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The Maroon Beret / Le Beret Marron is the "Voice of the Canadian Airborne Brotherhood," and is published on behalf of all Canadian Airborne associations.

Submissions are welcome and may be sent in electronic format (MS Word) to canadianairborneforces@gmail.com. The deadline for the 2019 issue is February 1, 2020. The Maroon Beret welcomes photos of all jump activities, past and present, that would be of interest to our readers. Preference is in high-resolution JPEG format, sent to canadianairborneforces@gmail.com. Do not embed photos in the article, but send as attachments. Please include details and photographer's name. We regret that we cannot guarantee that photos submitted will be used.

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Cover illustration: "Out of the Clouds" is a commemoration of 1 Can Para for the 75th Anniversary of D-Day by war artist and Airborne veteran Roger Chabot, CD. For more information about Roger Chabot's war art or if you desire to order a print of "Out of the Clouds" please visit his website at www.chabotwarart.com or write him at roger@chabotwarart.com.

Image couverture: « Out of the Clouds » commémore le 1 Can Para à l'occasion du 75° anniversaire du Jour J par l'artiste de guerre et vétéran aéroporté, Roger Chabot, CD. Pour plus d'information sur l'art militaire de Roger Chabot ou si vous désirer vous procurer une copie de la toile « Out of the Clouds » svp visitez son site web à www.chabotwarart.com ou écrivez lui à roger@chabotwarart.com.

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> Kitshop on the Web: www.joedrouin.com Graphic design and layout: **Esprit de Corps**





## CAFA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Canadian Airborne Forces Association (CAFA)/ Association des Forces Aéroportées du Canada (AFAC)



reetings jumpers and friends of the Airborne!

2018 was a very busy year for the Airborne Brotherhood with the 50th Anniversary of the Wegner Point tragedy being commemorated in appropriate Airborne fashion on the 13th of May in Petawawa. CAFA took advantage of the generous support offered by CFB Petawawa to hold our AGM on that weekend. It proved to be a mini reunion with a significant turnout of Brothers to honour the seven paratroopers who perished on the 8th of May 1968 in the Petawawa River.

Soon after I was personally off to Edmonton for the 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day at the 1 Can Para Cairn at Siffleur Falls, Alberta. It was my first opportunity to take part in this commemoration and it was a hugely enjoyable and respectful couple of days in the mountains with a host of our Airborne Brothers. Bill Dickson and his team, as always, did a superb job of organizing and conducting the service held to honour those who have gone before us.

What followed was a superb couple of days in Edmonton for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Canadian Airborne Regiment ably organized by the Airborne Social Club. The turnout was incredible for an organization that has existed for only

27 years and has been gone for 23. The weekend was a true celebration of the dedicated and honourable service given by those who served in the Regiment. There were many friendships renewed and a few jump/war stories told without a hint of exaggeration!

Meanwhile the business of CAFA carried on through the year with the bursary and Airborne Soldier of the Year Award being commented on in this issue of the *Maroon Beret*. On behalf of our members, I thank the CAFA Executive and our Board of Directors for their leadership, hard work and commitment in progressing the business of our Association. A particular thanks to John Fotheringham for putting together another first-class issue of this magazine.

This will be my last article for the *Maroon Beret* as I will be handing over the Association during our AGM which is being held at the *Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre* 

**ABOVE:** The Airborne Brotherhood met in June 2018 to pay homage to the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion, marking the 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. It was the first time CAFA President Walter Holmes was able to visit the 1 Can Para Cairn at Siffleur Falls, Alberta.



**ABOVE:** CAFA President Walter Holmes and other members of the Airborne Brotherhood salute during a reunion parade.

RIGHT: CAFA President Walter Holmes at a ceremonial dinner

(CAAWC) in Trenton from May 3-5. I thank you for the honour of serving as your President and for all the support I have enjoyed while in the job. I do plan to remain active in the Association as a Director.

Lastly, we lost a true hero of the Airborne in 2018 with the death of Major General Herb Pitts, MC. Herb's support of and dedication to the Airborne Brotherhood was second



to none. We are all indebted to Herb and Marianne for their commitment to the Airborne cause. Herb is missed, and we will remember him.

Airborne!

Walter Holmes CAFA President

#### CAFA Executive Committee, 2018–2019

- Walter Holmes, President
- Angelo Di Liberti, Vice-President
- Mike English, Secretary
- Dave Pentney, Treasurer / Membership
- John Fotheringham, Maroon Beret magazine
- Ian Husk, Canadian Airborne Forces Museum
- Jerry Robertson, Sergeant at Arms
- Rick Hatton, Scholarship / Bursary
- Jay Lapeyre, Soldier of the Year Award
- Joanne de Vries, 1st Canadian Para Bn Association

#### ARAC Executive Committee, 2018–2019 Effective October 21, 2015

- Dan Clarke, President
- Vice-President (vacant)
- David Kettle, Chaplain
- Marlene Schmidle, Acting Secretary
- Marlene Schmidle, Treasurer
- André Bilodeau, Membership
- Marlene Schmidle, Acting Maroon Beret
- Joe Drouin, Kit shop
- Roger Chabot, Social Activities
- Réal Gagné, Sergeant-at-Arms

## Quick References

#### ARAC Important Dates for 2019

- August 11 National Peacekeepers' Day, National Peacekeeping Monument, Ottawa, Ontario
- TBA Annual General Meeting
- November 11 Remembrance Day ceremonies at the National Military Cemetery, Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa

#### ARAC Head Office and Mailing address

3 -36 de Varennes, Gatineau, QC, J8T 0B6

#### Websites & Email addresses

CAFA website: www.canadianairborneforces.ca CAFA email: canadianairborneforces@gmail.com ARAC website: www.airborneassociation.com ARAC email: airborne1@airborneassociation.com

Kit shop on the Web: www.joedrouin.com Kit shop email: MARL6206@yahoo.ca



## ARAC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Airborne Regiment Association of Canada | Association du Régiment Aéroporté du Canada (ARAC)



ith 2019 underway, we recall the events that took place in the past year, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of our Regiment.

Our colleagues in the Airborne Social Club in Edmonton hosted a great 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion and we reconnected with many of our brothers at the event, both from the Regiment's formation in Edmonton and Valcartier and the laying up of our Colours in Petawawa in 1995. A great time was had by all.

2018 was also the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fatal parachuting accident off Wegner Point in Petawawa where seven Jumpers from 2 Signals Squadron and 1 RCR perished in the Ottawa River. In conjunction with our brother association CAFA and CFB Petawawa personnel, a moving ceremony was held at the point on May 8.

Sadly, during this past year we made our final farewells to two former Regimental Commanders, MGen Herb Pitts, the third commander in Edmonton from 1971 to 1973, and MGen Bob Gaudreau, who served as Comd 1<sup>ere</sup> Commando in Cyprus during the 1974 War, as well as Regimental Commander in Petawawa from 1985 to 1987. Both these fine soldiers were staunch supporters of our Regiment

and active participants of the Associations. They are sorely missed.

2019 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day and the Normandy Campaign. In honour of this occasion, Roger Chabot, a former Regimental member, unveiled at the Juno Beach Centre's D-Day ceremony a painting depicting the D-Day operation as related to our predecessor regiment First Canadian Parachute Battalion. In addition, ARAC has commissioned a ceremonial coin highlighting 1 Can Para's Normandy operations. The obverse of the coin shows a likeness of Lt Rousseau, a 1 Can Para soldier killed in Normandy. For those of you that are interested, these coins may be obtained through the ARAC kit shop operated by Joe Drouin Enterprises.

On December 15, 2018, at the initiative of Roger Chabot, ARAC held a reunion Happy Hour at the Mill Street Pub in Ottawa, which was attended by 50 of our brothers. It is our intention to hold these Happy Hours more frequently in the coming year. If there are other activities that you wish to have, please let your executive know.

As I mentioned last year, we had been requested to move one of our Regimental Colours to the National Cemetery by the Beechwood Cemetery Board of Directors. After reviewing the request and obtaining input from former members and commanders, it was agreed that the complete set of Colours should be kept together. To that end, we have decided to leave the complete set in Petawawa where they are very well displayed in the museum

As always we are interested in any support you can give to your executive to lighten the load on Joe Drouin

Enterprises, which has been carrying our association for the past decades.

During the last Remembrance Day ceremony at Beechwood, our attendance was heavily reduced. As we are the main veterans contingent at the National Cemetery, I hope that more of us will be there this year.

Airborne – Prends Garde!

Dan Clarke ARAC President

ajor-General (Retired) Herb C. Pitts, MC, CD was born on June 14, 1929 in Nelson, British Columbia. He passed away on September 27, 2018 in Victoria, leaving his beloved wife Marianne of 63 years.

Herb had an illustrious career in the military, having joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 1948 as a cadet at Royal Roads Military College. Upon graduation in 1952, MGen Pitts was commissioned into Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and quickly sent overseas to the conflict in Korea. His time as an armoured officer was short-lived. Upon his arrival in Korea, he was immediately transferred to Third Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) and served as a platoon commander. Herb would serve with distinction for the remainder of the Korean War and was recognized with the Military Cross for gallantry in action. He returned to Canada in July 1953 just prior to the ceasefire.

Upon return to Regimental Duty he served with the First Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (QOR of C) in Calgary, and then as a Staff Officer with the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade Group in Soest, West Germany. Upon promotion to Major, he served from 1962 to 1964 as a Company Commander with the Second Battalion QOR of C. He was again posted to the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade Group, and served for over two years as a Brigade Major.

In 1967 Maj Pitts was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and given command of the First Battalion, QOR of C, in Victoria, B.C. This battalion was designated 3 PPCLI in 1970. From 1969 to 1971 he was posted as an exchange officer at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, following which

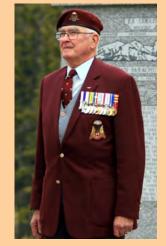
## OBITUARY: MGEN HERB PITTS

he attended the National Defence College in Kingston, Ontario. In 1971 Pitts was promoted to the rank of Colonel and posted to Edmonton to command the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) for two years where he would play a critical role in developing the airborne capabilities for the Canadian Forces. Pitts served at NDHQ from 1973 until his retirement in 1978 as a Major-General.

After retirement, Pitts continued to be close to the serving and retired components. Ever-dedicated to his regiments, he served as Colonel of the Regiment for the PPCLI and the CAR and later as the Honorary Colonel for The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, accumulating more than 44 years of uniformed service. MGen Pitts also served as the National President of Scouts Canada and was instrumental in the completion of the Korean War Memorial Wall at

Meadowdale Cemetery in Ontario with KVA Canada. ■ Note: Obituary published on Legacy.com was edited for space.

MGen Herb Pitts, MC, CD, patron of 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, a decorated Korean War veteran and ex-commander of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, stands at attention during one of the many D-Day ceremonies he attended at Siffleur Falls.





### 3 RCR

## Pro Patria 2018: Mike Company

by Captain Dylan Pawson



M Coy rappelling down Calabogie Dam during an urban assault. This was the company's first training exercise of 2018 following the finalization of a re-org.

or the paratroopers of M Company, 2018 was an exceptionally high-tempo, operationally focused year. As the Division Incident Response Unit (Div IRU) and NEO VG Coy, the company remained in a high-readiness role at all times throughout the year. The soldiers of the company again demonstrated the resolve and resiliency expected of airborne soldiers, conducting numerous training events and operations to enhance its light fighting capability. The hard work resulted in a company that demonstrated a proficiency in readiness and a willingness to accept any challenge. In July of 2018, M Coy was deployed on Operation IMPACT with a mission to train the Iraqi Security Force in Canadian tactics to enhance their ability to defeat ISIS.

Upon the finalization of a company re-org, M Coy started the New Year by conducting a Winter Complex Terrain School (WCTS) at the Calabogie Ski Resort, located about an hour west of Ottawa. This exercise allowed the new command teams and soldiers of the company to shake out and begin operating with each other. Once on the ground in Calabogie, M Coy conducted a resiliency

march up the slopes of the mountain with toboggan groups and established a company defensive position. It allowed the commanders and soldiers a unique opportunity of professional development in discussing the fundamentals of the defence while incorporating the siting and placement of important weapon systems integral to a rifle company. Once the position had been sited and defensive routine commenced, M Coy participated in training to hone their skills and sustain their proficiency to operate in a winter environment. This included cross-country and downhill skiing, rappelling and ice climbing, and operating LOSVs (light over snow vehicles).

The highlight of WCTS occurred at the end of the exercise when M Coy executed a level 4 dry attack on the Calabogie Dam. The company assaulted the dam, rappelled off the side, and conducted an urban assault through the interior. Following this exercise, the company quickly redeployed to Petawawa as WCTS provided a foundation for a deployment on NOREX 18.

After a short rest following WCTS, M Coy quickly prepared itself to deploy as the Div IRU VG Coy on NOREX



Members of 1 Platoon, M Coy, after a successful patrol in Arctic Bay, 2018.

18. This exercise, which took place between February 4 to 17, presented a challenging operation to test the company's ability to operate in some of the harshest conditions that Canada has to offer. Upon arrival in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, the soldiers of the company immediately faced temperatures of -50 degrees Celsius, sometimes even colder. Due to flight delays, the company had to rapidly shake out and execute its mission of securing a downed aircraft.

With assistance from the Canadian Rangers, the soldiers learned how to quickly repair LOSVs, tow komatiks (large wooden sleds), and set up ten-man tents when every minute spent in the elements counts. M Coy conducted an austere range to become proficient in the use of the Lee Enfield rifle, and used the opportunity to fire their own personal weapons in the cold conditions. Missions assigned to the company as part of the exercise included locating scattered debris of a downed aircraft. One such mission gave 1 Platoon the task of locating aircraft debris near the community of Arctic Bay. After a short flight from Resolute Bay, 1 Platoon disembarked their aircraft, unloaded their LOSVs, liaised with the local Rangers and RCMP and successfully completed their mission. Overall, NOREX 18 provided an excellent opportunity for the soldiers of M Coy, truly testing their skills in one of the most challenging training environments.

Following a brief but well-deserved March break, M Coy quickly filled its calendar with RTHR training to fulfill its NEO VG requirements. Sustainment training and enhanced shooting packages maintained the company's proficiency on all weapon systems, and planning for a training exercise in Trenton had begun.



Paratroopers of 3 RCR conduct a para drop at dusk during a winter training exercise in 2018.

While this was conducted, M Coy deployed three of its soldiers to participate in the Kosovo Best Soldier Competition. Under the leadership of MCpl Desbiens, Privates Braun and Romanko stood out amongst international soldiers that included individuals from SOF units. Pte Braun placed third and Pte Romanko placed fifth overall. To enhance its spring sustainment training, M Coy travelled to Trenton to conduct a Spring Complex Terrain School (SCTS). This enabled its soldiers work on their individual soldier skills including rock climbing, rappelling, and enhanced carbine drills at the 25-metre indoor range. This valuable training exercise culminated in a double door mass jump at DZ Hodgson. *Airborne!* 

Immediately following SCTS in April, M Coy constructed and executed a level 3 live range. It encompassed the challenges embraced by the light fighter, and consisted of a long-range patrol that had platoons move tactically through wooded areas, with potential enemy positions on route. After their dismounted infiltration, platoons then had to attack a complex objective located on the top of a high feature that would test any soldier's fitness.

During this busy time, another individual from M Coy deployed and stood out on the international level. Sgt Valentiate rose to a challenge in typical paratrooper fashion by volunteering to participate in AUMANGEA in New Zealand. A difficult test for any infantryman, he completed a 67-kilometre ruck march in FFO, numerous urban operations, and a survival exercise in an urban environment. Amongst all the candidates on this challenging course, Sgt Valentiate was recognized as the top candidate overall.

In late April, M Coy received a Warning Order for a short notice deployment on Operation IMPACT. The mission

8 ~ Le Beret Marron
The Maroon Beret ~ 9



would entail training members of the Iraqi Security Force on infantry tactics to support their fight against ISIS. Quickly, the company re-organized and began its pre-mission training in preparation for deployment. A small contingent deployed in late June to begin the initial assessment and prepare for the arrival of the main body. This small team completed an impressive amount of work in a short amount of time to prepare for a force capacity-building mission. In five weeks, the team developed a four-week program of instruction incorporating the basics of infantry tactics. It included first aid training, weapons classes on the AK-47, explosive hazard and threat awareness, urban operations and cordon and search.

When the main body arrived in early August, the focus was on constructing a camp capable of providing real life support to a training audience of 300 personnel. In the middle of the desert during the summer, where temperatures regularly reached upwards of +50 degrees Celsius, M Coy erected a massive camp in three weeks

**ABOVE LEFT:** M Coy double door mass jump onto DZ Hodgson during SCTS, April 2018.

ABOVE RIGHT: Major MacKenzie, OC M Coy, and Master Warrant Officer Whan, CSM M Coy, engaged in a quick competition with their counterparts at the AK-47 range.

BELOW: M Coy posed for a team photo at the AK-47 training range in Qayyarah West, Iraq, August 2018.





before the arrival of the first training audience. However, the hard work had just begun. After an IST period, M Coy received the first training audience from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ninawa Emergency Response Battalion (3rd ERB). Due to the detailed planning and thorough preparation of the advance party and main body, the 3rd ERB eagerly participated in all of the training and demonstrated an enthusiasm to learn from their Canadian counterparts. After a successful first serial, M Coy conducted two more courses and trained over 500 personnel from the 11<sup>th</sup> Ninawa Emergency Response Battalion and the 8th Salah Din.

During the graduation of each course, a Top Canadian Instructor was recognized. These individuals showed incredible dedication going beyond their responsibility to present relevant, detailed lessons tailored to their training audience. MCpl Rosenfeld and Corporals Lavoie and Hillson were recognized as the Top Canadian Instructors of the first three serials of Wide Area Security Force Basic. Upon completion of the third course in early December, M Coy departed Iraq for a well-deserved HLTA to spend time with their loved ones and prepare to complete one more course in early January.

In closing, 2018 proved to be an exceptionally hightempo and rewarding year of training for M Coy. It began in the slopes of Calabogie, travelled to the frigid north of Nunavut, and then across the world to the heat of the Iraqi desert. This extraordinary year will no doubt remain one of the most exceptional for many of the members of M Coy. The experiences and knowledge gained will benefit the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and the Regiment as a whole when our members transition into junior and senior leadership roles in the future.

AIRBORNE! ■



## 44 ... A SENSE OF PRIDE FROM SERVING OUR COUNTRY.

I like working alongside [veterans], having exchanged one uniform for another. Together, this significantly helps with the transition to civilian life.

— Gerry Fraser, Account Manager

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### 3 PPCLI

Parachute Company's 2018 Year in Review

by Captain Morgan Dudley & Lieutenant Dave Chadwick



n 2018/19 Bravo Company (Para Coy) maintained a high operational tempo with numerous exercises, company-level training events, and jump exercises that took them to locations all across Canada and the world. Throughout this time, the Coy exercised its parachuting capabilities domestically as well as internationally. This article will serve a memoir of the Company's parachute training over the course of the past year.

In January of 2018, Para Coy conducted platoon-level winter warfare training which culminated with a parachute insertion into Drop Zone (DZ) Buxton in Edmonton. Following the insertion and the completion of DZ drills, the platoons conducted a timed and competitive movement to pre-identified patrol base locations where they set up tent groups and carried out cold-weather patrol base administrative activities. This exercise confirmed that the Para Company Group (PCG) can maintain a winterwarfare parachute capability.

In April of 2018, Para Coy carried out an airborne insertion onto DZ Buxton for Exercise PEGASUS SHOOTER. The PCG carried out a timed loaded march from the DZ to the range and conducted individual pistol, shotgun, and rifle marksmanship while under physical stress. The

marksmanship component of the exercise was assessed competitively in order to foster friendly competition and excellence within the PCG.

In May of 2018, Para Coy sent a group to participate in the International Jump Week training exchange in Ramstein, Germany. Para Coy members were given the opportunity to learn from their parachutist counterparts from Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, and the United States as well as participate in a variety of cultural exchanges and cohesion building activities with foreign forces. The event was a huge success and the Para Coy intends on sending jumpers to participate in this exercise again in 2019. Upon return from Germany Para Coy ran a successful Basic Parachutist serial in order to maintain the airborne capability within 3 PPCLI. B Coy also sent a grouping to participate in a training exchange and ceremonial D-Day jump with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Washington State. Para Coy members were able to participate in low-level training with A Coy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Bn and participated in

ABOVE: Soldiers from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry receive an environment brief during Operation LENTUS 18-05. (MCPL GERALD CORMIER, 3RD CDN DIV)



multiple parachute airborne insertions from US Army CH-47 helicopters as well as United States Marine Corps C-130 Hercules aircraft. The exchange culminated in a jump on June 6<sup>th</sup> to commemorate D-Day and was followed by a short ceremony on the DZ. This event concluded the PCG's busy training schedule prior to summer leave.

Following the company's summer leave block in August of 2018, Para Coy deployed to British Columbia as part of Operation LENTUS to assist with firefighting activities. Through late August and early September, Para Coy integrated with civilian agencies to prevent property damage and ensure the continued safety of the local population. In addition to the firefighting tasks, Para Coy was able to send a group of parachutists to EX LEAPFEST in Rhode Island during which members participated in a round parachute precision landing competition and international wings exchange event.

In September 2018, the PCG began company-level training in preparation for the road to high readiness in 2019. The PCG deployed to Camp Wright in Athabasca for EX PEGASUS NIGHTFALL in order to conduct training on airborne insertions followed by platoon patrols and the seizure of an enemy airfield. Over five days the platoons

LEFT: In August 2018, members of Para Coy were deployed to British Columbia as part of Operation LENTUS 18-05 to assist with firefighting activities, including searching for and extinguishing hot spots and burning material in a fire affected mountain side near Lumby, British Columbia. (MCPL GERALD CORMIER, 3RD CDN DIV PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

conducted battle procedure and rehearsals and then were inserted at a DZ offset 10 kilometres from their objective. After the insertion, the platoons patrolled through enemy-controlled territory to their objective and conducted platoon deliberate attacks on the enemy force tasked with securing the airfield. The exercise not only provided an opportunity to sharpen individual soldier skills and platoon tactics, but also enabled the company to gain experience operating in the context of the new light forces order of battle (ORBAT). Following the light forces reorganization, a light infantry rifle company ORBAT now includes a weapons platoon that can be employed as a platoon size element capable of supporting company-level operations or regrouped and attached in detachment size elements in support of platoon operations.

In November 2018, the PCG conducted a commemorative Remembrance Day jump onto DZ Buxton which included a vehicle and trailer air drop. This specific airborne insertion marked the first attempt by the PCG to develop its sustainment abilities under the new light forces employment concept. November also saw Para Coy participate in Ex PEGASUS METEOR, during which the PCG inserted under cover of darkness onto DZ Buxton and conducted a first light attack on an urban objective. During

BELOW: A group from 3 PPCLI's Para Coy participated in the International Jump Week training exchange in Ramstein, Germany in May 2018. (U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS KRISTOF J. RIXMANN)





Ex PEGASUS METEOR the PCG Combat Service Support elements also inserted by air along with two MRZRs and trailers by air drop to further refine the PCG's ability to sustain itself in a dispersed context.

Leading into the New Year, the PCG began developing new TTPs for the conduct of dispersed DZRVs following a mass insertion. The intent behind this new train of thought is to achieve maximal dispersion of combat power surrounding the DZ in order to improve survivability and create a harder target for the enemy to disrupt following a parachute insertion. This new concept has yet to be tested as the trail jump was 'stop dropped' due to high

To celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, 3 PPCLI conducted a mass paratrooper drop at 11:00 followed by a Remembrance Day Ceremony in the field. (3 CDN DIV)

winds. The PCG was able to dispatch 1 x MRZR from a C130-J to further developing the capability of air dropping the Combat Service Support elements within the PCG. In March 2019, the PCG conducted an airborne insertion onto DZ Topham in Edmonton from a CH-146 helicopter. This jump served to maintain currency within the PCG and enable currency throughout the Road to High Readiness in Wainright for Ex MAPLE RESOLVE 2019.

In summary, the 3 PPCLI Para Company Group has remained extremely active throughout 2018 and 2019 and will to continue developing its parachute capabilities in 2019. The PCG will be looking to further refine the concepts of dispersed DZRV drills and maintain its competency in dispersed light infantry operations. The PCG is awaiting confirmation on dates for a potential deployment to the Middle East towards the end of 2019 and will transition into Theatre Mission Specific Training (TMST) in the summer of 2019. Overall, Para Coy 3 PPCLI remains fit, ready, and motivated to conduct parachute training and operations on behalf of the Battalion in order to fight and win on the modern battle space.



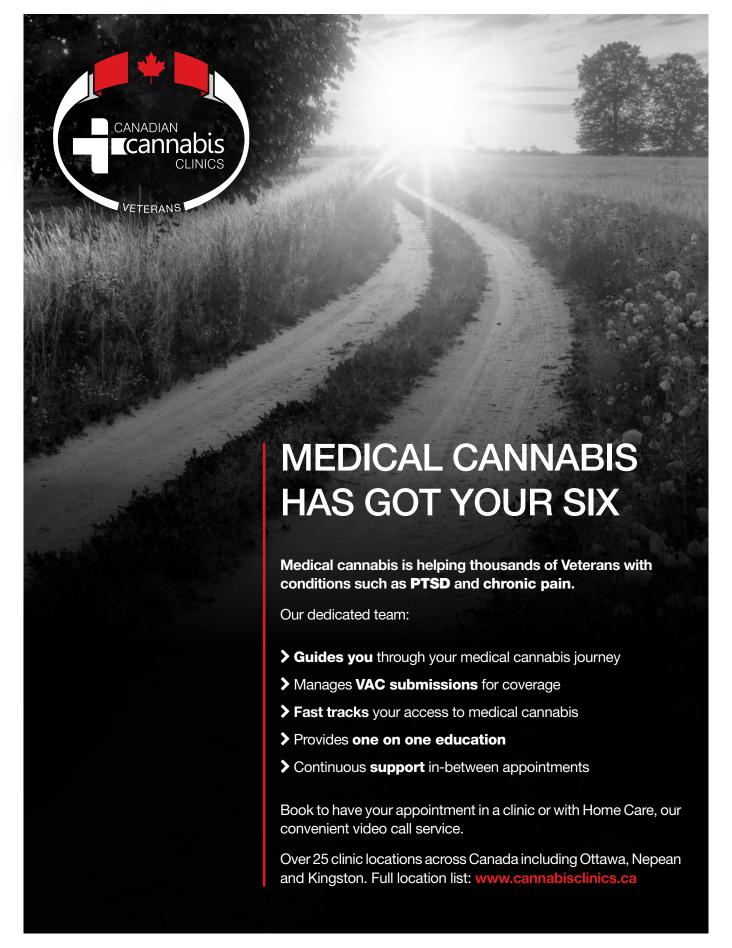
## THE AIRBORNE FORCES SCHOLARSHIP FUND



by Rick Hatton, CAFA Scholarship Chairman

he Airborne Forces Scholarship Fund has been jointly established by the Canadian Airborne Forces Association and the Airborne Regiment Association of Canada. A \$2,000 bursary is awarded in August each year to one qualified and deserving applicant who will be attending a post-secondary institution in the upcoming academic year in a full-time programme of study.

For further information, such as contact details for the CAFA Scholarship Chairman, eligibility, key dates and procedures for application, see the CAFA or ARAC websites. To be eligible, candidates must have been accepted at a post-secondary institution and have demonstrated high academic aptitude. Candidates may apply annually but are limited to one award. Eligible applicants include members of CAFA or ARAC; spouses, children or grandchildren of CAFA or ARAC members (either living or deceased); members in good standing of a Cadet Corps affiliated with CAFA or ARAC; or any Army Cadet who is a qualified Canadian Forces Parachutist. Applications may be submitted in either English or French. The deadline for applications for the bursary each year is June 30. ■



To book an appointment or for more information: veterans@cannabisclinics.ca | 613-483-2810



### 3 R22ER

Les parachutistes du 3º Bataillon, Royal 22º Régiment participe à l'exercice PÉGASE NORDIQUE avec des membres du 18º bataillon aéroporté de la Pologne à la BFC Valcartier en février 2018. Photos prises par le service d'imagerie de Valcartier.















## THE QOR

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada 2018 in Review

> by Major Scott Moody, CD OC Para Coy

he 35<sup>th</sup> year of the QOR parachute task was a banner year for the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. Most notably, 2018 was a year of exponential growth that saw the regiment recruit over 100 new Riflemen. Many of these recruits participated in the Full-Time Summer Employment (FTSE) program, a new initiative that was created to enhance growth and retention in the Primary Reserve that guarantees employment to Reservists from May 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of August. Throughout 2018, recruiting was at all-time high, making the goal of growing the ranks to over 400 Riflemen becoming achievable by the end of 2019.

2018 kicked off with a Basic Winter Warfare Course and Winter Warfare refresher training at CFB Borden during Exercise MAROON FROST 1 at the end of January. A month later, Exercise MAROON FROST 2 saw the 60<sup>th</sup> (Para) Company conduct a full-equipment, double-door jump onto Drop Zone Patterson in CFB Borden and executed a bridge demolition guard.

In March, the annual Basic Mountain Operations Course was held at Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area in Milton,

Ontario qualifying 24 members from 32 Canadian Battle Group (CBG). The course culminated with its final Exercise PEGASUS STRIKE 4 during which the BMO course facilitated a platoon-sized deliberate attack that inserted using fixed line and rappel. At the end of the exercise, a parachute descent was conducted onto DZ Hodgson in CFB Trenton.

In April, the Tactical Training Group (TTG) launched. This concept brought the QOR, Royal Regiment of Canada (RRC), and Lincoln and Welland Regiment together as one training entity within 32 CBG. The main goals were the sharing of planning responsibilities and the associated economy of effort as well as fielding a larger force to make collective training more valuable. PWT3 ranges and stands training to help members complete their annual Individual Battle Task Standards (IBTS) training was the main effort for the TTG from April to June.

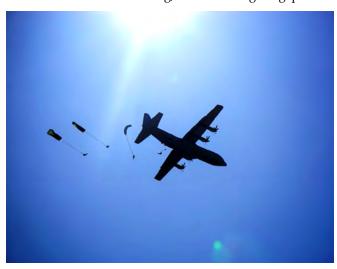
**ABOVE:** The year 2018 kicked off with a Basic Winter Warfare Course and Winter Warfare refresher training at CFB Borden during Exercise MAROON FROST 1 at the end of January.



To maintain currency and proficiency in parachuting during the IBTS cycle, a few one-day Quick Rig exercises were held. QUICK RIG 1 took place in Trenton with an equipment descent onto DZ Hodgson. QUICK RIG 2 was held in May in collaboration with Oscar Company 3 RCR and included a jump onto DZ Anzio in Petawawa. Exercise PEGASUS KNIGHT, the units' annual refresher, was held in June and included three parachute descents.

The annual 32 CBG concentration exercise, Exercise STALWART DEFENDER, took place during the last two weeks of August. As part of the exercise scenario Para Coy conducted an airborne seize and hold operation in CFB Borden that was relieved by an air mobile insertion by 450 Squadron. An aerial delivery resupply from 426 Squadron in 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Training Centre Meaford was also facilitated by the unit.

In September, the QOR took command of the TTG which was initiated by Exercise PEGASUS STRIKE 1, which focused on live fire training, recce and fighting patrols.



The TTG was managed by the QOR BG HQ supported by 32 Signals Regiment and included a support company and two fighting companies made up of the QOR, RRC and Lincoln and Welland Regiment. September ended with Exercise MOUNTAIN LEADER, the annual complex terrain operations refresher for 32 CBG.

Exercise PEGASUS STRIKE 2 saw 60<sup>th</sup> Company transition to defensive operations in CFB Borden. During the exercise, each platoon had the opportunity to practice the occupation, routine and withdrawal. This served as preparation for the TTG deploying two companies in a seize and hold exercise in November. Unfortunately, the planned parachute descent on the exercise was cancelled due to weather.

To ensure the QOR maintains a strong pool of qualified paratroopers, a Basic Parachutist Course was conducted with 3 RCR in Petawawa in October 2018. This was an excellent example of the strong relationship between 3 RCR and the QOR or Regular Force and Primary Reserve collaboration. The course was made up of instructors and candidates from both units and qualified over 25 candidates, 10 of which were from the QOR.

In November, the Regiment held several events to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War 1. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, a formal dinner was held at Casa Loma, the home of the unit's Regimental Museum and former home of Commanding Officer Sir Henry Pellatt. On November 11<sup>th</sup>,

**ABOVE:** In March, the annual Basic Mountain Operations Course was held at Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area in Milton, Ontario qualifying 24 members from 32 Canadian Battle Group (CBG).

**LEFT:** A view from below during the jump for Exercise QUICK RIG 1, April 2018.



after the annual Church Parade, we unveiled the names of the 2,242 members of the Regiment who were killed during the Great War. We also unveiled the unit's Battle Honours that would accompany the Cap Badge above the Wall of Honour.

The culmination of the TTG efforts occurred in late November during Exercise PEGASUS STRIKE 3. This was a one-of-a-kind collaboration between the Regular Force



**TOP LEFT & ABOVE:** Hitting the long, frigid water obstacle at DZ Hodgson during Exercise QUICK RIG 1 in April 2018.

Army and Air Force with the Primary Reserve. Specifically, the airlift for the exercise was provided by a CC-130J from 436 Squadron and a CH-147 from 450 Squadron. 3 RCR Recce Platoon also supported and mentored members of the QOR Recce Platoon. The plan, which was executed



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without an issue, saw 60<sup>th</sup> (Para) Coy conduct an airborne insertion while B Coy conducted an airmobile insertion to seize and hold two vital ground objectives. After the insertion, the two companies occupied a defensive position and successfully blocked the enemy advance

To close out the spectacular year of 2018, we held the Soldiers Annual Holiday Dinner in early December. During this event, several awards were given, most notably to Sgt Mike Currie, who was awarded the CSM Charlie Martin Top Senior NCO Award. MCpl Dom Ortega was awarded the Reg Walker 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Award for Top Master Corporal. MCpl Mike Catenacci was awarded the Airborne Rifleman of the Year; he was also recognized for being the Top Candidate on 3 RCR's Reconnaissance Course that he completed in September. ■

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: (1) Cpl Lydia Radewych moving off Drop Zone Gorvad during EX STEADFAST WARRIOR 2018. (2) QOR Para Coy working with 3 RCR's Oscar Coy at CFB Petawawa during EX QUICK RIG 2. (3) Cpl Buchan and Cpl Strack rig their equipment for a jump during STEADFAST WARRIOR 2018. (4) Waiting for the green light: 2Lt Matt Langille prepares to jump during STEADFAST WARRIOR 2018. (5) A parachute descent on DZ Gorvad during STEADFAST WARRIOR 2018.

















THIS PAGE, TOP THREE PHOTOS: The QOR conducts EX PEGASUS STRIKE 3 with 32 CBG, 436 Transport Squadron and 450 Tactical Helicopter Squadron at CFB Borden. (AVR CAITLIN PATERSON) BOTTOM PHOTOS: The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, RCR and QOR work with 436 and 450 Squadrons during PEGASUS STRIKE 3. (CPL STUART EVANS)





**PHOTOS THIS PAGE:** The QOR's Capt Roland Llewellyn-Thomas (kneeling at right) during Exercise PEGASUS STRIKE 3. He along with members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, The RCR and the QOR worked with 436 and 450 Squadron during the exercise, which was conducted November 23 to 26, 2018 inside the CFB Borden training area. (CPL STUART EVANS)





22 ~ Le Beret Marron

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_	NO (please proceed to sections 8 through 10) NEW (please fill complete sections 8 through 10)	ions 3 through 10)
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May 2016(2)



## CANADIAN ARMY ADVANCED WARFARE CENTRE

CH-146 Griffon Recovery



he year 2019 started off busy as usual for members of the Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC). Upon returning from Christmas leave and during preparation for their upcoming aerial delivery courses, WO Jack Prefontaine and Sgt Merle Harnish from CAAWC's Advanced Mobility Coy, 6 Platoon, were tasked with an unusual mission.

In December of 2018, a CH-146 Griffon search and rescue (SAR) helicopter had struck a communication tower 75 kilometres north of CFB Cold Lake, requiring it to land immediately because of damage to its rotor blades. Due to the remoteness and having no road access to the area, it was apparent that the only way to recover the downed helicopter was to sling it out with a mighty CH-147 Chinook from CFB Petawawa's 450 Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS). This task has never been done in Canada since the return of the Chinook to the Canadian Armed Forces. Both CAAWC members Prefontaine and Harnish have vast experience with Helicopter Underslung Operations (HUSO) and have carried them out overseas and all across Canada (including the Arctic), in addition to teaching multiple HUSO courses yearly.

The two members were flown out to CFB Edmonton to link up with members of 408 THS to come up with the

best course of action. Over the course of two days, multiple members from all over Canada conducted briefings and rehearsals with a CH-146 helicopter inside of 408 Squadron's hanger. Different methods were thought of and tried, such as a maintenance recovery kit sent from Mali, but it was apparent parts of that kit were incomplete. It was decided on the second day to go with aerial delivery slings (as recommended by the CAAWC members) which would be attached to the Griffon's rotor mount, with added redundant slings for safety. Aerial delivery slings are the most common way of slinging loads underneath helicopters and many units have these slings. A drogue parachute would also be added to the Griffon's tail for stability during flight.

The following day all key members met in Cold Lake and were then flown out to the site by the Chinook helicopter. They conducted a recce of the area and removed parts from the Griffon that could hinder the mission as well as to decrease its weight. They also did a complete check of the

ABOVE: On January 15, 2019 Sgt Merle Harnish (left) and WO Jack Prefontaine (right) from CAAWC are seen rigging a CH-146 SAR helicopter for extraction after it went down in a remote area some 75 kilometres north of CFB Cold Lake after striking a communication tower in December 2018.



**ABOVE:** The CH-147F Chinook is on its way back to 4 Wing Cold Lake with the Griffon securely slung below it.

area to ensure that there was no debris that could become a projectile under the rotor wash of the Chinook during the hoist. After a detailed brief at the end of the day with both the Chinook crew and rigging team, everyone was confident in the outcome of the mission.

The next day temperatures dipped to below -30 and the icy conditions made it difficult for the Chinook to be towed outside the hanger for its pre-flight inspections. After some minor delays the first flight to the crash site set off. Once on site everyone knew exactly what had to happen and worked as a team to remove all the Griffon parts not required. The Chinook left with the extra parts (and to refuel) while the rigging crew began its task just as rehearsed. The rigging of the helicopter took no more than 30 minutes to complete by the team, all the while being careful to not expose any skin due to the cold temperatures. Once the Chinook returned to the site, all members were in place as the hookup began. Nerves were on edge and the -30 degree temperature felt like -50 for the members under the helicopter because of the added winds from the Chinook's rotor blades. Being properly dressed for such a mission was essential.

The hookup went well and the downed helicopter was now in the air. The drogue chute worked as planned to stabilize the Griffon, but the crosswinds were a challenge for the Chinook's crew to manage. The crew who remained on site for the several hours after stayed warm by utilizing a small shack that was in place and monitoring each other using the buddy system. The Chinook flew at around 45 knots and safely delivered the Griffon back to Cold Lake. Mission success!



## Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre

The Parachute Training Company's 2018 Year in Review

he year 2018 was a busy and successful one for both continuation training and courses conducted by the Parachute Training Company (PTC) of the Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC). Four Basic Parachutist serials were conducted at CAAWC, with one dedicated to training young parachutists of the Army Cadets. PTC also provided Subject Matter Expert (SME) and instructor support for three separate Basic Parachutist courses run by 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division (Cdn Div) in Valcartier, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cdn Div in Edmonton, and 4<sup>th</sup> Cdn Div in Petawawa. Additional courses included three Jump Master (JM), one Static Line Square Canopy (SLSC), one Military Square Parachutist (MSP), one Military Square Parachutist Jump Master (MSPJM), and one Military Square Parachutist Instructor (MSPI). PTC also provided instructor and SME support to a division sponsored SLSC course run by 3rd Cdn Div, and to a Military Freefall Parachutist course that was run by 2<sup>nd</sup> Cdn Div.



The support and expertise provided by PTC instructors to the rest of the Canadian Armed Forces also involved Parachute Instructors (PI), namely Sgt Mike Barta, Sgt Choong and Sgt Brouillette, supporting the Canadian Special Operations Regiment's (CSOR) Special Operator Static Line Round (SOSLR) course. Similar to the Basic Parachutist course, the SOSLR course uses the MC-6 parachute system as opposed to the parachutes used by the Canadian Army, further demonstrating how versatile and adaptable the instructors of PTC are in their ability to adapt to and master new material.

Despite the busy schedule that PTC had throughout the year, the company still found time to provide their instructors with keen and interesting training with our allies in the United States and our allies overseas. Sgt Mike Barta was involved with winter warfare training in Sweden, representing PTC, CAAWC, and Canada quite well, while gaining a wealth of knowledge and experience from the Swedish Army.

On two separate occasions (in February and September), PTC sent JMs on Exercise GREEN FLAG in Fort Polk, Louisiana. This United States Air Force exercise saw CAAWC JMs carry out airborne training with our American allies and conducting both static line and free fall parachuting with our US counterparts. These exercises provided excellent opportunities to learn from one another and partake in some exciting wing exchanges following parachute descents.

PTC also sent two PIs, Sgt Zaharia and Sgt Taylor, on a US JM course at Fort Benning in October. Not surprisingly, both of the Canadian PIs performed to an exceptional standard, leaving their American colleagues impressed with how well airborne operations are conducted in Canada.

In November, PTC sent a member of the Canadian Armed Forces Parachute Team (CAFPT), Sgt Hewton, to Exercise CRUZEX in Brazil where, once again, good experience was gained while working and parachuting with foreign militaries and placing our unmatched professionalism on display.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable opportunities was Operation TOY DROP at Fort Bragg, at which WO Black was present. OP TOY DROP, which took place between November 26 and December 2, 2018, is a large multinational event where jumpers have an opportunity to take part in wings exchanges by donating toys to charity.

Aside from conducting courses and participating in various professional development events, CAAWC has a standing task to support the Search and Rescue (SAR) Technicians in the event of a Major Air Disaster (MAJAID) at a moment's notice. This task sees members of PTC go through the drills of responding to MAJAID calls by working closely with SAR agencies. In September, the MAJAID team deployed in support of EX READY SOTERIA in Yellowknife, where the team inserted via parachute to assist the SAR Technicians with the securing and management of a simulated aircraft crash site. PTC continues to provide support to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) by regularly conducting parachute refresher training for Load Masters within the Transport Squadrons as well as parachuting to support RCAF air crew currency for either Static Line Round (SLR) or High Altitude Parachuting (HAP).

The Canadian Armed Forces Parachute Team (CAFPT), the SkyHawks, completed 19 shows across Canada and the United States in the 2018 season. The team continues to provide the public with incredible demonstrations, displaying high level of skill in performance of their signature Canopy Relative Work (CRW) formations. The competency and accuracy that the SkyHawks achieve throughout their training was particularly evident when former SkyHawk Sgt Jenkins, accompanied by colleague Sgt Coulter, conducted a parachute descent with the Canadian flag into an extremely confined drop zone within downtown Toronto during the Toronto Honda Indy.

The Parachute Training Company continues to work on improving the drills and equipment used by parachutists in the Canadian Army. Through knowledge, experience and passion for the job, members of PTC constantly work to introduce new and exciting ways to train candidates, providing world-class parachute training to soldiers of the Canadian Armed Forces.

AIRBORNE! ■





# CANADIAN ARMY ADVANCED WARFARE CENTRE

#### The Pursuit of Perfection

by Major Arseneault,
Officer Commanding Support Company

or more than 60 years, parachute riggers have provided a tremendous support to the airborne capability of the Canadian Armed Forces, from its inception after the Second World War in the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps to its actual state in the Royal Canadian Logistics Services. Against wind and tide, through numerous transformations, parachute riggers maintain the parachute support with hard work and devotion, always true to their moto: I will be sure always. The future holds yet other challenges for this unique occupation, but they will certainly be able to build on their successes from the past.

Although it might change in the future, for the past several decades in order to become a Rigger you have to be a Supply Technician as it is a sub-occupation of that trade. The selection of future Riggers is important and is conducted very seriously. The candidates have to pass a strict physical fitness test and go through an interview. As all parachutists are volunteers in the CAF, it takes a lot of dedication to become a Parachute Rigger. After being recruited, candidates undergo tough training that will teach each of them how to properly pack, maintain as well as supervise a packing crew for 19 different parachute systems. All put together, it can take up to three years to have a fully qualified parachute rigger. The Support Company of the Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre (CAAWC) is the schoolhouse for the Riggers while being also the parachute

depot for the CAF. On average, CAAWC is able to qualify three to six Riggers yearly.

While CAAWC holds the parachute depot, this does not mean that all the Riggers are employed there. Almost half of them are actually employed in several units across Canada, either in search and rescue squadrons, light infantry battalions or in the Special Operations Command. The mass production of parachutes is done at CAAWC, where the Riggers arduously maintain the parachuting capability of the CAF. During the year 2018-2019, the depot put into service 1,300 CT-1 parachutes, which are used for round personnel parachuting, and 300 CSAR-7(A) parachutes, which are mainly used by the SAR Technicians. While integrating new systems into the supply chain, the Riggers maintain a high level of support to the CAF in Canada and abroad.

As the year 2019 began, Parachute Riggers were positioning themselves at the line of departure for new challenges. With an ongoing occupational review that will determine the future of this trade and the development of a procurement project to modernize the parachute systems, the coming years will certainly be thrilling for the Parachute Riggers.

**ABOVE:** It takes about three years of study for a Parachute Rigger to earn his certification as candidates must learn how to properly pack, maintain and repair as well as supervise a packing crew for 19 different parachute systems.



## 2018 AIRBORNE FORCES SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

#### Bursary presented to Ms. Anna Klick

he recipient of the 2018 Airborne Forces Scholarship Fund bursary in the amount of \$2,000 is Ms. Anna Madeline Klick. From St. Albert, Alberta, Anna Klick is a full-time student at MacEwan University in Edmonton. She is enrolled in a challenging Bachelor of Science programme of studies in Mathematics and Biological Sciences. On completion of her Bachelor of Science degree, Anna intends to obtain a Master's degree and a PhD in Mathematics.

Anna Klick was selected to receive the award as the most deserving applicant in 2018 based on her outstanding

academic performance in high school and first year at MacEwan University, her continuing and determined personal development, her long-standing commitment to community activities, her generous support to those less fortunate, and her impressive personal attributes. Anna is the daughter of Mrs. Margaret Klick and Sergeant (retired) Ben Klick. Sgt Klick served proudly in 2 Airborne Commando, Canadian Airborne Regiment and is a member of The Airborne Regiment Association of Canada and The Airborne Social Club (Edmonton).

This award was presented by Bill Dickson on August 31, 2018 at Royal Canadian Legion Branch #271 in St. Albert in the presence of Anna's family and friends and local members of the Canadian Airborne Forces Association, the Airborne Regiment Association of Canada and The Airborne Social Club (Edmonton).

Information regarding applying for the joint CAFA/ARAC Airborne Forces bursary can be obtained on the CAFA and ARAC websites. Applications are to be submitted by mail or e-mail to the CAFA Chairman Airborne Forces Scholarship Fund. ■

Front row (left to right): Margaret Klick (mother), Anna Klick, Ben Klick (father), Liam Klick (brother).

Middle row (left to right): Ben Murdock, Adrienne Freeman, Les Skinner, Gord Carter, Tim Turner, Bill Johnston, Robert Vanier, Bill Dickson, Troy Deatrich (President Legion Branch #271).

Back row (left to right): Tim Penny, Leo McCarthy, Art Brochu, John Johnston, Bill Tremain, Paul Wiseman, Wallace Bona.



#### Airborne Regiment Association of Canada L'Association du Régiment aéroporté du Canada

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brothers who jumped at D-Day and is featured on the back of the coin. He was killed on 7 June 1944. Around the edge is the names of the 3 objectives of each coy and Le Mesnil was the Bn RV at the cross road.

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Au recto de la pièce, vous voyez l'emblème du 1 CAN PARA, le 75e anniversaire en haut et en bas le 6 juin 1944. Au verso, figure Le lieutenant JP Rousseau est l'un des deux

frères qui ont sauté au jour J et figure au dos de la pièce. Il a été tué le 7 juin 1944. Sur le contour vous trouvez le nom des objectifs de chaque compagnie et celui de Le Mesnil, qui était le RV du BN à la croisée des chemins

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## **CAFA/ARAC** AIRBORNE SOLDIER OF THE YEAR AWARD

MCpl C.J. Mills 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment

by Maj R.A.A. MacKenzie, Commanding Officer, Mike (Para) Coy, 3 RCR



hroughout the past year, MCpl C.J. Mills has excelled in his preparedness and execution of all tasks and missions. His dedication and pursuit of professional growth embody the qualities expected of paratroopers within The Royal Canadian Regiment and the Canadian Armed Forces. This nomination seeks to substantiate his candidacy for the Airborne Soldier of the Year Award.

MCpl Mills joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 2009 as a regular force member. Upon his completion of DP1, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion of The Royal Canadian Regiment. He completed the Basic Parachutist course in 2012, and became a member of M Coy in July 2017. Since then, he has successfully completed the following courses: Static Line Square Canopy, Military Freefall Parachutist, Drop Zone/Landing Zone Controller, and Patrol

Pathfinder. He successfully completed all of these courses at the rank of Corporal within the past year.

MCpl Mills has accomplished an extraordinary amount in 2017/2018, adding to his impressive amount of qualifications. After recovering from an untimely surgery in January, he demonstrated his resolve by completing the Jumpmaster course in February. Immediately following the Jumpmaster course, he was then loaded onto Military Square Parachute Jumpmaster and Military Square Parachute Instructor. MCpl Mills successfully completed

ABOVE: Airborne Soldier of the Year Award recipient MCpl

C.J. Mills has been recognized for his dedication and pursuit of professional growth, his incredible work ethic, resiliency as well as his proficiency in all airborne operations.

#### Términus d'autobus School Bus Depot Police Station Poste de police de Varennes Street Fire Station Address / Adresse ▲Vérendrye Blvd. 36 de Varennes, Unité 3 Blvd. de la Vérendrye Gatineau QC J8T 0B6 Ph/Télé: (819) 568-6669 Exit 141 Fax/Téléc: (819) 568-1074 Sortie 141 **GATINEAU** OTTAWA RIVER RIVIÈRE DES OUTAOU<sub>A'S</sub> Route 50 to Montréal is **OTTAWA** the 2nd exit on the right after crossing the MacDonald-Cartier Bridge L'autoroute 50 à King Edward Ave. Montréal est la Ave. King Edward deuxième sortie à droite après avoir traversé le pont MacDonald-Cartier MacDonald-Cartie Bridge / Pont

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Tel: (819) 568-6669 Fax: (819) 568-1074 Web: www.joedrouin.com E-mail: altitude@joedrouin.com both courses with only a 10-day rest between the two. His success on the most technically demanding courses, within such a small time frame, is a testament to his incredible work ethic, resiliency and proficiency in all airborne operations.

On July 1, 2018 MCpl Mills was promoted to his current rank and immediately began the process to prepare for deployment on Operation IMPACT Roto 7. Arriving in theatre on August 11, 2018, he deployed to a small coalition camp in Qayyarah-West in Iraq as a section 2IC and instructor with the Qayyarah-West Training Team (QWTT). Utilizing his knowledge and experience of infantry operations, he instructed lessons on field craft, section movement, detainee handling, and vehicle checkpoints.

Even with his numerous advanced qualifications, he remains extremely humble and is always ready to receive constructive criticism and mentorship to further his ability as an infanteer. Since being deployed, he has maintained his high standard of fitness, waking daily at 4:00 a.m. to conduct physical training prior to the workday. This relentless spirit and dedication are intrinsic attributes possessed by MCpl Mills that have and will continue to benefit him as he progresses throughout his career.

MCpl Mills's dedication and continuous professional development embody the spirit of the airborne soldier. In achieving his numerous qualifications, MCpl Mills will become an integral part in training the next generation of paratroopers and a valued member of the Airborne Brotherhood. For his outstanding performance, it is highly recommended that MCpl C.J. Mills be the recipient of the 2018 Airborne Soldier of the Year Award. ■

**BELOW:** LCol Reeves and CWO Durnford presented the Soldier of the Year Award to MCpl C.J. Mills.



## EARLY DAYS WITH THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LIGHT BATTERY (PARA) RCA

by Wally Neufeld

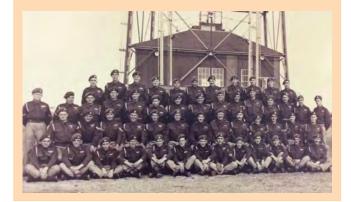
he 1<sup>st</sup> Light Battery (Para) Royal Canadian Artillery was formed in early 1950 and was made up of volunteers from the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. I was one of the first to go on the jump course, together with, I believe, six others from our outfit. We joined a course that was just starting for the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (Vandoos) and I made my first jump on April 3, 1950 – my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This jump was just supposed to be an orientation flight, but because the weather was so perfect it was decided that we would jump. The result was that the stick made up of our guys all jumped. The other three sticks made up of Vandoos did not. One peculiar result of this jump was that, in all the time I spent in the Army, I never got to land with the plane.

Some of the Battery's exploits included putting on a show at the CNE in Toronto – from jumping out of the mock tower, which we constructed, to jumping into Lake Ontario on a daily basis for a two-week period.

Our major weaponry, aside from the usual small arms, were the 75mm howitzer and 4.2-inch and 3-inch mortars. The howitzer were usually brought down in gliders built from plywood and often fell apart on landing. They were not the safest contraption to be in.

The Korean War came along and everything changed. I left the Army in 1952 and I believe the Battery was eventually absorbed by the Airborne Regiment. ■



32 ~ Le Beret Marron



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## 1 CAN PARA

1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Association's Update on Continued Activities

by Joanne de Vries



he Annual review of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Cadet Corps 100 based in Brighton, Ontario was held on June 9, 2018. Presentations in memory of Cpl Topham, Col Nicklin, Col Eadie, Ron (Andy) Anderson and Jan de Vries were presented to the deserving Cadets. Among those attending representing 1 Can Para were Cpl. Topham's nephew Gord Barrett and his wife Nancy, Adrienne Anderson, and Joanne de Vries.

At the Cadet Basic Para Graduation Parade on July 28, 2018 at CFB Trenton, 44 young Cadets from Cadet Corps across Canada completed the course and received their wings; and that included two young ladies. What a smart group of young people!

The Top Overall Cadet Award went to Cadet Aaron Day of 219 RCACC Nova Scotia.

The Top Jumper Award went to Cadet Evelyn Wrobel of 2919 Ontario (Barrie).

The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Bursary was presented to Cadet Jonathan Yohan of 2402 Ontario (North York). Jonathan has been accepted to study medicine at Western University in London, Ontario, ultimately to specialize in pathology and immunology. We wish him much success.

The yearly 1 Canadian Parachute Battalion Award presented to a deserving QOR soldier was presented to Cpl. P. Ortega at the soldiers' Christmas Dinner on December 5, 2018. The award is in memory of Battalion member the late Reg Walker. The widow of Reg Walker and his two daughters were in attendance for this presentation.

In 2006 a donation in memory of 1 Can Para Battalion was provided by the Battalion Association to The Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario to support the Royal Military College team competing in the Sandhurst Military Skills Competition held yearly at West Point in the USA. An endowment was set up to hold the initial deposit in perpetuity. The income earned on that deposit continues to provide support to the Sandhurst team. We wish the team success in future competitions.

ABOVE: Bob Mitchell (left), a Second World War veteran who served with the Royal Canadian Navy, reviews members of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps on June 9, 2018 at East Northumberland Secondary School. The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps in Brighten was chosen the best cadet corps of its size for the second year in a row. (BRIGHTON ARMY CADETS, FACEBOOK)



## Memorial Stone-Laying Service for CWO Ed Bakker

by CWO (ret'd) John M Clarke, MMM, CD Former Force Sergeant Major of the Special Service Force, CFB Petawawa

n Sunday October 21, 2018 CWO (ret'd) John Clarke and a small group of former Airborne paratroopers (*above*) gathered at Garrison Petawawa for a special memorial service. The service was in remembrance of CWO Ed Bakker who passed away on August 16, 2018 in Edmonton, Alberta and to lay a memorial stone (*at right*) in his honour at the Canadian National Airborne Forces Monument.

The Canadian National Airborne Forces Monument was established on May 25, 2008 on the grounds of the Airborne Forces Museum at Garrison Petawawa. It was dedicated and blessed by one of our former Airborne Padres BGen (ret'd) Gerry Peddle. MGen (ret'd) Lewis MacKenzie was the reviewing officer for the service. The monument is dedicated to all Canadian paratroopers past and present.

The focal point of the monument is our Airborne statue (Into Action), which was previously located at the main gate of Garrison Petawawa. It has since been taken down, refurbished and transported to its present location on the museum grounds. The statue is the central figure of the monument.

Three walkways surround the statue. A flagpole is located at the end of each walkway and memorial stones flank the walkways on either side. The names of many famous Airborne soldiers can be found there. CWO Ed

Bakker is now among them.

The service for CWO Bakker was low key and private. John Clarke organized the stone-laying service which was attended by some of Ed's closest



friends. Among those present were CWO (ret'd) George Tompkins, CWO (ret'd) Ralph Storey, CWO (ret'd) Ian Husk, CWO (ret'd) Gerry Manning, CWO (ret'd) Gerry Raymond, MWO (ret'd) Tom Murphy, and museum curator Ainsley Christensen.

Pipe Major Alan Buchanan played the bagpipes at the service

Ed Bakker was one of the finest soldiers and paratroopers I have ever known. Ed spent most of his Army life dedicated to the Airborne world. He held some very highprofile Airborne positions, including being the RSM of the Airborne School in Edmonton, RSM of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Petawawa, Force Sergeant Major (FSM) of the Special Service Force in Petawawa, and Base Chief Warrant Officer in Petawawa.

It is truly fitting that his place in history has been sealed with the laying of a memorial stone at Garrison Petawawa.

Airborne Forever.



## EX BRIM FROST '89 REMEMBERED

by Col (ret'd) Michael J. Houghton, MSM, CD BGen (ret'd) Michael P. Jorgensen, OMM, MSM, CD & CWO René F. Kiens, MMM, MSM, CD



n mid-December 2018, invitations were received from U.S. Army Alaska for three former Canadian Airborne Regiment troopers to participate in a remembrance ceremony recognizing the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the January 29, 1989 crash of a Royal Canadian Air Force CC-130 at Fort Wainwright that claimed the lives of nine Canadian soldiers. The ceremony was to be held February 5, 2019, and was to be a significant start to a week-long Extreme Cold Arctic Symposium involving U.S. and Canadian Army and Royal Canadian Air Force representation. The three former troopers invited were BGen (ret'd) Mike Jorgensen (crash survivor), CWO René Kiens (3 Div SM), and Col (ret'd) Mike Houghton (former Regimental Commander).

With the assistance of U.S. Army Alaska Deputy Chief of Staff Dusty Finley, we were reminded of the overall background of the exercise. BRIM FROST '89 was considered amongst the largest winter military exercises ever conducted in Alaska as it involved 26,000 service members, including the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group. The purpose of this exercise was to "conduct combined arms military operations across the State of Alaska in order to demonstrate both offensive and defensive military capabilities." The exercise was intended

to be a force-on-force engagement including an airborne assault by Canadian paratroopers, followed by U.S. Army paratroopers, with the main purpose to test the cold weather skills of the American and Canadian forces.

Dusty Finley, a former infantry captain assigned to the 297<sup>th</sup> Infantry Group (Scout) Headquarters of the Alaska Army National Guard, dispatched a convoy of APCs in 1989 for another incoming CC-130 and just happened to be the first responder following the crash. Finley describes the situation in part as follows:

"The defining characteristic of EX BRIM FROST 1989 was the extreme cold weather operating conditions that dominated Alaska. The cold weather became trapped in place for nearly three weeks by superimposed high pressure systems. Many of the aircraft that supported Ex BRIM FROST '89 were unable to properly set their altimeters due to very high pressure levels. This forced

ABOVE: This photograph shows the approach the CC-130 was taking before it crashed. BGen Mike Jorgensen (centre), then a captain, was one of the few who survived the crash. The weather conditions in 2019 (albeit lighter conditions and much warmer temperatures) were eerily similar as what Mike experienced 30 years earlier.



most aviation operations to be conducted under visual operating conditions.

One exception to the otherwise clear weather conditions was the man-made ice fog that shrouded the interior city of Fairbanks, to include adjacent Fort Wainwright. This fog was created by water molecules that crystallized on carbon particles released from automobile exhausts, heating fires, and several nearby coal-fired power plants.

At approximately 9:00 p.m. (Alaska Standard Time) on Sunday, January 29, 1989, as the Canadian CC-130 approached Ladd Army Airfield, visibility dropped to nearly zero-zero, caused by local area ice fog with ambient temperatures registering -51 degrees Fahrenheit. The CC-130 hit a flood control berm several hundred yards short of the front leading edge of the runway, bounced back into the air and then rotated approximately 180 degrees in the air before it crashed going backwards on the front leading edge of the runway. Just before the CC-130 crashed on the runway, it narrowly missed hitting a convoy of several armoured personnel carriers that were travelling on a nearby perimeter road. After crashing on the runway, the tail portion of the CC-130 aircraft partially separated from the fuselage killing or severely injuring all the personnel in the back of the plane.

The convoy commander, after seeing the CC-130 aircraft nearly impact his armoured personnel carriers, initially thought that the aircraft was the plane he had been sent out to link up with. He realized that the aircraft had

ABOVE: During EX BRIM FROST '89, a CC-130 carrying troops and equipment on a bitterly cold and foggy night, hit the bank of the Chena River while on approach to the Fort Wainwright Airfield on the night of January 29, 1989. The aircraft struck the ground with such impact that the fuselage broke in half. Of the eight crewmen and 10 paratroopers aboard, only nine survived. (COURTESY OF JOHN GARTNER)

RIGHT: Canadian BGen Craig Aitchison, who is currently serving as Deputy Commander of U.S. Army Alaska, Col (ret'd) Michael J. Houghton, BGen (ret'd) Mike Jorgensen and CWO René Kiens at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

crashed adjacent to his location. The convoy commander ordered a flanking movement of his armoured personnel carriers on to the airfield, quickly located the crash site, and immediately began providing assistance to the injured Canadian personnel."

Prior to the actual conduct of the Exercise, a thorough reconnaissance was concluded including selection of the drop zone (DZ) that would be used by the Airborne Regiment Battle Group. This was followed by the Battle Group deploying to Edmonton where the paratroopers would marry up with four U.S. Air Force C-141B Starlifters for the final assault. Once in Edmonton, final coordination started taking place with communications being established between RHQ and the advance party (including Pathfinders) in Alaska. During this short period, I received word that the original DZ was not to be used and that an alternate had been selected. This new DZ had not been recced by me, and my recollection today is that yet a third DZ was selected at the last minute. Based on the detailed recommendation of Sgt Dave Lavery who was located on this new DZ, I cancelled the para assault as the potential for injury due to frozen brush and extreme temperatures during night time was unacceptably high (the ambient temperature was reported to be between -50 and -60 degrees Fahrenheit). Rapid planning now took place to allow an air landed assault, following a prepositioning of survival equipment by three separate CC-130 airlifts.

Coincidental with the deployment of our survival equipment, the Battle Group boarded the four USAF C-141B Starlifters in anticipation of the relatively lengthy airlift to Fort Wainwright. Almost immediately prior to lift off from Edmonton, I was contacted in my aircraft to report without haste to the Operations Centre at CFB Namao for an urgent SITREP. Upon arrival, I was advised that,





while the first of our CC-130s had landed safely, the second had crashed on approach, and our third CC-130 had been diverted to another airfield. The Battle Group was subsequently deplaned from the C-141B Starlifters and returned to quarters to await further orders.

Capt David Hirter remained my eyes and ears

for the duration of the night and, based on his excellent reporting, led me to the decision that we could probably no longer participate as planned, having lost one third of our survival equipment in the crash, and with uncertainty surrounding our access to the equipment held on our two surviving CC-130s. In the case of the CC-130 that crashed, the compressed configuration in the cargo area would have involved approximately 30,000 pounds of equipment, including two 105 Howitzers, sleds, Arctic tent groups, miscellaneous extra Arctic survival supplies, plus the 12 pax strapped in on the port side of the aircraft.

During that fateful night, it became painfully apparent through Capt Hirter's regular reporting that casualties had occurred, including several fatalities. As the night progressed, while part of the Accident Response Team in CFB Namao, I came to the conclusion that we could no longer participate in Ex BRIM FROST'89 in any meaningful way. I advised the exercise authorities accordingly and gathered the Battle Group to advise them of the outcome of the accident and the details as I knew them, including the fact that deaths had occurred. I was advised that, in addition to six surviving crew members who had been in the cockpit at the time of the crash, three members of the Battle Group had also survived: Capt Mike Jorgensen, Tpr Sylvain Chenard and Tpr Stephan Poulin.

Through the generosity of the U.S. Military Airlift Command, the C-141B Starlifters were made available to us and the Battle Group was returned to our home base. It should be noted at this time that, although 2 Cdo was fully committed to participating in this huge exercise, the unit under Maj David Pentney's command had suffered immediately prior to deployment the loss of five paratroopers in a horrific vehicle accident on the Trans-Canada Highway, southeast of Pembroke. To say the

least, the Regiment was understandably in total shock, yet fully prepared to take on whatever task was given these outstanding soldiers. I continue to remain in awe of them, and immensely proud to have served with them in both good and bad times.

A short time later, Colonel Bill Buckham of Air Transport Group (ATG) had invited Maj Dave Chupick, BC 2 RCHA, with his BSM, MWO Paul, myself and my RSM, CWO Gilles Tanguay, to fly to Fairbanks to officially thank both the city and Fort Wainwright for the outstanding support they gave us during this tragic accident. BGen Samuel E. Ebbesen, Deputy Commanding General, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light), had overseen coordination for the initial military response efforts firsthand at Fort Wainwright.

Prior to the February 5, 2019 memorial ceremony, CWO Kiens and I accompanied BGen (ret'd) Jorgensen on a complete tour of the crash site, including the approach to the airfield, the berm and the road immediately prior to the start of the airstrip that precipitated the accident, and the airstrip itself. Eerily, the weather conditions in 2019 were similar to the actual accident conditions in that a heavy ice fog was apparent causing limited visibility, although the temperature was much "warmer" (approximately -17 vice -51 degrees F) and during daylight. That evening, we had a chance to meet a number of significant invitees for the remembrance ceremony orchestrated by BGen Craig Aitchison (Canadian Army), Deputy Commander for Operations, U.S. Army Alaska.

The ceremony commenced after a short delay at approximately 0945 hours on February 5<sup>th</sup> and included welcoming remarks, the playing of both the Canadian and American anthems, a moment of silence preceding the reading of the honour roll, the ceremonial firing and the playing of Taps before the ceremony was concluded.

During the ceremony, BGen Aitchison outlined the context of the remembrance ceremony as it related to the Extreme Cold Arctic Symposium, while Dusty Finley provided additional historical background on Ex BRIM FROST '89:

"The Ladd Army Airfield Air Traffic Control Tower was not aware that the CC-130 aircraft had crashed until it received notification relayed, in part, by one of the plane's aircrew who had walked through the ice fog to a barracks about a quarter mile from the crash site to report the crash. The convoy commander ensured his soldiers maintained continuous care of the injured Canadians and provided

LEFT: BGen Jorgensen (left) thanks retired U.S. Command Sgt. Maj. T.C. Coon for his actions. Coon, then the brigade command sergeant major for 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light), was one of the first responders to the crash site. The two had never met before Jorgensen returned to Fort Wainwright on February 5, 2019, his first visit since the crash, to speak at a ceremony honouring the Canadians at the post's Alert Holding Area. (JOHN PENNELL, U.S. ARMY)

RIGHT: A line of M113 armoured personnel carriers idles beside a road before moving into action during Exercise BRIM FROST '89. (SPC JACKSON, U.S. ARMY)

guides for the ambulances that were escorted out to the crash site. Ten crash survivors were initially located.

Immediately following the crash of the CC-130, Lt. Gen McInerney (Commander Joint Task Force Alaska) met with his senior commanders and cancelled the Canadian Airborne Battle Group operation and other major portions of the force-on-force operation. The primary focus was the safety of the force for which it took over a week to redeploy everyone involved in Ex BRIM FROST '89 back to their home stations.

A review of after action notes from Ex BRIM FROST '89 reveals that 480 service personnel were injured to include 253 cold weather injuries, of which 88 suffered some form of frostbite. Two of the injured service personnel required amputation of portions of their limbs. Nine service personnel perished during training – all Canadians in the CC-130 crash.

One of the major challenges faced during crisis response operations are challenges associated with communication. The crash of the CC-130 on January 29, 1989 proved no different. But what did stand out was the initiative demonstrated by both the soldiers and emergency personnel who exercised individual initiative to prevent additional loss of life and to minimize pain and suffering. And for that we can be thankful."

BGen (ret'd) Mike Jorgensen then provided the largely U.S. Army audience with his amazingly detailed recollection of the tragedy from the aircraft's final approach, to the actual crash, to the recovery operation that ensued. He talked of how well prepared the paratroopers were immediately before landing, and how he personally, while still strapped in by his seat belt, knew exactly how he was to exit the aircraft having just crashed. He spoke of how he was nearly run over by vehicles in the rescue convoy, now that he was away from the immediate crash site, and that somehow a few items of his Arctic clothing were missing.



Jorgensen then went on to describe the outstanding medical support he received in the Base Hospital, including being provided a visiting soldier who spoke a little French in the belief that Capt Jorgensen spoke only French. As part of BGen Jorgensen's presentation, he made clear that "while our soldiers did not perish as a result of enemy action, they lost their lives while serving Canada and while wearing their country's uniform proudly." He went on to reiterate our view that we would think their families would be pleased and grateful to know that their sacrifices have not been forgotten – even 30 years later.

A video of the ceremony, including BGen Aitchison and BGen Jorgensen's remarks, is available at the following site: https://www.dvidshub.net/video/659561/30th-anniversary-remembrance-ceremony

The ceremony was completed with the naming of the nine fallen Canadians, a squad of soldiers saluting by firing their weapons three times, and Taps played by the military band, all professionally and respectfully done. A short press conference followed the ceremony during which BGen Jorgensen answered a number of questions put to him.

Throughout the recognition of this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, CWO Kiens and I emphatically agreed that we were hugely honoured to accompany BGen Jorgensen as we remembered along with him:

CPL ROBERT "BOB" STEVEN JOHN ALLEN
WO JOSEPH KEITH ARSENAULT
CPL PAUL EMILE CLAUDE CASTONGUAY
MCPL JOHN WILLIAM MACKINNON
CPL PAUL STEVEN MCGINNIS
LT(N) RICHARD MOORE
MBDR DONALD EDWARD SMITH
CPL LEE WAYNE WRIGHT
MCPL LOUIS MARK PAPINEAU-COUTURE

They will not be forgotten. ■



# CAFA Branch #8 Bornewest – Mainland & DZVI

From the "Bornewest Archives"

ornewest came into existence 30 years ago, on February 3, 1989, when there was an impromptu meeting of current and former Airborne paratroopers at the WO's and Sgt's Mess at the former CFB Chilliwack. CWO Gerry Duguid (RSM 2 CER Petawawa) was visiting the base at that time and suggested to WO (ret'd) Peter Jones that the West Coast was ripe for some type of Airborne "get-together."

The next day Duguid left British Columbia, but not before leaving behind the 'Sown Airborne Seed' that resulted in a very enthusiastic and successful Bornewest Prop Blast on October 13-14, 1989. This event also saw the welcomed participation of a number of 1 Can Para veterans.

The naming of this "Band of Airborne Brothers" (branch) on February 3, 1989 was never in doubt. It would be: a) BORNE (Airborne) and b) WEST (West Coast) = BORNEWEST!

At the January 1991 meeting the Bornewest Organization (and its ideals) was made official. It was decided that there was enough interest on the West Coast to apply for participation in the Canadian Airborne Forces Association (CAFA), and an official application was prepared by Captain Ian Hetman, who at the time was the vice president and a member of the Regular Armed Forces (Base Operations). The application was accepted in committee by the HQ of CAFA and our first formal function was a luncheon held on



A memorial granite bench with a commemorative plaque (opposite page) dedicated to the Canadian Airborne was erected at the Vedder View Gardens Cemetery in Chilliwack on December 2, 2015.

February 21, 1991. The annual meeting of CAFA was held in June 1991 and Bornewest was at that time accepted as CAFA's eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) chartered branch.

The Branch 8 nominal roll in June 1991 showed a paid-up membership of 160 Jumpers – Glider pilots. At that time, we were the largest branch (out of 11) in the system and as always LEADING THE WAY! CAFA's action set the scene for what was to become the largest (non-engineer) event ever held at CFB Chilliwack: BORNEWEST PROP BLAST '91, which was held OCTOBER 11-13, 1991. A good time was had by all who attended!

With the encouragement of Major General Herb Pitts, the Vancouver Island paratrooper community was brought under the canopy of Bornewest with their designation of Drop Zone Vancouver Island (DZVI). The inaugural meeting was held on May 11, 2004.

Today our current (Mainland and DZVI) membership is 216; this includes active members, life members, ten 1 Can Para veterans, as well as widows of former members and associates. We have two CAFA life members and 11 paid-up CAFA members.

Bornewest events have been based on a monthly Airborne luncheon over the winter, along with an annual Christmas special lunch. In addition, our branch organized and has held special Airborne commemorative reunions over the last

30 years, especially to remember the formation of 1 Can Para, their combat jumps and battles. In 2014 and 2015 we were especially honoured to have



the French Consul General award 1 Can Para veterans Ray Ward, Peter Braidwood and Joe Pringle the Légion d'Honneur, the highest French National Order of Merit. We have also remembered the formation and service of the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Over the years, the position of president of Bornewest Mainland has passed from Doug Harrison to Ian Hetman and subsequently to Tom Walton, Ed Dobson, Wayne Dehnke and Rollie Keith. Presently, Ed Dobson is serving his third term as president. The DZVI branch is currently led by Jumpmaster Alder Currie.

In 2014 a proposal was made to erect a memorial/commemorative granite bench at the Vedder View Gardens Cemetery on Watson Road here in Chilliwack. Over the next year work continued on the project with funding for the bench coming from various sources and facilitated by our late friend Carol Law.

A dedication ceremony and benediction parade was held on December 2, 2015 complete with the Legion Colour Party. Special guests were LCol Jason Adair, CD CO 3 PPCLI and CWO Paul Francis, CD RSM 3 PPCLI. Padre Kenneth Pentland provided the benediction. Following the dedication ceremony, attendees returned to the RCL Branch 280 Vedder Golden for the annual Bornewest Christmas luncheon.

During the year, members who are available participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies and various other parades in Chilliwack as well as the annual D-Day Airborne commemoration at Siffleur Falls. Our annual Christmas luncheon continues to take place at the RCL Vedder Golden Branch where there is always a good attendance from members, family and friends.

Bornewest meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #280 Vedder Golden on Vedder Road, Chilliwack starting at 11:30 hours. There is an open invitation to any former and current Airborne members to join us at our meetings.

AIRBORNE! ■



## Humble Soldier Lived to 100 – And Saved Hundreds of Lives

Roy Rushton spent 74 years carrying shrapnel in his body — but his comrades never knew

by Richard Woodbury / CBC Licensing

oy Rushton spent three-quarters of his 100 years with both a bullet and a piece of shrapnel in his body — souvenirs from the Second World War that the paratrooper wouldn't let keep him from serving later in Korea.

He lived life with grit.

The Nova Scotia man died June 17, but the stories of his many adventures are being shared Saturday at a memorial service in Pictou, N.S.

He's been remembered by his fellow soldiers as a man they looked up to for his demeanour, experience, judgment and calming presence.

#### Paratrooper's First Jump

Rushton's battle experience began on the evening of June 5, 1944, when he leapt from a plane the night before D-Day. With that jump, he became one of 450 paratroopers



who landed behind enemy lines in northern France to try to secure positions before the Allied forces arrived.

Rushton hit the ground in Varaville. Hours later, he would be struck by shrapnel while running along a hedge. The piece of metal would remain in his body for the next 74 years; despite the

pain it caused, the shrapnel sat too close to a nerve to be removed.

His family had it taken out after he died.

Rushton's Second World War service came to an end on March 24, 1945, just months after he survived the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. Although the Pictou County man lived through a battle that saw 75,000 Allied casualties, he was shot in the thigh after he crossed the Rhine River and landed in western Germany.

He was 27.

The bullet would never be removed because doctors told him there could be complications.

Before the war, Rushton worked on his family's farm. Afterward, he bought and ran a store in Salt Springs, N.S.

But like the metal in his body, soldiering remained in Rushton's blood. When the Korean War broke out, he handed the store's keys over to his mother.

**ABOVE:** Sgt Roy Rushton in the trenches at Kapyong. His past wartime experience made him a role model for those serving alongside him. Rushton entered the Korean War a corporal, but after making a critical decision during the attack on Hill 532, was promoted to sergeant.

RIGHT: Sgt Roy Rushton in Holland during the Second World War. Rushton's battle experience initially began on the evening of June 5, 1944, when he leapt from a plane the night before D-Day. Hours later he was struck by shrapnel while running along a hedge in Varaville. The piece of metal remained in his body for the next 74 years; despite the pain it caused, the shrapnel sat too close to a nerve to be removed.

#### A Return To Battle

Age and his injuries, however, made a return to the battlefield more painful, his friend says.

"The physical strain, no doubt, must have been a great deal more on guys in their 30s, particularly guys who had been wounded in the leg and were carrying a bullet around with them," said Vincent Courtenay, 84, a fellow Korean War veteran who befriended Rushton later in life.

Robert Rushton, one of the man's four sons, recalls how the injury affected his father.

"In particular, when he was climbing the mountains in Kapyong in Korea, he found that it bothered him — although he did continue on to do his job as a soldier."

But it wasn't in Rushton's nature to complain or let on about the injury to others.

His former brother-in-arms, Bernie Cote, 89, was unaware of the bullet lodged in Rushton's leg; Cote said he only learned about it through speaking to CBC News. Instead, what he remembers of the soldier he served alongside in 1951 was his laid-back attitude and the way in which he inspired the men around him.

He was a "real guy from down East," Cote said. "And all the guys in the platoon thought the world of him."

Rushton's past wartime experience made him a role model for those serving alongside him, Cote said.

"When you get somebody that knows something and you don't know nothing, they were like a father figure to you," said Cote, who was then 22 to Rushton's 33 years of age.

"You felt safe with them."

An example of this came when Rushton's platoon worked to capture Hill 532, a mountainous piece of terrain

named for the fact it was 532 metres above sea level.

Their platoon led the offensive and Rushton took charge after his platoon officer was injured at the start of the mission, says Courtenay, who wrote about the offensive in the book *Rideau Hall*, which



follows the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry from 1950 to 1951.

He says Rushton and his comrades fought all day through ankle-deep snow to reach the heavily defended summit before the Pictou County soldier made a critical decision.

#### Becoming A Leader

"His platoon had taken many casualties — they were virtually out of ammunition — and he asked the captain in charge of the company to call off the action," Courtenay says. "If they took the position, because it was close to nightfall, they were going to get counterattacked and would just be wiped out."

The commander agreed.

The next morning, the forces took Hill 532 with little opposition.

Courtenay credits Rushton's decision with saving numerous lives. And while Rushton started the battle as a corporal, he finished as a sergeant.

Rushton's service in Korea came to an end in 1951 because of a hearing problem, his son says.

Once he was discharged, Rushton returned to running his store for several years, and he and his wife Margaret raised four sons together, two of whom would join the military.

Rushton never abandoned military life. He joined different regiments and later served as an instructor with the Halifax Rifles, Pictou Highlanders and Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.

He also worked as a commissionaire and later started his own small appliance repair business.

Even in retirement, Rushton kept his sense of adventure. He exercised it by travelling and in his decision to jump out of an airplane at 65, his son says.

As the jump unfolded, Rushton looked to be in danger of landing in a water reservoir.

"He started playing with the cords and he ended up slamming into the side of the hill, just below the airport," his son recalls. "He hurt his knee — he couldn't walk on it for about three weeks — but that's the type of adventurous man he was. He would do things out of the blue, just like that."

Rushton became involved with several veterans' groups. And he returned to Korea in 2003 as part of a trip to Kapyong organized by Veterans Affairs Canada.

RIGHT: After being discharged in 1951. Rushton returned to running the family store for several years. He also never strayed too far from military life, joining different regiments and serving as an instructor, then working as a commissionaire. and later becoming involved with several veterans' groups.



His stories always focused on the funny moments he had overseas and the good people who served at his side. He never discussed the horrors of war, his son says, but his actions sometimes hinted at the pain to which he'd been a witness

When he was a young boy, Robert Rushton said he'd sometimes come home to find his father listening to Hank Williams's rendition of *I'll Sail My Ship Alone*, with tears in his eyes.

"As the years went on and as I became a soldier, it became quite clear to me exactly what he was doing," Rushton's son said.

"Reminiscing." ■

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### A TALE OF COMMAND

BRADBROOKE, NICKLIN AND EADIE: Commanders of 1 Can Para Bn emphasize different components of command

by Colonel (ret'd) Bernd Horn



ommand, which is commonly accepted to be "the authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, co-ordination, and control of military forces" is arguably a very personal endeavour. After all, each person approaches it in different ways depending on their experience, circumstances and personality. It is this dynamic that individualizes the command experience.

However, there is another complicating factor that adds to this individualistic / personality centric mix. Command is not a uni-dimensional concept. It comprises of three components – authority, management (e.g., allocating resources, budgeting, coordinating, controlling, organizing, planning, prioritising, problem solving, supervising and ensuring adherence to policy and timelines) and leadership (i.e., "directing, motivating and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success").

As such, commanders invariably place a different emphasis on the different components. Some rely on authority, others have a bureaucratic managerial bent, while still others personify leadership and emphasize that component. The best commanders are able to use a balanced approach, specifically tailoring the degree of emphasis on each component based on circumstance, their subordinates and their own personality. As a result, some commanders reach greatness while others disappear into history in ignominy.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion (1 Can Para Bn) provides an excellent example of how commanders can vary, even within one small unit. During its brief three-year history, from 1942 to 1945, the airborne unit had three

ABOVE: 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion graduates being inspected by U.S. Brigadier General Walter S. Fulton, Commanding General of Fort Benning. (COURTESY OF ACME)

RIGHT: An accountant who worked for a farm implement company in Regina before the war broke out, LCol George Bradbrooke was chosen as the unit's first CO. Bradbrooke was a talented administrator and seemed like a good first choice, but he was not a field officer or a disciplinarian and over time serious problems began to arise in the unit.

commanding officers (COs) each of whom emphasized a different component of command. As such, as will be seen, some commanders have more talent than others in leading troops in battle, while others excel in organizational skills. In other words, each practiced the art and science of command differently – some relying more on leadership while others placed more focus on the authority and managerial components.

The unit, 1 Can Para Bn, was itself a dark horse. During the early years of the war, Canadian commanders and politicians dismissed the idea of airborne forces as a luxury that the Canadian Army could not afford and quite frankly had no use for. However, the continuing American and British development of these forces and their subsequent belief that paratroopers were a defining element of a modern army led the Canadians, in July 1942, to form a similar capability, but on a much smaller scale.

Despite the Army's initial reluctance to the idea of airborne soldiers, it now undertook an all-out effort. In fact, the parachute battalion was given elite status and was widely advertised as such. It was granted "the highest priority." The Army also attempted to provide the Battalion with the best available manpower. "Only the best men," directed the Army commander, "will do." Although only limited experience was available on which to base selection, it was clear that paratroopers needed characteristics such as resourcefulness, courage, endurance and discipline. The Canadian Army Training Memorandum explained that "parachute training is tough . . . It needs young men, alert and clever young men, who can exploit a chance and who have the guts necessary to fight against overwhelming odds and win." But, it was also evident to the leadership that the airborne soldier required a level of intelligence above the normal infantry requirement. "Only physically perfect men of high intelligence and good education were admitted," explained Captain F.O. Miksche, a renowned military writer of the time.

Senior commanders acknowledged the higher standards required of paratroopers. They knew that the paratroopers would require "greater stamina and powers of endurance

than is generally asked of an infantry soldier." The Director of Military Training succinctly asserted, "'guts' all along the line" was a necessity. Brigadier F.G. Weeks, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (DCGS), elaborated, "the Dominion's aim was to develop such a hard striking unit that it would have an



efficiency excelled by no other such group in the world."

The Army leadership also decided that all serving members should be of the rank of private and they made it mandatory for all volunteers to revert prior acting or substantive rank to that of private before proceeding for training. As a result, many senior non-commissioned officers rejoined the ranks. The conceptual model was such that one journalist quipped, "You've practically got to be Superman's 2IC in order to get in."

Importantly, the Army tried to make certain that theory was backed up with practice. A very complex and discerning screening process was undertaken to ensure that only the finest candidates were selected for further training. Army psychiatrist, Dr. A.E. Moll, developed a rating system that was used to grade volunteers during selection boards. His system ranked an individual from a range of A (outstanding) to E (rejected). Only those who achieved an "A" score were kept for airborne training.

The requirements imposed on the volunteers demanded an exceptionally high standard of mental, physical, and psychological fitness. Criteria were quickly developed and promulgated. Initially soldiers were required to be fully trained before they could qualify to apply for parachute training. However, within three months this restriction was lifted and volunteers needed only to be "basically trained." This ensured that there was a larger pool of talent to draw from.

All volunteers were required to pass a very discerning selection process. Once an individual volunteered for parachute training he was then put through a personality appraisal that comprised of a review of the individual's

service record and qualification card data, the completion of a questionnaire, administration of a word association test and a self-description test. And finally, there was a psychiatric interview to overcome. The examiners deemed the psychiatric interview essential to determine not only if the volunteer would "take the jumps" but also on whether or not he would "become an efficient paratrooper in ever sense of the word."

Early on in the process military commanders and examiners agreed that "only those whose suitability is beyond reasonable doubt are to be recommended." A rigorous application of the selection criterion was imposed despite the understanding that this would make it difficult to meet the quota requirement. By December 1942, a report from the Director of Personnel Selection indicated that approximately 50 per cent of those volunteering were rejected.

Clearly, the screening procedure was quite severe. But this was just the beginning. A further 35 per cent of successful volunteers were lost due to the normal parachute training wastage rates. However, the process ensured that 1 Can Para Bn had the cream of the Canadian Army. On the whole, they were some of Canada's fittest, most motivated and capable soldiers. A great many were former NCOs with years of experience.

Not surprisingly, as a result of the strenuous selection and subsequent training the paratroops faced, the Army hierarchy decided that the "Parachute Corps must be considered an elite Corps in every sense." The *Canadian Army Training Memorandums* aptly summarized that "Canada's paratroop units are attracting to their ranks the finest of the Dominion's fighting men . . . these recruits are making the paratroops a 'corps elite'."

The media was even more pronounced in their description of the new airborne unit. "The army picked them out of thousands of fit young Canadian soldiers," wrote journalist Robert Taylor, "who sought berths in the Canadian army's newest and already its elite corps, the first parachute battalion." Other reporters and newspapers were equally impressed. They described the paratroopers as "action-hungry and impatient to fill their role as the sharp, hardened tip of the Canadian army's 'dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin'." With unanimity, newspapers invariably described the parachute volunteers as "hard as nails" representing the toughest and smartest soldiers in the Canadian Army. One journalist wrote, "They are good, possibly great soldiers, hard, keen, fast-thinking and eager for battle," while another

asserted that they were "Canada's most daring and rugged soldiers . . . daring because they'll be training as paratroops: rugged because paratroops do the toughest jobs in hornet nests behind enemy lines." Others painted a picture of virtual super-men. "Picture men with muscles of iron," depicted one writer, "dropping in parachutes, hanging precariously from slender ropes, braced for any kind of action . . . these toughest men who ever wore khaki." Another simply explained, "your Canadian paratrooper is an utterly fearless, level thinking, calculating killer possessive of all the qualities of a delayed-action time bomb."

Clearly, the unit had outstanding potential. However, with such a roster of talent, the requirement to select able leaders, specifically a capable CO, was critical. As such, the Army Commander chose Lieutenant-Colonel George Frederick Preston Bradbrooke as the unit's first CO. Bradbrooke was a Westerner and an accountant who worked for a farm implement company in Regina. When war broke out he joined the Saskatoon Light Infantry. By 1942, he had already participated in the commando raid on Spitzbergen and had made a visit to Russia. He also volunteered for the paratroops and underwent his parachute training at the Parachute Training School, Royal Air Force Station, Ringway, in England.

To some, Bradbrooke may have seemed a strange choice. At 30 years of age, he was reportedly the youngest man in the Canadian Army to hold the rank of lieutenant-colonel. But, the six foot one inch, blue-eyed officer was soft-spoken and of "normal stature and of rather slender proportions." He appeared, as one writer described, "every inch a 1930s matinee idol and sometimes acted like one, in the memory of some of the men." This did not seem in consonance with the aggressive, explosive image of paratroopers being portrayed in the press. Moreover, many of his soldiers found him aloof, if not socially elitist.

Nonetheless, on October 12, 1942, Bradbrooke undertook his new duties with enthusiasm and conviction. And, initially, he seemed to prove to be the perfect selection. He was a talented administrator in the early days when the battalion had to be formed, training schedules created, the necessary equipment procured, aircraft allocated, and most of all, a role for the new neophyte parachute unit found.

These were no easy tasks. Unfortunately, once the Army had created 1 Can Para Bn and established the process of selecting drafts of volunteers to be sent to Fort Benning for parachute training, it largely forgot about

RIGHT: The paratroopers chosen to be part of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion had to meet higher standards and were required to be young, alert, gutsy and possess greater stamina, powers of endurance and have a higher intelligence than the average infantry soldier. (U.S. ARMY)

the unit. As a result, a number of serious issues began to appear. Problems in selection cropped up and the attrition rate blossomed, thus, creating difficulty with achieving the necessary manpower levels. In addition, needed equipment such as personal and section weapons, radios, and vehicles, to name a few, were not being allocated to the new unit. Therefore, keen, enthusiastic newly trained paratroopers found themselves sitting idle with nothing but physical fitness training and foot drill to occupy their time. In fact, the lack of follow-up training designed to challenge the neophyte paratroopers once they had finished their jump course, coupled with the on-going problem of obtaining parachutist pay, the unavailability of unit insignia and distinct items of dress, compounded with numerous administrative problems and increasing questions raised as to the Battalion's operational role, thwarted the development of the unit's esprit de corps and lowered morale. Some disheartened paratroopers even requested to be posted back to their previous units.

Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that the senior command at national defence headquarters (NDHQ) still struggled with the issue of 1 Can Para Bn employment. Focused on building a Canadian Army capable of fighting on the modern mechanized battlefield, the problem of what to do with a small unique specialty unit just did not seem to be a priority. This confusion and lethargy created great challenges for Bradbrooke.

Crippling was the creation of the First Special Service Force, a joint US / Canadian commando unit in August 1942. The Canadian component was initially called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion as a security cover name. However, its existence threatened that of 1 Can Para Bn. On December 1, 1942, Captain R.W. Becket of 2 Can Para Bn arrived in Fort Benning with specific orders from NDHQ to recruit qualified paratroopers for this newly formed unit. During his address Becket guaranteed that "this unit [2 Can Para Bn] will see action before this one [1 Can Para Bn] does." Consequently, Sergeant Herb Peppard, who had been with the Battalion since its very beginning, and 96 other paratroopers, requested an immediate transfer. They saw this as a unique and welcomed opportunity to get out



of Fort Benning and the dull regimen that was in place. "We had nothing to do so we spent hours marching singly, or in pairs, saluting fenceposts," said Peppard. "We felt," he added, "that we were making jackasses of ourselves in front of the Americans and that we had been put on indefinite hold."

On all levels, Bradbrooke made every effort to solve the problems and he ably battled NDHQ to move the realization of the new parachute unit forward. First he tackled the issue of manpower. He demanded more volunteers and extra parachute training serials to bring up his unit to the necessary strength. In addition, he provided advice on how to improve the selection process based on his observations of the failed candidates at Fort Benning to date. He also worked feverishly at developing a parachute training directive modeled on the existing Canadian Army Basic and Advanced Infantry Training Syllabuses so that advanced training could be undertaken. And, Bradbrooke fought for equipment.

Disheartened by the loss of so many of his trained men to 2 Can Para Bn, Bradbrooke immediately expressed his concerns to the Directorate of Military Training requesting urgent clarification in regard to the Battalion's operational status. The Battalion's War Diary captured the state of frustration and uncertainty that prevailed. "The personnel," it revealed, "began to feel as though they were lost souls of a lost Battalion." By late December equipment and weapons finally began to arrive.

At the same time, in an attempt to stem any further loss of manpower, Bradbrooke took it upon himself to implement numerous initiatives during the months of December 1942 through to February 1943. These efforts proved crucial in developing and maintaining unit morale while providing new challenges to bored paratroopers. Personnel were organized into Battalion sub-units,



specifically, Headquarters (HQ), "A", "B", "C", and Training companies. This established a much needed administrative and operational infrastructure. In addition, it instilled a competitive spirit and unit identity. These small steps invigorated the morale and motivation of the paratroopers. "Operation of the Battalion is becoming more efficient every day," revealed the War Diary, "morale has improved tremendously."

In March 1942, the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General Ken Stuart, informed the Overseas Commander, Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton, that 1 Can Para Bn could be made available to the British. On April 7, 1943, Canada agreed to contribute its parachute battalion to a second British airborne division that was being formed. And so, in late June 1943, the Battalion's 31 officers and 548 other ranks deployed to England for overseas duty. They were subsequently attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Brigade (3 Para Bde), as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division (6 AB Div).

Their new Brigade Commander was the incomparable Brigadier James S. Hill. He was an experienced airborne commander who saw action in Tunisia, North Africa during Operation TORCH as the Commanding Officer of the British 1st Parachute Battalion. While in North Africa he was severely wounded and evacuated to England. Hill, based on his operational experience, believed that the unforgiving nature of airborne warfare was such that the survival of his paratroopers depended to a great extent on their physical fitness. Therefore, he set demanding standards. Hill expected a unit to cover 50 miles in 18 hours with each soldier carrying a 60-pound rucksack and weapon. Ten-mile marches within a two-hour time period were also considered the norm.

**LEFT:** Brigadier James S. Hill, the beloved commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> British Parachute Brigade. Although a disciplinarian and unrelenting taskmaster, his fairness, exceptional courage, and lead-from-the-front style won him the admiration and respect of all his subordinates. (C.H. RICHTER, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, PA-162027)

Unfortunately for many reasons, many not its fault, the Battalion had not yet reached proficiency in many of the individual and collective battle skills that Hill demanded. Parachute skills, marksmanship and field craft were some of the areas still lacking. Although a skilled administrator and bureaucrat, what Bradbrooke was not, was a dynamic up front leader or trainer. Lieutenant William Jenkins felt he "relied on his rank." Private Doug Morrison assessed Bradbrooke as "a good administrator, but he wasn't a field soldier." Neither was he a strict disciplinarian. This was significant. The Canadian Inspector-General noted that while overall discipline was good, he felt, "Due to the youth of the men they are sometimes hard to control." He added, "The men came in with a little Paratroop complex in their soul, which will be ironed out when they get along side other paratroop battalions."

In the end, despite Bradbrooke's administrative expertise and ability to stand the unit up, it seemed he was beginning to show some weakness in the ability to lead and control his battalion. Corporal John Ross felt he "was over his head." This was not always readily obvious because, luckily for Bradbrooke, his Deputy Commanding Officer was Major Jevon Albert "Jeff" Nicklin, an officer from the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, who was more than willing to swing the "big stick" and enforce rules, regulations and the unit standards.

Already back in Canada, 28-year-old Major Nicklin, a former Canadian Football League (CFL) star who played with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, continually worked at instilling a sense of urgency and professionalism. He constantly tested and pushed everyone in the Battalion, including officers, even the company commanders. One officer remembered that Nicklin "punished officers who tried to sneak out of the two-mile morning runs by turning them over to the Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM) for punishment drill on the parade square.

Nicklin demanded attention to detail and he was intolerable of mistakes. Jenkins noted that Nicklin was "tough, very tough, but he would not ask anything of anybody that he would not do himself." As training progressed, Nicklin

ceaselessly criticized the level of intensity and effort being put forth by members of the Battalion. Each week, he drafted and posted the upcoming training schedule. Anyone not directly tasked on garrison duty was expected to participate in the training activities. Even sports days designed to provide a bit of a diversion and relaxation failed to meet with Nicklin's favour. "This is not a holiday for certain personnel to be sitting around, lolling in the sun," declared Nicklin. "This time was to be used," he asserted, "with the view and in mind at all times of developing personnel of companies into able physical condition, which is one of the two prime requisites of our training."

Nicklin's approach was inflexible. He was relentless. Colin Brebner, the unit medical officer who was constantly at odds with Nicklin, described him as "tough as hell. He expected everyone to be as strong and as fit as he was." Brebner lamented, "He'd [Nicklin] drive them to the limit." Each week new faults were uncovered. Nothing seemed to escape his eye. "The condition of the feet of personnel of this unit," he complained, "seems to be in a very soft state."

By the beginning of May, Nicklin observed, once again, that individuals were not putting forth the required level of effort. "Training," he seethed, "has been carried on in a very desultory manner and this must cease, especially under the present situation." He now focused his renewed effort at the leadership levels. "Training will be really intensified at once," he ordered, "emphasis being laid on junior officers and NCOs."

Nicklin worked at improving the Battalion's state of readiness and fitness, even if it was not appreciated by everyone. Private Morrison repeated a common sentiment when he stated Nicklin "wasn't really popular." But the DCO's efforts were important. He ensured method of instruction in the classroom was adequate to achieve the necessary levels of learning. He increased the complexity of training, as well as the self-reliance of the paratroopers. They were now required to cook their own meals in their mess tins while in the field and route marches now included ambushes and immediate action drills.

Despite his efforts, the Battalion was not progressing as fast as it should. Following an inspection carried out during the last week of June, Nicklin, reported, "that not one coy is ready to proceed to higher training such as collective platoon training." But Nicklin's constant protestations and exhortations were justified. A Directorate of Military Training report revealed that

the Battalion was still only at the individual or "trained soldier" level. As a result, they recommended that training be accelerated, "as it was felt [that this unit] to be below Parachute Battalion standard."

Prior to leaving Canada, during the first week of July 1943, the Battalion was inspected one last time by Major-General J.P. Mackenzie, Inspector-General Western Canada. Mackenzie assessed Bradbrooke as "a very efficient officer – energetic with plenty of imagination." He rated Nicklin as "a good leader and, as a Training Officer, thoroughly satisfactory." In essence, the character as well as command and leadership styles of both officers were evident, but each supported or covered for the weakness and possible problems of the other.

Nonetheless, Brigadier Hill welcomed the Canadians. He saw in them the making of great soldiers. "As the days passed," wrote Hill, "General Gale [6 AB Div Commander] and I realized what a unique and interesting Battalion had joined us as brothers." However, he was not blinded by their strengths. Hill consistently "kept a tight rein" on his Canadians. Although he admired their spirit, he also felt that they were neither well disciplined, nor adequately trained when they first joined the Brigade.

Their shortcomings were quickly addressed by Hill's rigorous training regimen and demanding standards. By spring 1944, it was merely a matter of time before the Canadians would be tested in battle. The planning and preparation for the invasion of Europe was now in the final stages. Missions had already been assigned. The 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division was responsible for protecting the left flank of the 3<sup>rd</sup> British Infantry Division that was to land on a beach west of Ouistreham. In turn, 3 Para Bde was given the daunting tasks of destroying the coastal defence battery at Merville, demolishing a number of bridges over the River Dives, as well as controlling the high ridge centred on the small village of Le Mesnil that dominated the landing beaches.

Brigadier Hill assigned 1 Can Para Bn the responsibility of covering the left flank of the Brigade's drop zone (DZ) and protecting its movements within the DZ. The Battalion was also given three primary missions: the defence and protection of 9 Parachute Battalion's left flank during its approach march and attack on the Merville battery; the destruction of two bridges spanning the River Dives; and the of destruction of German positions and a headquarters as well as a bridge at Varaville.

The Battalion crossed the channel and jumped into France between 0030 hours and 0130 hours, on June 6, 1944. The drops were badly scattered over a wide area as a result of the lack of navigational aids and the heavy dust and smoke that drifted over the drop zones from the heavy bombing of nearby targets. Heavy enemy anti-aircraft fire also panicked many of the pilots who immediately took evasive action that only magnified the difficulty of delivering the paratroopers accurately onto their objectives. On the first drop alone, only 30 of a possible 110 paratroopers of "C" Company landed on the DZ. The subsequent drops were no better. The second group, made up of the main body of the Battalion, was scattered over an area forty times greater than planned. To add to the problems, numerous leg kit bags ripped open, scattering the unit's vital heavy machine guns, mortars and anti-tank weapons across the Normandy countryside. This significantly reduced the firepower available to the airborne soldiers in the critical days that followed.

In the midst of the growing chaos, the physical and psychological toughness honed by careful training, showed its importance and value. The paratroopers, as individuals and as a collective unit, not only persevered, but flourished despite the unexpected situations and setbacks. By the end of the day, the resiliency of the Canadian paratroopers enabled them to attain all their assigned objectives with less than 30 per cent of the troops and equipment originally allocated to the tasks. Having completed their allotted missions, the surviving paratroopers grimly dugin to hold that which they had fought so ferociously for. Despite heavy losses, the Battalion held off all German counterattacks until the eventual Allied break-out.

By mid-August, the tide had finally turned and 1 Can Para Bn, as part of 3 Para Bde, for the first time since the Normandy drop, was back on the offensive. Commencing on August 16 and continuing for the next ten days, the unit participated in an advance and series of attacks against the German rearguard until finally being pulled from the line. On September 4, the Battalion began its departure from France and returned to its adopted home in Bulford three days later.

Unquestionably, 1 Can Para Bn distinguished itself in its first combat action. However, this came at great cost. During the three-month period between June 6 and September 6, 1944, the Battalion sustained heavy losses. Of the original 544 paratroops dropped, 83 were killed, 187 were wounded and 87 became prisoners of war. In

regard to 1 Can Para Bn's performance on D-Day, Brigadier James Hill wrote, "they really put up a most tremendous performance on D-Day and as a result of their tremendous dash and enthusiasm they overcame their objectives, which were very sticky ones, with considerable ease . . ." Hill was justifiably proud of his Canadians. "The battle," he wrote, "carried on for three months till the Germans were driven across the Seine. In this period, the 6th Airborne lost some 4,457 men killed, wounded and missing. Throughout that time, the Canadian Parachute Battalion had never been out of the line. They won their spurs and glory . . . and paid the price. Nearly half the Battalion were either killed, wounded or missing . . . It had been a bloody battle with high stakes. No quarter asked or given."

Despite the unit's fine showing in its first combat experience, not everything was acceptable. The CO was found wanting. Sergeant John Feduck observed, "he was no active commander – he should have been assigned to a desk." It was not lost on anyone that the CO was seldom seen among the forward trenches.

This was in stark contrast to Nicklin who continued his larger-than-life presence. He regularly visited the soldiers in their forward positions. Furthermore, he enjoyed the action and even took part in reconnaissance patrols. "He was very strict," conceded Sergeant Feduck, "but he was a real paratrooper." In short, he shared the risks of his men. In fact, Nicklin was seriously wounded on July 23, 1944, while participating on a patrol. He tripped a wire that set off an improvised mine made of two mess tins packed with ammunition and metal scraps. Shrapnel hit him in the arms, legs and buttocks and he was evacuated to England. His closest friend, a fellow native of Winnipeg and former officer of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Major Fraser Eadie, took over as DCO.

The obvious absence of the CO among the forward trenches did not elude Brigadier Hill. In fact, upon taking over as DCO, Hill counseled Eadie not to leave the CO alone as "he's a bit nervous." Eadie recalled sitting by a slit trench as an 88mm shell came whistling by slamming into the paratroop position nearby. "He [Hill] didn't move, so I didn't either," recalled Eadie, "Hill was testing me."

Brigadier Hill rated Bradbrooke as "a good administrator, a very good CO in peacetime and an intrepid parachutist." However, Bradbrooke's leadership during the defence of the Le Mesnil crossroads and the subsequent pursuit of the retreating German forces was not up to Hill's, or the

RIGHT: Major Jeff Nicklin, 2IC of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, photographed at Carter Barracks, Bulford, England, on January 5, 1944. Nicklin enforced rules and regulations, worked at improving the Battalion's state of readiness and fitness, and did not tolerate mistakes. LCol Nicklin was killed in battle on March 24, 1945, during Operation VARSITY's parachute assault. (LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA)

unit's, expectations. Hill noted that Bradbrooke lacked the aggressive leadership required to lead his men during combat.

Major Richard "Dick" Hillborn acknowledged that the problem was evident to everyone. As a result, according to Hillborn, Brigadier Hill, who was seriously wounded on June 6 himself but refused evacuation, spent an unproportionate amount of time in the 1 Can Para Bn lines and personally led the famous Bréville counterattack on June 12, because of his concerns for the lack of leadership shown by the CO. Hillborn further reveals that in later discussions Hill confessed he did not know what to do about the problem because of the "political aspect."

This problem was later solved for him by Hillborn. On August 23, during a lull in the fighting, Lieutenant-General Ken Stuart, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), visited the unit. Hillborn was known by Stuart because he had visited the CGS at his home in Barriesfield during the pre-war days when Hillborn was a student at the Royal Military College of Canada with Stuart's son. Hillborn asked for a few minutes of the CGS' time and, in a private discussion in a Normandy orchard, laid out the problem to Stuart. As a result, or coincidently, that same day, Bradbrooke was assigned to a position on the General Staff at Canadian Military Headquarters in London. Major Eadie became the acting CO for the remainder of the unit's time in Normandy.

The Battalion's return to England provided the opportunity to reconstitute itself and prepare for its next mission. The unit's first priority was bringing itself back up to strength through the integration of reinforcements from the 1 Can Para Training Company. The general feeling that prevailed, recalled Sergeant R.F. Anderson, was one of "tremendous relief and of great success and of having survived a most harrowing experience." During the next four days, activities were mostly administrative in nature consisting of clothing, pay and medical parades. While discipline remained high, the officers and the senior NCOs ensured that the tempo of activity was relaxed and that the men were not rushed. Everyone knew that these first few days would

prove difficult.
Many familiar faces
had vanished. "Out
of my company's
120 men," recalled
John Kemp, "there
were 22 of us that
returned to Carter
Barracks."

The survivors were well treated.
The base staff went out of their way to welcome the paratroopers back



home and great care was taken to prepare excellent meals. Furthermore, many day passes were issued enabling the paratroopers to go out on the town, dance and have a few pints. For those who preferred to stay in camp, they had the option of taking in a movie or show. On September 11, the paratroopers were given a well-deserved 13-day furlough. Prior to heading off to their various destinations, the paratroopers were warned that the day following their return, training would start once again in earnest.

As promised, on September 26, 1944, Acting Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Nicklin, the Battalion's new CO, had the unit formed up for a special parade. His address was short and to the point. He wanted to command the best battalion in the Division. As a result, he insisted that training would be very demanding. His previous 'in your face,' harsh disciplinary style as the unit's DCO had been tolerated by the untested troops in the training leading up to Normandy. However, it now annoyed the hardened combat veterans. Nonetheless, Nicklin's command approach was fully endorsed by Brigadier Hill who believed that strong leadership was necessary to ensure that the paratroopers put forth full commitment and effort during training. In fact, Hill's Evaluation Report of Nicklin stated:

An officer of the highest integrity who possesses unusual drive and determination. He sets a very high standard in the Battalion and is prepared to accept no compromise. He is a stern disciplinarian, but takes infinite trouble to safeguard the welfare of the men. He is a good trainer of troops and is tactically sound in his ideas. He requires further experience in the tactical handling of his Battalion.

Part of the problem, however, also lay in the difference between the old and the new CO. Lieutenant-Colonel Bradbrooke was a behind-the-scenes individual and he was not a stickler for strict discipline. This was in complete contrast with the new CO. Nicklin was up front and tolerated no deviance from the rules.

"Jeff Nicklin," observed one senior NCO, "was one who almost seemed indestructible, 6'3" tall, football hero back home, a stern disciplinarian, physical fitness his specialty." Those who played football with Nicklin back home "rated him almost immortal." Sergeant Feduck remembered Nicklin as "a strong commander with very severe discipline – what he did or said you obeyed." Unquestionably, Nicklin was a rugged physical individual, who was feared and could sense fear, recalled Brigadier Hill. In this officer, Hill discerned the leadership qualities that could prove very useful to supervise the Battalion's post-campaign training.

While Hill respected the accomplishments and sacrifices of his Canadian paratroopers, he had nevertheless learned a valuable leadership lesson while commanding soldiers during the Battle of France in 1940, and paratroopers later in North Africa in 1942. The Brigadier had observed that 'blooded' veterans who returned from combat duty to resume daily training routine showed an unwillingness to 'snap to it' and put up with various aspects of garrison duties and discipline. Therefore, he believed that a strong hand was required to once again motivate, closely supervise and control battle-hardened troops. Hill was right. Having faced death and survived, many veterans now thought that they were better than their new untested comrades. Hill identified this type of combatant as "heroes and crooked berets that had to be knocked on the head and have discipline reimposed."

This post-operational mindset was seemingly now developing within 1 Can Para Bn. "Here we have very tough chaps, heroes," explained Hill. "They had to be disciplined. So, I popped in Jeff Nicklin." In the end, regardless of what the paratroopers had accomplished, Hill would not shy away from his two airborne tenets – discipline and physical fitness. There was still much to accomplish and the war was from over.

Nicklin now focussed on correcting the deficiencies and shortcomings experienced during the Normandy Campaign. He specifically targeted those skills required for offensive operations. The Battalion had its work cut out for itself. It was a long way from its pre-D-Day level of operational

readiness. Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Nicklin accepted this challenge without hesitation. The men immediately noted the change in the tempo. "The training got more severe," recollected Sergeant John Feduck, "and nothing was let go. Nothing was overlooked." He added that "Nicklin was the type of guy who did everything strictly by the book, and he had his own way of training, making sure you went for your runs. There was no slacking off." Nicklin's training schedule was very simple. "You trained all the time," stated Feduck. "You had no time for yourself," he added. "Leaves were a little shorter and you worked harder."

Physical training under Nicklin "was a hell of a lot tougher," recalled Sergeant Harry Reid, "He wanted us to become linebackers." Doug Morrison lamented, "he was so determined that we would all be as fit as him that he lost a lot of people." The new CO's objective was clear. "He wanted to have the best battalion in the Brigade," explained Sergeant Andy Anderson. "Nicklin had us out on the parade square at six o'clock in the morning," he recalled, "and worked us till dark." The senior NCO noted, "Brigadier Hill was thrilled and he did not object to that." Nicklin really enjoyed the physical part of the training. He personally led the bimonthly ten-mile forced march. As the paratroopers arrived at the finish line, "he [Nicklin] and the RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major] would stand at the gate with a clipboard," recounted Anderson, "and took down the names of the stragglers." No quarter was given. "If they could not keep up," stated Anderson, "they were gone." Nicklin wanted each platoon to arrive at the finish line as a group.

Nicklin's Normandy experience had confirmed in his mind that a well-trained group that worked skillfully together could inflict greater damage than a few isolated paratroopers. Since the Battalion's return from France, Nicklin inculcated the importance of teamwork in all training to both the veterans and to the reinforcements. He had personally experienced the benefits and results of this concept as well as the close-knit camaraderie that it fostered during his tenure with the CFL's Winnipeg Blue Bombers. He realized that teamwork was vital in wining football games. Nicklin knew that it would also enhance the effectiveness of his paratroopers.

Furthermore, Nicklin insisted that all his officers become team players. They were now ordered to take part with their men in all training activities. Under Nicklin there were no exceptions. "He started pushing them hard," recalled

RIGHT: Twenty enlisted men and six officers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion receive their silver wings as qualified jumpers in a colorful ceremony at the American parachute school in Georgia. (TORONTO STAR ARCHIVES)

Sergeant Roland Larose. "He ordered all the officers to take part in these runs and physical training exercises." This was one of the rare Nicklin training directives that the troops appreciated.

The hard training and demanding exercises assisted in integrating the reinforcements that the unit received. Nonetheless, the first few weeks proved difficult for the new men. "That's when the BS [bull shit] started, the attitude of some of veterans was, 'We were there [Normandy] and you weren't,'" explained Major Hilborn. The new men had to prove to the veterans that they could indeed fit in and, more importantly, keep up.

Nicklin had anticipated this situation and told his officers he would not put up with such behavior. "There was no lording over others," recalled Lieutenant Alf Tucker. Nicklin insisted that all veterans use "their experience to show the replacements how to react and protect themselves or how to act in a manner that was in their best interest. I remember," explained Tucker, "that the officers took that to heart."

"The problem," conceded Hilborn, "now became one of reintegrating the old with the new. They all had to be taught to think alike." A redeeming factor was that the reinforcements were all qualified paratroopers. They had also undergone advanced weapons and fieldcraft training similar to those of 1 Can Para Bn. The men had a good handle on their basic skills. Now, they just had to be accepted by the veterans.

The integration of the new members eventually worked itself out. By mid-October 1944, the Battalion's training program was progressing well and the undesirables had been weeded out. Corporal Richard Creelman commented, "There were quite a few that did not come up to what they were expected to and they were replaced. They [Battalion Headquarters] found out quickly who were the leaders and who weren't." Those who chose to remain knew that they would have to work hard. "We had some experience by now," said Creelman, "and we knew what was expected of us. We knew what it was like getting shot at."

It was also easier to keep the men in line. "All you had to do," explained Sergeant Larose, "was to tell them to



smarten up, or they'd be back to the Canadian Army. That was it." Even though the training was difficult, the pride of wearing the distinctive maroon beret and the unique Canadian Parachute Qualification Badge, as well as the fact that they were the first to take the fight to the enemy were reasons enough for the paratroopers to dig deeper and find the energy to keep up with the unrelenting tempo.

Those who remained were extremely professional. They were self-motivated and possessed good leadership skills and initiative. "In the Nicklin regime, we had to be prepared and were expected to take on a lot of initiative," revealed Andy Anderson. "Certain phases during the exercises were especially prepared to evaluate candidates [all ranks] and their use of initiative," he explained. "You would be briefed and once you landed [during an exercise], referees would black arm band [identification system used during an exercise to simulate casualties and wounded personnel] a certain percentage of your stick." A paratrooper would then be designated by the referees to carry on with the unit's task. "You had to know where you were," stated Anderson, "who was missing, what you had to do and what resources were at your disposal. This was a new part of the training that had been derived from our Normandy experience." He concluded, "This training really paid off." Quick thinking and adapting to any situation resulted in the mission's success. It also kept casualties to a minimum.

Despite the challenging training, the paratroopers were becoming increasingly disgruntled with certain aspects of the CO's uncompromising level of discipline. Fraser Eadie, the new DCO, frankly stated, "Nicklin's attitude was to simply charge to the hilt [those who did not comply] with his regulations or orders." Private Morrison believed he "was too strict and overdid it with discipline." He added, "he would toss people out or charge them for very slight problems." Roland Larose recalled one particular case. "Sometimes NCOs had to give drill exercise to defaulters



had committed infractions or had not performed up to expectation]. He [Nicklin] got them to wear a smock with a big yellow stripe down their back. That really cheesed us off," said Larose. "You can only push a guy so far... They weren't yellow,

[paratroopers who

that's the part we didn't like."

Even the smallest detail did not escape Nicklin's watchful eye. "We used to have to blanco [color] our stripes [rank insignia] white," stated Corporal Ernie Jeans. He went on, "I didn't do that because I wasn't on parade much. However, one day, Nicklin noted my stripes and hollered at me from across the parade square. I had to race over and I had a lot of explaining to do." By all accounts the CO was unrelenting. "[Lieutenant-] Colonel Nicklin," wrote Anderson, "was a by-the-book commander, absolutely no quarter given and he had no compassion for defences that were mounted." He added, "the number of soldiers punished severely for what might be minor infractions gave the colonel the unkind title of the 'Tyrant'." Corporal John Ross felt that Nicklin was "isolated from the private soldier." By late October, a group of paratroopers decided that they would no longer put up with this excessive discipline and organized a hunger strike.

The Battalion War Diary entry for Friday, October 20, 1944, simply reads: "On evening supper parade great confusion was caused when the men refused to eat." It explained, "The complaint lay not in the food but in the treatment of the men by the commanding officer." What in fact transpired was a refusal of some 70-80 men to eat their meal. The following day, the War Diary simply noted "Personnel still not eating." However, what it failed to highlight was the fact that the hunger strike had now spread through the whole battalion, including the training company. On Sunday, October 22, the War Diary reported, "Personnel in camp refused to eat again today." Clearly, the hunger strike was meant to pass a serious message. The troops, however, "were observing

**LEFT:** Major Fraser Eadie, took over as DCO after Nicklin was seriously wounded on July 23, 1944, while participating on a patrol. Eight months later, he took command of the Battalion following Nicklin's death. Eadie learned well from his predecessors, and was considered an excellent CO who knew how to balance the three components of command: authority, management and leadership.

all orders meticulously and were actually attending meal parades but were not eating."

The protest, argued some of the senior leadership, was organized by a group of malcontents to complain about what Captain John Madden described as "a parade square type discipline." Madden explained that "The men saw it as chickenshit... They knew that so many of the manifestations of this parade square discipline were unessential to getting the job done in war." Private Jan de Vries added, "Many paratroopers were uncomfortable with this course of action." However, he conceded, "we were put in a position that we had to show solidarity and go with the flow."

Whereas discipline was an integral element of a military life, Nicklin enforced it with an iron hand on absolutely every facet of the daily lives of his men. "He [Nicklin] imposed such requirements," complained Madden, "that when they went to the canteen at night, they couldn't go casually dressed. They had to go with their battledress jacket buttoned up. They couldn't wear their fatigue shoes; they had to wear proper ammunition boots, and that sort of thing."

The hunger strike came at an inopportune moment. With the influx of a large number of new paratroopers, NCOs and officers, the incident threatened to cause irreparable damage to the unit's cohesiveness and morale. Many officers were very concerned by this turn of events. While some backed the CO's actions wholeheartedly, others thought that Nicklin was unnecessarily hard on the men. "It was disconcerting," lamented Madden, "in that you were expected to go back to battle with these guys and here they had, you know, dug in their heels and shown that they weren't prepared to obey orders or do what was required."

Lieutenant Jenkins agreed. "It was an unpleasant experience around camp," stated Jenkins, "because morale was usually very very high. But, now whose part do you take?" Jenkins added, "You could not condemn them [the men] for what they did. The position that most of us [officers] took, was that it was your business and do whatever you like . . . It was a tense period for a while."

The strike went on for three days and further strained the relations between the men, the NCOs and the officers.

By Saturday afternoon (October 22, 1944), Brigadier Hill decided to take a closer look. He monitored the situation and finally the next day decided to intervene. Hill was revered by the men. "Brigadier Hill was a tremendous officer," remembered Sergeant Flynn. "He was out every morning and did all the things he expected us to do. He had a smile all the time. I was certainly impressed with him." Sergeant Anderson agreed. "I can hardly think of any general officer that the men could feel any affection for, except Hill," he stated. "He is always up front, he has been wounded at least six times, he is totally without fear, and what I always imagine as a great leader, however you measure it."

Hill ordered the entire Battalion to be assembled in the base auditorium. Upon Hill's arrival all officers and warrant officers were asked to leave. The men were then given a few minutes to present their concerns. The Brigade Commander then interjected, "Look, you are letting the whole party down." He then appealed to their sense of pride. "More importantly," he chided, "you are letting Canada down." The meeting was short and to the point. Deep down, the paratroopers knew that the Brigadier was right. He was a professional soldier and would not tolerate such nonsense. Hill ended the meeting abruptly. "Now," he emphatically asserted, "I am making it absolutely clear I am giving you an order, and you are going back to eat your lunch." A few hours later, Brigadier Hill was informed that the Canadian paratroopers had done as they were told.

The following day, six paratroopers requested to meet with the Brigadier. They identified themselves as the ring leaders and apologized for their behavior. Hill was impressed by this show of character:

I accepted their apologies and thanked them very much for coming in. I always loved those Canadians and that made me love them more and more. That couldn't have happened to any other battalion except a Canadian battalion. It was wonderful. Of course, really, that I had the grip on them to some extent was that I loved them, literally. If you love people you are commanding and lead, they will always reciprocate.

A Canadian Army investigation into the hunger strike concluded that a number of factors caused the protest.

These were reported as:

- a. The battalion was being reconstituted and that roughly two thirds of the men were new since the operation in Normandy.
- b. Most of the junior officers were new.
- c. The former CO had not been a strict disciplinarian and the men had been getting away with a lot, though discipline as a whole was not bad.
- d. The new CO was an exceptionally strict disciplinarian and in his enthusiasm had been punishing minor offences on a much too severe basis and in some respects had produced regulations, particularly concerning dress within the camp area, which were not entirely reasonable ones.
- e. Many of the new junior officers have not grown to know their men as they should.
- f. It appears that a number of the new men in the Battalion were among those at Camp Shilo, Canada, who staged a similar hunger strike successfully there some time earlier this year.

Paratroops, as a whole, appear to be somewhat overpampered and temperamental prima donnas, and they dislike going through the training process again after their operations in Normandy.

No action was taken against the soldiers or instigators. Hill believed that the incident "had pretty well burnt itself out" and he felt it would be "unwise to exaggerate the importance of the whole matter by digging them out at this stage and making examples of them." Part of the problem was also the rationale behind the protest. Although both Hill and the Divisional Commander, Major-General Richard Gale, expressed complete confidence in Nicklin, both were "satisfied that the main cause was the slightly excessive enthusiasm for perfection in disciplinary matters by the CO."

Despite the belief of Hill and Gale that "the CO's appreciation of the disciplinary situation is cured" in the end, whereas the men had given in, Nicklin refused to change his rules. "Major Eadie, the Battalion's Second in Command," remarked Sergeant Anderson, "told me after the war that on many occasions he asked Nicklin to back off on certain issues regarding discipline. But he refused to do so."

Despite the embarrassing episode, neither the hunger strike, nor Nicklin's zealous attitude to discipline, adversely affected the Battalion's performance. Their

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record of action and accomplishments to the end of the war was commendable. They distinguished themselves when they were rushed to Belgium to assist the Allied effort at stopping the Germans during their Christmas offensive in the Ardennes in December 1944, commonly called the "Battle of the Bulge." They also performed admirably in Holland in the aftermath of the German attack during one of the coldest winters on record. In addition, they demonstrated their professionalism and effectiveness during Operation VARSITY, the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945 and the subsequent pursuit of the German forces across North-West Europe. The Battalion ended the war in Wismar on the Baltic Sea, the only Canadian troops to link-up with the Russians.

Lieutenant-Colonel Nicklin, however, was killed in battle on March 24, 1945, in the parachute assault during Operation VARSITY. He was found hanging in a tree, still in his canopy, riddled with bullets. As a result of rumours and supposition as to the fate of Nicklin who had been reported missing, the Canadian Army sent an investigative team to determine what in fact had happened to the CO. In the end, his death was attributed to enemy action. He had landed in a tree directly above an enemy machine-gun nest - he never had a chance. Ironically, normally Nicklin jumped in the middle of the stick so that he could have half of his headquarters on either side of him upon landing. However, for this operation he wanted to be the number one jumper so that he could lead his troops into battle. That decision cost him his life, but he stayed true to principles up to the end.

Command of the Battalion now fell to Major Fraser Eadie. The new CO was much like his predecessor in some ways; he was a former athlete who turned down an opportunity to play professional hockey with the Chicago Black Hawks in the NHL to serve his country. In addition,

**LEFT:** Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in a transit camp staging area prior to D-Day, England, in the first few days of June 1944. (SGT. ELMER R. BONTER, DND, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, PA-114599)

Eadie too was direct and frank. He also had a fiery temper. Nonetheless, in many ways, Eadie was lucky in that he had evolved and grown with the unit virtually from the beginning. He knew the men; had experienced combat; he had watched two other COs and he was familiar with the problems, strengths and weaknesses of the Battalion. He was well positioned to lead it to the end of the war, which was mere months away.

From all accounts Eadie had learned well. He was an excellent CO who knew how to balance the three components of command. One soldier observed that he was a CO who knew "when to be on parade and when to be off parade." Sergeant Feduck recounted, "[Eadie was] very strict but extremely smart." He added, "He had a way of talking to the men at their level - never mocked or downgraded you." Similarly, Private Morrison recalled, "Eadie was tough when he had to be but fair." By his own accounts Eadie had a simple leadership philosophy. "I always believed," he affirmed, "that I must lead them [his soldiers] or I couldn't live with myself." He added, "The only way to be promoted was if I was held in good esteem by my men. I never asked them to do anything I wouldn't do myself." It is no wonder then that Fraser Eadie was highly respected and treated like "the CO" by his men until his death in 2005.

On September 30, 1945, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion was officially disbanded. The nation's first airborne soldiers had earned a proud and remarkable reputation. Their legacy would become the standard of excellence that would challenge Canada's future paratroopers and imbue them with a special pride. The Battalion never failed to complete an assigned mission, nor did it ever lose or surrender an objective once taken. The Canadian paratroopers were among the first Allied soldiers to have landed in occupied Europe, the only Canadians to have participated in the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, and by the end of the war had advanced deeper into Germany than any other Canadian unit. "The Battalion," wrote Field-Marshall Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, "played a vital part in the heavy fighting which followed their descent onto French soil in 6 RIGHT: "Drifting Down" depicts members of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion training in Winterbourne Stoke, England in 1944. This unit fought as part of the 6th British Airborne Division throughout the Northwest European campaign. On March 24, 1945 the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion took part in Operation VARSITY, the code name for the crossing of the Rhine. It was the largest single-day airborne operation of the Second World War, involving more than 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircraft. ("DRIFTING DOWN" PAINTED BY GEORGE TINNING, BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART, CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM, 19710261-5455)

June 1944, during the subsequent critical days and in the pursuit to the Seine. Finally, it played a great part in the lightening pursuit of the German Army right up the shores of the Baltic. It can indeed be proud of its record."

In the end, this achievement is owed in large part to the unit leadership, particularly its commanding officers. Although each was in contrast to the others, all brought special skills, talents and capabilities to the unit. In so doing, they all shaped and prepared the Battalion for its role and success during the war. G.F.P. Bradbrooke, the aloof administrator and intrepid parachutist, was instrumental in establishing and organizing the unit when it was in its infancy. He seemingly relied on his rank, and focused on the management and authority components of command. And although he failed to be the dynamic and courageous battlefield commander, his instrumental role in establishing 1 Can Para Bn cannot be dismissed.

In contrast, the larger-than-life ex-star of the CFL, Jeff Nicklin, proved to be a dynamic, imposing commander who was feared by most, respected by many, and very unpopular with the majority. Nonetheless, his superiors adored him as a paratroop commander. He instilled energy and drive and a relentless pursuit for toughness and effectiveness. Nicklin always led by example and ensured he managed the unit properly – always ensuring the necessary supervision of activities, proper priorities and allocation of resources. He was never afraid to use his authority and it seems was probably too ready to use it to the maximum to discipline even minor indiscretions. Nicklin, in his desire to shape and mold a tough battalion, one whose men were superbly fit and expert at their craft, sometimes went too far. He was too inflexible in his philosophical approach; too distant from the men on a human level and arguably lacked a degree of compassion and humanity. As a result, many considered him a "tyrant." However, what cannot be lost is the fact that Nicklin's unrelenting pressure created a unit that was



second to none and was able to operate effectively in the complex and unforgiving airborne battleground. Although not all may have appreciated his methods, many owe their lives to his zeal and conviction in training them hard.

Finally, Fraser Eadie seemed to be the balance between his former two predecessors. Possessing a fiery temper, he could nonetheless easily let minor indiscretions go and never held a grudge. Courageous, he led his men in battle from the front "with utter disregard for danger." He relied on leadership – and was conscious of when to be a strict disciplinarian and when to allow the troops to relax and vent. Although he relied on leadership, he was an able manager and ensured the unit was efficient in every facet of the word. Equally, he never shied away from using authority when required. He knew himself and he knew his men, and as a result, he was able to balance the three components of command and use the right component to the right effect.

In the end, all three COs played a vital role in shaping the unit into what it was. Although all had a different approach to command, it seemed that each was the right individual at the right time. A Bradbrooke was necessary to stand the unit up. Equally, a Nicklin was required to take the veterans of Normandy and bring them back to earth so that they could properly prepare for the next battle – and especially integrate them with the new reinforcements. Finally, an Eadie with his balanced approach was vital to bring the troops down in the final days of the war and lead them into demobilization. Together, they and their soldiers laid the foundation of a proud airborne legacy for Canada's future paratroopers to follow.

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### 1 CAN PARA BN

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day Ceremony: 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Cairn, Siffleur Falls

> text by Capt (ret'd) Bill Dickson photos by David Paris



he weather icons in the Nordegg–David Thompson area for the period of June 5-7, 2019 were not promising! Dark clouds and raindrops were the order of the day. But as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion PPCLI climb team, family members and our Padre Dave Prouse gathered at the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Cairn (Airborne Monument) on the morning of June 5<sup>th</sup> to bless the ashes that were about to go up Normandy Peak, it turned into a nice day. Cool, light clouds and windy, but nice. The team, accompanied by two family members, made it to the top of Normandy Peak where they conducted a memorial service for our five departed Airborne Brothers now joining those other past members as Guardians of the Monument.

That night, back at the David Thompson Resort, the Meet & Greet took on the typical Airborne Family mood. It was noisy! But the gathering quieted down a bit earlier than in past years — we must be getting older! Still, many were not ready to call it a night and gathered back in their rooms or at camp sites and partied in traditional airborne fashion late into the night.

Arriving to set up for the ceremony on the 6<sup>th</sup>, we were pleased to find that Alberta Parks personnel had restricted access to the site to all but Airborne veterans and families. Weather again cooperated, with light clouds and blue skies making Ex Coelis Mountain a perfect backdrop for the parade. It didn't take long for the area to fill up under the direction of CWO (ret'd) Mike Bludd, CD. On hand to celebrate the 18<sup>th</sup> D-Day Ceremony held here at the Airborne Monument in the Siffleur Falls Staging Area were the gathering masses of Reg Forces members, Airborne veterans, Army Cadets, VMPC members, Alberta Parks personnel and even a few UK soldiers from BATUS (British Army Training Unit Suffield). The end count, on parade and guests sitting, was estimated at between 175 – 200 personnel ... a magnificent setting to behold from the MC's position.

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Operation VARSITY veteran Lou Lamy from Calgary took the salute. Padre

**ABOVE:** CWO (ret'd) Mike Bludd forms up the parade for the D-Day Ceremony at Siffleur Falls on June 6, 2019.

Dave Prouse gave the invocation and 1<sup>st</sup> Can Para Bn widow Adrienne Anderson read the Airborne Prayer. Tributes from the Minister were read by Ms. Darci Thomson, Area Service Officer, Calgary Veterans Affairs Canada Office. And Lt. Gen (ret'd) Kent foster, CMM, OStJ, CD, gave the all important key address to the troops on parade.

In an unexpected and surprise move, we were pleased to be joined by Lynn Robb of Calgary – daughter of Norm Toseland, the 1st Can Para Bn veteran who was responsible for getting the Ex Coelis Mountain range named – who spoke to us about her father. She was flanked by Brian Mason and Kevin Richards, members of the First Special Service Force (FSSF) re-enactment group, while our Bugler Sgt Martin Walters and Piper MWO (ret'd) Spot Norris did the honours for the Last Post, Lament and Reveille. Escorted by Army Cadets from Brighton and Edmonton, wreaths were placed in honour of the fallen by the attendees.

As a tribute to his uncles who landed on D-Day, Al Cameron of Veterans Voices of Canada spread a vile of sand that was taken from the beach at Normandy on the base of the Airborne Monument.

On dismissal, the group picture of all attendees, centered on the monument and the backdrop of Ex Coelis Mountain, captured the moment of dedication for another year. It was a beautiful day for a ceremony. Would it be the last?

The BBQ back at the David Thompson Resort closed out another special event and gathering of the Airborne Family. They came from east and west to remember and honour those that went before us. Their stories were real, the memories at times painful. The evening ended early — again. And, yes ... we are all getting older!

For those of us who stayed overnight, the morning of June 7, 2019 at the David Thompson Resort was a shocker!! It had snowed over night – sleet, wind and rain greeted us at the breakfast goodbyes. One can say that was interesting — like on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944, I guess yesterday we too "had a window of opportunity."

Jumpers, it was one of the best D-Day ceremonies at Siffleur Falls we ever had. It will be up the Brotherhood if we do this again ... and that's all I'm going to say about that!

BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTOS: (1) Cadets from 2551 PPCLI Cadet Corps Edmonton and 1<sup>st</sup> Can Para Bn Cadet Corps 100 of Brighton joined the parade. (2) On June 6, 2019 an impressive group of attendees assembled before the majestic backdrop of the Airborne Monument and Ex Coelis Mountain at Siffleur Falls to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day.



ABOVE: Roger Chabot's oil painting entitled "Out of the Clouds" was unveiled by Lou Lamy and Adrienne Anderson during the June 6, 2019 D-Day Ceremony at Siffleur Falls.





**ABOVE LEFT:** Cpl Weinerman, of the 3 PPCLI climb team, gives a thumb's up at reaching the top of Normandy Peak.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** MWO (ret'd) Ed Haines, escorted by a 1<sup>st</sup> Can Para Cadet, places a wreath on behalf of Aboriginal veterans.







## Mémoires de Chypre, 1974

Laurent Pelletier: Sa dernière volonté



aurent Pelletier, Caporal-chef à la retraite, est décédé il y a deux ans passés. Une partie de ses dernières volontés était qu'il désirait que son livre du Régiment aéroporté du Canada, reçu à Chypre en 1974 lors de l'invasion Turque (mission canadienne), soit remis à la Légion canadienne de Rimouski, co-localisé là où son ami le soldat Berger de Rimouski a péri lors du conflit.

La présentation a été faite le 7 octobre 2018, après le marathon SFL de Rimouski à M. Jean Thériault, CD, Commandant du District no 2 du Bas St-Laurent par le frère de Laurent, M. Gilles Pelletier, MB, CD (Sergent à la retraite), qui a aussi servi lors de cette mission.

Lors de la présentation Gilles portait fièrement le chandail marron du 50° anniversaire du Régiment, ainsi que le ruban du souvenir en l'honneur de Laurent.

Sur la photo, de gauche à droite, vous pouvez voir : Pierre St-Laurent, MMM, CD, Lieutenant-Colonel à la retraite;

Dre Annie Lavoie, belle-sœur et épouse de Adrien; Véronique Kenny; Hugo St-Laurent, CD (adjudant-maître); M. Thériault; Gilles Pelletier; Donald Pelletier (frère); et Adrien Pelletier (frère). En avant nous avons Rose St-Laurent, fille de Véronique et Hugo.

Nous avions fait la dispersion de ses cendres par hélicoptère dans son village natal de Saint-Paulin Dalibaire (maintenant fermé). La présentation du livre était la dernière de ses volontés.

Nous remercions Helen, la veuve de Laurent, pour avoir permis cette présentation.

Qu'il repose en paix. ■

Le livre du Régiment aéroporté du Canada, que le caporalchef à la retraite Laurent Pelletier a reçu en 1974 en Chypre lors de l'invasion turque, a été remis à la Légion canadienne de Rimouski en sa mémoire en octobre 2018 par son frère Gilles Pelletier.

60 ~ Le Beret Marron

#### CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT CHALLENGE COIN Request for Replacement Coin Request for NEW Coin Served before1968. Coins have BR in front of number, ex. BR0000 Served during 1968-1995. Four digit number, ex. 0000 Served after 1995. Coins have AR in front of number, ex. AR00000 (Served with a Jump Company at least one year) Requirements/ Criteria Proof (Service Record) sent by mail or fax of documents showing that you served during these time a. 1 Can Para Bn from 1942-45 b. First Special Services Forces 1942-1944 c. Special Air Service 1947-1949 d. Mobile Striking Force 1948-1958 e. Defence of Canada Force 1958/1968 f. Canadian Airborne Regiment & Battle Group 1968/1995 g. Airborne School & CFPMD h. Jump Companies Require form from your DND service called "Member's Personnel Record Resume" or the "UER Employment History Record (CF743D)" 2. For replacement coins.........Do you know the number of your coin? If yes, #\_\_\_\_ Require your Service Number as supporting documentation. This information is not used or forwarded to anyone and is only used for identification purposes especially when there are common last names. Military Service Number # Full mailing address with Telephone number. ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Money Order (Payable to Joe Drouin Enterprises Ltd) Card No. \_\_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_ /\_\_ Signature \_\_ Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #(\_\_\_\_)\_\_ -\_\_\_ Fax #(\_\_\_\_)\_\_ -E-mail: Your last name and original number will be engraved on the coin. Each coin will come in a clear plastic pouch and with an inserted card describing the challenge. Shipping is by express post which has tracking and 6. Quebec: \$25.00 coin + \$9.50 Post + tax = \$41.97 Ontario: \$25.00 coin + \$9.50 Post + tax = \$41.25 BC, AB, SK, MB, NWT, YU: \$25.00 coin + \$17.50 Post + tax = \$44.63 NB, NL, NS and PEI: \$25.00 coin + \$17.50 Post + Tax = \$48.88 Must be sent in advance either by money order or Visa or MasterCard. Postage include express post with tracking number and insurance. Arrangements for eTransfers also permissible. Airborne Regiment Association Kit Shop 3 – 36 de Varennes, Gatineau, QC J8T 0B6 Phone: 819-568-6669 Fax: 819-568-1074 E-mail: altitude@joedrouin.com Kitshop on Web: www.joedrouin.com Airborne Regiment Association of Canada www.airborneassociation.com Jan 2019



### THE LAST POST

Bakker, Ed – RSM CABC, RSM Cdn AB Regt (82 – 84), FSM SSF (87 – 91), BCWO CFB Petawawa

Butler, John – UK

Campbell, Allan – 1 Can Para

Croshaw, Ernie – British 1 $^{\rm st}$  Airborne Division, WW2

Currie, Jerry - Cdn Gds, RCR, Cdn AB Regt

Delory, Wilfred (Wilf) – 1 Can Para – D-Day and the Rhine Crossing

Dixon, Russell – 1 Can Para

Feduck, John – 1 Can Para - D-Day and the Rhine Crossing

Gautreau, Joseph – RCE, 1 Can Para – Dieppe, D-Day, Korea

Gobuty, Steve – RCR, Cdn AB Regt, CANSOFCOM, R Regt C

Gratto, James (Jimmy) Gratto – RCCS, MSF, DCF

Harris, Herb – 1 Can Para

Hatcher, Clayton Victor – PPCLI, Cdn AB Regt

Hunter, Peter Whyte Gray (Scotty) – UK, CAFA President (Sudbury Branch)

Key, Brian "Frank" – UK, RCCS, MSF

Labrie, Patrick – 2RCHA

Little, George – 1 Can Para

Miklos, James – 1 Can Para

Northrup, Stuart - RCR (Korea), Cdn AB Regt

Olmstead, Graham MacLaren – PPCLI, RSM Cdn AB Regt (73 – 76)

Pitts, Herb – PPCLI (Korea), QOR, Comd Cdn AB Regt (71 – 73)

Richardson, W.P. (Bill) Richardson - Light Bty RCA Seiersen, Peter – PPCLI (Korea)

Sloan, Raymond Francis – RCCS (Korea), MSF Sullivan, Robert – 1 Can Para

Voisin, Oliver Edwin – 1 Can Para - D-Day

Walsh, Bernard "Paddy" – UK, RCCS, MSF



#### Bombardier Patrick Labrie, 2RCHA

Bombardier Patrick Labrie, a six-year veteran based out of Petawawa, died during a lowaltitude parachute training jump in Bulgaria on June 17, 2019. At the time of his death, Labrie was part of a contingent of about 100 Canadians who were participating in the U.S.-led Exercise SWIFT

RESPONSE 19, which took place from June 8 to 27 in various locations in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania.



