

LdSH (RC) Society  
4520 Crowchild Trail SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2T 5J4



LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE (ROYAL CANADIANS)

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 16, No. 2

Newsletter Editor: 'Mucker' Al Langan

Fall, 2001

## Strathcona Mounted Troop Report

The 2001 season proved to be as dynamic and exciting as ever for the members of Strathcona's Mounted Troop. After a very busy Regimental centenary year, mounted troopers were glad to get back into the "routine" of a normal Musical Ride season.

This season kicked off May 20th with a ride for the **Taber and Area "Rodeo Daze."** This was a great opportunity for the boys to work the bugs out and get used to performing in public with their new mount. Upon return from Taber the Troop diligently practiced for our first big show at the **Spruce Meadows National Tournament.**

Again the Troop was able to prove itself as a valuable member of Spruce Meadows **Colour Guard.** The major tournaments at Spruce Meadows always prove to be very busy and challenging for the Troop. This year's National was no different. From adding colour to the grounds of Spruce Meadows to escorting the winners of the different events during the playing of the Radetsky March, **Strathcona's Mounted Troop** is a regular, valued fixture at any Spruce Meadows event.

After being re-deployed from Spruce Meadows the Troop's pace of operations was slowed as **Larry**, our favourite farrier, was in for his first scheduled visit. Larry has become quite a fixture around the Troop as his interest in the Regiment coupled with his sense of humour and his gentle way with our horses, not to mention the break he gives us on his fees, have made him a fan favourite.

Mid-June also saw the departure of WO **Chris Seefried**, a valued member of the Troop for over 5 years. His "colourful" way with the horses and riders was always appreciated, as well as his nurturing way of delivering constructive criticism to new riders and junior officers. His expertise will be missed. As any one in Regimental Transport can attest he still keeps the Troop close to his heart, as his old saddle is in his new office as the Regimental Transport Warrant Officer.

With freshly trimmed and shod hooves, the Troop ventured back to Spruce Meadows for the **Canada 1 Tournament.** This is the smallest of the major tournaments held at Spruce Meadows and consequently in order to raise the profile of the event the

Troop was invited to participate for the first time this year.

Canada Day saw the Troop performing at **Fort Edmonton Park.** The show was highlighted by the expert equestrian skills of Corporal **Ron Sampert**, as he was able to pick up five of five pegs during the tent-pegging portion of the ride. For the remainder of July the Troop was all over **Alberta** performing at numerous events. The Troop appeared in both the **Calgary Stampede** and **Edmonton Klondike Days** parades, winning best mounted colour-guard in both events.

The highlight of the season came in mid-August with a 20-hour road trip to **Nanaimo, British Columbia** for five days of performances at the **Vancouver Island Exhibition.** The people of Nanaimo are big fans of the Musical Ride and offered several compliments on the quality of our ride in comparison to the **RCMP's** ride. The last performance during this weekend represented the change of command date as outgoing Troop Leader Captain **Chris Hunt** hand over the reigns (pun intended) to incoming Troop Leader Lieutenant **Ross Prokopy.** After a busy summer most members of the Troop were glad to welcome September as the schedule for the Troop classically slows at this time. This is not to say that the Troop was "slacking" off as during this month the Troop had repeat performances at Spruce Meadows for the **Masters Tournament** and at **Fort Edmonton Park** for Labour Day. This coupled with rides in **Edson, Alberta** for the **75th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion** and at the **Crystal Kids Youth Foundation's** Street Festival proved this September was not as relaxed as many would have liked.

As the leaves begin to fall and the calendar flips to October Strathcona Mounted Troop is finally winding down after a very busy summer season. The Troop will begin its block leave period after Thanksgiving and then begin preparations for next year's ride season, including the procurement of new horses and the exchange of personnel. The Troop has already received many bookings for the 2002 ride season and is even now looking forward to these performances.

**Lt. Ross Prokopy**  
Troop Leader



## Message from the Colonel of the Regiment

As this is being written the full implications of the events on 11 September are not clear at all. As the Commanding Officer notes, the attacks create uncertainty in the Regiment as they have in many facets of life in North America and around the world. As he also notes, if called to respond in some way, the Regiment will do so as it always has, with professionalism and to its usual high standards. All Strathconas will share this view.

To this point, however, 2001 has been a more traditional year for the Regiment and a welcome one. The many UN tasks in **Kosovo** and **Bosnia** following so closely after the move to **Edmonton** made it difficult to ensure that both individual and collective training were being done to the levels necessary. This essential classic armoured and all arms training provide the foundation to professionalism. They are the training that has permitted the Regiment to respond so successfully to its many varied tasking over the years and to perform so well in its deployments. Having all squadrons here in **Canada** and under command for a period also help to ensure high standards are uniform across the Regiment. The benefits to the family life of all ranks are obvious.

The trip to **Ottawa** to meet **His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales** and to receive his trophy presented for Squadron annual competition was excellent. It is regrettable that more Strathconas could not have had the opportunity to meet him either in Ottawa or as part of Celebration 2000. The presentation of the Prince of

*-continued on page 3*

# Letters Letters Letters Letters Letters

Greetings from the left coast. Sorry it's taken so long to write but when one is retired other things happen. In any event I'm in my fifth year as NPFAO at **Vernon** and working as hard as I have to. Stopped by **Vic Binnie's** for a beer and a couple of hour's visit. Sgts Bruce Montrose and Stan Piorier were here from the **Regiment** as training advisers so we get together for beer and story time in the Mess. I saved some clippings from **B.C.** papers and am sending them along with some obits that I had intended to send when they were current. The item on **Harry Watson (RCD)** is included because he was a member of our little band that gathers annually for a luncheon and will be known by many of the black hatters. **Bruce Andrews** was a sub-altern in the Regiment and joins us time to time at these luncheons. This is kind of rambling but, **Bill Prouse's** brother **Roger** has been a Company Commander in Vernon for some time and I usually get to see Bill and **Mary** when they come out for the graduation parade. General's **Jack Dangerfield** and **Pat Carew** come at about the same time, so when **George Barr** and **Bill Turner** show up, we have a mini reunion on the side of the Parade Square. **Ed** and **Mike Pushkarenko** are in the **Legion Colour Party**, so will be able to say hello sometime during the summer. Hope to get down around **OK Falls** to see **Gerry Reid**, **'Westy' Westergard**, **Gord Pohlman**, **Vic Childs**, **Bob 'Mouse' Davis**, **Jim Kelso**, **Louis Keltika**, **Bill Midwinter**, **Al Crook**, **Hal Johnson**, **Clarence McKenna**, **Tom Herlihey**. Thought I'd throw a few names from the **50's** early **60's**. Anyone know where they are?

Would appreciate you adding two names to the **Strathcona Family** list; big brother **Bob Anderson** and **Harreson Garner**. Most will remember Garner as **Rocky Gagne** who transferred to the **Postal Service** and ended up serving with us again in Europe in the mid **60's**.

Well enough for now and I'll try not to procrastinate and write more often.  
Perseverance.

**Bill Anderson**  
Sooke, BC

*(Thanks for the clippings etc. they are now in the **Regimental Museum's** archives. Most of the names you listed are on the **Family Roll** and will send addresses of those we do have with this issue of the Newsletter. Thanks for your generous donation. Ed)*

Thank you for the spring copy of your *Newsletter*. I always look forward to reading the Regimental news, and finding names of people we've known through the years.

Will never forget the thrill of your 100th birthday reunion May 2000. My father was a

Boer War veteran, so I was raised on melodies like "Soldiers of the Queen", "Goodbye Dolly Gray" etc. I never thought I'd see such a magnificent parade to the tune of my favorite march! A real privilege.

Enclosed is a cheque to cover postage etc. With best wishes.

**Vera F. Ball**  
Victoria, BC

*(Glad you enjoy the **Strathconas Family Newsletter**. Thank you for your donation. Ed)*

I am enclosing funeral information for **Obie**. It will be self-explanatory. On **Obie's** behalf please accept small donation towards the Strathcona Society. If possible, I would like to continue to receive the *Newsletter*. Thank you in advance.

**Johanna Bartlett**  
Calgary, AB

*(Our condolences go out to you on your loss. Thank you for the donation and you most certainly will receive future editions of this Newsletter. Ed.)*

Received the recent Spring *Newsletter* in grand order. I thoroughly enjoy the "**Letters**" section; the comments and anecdotes written bring one a little closer and revive old memories. Their addresses certainly show the worldly dispersion of the **Strathcona Family** and their eagerness to keep in touch. I recently had a phone call from **Earl Sutley**, brought back memories of Meaford. Earl has fallen on hard times (health wise) but was in good spirits. Sorry I was unable to attend, what I understand was a first class reunion. Sometimes other developments occur which are beyond control. Fortunately many attendees called me. I appreciated their taking time from the busy activities. Enclosed is **George Towell's** current address.

Sincerely,

**E.A. Brown**  
Edmonton, AB

*(Thanks for your donation. Sorry you missed the reunion but glad you felt part of it by those who called on you. Ed)*

Enclosed is obituary notice that I cut out of the **Vancouver Sun** newspaper. I attended the funeral mass for **John Waldie** but due to a previous commitment was unable to attend the gathering after the service, so did not meet with any other **Strathconas** that may have been in attendance.

Just received the *Newsletter* and noted the passing of **Roy Brough**. We have passed this info on to a mutual friend in **Owen Sound, ON**. **Joan** the widow of **Robbie Robson** a former Strath, who transferred to **RCEME**, had passed away

some years ago in **Montreal QC**. Joan has since remarried and her husband has invited me to go fishing for a B.C. salmon in **Lake Huron**. Sure going to try and make it. The last time there I caught a 17 pounder.

I may be in **Calgary** this summer and if so I will give you a call.

Perseverance.

**Bob Burvill**  
Surrey, BC

*(Thanks for the update. You didn't mention who the mutual friend in **Owen Sound** was. Ed)*

In early Fall until late Spring, my wife and I spend the winter months along the **Colorado River** in **Southern Arizona**. This year, on returning to **Calgary**, amongst a huge stack of mail, was the **fall** and **spring** edition of the *Newsletter*. Turning each page, the way one does, looking for some name, person or incident of the distant past, for this information I commend the newsletter, but all too often now, the **Last Trumpet Call** brings a deep sadness as so many of my old comrades, and associates depart. May they rest in peace.

At **Reunion 2000**, my lovely wife **Anne Marie**, and I, with my son-in-law, **R.S.M. Doug Gardner** and my lovely daughter **Alannah** mingled amongst those very special people indeed.

A great but difficult task was the **Orillia** project. Mr. **Shadbolt**, we made an honest attempt to visit there enroute to **Kingston**, however, unforeseen circumstances caused us to alter our plans.

On another sad occasion, I attended, in Calgary, the funeral of another departed comrade, it was at this gathering I met and talked with Mr. and Mrs. **Bellfountaine**, and I'm delighted to say **Ken** is doing just fine as is his lovely wife **Wanda**. I was deeply saddened to learn again of still another fallen Warrior, Col. **W.R.C. (Bill) Little**.

I had the unique experience of serving with the **Fort Garry** and **Strathcona's** with Signals Troop at **Fort Beausejour** in Germany 1964 to 67. I was on parade when the Guidon was presented to the Fort Garry's, by **Earl Alexander of Tunis**. Many years later I paraded with the **Old Guard** of the Strathconas in Edmonton when their old Guidon was laid to rest, and now proudly displayed in the **legislative building** in Edmonton.

Now, perhaps some humor to conclude. The following is a paused moment in my time, so many years ago, and of the warrior Col 'Wild' **Bill Little**. We were on an exercise **QUICK TRAIN**; the tanks were all loaded on the flat cars. We were off on a twenty-one day exercise in the North West

-continued on page 4

## **Message from the Colonel of the Regiment** *continued*

Wales Trophy is a fine gesture by His Royal Highness and we thank him for it. We should also recognize the solid support we have received from him through his visit to Kosovo, the time spent with the Strathcona Mounted Troop in London and other support he gave us through Celebration 2000. He has proven to be genuinely interested in the Regiment and all of its activities. On leaving Canada following the Ottawa visit the Commanding Officer received the following message from the Colonel in Chief:

*"As I leave Canada to return to the United Kingdom, I wanted to let all members of my regiment know how much I enjoyed meeting some of them in Ottawa and having the opportunity to discuss something of what you have been doing, and are planning for the future. I am immensely proud of the outstanding contribution you have made to operations in Kosovo and, more recently, in Bosnia and I hope that "B" Squadron have enjoyed a very well-earned period of leave. I am also immensely proud of the wider role you continue to play in the life of Canada and have seen for myself what excellent ambassadors you are for your country, whether mounting the Queen's Life Guard in London or mounting guard on operations in the Balkans. All of this leaves me confident that you will continue to rise to the challenges on integrating the Leopard C2 and Iris, and of future operations wherever they may be. I have enjoyed enormously my all too brief visit to Canada. Thank-you for the part you played in making me feel, as ever, so welcome. Good Luck and God Speed." Charles, Colonel-in-Chief.*

Continuing with the point of support by the Prince of Wales. I would like to advise all of a new method of recognition of **outstanding service** to Strathconas, that is, service to the whole of the Strathcona family, those in the Regiment, others still serving, and those of us who are retired. The **Society Board of Directors** several times has considered proposals to recognize various individuals who provide noteworthy support to the Regiment and our extended family. "**Patrons**" and "**Friends**" of the Regiment have been terms used as a means of recognition previously as have **Honorary** and **Associate** members of the various institutes.

These other terms do not seem to be quite appropriate, however, for a Strathcona that we wish to recognize. The Board took it as understood that each and every Strathcona is expected to contribute as they can to the well being of the Regiment and the Strathcona family as a whole. Still, there are those who, over a long period of time, have gone well beyond "**the call of duty**". Their contributions would be such that all would agree that particular recogni-

tion should be given. For such cases, The Prince of Wales has graciously agreed with a proposal I put forward to him on behalf of the Society, that such individuals will be recognized by a **Colonel in Chief Commendation**, signed by the Prince of Wales himself and presented with appropriate ceremony. It was understood that recipients would be those who provided truly rare service and that presentations would not be frequent or annual such as many of our awards presented on **Moreuil Wood Day**.

While in the future recipients would be rare, it was recognized that as we introduce the Colonel in Chief Commendation, a larger number of potential deserving Strathconas exist. Consequently, following recommendation by the **Plans and Priority Committee** (see below) three nominations were proposed to Prince Charles and he has approved them.

Most will know each of them and will have no difficulty seeing the length of each of their service to the Strathconas, the quality of that service, or its impact for good to our extended family. The first three recipients will be **Nic Nicolay**, Al '**Mucker**' **Langan** and **Padre Bob Greene**. On behalf of all I congratulate each of them on being selected but even more for their long and dedicated service.

It is opportune perhaps also to advise readers of the **Society** developments. Many will remember that the Society was formed in 1974 as our method to ensure that Strathconas would play a direct and large part in protecting our own interests as Strathconas. From early formative and tentative steps in **Calgary** to now the Society has evolved into a mature organization. Involvements have grown and evolved also as the Regiment itself has changed. Continuing support to the **Regiment, Newsletter, Reunions, Museum, Strathcona Mounted Troop**, and more recently, the **Historic Vehicle Troop and Band**, all have been matters falling under the Society. Obviously the Society has advanced substantially beyond what may have been envisaged in 1974. But the critical points of attempting to influence our own destiny and also to maintain Strathcona spirit into the future have remained central.

Given Society evolution in its first twenty-five years and considering the future, the Society Board felt it prudent to review its operation, to assess strengths and weaknesses, and make any changes deemed advantageous. A small **ad hoc committee** was appointed to make the review and its report to the Society Board was approved in March. The report makes a number of proposals, which will be dealt with over the next several years. The changes will all be seen to be evolutionary as opposed to being more dramatic. We believe though that the adjustments will help keep the Society con-

temporary and responsive to Strathcona needs.

As one would expect with the increased number of activities the Society is involved in and the increase in the pace of life generally, a major point the report made was the need for the Society to be more responsive to events and to the Regiment. Yearly meetings at the time of Moreuil Wood celebrations no longer meet the increased workload and pace of life. Also, a need for better structured long-term planning was determined. The solution was felt to be a **Standing Committee** to help address these difficulties.

The composition of the committee, named the **Priority and Plans Committee**, has been approved by the Society and it has had its first meeting by **teleconference**, as most meetings will be. This committee, and its members, also provides a sound method to open more lines of communication within the family and for that reason I will include the names of members here. They are: **MGen Cam Ross** (Chairman), **Greg Hug** (Dchairman), **Des Deane-Freeman**, **John Roderick**, **Mark Egener**, **Earl Cady**, and **Peter Wonderham**. Attending meetings will also be the **Colonel of the Regiment**, **Commanding Officer**, **Regimental 2IC**, **Regimental Sergeant Major**, **Walt Reid** (Society Secretary designate) and '**Mucker**' **Langan** the **Newsletter Editor**. Examination of this group shows that it is geographically diverse, mixes serving and retired members, covers the Society generation span, and covers all ranks. Over time committee members will provide a means for a larger number to input to Society planning and I encourage any and all to make use of the committee.

This year follows an intense period of operational deployments by the Regiment and also the intensity of activities caused by our Celebration 2000 events. It is normal that we would try and consolidate somewhat this year before moving forward again. To some extent, that is what is being done. But more importantly, with so much changing around us, we are trying to focus on how best to ensure that Strathcona standards are perpetuated and that we have the means to continue to perform at our traditional high standards into the future. As it always has been, the most critical point of all is to have the involvement and support of the largest number of Strathconas possible. As ever, I encourage all to stay interested and involved.

Perseverance.

**LGen (Retd) J.A. Fox**



## Letters Letters *continued*

of Germany. In the early morning hours, in the small town of **Rheder**, while waiting for the tanks to be off loaded and free to mull around a bit. Many of us went to a restaurant on the corner of the square when we soon heard the heavy rumble of the first tanks to enter the intersection. Col Little stood there, an imposing figure, like a military policeman giving directions (90 degrees to the right). Several tanks had passed when I jumped to my feet and went outside. Adjusting my beret and web belt so I could present myself as well as I could under the circumstances. Upon approaching the Col., I noted that he just stood there rubbing the palms of his hands. Morning Sir, "Tis, he softly replied, with a mile wide smile. My God he must have thought I had gone out of my mind when I said; "taking over sir, you are?" He then gave me a long hard look as I stood at attention and gave him a real dragged out twenty-one gunner. I thanked him, when he told me to relax, then quickly added "can I get you a coffee sir"? Suddenly he asked, "you think a CO shouldn't do this don't you"? To which I replied, "It is not so much what you can or can not do sir, as it is what I couldn't do and that is to sit in that restaurant and see you out here, that is beyond me, sir".

Sometime later the Signals Officers, Capt **Samis** and Capt **Drummond** wanted to see me A.S.A.P. Bloody hell, I blew it. Cpl **Butt**, they both dragged it out. Col Little expressed his gratitude for your kind consideration.

At the reunion parade, the crowd excitedly waved and hollered as the first heavy tank rumbled past. I remained calm and seated to hide my weakness. Good Bye Col Little, I shall think of you often as through misty eyes I saw you one more time (90 degrees to the right) – then you faded somewhere into the crowd.

**Frank Butt**  
Calgary, AB

*(Thank you Frank for sharing your thoughts and memories. A grateful thanks for your generous donation. Ed)*

Enclosed is a "Citation" issued by Field Marshall **H.R. Alexander** stating that the Italian campaign was "one of the greatest and most successful (campaigns)" ever waged. It was issued **2 May 1945**.

Gen. **Milroy** and I would hope that it could be published in the *Newsletter*: It should make the Regiment, the survivors of the Italian campaign and associates very proud.

Very few of those who served in **Italy** have ever seen the citation, as we moved to **N.W. Europe** in early 1945 and this citation was not issued until the above date.

My copy was recently located in the **British Archives** during a search by a member of a committee of **RCAF Radar Veterans** preparing a lengthy history and

book on "**CANADIANS ON RADAR**" **ISB No. 9687596-0-2**. They sent a copy to each university.

Perseverance.

**Martin Colpitts**  
Ottawa, ON

*(Thanks for providing the opportunity for many **Strathcona Vets**, who, like you remarked in your letter, had never known of its existence. Thank you **Martin** for the donation Ed.)*

### **ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS** **2 May, 1945**

#### **SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY**

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Forces In the Mediterranean Theatre

After nearly two years of hard and continuous fighting which started in Sicily in the summer of 1943, you stand today as the victors of the Italian Campaign.

You have won a victory, which has ended in the complete and utter rout of the German armed forces in the Mediterranean. By clearing Italy of the last Nazi aggressor, you have liberated a country of over 40,000,000 people.

Today the remnants of a once proud Army have laid down their arms to you – close on a million men with all their arms, equipment and impedimenta.

You may well be proud of this great and victorious campaign, that will long live in history as one of the greatest and most successful ever waged.

No praise is high enough for you sailors, soldiers, airmen and workers of the United Forces in Italy for your magnificent triumph.

My gratitude to you and my admiration is unbounded and only equaled by the pride which is mine in being your Commander-in-Chief.

Sgd: **H.R. Alexander**  
Field-Marshal  
Supreme Allied Commander  
Mediterranean Theatre

I got my spring 2001 *Newsletter*. Another good effort on your part. Well done. As soon as the *Newsletter* arrives, I drop everything and read it from cover to cover. I really appreciate your effort in continuing to put out such a fine publication.

Now that I have "battered you up", I would like to point out that enclosed with my *Newsletter*, was a "Strathcona Family Roll Info Sheet" for **Gary Glynn** of Dartmouth! He lives not far from me so I will pass it on to him for action. Thus, you now owe me 47 cents for delivering your bloody mail!

I see where old **Vic Binnie** has got his crooked fingers to tap out a missal to the *Newsletter*. He is getting over a bout of stiff arm and shoulder due to a pinched nerve in his neck. (Fall off a horse?).

**Stan Adams** is looking for some detail on the **German Observation Posts** we were firing at in **Orsona** (East of Ortona). I think he wants the detail of the Ops for a

painting he is planning to attempt. To get to the firing point at Orsona, we had to run a "Mad Mile" a road that was under **German** artillery fire (four tanks at a time). I don't remember much of what went on there; I was a Wireless Op and did not get to see very much from my vantage point. All I remember is the tank going to the firing point, firing, backing down and going back up to the crest to fire again, not very exciting at all. If any of your readers can elaborate on that with specific details of the German Ops, Stan would appreciate it.

That article by **Father Bob Greene** about his trip to **Holland** was good. Glad to hear that **Roger Ptosnick** is still around.

Please find enclosed cheque to allay expenses for the *Newsletter*. I will forgive the 47 cents you owe me for mail delivery. (Can't do the arithmetic to sort out who owes what).

Perseverance.

**Percy Buzza**  
Dartmouth, NS

*(The equation is simple; we owe you our sincere thanks for your contributions of input to this humble Newsletter, monetary and your continuous effort to keep in touch with so many VETS. Here then is my IOU. Ed)*

As promised, here is a much-in-arrears contribution to the *Newsletter*.

Unfortunately, **Bunny** and I could not attend the celebrations in Edmonton last year. However, I did manage to experience second prize by attending the **Mounted Troop** ceremony in Ottawa. It, together with the displays from the museum, did the Regiment proud. All concerned deserve much praise for a job well done. In fact, as I type this letter I am looking at a laminated copy of an *Ottawa Citizen* article hanging on my wall. It is titled, "Pomp and pageantry on the Hill," and is accompanied by a close-up colour photo of three members of the Mounted Troop, with the peace tower of the parliament buildings in the background. Very impressive!

I was also happy to receive copies of the prints of the paintings in the Heritage Collection. The only sad note was the untimely death of **Joan Wanklyn** before she was able to complete all of the work. I assisted **Ian McNabb** in coordinating the project, and had direct input into the Sinai scene as well as helping General **Bill Milroy** and **Bob Gartke** by passing details of the Melfa battle to **Miss Wanklyn**.

I have now made an offer to the CO to produce short historical descriptions of each scene for use in any number of ways in the future. I have enough information to do this for all the paintings, with the exception of Korea. I believe it refers to the action in which **Sgt Allen** earned a Military Medal for recovery of a tank under heavy fire. If someone could confirm this, as well as supplying details as to time, place and general

*–continued on page 5*

## Letters Letters continued

situation, I would be most grateful.

All the best and keep up the good work. Please pass my best wishes to **Nic Nicolay** and the other Strathcona's "soldiering on" in **Calgary**.

Perseverance.

**Sean Henry**  
Ottawa, ON

*(Your involvement and counsel within the Society have been appreciated. I'm sure our **Korean** vets can assist you with the info needed for your project. Thank you for your donation. Ed.)*

I must once again express my appreciation of a reunion well done. Last May was a wonderful chance to see old friends again.

I made it to the dedication ceremony at the Sam Steele Memorial. It was a treat to watch the poop troop do their thing. A good time was had by all.

I'm sending a donation to help with the *Newsletter*. Use it well. It is great to get it and keep up with the family as it were.

**Kelvin J. Hill**  
New Lowell, ON

*(Glad you were able to attend and enjoyed the Orillia annual gathering. Thanks for the donation. Ed)*

Thanks for sending me the *Newsletter* it was nice to read all the news from the Strathcona's and to see the name of my father in the Last Trumpet. I would like to ask you that you send me the *Newsletter* everytime it comes out. I have enclosed a donation for the postage.

I am proud of my dad and to know that he was a Strathcona. Thanks for all your help to me.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.  
Sincerely,

**Nel Hoogvliet**  
Holland

*(You most certainly will continue to receive the Newsletter as long as you wish. Thank you for the donation. Ed)*

As our respective governments have left me with a bit of discretionary income again this year I am happy to enclose a cheque to assist you in carrying out your commendable job of publishing the *Newsletter*.

I assume that you have been informed of the recent death of **Jack Waldie**. His "obit" appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* last week. I remember **Jack** serving in the Regiment in 1952-53. Unfortunately I do not have a copy of the "obit" to forward to you.

Keep up the good work and all the best.  
Sincerely,

**Frank Karwandy**  
South Surrey, BC

*(As always Frank a grateful thanks for your donation. Jack's obit was sent in by Bob Burville. Ed)*

Thank you very much for sending the *Newsletter*; I enjoy reading it very much, although I don't know too many of the names anymore. Keep up the good work.

Am enclosing a small contribution for the costs involved and wish all the Best to **All Strathconas**.

Sincerely,

**Dodie Luloff**  
Huntsville, ON

*(Thanks **Dodie** for your donation. Ed)*

I have just received the spring *Newsletter* and the Strathconian Magazine and enjoyed reading them both. It was sad to hear that they had to stand down "**A**" Squadron.

I was wondering if it was possible to get a couple of copies of the photo of the centurion tank that appeared on page 45 of the **Strathconian 2000** edition.

Could you let me know what I would have to do to get two 8x10" copies.

Perseverance.

**Norman Lyng**  
Mississauga, ON

*(Cpl **Ramsden** the Museum Archivist has responded to your request for photo copies. Ed)*

I received my 18 year Long Service and Good Conduct medal (LS&GD) in 1955. The reason I remember it so well is that I was informed at that time I had gone down in the annuals of the RCASC and perhaps the Canadian Army as the only officer cadet to receive the award. In the last *Newsletter* **Sam Hall** stated he had the 18 year (LS&GD) as well as the 12 year Canadian Decoration (CD), and asked if any other Strathconas had the same. They are very few. I know of four of us (for sure) who have both medals, **Sam Hall, Hughie Mackie, Bill May** and **Gordon Mackay**. I also believe **Jack Fallas** is included. Have tried to contact several others who may have both medals, to no avail. With the help of ol' Mucker, this is the best I can do. Of the approximate 220 of us old PFs (pre war), there are some who received their commissions during the war and continued with their officer's rank until their release from the Service. They were not eligible to the, LS&GD, but if they were in the Non

Active Militia prior to joining the Strathconas before the war would be entitled to the 12 year Efficiency Medal (EM) and Rosette. I do know that was the case for the Other Ranks as wartime service counted double. **Jock Burton** was one these who received the EM even though he was not a PFr. The officers, if not in the pre war Militia, they would claim the CD and Rosettes. I know a few who received their (LS&CD) but not the CD. There were two or three who had the EM with Rosette and the CD. In order for an officer to receive the LS&CD medal, he had to serve at least 12 years of his 18 year service as an OR (Other Rank). There are a few others who may have both but I'm not certain, such as **Mance Powell, Bill McCullough, George Kendall, Bert Stallard, Joe Lank** and **Ralph Scott**.

After reading this, perhaps some will come forward either to confirm or correct any of the names and items mentioned above.

Perseverance

**Gordon MacKay**  
Perth, ON

*(Gord this should get some action or interest from our Vets. May even help you to finalize your **PF** project. Ed)*

I just finished reading the LdSH (RC) *Newsletter*. What a great read! I couldn't put it down until I had read it cover to cover. I enjoyed reading about all the Strathconas, then and now, and I felt a feeling of "family" from reading the letters to the Editor and comments at the end of each. The historical content is very informative as well. Thank you.

**Russ** and I are posted to Gagetown in July. He says that we can continue to enjoy the *Newsletter* there as well.

I've enclosed a small first time donation, but more importantly, I have enclosed our new address in Oromocto.

Thanks again, sincerely,

**Angie Ells**  
Oromocto, NB

*(Thank you for your kind words. The Newsletter will reach you no matter where you and your husband are posted. All **Strathconas** serving with or away from the **Regiment's Home Station** are sent each edition. Have a good posting until your return. Ed)*



# Comments from the Commanding Officer's Hatch

Since the printing of the last *Newsletter* there have been many activities both training and social, here at the Regiment. The upcoming training plan is full and will see us all in the field more often, training at a higher level than in the past few years.

Normally, when the training plan is set, a certain amount of stability can be achieved within Regimental lines as we look forward to, and plan for these training events. Unfortunately, the events of **11 September in the United States**, have added a degree of uncertainty for all of us here. As always, the Regiment will handle anything that comes our way.

Over the past few months the Regiment was heavily involved with an urban operation exercise series called **ORTONA RAM** and **URBAN RAM**. These exercises caused us to relearn many of the lessons learnt during **WW2**. Although a successful series of exercises, we proved again how vulnerable a tank is in close urban terrain.

In May a small group of us travelled to Ottawa to meet with His Royal Highness

Prince Charles. He presented the Regiment with the **Prince of Wales Trophy** to be presented each Moreuil Wood, to the top Squadron in the Regiment. The first presentation will be made **March 2002**.

As the posting season approached this summer, we said good-bye to old friends, both officers and soldiers. I would be remiss not to mention the outstanding support and hard work provided to me and Col **Craig Hilton** by the outgoing Second-in-Command, Major **John Stuckart**. After three years of dedicated service to both the Regiment and the Society, John is off to a "hardship" posting in **Naples, Italy**. We look forward to seeing him back again if he decides to return home to Canada.

With the end of summer and a much-needed leave period for all, the Regiment is now geared up for what will be a busy fall and winter period. Each of the Squadrons will conduct its own field exercises this fall, followed by a Regimental gun camp and live fire field exercise this November in

**Suffield**. I can only hope the heater in my tank is working.

Following the Christmas break we will continue training Leopard and Coyote gunners and drivers. This year's training will culminate in a live fire Battle Group exercises in April in Suffield. This exercise may also involve a large number of American M1 tanks with us. Once this is all complete we will begin another operational cycle with Recce Squadron heading back to Bosnia September 02 to March 03. "B" Squadron will follow them from April to September 03. For many of our soldiers this will mark four tours of Bosnia in less than ten years. There continues however, to be no shortage of volunteers for these missions.

In closing, soldiering at the Regiment continues to be great fun, with many exercises and activities on the horizon. It will be great to have us all together for the next year.

Perseverance,

**LCol WJ Ellis CD**



## Once Upon A Time There Was A Subaltern

*(The following is the fifth of a series of reflections penned by a Strathcona (who for now shall be anonymous) regarding his service during what he considered were the "Golden" years with the Regiment. Ed)*

Springtime in wild rose country – time to give birth to a **Recce Sqn** for service with the BAOR in West Germany. The majority would come from "C" Sqn with the usual cross-postings from other Sqns and returnees from the RCAC School, Camp Borden. Expectations were high and rumours were rampant, the daily ration flowed freely and revisions flourished in Currie Barracks that spring.

Recce Sqn was to be the first since 1945. As an independent Sqn, organized for Bde tasks, it could be a unique experience. With the traditional Canadian political-military flair, the Sqn would get equipment "left-overs" from WWII – Ferret scout cars w/ brens as main weapons. These 'cars' together with GMC 2½T's, Dodge ¾T's w/ winches, Jeeps (for the high-priced help), and made-over vans for the Battle Captain and SQMS – these were the Sqn wheels. (Staff vehicles: Volkswagens and Kleibebuses were acquired after arrival at Fort Chambly.)

**An Aside: Colby Yeomans**, who was to

become 1st Sgt, 1 Troop, notes that a real nucleus of senior NCO's were Korean veterans, most with "C" Sqn ('51). Major **Vic ('Pappy') Jewkes** old Sqn. (When these were added to the OC, 2 1/c, and BC with their experiences from WW II and Korea, the Sqn was off to a solid start.)

**An Aside: 'Pat' Patterson**, 2nd Sgt, 2 Troop, remembers the first meeting of the Sqn in the Men's Mess Hall. It was here that we finally knew who would be in Part II's. (The swapping/dumping/stealing of OR's was complete.)

**An Aside:** The actual allocation of personnel was accomplished with input from Subalterns and Sergeants. The result was a well-balanced Sqn, where the 3 Recce Troops each contained their fair share of exceptional Jnr NCO's and Tprs. An immediate competitiveness to excel as a troop resulted. Combined with the pride of place in RECCE, we were off to an exciting start.

The tank Sqns chuckled, as our training commenced without vehicles. The Ferrets were 'hopefully' enroute – from the corners of armouries across Canada, where they had often resided with lacquered tires (rotten) and painted bodies (for show only). Time wasn't wasted though: intense refreshers on wireless/reporting, weapons (especially the bren – which replaced the

20-pdr we'd left w/Centurions), and map reading were now avidly pursued.

**An Aside:** The **Engineers** sent personnel from Esquimalt to initiate many of us to mines, booby-traps, and demolitions. The adrenalin really flowed as you walked away from the charges you'd set to destroy rocks, roads, trees, steel rails – then looked up to hopefully see what debris would be raining down on you.

The transition from the "Cadillac" of tanks to a "Kiddy-Car" was challenging. The D&M (W) course led us into the world of inner & outer tracta-joints, fluid couplings, and a pre-select gearbox (which proved hilarious in amateur hands – and could wipe out a crew commander...).

**An Aside:** The instructors warned us not to wrap our thumbs around the wheel when travelling cross-country. The wheel could really twist - and I learned the hard way how much thumbs could hurt. Even today I curl my thumbs beside my fingers on my van, and chuckle at the memories.

We fell in love with these cars even before Wainwright '57. They were easily maintained, handled easily on/off roads, had range, ran quickly and quietly, with a low silhouette.

**An Aside:** Colby Yeomans recalls that

*–continued on page 8*

## I'M A SENIOR CITIZEN

I'm the life of the party... even if it lasts until 8 p.m.

I'm very good at opening childproof caps with a hammer.

I'm usually interested in going home before I get where I'm going.

I'm good on trips for at least an hour without my aspirin, beans, and antacid....

I'm the first one to find the bathroom wherever I go.

I'm awake for many hours before my body allows me to get up.

I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a word you're saying.

I'm very good at telling stories... over and over and over and over.

I'm aware that other people's grandchildren are not as bright as mine are.

I'm so cared for: long term care, eye care, private care, dental care.

I'm not grouchy, I just don't like traffic, waiting, crowds, politicians.

I'm sure everything that I can't find is in a secure place.

I'm wrinkled, saggy, lumpy, and that's just my left leg.

I'm having trouble remembering simple words like.....

I'm realizing that aging is not for sissies.

I'm anti everything now, anti-fat, anti-smoke, anti-noise, anti-inflammatory.

I'm walking more (to the bathroom) and enjoying it less.

I'm going to reveal what goes on behind closed doors... absolutely nothing.

I'm sure they are making adults much younger these days.

I'm wondering, if you're only as old as you feel, how could I be alive at 150?

I'm supporting all movements now... by eating bran, prunes and raisins.

I'm a walking storeroom of facts... I've just lost the storeroom.

I'm a SENIOR CITIZEN and I think I am having the time of my life!!

Now if I could only remember who sent this to me, I would send it to many more. You didn't, did you???

Cheers,  
Jim Jefferies



## The RSM's corner

As I approach my first year in the **RSM's** chair, I think I can say that things have been very busy (A guy can hardly find time to have a coffee around here). Although we have not been doing a lot of field training as a Unit, the calendar always seems to be full. I always say, you can never have enough dogs and ponies, quarter guards, or taskings!

Seems to be no ends to the Garrison madness, as we stare at our computer screens, answer e-mail queries and drive mountains of paper from one office to the next. The good news is that we are finally getting out the door in the **September** and **November** period. We will have **Gun Camp** and do some **CBT Team Training** where we can test the new **Leopard** turrets, communicate on our new radios, and hopefully launch a few rounds down range. In fact, the tempo before and after Christmas should pick up considerably, as we steer towards two possible **Coyote Sqn** rotations to **Bosnia** (back to back starting in Sept 02).

The troops have been busy doing extra tasking with things like **Spruce Meadows**, **Halifax Tattoo**, **Gagetown** and **Vernon**, **Federal Liberal Caucus** visits; Include the annual **PCF**, **IRU**, **Mountain Man**, **Soccer**, **Baseball**, and **Adventure training** in **Kananaskis**. A few used their after duty time restoring and repairing old vehicles and the list goes on and on! It's a won-

der we get any vehicle maintenance done!

Add to all that the fact that the Army and the Forces in general continues to change the way we do business as a Regiment on a daily basis and you can see that time gets eaten up rather quickly. Not to worry though, we will persevere, and in true Strathcona fashion attempt to keep all the balls in the air at the same time.

At this year's dinner and dance, to commemorate the battle of **Melfa River**, the regiment invited a few local **Vets**, who had taken part in this battle, to join in the celebration with us here in **Edmonton**. Those who were able to attend were **Billy May**, **Bud McLean**, **Father Robert Greene** (Calgary) and **Al Swinton** (Edmonton)

I must mention the fact that we have had a rather active posting season this summer, (no I didn't do this on purpose) with many of our best soldiers going out the door to places like **Gagetown**, **Wainwright**, **Winnipeg**, **Borden**, **Yellowknife**, **Medicine Hat**, **Calgary**, **Kelowna**, and even **Regina!** To all those soldiers and their families who have moved this summer, we wish you well. Please know that we have a large return spring on you and we want you back. To those of you who are either returning for another tour, or are serving with the Regiment for the first time welcome. You have joined a proud and distinguished Regiment make it yours!

**(CWO) RSM D.M. Biener, CD**



L to R: CWO (RSM) D.M. Biener, Mr. Al Swinton, Mr. Billy May, WO Dave Procter, MWO Chris Kitchen, WO Brian Talty, Father Robert Greene, Commanding Officer LCol Jim Ellis.

## Once Upon A Time There Was A Subaltern *continued*

even early on we became aware of the vehicle being "somewhat treacherous, especially with our relatively inexperienced drivers." (When descending/ascending slopes, the car felt 'tippy' and the all-wheel drive could pull or push the vehicle wheel off the ground – crew commanders had to stay alert....)

By the time for concentration at Wainwright the Sqn was pretty well 'shaken out'. The time had come to put the pieces together and function tactically. Another advantage in being RECCE: no tanks to move and no tank trains – we moved w/our kit with us at 40-60 mph. (As we often reminded each other, we were being paid for 'tripping' and camping).

**An Aside:** We cleared the Main Gate, Currie Barracks, and were escorted in Troops (packets) by "**Calgary's Finest**", on motorcycles, at 30-50 mph through the city and deposited on the north edge of the City. One unfortunate civilian driver entered an intersection somewhere in North Calgary, and our police 'outrider' kicked out his headlight without stopping. Apparently a following cruiser would stop and give him a ticket for the violation. An example of a population emerges from the discipline of war, when conformity and obedience were expected.

**An Aside:** 'Pat' Patterson recalls a "provisioning run" prior to departure. Sgts '**Pat**' Searle, '**Scotty**' Miller, and he called on **Helen Searle** to collect the home made beer to be transported to the Sgts' Mess, Wainwright. (I also recall the rumour re: 'Pat' Patterson's efforts the previous year to produce "cocoanut rum" in his PMQ basement. Apparently the fermentation was too successful. The

cocoanuts exploded and the stench in his basement was intense.)

Never a topic for discussions – yet fully understood by all – was the certain knowledge that our craft as professional soldiers could put us in harm's way, even death (hopefully sudden). It was injury or death by accident which occasioned bitter anger. L/Cpl Giroux was a "Charlie-Charlie" in 1 Tp, enroute to Wainwright near the Hardisty Gate when his vehicle left the road, entered the left ditch, ran along that ditch, attempted to rejoin the road – then tipped and rolled completely over. L/Cpl Giroux, married less than a month earlier to a Wetaskiwin girl, was killed. The remainder of the Sqn aged that day.

**An Aside:** I was detailed as investigating officer. The file was over 1" thick before I signed the final report. The least I could do was to attempt to fully explore the event as to causes. A final act was to return the cap badge and belt buckle to his widow – the rest of his clothing (supposed to be returned) I took into a refuse pit, soaked it in gasoline, and burned the lot. It was reported "mislaid".

**An Anecdotal Aside:** Colby Yeomans recalls being detailed w/ **Ben Burgoyne** to prepare the Firing Party for the burial in Wetaskiwin. "We had this new SSM. We called him "**Billy**" but not to his face. We knew he was not to be taken lightly." Colby recalls training in the harbour: slow march, volleys w/ blank cartridges, load, etc. "We became pretty good". The RSM (WO1 **R. Gaunt**) and "Billy" gave us a final inspection and it was off to Wetaskiwin with me in command of the whole shebang. We did everything right: liased w/ the RCMP, escort and traffic control, carried out a

Recce of all locations, spoke to family members, even the Padre. Everything went great: the service, movement of the cortege to the cemetery, the volleys with everyone crying (Giroux had married into an Italian family) they were right out of their trees...all was going just great 'till they invited us to the Legion for refreshments after the service. Within an hour everyone is well on his way except for the truck driver, Benny, and myself, although we'd had a few. We had to move them out and the locals didn't appreciate that. It took what seemed forever to extract ourselves from the Legion, mount-up (the 2 1/2T), and move out. By now, some are in bad shape. Benny and I rode in the back with them so there would be no more mishaps. I can remember saying to Burgoyne, "wait 'till "Billy" sees this gaggle. My Recce career will come to an abrupt halt". God bless "**Billy**" **May** – because he was waiting as we arrived in harbour. The truck came to a halt and we jumped out and lowered the tailgate. We had this guy, **P\_\_\_\_\_**, who had come over from Ireland, doesn't he tumble out of the truck and land at "Billy's" feet. "Billy" took one look and shouted, "Get your feet under you and quit acting smart!" Not losing a beat he looked at me and said, "And how did the funeral go, Sergeant?" "Everything went well, sir." I'll never forget his reply: "Gooooood", and away he went into the harbour. I turned to Benny and winked. "That was our free one." By the way, the sober truck driver who had remained w/ the truck and guarded the rifles was Tpr **Mogg**.

In this manner the Sqn arrived in Wainwright, entered harbour, and prepared for the exercises to come in '57.

## MPs ENLIST

OTTAWA – A dozen MPs have enlisted in a pilot project designed to educate them about the military. Roger Gallaway, the MP for Sarnia-Lambton, Ont., went to boot camp and was almost shot during a simulated exercise. Bev Desjarlais, the NDP MP for Churchill, Man., who is afraid of heights, joined the air force for a week and ended up being dropped deep into an Ontario forest, and having to be airlifted into a Labrador helicopter. David Price, the Liberal MP for Compton-Stanstead, Que, who reported for duty on Sept. 11, the day of the terrorist attacks in the United States, found himself the following day in the cockpit of a Hercules aircraft speeding toward Halifax, with cots and blankets for the thousands of passengers stranded when their U.S.-bound flights were forced to land in Canada.

The three MPs are among 12 to volunteer for the Canadian Forces Parliamentary Program. In total, 39 MPs have

expressed interest in the program, which may be expanded to include Senators. Mr. Price and Ms. Desjarlais opted for the air force. Other MPs have gone to sea. Mr. Gallaway chose the army, and ended up with the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos, in Val Cartier, Que. Now Mr. Gallaway, who takes more than half an hour to put on his uniform, is armed with an automatic rifle and is preparing to go to Bosnia next month for peacekeeping duties. For that trip, which includes three other MPs, Mr. Gallaway has been issued a backpack and sleeping bag. Though he was a pretty good shot on the range, he will not be expected to carry a rifle.

The idea of the program is not to kill MPs, though Rachel Kersys and André Levesque, who operate the program for the Department of National Defence, insist the politicians receive no favours. There is no VIP treatment beyond being

treated as if they have the rank of Major. Their uniforms are on loan and must be returned. Only the special arm patch, bearing the House of Commons crest, was made especially for the program. Costs are minimal, says Ms. Kersys, since the MPs sleep in a barracks (a two-room suite for Mr. Gallaway), eat in the mess halls and shadow the soldiers. They are allowed to speak to anyone about any topic.

The program is modeled on one that has operated in the United Kingdom for more than a decade. Research showed only eight of Canada's 301 MPs had any exposure to the Armed Forces. "It's actually quite sad when you look at it," Ms. Kersys said. During one simulation, a crowd of about 15 people surrounded Mr. Gallaway. He failed to react when a woman in the crowd pulled out a gun from under her coat. A fellow patrol member noticed the woman immediately and "shot her." "I did-

*–continued on page 12*

# Birchaven Invitational Golf Tournament

Great weather, good friends and awesome golf marked the 10th playing of the Birchaven Invitational Golf Tournament, held again this year 7-9 September at the beautiful Owen Sound Golf and Country Club. Host **Bruce Rutherford** and his wife **Dawn** had everything organized and squared away as usual, beginning with a meet greet eat and drink session that allowed everyone time to catch up on each others activities whilst getting acquainted with the latest additions to the **Rutherford** menagerie, namely six or seven raccoons and a couple of shy possums.

Again this year a demanding business schedule prevented **Dave Keddie** from attending, but he was able to provide his usual company sponsored prizes, for which we were all grateful. **Bruce** was able to get for his replacement however, none other than Owen Sounds star cross country skier, roller skater and golfer **Bill Georgas**. **Bill** was a great addition to the group as he was able to relate stories of both **Bruce** and brother **Bob** of events before our time.

As it was two well-balanced foursomes launched forth into the early morning sun for a day of memorable golf. In spite of a lengthy lay off Judge **Bob** and his partner **Bill** led the charge with **Dennis Hopkins** and **Clive Milner** making up the foursome, all grateful for the best ball format. The following quartet, **Bob Billings**, **Bruce Rutherford**, **Bob Sear** and **Al Diggins**, were so close at times it resembled tactics training at Meaford with two and three-up "T"s, and the odd blind corner drill thrown in for good measure!

At the end of the day the Best Golfer trophy went to host **Bruce** and his cart driver **Bob Billings**. **Al Diggins** won the Gorf trophy for longest drive. The Judge **Bob** again walked off with the Golden Golfer Trophy again as well as the lunch tab, for which we all showed our usual apprecia-



L to R: **Bob Rutherford**, **Clive Milner**, **Bruce Rutherford**, **Bob Sear**, **Dennis Hopkins**, **Bob Billings**.

tion. **Bob Sear** was chosen as Best Crew Commander for not once having to reverse (i.e., never hitting the ball backward), and **Dennis** and **Clive** tied for the nearest scorecard. Par golf? Not a problem.

A new trophy this year, the Trooper Wyatt Mannequin Piss for the closest-to-the-hole was not awarded as nobody was. The rules committee guarantees that it will be awarded next year even if we are rained out.

A major activity this year was the presentation of the Canadian Peacekeeping medal by **Bruce** to **Bob Sear**, **Bob Billings** and **Dennis** as well as the NATO

Service Medal to **Bob Billings**. **Bob Sear** who was the career manager who sent them in the first place most ably narrated the event.

The tournament was climaxed, as always, with the awards banquet prepared by master chef **R. Stanley** ably assisted by **Dawn**. The following morning, after a hearty breakfast cooked by the host, all departed much the better for the time spent together and being so well cared for by **Bruce** and **Dawn**.

Cheers.

**MGen (Retd) C. Milner**  
Col. Comdt. RCAC

## Vancouver Island Report

We met for our **Moreuil Wood** Luncheon on Saturday, 31 March, at the **Princess Mary** restaurant in Victoria. There was a good, strong turnout for our gathering. Some of the group had to travel from distant locations. **Pete Sybrandy** comes from **Washington State**, and there is always a group who comes over on the ferry from the **Lower Mainland**. **John Dutton** has been a regular participant for more than 20 years and makes the crossing every year. It is always a special pleasure to see our **RCEME** comrades joining us regularly. **Sam Schnaar** and **Ben Barnhart** were there to meet with old friends and usually we can expect to see **Fred Legg**, **Ben** and I go back to service in **UK** in **1941**.

**Doug Dunsmore** came down from

**Comox** to present me with the **Peacekeeping Service Medal**. It's a tradition with us. He was the Chief Scribe in our **UNEF** tour in 1961 and I know he gave me my **UNEF** medal at **Rafah, Egypt**. I think he also presented me with my **CD**.

We lost one of our comrades this summer. **Brian Baker** died in Victoria on 20 July at age 73. He had been in extended care at the **Gorge Road Hospital** for more than a year. **Brian** served in **Korea** and retired in, I think, 1970.

I would appreciate help in getting in touch with **Bob Bird's** family in Saskatchewan. Early last year I contacted his son, **Richard** who was living in **Balgonie, SK**. I had promised to write a memorial letter about his father, for him. I also

had some telephone calls with **Teresa**, **Bob's** widow. Unfortunately, during the summer of **2000** my computer crashed and I lost their phone numbers. I have tried to find them through **Canada 411** without success. If anyone can help me make contact again with the **Bird** family it would be much appreciated. I can be reached at **(250) 479-8019**, or by e-mail at <jfburton@shaw.com>.

I want to tell you about a book that **Bill West** gave me. It's about the **Italian Campaign**. It is a fascinating personal recollection of the experiences of **18 Platoon "D" Company** of the **Perth Regiment**.

The **Perths** were an infantry battalion of **11th Infantry Brigade** in the **5th**

-continued on page 10

# PERAMBULATIONS OF THE PERIPATETIC PADRE

The year 2001 has given me the opportunity of visiting **Strathcona's** and their **widows** in five different provinces. Starting in late May, I had a great visit with **Lloyd** and **Della Spilde** in Provost, Alberta. Lloyd who is permanently confined to hospital was having his best day in two years and we had fun barking out tank commands. Lloyd who was affectionately known in "B" Squadron as "Jock" was my driver through part of Italy and all of Holland. I was his bow gunner and the crew commander was none other than Major "**Billie the Kid**" **Milroy** who later rose to be a Lieutenant General while I dropped from Lance Corporal to Trooper, but this was only after my true ability was discovered! Della who visits Jock faithfully every day prepared us a wonderful roast beef dinner and bedded my friend and I down for the night in the Spilde's lovely home. The next morning we took off for **Jimmy** and **Margery Spencer's** home in Mervin, Saskatchewan, about 100 miles north east of Provost. Jimmy was my driver in Italy where on the first day in the Gothic Line (August 31, 1944) I almost shot off his head. We were going down a hill and hit a ditch, which caused my foot to bounce on the turret floor and onto the firing pedal which fired the 30-mm co-axial mounted just over the driver's head. Jimmy thought we had been hit by an '88 and proceeded to goose the Sherman. I think he has forgiven me, possibly remembering that I was the one who helped him to the Regimental Aid Post after he was wounded at Torrice Crossroads, earlier in May. In June my wife **Marion** and I journeyed to Brandon Manitoba spending two nights visiting **Rae MacDiarmid** in Moose Jaw. Rae is the widow of **Ian** who was one of "B" Squadron's really super crew commanders. Later in June Marion and I drove to a theological confer-

ence in Langley, B.C. and while their were the guests of **Jack** and **Valerie Somerset** who treated us royally. On the way home we stopped in to visit **Scrammy Scramstad** my crew commander at Torrice Crossroads who was just about to celebrate his 80th birthday in Penticton. After spending the night with **Irene Kennedy** in Penticton we headed north to call on **Vic Binnie** in Vernon. Vic is something else! Despite the fact that he is partially blind, he has a computer, which creates large font characters that, produces a larger print of letters he receives. With this machine he has made hard discs of the 2000 reunion in Edmonton. Vic was most hospitable serving us cold drinks on a hot day.

When he is not on his computer he spends his time trying to evade the host of ladies who populate his seniors' residence. Keep running Vic. He is also in constant contact with "**Fighting**" **Jock Burton**, my crew commander in England and who later gained fame in Italy by shooting up half the German Army on Highway 16 near Torrice Crossroads. In July Marion and I drove east stopping in Winnipeg to visit with **Chum Macey** in the Deer Lodge Hospital. Chum is not in good shape, but when I mentioned the name "Vic Binnie", he seemed to perk up. In Winnipeg we phoned **Roger Ptosnick** and **Carol Ellerbeck** (daughter of **Bob**) but both were out. After arriving in Toronto we called on **Frank Clifford**, who in his late 80's is still doing some part time work in his old law firm where he was a long time office manager. By the time this hits print, Frank will probably have moved to London, Ontario where he joins his son. Around the corner from Frank live **Len "Alley" Katz** and **Lee**. Len was in "B" Squadron in the winter of 1943-44 in the Ortona - Orsogna Line where he managed to consume most of the contents of a Vino

Barn and lived to tell the story. Len drove a hack for many years in Toronto, having such famed customers as Prime Minister **John Diefenbaker**. On our way to Montreal we dropped in to see **Gordie** and **Gladys MacKay** in Perth, Ontario. Gordie the old trumpeter has a room in his basement all fixed up with Strathcona memorabilia. This was a great treat to see and brought back many memories as I gazed at a really super collection of old Strath photos. Back at home in Calgary I try to keep in touch with as many WW II Straths and their widows as possible. These include **Don Lake**, **Alex Ozirny** in the Belcher Hospital, and his wife **Jean**, **Billie** and **Molly May**, **Nick Budner's** widow **Alice**, **Herb McCreary's** widow **Millie**, **Frank Thiessen**, **Marilyn Blanch**, and widow of **Ron**. We "**Once a Strathcona, always a Strathcona**" and this has proved so true in recent days. The Regiment invited **Billie May**, **Bud McLean** and myself from Calgary and **Ron ????????** from Edmonton, to the **Moreuil Wood** dinner at the Snr NCOs Mess in the barracks, we were the only four World War II vets at the dinner. Here in Calgary, the **Association (Alberta Branch)** most generously presented me with a plaque, making me an Honorary Member of their Branch. You could have knocked me over with a Sherman! One last word - Straths I have been trying to dig up are **L.J. "Duffy" Dufresne** "B" Squadron from November 1943 to November 1945. Lived on the St. Lawrence near Iroquois, Ontario, but when I inquired their last July no trace of him. I am pursuing this one. Well as the momma spider said to the poppa spider - "I gotta fly!"

POOSH ON STRATHCONA'S.

**Father R.S.H. Greene**  
L/Cpl (Retired)

## Vancouver Island Report *continued*

**Armoured Division.** The book was written by **Stanley Scislawski** who was the **PIAT** gunner in the Platoon (the PIAT was a portable anti-tank rocket launcher.) It is, for me, an honest account of the trials, failures and stunning successes of his platoon. The title he gave his book "**Not All of us were Brave**". But don't believe it! Part of the story is particularly interesting to us because Stanley describes the defense of the feature **Point 204** on the night **1/2 Sep 1944**. The Perths and "B" Squadron, Strathconas defended this vital feature. The seizing and holding of the feature was extremely important to 8th Army, because it broke open the **Gothic Line** defensive system. The **Germans** launched a fierce counter attack, which failed, causing the enemy to withdraw. Stanley describes the action as it concerned 18th Platoon. "**B**"

**Squadron** tanks are not part of his account. Nevertheless "B" Sqn was very much there. Major (LGen (retired)) **Bill Milroy** was awarded the **DSO**. **Harold Boettcher** received the **MM** for his courage and skill with a **.50 Browning**. The casualties were Maj **Milroy**, Capt **Don Munro**, Lts' **McIlwaine**, **McKay-Keenan**, **Vic Gar** (who died of his wounds), and Tpr **Harold Boettcher**. In this same action, mention is made of one man who was so exhausted that he had fallen asleep in his slit trench and had slept through the artillery fire which our gunners brought down on the feature. I remember someone showing me the slit trench on the following night and telling me that a Perth had shared the slit trench with some German soldiers during the counter-attack. I know the book will bring back many memories of

our time in **Italy**. I think the book could be a useful training tool in the study of leadership. Stan seldom mentions officers. The man who led the platoon at most times was the platoon sergeant. He was the dominant figure in combat. Ask your library to get it for you. If you find you like it, tell your family before Christmas.

In a few weeks we will get the summons from **Bill Anderson** for the committee to assemble, for the purpose of carefully considering all the factors bearing on the annual **Moreuil Wood Luncheon**. We eat our Fish and chips, wash it down with a couple of beers (at our own expense), then finally, Bill declares the date for this event and we disperse. It's a marvelous ritual.

Seasons Greetings from the West Coast.

**Jock Burton**  
Victoria, BC

## A visit to a lost son's grave

*My dad sent the attached article from the Kootenay Advertiser last fall, as part of a Remembrance Day "special". Dad was Captain QuarterMaster of the Regiment in Italy during WW 2.*

**Rod Tomlinson**

Calgary, AB

### A visit to a lost son's grave makes a fitting farewell

*(Judi Illingworth of Charlottetown submitted this story to Veterans Affairs project. It is a very touching story written about her grandmother).*

Imagine watching your 14-year-old son cross the train tracks every evening to go to the Drill Hall. Imagine watching him go overseas, barely out of high school. Then try to imagine travelling thousands of miles across the ocean to visit his grave, 40 years after last seeing him alive.

Many people would have difficulty imagining this scene but it is a scene my grandmother, Mrs. Charlotte Smith (Nanny), never forgot.

Born in Ottawa, on October 4, 1900 she lived her entire life in the Ottawa area, attending Bordon Elementary and Cambridge High Schools. Nanny married William Smith in 1920 and one year later Kenneth was born. Kenny was the oldest of six children.

In 1935, at the age of 14, Kenny joined the Governor General's Foot Guards in Ottawa. That was quite young but Kenny just loved it and would come home at night and shine his buttons and boots. Kenny's duty with the Foot Guards included reporting nearly every evening to the Drill Hall. And as he crossed the train tracks that ran behind their house, Nanny proudly sat on the porch and watched him go. She always worried and she used to sit up and wait for

him to come home across those tracks at night.

Kenny was the first of his group of friends to enlist and then the day came for him to go overseas with the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadian) 2nd Armoured Regiment. For months after he left Nanny remembered sitting there at night picturing him jumping the tracks.

Kenny was stationed in North Africa and Italy and he wrote home every week. He would often send little souvenirs home and one day a parcel came for a little girl Nanny & Grandpa had adopted. Here in this parcel was a silk dress that some lady had given to Kenny for a Chocolate Bar. He was always doing things like that. He was a very giving person.

Indeed, Kenny was a giving person, and on September 13, 1944, just two days after his 23rd birthday, C40082 Trooper Kenneth Edgar Smith gave his life in the province of Pesaro, Italy.

The unit Kenny was in had been trying to overtake a German stronghold: the Castle of Gradara near the town of Rimini on the Adriatic Sea.

Capt. Brown of Kenny's unit wrote Nanny to describe the events of his death. Captain Brown saw Kenny's tanks get hit and that made the letter even worse to read. A few years after Kenny's death, Nanny received her Silver Cross in the mail. Having that Cross meant more than anything in the world to her and she was so proud of it. In 1988, Nanny was asked to lay the wreath at the Westboro Legion Cenotaph. I remember her saying: "To be asked to lay a wreath as the Silver Cross Mother is the highest honour anybody could give me."

Nanny made a point of attending Remembrance Day services every year—

whether it be at Westboro or at the National War Memorial.

In 1982 Nanny, along with my Uncle Corky (another son) and his wife visited her son's grave in Italy. The trip was an emotional one, and even the prospect of seeing Kenny's grave would bring tears to her eyes. I remember her saying she cried most of the way over but the trip was beautiful. Kenny is buried in the Gradara War Cemetery, directly across from the castle where he gave his life. Both Nanny and Uncle Corky found the moment very emotional and sat there in silence crying at the loss of a son, brother, and good friend. Nanny wanted to plant a maple tree on his grave and she wished she had brought something. She did have a little red, white and blue ribbon on her jacket so she attached it to a stake and put it in the ground. She did bring back a little bottle of soil from his grave. She was impressed with the care that was taken at the cemetery—it was perfect, not even a weed.

There are train tracks beside the road that must be crossed to enter the cemetery. Nanny felt it fitting that she used to watch Kenny cross the tracks every night on the way to the Drill Hall and here she was crossing the tracks to see him again.

Nanny died on June 5, 1991 and is buried in Pinecrest Cemetery in Ottawa. Sprinkled over her grave is the soil she brought back from Kenny's grave. Something she had asked we do.

I never met my Uncle Kenny but reading letters and poems he wrote and sent home and listening to stories told by my Nanny and my mom made me feel like I did. Some day I hope to be able to take my mom over to visit the grave of her brother, something I know would make her happy.

## Where Have All the Generals Gone?

Photo taken at the **Fort Frontenac Officers' Mess** in **Kingston**. Maj **Grodzinski** was interviewing Generals **Milroy**, **Neatby** and **Gutnecht** for the Regimental Archives, so we used the opportunity to have an informal Regimental officer's luncheon. Thought you might wish to include it in the next newsletter. Back row, L - R: Col (Retd) **Doug Green**, Col **Ray Wlasichuk**, Col (Retd) **John Roderick**, Gen (Retd) **Bob LaRose**, Gen (Retd) **Bill Milroy**, Gen (Retd) **Phil Neatby**, Gen (Retd) **Rene Gutnecht**, Maj **Chris Young**. Front row L-R: Capt **Zenon Dreboldt**, Maj **John Grodzinski**, Maj **Mike Froess**, Maj **Ralph Kennedy**, Maj **Rod Babiuk**. Present but not shown: LCol **Rick Bowes**.

**Mike Froess**



# REGIMENTAL MUSEUM REPORT

Six years prior to the departure of the Regiment from Calgary, The Regimental Museum moved from the **Bessborough Building** in Currie Barracks to its present home at the **Museum of the Regiments**. As such our gallery, collection and archives have been part of the largest Military Museum in Western Canada that is second only to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

For those of you who have had the opportunity to visit our facility, you will agree the quality is second to none. Current serving and retired members of the founding units and a large group of volunteers are largely responsible for this. Without these dedicated people we would not be able to present this world-class facility to the public. If you wonder whether people are interested in the museum and do the tales and history of the **Strathconas** actually get told. The answer is emphatically **YES!**

The staff at the museum has developed a variety of programs such as sleepovers, birthday parties and edu-bus however the largest are the **Remembrance Day** programs. These outstanding programs recently received an award from Museums Alberta. These programs cover all aspects of the wars in which Canada has participated. They range from Cubs and Beavers programs to post secondary curriculum. Last year the Museum of the Regiments told our stories to over 16,000 students in schools and 4,000 people at the Museum in a six-week period. These programs are ever evolving and this year we expect the numbers to rise to well over 18,000 in the schools and up to 4,000 at the Museum as this the most we can accommodate for these programs. The **Family Remembrance Day Service** held at the museum traditionally hosts 3-6,000 people for the parade on **November 11** annually and this

number is expected to be even larger, weather permitting.

On an average year the Museum of the Regiments averages almost 50,000 visitors annually and the outreach programs another 10,000. As word of the quality of our facility spreads we anticipate that this number will only increase. With that in mind there have been some major changes in the works for the past number of years and the thought has been toward expansion. The goal is not only to expand the existing facility but also to include the Naval Museum of Alberta (**Tecumseh**) in the same location. This should be a win-win situation for both museums and will create the largest and best military museum complex in Western Canada and establish a new era of cooperation between this new museum and the Canadian War Museum. The expansion is still a couple years away, however we are gearing up for that time now.

Over the past year our museum staff has been busy trying to tie up a number of areas from the Celebration 2000 activities while attempting to make minor changes in the gallery. **MCpl Todd Giberson** has been busily cataloguing the collection to ensure all the artifacts are indeed in good order. Once this task is completed some of the pieces of the collection will be conserved and put away as their current state will no longer allow handling. One such item is the Sudbury flag that is actually held at the Museum. Its replica, which is displayed in regimental lines, was reproduced by **Mr. George Milne** and donated to the unit along with the replica King's Colour. The biggest challenge will be with our archives. **Cpl Lee Ramsden** will be focusing on digitizing the thousands of photos and documents to not only preserve our history for future generations, but by building a large database we will be able to bet-



*Museum staff receives the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal (CPSM). L to R: WO D.H. Crowell, MCpl T.W. Giberson, Cpl L.J. Ramsden.*

ter serve any research requests. Hopefully this will be close to completion by the time the expansion of our building is complete.

Recent changes at the Museum are timings and admission charges. The staff hours remain the same 8-4 weekdays, while the gallery hours are 10-9 Mon to Thurs and 10-4 Fri to Sun. Admission is \$5.00 adult, \$3.00 senior, \$2.00 teen. Children under 12 years and serving members free.

I hope you all get the opportunity to visit our Regimental Museum, if you haven't already, and take pride in the proud history of our regiment. I look forward to your the visit.

**WO Darryl Crowell, MB, CD**  
Curator

## *MPs Enlist* continued

n't see her," admitted Mr. Gallaway, adding the moment seemed very real.

"I'm not saying that the week there [in Val Cartier] or this week in Bosnia is going to make me an expert on the Armed Forces. But it gives me some exposure to it and some idea of who are the soldiers in our military, how they are treated and how they feel. And I have to say, I am impressed." So was Bev Desjarlais, who dropped markers from the back of a Hercules for a search and rescue exercise while secured to the plane with a safety harness. "It gives you a good idea of how tough a job it is to be up there," she said "especially if you are looking for an individual. ... It's not as easy as it appears."

Mr. Gallaway, however, did have one complaint. "I wanted to be a colonel."

**Coming January 2002**

***Check us out at***  
**[www.strathconas.ca](http://www.strathconas.ca)**

***Send your comments to:***

**Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)**  
**PO Box 10500 Station Forces**  
**Edmonton, AB T5J 4J5**  
**Phone: (780) 973-1660**  
**Fax: (780) 973-1647**  
**Email: [kstephan@dnd.ca](mailto:kstephan@dnd.ca)**

# LdSH(RC) Association (Alberta Branch) Report

## LdSH (RC) Association (Alberta Branch) Report

Greetings from "Wild Rose Country". Our summer break is over and your committee is getting on with the job. There is a slow down in correspondence as each of us tries to enjoy what is left of summer and finish our vacations. Often no news is good news and I hope this is the case.

### PEOPLE-PLACES-THINGS

**Joe Bishop** - Apdo Post #594 C P 45800 Chapaia, Jalisco Mexico - come and visit, e-mail to: joe@damron.ca or check out the condo [www.angelfire.com/art/buffy/joe/joemain.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/art/buffy/joe/joemain.htm).

**Fred Daunais** - went through major surgery losing a limb and is experiencing many problems with his recovery. Fred, ALL who know wish you the best.

The **Beller's** - **Wanda** and **Ken** hit the road in their car and made it to the East Coast visiting many friends en route. **Wanda** read the map thus they returned safely!

**Mr. and Mrs. R.B.E. Clarke** - have relocated to Calgary this Sep. Welcome home you two.

**Salmon's** - They are heading west to an area around **Blind Bay** and should be settled now. We'll miss you guys.

The **Shadbolt's** - took a month and continued their trip to the East Coast that was interrupted last year. They attended **Col Eddy's** daughter's wedding, and I'm not sure if it was before or after the lobster feast. **Fred**, their son, also lives down that way. They also had a chance to see **Marie Major** and **Pusher Bennett**.

**I.D. MacKay's** Famous Luncheons. They are still a very popular event with retired and serving Strathcona's. The Regiment has been supportive by sending down members of the Regiment when possible. Regular attendees include **Red Sturgess, Bob Coll, Jim Remington, Ron Bancroft, Bill Nastuik, Dave Cathcart, Bob Lett, Vic Saver, Joe Cotterall, Bill Hood, Jerry Salmon, Frank Rowe, Gary Lee, Harry Thompson, Bud Wheat, Cliff Brown, Ken Bellefontaine, Bill Finch, Jim Dort, Rod MacDougall, Mucker, WO Crowell, Roy Jardine, Joe Dunn, Jerry Cluett, Earl Cady, Charles Bashford, Bill May, Bob Bartlet, John Boudreau, Nic Nicolay, Howie Owen, Spook Spence, and Dick McDonald**, and I'm sure I have missed a few. Thanks for your company and war stories guys.

**Bensons** - **Curtis** and **Jane** have decided to hook up the trailer and head south at the first sign of frost. **Curtis** intends to get to Texas and after that go where the feeling takes them. They did leave a contact phone number in Calgary so if the need arises give me a call.

**Crossman's** - would like to thank the Calgary crew that traveled to **Consul**,

**Sask.** to lend their support at our daughter's wedding. Thanks **Jim** and **Nancy, Bob** and **Sharon, Ken** and **Wanda, Wayne** and **Anne-Marie, Jim** and **Sandra** also **Gary** and **Gail**.

**Coleman** (Red) - writes: I really enjoy the *Newsletter* please keep it coming. He also mentioned he was part of the **D-Day Dodgers** who help to distract a number of Germans keeping them busy in **Italy** lightening the load a bit for the landing in **France**. I met **Stuart McLaughlin** who is currently serving with the Regiment in Edmonton. I keep his family updated on any Strathcona news.

**CO** and **RSM** - Thanks from all those who meet at **#285 Legion**, for presenting the Branch with a Regimental plaque, which is now proudly displayed.

**Bill Penner's** trip East - Left in May stopping in **Petawawa** staying with **Bernie** and **June Leeder**. Attended **Radley-Walters** picnic at the yacht club chatted with many, to name a few - **Clive Addy, Charlie Butt, Bill Coupland, Charlie Maybee, Tim Lowerson, Ted Nurse, and Jim Temp**. Further east at Gaspé we visited with **Rad** and **Pat Walters**, on to **Cape Breton, Newfoundland**, and over to **PEI**. Spent an evening with **E.J. McDonald** and **Doreen**. In **N.S.** spent time with **Red McIssac**, then on to **Springhill** stopping at **L&S Brown**. Visited with **L&B Smith** later making our way home arriving on the 7th of Aug. Good Journey and Good Friends.

### OK FALLS REUNION 14-16 Sept 01

**Don, Bob, ID,** and **Gary** attended from Calgary and the OK COMMITTEE is to be commended on the GOOD ORGANIZATION, GOOD FOOD, AND GOOD FRIENDSHIPS. **Betty Reid** and **Irene Kennedy**, ticket seller's supreme, **Bill** and **Pattie Wood** the registration experts, GOOD JOB! Thanks also goes to **Wes** and all the **Legion staff** for their hard work. It was especially good to see **Knobby** and his family just two weeks after they had moved back to **Calgary**.

Insider News! **Jerry Reid** reserved a room for everyone except **Betty**? We are a little curious why one of the guests stored chairs on her bed? **Gary's** research showed Major **I.D. MacKay** (retired) never had a **BATMAN**, so **Bob Lett** was appointed. Jury is still out on its success. (You had to be there!)

**George Bar** and **Bill Turner** volunteered to run next years Reunion in **Kelowna**.

**Caesar Jordaen** (administrator) - you and your committee are to be congratulated. **Job Well Done!**

**Reunion 2005** - Mayfield Inn and Suites is Reunion Central (near the West Ed Mall) for 2005. Association will discuss sponsoring of widows, number and cost at our Sep meeting. Our pre-plan is a four-day event,

Meet & Greet, Reunion Dinner, All Ranks Function, Church Service and Closing Ceremonies. Theme should be decided at March 2002 Board of Directors meeting. It is Alberta's 100th so you may wish to plan early.

Members of the Alberta Branch will notice a **\$5.00** increase in the membership dues for **2002** to help offset the cost of doing business. Our e-mail address will be in the Spring issue of the *Society Newsletter* and will also appear on the **Regiment's Web Page** by **Jan 2002**. Please continue to write us about the happenings in your area. May everyone enjoy a Safe and Happy Festive Season.

Perseverance

**Don Crossman**  
President



## LdSH(RC) Association (Ottawa Branch) Report

The **Ontario** group under the leadership of Gen **Phil Neatby** is working to keep the spirit alive in the center of the country. The greatest concentration of the family is in the **Ottawa** area but there are a number of areas where there must be a greater effort made to keep them involved.

On a suggestion from **Pierre Garneau** a visit to **Vimy House** (the warehouse of the **War Museum**) was arranged and well attended. Four of the family, including **Pierre, Walt Conrad, Dave Iley** and **Bill Jacobs**, are active as guides at **Vimy House** during the Fall to Spring period when it is open to visitors on Saturdays, free of charge.

More events are planned for the coming year. A greater communication effort is planned now that so many of us are using the Internet. **Bill Logan** has been working to get all of the e-mail addresses he can find for faster distribution of our bulletin.

Perseverance

**Bill Jacobs**  
Ottawa. ON

# Letters home

While scanning through *"The Western Producer"*, which is a Prairie Publication published in Saskatoon, SK. Winnie Pogmore of Red Deer, AB, which has letters written, compiled the following article by a Cpl Spreeman who was a World War I Strathcona and was addressed to his sister Viola. Winnie is Viola's daughter.

**I.D. MacKay**  
Calgary, AB

## Letters home

*By March 1918, Germany had all but won the war. The French and British were exhausted, the infantry greatly depleted, the tanks not effective, and the airplanes unable to destroy German strongholds. Bayonets and poison gas had not stopped the onslaught. On March 30, 1918, the Cavalry Brigade under Lieut. Flowerdew recaptured Moreuil Wood. The tide was turned.*

*Herbert Spreeman went one mile north into Rifle Wood on March 31, 1918, where he was severely wounded.*

*Only 15 Cavalrymen were left when the Germans retreated and the Allies regrouped.*

*Spreeman was born in Ontario in 1895 and came west to the Chinook, Alta. Area as a young blacksmith.*

*He served as a constable in the Banff and the Peace River district with the North-West Mounted Police, and in 1917, joined the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), a unit of enlisted NWMP.*

*The following are excerpts from wartime letters he sent to his sister Viola of Kitchener, Ont.*

**Jan. 4, 1918**

**Trooper H. Spreeman 2270327**

**Lord Strathcona's Horse C.R.C.R.**

**Shorncliffe, Kent, England**

Our Christmas was a great one – fit for a king, so don't put yourself out sending boxes, although I do enjoy the good ones you pack. I have beer: stony broke since my pass. Haven't had a good bath for an age: costs sixpence to have one here. Did I tell you I quit smoking? If so, I've misinformed you as I smoke a pipe. Don't mention this to Mother unless you wish. A man, a pipe and a good book builds character, and is a comfort to a soldier. Oh, Viola, your letter has made me lonely. I feel as though I would like to be home again. The fleeting vision of you at the station in Toronto will never be forgotten. Mother was so brave, I shall never forget how well she bore up, and if one of her boys shall fall a victim of Hunnish brutality, she has still one to comfort her in later years.

**Feb. 14, 1918**

Before I leave for France on Saturday morning I will send you some pins – have them gilded for broaches. Give one to Effie. Leave to London was wonderful, but one does need to be very careful of the

girls. Some are fast and furious, and get many a fine young fellow in wrong. People here are eating horseflesh – on base we are classifying our horses and casting some for eating purposes. Imagine eating our own horses.

**March 18, 1918**

We are rushed at present, and circumstances not favorable for correspondence. Paper in short supply. I assure you dearest sister that your letters cheer me awfully. I enjoy the army more than ever but every night is a hell. Cold is no name for it. One nearly perishes, but during the day the sun comes out warm and clear. When I return, I long to sleep out under an apple tree or in an old barn. At last we are in active service. No need to tell you about the trenches or holes. I'm glad I'm in the Cavalry – we ride with a pack on our backs. Sometimes we can't believe a war is on – everything dreadfully quiet, nights clear and black. Then the guns open up, and one is almost deafened by the roar of the artillery, and airplanes circle in the sky. Search lights shoot up, machine guns chatter, and all is in an uproar. Damage to the country is awful. Will try to send field cards. Heavy rain makes our horses a fearful state – will need hours of grooming. Gillette razor blades, writing paper tobacco and eats are much appreciated.

**April 7, 1918**

**Canadian General Hospital  
Basingstroke, England**

I was hit April 1 in the right thigh – slightly in the left. We have been through hot fighting since arrival in France. The Germans' offence in the news is not exaggerated in the least. She is having her last kick. All our draft is dead or wounded. My chum was shot through the stomach and died 20 minutes later, saying "Divide my money among the boys". Another chum lay for 13 hours before dying. We could not get him out – oh it was awful! He continually begged me to shoot him. Others fell by the sword and others by tossed bombs. Oh, 'twas dreadful, horses and men lay dying everywhere. The Huns out numbered us 10 to one. I could tell you of the mad dashes or charges, but they are not pleasant to remember, let alone talk about. We rescued an officer after dark with a stretcher made from a horse blanket, two poles, and four bayonets – all less than 200 yards from the enemy. For 10 minutes, bullets rained around us but as if by a miracle, none of us was hit. The French soldiers, who I admire, call us the Fighting Devils and are generous to us.

**April 15, 1918**

**Canadian General Hospital  
Basingstroke**

We now walk with a stick – wound healing but badly swollen. Will be sent to a Convalescent Hospital and then have leave before going back into active service. Fight-

ing now is more in the open with more disastrous results, but we are holding our own, and the U.S. troops are coming in. Our Cavalry suffered very heavily and many of the boys will never use their limbs again. Nearly all our fellows were lost and an awful bunch of horses. It is a pitiful sight to see a wounded horse lying helpless or standing on three legs. One horse would not leave its master and stood beside the dead rider for hours until finally a bullet brought him down. Their screaming is dreadful to hear. You may wonder if I have killed any Germans. Well, yes, I have accounted for a few, and I'll tell you that when shells are bursting all around and Fritz is firing not 300 yards away, you do not stop to consider if it is the right thing to do. All this aside, it's simply awful when one gets used to killing. I'll tell you though, dear sister, good many times I wonder just what becomes of the souls of these men. Men usually die exactly as they have lived. It's awful isn't it? May God be merciful in the prayer we should have on our lips. Oh, I ache when I see the old women and children walking along the road with their few belongings – their homes destroyed by war. That is when it comes home to a fellow. What would Canadians think if such would happen to them? Seeing these things, we do not wonder why we are fighting. Don't worry, I am in God's hands.

**April 15, 1918**

You may wonder dear sister why I spoke of the thoughts and words of a dying man. When it comes to die, everyone who has believed in a faith in Christ dies with a prayer on his lips instead of an oath. For myself, I am not ashamed to admit that I prayed many times for God to be merciful.

**June 6, 1918**

May be operated on again. MD says something seriously wrong.

**July 12, 1918**

**No. XI Gen. Hospital  
Shorncliffe, Moore Barracks**

Third operation was a success. The old dead flesh was cut away, and a shell fragment next to the bone was extracted. Now healing properly.

**July 25, 1918**

Dearest sister, please be patient with me, and answer every question. Here goes – what did Effie say about me when you were there? Did she say, or tell, anything I had written? Tell me everything you can remember. Did she honestly say that should I return a cripple that she would not turn me down? I am simply dying to know.

**Aug. 18, 1918**

Received Effie's letter. I think it very jealous and selfish of her to be pleased her brother has been exempted from overseas duty. Think of the families who send two, three, or four sons and they are afraid to

*–continued on page 15*

# Veterans commemorate V-E Day

(The following article and picture were published in the **Cranbrook Daily Townsman** and submitted by **Colin Anderson**.)

War veterans from as far away as **Eureka, Montana** came to **Rotary Park** to celebrate **V.E. Day** and commemorate 100 years of Cranbrook's wartime contributions.

Members of the **Royal Canadian Legion Branch #24** celebrated by unveiling the **Wall of Honour Mural Dedication**, a stunning tribute to the difference nearly one thousand local heroes have made in defense of the free world.

The mural captures stunning visuals from bygone wars including: the **Boer War, WW 1, WW 2** and the **Korean War**. Each image portrays a fascinating history lesson in **Canada's** war efforts. Artist **Joel Cross** spanned the decades with his work.

A continuing theme throughout the mural is the importance of the **Lord**

**Strathcona Horse** regiment of which **Sam Steele** was the first commanding officer and which still has an active membership in **Cranbrook** today.

One of the many images depicts Sgt. **Richardson**, a member of **Strathcona Horse** during the Boer War, riding atop his horse in the midst of battle, his friend and fellow soldier slung over the horse's back. The sergeant had penetrated through enemy fire to retrieve his friend who had been badly injured. Richardson himself was wounded but he persisted and transported his friend to safety. The two men survived but the horse that carried them collapsed and died minutes after escaping the battlefield, a victim of enemy fire. Richardson received the **VC** for his brave action.

Organizers hope that this and the other stories featured on the mural will help younger generations understand the sacrifices that were once necessary to securing the safety of Canada and its allies.

"This mural is very important to the preservation of our history," said **Colin Anderson**, a Strathcona member and **Vietnam** peacekeeping veteran.

Anderson explained that the **863** names featured behind the mural represent the brave Cranbrook area men and women who have served for their country over the years.

Ninety other names are still waiting to go on the memorial wall but Legion members admit that more funding is needed to complete the project.

The ceremony was held in conjunction with the **55th anniversary** of V.E. Day; Germany's unconditional surrender and the beginning of the end of World War 2. Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945 officially ended the war.

**Darren McDonald**  
Staff Writer

## Letters Home *continued*

send one. I want to forget if I can, so oblige me and don't mention her again.

**Sept. 9, 1918**

**Gen. Hospital**

Leaving for Epsom Convalescent Home. Out of bed now after surgery.

**Oct 30, 1918**

Have you heard of the dreadful disease called the Flu? Hundreds have died and our M.O.S. is endeavoring to stamp it out. I'm on duty at the Orderly Room. The way the war is going, I may not see France. I've met a special girl of whom I will be proud to introduce to my parents and sisters. She is dead anxious to meet you. Dear sister I know you will like her.

**Dec. 30, 1918**

Married at Mickleham, Surrey.

**Aug. 4, 1919**

**Givons, Leatherhead, Surrey**

I'm stopping at Elsie's home on my final leave prior to leaving England. I'm anxious to be away from home, although I am just a wee bit sorry to leave old England, as I have begun to grow fond of this quaint old country.

Your loving Bro, **Bert**

*Spreeman and his war bride came home to Drumheller, Alta., where he blacksmiths with his father Isaac. They later homesteaded in the Millerfield district near East Coulee, often referred to as "Poverty Flats" and supplemented the farm by working in the coal mines during the winter. While threshing, he caught his arm in a belt and was severely injured.*

*Spreeman later worked with Regal Oil, Lions Oil and Purity 99.*

*A move to Comox, B.C., brought a career change as a motel operator. He and third wife Alice retired in Penticton, where he died in 1982.*



Wall of Honour Mural – Cranbrook, B.C.



## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

In addition to those acknowledged with their "Letters", we wish to thank the following for their generous donations:

**George Aitken, Benny Benoit, Ed Bryant, Harry Davidson, Des Deane-Freeman, Tom Fleming, Ron Howard, Foster Hutchison, Bill Milroy, Peter Nichita, Stan Tall, Rod Tomlinson.**

If I missed anyone who donated money to the **Strathcona Society**, my sincere apology and please let me know. Just a reminder that all donations to the Society, which includes the **Newsletter, Museum, Mounted Troop**, and the Society generally, are eligible for **income tax** deduction.

As your 'letters' are what make the *Newsletter*, I urge you to please drop us a note with your war stories, anecdotes, travels, lies or whatever. We especially are in need of some humorous **anecdotes** and **peacekeeping** stories.

In response to the inquiries for contact addresses for the **Lord Strathcona Association Branches**, etc:

### ALBERTA

Lord Strathcona's Horse  
(Royal Canadians) Association  
Box 3004, Chinook R.P.O.  
Calgary, AB. T2H 2V8  
Phone: (403) 273 -0154 (Until year 2002  
when Email is established)

### ONTARIO

Lord Strathcona's Horse  
(Royal Canadians) Association  
1216 Parkway Drive  
Ottawa, ON. K2C 2W3  
Phone: (613) 829-6930  
Email: davidiley@home.com

### Kit Shop:

Lord Strathcona's Horse  
(Royal Canadians) Kit Shop  
Steel Barracks  
PO Box 10500, Stn Forces,  
Edmonton. AB. T5J 4J5  
Phone: (780) 974-4011 Local 3012  
Email: kitshop@telusplanet.net

For the Spring 2002 edition of the Newsletter, please forward your reports, letters, anecdotes, articles, photos, etc by the **25 February 2002**. Adding a subtle note, **Donations** can be sent anytime or many times.

**'Mucker' Langan**



## LAST TRUMPET CALL

### *"May They Rest in Peace"*

**ADAIR, J.D. (James)** WW 2, age 82, Jun 01, Barrhead, AB  
**BAKER, B.L. (Brian)** Korea, Regular, age 73, 20 Jul 01, Victoria, BC  
**BARTLETT, N.A. (Obie)** WW 2, age 86, 08 Jul 01, Calgary, AB  
**DAVIDSON, Harry. (HE)** WW2, age 77, 17 Sep 01, Winnipeg, MB  
**ELLERBECK, R.W. (Bob)** WW2, age 82, 17 Oct 01, Winnipeg, MB  
**GRAND, E.H. (Ted)** WW 2, age 79, 20 Jun 01, Tottenham, ON  
**GUMBLEY, H.G. (Harry)** WW2, Regular, age 77, Apr 01, Ottawa, ON  
**McCALLUM, J.H. (John)** WW 2, age 80, Mar 01, Toronto, ON  
**McQUOID, L.F. (Moose)** Korea, Regular, age 69 06 Sep 01, Bramela, ON  
**PAXTON, R. (Ron)** Korea, Regular, age 73, 14 Apr 01, Dauphin, MB  
**RICHMOND, C.E. (Eldon)** WW 2, age 78, 24 Aug 01, Perth, ON  
**ROSLER, B. (Bert)** WW 2, age 85, 05 Oct 01, Abbotsford, BC  
**THOMPSON, J.B. (John)** WW2, age 94, 02 Sep 01, Edmonton, AB  
**TOBIAS, D. (Dave)** WW 2, age 80, 17 Feb 01, St John, NB  
**WALDIE, J.S. (John)** WW2, Korea, Regular, age 77, 07 Apr 01, Surrey, BC  
**WENTLAND, R.H. (Stretch)** WW2, age 80, 26 Mar 01, Calgary, AB

### *In Loving Memory of Wives*

**CHRISTENSON, MARGARET** (Ken) 29 Sep 01, Calgary, AB  
**WINCHESTER, ALICE** (Dudley deceased) 23 Sep 01, Calgary, AB

(My apologies for lack of details in some cases. Ed)



## Lost Trails

The following had their Fall 2001 *Newsletter* returned by Canada Post with the notation "MOVED". If any reader knows the current whereabouts of these individuals would you, or have them, notify this office:

**Frazer Beebe**, Agassiz, BC. **Peter Carroll**, Sardis, BC. **Joe Dunn**, Kamloops, BC. **Jens Hornum**, Delta, BC. **Lloyd McLean**, Parksville, BC. **Bob Provencher**, Pender Harbour, BC. **"Boots" Schuh**, Sardis, BC. **James Waterton**, Victoria, BC. **Theresa Bird**, Redcliffe, AB. **Jeff Duncan**, Edmonton, AB. **Derrick Hawkins**, Calgary, AB. **J.F. (Willy) Wilson**, Calgary, AB. **G.D. Straub**, Edmonton, AB. **Ron Thompson**, Calgary, AB. **Maria Boyce**, Winnipeg, MB. **Ralph Getz**, Elliott Lake, ON. **Martha Hjalmarson**, Ottawa, ON. **Randy Loesch**, Angus, ON. **Bert Mills**, Scarborough, ON. **Ray Sims**, Petawawa, ON. **Roy Payne**, Ottawa, ON. **Ken Marshall**, Ile Bizard, QC. **George Fudge**, Bridgewater, NS. **Don Yule**, San Francisco, USA. **Robert Marvin**, Kingston, Jamaica.