlook in December 1975. Both Harry and Margarett were long-time members of Branch 262, Outlook. Harry passed away on December 20, 1993.

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Vimy “The Legacy of Willie Milne”

Canadian Expeditionary Force, Vimy Ridge, Thelus, France
Easter Monday, April 9, 1917

by *Scott Allan White*

As the winds grow weak and the sun grows long,
As the clouds grow heavy and the stars shine strong;
A rolling stretch of Douai Plain is what I might look on,
O'er the ridge today.

The boys they lie upon the ground, they laugh and sing and pray;
They're thankful for the heroes like Willie Milne today;
Who filled with life and dreams and hope, gasped his final say,
Up on the hill this day.

Vimy Ridge above this lair, has taken lives so young;
The fighting lads from Canada going dusk to dawn;
Yard by yard they must charge up, until the fight is won;
On each and every day.

Round on round the rifles fire, up at the men we see;
Sans love, sans hope, sans will, sans amore, sans d'espoir, sans esprit;
With bodies of their countrymen lying in between;
Upon this very day.

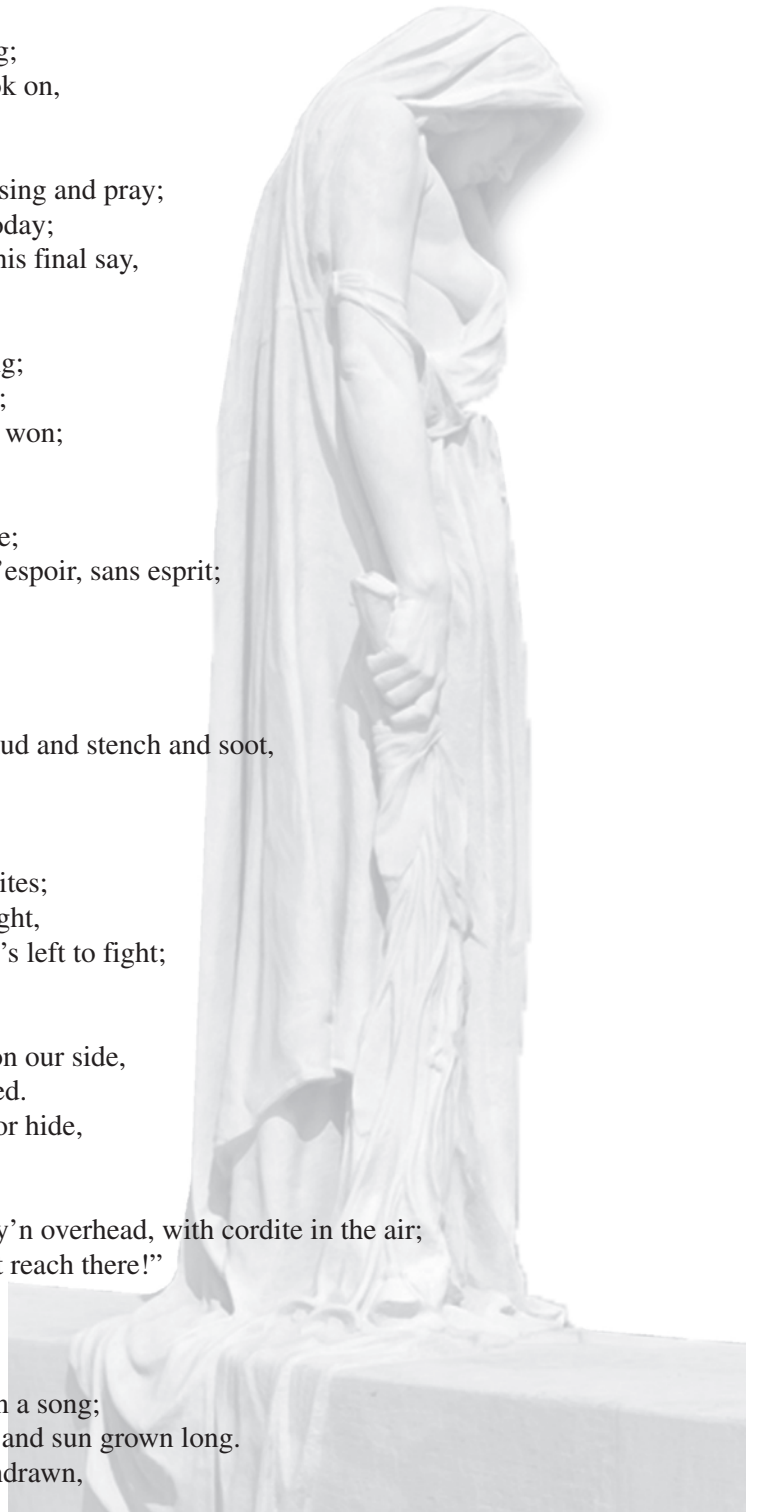
Climb up the hill at any cost, take 'er foot by foot,
Through blood and guts and body parts; through mud and stench and soot,
Until the enemy gives in, or 'til the ridge took;
It should be ours today.

Inch by inch, man on man, cringing through their sites;
The fight goes on at any cost, the ridge is ours tonight,
Or tomorrow morn' the scourge goes on, 'til no man's left to fight;
On and on each day.

Leaping, pounding thwarting, charging, “will” be on our side,
Redeeming usurpations, avenging those who've died.
The soldiers grit, “Oh Canada!”; We won't retreat or hide,
On this or any day.

Go, go, go unto your death, despair; with bullets fly'n overhead, with cordite in the air;
Until the Germans one by one, give way. “We must reach there!”
Tripping o'er the ridge this hour;
The Germans cannot stay.

Victory isn't sweet, or light hearted, nor captured in a song;
It's clamour brought to silence, winds drawn weak and sun grown long.
Across the Douai Plain we stare; Our enemy's withdrawn,
From Vimy Ridge today.



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SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE DE LA SASKATCHEWAN	144	TOWN OF CARNDUFF	330	VILLAGE OF MACRORIE	328
SOS ELECTRICAL LTD.	106	TOWN OF COLONSAY	332	VILLAGE OF MARYFIELD	244
SOUTH 20 DODGE CHRYSLER LTD	216	TOWN OF CRAIK	180	VILLAGE OF MERVIN	210
SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY FUTURES	258	TOWN OF CREIGHTON	306	VILLAGE OF MISTATIM	318
SOUTH RIDGE CARE HOME	194	TOWN OF DELISE	200	VILLAGE OF MUENSTER	310
SOUTH SASK CUSTOMS AUTO BODY & PAINT	304	TOWN OF DUNDURN	278	VILLAGE OF QUINTON	304
SOUTHERN ASPHALT SERVICE LTD	242	TOWN OF EASTEND	318	VILLAGE OF RHEIN	334
SOUTHERN INTERIORS LTD	278	TOWN OF ESTERHAZY	198	VILLAGE OF RIVERHURST	134
SOUTHERN SEMI-SERVICES LTD	312	TOWN OF GULL LAKE	270	VILLAGE OF SHEHO	198
SPALDING ORTHOPEDIC DESIGN INC	164	TOWN OF IMPERIAL	282	VILLAGE OF STRONGFIELD	276
SPARTAN ENERGY	354	TOWN OF ITUNA	316	VILLAGE OF TOMPKINS	330
SPEARING SERVICE	158	TOWN OF LAMPMAN	316	VILLAGE OF VANSCOY	314
SPECTRUM ELECTRIC INC.	322	TOWN OF LANGHAM	210	VILLAGE OF WASECA	332
SPEERS FUNERAL CHAPEL	62	TOWN OF LANIGAN	96	VILLAGE OF WELWYN	280
SPENCER ELECTRIC	152	TOWN OF LEADER	314	VINTAGE VINYL	184
SPIRITWOOD HOME BUILDING CENTRE	192	TOWN OF LEROY	202	VISCOUNT VILLAGE OFFICE	330
SPIRITWOOD MOTORS LTD	364	TOWN OF MAIDSTONE	200	VISTA GLAZING AND ALUMINUM	222
SPRING MEADOWS NATURAL PET FOOD	112	TOWN OF MILESTONE	196	VITO OIL CANADA	212
SPUZAK MEATS LTD	286	TOWN OF MOOSOMIN	344	W D PLASTICS LTD	154
SRI HOMES INC.	84	TOWN OF NIPAWIN	188	W HUNTER ELECTRIC 2005 LTD	176
ST MARY'S SCHOOL	248	TOWN OF NOKOMIS	120	W SHUPE & CO	204
STANDARD MOTORS	186	TOWN OF PORCUPINE PLAIN	342	WADENA MEAT PROCESSORS	198
STAN'S PLUMBING & HEATING	362	TOWN OF ROCANVILLE	296	WALDHEIM JUBILEE CTR	174
STEVENSON INDUSTRIAL REFRIDGERATION LTD	166	TOWN OF ROCKGLEN	336	WALTER LOEWEN	342
STONE'S PLUMBING & HEATING LTD	358	TOWN OF SCOTT	348	WARRINGTON AGRO DYNAMIC LTD.	230
STOOSHINOFF LAW OFFICE	284	TOWN OF SPRINGSIDE	320	WATROUS BAKERY LTD.	152
STOROUK MC CLELLAND DEBUSSCHERE CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS PC INC.	294	TOWN OF UNITY	328	WEESE ELECTRIC LTD	356
STOUGHTON FEED PROCESSING INC	226	TOWN OF WAPELLA	172	WELLDONE PLUMBING & HEATING	190
STOUGHTON VETERINARY SERVICES PROF CORP.	318	TOWN OF WHITE CITY	206	WESTCARE FACILITY SERVICES LTD.	138
STRAIGHT LINE BUILDERS INC.	366	TOWN OF WILKIE	310	WESTCOR CONTRACTING	256
STUDIO 10	170	TRANS-CARE RESCUE	198	WESTERN SURETY CO.	288
SUN COUNTRY WELL SERVICING	192	TRIMOUNT ESTEVAN DEVELOPMENTS	100	WESTHILL MANOR	202
SUN WEST SCHOOL DIVISION	328	TROBERT LAW FIRM	170	WESTMAN STEEL	178
SUN WOOD BUILDERS	344	TRU-NORTH YAMAHA RV & MARINE	218	WESTRIDGE CONSTRUCTION LTD	322
SUNBELT BUSINESS BROKERS	170	TRUSTED TRUCK AND TRAILER	314	WESTRIDGE GMC	354
SUNRIDGE ROOFING INC.	336	TS&M SUPPLY	164	WESTWOOD TURF FARM	224
SUNTEP	86	TUFF EXTERIORS	234	WEYBURN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY	246
SURTEST OILFIELD SERVICES	198	TUNNELS OF MOOSE JAW	254	WEYBURN LIVESTOCK AUCTION	366
SWIFT AUTOBODY LTD.	196	TURNER TRANSPORT LTD.	198	WF BOTKIN CONSTRUCTION LTD.	188
SWIFT CURRENT AIRPORT	336	TURTLEFORD & DISTRICT CO-OP	284	WH CODERRE & SONS CONSTRUCTION LTD	224
SWIFT CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL	336	TURTLEFORD CREDIT UNION	218	WHEAT COUNTRY MOTORS	352
SWIFT CURRENT FIRE FIGHTERS	250	TWO RIVERS EXPRESS	198	WHEATBELT SALES LTD	224
SWIFT CURRENT THRIFTLodge	150	UA LOCAL 179 PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS	70	WHEATLAND BUILDERS & CONCRETE	154
SYLVAN LEARNING CENTRE REGINA	210	UFONE WIRELESS & ELECTRONICS LTD	40	WHITECAP DAKOTA FIRST NATION	46
T J'S PIZZA	302	ULTIMATE INSULATIONS FOAM & FIRE INC.	368	WHITFORD CONSTRUCTION LTD	342
T.T. AUTO SERVICE LTD	342	UNIFOR LOCAL 1-S	160	WHITTER CONSTRUCTION	148
TAIT INSURANCE GROUP INC	162	UNIFOR LOCAL 2013-M	154	WHOLE HEALTH MASSAGE THERAPY	356
TAS TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES INC.	214	UNIFOR LOCAL 677	240	WIKI INSTRUMENTS	162
TAYLOR AUTOMOTIVE GROUP	124	UNIFOR LOCAL 922	276	WILDFONG ENT.	212
TEAMSTERS DIVISION 510	254	UNITED RENTALS	108	WILDWOOD DENTAL CLINIC	160
TEL-RITE SERVICES LTD	272	UNITED STEELWORKERS	264	WILLIAM BOOTH SPECIAL CARE HOME	142
TEXCAN, A SONEPAR COMPANY	300	UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN	260	WILLOWS DENTAL	210
THE CROSSING AT GRASSLANDS	178	V & S PLUMBING & HEATING LTD.	194	WINDOWS BEAUTIFUL	156
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THE RENT-IT STORE	168	VANITY HOUSE SALON	108	WINGATE BY WYNDHAM REGINA	140
THE SHELLBROOK MOTEL LTD	364	VERITAS DESIGNS & INSPCTN INC	180	WINTERGREENE ESTATES	92
THOMAS SAND & GRAVEL	84	VIBANK MEAT MARKET	184	WOLSELEY CANADA	52
THRIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGN	314	VICTORIA SQUARE HEARING	4	WOLSELEY HOME BUILDING CENTRE	230
TIERDON GLASS LTD	174	VILLAGE OF AYLSHAM	312	WOODLAWN CEMETERY (City of Saskatoon Superintendent Parks Division)	50
TIM HORTONS ATTRIDGE DR LOCATION	232	VILLAGE OF BANGOR	362	WYANT GROUP RACEWAY	154
TISDALE RENTALS LTD	220	VILLAGE OF BETHUNE	302	Y W C A	224
TOM LUKIWSKI MP MOOSEJAW- LAKECENTRE- LANIGAN	298	VILLAGE OF BORDEN	320	YELLOWHEAD MODULAR HOME SALES	180
TOP GUN MECHANICAL LTD	140	VILLAGE OF BRIERCREST	184	YOUNG'S EQUIPMENT INC.	44
TOP SHOT CONCRETE INC	206	VILLAGE OF BUENA VISTA	312	YOUR DOLLAR STORE WITH MORE	364
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Saskatchewan Command

**Military Service Recognition Book
War Brides Submission Form**

Since 2008, The Royal Canadian Legion of Saskatchewan has published a book on RCMP and military who live or have lived or serve or have served in Saskatchewan. We have now added war brides with a Saskatchewan connection to our book. It is through submissions from the public that we put our books together. Are you a war bride or do you know one? If so, please fill out this form as best you can and submit it to us. We are looking forward to including your story in an upcoming book.

War bride→	Surname	Given names
	Place of birth	Place of residence before departing for Canada
Husband→	Surname	Given names
	Rank	Branch of service
Marriage→	Place	Year
The journey→	Date of departure	Name of ship
	Port of departure	Number of children with you
In Canada→	Port of arrival	Final destination (farm/town/city, province)
	Mode(s) of transportation from arrival port to final destination	
	Are or were you a member of a Royal Canadian Legion Ladies' Auxiliary or branch? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, in _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No	
A memory or two→		
	(continue on back if necessary – max. of 125 words)	
Photograph→	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have enclosed a photo <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not enclosed a photo	
Person submitting form→	Name	Phone number
	Email address	

Military Service Recognition Book
RCMP and Military Submission Form



Since 2008, The Royal Canadian Legion of Saskatchewan has published a book annually, on RCMP and military who have Saskatchewan ties. It is through submissions from the public that we produce this book.

Are you a member of the RCMP or military or do you know one? If so, please fill out this form as best you can and submit it to us. We are looking forward to including your story.

Military or RCMP person →	Surname		Given name(s)	
Place of Birth		Date of Birth:	Date of Death:	
Branch of service → (circle which apply)	Navy	Air Force	Merchant Navy	
	Army	RCMP	Other: _____	
Service Unit →	(eg. PPCLI, RCD, South Saskatchewan Regiment, Name of ships, Squadrons)			
Area(s) served in →	(eg. Canada, Afghanistan, Cypress, Korea)			
Killed in action? →	Location killed			
A memory or two (Please include any conflicts, deployments, or stationing. As well as years of service.) →	(continue on back if necessary)			
Photograph →	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have enclosed a photo		<input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not enclosed a photo	
Indigenous Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Check the box if you wish to be recognized as indigenous in the book.			
Person submitting form →	Name		Phone number	
	Email address			

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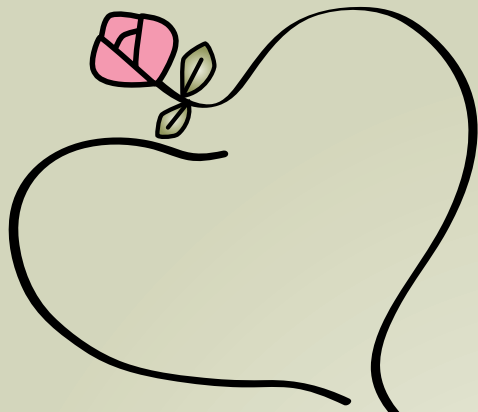
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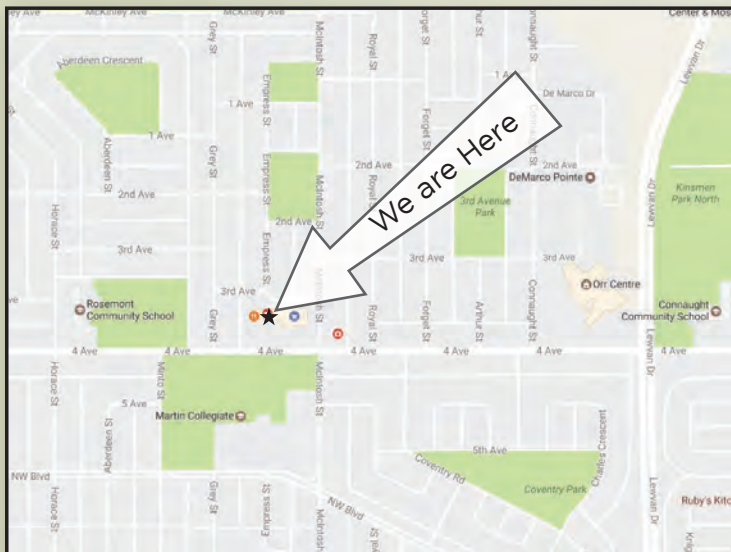
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