

HONOUR



CHARTwell
retirement residences

Chartwell is proud that net proceeds of this book are being donated to Canadian organizations committed to the remembrance of Canada's veterans, including The War Amps Operation Legacy.

Yuri Dojc

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Published in Canada by Chartwell Seniors Housing REIT
100 Milverton Dr., Suite 700, Mississauga, Ontario L5R 4H1
www.chartwellreit.ca

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title: HONOUR

ISBN: 978-0-9781155-1-7

Executive Editor: Phil McKenzie

Photography by Yuri Dojc

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Design and project co-ordination by Brad Walker

Cover photo by Yuri Dojc

Foreword photo by Brad Walker

Editing by Jean Mills

Proofreading by Marilyn Hersh

Translation by Documens Traduction Inc.

Printing by CJ Graphics

Paper supplied by Unisource Canada, Inc.

Cover printed on Neenah Classic Crest Slate DTC

Text pages printed on Starbrite Velvet 100lb text

FOREWORD

In 1997, flying back from Czechoslovakia after my father's funeral, I struck up a conversation with the man beside me. Over the course of our flight we had a rather meaningful discussion about one's life destiny. As we spoke, my companion shared his experiences as a Jew interned at Auschwitz near the end of the Second World War. I was very moved by what he said and can still hear the emotion in his voice. He said: "It wasn't the government that won the war or liberated the concentration camps; it was the soldiers." It was the soldiers who fought the front-line battles and faced the threat of death with every step of their advance, not the politicians who conscripted their service. It was the soldiers who entered the camps and opened the iron gates, not those who had carefully negotiated the treaty that announced the German surrender. It was the soldiers. Those words rang in my ears.

As a photographer, I felt compelled to better understand who these individual soldiers were.

I began taking photos of veterans as I came across referrals from friends and contacts about unique individuals. However, *Honour* truly began to materialize while I was working on another book project, *Reflections*, with Chartwell Seniors Housing a few years ago. As I shared my commitment to the idea of a veterans photography project, Phil McKenzie, Chartwell's head of Sales and Marketing, immediately became passionate about the project. "We need to do this, Yuri," he urged me. The dynamic seemed perfect. Chartwell is home to hundreds of veterans who live in their long-term care and retirement residences across Canada.



With other project champions behind us, including Chartwell's Brad Walker and Sharon Henderson, we officially began seeking interested individuals living in Chartwell homes. Our call for participation was limited only to those who had served or had supported the war effort. Our hope was to capture a true diversity of experiences and individuals.

To those who are featured in the following pages, I can only offer my deepest appreciation for their participation and willingness to let us capture their humanity, their experiences and their raw emotion after 65 years of peace. Many told us stories that, they later confided, had never been shared before. Many of our photo sessions involved family members, and I could not imagine a greater telling of their story than through the adoring eyes of their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. I knew with our first photo that we were not just photographing people, we were capturing history.

It was great to work with the project team behind this book at Chartwell. This was one of the most fulfilling professional experiences that I have ever been involved in.

When you turn these pages, I hope you will see what I saw as I looked through my lens: pride, humility, memories, love.

Yuri Dojc

INTRODUCTION

Remembrance. This simple word is the debt all Canadians owe our Second World War veterans. Their service and their sacrifice define our country and the peaceful, democratic way of life we so cherish in Canada.

Chartwell Seniors Housing is proud to have partnered with world-renowned photographer Yuri Dojc to create this lasting legacy commemorating Canada's World War II veterans and those who supported the war effort. When we experience a book like *Honour*, we are acutely aware that history is passing before our eyes. In fact, employees in our long-term care and retirement homes across Canada often share that this insight into our past is one of the most interesting and fulfilling aspects of working with seniors.

I want to extend a sincere thank-you to the individuals featured in this book. While space has permitted only 35 profiles, we easily could have told the stories of hundreds more. Their stories, as told to Sharon Henderson, Chartwell's Director of Communications, are based solely on individual personal accounts and recollections. We wanted to express their memories as true to their telling as possible, and while time can sometimes wear away the details, it only serves to remind us that our window for the preservation of those reminiscences is getting smaller with each passing day.

Brent Binions

President and CEO

Chartwell Seniors Housing REIT

JOHN DELBERT KERFOOT

B. NOVEMBER 23, 1919

SMITHS FALLS, ONTARIO

*“I hope we never
face this again.”*

As a Leading Aero Engine Mechanic stationed in Yorkshire, England, John Kerfoot, known to his family and friends as Jack, fondly recalls the exhilarating opportunity of working on “the big boys,” including the Avro Lancaster bomber and Rolls Royce engines. “I would change the plugs and start up the planes, and I would just feel like taking off,” he recalls with a laugh. The excitement would be short-lived as the skies would later fill up with German planes chasing a returning Allied aircraft desperately close to a safe landing. “It is an awful feeling to watch a seven-crew plane become engulfed in flames right before your eyes,” Jack sadly reminisces. “It was an absolutely awful, fiery, sad scene to witness. You never lose that image.” The Gerry planes would then circle round and shoot up the village, leaving more death, destruction and fear in their wake. After he returned home to Smiths Falls after the war, three Germans came to the small town looking for work the next year. Over time, John befriended one of the men, who had served in the German army. “It was obvious that they had faced the same losses as we had and that they had been following the same orders that we were following,” Jack adds. Still close friends today, Jack believes that the sacrifice of war on both sides should serve as a warning for future generations. “I hope we never face this again,” he reflects.



RENÉ MASSÉ

B. NOVEMBER 13 1924

SAINT-JEAN-SUR-RICHELIEU, QUÉBEC

Like many young Canadians of the time, René Massé enlisted at the age of 18 with a sense of adventure about war. “We thought we were men,” he quietly recollects of his youthful optimism. Arriving in Holland in 1945 as a member of the Royal 22nd Regiment, he saw that the German occupation had

*“We all have
memories we
prefer not to
talk about.”*

taken its toll on the Dutch, and starvation was rampant.

René recalls temporary ceasefires being negotiated so the Canadians could hand out food to the desperate locals before the fighting resumed. At the same time, the Germans, with their own supply chains weakening, scrambled to secure themselves the food packets being airdropped by the Canadians. “War is a dirty thing,” he says, lost in thought. “We all have memories we prefer not to talk about.” After the surrender of the German

forces on May 5, 1945, René’s regiment was responsible for escorting German prisoners across the border. This close proximity with the German soldiers made it clear to René that “they were just people and as happy as we were that the war was over.” In 1967, someone he didn’t recognize bought him a drink in the local pub in Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, Québec. The gentleman turned out to be one of those German soldiers, now travelling on business from Hamburg, whom René had escorted across the lines all those years ago and who had recognized him. The two men were finally able to toast peace together.



SORTIE

LLOYD VINCENT HOOVER

B. DECEMBER 29, 1922

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Lloyd Hoover's experience as a radar mechanic in the Second World War was a learning opportunity far greater than if he had remained home working on the local farms, which seemed to be the only employment opportunity open to him after high school. Enlisting, on the other hand, offered excitement, opportunity and a steady paycheque. However, on his first attempt to join at the age of 19, Lloyd was rejected due to poor eyesight. He tried again soon after and was assigned to ground crew service and trained as a radar mechanic. Following his military, radio and radar training, Lloyd was posted to the coastal air surveillance base of Bella Bella near Vancouver. There he had the opportunity to work on military seaplanes, including the PBY Catalina, a flying boat used for patrol bombing, anti-submarine warfare and

*“It was an experience
never to be forgotten.”*

search-and-rescue missions. Lloyd was later part of a group of 5,000 radar mechanics sent overseas after D-Day in 1944 to assist the British Royal Air Force. “We were part of

the behind-the-scenes of the war, but we knew we were contributing to the overall effort,” he adds. Serving in Scotland, Ireland and England, Lloyd is glad that he was persistent in his efforts to enlist. “It was an experience never to be forgotten,” says Lloyd.



JOYCE TAYLOR

B. OCTOBER 9, 1916

PORT ANTONIO, JAMAICA

Born and raised in Jamaica, Joyce Taylor was eager for adventure when she contacted the Canadian embassy about enlisting. This, of course, required her to immigrate to Canada, something she was very willing to do. Her mother's best friend had left the island to move to Canada years before, and Joyce was fascinated from an early age by the stories this woman would tell when she returned home. "I saw moving to Canada as an adventure; serving was my opportunity to offer my new homeland something in return." Travelling with two other women she knew from Jamaica, Joyce first flew into Miami and then took the train to Toronto. "We were met at the train station by representatives from the Army, sent to basic training in Kitchener and then posted to Ottawa. It was all so interesting and exciting." Assigned to the Director of Organization in Ottawa, Joyce worked for the department which oversaw the return home of service personnel after the war. "You felt good knowing you were helping to reunite families," she remembers. "It was time to bring the boys home."

*“Serving was my
opportunity to offer
my new homeland
something in return.”*





GERALD FRY

B. MAY 26, 1924

KARLSUHE, GERMANY

As the son of a physician who had served in the German Army during World War I, Gerald Fry never thought to identify himself as a Jew, his family having assimilated generations ago. That sense of security would change dramatically following Hitler's introduction of the *Nuremberg Laws* in 1935, which legalized the ethnic segregation of Jews in Germany. As the Nazis accelerated their regime of oppression, Gerald's family became increasingly fearful for their safety. In 1939, at the age of 15, he bid them an emotional goodbye as he embarked for England, one of 90 Jewish children sponsored for refuge by former British Prime Minister Lord Baldwin. "To this day, I have no idea why I was chosen, why I was spared," he recalls. It would be the last time he would see his family. In England, Gerald enlisted in the British Army, serving from D-Day to VE-Day. "I had a score to settle with the Germans," he adds. The very day the war ended, Gerald was seconded to the Intelligence Corps as a war crimes interpreter for two years, attached to a British High Court Judge who presided over the trials of second-level war criminals, those who had carried out orders from the top Nuremberg defendants. At the end of the war, Gerald learned that his family had been sent to Auschwitz where the shocking genocide of over 1.1 million Jews took place. Gerald's resentment and anguish remain strong today. "I don't think forgiveness will ever come in my lifetime," he concludes.

*"To this day,
I have no idea
why I was chosen,
why I was spared."*

THÉODE DESCHENEAUX

Shown with his granddaughters

B. JULY 21, 1917

NOTRE-DAME-DE-PIERREVILLE, QUÉBEC

While the war was being fought across the Atlantic, the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was a harsh reminder of how close the conflict had come to Canada's own shores. In 1941 Théode Descheneaux enrolled in the army but soon asked to be transferred to the Merchant Marine. "I really thought that I would be more useful here than overseas," says Théode. Montréal had become the key shipping port along Canada's east coast, and this critical supply route was under frequent threat from German U-boats eager to disrupt the transfer of goods including lumber and fuel. When their crew heard that a nearby Canadian ship had been torpedoed by a submarine and had sunk, Théode still recalls the fear he felt on hearing that the same submarine had just passed under their own ship. Soon after, they moved into an area near the Saguenay River to hide for seven days as German boats circled nearby. Théode remembers another close call when a large object was spotted approaching their boat, and the tremendous relief when it turned out to be a huge whale instead of a German submarine. In all, 72 Canadian merchant ships were lost due to enemy action. While Théode is proud of his military service, his hope is that no other generation will face such a loss of life as in the Second World War.

*"I really thought
that I would be
more useful here
than overseas."*



HOWARD LESLIE FOSTER
Shown with his wife Gwen

B. NOVEMBER 25, 1921

THORNLOE, ONTARIO

Against the backdrop of a war that was gaining momentum overseas, teenagers Howard Foster and Gwen Appleby began a slow courtship of long walks, countless hours spent talking, and the unspoken hope that a more serious future lay ahead for them, together. However, in 1942, Howard's decision to enlist in the Air Force (a great opportunity for an education and an amazing life experience) would exact a heavy price on this blossoming romance. The time apart would heighten Howard's youthful insecurities about holding back Gwen, a promising scholar. Little did they realize when Gwen attended Howard's "wings ceremony" in October 1943, as he graduated as a pilot after 14 months of rigorous training, that they would not see each other again for six decades. Over those intervening years, their lives would take them in separate directions as they both enjoyed happy marriages, loving families and professional accomplishments. Since both had now lost their beloved spouses, time seemed ready to give them another chance. In May 2003, Howard worked up the courage to call Gwen. "Feelings that lay dormant for 60 years rose to the surface," said Gwen, reflecting on their first conversation. "Life had come full circle." By October that year, they were married with the full support of their families. "Distance had separated us," adds Howard, "but time has brought us back together."

*“Distance had
separated us but
time has brought
us back together.”*



EARL B. MACNAUGHTON

B. AUGUST 29, 1919

MAPLE, ONTARIO

*“You felt a
responsibility
to help prepare
them as best
as possible.”*

With the rapid evolution of new technology in the areas of weaponry, communications and intelligence, scientists played an important role in the Second World War for both their strategic and training abilities. Finishing

a degree in Math and Physics at the University of Toronto in 1941, Earl MacNaughton essentially graduated into the war. “Scientists were involved in assisting with military training of new recruits into the Army, Navy and Air Force. It was felt they would benefit from an introductory science course at a first-year university level,” Earl recounts. As a civilian, Earl taught these courses. “You felt a responsibility,” Earl recalls, “to prepare them as best as possible.” Earl was next involved in operational research studying the effectiveness of Canadian

naval attack procedures. In the spring of 1944 he became an Officer of the Royal Canadian Navy, allowing him to work directly on Canadian naval ships. After the war, Earl had the opportunity to board a German submarine that had been lurking outside of Halifax. “Examining their log books, we realized they had been observing us the whole time as well.” Earl married his wife Jean in 1943 and returned to the University of Toronto. Graduating with a PhD in Physics, he joined the University of Guelph in 1948, where the MacNaughton Building stands in honour of his contributions to science.



EDWIN DOUGLAS WHILLANS

Shown with his family

B. OCTOBER 3, 1919

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Doug Whillans' calm telling of his Royal Canadian Air Force days can almost lull you into believing that any one of his 100 plane raids was just another day on the job.

"Once we got onto the squadron, we were essentially going to work." As a Wireless

Air Gunner, Doug's seven-man crew flew mostly Lancaster bombers on their overnight missions across the skies of Germany. The toll of those night raids clearly left their mark on this gentle man. "You tried not to think of the effects on your targets, but you knew the toll was heavy on both sides," adds Doug, who has kept his log books of all the areas they bombed. In retrospect, Doug acknowledges that for many Germans, "they too were only doing what they were told to do; they were just on the wrong side. It was our duty to stop a madman and that is what we did." Intense attacks were frequent occurrences for fighter planes and Doug's crew faced a number of close calls, the risk magnified by the cargo of bombs they carried on board. "We lived day to day, the danger was so constant." Close calls behind him, Doug was grateful to return home at the end of war to his wife, Sylvia, and son, Bob, who was only six weeks old when Doug had left for service.

*"It was our duty
to stop a madman
and that is what
we did."*



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BREMEN



LLOYD GAUDETTE

Shown with his wife Terry

B. JUNE 14, 1922

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

For Corporal Lloyd Gaudette's parents, a knock on the door on Christmas Eve became a sound they would dread. Twice, in 1943 and 1944, they had been notified on December 24th that their son, a gunner with the 48th Highlanders, was "wounded in action." During the first injury, a sniper's bullet grazed Lloyd's forehead in battle. The second, a year later, would leave a much more permanent reminder of what many refer to as "Bloody December" on the front lines in Italy, which would culminate in the deadly Battle of Ortona. Over 1,300 Canadians would lose their lives during close-quarters combat waged in the small Italian town. "I was in the front line more than I was out of it," recalls Lloyd. Soldiers would often make their advance by walking along tank tracks, under the assumption that any hidden landmines would have already been triggered by the weight of the heavy vehicles. Not so, Lloyd learned, as he was thrown 50 feet from the impact of the blast and subsequently lost his leg below the knee. Despite the gravity of his injury, Lloyd immediately realized his good fortune in having survived. "I made it, I'm here," he remembers thinking in the hospital. Years later, returning to Italy with his wife Terry, he visited the war cemetery in Ortona. "I knew virtually the entire front line of tombstones."

*"I was in the front
line more than I
was out of it."*

MAUREEN MARGARET HARWOOD

B. FEBRUARY 13, 1925

BRIGHTON, SUSSEX, ENGLAND

Maureen's self-proclaimed life as an "Army brat" began early when her family moved to India, where her father was serving as a member of the Indian Army Corps. The government of India was one of the largest Allied supporters, declaring war on Germany in September 1939. Maureen volunteered for service

at the age of 17, becoming a Volunteer Ambulance Driver in India. As the Indian Army engaged in heavy combat with the Japanese, Maureen would transport injured soldiers from the train station to the hospital. "The atrocities of that battle were shocking," Maureen remembers. "The injured men were as emotionally damaged as they were physically wounded. It was horrifying to think of what they had been through." At 18, Maureen became a cryptographer for the Indian Army Corps and remembers being required to sign the British *Secret Services War Act*. "We were told that the penalty for breaking the 'code' was death by firing squad. It was a stark reminder of the importance of the material we were working with," says Maureen. Returning to England after the death of her father, she joined the Royal Navy, continuing as a cryptographer until the end of the war. "We always knew we would win, that the Allies would fight to their last man to stop the atrocities of Hitler," adds Maureen.

*"The injured men
were as emotionally
damaged as they were
physically wounded."*



GEORGES MAURICE LEONARD

Shown with his wife Jean

B. APRIL 22, 1917

MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

Surrounded by the harsh realities of war, Maurice was one of the approximately 48,000 Canadian servicemen who found love amidst the close and frequent contact many soldiers had with British civilians. Billeted on a residential street, Maurice and his housemates were warmly welcomed by their neighbours

“War is a nasty thing but I was fortunate to find something so unexpected.”

including one particular family who opened their home and, most importantly, their kitchen to the young Canadian soldiers. Love soon blossomed between Maurice and their youngest daughter, Jean, and after a two-year courtship they were married on Dominion Day, July 1st, 1944. “War is a nasty thing,” says Maurice, “but I was fortunate to find something so unexpected.” Despite the joy he found in Britain, Maurice vividly recalls the misery of what England’s people were put through during the war. Stationed near London,

he saw first-hand the reality of The Blitz, the Germans’ sustained bombing of London that killed over 43,000 civilians. “The destruction and fear could be seen and felt everywhere,” recalls Maurice. “On top of the constant dread, the restrictions and rations were unnatural, especially to the children. They lost their childhood.”



VINCENT PATRICK CAVANAUGH

B. APRIL 13, 1922

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

As a member of the 1st Canadian Infantry Corps, Vince Cavanaugh served in Italy, including on the Hitler line, the Battle of Ortona and the Moro River Campaign. Thousands of Canadians lost their lives in those historic encounters. Humble but deeply proud of his service, Vince Cavanaugh recalls his time on the Italian front line as always being within artillery range from the enemy. “We were trained to always be ready,” he recollects. “We depended on each other for our lives.” That strong camaraderie was necessary to survive the physical and emotional fatigue of the frequent fighting as well as the harsh living and weather conditions. Vince remembers going for six months without seeing fresh food, living on canned meat, vegetables and biscuits. Returning to New Brunswick after the war, it was the colours that Vince noticed first after the years of green uniforms and muddy surroundings. Re-enlisting nine years later, Vince went on to serve with NATO until 1972 as a weapons technician, spending another 11 years overseas, this time with his family. “I’ve never forgotten that the comfort and safety we enjoy today is from the sacrifices made in war. We can’t let the next generation ever forget the price paid for our freedom.”

*“We depended
on each other
for our lives.”*





LLOYD DAVIS

B. OCTOBER 3, 1920

TORONTO, ONTARIO

As a Signal Officer in the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, Lloyd Davis was responsible for establishing and maintaining communication with brigade headquarters as well as the two other regiments in their battalion

*“I still can’t
understand how
hatred as vile as
Hitler’s could
spread like it did.”*

throughout combat. “Essentially, we reported a play-by-play of what was happening on the battleground: our advance, enemy captures, injuries and casualties,” Lloyd recalls. “We were positioned well back from the fighting, but you could hear it and were always aware that men were being blown away only feet away from us,” Lloyd recalls. Despite being out of the direct line of fire, he couldn’t help thinking that the sound of shelling was always coming closer.

“You always wondered if the next shell would be aimed at us,” he adds. The regiment fought in the Battle of Normandy and the Battle of the Scheldt, and concluded their deployment fighting on German soil. It still remains unfathomable to Lloyd that the Nazis were able to succeed to the extent they did with their oppression and unconscionable behaviour to innocent Jewish citizens. “I still can’t understand how hatred as vile as Hitler’s could spread like it did,” says Lloyd. “We knew it had to be stopped. We knew that was our job.” Returning home after the war, Lloyd joined the Reserve Army in Toronto and stayed active for 25 years, finishing as a Captain and the Adjutant of the regiment.

JOHN ANGUS McDONALD

Shown with his daughter Janine Seaver

B. MARCH 18, 1918

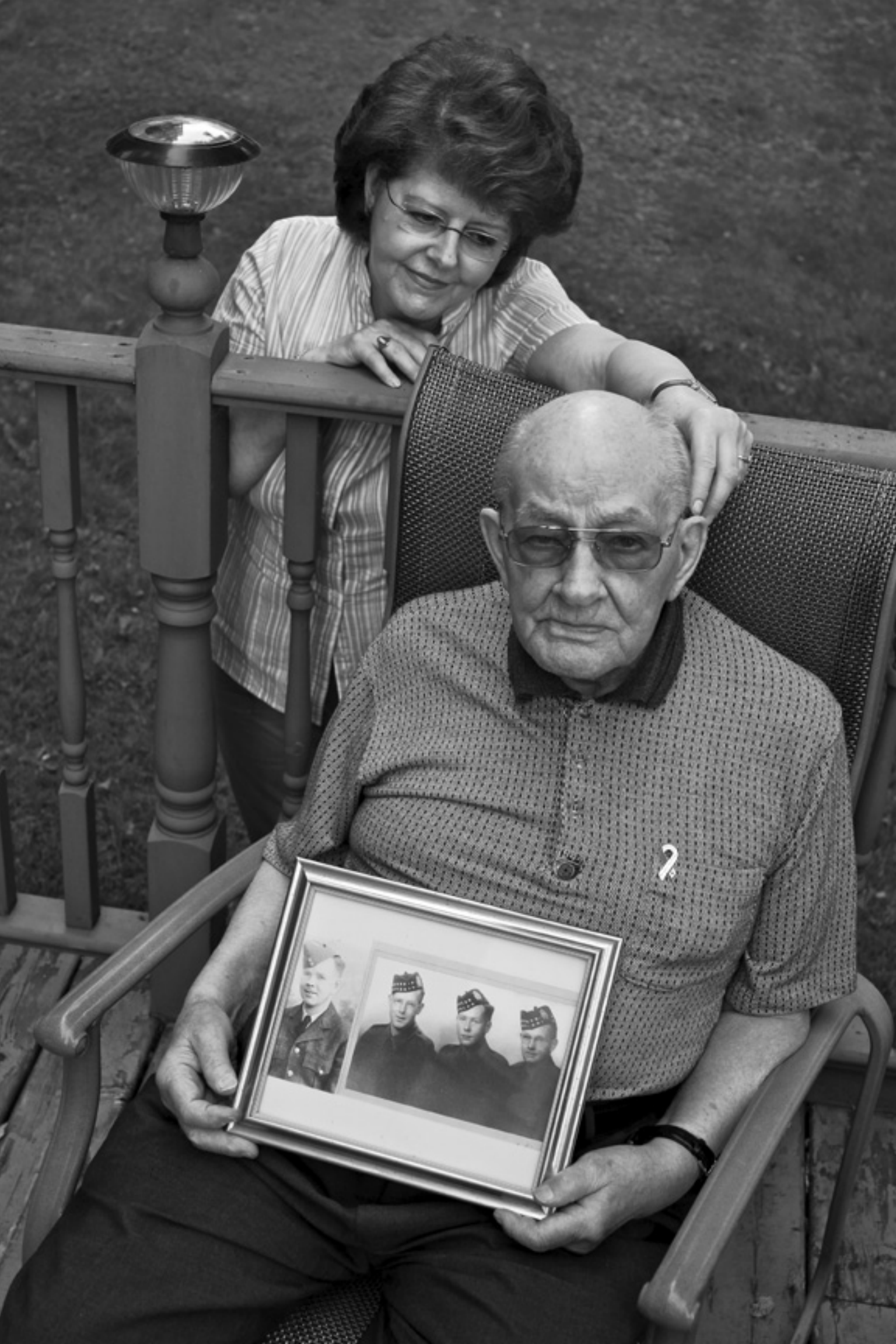
LANCASTER TOWNSHIP, ONTARIO

John McDonald recalls the pride of enlisting along with his three brothers to serve in the Second World War. His oldest brother Donald chose the Air Force, while James, John and Francis all joined the Army, serving in the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders 1st Battalion. As they sat together at a local pub to toast the occasion, John's younger brother Francis offered an eerie prediction. "He told us 'all of us brothers are not coming back,'" John solemnly recalls. He would prove to be right. A month after their regiment took part in the Normandy invasion on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, John received word that his brother Francis had been hit in the groin with shrapnel. Told not to worry as the wound was not deep and Francis would be transferred to an English hospital to recuperate, John penned his brother a letter that night offering his wishes for a quick recovery. Unbeknownst to John, a vital southerly advance had closed the local bridge to one-way crossings that night.

*"All of us brothers are
not coming back."*

By the time Francis was moved, he was too weak to withstand the shock of the necessary amputation and he died. With the Battle for Caen still underway, John would not find out about his brother's

death for another week. Francis' medals, and his mother's Silver Cross, are on display in the Caen Memorial Museum for Peace outside of Normandy, France, representing Canada's sacrifice for freedom.



WILLIAM LOCKWOOD

B. DECEMBER 29, 1917

RENFREW, ONTARIO

Bill Lockwood prefers to be recognized for his devotion as an airman, not for his hardships as a prisoner of war (PoW), but he deserves the title of hero for both. “I was trained as a fighter, not a prisoner,” Bill adds adamantly, but the emotion is raw and reveals the memories that are still vivid in his own quiet moments. As a Royal Canadian Air Force Flight Lieutenant, Bill was stationed in South-East Asia during the Second World War. The squad of 650 pilots was forced to surrender to the Japanese when Singapore fell. Bill’s ordeal would last more than three years and include starvation, disease and brutality at the hands of his captors. While being moved across the Pacific, over 300 of the PoWs would die of starvation, disease and frequent shelling by Allied planes unaware that the Japanese ship held their own men. Bill was tasked with the job of presiding over each man’s burial which, given the conditions, consisted of a short blessing as the bodies were lowered into the ocean. Bill still has the diary he kept on the boat in which he recorded the names of each of the deceased men. “They deserved to be remembered if they could not be helped,” says Bill softly. Liberated in 1945 weighing less than 100 lbs, Bill was aware of his own close mortality. “We had reached the end of our endurance,” said Bill. “I know I would not have survived much longer.”

*“They deserved to
be remembered if
they could not be
helped.”*



Wm. J. ...
Gunsberg

Wm. Williams
Cpl. Weather
Hughes. D. C. 110
127

B. Rain
Cpl. Maudsley
Cpl. Muehle
J. Jones 900
Gull's grave
L. Clark
C. P.
Hawcutt A.

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13
14

Miller

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13
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Chandler
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Woodrums
Wooten

11
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C. P. Bennett

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ALDO GERALD RUSCONI

B. NOVEMBER 8, 1922

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

Watching the 1968 film *The Devil's Brigade* a few years ago triggered more than nostalgic memories for Gerry Rusconi, a member of the joint Canada-USA First Special Services Force. Instead, it brought back the emotion of knowing that he was one of only 17 men to survive from his regiment's original 250 members. The First Special Services Force was created as a versatile assault group, put through incredible physical conditioning and sent into enemy territory to wreak havoc and gain control. "We were told we were the world's best fighting unit," recalls Gerry. "The Americans and British had been trying to take Monte La Difensa in Italy for six weeks. We took it in six hours." The Germans quickly nicknamed the unit "The Black Devils." The elite soldiers thrived on danger and their battles became as legendary as their high numbers of casualties, hovering at almost 40%.

Despite multiple bullet and mortar wounds, Gerry recalls their final day as a fighting unit as "the saddest day in my life to that date."

Seven days after returning home, Gerry would marry his wife Betty and they would go on to have three boys. Adds his youngest son Garth,

"He didn't talk about the war much, and it took us a long time to realize that he'd been a part of this incredible history. We're awfully proud of what he did for Canada and of the husband and father he was at home."

*"We were told we
were the world's
best fighting unit."*

DOREEN MANLEY

B. APRIL 17, 1926

BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

*“It’s not something
you want to
remember, but
something you
can’t forget.”*

Growing up in Bradford, Yorkshire, Doreen Manley remembers German air raids were a terrifying backdrop to the Second World War. She recalls racing towards her family’s backyard air raid shelter as the machine gun in a low-flying Gerry plane peppered her residential street with bullets. For three months, her family lived in that shelter with only moments of fresh air at a time. “It’s not something you want to remember but something you can’t forget,”

Doreen adds quietly. “You never knew if you would make it to the next day.” The planes would fly so close to the houses that Doreen can recall looking up into the hardened faces of the German pilots. In 1940, the town’s Marks & Spencer’s store was hit, bursting a water pipe in the basement where many had taken refuge, including dozens of women and children. Two of Doreen’s friends drowned in that tight space. At the age of 17, Doreen joined the Women’s Land Army and the Women’s Timber Corps. Responsible for providing food and timber for the United Kingdom in place of the men serving in the military, the Corps was physically challenging work, but Doreen loved the adventure. “We would chop trees using six-pound axes and hoist six-foot timber planks. We did the jobs of the men so they could serve,” she recalls. In 2008, Doreen received a medal from the UK government recognizing the efforts of women in the Second World War.



BILL ROYDS

B. APRIL 11, 1922

KENORA, ONTARIO

*“They were trying to
kill us; it was our
job to do the same.”*

Thinking back to his service as Ordinary Seaman on the frigate *HMCS Saint John*, Bill Royds fondly recalls his opportunity to travel around the world as a young man of only 19. “It was an incredible opportunity for a boy from northern Ontario,” he adds. And an exciting experience as well. Frigates were escort vehicles as well as being equipped for anti-submarine warfare, and the *Saint John* was heralded for the sinking of two German U-Boats in the English Channel near the coast of Scotland. Both the U-247 and the U-309 contained over 100 Germans, and Bill can remember the exhilaration of the sailors when the hits were confirmed. “They were trying to kill us; it was our job to do the same. We sure celebrated,” says Bill. He also recalls the discipline of the navy as tough and life on the ship as difficult at times. “But we were young and proud to serve,” he remembers. “We weren’t there for the conditions; we were there for the cause.”



ROBERT GORDON SAWDON

B. FEBRUARY 24, 1925

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

In his war memoir, “Another River to Cross,” Robert Sawdon narrates a number of terrifying close calls that remind him daily of his good fortune to have lived to tell the tales. His older brother James, one of three Sawdon boys to serve

“As I entered the cemetery, I could still hear the sounds of battle.”

in the Army, was not as fortunate. James died on June 6th, 1944, after landing on Juno Beach, struck by machine gun and mortar fire. It is estimated that 359 Canadians died in the initial landing. “Their blood soaked into the sand and into the soil of France,” Robert solemnly adds. After the war, Robert visited the Canadian War Cemetery at Beny-sur-Mer near Normandy, France. “All around me there seemed to be

an aura of peace and serenity, but,” he recalls, “as I entered the cemetery, I could still hear the sounds of battle. I could hear the thunder of the artillery, the sputtering of machine guns, the siren-like sounds of “moaning minnies” mortar bombs and the clanking of prowling tanks.” Robert was taken aback by the dates engraved on the headstones, a somber reminder that most of the men buried were only in their late teens or early twenties as they died in battle. “These brave men gave the greatest possible gift to their fellow men – their lives,” says Robert. “Their loss was not in vain. A brutal regime had to be stopped so that freedom could live again.”



FRED STRINGFELLOW

Shown with his wife Jessie

B. MAY 6, 1923

TISDALE, SASKATCHEWAN

Fred Stringfellow was only 17 when he enlisted. “Everything was scarce back home, especially jobs and money,” Fred recalls. With seven children in the family, three enlisted. “We talk about how tough we had it, but it was the mothers who had it the toughest.

They worried about us every hour of the day,” Fred adds. Fred served with the 8th Recce, a reconnaissance regiment responsible for determining the location and capabilities of enemy units. This involved close-range approaches to the Germans, and surprises were frequent, which often meant hiding in close range until reinforcements arrived. “I learned early that if you heard the gun, you were

good; if you didn’t, you were gone.” Landing in Normandy a few weeks after D-Day, Fred drove a waterproof truck off the landing barge at Juno Beach as Allied forces fought their way into occupied France. “Every day was a close call,” Fred adds, “but hearing what Hitler was doing made us fight a little harder. We wanted to fight for those who would never make it back home.”

The 8th Recce was involved in heavy action right up until the end of the war – which happened to coincide with his birthday, a wonderful gift, he recalls. Arriving back home, Fred would go on to meet Jessie, who had lost her husband in the war. They have been married for 62 years.

“Every day was a close call but hearing what Hitler was doing made us fight a little harder.”





DR. ELDON COMFORT

B. OCTOBER 4, 1912

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

*“I came to believe
that there must be
a better way.”*

When Dr. Eldon Comfort enlisted, he believed the enemy to be so evil that the end justified the means. His experiences, however, would produce a very different impression. “I quickly realized that the enemy was in fact Hitler and those who did his bidding; but that was not the soldiers on the German front line,” he explains. “I came to believe that there must be a better way.” As a Lieutenant with the 2nd Divisional Army, he oversaw a section of radio, telephone and dispatch officers who were responsible for directing gun fire on the front lines. “You realize the gravity of your responsibility quickly,” he adds. As the Allies began planning for their final thrust in 1945, Eldon was asked to design a signal diagram for the advance. It involved heavy artillery and thousands of guns to soften the area for the troop advance. “I’ve never stopped thinking how many were killed in those positions,” he softly recalls. Eldon’s disillusionment would propel him to become a peace activist, his influence on the movement recognized in 2001 when the University of Victoria awarded him an Honourary Doctor of Sacred Letters. Eldon co-ordinates an annual Remembrance Day ceremony at The Gibson Retirement Home where he resides. “People need to remember what happened honestly,” he says. “Not to glorify the war, but to remind us of the respect owed to those who gave their lives.”

SANDRA WILLIAMS

B. APRIL 27 1922

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“We escaped, for a short time, from the stress of war.”

Aware of Canada’s vulnerability to a Japanese attack on the Pacific shoreline, Coal Harbour, on the tip of Vancouver Island, was one of our domestic surveillance bases. Following basic training and Morse code instruction, Sandra Williams was sent to Coal Harbour as

a Wireless Operator Ground (WOG). Working as a team of four, the women would listen to and record Japanese messages intercepted from submarines in the nearby Pacific. “We never knew what the codes said, we just did our job to record them and turned them over for translation,” Sandra recalls. The small island crew, which included about 15 women to approximately 150 men, became close and looked out for each other, especially the young girls. “We thought we would stay in touch forever, but time made that difficult,” she adds. Their location allowed for some interesting leaves and she fondly recalls hitchhiking to Mexico and Hollywood in her uniform. “We were treated like royalty everywhere we went. It was quite a boost to our egos. We escaped, for a short time, from the stress of war,” Sandra recalls. Despite being on high alert for a Japanese invasion, closer to home, Sandra felt the internment of Japanese Canadians was unjust and shameful. “They deserved better,” she reflects.



KEN ARCHIBALD

B. JULY 19, 1920

MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

*“You felt so helpless;
you could see the
bombing happening
below and you
couldn’t do anything.”*

Ken Archibald didn’t join the Air Force as a pilot; he joined it as a radio operator and was soon training rookie signallers in Trenton. “But what I really wanted was to get in the air.” Growing up, Ken had taken flying lessons and, at the age of 22, he became a Flying Officer. Based in Canada, he covered many long flights across the Atlantic transporting goods including confidential documents, mail for the troops and armament. “The planes were going non-stop,” recalls Ken. “There was little time between shifts, and often the weather conditions made the flights extremely dangerous. But it was always an adventure.” The cargo planes were valued targets for the Germans looking to stop the flow of information and classified documents, and Ken sadly recalls what a frequent occurrence it was to land and hear that another friend had gone missing overnight. Sometimes, while crossing the Atlantic, they could see the distress of Allied war ships being attacked. “You felt so helpless; you could see the bombing happening below and you couldn’t do anything. All we could do was radio for help.” On one crossing over the English Channel, near Dunkirk, Ken’s crew sustained an attack that left their C-47 riddled with 211 holes. “Then,” Ken adds, “peace comes and we all move on. We don’t forget, we just move on.”



RICHARD ALAN KUNZE

Shown with his wife Vera

B. OCTOBER 21, 1921

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Enlisting in 1942 at the age of 21, Richard Kunze sought both to serve his country and overcome the persistent discrimination that was being levelled against him as a German descendant in wartime Toronto. “It seemed that the spelling of my last name was enough for my loyalties to be questioned immediately.” Ironically, his father had come to Canada himself to escape the growing violence and oppression of the German empire. Originally a chemical

*“My life was spared
by one honourable
soldier who gave
up his own.”*

volunteer for the army, Richard still suffers from the debilitating scarring left behind by mustard gas burns. So extensive were his scars that the army originally resisted accepting him for overseas service due to the risk that he would be captured for chemical warfare intelligence. Eventually, he was cleared for active duty and fought in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

His regiment suffered heavy losses and his own survival was a chance of fate. A few troopers were moving a large battle gun when the motor exploded. The soldier in front of him took the full impact of the blast while Richard survived. “My life was spared by one honourable soldier who gave up his own,” Richard recalls. Despite the years, the pain from his scars remains constant, but he clearly endures it with pride. “You need to forget and carry on. I chose to serve and I’m proud I did.”



FRANCIS CURRY

B. JANUARY 7, 1920

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

*“I left a young man
of 20 and returned
old at the age of
only 26.”*

Francis Curry enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1940 immediately after graduating from high school. “I left a young man of 20 and returned old at the age of only 26,” he recalls. Despite it being against the Navy’s strict code of behaviour, Francis kept a detailed journal during his time at sea. The five-year diary would later help him document his wartime experiences in two published books, and the original document is now preserved in the National Archives of Canada. Those memories detail his time as a Leading Seaman in the Navy, serving on corvette ships. The corvette convoys were a key defensive measure of the Allies during the Battle of the Atlantic, and their job was to provide protection to the convoys of merchant ships crossing the Atlantic with vital supplies including food, munitions and oil. They also dropped countless depth charges targeted on lurking German U-boats. Francis was responsible for conveying sonar information to the captain during an attack. The extreme weather of the Atlantic made for hazardous conditions, including the formation of ice a foot deep on deck. Below deck was often no better, he recalls. “We were often stinking and starving. War was all around us and then, out of nowhere, a ship would blow up in the distance,” Francis remembers. “Some men preferred to slip overboard than to keep the fight up,” he adds.





JEAN NORRIS

B. AUGUST 5, 1924

MITCHELL, ONTARIO

*“You had to grow
up in a hurry
and accept the
heartache that
came with war.”*

Jean Norris was only 18 years old when she enlisted in the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, following in the military footsteps of her father, uncle and brother as well as her future husband, Merlyn. Her badge number, W1371, reflected her

status as one of the first 2000 women to enlist, and she was trained at Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

“I wanted to carry on the family tradition,” says

Jean. “I was proud to be a woman in service to

my country.” Stationed at Ipperwash Military

Base in Ontario, Jean vividly recalls her time of

duty as an incredible learning experience and

one she took very seriously. Jean was assigned

to the records department and responsible for

co-ordinating paperwork for departing soldiers

after they completed basic training. She vividly

remembers one group of soldiers, full of hope and pride as they departed,

failing to reach their destination off the coast of Italy, their lives cut short by

an air raid – and their families having to be notified. “You had to grow up

in a hurry and accept the heartache that came with war,” Jean quietly adds.

Asked what her message for today’s youth is, Jean thoughtfully offers her

advice against the backdrop of the war in Afghanistan. “Love thy neighbour.

If there was more love in the world, there wouldn’t be war. There wouldn’t

be such great loss.”

DONALD FETTES

B. OCTOBER 21, 1923

GRAVENHURST, ONTARIO

With conscription looming, 18-year-old Don Fettes made the decision to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Despite challenges to his depth perception, he was accepted and trained as a flight engineer, requiring him to both co-pilot the plane and oversee the four 1640-horsepower engines on board. Involved in six raids, mostly in an Avro Lancaster bomber, Don remembers both the fear and excitement of their nighttime missions. “The plane would shake from the power of the engines and we could see everything below,” he recalls. “It was scary but exhilarating.” Another of Don’s roles was to drop “window” (also known as chaff) as a countermeasure over the targets. Window contained thin pieces of aluminum wrapped in paper that, when released, would billow down in a cloud formation and block enemy radar. On his first mission, he forgot to rip the paper and was later chastised for “causing no more damage than the risk of hitting someone on the head,” he recalls with a laugh. At the end of the war, Don stayed on to volunteer for three missions to return Allied prisoners of war to England. “You never saw such an emaciated group of men. It was humbling to know what they had endured,” he recalls. “I don’t think I’ve had a finer feeling in my life than bringing those boys back,” Don adds proudly.

*“I don’t think
I’ve had a finer
feeling in my life
than bringing
those boys back.”*



FRED RODWAY

B. NOVEMBER 29, 1922

HALKIRK, ALBERTA

When Fred Rodway enlisted in the Canadian Navy at the age of 19 he recalls that “the most water I’d been around was in the bathtub.” The Stoker 1st Class was assigned to the frigate *HMCS Nene*. One evening, while the ship was crossing the turbulent Nordic Sea, Fred ventured out on deck for some fresh air. The waters were treacherous and a surprise swell swept Fred overboard. His quick reflexes saved him from falling immediately into the frigid waters, and he bravely held on as the cold water lapped at his legs. With only seconds of strength left, Fred was miraculously saved by his shipmate Ralph Patterson. They still talk by phone once a month. Fred’s ship was part of an escort group that accepted the surrender of 15 German U-boats after V-Day, ferrying them to the north of Scotland. “Up close we could see that the German boats had superior equipment, but we knew we had prevailed out of respect and admiration for our sense of purpose,” said Fred, describing the victory of the Allied forces. “We were a close group on the *Nene*, full of youthful confidence. I don’t think we spent much time thinking of the danger. At the same time, we all know that war never solves anything, and I fear making it sound glorious because it never is.”

*“I fear making it
sound glorious
because it never is.”*



FREDRICK SHORT ANDREWS

B. JULY 22, 1921

WINTERTON, TRINITY BAY, NEWFOUNDLAND

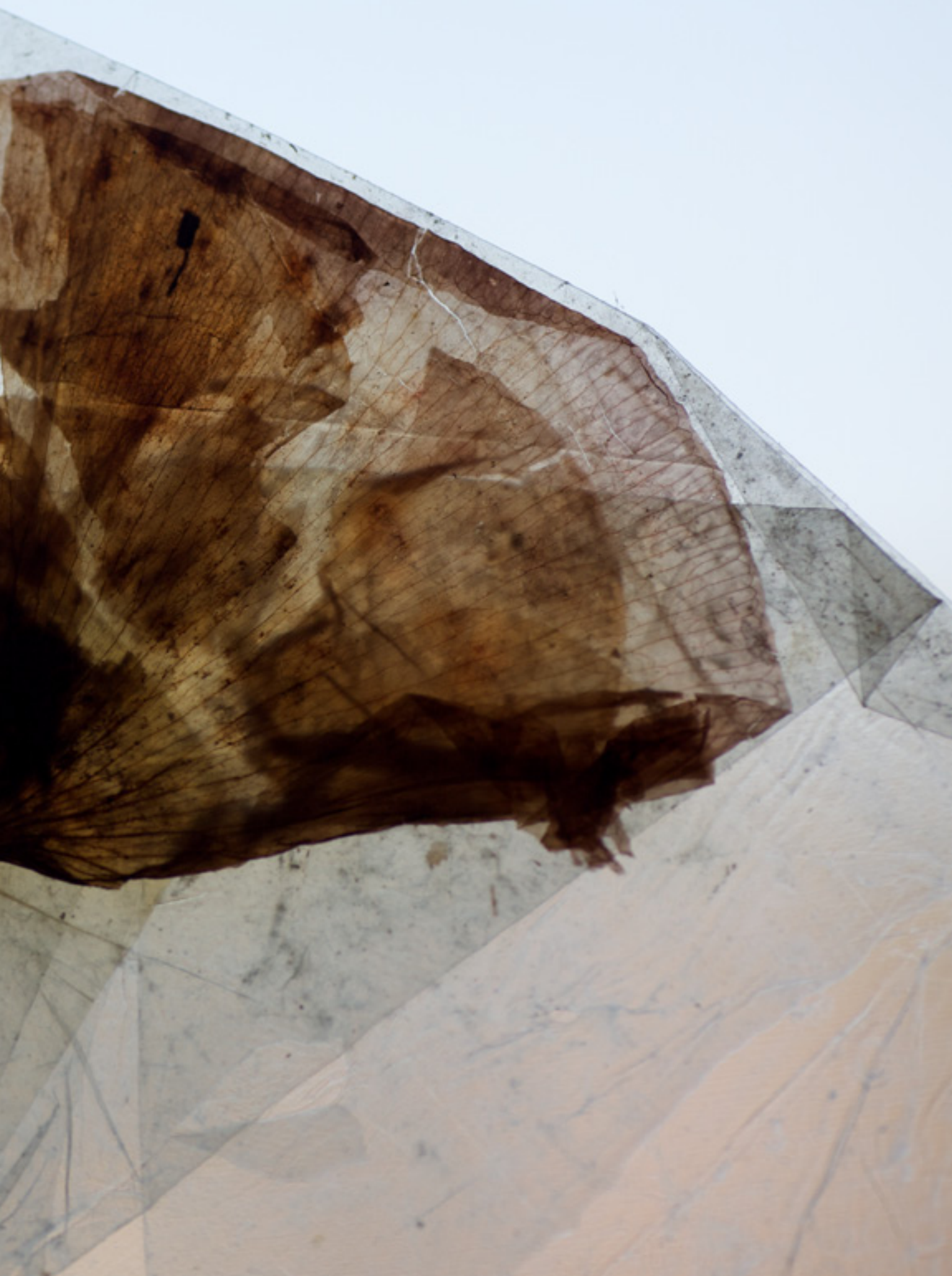
Fred Andrews had joined the army to fight the German threat, and so the order on May 4th, 1945, for his regiment to fire their last eight rounds came as a surprise. “We were in active combat along the Baltic Sea when we heard the order and our response was disbelief,” he recalls. Most difficult was the command to stay in position. While the rest of the Allies celebrated, Fred, a gunner, and his regiment held their ground for three additional days until the ceasefire was confirmed. After seven years of service, it was a day he had longed for. Earlier, in 1944, Fred had picked a poppy as he walked through Normandy’s Flanders Field. Away from home since the age of 18, Fred remembers that “I knew I was walking with history” as he made his

*“I knew I was
walking with
history.”*

way through the countryside. He wrapped the poppy in the packaging left from his cracker ration, found an envelope and mailed it to his mother. His mother kept it in her Bible until her death, at which point she bequeathed the poppy back to Fred in her will. Today, the poppy remains carefully stored, still in its original wrapping. While both fragile and faded, it

is an incredible reminder of the fragility of our World War II veterans 65 years later. A former teacher, Fred continues to write of his memories and has published three books of poetry on the topics of war and faith.







WILLIAM TINDALL

B. JANUARY 13, 1923

TORONTO, ONTARIO

With some creative talking, 17-year-old Bill Tindall successfully enlisted in the Governor General's Horse Guards in 1940, keeping his true age hidden. Looking back, he acknowledges that in his rush to join up, he lost his adolescence to war, but he adds, "Life in the army was an education you can't get anywhere else." When his true age was discovered soon after, he was sent to a holding unit until his previous schooling in machine draughting came to light. At that point he was transferred to the Royal Canadian Engineers, who were tasked with constructing hospitals, bases, roads and bridges in England to support the Allied forces. Eighteen days after the D-Day invasion of Normandy, Bill and his group arrived amongst "thousands of troops. And for every fighter on the front line, there were ten in the background building, fixing or cooking," he adds. In 1945, after victory was declared, Bill was transferred to the 3rd Canadian Cemetery Construction Company in Lille, France. His unit was responsible for ensuring Canadian soldiers who were killed in action and buried in make-shift graves or left on the battlefield received a proper burial in a Canadian cemetery. "When you see their graves," Bill adds solemnly, "you realize these young men will forever miss life's milestones. You get to go home and go on. Their sacrifice goes beyond what anyone should be asked to give."

*"When you see their
graves, you realize
these young men
will forever miss
life's milestones."*





ADELINE MESSNER
B. SEPTEMBER 30, 1923
SHAMROCK, SASKATCHEWAN

With a clear memory, Adeline Messner recalls her intense desire, at the age of only 18, to contribute to the war effort. Originally refused enlistment due to health issues, Adeline bravely made her way to Hamilton, Ontario, to work in a weapon manufacturing plant. “It was wartime; we had to do what we could with what we had to offer.” With only minutes left on one of her 12-hour shifts, the lathe she was working on came down on her hand. Whether she fainted immediately before or after the accident was never known, but the shock truly set in when she woke up in the hospital with three and a half of her fingers gone. Adeline recalls knowing at that moment that her life was changed forever. For starters, she returned her engagement ring to her fiancé who was stationed nearby in London, Ontario. He showed up in person and told her to put the ring back on. Adeline and her husband went on to raise three boys and enjoy a 63-year marriage. Years later, Adeline humbly denies her injury as being worthy of recognition. But like many of the untold stories of women in wartime, Adeline’s contribution was given without asking for anything in return. Her heroism lies in her quiet nobility and her strength in carrying on.

*“It was wartime; we
had to do what we
could with what we
had to offer.”*

WILLIAM LLOYD DONOHUE

B. MARCH 16, 1918

LISTOWEL, ONTARIO

As a Sergeant in charge of the #1 Gun in C Troop, 7th Medium Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, William Lloyd Donohue's division was available to any formation that needed heavier gun support. Landing on Juno Beach on July 13th, 1944, Lloyd, as he prefers to be known, recalls "as soon as we had land under our feet, we were firing." His 10-man gun crew took part in all of the major Allied battles including Normandy, the closing of the Falaise Gap, the Scheldt, as well as battles in Holland, with their commission ending in Germany. "The fighting was intense; we would fire one round per minute, around the clock, for weeks," he adds. The closing of the Falaise Gap resulted in high casualties for both sides, including nearby civilians caught in the intense fighting. After sustaining an injury in the battle, Lloyd found himself next to a German prisoner in the medical tent. "I inquired about his good English," Lloyd recalls. "He shared that he had been educated at Oxford University for two years. Relieved to be done with the fighting, he swore he would never return to Germany." Returning home, Lloyd enjoyed a 57-year marriage to Ruth, raising two daughters. "The memories stay with you," he says of adjusting after the war, "but you have to learn to let go so you can move on."

*"You have to learn
to let go so you can
move on."*



ELLERY POST

B. DECEMBER 25 1924

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Enlisting in 1942, Ellery Post chose the Navy, in part because they accepted 17-year-olds and, with youthful enthusiasm, he was ready to go. “Someone started the war before we were born but they didn’t finish it; we did,” Ellery recalls. On reflection, he quietly adds, “a lot of people gave up their lives and you can’t help but wonder if it was worth it.” Trained as a signalman, Ellery served on the crews of the *HMCS Columbia* and the *HMCS Huron*. The destroyer ships offered escort protection to the convoys in the Atlantic, including through the northern Atlantic passage to Murmansk, Russia. Signalmen were responsible for lookout duties, eight hours at a time, as well as for signalling other ships in the Battalia. Their vulnerable outdoor positions often put signallers in the line of fire, and Ellery recalls narrowly escaping the German shots by only inches. “I was lucky enough to get through the war without injury,” says Ellery, “but you never forget your friends who weren’t so lucky.”

*“Someone started
the war before
we were born but
they didn’t finish
it; we did.”*



2700
1944
TOM LEVINE
RCMP 1900-1944
NATHAN LEVINE
CPL THOMAS JOHN
1914-1944
LTC COLLETT
1914-1944
IN HONOUR OF BILL REE
MAJOR WS LEGGAT MC
WING HIGH ALAN LESLIE
THE LESLIE FAMILY
SCOT SONEY E LLOYD
1914-1944
ALL NAVAL VETERANS
JIM LYNEFIELD FAMILY
BARRY R. LEDGERT
BAR
RCMP UN FORCES
FLYING OFFICER
JACK C. LESLIE
SONNY LEON
1914-1944
PFC S. BILL CINE LLOYD
1914-1944
KATHLEEN D. LEHMAN
CWAC 1942-1945
LEST WE FORGET
WENDEL S. LIND
ALWAYS REMEMBERED
H. B. LLOYD
1914-1944
CRAFTSMAN NORM LESKO
RCMP CORP 1942
LEST WE FORGET
COLES MARKET WALL
IN MEMORY OF
JACOB WALTER J. LINDAL
MARCEL A. LLOYD
1914-1944
DANIEL W. BILL LEISH
RCMP 1942-1945
WILLIAM HENRY LESTER
1914-1944
LTC JACK LINDGREN
MILITARY ENGINEER
LLOYD L. LLOYD
1914-1944
S. L. & A. LETCH MC DPC
RFC, CAC, CAP, RCAP
LTCOL SM LETH BRIG
DUBIN'S OWN AIRLES
SCOT WES UNLAW
1914-1944
WING LOCK RCAF 1914
LOCK MILITARY
R.D. LETCH, A MAN OF
INTEGRITY AND HONOUR
LLOYD LEVISON SM CPM
WARRANT OFFICER RCMP
SCOT WILLIAM W. LIND
1914-1944
JOHN LINDEN BODIES
1914-1944
SCOT ALBERT LEVENS
THE DRUMMETT FAMILY
GLENN LEVAGOOD RCMP
1914-1944
CHARLES W. LINDY &
JOHN C. LINDY
& JAMES LUGAR
1914-1944
SCOT NORMAN R. LENNIX
FRANCE-KAFRICA-ITALY
FOR ALL VETERANS
THE RW LEVONIN FAMILY
CALGARY HONOUR
LEON CLUB
EARL F. LINDEN
1914-1944
DR ROBERT H. LENNIX
1914-1944
DANIEL LEVONIN
1914-1944
LEON CLUB OF CALGARY
1914-1944
JOHN W. LINDEN
1914-1944
PAUL LEONPKY DMR
CAN. CAN. ARTILLERY
LTCOL DAVID J. LEVONIN
1914-1944
LLOYD S. LINDEN
1914-1944
LTC JOHN W. LINDEN
1914-1944
MICHAEL LEONPKY
1914-1944
LTC LEONPKY LINDEN
1914-1944
LLOYD S. LINDEN
1914-1944
LTC JOHN W. LINDEN
1914-1944

ELLISON HUNT

Shown with his daughter Maxine Eveland

B. DECEMBER 25, 1921

ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO

*“The stories
needed to be
told – the good
and the bad.”*

Ellison Hunt served as a Military Policeman for five years. “You couldn’t call it a pleasant experience,” he recalls, “but it did have its moments of camaraderie along with the terror.” While stationed overseas, he primarily assisted in moving troops, keeping order and helping to evacuate the wounded. “We would direct traffic in the midst of falling bombs and amongst blown-up roads and bridges,” he remembers. Close calls were frequent, including, on many occasions, being hidden from but in range of German patrols only steps away. Covert measures were critical, such as secret knocking codes for surveillance rooms and walking only in previous footsteps to avoid triggering mines. Ellison narrowly escaped being shelled by enemy snipers and remembers incidents of the Germans “booby trapping” the dead bodies of Allied soldiers to blow up when they were recovered, which he calls “a dirty and callous trick.” When the war was over, Ellison was responsible for the transfer of surrendering enemy soldiers. Back in Canada, he continued his role, transporting German prisoners of war to holding areas in Northern Ontario. He recalls that many of the German prisoners of war spoke English and seemed respectful and relieved. After the war, Ellison began writing to help cope with the memories. “The stories needed to be told – the good and the bad,” he adds. His daughter Maxine recently found five binders of war recollections and is currently compiling them into a book.



THANK YOU

This book would not have been possible without the commitment and assistance of Chartwell employees from across Canada who helped to champion and support this important project. We would like to thank: Jason DaCosta, Vivek Wu, Caroline Crête, and Sonya Miles. As well, a special thank-you to the staff in the following residences:

Chateau Gardens Elmira,
Elmira ON

Peterborough Manor Retirement,
Peterborough ON

Bankside Terrace Retirement,
Kitchener ON

Rosedale Retirement,
Brockville ON

Wellington Park Terrace,
Guelph ON

Rideau Place Retirement,
Ottawa ON

The Gibson Retirement,
Willowdale ON

Barrington Retirement,
Barrie ON

Pickering City Centre Retirement,
Pickering ON

Renaissance Regina,
Regina SK

Heritage Glen Retirement,
Mississauga ON

Willow Manor,
Maple Ridge BC

Rouge Valley Retirement,
Markham ON

Langley Gardens,
Langley BC

Riverside Retirement Residence,
London ON

Colonel Belcher Retirement,
Calgary AB

Chateau Cornwall Retirement,
Cornwall ON

Résidence Le Monastère,
Gatineau (Aylmer) PQ

Quail Creek Retirement,
Renfrew ON

Complexe Oasis St-Jean,
St-Jean-Sur-Richelieu PQ

The Willowdale Retirement,
Smith Falls ON

Marquis de Tracy II,
Sorel-Tracy PQ