



# HELMET LINER GAZETTE

Following Articles taken from the Veterans Affairs Canada Newsletter "Salute"

April 12, 2008

## *Repatriation of Military Bracelet and Funding for Legion*

**Sault Ste. Marie** - A piece of history found its way back to Sault Ste. Marie during a members' appreciation luncheon held today at The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #25 (Sault Ste. Marie).

The family of Archibald Gunn were presented with their father's military identification bracelet from the Second World War. Mr. Gunn, a former long-time member of Branch #25 (Sault Ste. Marie), had worn the bracelet while serving in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, during the Second World War. The Dutch family who found the bracelet located the Gunn family through Veterans Affairs Canada, making it possible for this military souvenir to be repatriated almost 65 years after it was lost. "It is a symbol of peace and freedom that we all share," said Brent Gunn, Archie's son. "We are so fortunate to be Canadians!"

A message was read on behalf of the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs. Minister Thompson also announced today two contributions of up to \$5,300 to The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #25 (Sault Ste. Marie). This funding, provided through Veterans Affairs Canada's Community Engagement Partnership Fund, is in support of commemorative events. In particular, the funds will allow the public to experience a part of Canadian history through videos and portraits of local Veterans on display at various events throughout the year.

"These events give us an opportunity to thank the many Veterans who served our country," said Minister Thompson. "We are proud to support events that help preserve the memory of Veterans and those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

The Community Engagement Partnership Fund provides funding to non-profit groups, educational institutions and other organizations delivering remembrance activities and events. Administered through Veterans Affairs Canada's Canada Remembers program, contributions are made throughout the year and encompass both national and community-based projects.

April 19, 2008

## *Government of Canada Commemorates the 55th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice*

**Vancouver** - On behalf of the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Dr. James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Alberni, participated in a commemorative ceremony to mark the 55th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, the 10th anniversary of the Kap'Yong Memorial Plaque dedication, and the twinning of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve with Hallyo Haesang Sea National Park in Korea.

"Today, we commemorate the legacy of those Canadians who served in the first major international crisis following the end of the Second World War. More than 26,000 Canadians served in the Korean War and 516 lost their lives in the name of peace and freedom," said Minister Thompson.

Veterans Affairs Canada partnered with The Royal Canadian Legion, Parks Canada and the Korea Veterans Association to honour the distinguished contributions of Canadians in the Battle of Kap'Yong during the Korean War. Many people joined Dr. Lunney at Radar Hill, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve to remember the great sacrifices and the achievements of the men and women who served.

"Our Government supports events that foster appreciation-especially in Canadian youth-for the accomplishments and sacrifices made by Canadian service men and women," said Dr. Lunney. "As Canadians, we share a proud military history and we are passionate about honouring Canada's Veterans and all who served."

April 19, 2008

## ***Government of Canada Honours First World War Veteran***



**Spokane, Washington** - Today, at a small family ceremony in Spokane, Washington, the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, presented a *Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation* to Mr. John Babcock, Canada's last known First World War Veteran.

"Mr. Babcock is an ambassador for all those who served in the First World War, and his contribution to our understanding of this period in our history is immeasurable," said Minister Thompson. "Mr. Babcock is our last personal connection to a remarkable generation of Canadian heroes."

John Babcock was born in July 1900 and grew up on a farm near Kingston, Ontario. He was 15 years old when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Upon his arrival in England a few months later, Mr. Babcock was transferred to the "Boys Battalion." Before he turned 18 and was eligible to go to the front lines, the war had ended.

The *Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation* is presented to individuals who have contributed to the care and well-being of Veterans and to the remembrance of their contribution, sacrifice and achievements. It is intended primarily for Veterans, but in some circumstances may also be awarded to non-Veterans. Nominations may be submitted by the public at any time and are reviewed annually by an advisory committee.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation consists of a bar, which can be worn below official decorations on a Veteran's blazer, a lapel pin for civilian wear and a certificate.

More information on the [Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation](#) and [Mr. John Babcock](#) can be found on the Veterans Affairs Canada [Web site](#).

## **Prime Minister Harper announces citizenship for Canada's last known surviving veteran of the First World War**

9 May 2008  
Ottawa, Ontario



Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that John Babcock, Canada's last known surviving veteran of the First World War, is to be granted Canadian citizenship in recognition of his military service to Canada and his expressed desire, at age 107, to become a citizen of the country where he was born.

"We are proud to welcome Mr. Babcock back into the Canadian family and to honour the service he gave our country," said Prime Minister Harper. "He symbolizes a generation of Canadians who, in many ways, were the authors of modern Canadian nationhood. When Canada went to war in 1914 we were widely perceived as a mere colony of Britain. By the end of the war, the world recognized Canada as a proud and independent country. Mr. Babcock and his fellow servicemen helped make possible Canada's coming of age and I thank them from the bottom of my heart."

John Babcock was born on July 23, 1900 on a farm near Kingston, Ontario. As a teenager, he joined a Canadian Army youth battalion and was sent overseas as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

In the 1920s, Mr. Babcock moved to the United States. He became a U.S. citizen in 1946, and automatically lost his status as a British subject. The Canadian Citizenship Act, which legally established Canadian citizenship for the first time, only came into force in 1947.

Meetings with Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson prompted the decision to grant Canadian citizenship to Mr. Babcock. "He told me he considers himself a Canadian at heart," said Minister Thompson. Last month he presented Mr. Babcock with a Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation in recognition of his contributions to the care and well-being of Veterans and to the remembrance of their sacrifices and achievements.

On hearing of Mr. Babcock and his wish to obtain Canadian citizenship, the Prime Minister urged his minister to act as quickly as possible. "Mr. Babcock will become a Canadian citizen as soon as he takes the oath of citizenship," Prime Minister Harper said. "This means the last known soldier to serve Canada in the First World War will forever be a Canadian."

May 13, 2008

## ***First World War Veteran Forever a Canadian***



**Spokane, Washington** - Today, at a small family ceremony in Spokane, Washington, Mr. John Babcock, the last known soldier to have served Canada in the First World War, became a Canadian citizen. The oath of citizenship was witnessed by the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs.

"Bestowing Canadian citizenship upon Mr. Babcock is a fitting tribute to a man who represents the very best of what we rightfully call Canada's 'Greatest Generation'," said Minister Thompson. "I know Canadians will be pleased that we have been able to do this for Mr. Babcock. As he told me the first time I met him, he still considers himself a 'Canadian at heart'."

"This is unexpected and great news," said Mr. Babcock. "I was born in Canada and now I am a Canadian. This completes my circle of life."

"We are proud to be bringing Mr. Babcock back into the Canadian family and to honour the service he gave to this country as a young man," said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. "After all these years, Mr. Babcock is a proud Canadian."

John Babcock was born in July 1900 and grew up on a farm near Kingston, Ontario. He was 15 years old when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Upon his arrival in England a few months later, Mr. Babcock was transferred to serve with the "Boys Battalion" until he turned 18 years of age. The war ended before he was able to serve on the front lines. Mr. Babcock moved to the United States after the War. He became a U.S. citizen in 1946, and automatically lost his status as a British subject.

## **Canada's Last Known First World War Veteran**

### ***A/Lance-Corporal John Babcock***

#### **Biography**



Born on July 23, 1900, Mr. John Babcock grew up on a farm in Kingston, Ontario as part of a family that included 13 children. When he was quite young, his father died in a tree-cutting accident. Despite this devastating loss, Mr. Babcock went on to bravely serve his country in the First World War.

He was 15 years old when he joined the 146<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Sydenham (near Kingston), Ontario. A few months later, he arrived in England. He was transferred to reserve battalions and ended up with the Boys Battalion (also known as the "Young Soldier's Battalion") in 1917, waiting until he turned 18 to go to the front lines. The war ended first.

Mr. Babcock would later move to the United States, where he then served in the American Army from 1921 to 1924. Mr. Babcock married Dorothy (Dot) after his first wife, Elsie, passed away in the late 1970s.

Mr. Babcock and his wife Dorothy live in Spokane, Washington, where he still reads voraciously. He's also taken up flying lessons and became a pilot when he was 65 years old. In recent years, he completed his high school degree via correspondence courses and has taken local college courses. He can recite the alphabet backwards without hesitation and spell out his name in Morse code. Mr. Babcock is an avid traveller and takes daily walks to maintain his good health.

## **Interview with A/Lance-Corporal John Babcock**

**We sometimes hear about the terrible conditions during the First World War. Do you have happy or fond memories of the First World War?**

It was a new experience and I looked forward to it. I remember walking up Princess St. in Kingston and my uncle saw me as I was walking with a group of recruits and his eyebrows went up and he was surprised to see me. I was slightly embarrassed as my long pants did not quite reach my ankles. His eyebrows went up and he nodded approval. I had both happy and unhappy memories after the Great War.

**What is your most vivid memory of your time in the Canadian Expeditionary Force or in the Boys Battalion?**

There were several memories. The Senior Non-coms and officers were all veterans who had served in France. Our Major had been gassed which caused him to speak in a very soft voice. He had won medals in France. About one third of the Young Soldiers Battalion I served in had fought in France. All the young boys were pretty wild at that age.

**What was your reaction when you found out you wouldn't go to the front lines?**

I was chagrined, I wasn't a "real" soldier.

**What did your time in the military teach you? What is the most useful lesson military life taught you?**

Discipline and honesty. You could leave your money lying on your bunk and no one would touch it. Stealing from a comrade was the lowest thing you could do. A young soldier in my group spent nine months in Wandsworth, a military prison, for stealing a dollar watch. I felt sorry for him. He came back and joined our unit and told of his experience in prison.

**Do you take part in Memorial Day/Veterans' Day ceremonies? What do those mean to you?**

Yes, I have gone to local schools on Veterans' Day and told of my experience in the military. It didn't mean as much to me as those who served in France.

**Do you belong to any Veterans' associations? Do you keep in touch with other Veterans?**

No, I did not join any veterans associations. I lost contact with all my Canadian fellow veterans. I was very bashful and failed to acknowledge a soldier I saw in the train station in Winnipeg who had served with me in the Young Soldiers Battalion in England. This was in 1920 and I had been working in the harvest fields in Saskatchewan.

**Do you feel a special kinship with today's soldiers?**

Yes, I understand what they go through in basic training and drilling. You are soon taught to obey orders.

**I read that between you and your wife, you have 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. How would you react if any of your great-granchildren were to join the military or are any of your relatives in the military already?**

Yes, I have a grandson who served four years in the U.S. Army and six months in Iraq. I would feel badly if he was called back as he has a good chance of getting killed.

**What word of encouragement would you offer to today's youth already in the military or those thinking of joining?**

It may become necessary for a young man or woman to join the military to defend their country. I hope countries think long and hard before engaging in war as many people get killed. What a waste...not to mention the relatives who are left to mourn.

**Have you ever thought of writing your life story or have you already done that? I read somewhere that when you turned 100, you wrote a narrative of your life and your family printed it. Is this information correct? What was your family's reaction?**

Yes, I wrote my autobiography and gave a copy to family and friends who all stated they enjoyed reading about my life.

**Do you ever talk today to your family or friends of your experience in the military?**

Sometimes, not often, they have all heard or read my life story.

**When was the best time of your life, the best period of your life?**

When I was in business and when my children were growing up.

**What's your secret to longevity?**

I think the intense physical training I received when I was 15 1/2 through 24 years of age when I served in the Canadian and U.S. Army.

### **Do you believe history keeps repeating itself?**

Yes, I guess it does but hopefully one day we will get it right and not kill each other.

## **Modern Canadian Victoria Cross unveiled at Rideau Hall**



The manufacture of the modern Canadian Victoria Cross was a joint effort by the artists of the Royal Canadian Mint and the specialists of Natural Resources Canada.

Just before Victoria Day weekend, the new Canadian version of the Victoria Cross was officially unveiled by Her Excellency The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada. The ceremony at Rideau Hall was attended by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Walter Natynczyk and past recipients of Military Valour decorations.

The modern Canadian Victoria Cross replaces the British Victoria Cross introduced by Queen Victoria in 1856 and awarded to 81 members of Canada's military forces in the course of various conflicts up to the end of the Second World War. Australia and New Zealand have also developed modern versions of the Victoria Cross.

Although the modern Canadian Victoria Cross has been in existence on paper since 1992, the first one was manufactured in 2007. Much thought went into the creation of this highest Canadian honour. The modern Canadian decoration retains a tangible link with the original Victoria Cross and its Canadian recipients, while forging a connection with the birth of our nation and with Canada's present and future.

The design of the new Cross is slightly different from that of the original. To accommodate the official languages of Canada, the motto on the insignia has been changed from "For Valour" to the Latin "Pro Valore." Another small change is the addition of the Fleur-de-lis at either end of the scroll bearing the motto, to accompany the traditional rose, thistle and shamrock, thereby establishing a link with the floral elements found in the Royal Arms of Canada.

Some of the mystique of the original Victoria Cross is linked to the metal used in its fabrication. The British Victoria Cross is reputed to have been manufactured using bronze from Russian cannon captured at Sevastopol during the Crimean War of 1853-1856. While there is no solid proof of this, the story is taken to be true. What is certain, however, is that this original supply was exhausted by the end of 1914 and since then the majority of Crosses have been made from the metal of a pair of Chinese cannon of uncertain origin.

Bronze used in the original Victoria Cross was included in the manufacture of the Canadian decoration, to preserve the historical connection between the two. This was mixed with the bronze of one Confederation Medal - a commemorative medallion commissioned in 1867 to mark Confederation - and other metals mined across Canada. The result is distinctly Canadian.

Twenty genuine Crosses and six second award bars will be produced and deposited at the Chancellery of Honours, Rideau Hall, for safekeeping. The remaining alloy produced according to the original formula will also be kept by the Chancellery of Honours, in the shape of marked ingots, for the casting of future decorations.

The criteria for award of the modern Canadian Victoria Cross are identical to those of the British Victoria Cross and the Victoria Crosses of Australia and New Zealand: "The Victoria Cross shall be awarded for the most conspicuous bravery, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty, in the presence of the enemy."

As can be seen with recent awards of the Victoria Cross for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (to two British soldiers and a New Zealander), the standard is extremely high. Should a member of Her Majesty's Canadian Forces meet the criteria, Canada is now ready to present its own Victoria Cross.

*Following articles are credited to National Defence Magazine "The Maple Leaf"*  
**CFS Alert's 50th anniversary**

Alert officially began its operational role as a Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) unit of the CF on September 1, 1958. In the close to 50 years that have followed, the site has seen many changes and many faces as the "Frozen Chosen" have stood guard on the top of the world.

A celebration befitting Alert's unique place in Canadian history will be held in Ottawa, September 12-14. A warm welcome is extended to all those who have ever been or had an affiliation to CFS Alert. Whether you were there as a technician, aircrew, cook, CE crew or postal clerk, to name a few and yes, even commanding officers—are all invited!

An aircraft has been requested to transport up to 40 passengers north for the ceremonies at CFS Alert. But final confirmation will not be received for some time.

Full details, along with costs, will be promulgated at a later date. For those with computer access you can visit [http://www.leitrimmess.com/events/Alert\\_50.php](http://www.leitrimmess.com/events/Alert_50.php).

One of the major efforts being undertaken for the Alert celebrations is the creation of a photo album and calendar. Our goal is to tell the story of Alert from its earliest days (pre-SIGINT) to present day with photos. Areas that we have covered fairly extensively include the local wildlife, exterior shots of the camp and the surrounding landscape. However, we have many gaps and are seeking your assistance. Of particular interest are any and all shots taken indoors prior to 1978, especially the houses post 1978, CBC shows, visiting dignitaries, sunrise and sunset activities, mess activities, Christmas celebrations, diagrams of building locations pre 1970, etc.

If you have any photos as described above, or if you have some that you feel may be unique or of interest, you can scan and e-mail them to us, or copy them to a disc and send by mail. You can mail photos directly to us and, if you would like them back, we will ensure they are returned. Closing date for photos is May 1.

We are also hoping to display a variety of Alert artifacts during the celebrations. If you have any old memorabilia from Alert that you are thinking of getting rid of, or that needs a good home or if you would like to loan it out for the reunion we will see that they are safely returned.

For more info and any questions contact the following: Capt Brian Kebic, [kebic.bf@forces.gc.ca](mailto:kebic.bf@forces.gc.ca) or [bvkebic@rogers.com](mailto:bvkebic@rogers.com); Lynn Wortman [lynn.wortman@rogers.com](mailto:lynn.wortman@rogers.com) and Capt Tom Jenkins at [jenkins.tg@forces.gc.ca](mailto:jenkins.tg@forces.gc.ca).

## One of CFS Alert's pen pal marriages

*by Tom Stibernik*

Reading about CFS Alert's upcoming 50th anniversary celebration in *The Maple Leaf* has brought back many fond memories of my posting there in 1974. Amongst my most cherished memories is how I made my first contact with a woman, who would eventually become my wife.



In 1974 Alert was still a male only posting and contact with the world down south was either through VE8RCS shortwave radio/phone patch or mail. An administration clerk at the time, my preference gravitated towards writing. So I got into a routine of writing to my friends and family and waiting for the weekly Herc to arrive with the mail. Probably a month or two into my tour, I received a letter addressed to me, but with an envelope that bore stamps from Australia and a return name and address unknown to me.

Upon opening the letter, I noticed it was from a person named Vida who introduced herself as a girl who lives in Sydney, Australia. She heard I was in the CF serving in some remote part of Canada and stated she would be interested in becoming pen pals. She also wrote that she heard about me from her cousin Joe, who was also a good friend of mine. Indeed, he was—a civilian friend with whom I was in touch by mail on a regular basis.

Was I concerned or suspicious? Most definitely, but I was also curious. As a member of the CF and knowledgeable of Alert's mission, I was in a conundrum. Although concerned on a security level, I was also curious on a personal level. So I developed and put into play a strategy giving me time to determine the validity and reliability of the writer of this curious letter.

In response to Vida's letter I prepared an answer that was rather generic in nature. I basically copied verbatim portions from the CFS Alert Information Booklet, copying paragraphs concerning the geographical location, climate, and environment of Alert and Ellesmere Island. Thus, the substance of my letter was banal, void of substance and probably warmth. Until such time as I would be able to confirm from my friend Joe the veracity of her relationship to him.

As it turns out, I soon received a letter confirming her identity. Luckily, I received Joe's letter prior to hearing from Vida once again. From then on Vida and I became pen pals and continued to correspond for a couple of years until we got married in 1977.

When we get together with close friends, we have a great story to tell. She tells about how “cold” she thought my first letter to her was, as I respond, that for all I knew she might have been a Cold War spy. We still get a good laugh.

My time with the CF has been the most rewarding of my life. Although I have many extremely great memories of my time spent in Alert, this is one that will be near and dear for the rest of my life.

—Mr. Stibernik served in the CF from 1972 to 1976.

## 50-year-old excerpts from a diary from CFS Alert

**Earle Smith, a communications operator and radar technician, was posted to Alert, working as part of the SIGINT team, from August 1957 to February 1958. At that time, it was yet to be determined where the main SIGINT effort would be established, Alert or Resolute Bay. Throughout his tour in Alert, Mr. Smith kept a diary of his daily activities. Here are a few excerpts from that diary.**

*by Earle Smith*

**August 30, 1957:** Finally arrived at Alert, on the northeast tip of Ellesmere Island at 1010 hours. Coming over the land, our first view was of snow-covered mountains, small lakes and streams, certainly a forbidding sight from the air. We easily spotted the orange coloured buildings (our home for the next six months or so) of RCAF Det. Alert, and the DOT/JAWS weather station. [Note: The Joint Arctic Weather Stations (JAWS) was a cooperative effort between the Canadian Department of Transport (DOT) and the United States Weather Bureau. Eventually, the weather operations were turned over to the Canadian Department of the Environment (DOE).]

Also spotted a small herd of Muskox in a valley a few miles south west of Alert. Within an hour of the plane's departure, the sky had completely clouded up and a strong north wind complete with a small snow blizzard was giving us our first taste of the winter ahead.

**August 31:** Took a picture of the midnight sun before hitting the hay. The sun doesn't go below the horizon here yet, 24 hours of sunlight for a while to come. Before I forget, we saw our first wolf – it hangs around the area here. It was lying on the ground beside one of our barracks tonight when Frank Gelson walked by. Thinking it was one of the huskies he called to it. It didn't move so he petted it on the head and walked on. He got quite a jolt when we informed him that it was a wolf, not a husky.

**September 1:** Also saw the fresh water lake from which we have to haul our drinking water. The DOT boys keep a small rowboat here and have good luck catching trout.

**September 5:** Took some colour pictures just after supper – one of the DOT area, one of the back part of our buildings and immediate surroundings and last but not least, one of our Air Force ensign blowing strongly in the breeze. The ensign's clear and bright colour certainly stand out against our orange coloured buildings. On my way to the barracks from work at midnight I saw a sunset that most of the world will never see; the sun just barely crept below the horizon and then up again to begin another 24-hour tour.

**September 9:** Three of the boys went tobogganing tonight. There's quite a steep hill, which runs from our buildings down towards the shore of the ocean – certainly ideal for the sport of tobogganing.

**October 27:** Mail today!! First time in one month and one day. The letters from home sure looked good, believe me. Even if it had been only a short note, it would have been more than welcome. I can see where those letters are going to be read and re-read thoroughly.

**December 13:** Coldest night of the winter so far - 49°F. Sure can feel it, too.

**December 19:** The North Star aircraft that was due in today turned around at Thule AFB and went back to R.B. Sent word up to us that engine trouble was the reason for the turnaround. Morale sure took a big drop, especially when we heard that there was 657 pounds of mail on board. Still, it's sort of a shame, with Christmas so near.

**December 25:** Everyone all dressed up for the Mess dinner today, lovely Christmas turkey dinner with all the trimmings. The cooks from the weather bureau come up and helped our cooks prepare the meal. The tables looked very nice—individual name cards, and also individual menus. A lot of us managed to get some colour pictures. It will be a nice souvenir if they turn out. One thing for certain, this was the biggest gathering at a mess function that Alert has ever or, possibly, will ever see.

**December 26:** Back to work at 4 p.m. Our two-day holiday is over. Only 64 days left to go!!!

**January 5, 1958:** Temperature is down around -45°F, with a cold 15 mph north wind. The coldest to date was December 29 -48.8°F. Biggest change in temperature was December 30 – from a low of -43.8° to -4.7°F.

**January 15:** The a/c got in today!! Plenty of mail and Christmas parcels for all. You've never seen a happier bunch in all your life. Plenty to catch up on for the mail has piled up since November.

Mr. Smith retired from the RCAF in August 1968.

In September 2008, we mark the 50th anniversary of CFS Alert. To register for the events, go to [www.alert.leitrimmess.com](http://www.alert.leitrimmess.com)

## Remembering the fallen in Afghanistan through art

### Uncle killed during Second World War inspired artist to paint portraits.

*by WO Brad Phillips*



TORONTO, Ontario — They are familiar to us all, all too familiar. We have seen them on the nightly news, on the front pages of our daily papers and on the Internet smiling back at us, so full of purpose and life. They are the faces of the Canadians soldiers and one diplomat who have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

Artist Joanne Tod is painting these faces on small birch ply panels that will eventually make up a Canadian flag, which the artist hopes to sell. The proceeds will be donated to help military families.

"I have no intention of making money from this myself," she said. "I see myself as kind of a conduit," Ms. Tod has a passion for her art and subjects.

Her uncle, Private James Alexander Tod, was the inspiration for her project. Thirty-year-old Jim Tod was a member of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, when he was killed in Italy in 1944. Before going off to war, he was also an aspiring artist who dabbled in painting. He is buried in Cassino Military Cemetery.

Ms. Tod has inherited many of her uncle's paintings, and letters he wrote to his family during the war. One of her favourites is a letter in which he describes entering a village and being greeted with a red liquid all over the ground. But it was not blood spilled during a hard fought battle, but wine purposely dumped to prevent Allied troops from quenching their thirst.



She had agonized over her uncle's letters and put off reading them. Then, the mission in Afghanistan and the deaths of Canadian soldiers finally prompted her to examine the correspondence, which is part of her family's heritage. Inspired by Pte Tod's letters, tales of her uncle and the memories of her father—a former chief petty officer who served in the Royal Canadian Navy—she began painting portraits of the fallen in Afghanistan.

It takes her about six hours to complete a portrait. Due to the nature of her craft—painting on wood— she does not take any breaks until the painting is complete. To date, she has painted the portraits of half of the Canadians who have died in Afghanistan.

## If the walls could talk...

*by Steve Fortin*

As soon as a visitor walks onto the campus of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston, one cannot help but be struck by the aura of history that permeates the place.

First, is Point Frederick, a 41-hectare peninsula situated at the junction of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, where the Rideau Canal begins. But even more impressive are the buildings and the architecture that defines them. There was a permanent military presence at Point Frederick long before the site was used for the education of officer cadets and the founding of the RMC in 1876. This strategic location had been in use since 1789, when the Royal Navy and its dockyard occupied the site.

No one better understands the historical significance of the site and buildings than the curator of the RMC museum, Ross McKenzie, a former CF member and former student of the college.

To give some idea of the importance of the site, Mr. McKenzie recalled a few historical facts. "During the War of 1812 between the United States and the British colonies, the Royal Navy dockyard and the site where we are now were of the highest strategic importance for Upper Canada. This is where they build the ships that were used to defend Upper Canada."

Following the victories of the War of 1812, the location's strategic importance was recognized, at least enough to construct fortifications and buildings for the former naval shipyard, some of which are still standing and an integral part of the RMC. "When you look at the layout of the fortifications, you can see that the objective was to surround and protect the naval dockyard at all costs, along with the Rideau Canal, which was essential for the control of the seaway that leads all the way to the Atlantic," said Mr. McKenzie. Incidentally, the Fort Frederick Martello Tower, built slightly later (1846-1848) to strengthen the dockyard defences, now houses the RMC museum.

The naval shipyard gradually lost importance and was closed in 1853. After the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, British troops withdrew from Fort Frederick and from Canada in 1870-1871. The new Canadian government, now responsible for its own defences, founded the military college in 1874. In 1876, the first class of 18 cadets, who became known as the "Old Eighteen", laid the foundations for the military training school that would become the Royal Military College of Canada.

The museum curator noted that the oldest building still standing solidly at Point Fr d rick, the "Stone Frigate", was built in 1819-1820 and in 1876 was used to house the military college. Today it is used as a dormitory for RMC students. Mr. McKenzie pointed out that the site may still surprise history buffs. Archaeological digs were undertaken when relics of the past are uncovered.

It was recently discovered that the second oldest building on the site, the former commanding officer's house, may not have been used for the purpose it was historically reputed to have been built for. "For a long time, historians believed that this had been the old hospital," said Mr. McKenzie. "However, we recently discovered that the hospital was made of wood and did not survive the elements, and that the old commanding officer's house had been the doctor's house."

As time goes on, the site reveals its secrets. Enthusiasts like the curator, Mr. McKenzie are dedicated to understanding it and bringing it back to life. Paradoxically, Mr. McKenzie has set up his quarters and his office in one of the smallest, and the third oldest buildings at Point Frederick—the guardhouse. This tiny building, likely dates back to 1839-1840, was erected to increase the dockyard's defences following the rebellions of 1837-1838. Although its solid stone exterior gives the impression it was made of stone, recent discoveries revealed it had originally been made of wood and later reinforced with stone.



Next, is a visit to the Mackenzie building, it stands in front of the parade square and provides a link between the former purpose of the site, a defence post, and its current function as a military training establishment. The Second Empire architectural style testifies to its 1878-1879 period of construction. The contrast between the clear light of a cold winter's day and the dark entrance to the main portico leaves the visitor momentarily startled, but one's attention is quickly caught by the explosion of colour provided by three large stained-glass panels. The three windows were a gift from the class of 1956 and represent an original tribute to the three CF elements: left to right Navy, Army and Air Force.

Since its foundation in 1874 and the arrival of the "Old Eighteen" in 1876, every RMC graduate has had his or her name entered alongside their classmates on one of the large wooden panels listing each year's class. Sometimes a name will catch the visitor's attention, especially when it represents a service that is different from the rest. Such is the case of W.T. Bridges, from the Royal Australian Artillery, an Australian Army major-general, who studied at the RMC, although he did not graduate. "This man had a singular career. He emigrated to Australia with his family after taking part in the Boer War with the British Army, contributed to the founding of the Royal Military College of Australia in Duntroon, and was its first commandant," said Mr. McKenzie. MGen Bridges would lose his life during the First World War on the Gallipoli front, becoming the first Australian general to become a casualty of the Great War. Such a fate would also befall a number of the names listed among the RMC graduates; each name reflects the particular history of a person who has chosen to serve his country.

On the second floor of the Mackenzie Building, are commemorative plaques in honour of former graduates, who lost their lives on duty. The numerical order of the student numbers reveals the nature of the sacrifices made by RMC alumni in each period of history. "A few of the faces we are seeing here are former classmates or comrades in arms, I knew during my military career," said Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKenzie's comrades can rest in peace, like the ones who preceded them. In the old guardhouse lives a defender of the memory of this site, someone who is dedicated to preserving the history of this magnificent establishment.

## **The RMC Museum in Kingston, a priceless gem!**

*by Steve Fortin*

The City of Kingston virtually breathes history—within its boundaries are no less than 23 museums, art galleries and historical sites focussing mostly on military history. The RMC Museum plays a key role in the collection, preservation and promotion of the military heritage of Canada in general and of the area as well.

Located at Fort Frederick, the RMC Museum blends into the campus environment. The current museum dates back to 1962, and its mandate is to collect, conserve, research and display material relating to the history of the college, former cadets and the site. In 2007, the RMC Museum received a world-class distinction when Fort Frederick became part of the 14th location in Canada, and the only one in Ontario, to be recognized as a UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) world heritage site. The Rideau Canal and the Kingston Fortifications are now considered, by all countries adhering to the UNESCO Convention, a part of the world's heritage to be protected.

Entering the Fort Frederick Martello Tower is like stepping into the past. Restored and well preserved, this three-storey tower, which is unusual for this kind of structure, is full of surprises. On the third floor, visitors can see the movable beams of what used to be a removable roof, three 32-pounder guns inscribed with the dates of manufacture and mortar shells, some of which can weigh up to 45.5 kg. Inevitably, the period setting takes visitors back to battles of the post-Napoleonic period. The curator of the RMC Museum, Ross McKenzie, stresses that even the beams supporting the canons are original.

The tower also houses one of the most impressive antique arms collections in Canada. The collection was given to the museum by Walter Douglas, a former cadet who attended the establishment from 1887 to 1890. A wealthy and well-known philanthropist, Mr. Douglas acquired the arms collection in 1938 from the family of General Porfirio Diaz, former President of Mexico. Mr. Diaz had collected objects from between 1870 and 1911. The collection includes more than 400 pieces, of which a few can be admired by visitors in the Fort Frederick Martello tower.

Another interesting display at the museum is the Leinster Plate. Unique in Canada, this collection of British Regimental silver belonged to the 100th (Royal Canadian Regiment) Regiment and, later, to the 1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). The battalion officers had originally donated their silver to the officers' mess of the Canadian regiment, and when it was disbanded in 1922, they gave it, in trust, to the Government of Canada, which in turn, placed the collection, in trust, with commandant of the RMC. Some pieces are on display in the College's Senior Staff Mess, and other select pieces are on display at the museum.

The recognition of Fort Frederick by UNESCO as a world heritage site, and the recent investments in museum facilities and rooms to conserve surplus pieces from various museum collections are good news for Mr. McKenzie. "The pieces that are not on display in the museum will be conserved in optimal conditions, and the UNESCO designation will give our site greater visibility on the international stage." There is no doubt that this site is a treasure worth exploring not only for the first time, but also for repeat visits.

## **Smiley Douglas honoured by 749 (Red Deer) Communication Squadron**

*by Steve Fortin*



"A true legend! A real live Canadian hero!" That's how Lieutenant Harold Lowe describes Smiley Douglas, the honorary lieutenant-colonel of the 749 (Red Deer) Communication Squadron, in Alberta. On the evening of March 1, 749 Comm Sqn members celebrated Mr. Douglas' heroic acts and his 80th birthday, which was February 29.

The story of this Korean War veteran is one for the books. Raised in a rural community in the heart of Alberta, Smiley Douglas—his real name—enrolled in the Army on August 10, 1950, and joined 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2 PPCLI). Less than six months after his enrolment, he found himself in the Battle of Kapyong in South Korea.

"Although he does not talk much about his exploits," says Lt Lowe, "H/LCol Douglas was awarded the Military Medal for Bravery for his service in Korea."

Acting Corporal Douglas had set warning grenades in the trenches surrounding his observation post, but then noticed that some of his brothers-in-arms, obviously disoriented, were heading right for them. To prevent his comrades from

being injured, A/Cpl Douglas hastened to disarm the grenades but wasn't quite fast enough: one blew up in his hand, and he lost an arm and the use of one leg. He was later evacuated and repatriated to Canada, where he was awarded the military medal for his act of bravery.

In 2000, the Korean War veteran was chosen to represent Canada and the CF in Pusan, South Korea, at a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. "Don't ask me why they chose me," says Mr. Douglas. "I have no idea."



During the ceremony, the Canadian veteran was accompanied by Prince Andrew, Duke of York. "We were participating in a ground-breaking ceremony for the new monument," he says, "and I was expecting them to give us a special shovel for the occasion. But they gave us a shovel that could well have been around at the time of the war." Mr. Douglas and Prince Andrew had a good chuckle over it.

Mr. Douglas doesn't make a big deal of his experiences. He is happy to have had the opportunity to represent his brothers-in-arms, the CF and his country, and he talks about his adventures with a slightly bemused air. But this in no way detracts from the sacrifices he made for his country – sacrifices that prompted 749 (Red Deer) Comm Sqn to honour this Canadian hero.

## **Borden Museum Air Force Annex named after Victoria Cross recipient**

Alan Arnett MacLeod was a tenacious 14-year-old with a dream. Today, he and his dream are remembered and honoured at Base Borden.

Visitors to the Base Borden Museum will notice that the building housing the Air Force Annex, beside the old Borden airfield, is dedicated to 2nd Lieutenant Alan McLeod, First World War Victoria Cross recipient.

Alan, born in 1899 in Stonewall, Man., was a doctor's son. He joined The 34th Fort Garry Horse in 1913, when he was just 14. He was four years younger than the required age, but the unit commander allowed him to serve anyway.

His duties consisted mostly of grooming horses and shoveling manure, but the lad was happy just to be in the army. When war broke out the next year, however, Alan's military career came to an abrupt end – it was one thing for someone underage to serve during peacetime, but there was no way someone so young was going to serve during wartime.

Undeterred, Alan went to Winnipeg and tried re-enlisting several times, but was turned away because of his age. When Alan was 17, he made his way to Toronto, where the Royal Flying Corps had established a cadet training wing. Once again, his service was refused. It wasn't until he turned 18 that Alan was finally able to resume his military career as a cadet in the RFC.

He was sent to the Cadet Ground Training School at Long Branch, just outside Toronto, for pilot training. Alan proved to be quite capable of handling the AVRO 504 aircraft. After only five days' instruction and three hours of flight time, he completed his first solo flight.

Alan was sent to No. 42 Wing at Camp Borden for intermediate training. He graduated with fewer than 50 hours of flying time.

On March 27, 1918, during a battle with members of Baron Manfred (the Red Baron) von Richthofen's squadron, 19-year-old 2Lt Alan McLeod became the youngest Canadian Airman to earn the Victoria Cross, the highest award for bravery in the face of an enemy that can be awarded to members of British and Commonwealth militaries.

The description of his valour from his citation reads:

"His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned officer of the Royal Air Force, for services displaying outstanding bravery: 2nd Lieutenant Alan Arnett McLeod, Royal Air Force. While flying with his observer, Lieutenant A.W. Hammond, M.C., attacking hostile formations by bombs and machine-gun fire, he was assailed at a height of 5 000 feet by eight enemy tri-planes which dived at him from all directions, firing from their front guns. By skillful manoeuvring he enabled his observer to fire bursts at each machine in turn, shooting three of them down out of control. By this time 2Lt McLeod had received five wounds, and while continuing the engagement a bullet penetrated his petrol tank and set the machine on fire. He then climbed out on to the left

bottom plane, controlling his machine from the side of the fuselage, and by side slipping steeply kept the flames to one side, thus enabling the observer to continue firing until the ground was reached.

"The observer had been wounded six times when the machine crashed in 'No Man's Land' and 2Lt McLeod, notwithstanding his own wounds, dragged him away from the burning wreckage at great personal risk from heavy machine-gun fire from the enemy's lines. This very gallant pilot was again wounded by a bomb whilst engaged in this act of rescue, but he persevered until he had placed Lieutenant Hammond in comparative safety, before falling himself from exhaustion and loss of blood."

Alan received his Victoria Cross September 4, 1918 but, sadly, would not live to see the end of the war. While recovering from his wounds back home, he contracted influenza and died November 6, 1918.

Base Borden has changed considerably since Alan McLeod's day, and he would hardly recognize the place – except for the hangar that now bears his name. It is one of only eight hangars, built in 1917 for the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), that are still standing, and became part of the Base Borden Museum organization in 1995.

Ninety-one years after Alan McLeod trained as a pilot at Camp Borden, the McLeod Building, dedicated in April 2004 in a ceremony corresponding with the 80th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force, serves not only as a monument to his bravery, but as a link to Borden's proud past. It's the least we can do to honour him, and all who served.

## **16 Wing Borden: "Birthplace of the RCAF"**

*by MWO Normand Marion*

"Welcome to 16 Wing Borden, the birthplace of the Royal Canadian Air Force." "... the cradle of military aviation in Canada." "... the schoolhouse of the Air Force." And more.

Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Kowal, Commander of 16 Wing, uses many expressions to greet visitors to the wing. While some of his greetings highlight the proud Air Force heritage still evident around the base, others reflect the prominent and crucial role the wing plays in training the Air Force today.

The story of Canadian military aviation at CFB Borden—or Camp Borden, as it was formerly known—goes back to the construction of an aerodrome for the Royal Flying Corps in 1917. Borden played a prominent role in all evolutionary phases of our national air force, from the formation of the Canadian Air Force in 1920 through the formative years of the RCAF, starting in 1924. The base also played a leading role in the early days of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. In the post- Second World War era, instruction shifted from aircrew training to aircraft technical training, earning the station the new nickname "Schoolhouse of the RCAF".

When 16 Wing Borden was established in 1994, the men and women of the wing eagerly picked up the torch, and continue today to uphold the long tradition of air force technical training in Borden. With a mission to "provide quality training and professional development to meet Canada's defence commitment", the wing's team of about 300 Regular and Reserve Force personnel and civilian staff look after the training of more than 2 000 students every year. Their training strategy is guided by years of experience, a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement, and unwavering support for wing personnel.

16 Wing currently comprises a headquarters and two training establishments, the Canadian Forces School of Aerospace Technology and Engineering (CFSATE) and the Air Command Academy (ACA).

CFSATE's primary focus is on training technicians in aviation systems, avionics systems, aircraft structures, and imagery, as well as aerospace engineers. Faced in recent years with significant challenges from increased recruiting levels, the school has shown, through various initiatives, a tremendous capability for adapting.

"CFSATE has set the example for a transformed training environment," says LCol Kowal, "effectively implementing performance-oriented training to meet the needs of the Air Force, increasing throughput with larger class sizes, modernizing classrooms, taking advantage of new technologies, and embracing a flexible approach to human resources, which includes a total force structure, contractors and community college."

The ACA provides professional development and training to CF non-commissioned members from junior ranks to senior supervisor levels. Courses include leadership, management, communication skills, and Air Force culture and history. The ACA is currently preparing to deliver the enhanced primary leadership qualification (EPLQ) course, with a pilot course scheduled to start in May.

# Meritorious Service Decorations recognize the “above and beyond”

*by Directorate of Honours and Recognition*

The CF Decorations Advisory Committee is seeking more nominations for Meritorious Service Decorations (MSDs) – nominations that represent both an equitable balance in ranks, and a wider array of military activities.



MSDs are perhaps the most effective tools of recognition available to the CF, and yet their potential is far from being fully developed.

The Meritorious Service Cross (MSC) was created in 1984, and the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) in 1991. A parallel Civil Division for each was also created in 1991.

The criteria for the MSDs are simple, broad and flexible. The MSM, for example, is intended to recognize a military deed or activity that has been performed in a highly professional manner or is of a very high standard – a deed that brings benefit or honour to the Forces.

Unlike the Order of Military Merit (ORMM), which recognizes long-term merit, the MSDs exist to recognize either one specific act or meritorious service over a specific period of time – a few minutes, days, a project, an operational rotation or a posting.



MSDs are meant to recognize all types of military service. While operational achievements command much deserved attention, most CF personnel are serving in Canada and elsewhere in non-operational settings, and must also be considered for recognition in this way.

There are no quotas or annual limits to the number of MSDs available for award – everyone who meets the criteria and deserves recognition can be nominated. The ORMM is at the top of the “pyramid” of merit recognition, and logic dictates that lower-level recognition should be more easily attainable. The Committee is therefore looking to recognize more deserving CF members through the awarding of MSDs.

Unlike the ORMM, there is no link between the level of award (MSC or MSM) and the rank or level of responsibility of the nominee: merit is the only factor. It is therefore possible for a private to receive an MSC and a general to receive an MSM.

It is the responsibility of leaders at all levels to identify CF personnel whose performance is outstanding, and to nominate them or bring them to the attention of the chain of command so that they can be appropriately recognized in a timely manner. While nominations must be supported by nominees’ COs, anyone in the chain can start the process – it is quite possible for a sergeant or warrant officer to initiate a nomination.

The nomination process has also been simplified recently and the new one-page form Recommendation for Individual and Unit Awards (DND 2448) accompanied by a one-page write up should be sufficient in most cases to recommend an MSD. A successful nomination does not require a mountain of paperwork; if the individual deserves it, it can usually be made clear in a reasonable number of words.

We have CF personnel at all rank levels and in all fields of activity who perform “above and beyond”. Look around you, at your subordinates and your colleagues, there are amazing people who deserve recognition out there, but someone must take the initiative to see their efforts acknowledged and that someone can be you.



## **Paying our respects**

*by Maj Pierre R. Bergeron*



It was early, cold and damp at Kandahar Air Field on the morning of January 23 when the LAV III rolled into position for the 9th ramp ceremony of ROTO 4. Until I had conducted my first ceremony, I really hadn’t grasped the impact each of these have, not only on our Canadian soldiers but also on other soldiers of the coalition.

Just a few weeks earlier, on December 31, I had made the following comments at the ramp ceremony for Gunner Jonathan Dion: “So, this morning, we stand united and in solidarity with the other forces of the coalition. The death of Gunner Jonathan Dion is not only a loss for Canada, but also for the coalition. We are united in our mission effort and also in the grief that each one of our nations experience when we lose a soldier.” I was unaware that, shortly, someone would prove me right.

On January 23, a few hours after the ramp ceremony for Sapper Étienne Gonthier, a British officer of the Royal Logistics Corps wrote an e-mail to his wife:

"Not a good start today as I attended a ramp ceremony for a Canadian sapper who died recently. We stood in the freezing cold as his coffin was carried onto the C-130 and home to his family. I was incredibly moved and indeed shed more than a tear."

The ramp ceremony is a tradition of the profession of arms. It's our way of paying our respects and honouring the life and service of a friend, for those who personally knew the deceased, and of a fellow Canadian soldier, for the others. With dignity, we salute one last time as the transfer case, draped with the Canadian flag, passes by and the remains of our fallen comrade are taken on board the C-130 to be carried to his final resting place. As a chaplain, it's an opportunity to address the collective grief of our soldiers and of the coalition forces assembled with us. Ours is a great privilege, but also a tremendous responsibility, as we minister to those who are saddened by the death of a fellow comrade in arms, and reminded of their own mortality.

During this tour, I have been deeply challenged by the words of Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." At each ramp ceremony, I am stirred in my soul by the choice our courageous men and women have demonstrated by faithfully returning to their duties and mission after paying their last respects. These great Canadian and other military personnel have all volunteered for a profession that values "service to country before self", and want to make this world a better place.

**That is why we will, and must, remember them.**

## **A national place of tribute**

*by Steve Fortin*

On a glorious spring day, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada Michaëlle Jean presided over a ceremony to inaugurate the Beechwood National Memorial Centre.

The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation's dream of providing a facility designed to meet the memorial needs of all Canadians is now a reality. "The time was right," said Beechwood Cemetery Foundation chair Grete Hale, "to create a national place of memorialization for Canadian families of all faiths and backgrounds."

To ensure that the centre would meet the needs of Canadians of all faiths and backgrounds, extensive consultations were held with major faith leaders. As a result, the Beechwood National Memorial Centre can accommodate different observances. This multi-faith facility is believed to be the first of its kind in the world and is already garnering national and international attention.

Padre Gerry Peddle, former CF Chaplain General and vice-chair of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, underlined the importance of the event in his address. "Today, with Her Excellency in attendance, we are opening more than a facility. We are opening a hallowed place where all will feel welcomed as they deal with the grief over the loss of a loved family member, a place where the healing can begin."

The CF Central Band and a guard of honour welcomed the Governor General, who was awaited by a crowd of visitors and reporters gathered to cover the event. The Governor General, whose arrival was announced by a mounted RCMP escort, inspected the guard of honour. Various dignitaries, community and business leaders, military and RCMP officials, distinguished guests, families and friends attended the event.

This year marks the 135th anniversary of the founding of the Beechwood Cemetery. Since its establishment in 1873, more than 75 000 Canadians from all walks of life, including many prominent Canadians such as Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden, universal Medicare proponent Tommy Douglas, General Andrew McNaughton and poet Archibald Lampman have been laid to rest there. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated it a National Historic Site in 2001 and, that same year, it became the official National Military Cemetery of Canada.

"A national cemetery in Canada's capital serves as a symbol of Canadian unity and pride, and as a means of preserving and promoting Canada's rich history and diversity," said Sylvia Ceacero, executive director of Beechwood.



**Last Posting**

It is with sadness to announce that on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008 one of our founding members *Sidney Mollon* of Fredericton NB has gone to his last posting. Sid served as a merchant marine during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, awarded the CVSM and Clasp, War Medals 1939-45, re-enlisted in the RCASC in April 1954 and served until November 1970, during this time of service he had two United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in Cyprus. Sidney was buried on the 7 May 2008, per his request members of The Blue Helmets attended the grave site service



**Lest We Forget**

**Grandparents**

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws.

"You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a girl in the line said to the little fella. Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles, she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful!" The boy looked up, "Really?" "Of course," said the grandmother. "Why, just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles." The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

\*\*\*\*\*  
A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"

\*\*\*\*\*  
My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are Alike?" I mentally polished my halo while I asked "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.

\*\*\*\*\*  
I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me, and always she was correct. But it was fun for me, so I continued. At last she headed for the door, saying sagely, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these yourself!"

\*\*\*\*\*  
When my grandson, Billy, and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from tracking pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use, Grandpa. The mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

\*\*\*\*\*  
When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied, "I'm not sure." "Look in your underwear, Grandma," he advised. "Mine says I'm four".

**The Blue Helmets**  
Peacekeepers Memorial Day  
09 August 2008

Fellow Members

On August 09 to honour our fallen peacekeepers The Blue Helmets will have a Remembrance Service at the Fredericton Cenotaph and United Nations Flag Raising at the Fredericton City Hall.

Itinerary is as follows:

- 09:30 for 10:00 Members and guests meet at the Fredericton Cenotaph
- 10:00 Remembrance Service
- 10:45 for 11:00 Members and guests meet at Fredericton City Hall
- Luncheon at the RC Legion

Dress: The Blue Helmets Dress (for those who have it) with medals

Your attendance would be greatly appreciated

Master of Ceremony will be Fred Gallant

In the Service of Peace and for our Veterans

Mark your calendar, looking forward to seeing you there



## THE BLUE HELMETS

### 2008 Annual Reunion

Itinerary for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2008

All indoor events will take place at Fredericton Inn, Regent Street, Fredericton, NB

- Friday     3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008
  - 18:30 Meet and Greet Fredericton Inn Lounge
  
- Saturday   4<sup>th</sup> October 2008
  - 1030 for 1100 Memorial Service at Fredericton Cenotaph
    - NOTE: Don't forget your medals and Beret
  - 1200 Luncheon at the RC Legion Br 4
  - 1330 for 1400 General Meeting at the Fredericton Inn
  
- Saturday   4<sup>th</sup> October 2008
  - 1830 for 1900 Dinner (Jacket and tie)
  - 1900 Three Course Meal
  - 2000 Guest Speaker
  - Socializing after the dinner
  
- Sunday     5<sup>th</sup> October 2008
  - Farewell Breakfast
  - 0800 – 1030
  - 1130 – Safe Trip Home for All.

# The Blue Helmets

## 2008 Annual Reunion

### Registration Form

Yes I/We \_\_\_\_\_ will attend (check appropriate box)

For planning purposes it will be necessary to have numbers for each of the listed functions, therefore would you please indicate the functions you will be participating in.

Fee: \$32.00 per Person

- ( ) Meet & Greet (Friday)
- ( ) Cenotaph Memorial Service and Luncheon afterwards (Saturday)  
"DON'T FORGET YOUR MEDALS AND BERET"
- ( ) Supper (Saturday)
- ( ) Farewell Breakfast (Sunday)

**➔ •Note:** For reservation purposes, it will be necessary to confirm number of people attending therefore Registration must to be received by no later than 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Last minute registration (no later than 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008) will be accepted by contacting Fred LeBlanc via Phone: 506 472-3215 or E-mail: [Fredleb@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:Fredleb@nbnet.nb.ca)

Please make Cheque or Money Order payable to: The Blue Helmets

Send all to:

The Blue Helmets  
17 DeWitt Acres  
Fredericton NB E3A 6S3