



Signals Band Wins Three Awards at CNE Warriors Day 2007



The Band parades in their new summer uniform. *Photo provided*

How time flies when you are having fun. Another year has passed and Toronto Signals Band is as active as ever. We participated in 34 activities during our 2006/2007 season. We performed at 23 parades, The Fort George Tattoo, Waterloo Band Festival (proceeds to Juno Beach) and 9 other types of events. Of significance was the placing of a wreath by our member Tom Johnson at the Vimy Ridge Monument on behalf of the Toronto Signals Band.

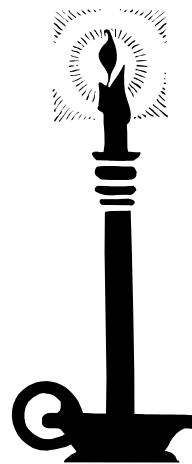
Some of the highlights are as follows:

Winning three awards at the 2007 Warrior's Day Parade Best Colour Guard Award, Best Band Award and Best Overall Award with the Highest Score. This year the band's activities went far beyond the armoury. We did 7 Regimental CO's Parades as well as the Re-

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Hwy 401 between Trenton and Toronto has been re-named. *Photo by permission.*



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Commanding Officer's Comments



Maj. Greg Stasyna CD
Commanding Officer

We are now finishing the latter half for the year of 2007. It has been a particularly long and busy year. Yet it seems to have flown right by. I seem to remember just recently celebrating New Year's Levee and bang; here we are at the end of 2007. Such are times when there are some many activities, events and operations packed into a year. From the Communication Group exercises (Jupiter Trillium 01/02), through to 32 Brigade Group's Exercise Iron Talon 01/02 mixed with the summer concentration (Exercise Maple Defender) to Regimental, Brigade and Group taskings to such

special events as our formal Regimental Ball, Warriors Day, Communication Group activities and topped of with Exercise Steadfast Response a domestic operations exercise designed to support and protect Canadians in Canada. These are but only a few of the many events that have passed through the doors of our Regiment this year.

One of the distinct highlights and challenges in organizing was the "unofficial" visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Anne. Honorary Colonel Horsfall was originator through her good work of setting up the Regiment's ceremonial participation for an honour guard for Princess Anne's visit to Toronto on June 4, 2007.

I am now well into my third year as your Commanding Officer and it is with great satisfaction that continues to lead the unit through a period of change. The change involves the role of the unit within a changing Communication Reserve. As you may know, the Communication Reserve has gone through a period of "transition" into the army command. Our next step will be "transformation" which will focus on how the Communication Reserve will fit into the "army". This process will take place throughout 2007/08. I am confident at the Regiment will benefit from this "transformation" and will come out as a strong member within the new organization.

The Regiment is fortunate to be located within Toronto. We have the ability to harvest a strong population base for recruiting. We benefit from being able to participate with army units that offer us the ability to use our training and resources for numerous exercises and operations. Our troops gain important experience from this cooperation for both domestic and over seas operations. I will continue to steer the unit into a strategic direction that will allow us to benefit from a changing environment and the community that we serve and live in. With this said, recruiting, succession planning and expansion of the unit along with the improvement of our administrative and operational infrastructure form my specific aims.

On another note, I wish to focus attention on our "Regimental Family". This I define as our numerous associations including the Toronto Signals Band, 709 Cadet Corps, Regimental Advisory Council, Jimmy and Associates, Hong Kong Veterans, Dutch War Veterans, the Flag Party and numerous other affiliates. These associations are extensions of the unit and represent an extension of our regimental soul in both history and spirit. The main strategic goal that I am focusing on is to get more participation from many regimental alumni particularly from the late 1970s through to 2000. Many members that have served with unit have

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From the RSM



MWO April White CD
RSM

Here we are again, starting a new training cycle and we are off to a very good start having had great weather for all of our September and October training exercises. But where did the summer go? I know for some of us, the weeks between June and September are a welcome break, but it goes by far too quickly. For the troops, the summer can be much too long particularly when attending training courses or fulfilling a tasking away from home. Whatever you do over the summer, the benefits of these experiences are often only appreciated and fondly remembered long afterwards.

The memories you make, last a lifetime. For those on your PLQ now with 32 Bde, take heed: The course is tough and the hours are long but you'll be done before you know it and in the end, you too will have stories to tell.

For those that went to CFB Shilo for BMQ or PLQ and off to CFB Kingston and elsewhere for training congratulations! These courses are very demanding particularly when dealing with soaring temperatures and hungry insects. I am very proud of your accomplishments and I would be remiss if I didn't boast about the PLQ graduation parade. Not only was the pre-parade demonstration impressive but half of the parade positions for the BMQ/PLQ parade were from our Regiment! Well done. Over the summer, Cpl Mawby-Puglia was deployed to support the Afghanistan mission and should be returning around Christmas. I trust Cpl MP will have lots of stories and memories of his own to share when he returns in late December.

With a few busy training months behind us, we are now focusing on several key Regimental events before the Christmas break. At the November CO's parade the Group Commander awarded MCpl Gajewski with her much deserved, Group Solider of the Year Award. We also have the Regimental Remembrance Mess Dinner, the Remembrance Day Church Parade, Regimental Christmas Dinner and then the Christmas holidays. Of course in addition to the above, both Alpha and Bravo Troop will have conducted several training exercises. High Frequency radio communication skills are again a focus for the Regiment and we're getting additional equipment as a result, keeping Alpha Troop and the Chief Communications Operator busy working on setting up and planning for the new equipment. 2008's training year starts with the usual vigour of Winter Warfare training and, of course, more exercises.

With just over a year as the RSM, I've learned a lot and certainly have more to learn as we transform to fit into the army. Like the CO, I am optimistic that transformation will be beneficial to the Regiment. The CO and I attend the 32 Brigade meetings and functions to they are very appreciative of the Communications support we provide them just as we are appreciative of them providing us with BMQ and PLQ training positions. The relationship with Brigade is excellent and we are pleased to provide two instructors to the Battle School (Sgt Ben and MCpl Sagar).

We are on the right path with our collaborative and can-do attitude. We have a sea of expertise within the Brigade that we are starting to tap into thanks to the Operations and Training Staff and leadership of the Troop Commanders and Sergeant Majors and we are taking ad-

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HONORARY COLONEL'S COLUMN

Hon Col Sally Horsfall SS StJ RN



This fall I was privileged to be in Australia during the international meeting on Employer Support for Reserve Forces. As you no doubt are aware, Canada is one of the countries that do not have legislation requiring employers to give time-off to reservists for military training or deployments (although several provinces are proposing or have adopted legislation). Instead Canada has The Canadian Forces Liaison Council (CFLC) a civilian organization comprised of senior industry leaders who volunteer their time to work alongside a network of military commanders to liaise with employers, educators and reserve force units. Their work, encouraging employers to provide time off to reservists, and helping reservists inform their employers of the issues, has helped the CF immensely. 25% of Canadian military personnel serving on CF operations at home and abroad are reservists.

Each reserve unit is asked to appoint an Employer Support Representative (ES Rep) to implement the CFLC programs within the unit. This includes assisting asking for time off and coordinating unit/employer events. At 709 we are fortunate to have MCpl Hanbury as our ES Rep along with the able assistance of Capt. Hal Buller. ES Reps are given a variety of tools including speeches and power point presentations, videos, training manuals and a variety of promotional materials that can help reservists build a positive and supporting relationship with their civilian employers and educational institutions. All of this material is available through the CFLC website www.cflc.forces.gc.ca Take a peek!

May I wish you all a happy holiday season and best wishes for the training exercises in 2008.

EDITORIAL



When I first took over this job, I let it be known that I could not do it alone. I needed the help of the members of the Regimental family to keep me up to date on what was happening. My thanks to Ortie Beaumont of the Band, Col Jack Lee for Jimmy & Associates, officers and the Regimental Council, and Capt. Rick Leswick for the 709 Cadets all submitted material for this edition. Leo Sansone has submitted an article on the UN Veterans group and with the number of UN medals in this regiment, that's an organization that you might want to look into. Cpl Duncan Lloyd gave me a great piece on the use of simunitions in training. But I need more. If you have a story idea or an interesting photo relating to any part of the Regimental family, please send it to me. This is YOUR publication. My e-mail is editor709@yahoo.ca Have a great Christmas holiday, drive safe and look forward to our next edition in June of 2008.

MWO Steve Brickenden, Editor
Spiritus Manet



709 (Toronto) Communication Regiment

Maj. G.I. Stasyna CD
Commanding Officer

Capt. H. Buller CD
Adjutant

MWO April White CD
Regimental Sergeant Major

Col. S. Horsfall RN SSStJ
Honorary Colonel
and Chair Regimental Advisory Council

LCol. J. Lee CD
Honorary Lieutenant Colonel
and Unit Historian

Capt (Rev) F. Butler-Caughie Gr. COSJ
Padre and Unit Welfare Officer

Maj. Alex Moseanu SBStJ, CD, ADC
Museum and Archives

709 Communicator

MWO Steven Brickenden CD
Editor

WO1 (Retd) Eric Cozens
Editor Emeritus

Capt (Rev) F. Butler-Caughie Gr. COSJ
Publisher

Dr. Michael Leahy
Publishing Support

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This is a limited production, domestic publication produced with the permission of the CO for the purpose of recording the activities within the Regiment and the Regimental family. It is intended to provide a wide variety of material relating to military communications and military affairs, both at home and abroad.

Comments or submissions can be sent to editor709@yahoo.ca



The Long Goodbye Padre Fred Butler-Caughie, CD



Betty has been a very dear friend of mine for over twenty-seven years. Eleven years my senior, she has been a confidante, advisor, encourager, voice of reason/caution, “Nana” to our children and

within her faith community is held in very high esteem.

I have been to Betty, a spiritual advisor, confidante, an example of determination in how I tackle life and its situations and an encourager to her when she was at a loss for answers in situations where there were no clear answers; situations where trust looms much larger than mere information; situations like this.

In the fall of 2006 Betty awakened one morning to find her right cheek strangely numb. Getting out of bed, she went to the bathroom and looked into the mirror. The right side of her lip was curled up slightly. Putting her initial concerns aside, she prepared breakfast for her husband, Bill and herself. It was then that she realized that she needed to pay attention to what had so suddenly intruded into her

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IN ERROR—Eric Cozens, editor emeritus, has been incorrectly identified. For the record, he served in the British Army REME and held the rank of WO1 (our CWO). *Mea Culpa* sir.

Arte et Marte



Training with Simunition

Cpl. Duncan Lloyd



Cpl Andrew Urquhart from 723 Comm Sqn Halifax, and MCpl Erin Ferguson from 772 Electronic Warfare Sqn Kingston prepare to enter. *Photo Cpl Lloyd*

You're leading your four-man team in a line along the side of a building. The front man calls back "Door right, stack right!" Everyone lines up to the right side of the door, staying close to the building. "Breacher up!" you call as the last man in the team moves up to the door. He inspects the door for booby traps, and then stands ready with his sledgehammer. As you maintain your aim on the door, you feel the man behind you sharply pinch your elbow indicating that everyone in the team is

ready. You nod to the breacher, and your adrenaline starts to pump as he brings up the sledgehammer and breaks open the door. From there on in, you depend solely on your training, as there is no time to think. The first man quickly moves through the door and darts left, and the first shots are fired. You are close behind him, and turn right as soon as you enter the room, rifle up and ready to fire. Looking through your optical sight, you scan, right to left. A picture of a hooded man holding a pistol enters your vision and you squeeze the trigger twice. Blue splats appear on his chest and head and you continue to scan. The rest of your team has entered the room and all that can be heard is the sound of gunfire. Another target enters your vision and two blue marks appear on his torso as you squeeze the trigger. As you scan back and forth, someone with a rifle aimed at you appears in the doorway across the room. You feel a round skim passed your head as you squeeze the trigger twice. The person drops to the floor and you continue to scan. "Right OK!" you call, "Left OK" a teammate calls. "Room clear!" you yell, and everyone lowers their weapons to a ready position. This is what it feels like to train in house clearing with simunition.

Simunition is quite an effective training tool, employing very realistic equipment. As the name denotes, it simulates live ammunition. They work the same as bullets with the exception that instead of firing lead, you are firing non-lethal coloured wax pellets. This adds an undisputed realism to training. Unlike blanks, you actually have to concentrate on aiming at your target, and it offers a blatant realisation when you get hit. You realise not only that you would be dead if this were real, but also at how much intense, real pain you are in. Which means you can't ignore getting hit. The environments you are placed in are also very versatile, with rooms and targets, both live and paper changing with each session. The enemy that was holding the rifle in the last scenario might only be a civilian holding a lollipop in the next, meaning you must always be sharp. In all, I believe simunition to be not only a realistic method of training, but also a realistic wake up call to those who don't take training such as this seriously.

Cpl Lloyd is a member of 709 Toronto Communications Regiment.



Colonel-in-Chief, Princess Royal's Visit



June 4, 2007 at the Sheraton Centre Toronto, an annual dinner was held to support March of Dimes Canada's programs for people with physical disabilities. The honoured guest speaker was Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal.

Among the Princess Royal's many other duties, HRH is also the Colonel-in-Chief of Communications and Electronics Branch of the Canadian Forces, a title that she has held for over 30 years.

Honorary Colonel Sally Horsfall is a patron of the March of Dimes Canada. As an organizer Col Horsfall was aware of the Princess Royal's itinerary during the visit in Canada. Col Horsfall decided that it would befit the Princess to have the C & E branch provide an Honour Guard for this occasion. Even though this was unofficial visit for the Branch, permission from various levels of the military was essential. 70 Communications Group and 32 Brigade authorized the guard. 70 Communications Group proceeded to assemble communications personal from within the Group. The Toronto Signals Band provided the fanfare and the Royal anthem upon entry of HRH into the main dining room and the 709 Cadets provided the ushering functions. The Regiment provided the bulk of the guard that lined the entry hall to the main dining room.

The March of Dimes appreciated the pomp and pageantry for this occasion, which provided dignity to the event and that was befitting Royalty and 70 Communications Group was delighted and honoured to have played a small part of the occasion..



Letters, soldiers, the scent of violets

You can't hug a megabyte or smell a pixel. But a letter can be held and treasured long after the video moment has passed.

KENNETH W. J. LLOYD



Maj. Ken Lloyd CD

Recent coverage of the videophone service for the Halifax troops in Afghanistan is in strong contrast to my own experience of service in foreign places with a family far away. The videophone can bring a valuable and treasured reminder of home and loved ones but it cannot substitute for the intimacy and care inherent in a letter carrying love, passion and yearning between a soldier and a soldier's family.

A letter is intimate, it is a treasure, held, kissed and secreted away to the inside pocket of a combat jacket. It is a shared moment made tangible through the smoothness of the paper and the smell still clinging to the inside of the envelope. The letter is a piece of home amid the unknowns of a foreign land.

In the excitement of a videophone call, a valued thought might remain unsaid and never carried away as a memory. In a letter, every thought can be crafted into an indelible record of remembrance to be referred to and reread in moments of solitude. A videophone call is ethereal, built by electrons without a permanent record. A letter can be kept and stored to rekindle memories.

When the rumors of the First Gulf War began to break and the first new boxes of nuclear, biological and chemical suits began to fill the shelves of the quartermaster store, the queue

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One of the most successful events in years.

Jimmy & Associates BBQ

Once a year, the Frank Freeman's farm, located near the Metro Toronto Zoo, is invaded by the members of Jimmy & Associates for their one and only annual fundraiser BBQ. The money raised is used by J&A to fund other functions such as the annual Christmas party. This year, he event was held on July 22 and was one of the most successful in many years. The

weather was absolutely perfect and the venue was lovely. Like any major event, thanks must go to the many people to set up the tentage, prepared and served the food, created the baskets and helped clean up the aftermath. A pleasant day in the country air was augmented with a raffle and a white elephant sale held under tents provided and set up by the Regiment. Some great bargains were to be had there and many of us went home happy with our new-to-us treasures. If you weren't able to make it out this year - be sure to book it in for next year - this event is always a terrific time to catch up with old friends while you relax for a summer's afternoon in the country.



Commanding Officer's Parades 1 October 2007

It was an unusually warm October evening, when the Commanding Officer's Parade was held in Fort York Armoury. It was even warmer inside the Armoury parade floor. RSM MWO White formed up the members of the Regiment, Band, and the 709 Cadets for the CO Major Greg Stasyna. Once the CO fell in the Flag Party the parade was ready the Reviewing Officer to mount the dais. The Reviewing Officer for the evening was Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Jack Lee.



Four cadets are promoted to the rank of Private

The Regiment was dressed in DEU and in CADPAT while the Band was in their brilliant scarlet uniform. The Flag Party in their Patrols dress and the Cadets in their Greens were their respective positions on the parade square. The parade numbered well over a hundred personnel.

After the formalities of the inspection and march past the CO and the Hon LCol addressed the parade. The Honorary, CO and RSM had the honour of promoting Cadets Andreopoulos, Grinnus A., Grinnus D., and Patistas to the rank of Private. For cadets who have worked

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disappeared. It is my intention to encourage these members to participate in our associations. The unit is evolving; however, we must maintain contact with our history through our veterans.

Finally, I look forward to a challenging year in 2008. Change will continue. The unit will always be busy and new opportunity will never cease to avail itself as our transformation continues. Merry Christmas and best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Spiritus Manet

G.J. Stasyna

Major

Commanding Officer

(Continued from page 3) RSM

vantage of the militia experts to ensure our troops get the best training. It's a Win – Win situation and in many ways, we have the best of both worlds.

Lastly, I'd like to thank all the Jimmy and Associates who were able to attend the CO's Parade in October. The support that you, the Signals Band, Cadets, Flag Party and affiliated associations provide the Regiment is key to strengthening our Regimental family and deepening our proud Regimental history.

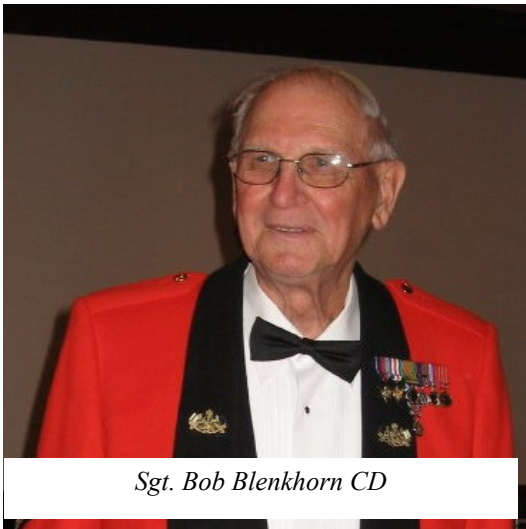
Spiritus Manet

MWO White, CD

RSM



BIOGRAPHY— Sergeant Robert J. Blenkhorn, CD



Sgt. Bob Blenkhorn CD

Sergeant Blenkhorn enlisted in the Canadian Army in April 6, 1942 and completed his basic training in Huntingdon, Quebec in June 1942. He arrived in the UK August 14, 1942 and received signal training as a wireless operator at Southwood Camp, Cove Farnborough as part of the 1st Canadian Reinforcement Unit (ICSRU). After the training Robert was posted to 3 TeleOp Section in Ashstead, Surrey and received additional training as a switchboard operator.

Sgt. Blenkhorn's first posting was to the 1st Canadian Army Headquarters which was in France, Belgium and Holland. At the end of the war he was stationed in Apeldoorn, Holland as a NCO in the Switchboard section at HQ.

Bob returned to Canada, December 1945 sailing to New York on the Queen Elizabeth and was discharged on January 31, 1946.

On February 14, 1949, Robert joined 8th Signal Regiment and retired March 22, 1960. He was awarded the Canadian Decoration (CD) upon discharge.

Sgt. Blenkhorn is a member of Jimmy & Associates and served as President of the Association from 1995 to 2005. He is also a member of Jimmy & Associates Flag Party. Robert is an associate member of Warrants and Sergeant's Mess of 709 (Toronto) Communication Regiment, the Hamilton Signals Association and the Signallers Club of Canada. Bob celebrated his 85th birthday in September 2007 at the WO's and Sergeants' Mess.

He was the husband of the late Margaret Blenkhorn and father of two daughters and grandfather of several grandchildren.

Congratulations Bob and many happy returns.



With his family at age 85.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY ACTUALLY SAID THIS:

"If two people can't see each other, then it's impossible to communicate"
- **Unknown Roman warfare expert**
(63 ad.)

"Radio is just a fashion contrivance that will soon die out. It is obvious that there never will be invented a proper receiver!"
- **Thomas Edison**



(Continued from page 1) BAND

membrance Day Parade. Vimy Ridge Monument—Placing of wreath on behalf of the Toronto Signals Band, 2605 Cadets Annual Review, Princess Royal Reception for the March of Dimes, Kingston Heritage Tattoo (Fort George), Waterloo Band Festival (proceeds to Juno Beach), 8 Santa Claus Parades – covering area Bowmanville to Guelph, Children’s Christmas Party, Toronto Parades - Greek Independence Day Parade, Beaches Easter Parade, Highland Creek Festival, Warrior’s Day, Cabbagetown, Rural Ontario – Simcoe Charity, Waterloo 150th, Stoney Creek Flag Day, Welland Rose Festival, Windsor and Chatham Canada Day. Outside of Canada the band performed at the Lexington and Richmond Michigan Town Festival Days. This will give you an appreciation for how far we go, keeping the Regiment and the Band foremost in the public’s eye. Wherever we perform we are proud to say Toronto Signals Band is part of the 709 Communication Regimental Family.

It hasn’t been cheap! It has been an expensive year for us. This year we have replaced all of the wings for the tunics, replaced worn pants, purchased ten pairs of spurs, repaired busbies and purchased some newer mellophone and baritone trumpets. **The New Summer Look** - As I mentioned last year the Band purchased a summer blouse to combat heat exhaustion and dehydration generated by the heavy wool tunics and busbies. This year we added a forage cap and cap badge to the summer blouse to assist with this problem and also to preserve the busbies that we currently have from wear and tear. This was a significant expenditure for us. The summer attire maintains our military image while improving comfort.

Forward Planning: The Board, selected Committee Members and the Band spent many hours discussing our mandate, our vision of the future and the strategies to progressively move us towards our objectives. Thus we now have a Mission and Vision Statement as below:

Toronto Signals Band Mission Statement: We passionately strive to preserve the heritage and traditions of Canada’s oldest self-supporting volunteer military marching band. We are dedicated to sustaining a strong community presence, quality entertainment and a positive public identity, while fostering friendships and personal pride.

What We Will Look Like In 2010! 1. We maintain our affiliation with the 709 Communications Regiment 2. We have a team of committed members that strive for excellence in music, marching and drill. 3. We have a marching membership of 100. 4. We have funding to purchase new equipment, uniforms and instruments. 5. We have a supportive environment conducive to having fun and friendships. 6. We have a selection of music that promotes audience participation.

“Tomorrow we will be bigger and better than today” For each of the above Vision items there is a list of actionable strategies developed by all to move us towards reaching our objectives. There is a great deal of hard work ahead of us, and each member must play their part and participate and assist in fulfilling these needs. This will be the most important project the Band has ever attempted but it is the future of the Toronto Signals Band, which is the resultant outcome.

AGM - On October 15, 2007 at the Annual General Meeting elections took place for the

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AMATEUR (HAM) RADIO COURSE

MWO Steven Brickenden



MCpl Spessot and 2Lt Quintana-Escalona at the ARES HAM Station *Photo by Ted Cowie, VE3AAP*

Hell had descended in the form of wet, heavy white snow driven by high winds. Then it froze. Trees that had stood for fifty or sixty years, had snapped like dry twigs under the weight of the ice that coated everything including the power lines, which proved to be unequal to the task. Hydro was out, telephones, including cell phones, were out. Weather conditions made travel on the roads extremely dangerous

HAM Radio (Continued on page 15)

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life.

Betty noticed the slurred speech immediately as she uttered her first words of the day to Bill. She also discovered that not only was her speech affected, but the right side of her face seemed “frozen”. Her morning tea dripped from the corner of her mouth down her chest. Thinking that she had had a stroke, she called her doctor and was told to head to the hospital, he would meet her there.

Initial tests indicated that these symptoms were not indicative of a stroke, but rather, Bells Palsy. And so treatment for Bell’s Palsy commenced.

Betty was not responding to the treatment. More testing had to be done over the next several months. Many diseases and maladies had been eliminated, now everything pointed to ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also called Lou Gehrig’s disease after the famed Yankee Slugging tandem of Gehrig and Ruth, is a progressive neuromuscular disease that weakens and eventually destroys motor neurons (components of the nervous system that connect the brain with the skeletal muscles). Skeletal muscles are involved with voluntary movements, such as walking and talking. The motor neurons transmit the command to move from the brain to the skeletal muscles, which respond by contracting.

A person with ALS usually presents with problems in dexterity or gait resulting from muscle weakness, or with difficulty speaking or swallowing. Sphincter control, sensory function, intellectual ability, and skin integrity are preserved. Patients become paralyzed and often require ventilation and surgery to provide a new opening in the stomach for feeding. Loss of respiratory function is ultimately the cause of death.

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The life expectancy of ALS patients is usually 3 to 5 years after diagnosis. ALS is most commonly diagnosed in middle age and affects men more often than women. In Betty's case, diagnosis came after the disease had reached its latter stages. Betty was given three to twelve months to live.

In dealing with terminal illness many clinicians, therapists, chaplains, etc. often refer to the "Five Stages of Grief": *Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance*. Adherence to such a formula generally adds more stress to patient and loved ones as it inherently inserts a certain set of "beliefs" into how one should respond to first the knowledge of the existent terminal illness and then through the various stages of loss (body function, a sense of control, appearance) to the ultimate outcome, death. The fact of the matter is that each person brings their own set of values, beliefs, coping skills, self awareness/esteem, etc to this and any of life's situations.

Though there is no "blood connection", Betty and Bill are part of our "family" and so after notifying their son, Don, we were informed as soon as the results of all the testing had been made known.

It is not just the afflicted that must experience what I refer to as the "Long Goodbye", but also family, friends and other loved ones. Each must travel along this journey with each other, but also at times, alone. Almost every emotion known comes into play along this journey; the pain of knowing the journey's destination; the anger that this "disease" is causing such destruction; the sense of loss as one must observe more and more of the attributes of our loved one slip away leaving but a shell of the original person.

Betty has accepted the fact that her time on this earth is coming to a rapid conclusion. Rather than turn her thoughts inward and thereby shutting out the world and loved ones around her, she has made a conscious decision to share her journey embracing the life she has lived and the life she is still living.

As she transitions through the various stages of loss, she prepares strategies on adapting to the realization that another part of her body has ceased functioning. For instance, Betty's speech has become more and more laboured. Soon she will no longer have the ability to speak at all. In order to adapt to this reality the use of a note pad or white board proves helpful, but more helpful is the use of a wireless laptop with instant messaging. This use of this technology would allow Betty to be in constant contact with the world outside here home.

Her ability to swallow will slowly become more and more difficult until she reaches the point where she can no longer swallow at all. A feeding tube has been inserted directly into her stomach. At this point it is being used for certain medications. Increasingly, food will be introduced to her body through the tube.

As Betty adapts through each stage of the disease's progress little things take on greater meaning, a touch, and embrace, a caress, a kiss. All of these attest to the fact that she is still

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Group Commander LCol McLellan

hard, this is the first of many advances they will make in their careers.

Quite a number of the Regimental family members were represented by members of Jimmy and Associates, friends of the Regiment and many of the parents of the 709 Cadets.

While the members of the Regiment and Cadets went about their evening regimental activities the remainder retired to the WO's and Sgt's Mess for refreshments, meet and greet. All in all it was a very successful first formal parade of the new training year.

November 5, 2007

700 Group Commander and 32 Brigade Commander Visit

The 700 Communications Group Commander, LCol McLellan, accompanied by the Group RSM, CWO Mark Brown inspected 709 Communications Regiment 2007 Monday night. Also present were the 32 Brigade Commander, Col Mann and the Brigade RSM, CWO Bill Darling, Hon Col Sally Horsfall and Hon LCol Jack Lee.



Soldier of the Year, Cpl Natalie Gajewski with her parents and Group RSM CWO Mark Brown

(Continued on page 17)

Padre (Continued from page 13)

alive and loved. Alive and cherished, alive and embracing that life, alive and sharing that life with her loved ones; as Betty transitions she looks toward completion. Her person faith has been a constant in her life since childhood. When Betty thinks of "completion" it is in reference to her journey through this life now lived. But it doesn't stop there for her. Betty firmly believes that as this life ends, another begins in a different realm, a heavenly one.

In a recent conversation with Betty, she has planned her funeral, chosen the hymns to be sung, the Scriptures to be read and the participants in the liturgy. She asked if I would share in the celebration of this liturgy. My response was yes and then she explained that she did not want me to lead the entire funeral because she wanted me to sit with her family so that I too may be ministered to. We're planning for Christmas. We don't know if Betty will make it until then, but we do know that her hand in its planning will certainly be part of our experience. But now is not yet time to say Goodbye; we will save that for another day.

An Italian poet said,

"We live in a flash of light; evening comes and it is night forever."

It's only a flash and we waste it. We waste it with our anxiety, our worries, our concerns,



(Continued from page 12) HAM Radio

at best. In times of emergency, such as the Quebec ice storm or the more recent California wildfires, the only reliable communications with areas cut off from the rest of the world, were HAM radio operators. Using portable generators, they were able to keep contact with other stations to pass emergency information to



Group Photo by Ted Cowie

L-R—2Lt Elliott, Cpl Sagar, 2Lt Hood, Lt. Lai, Sub Lt Beriault, Cpl Pringle, Lt. Quintana-Escalona, Cpl Skokovets, MCpl Sagar, Pte Ng, Cpl Brimble, Lt Tu, Cpl Lloyd, WO Carter, MCpl Spessot, Pte Ngo, Maj Stasyna, Cpl MacPhail-Ferreira, Cpl Lau, MWO Brickenden, Pte Dimitriov.

rescue teams which included personnel from the Canadian Forces, some from this unit. Using equipment that they purchase and assemble themselves, the Amateur Radio operator is anything but ‘amateur’. Often better trained and sometimes better equipped than their ‘professional’ counterparts, HAM operators function with little public acknowledgement of the role they play in passing emergency information. For Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) it is a critical part of civilian emergency planning. So critical that there is a volunteer group called the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) which works closely with EMO and holds exercises, similar to our Command Post Exercises, to ensure that this works as smoothly as possible. It is something that we need to be aware of as part of our aid to the civil authority.

In a move that began over 40 years ago in Kingston, thirty members of the regiment including two cadets are spending twelve Wednesday nights taking a course to become licensed HAM operators. Run by volunteer instructors Joe Cusimano (VE3OV), Jim Taylor (VA3KU), Ted Cowie (VE3AAP), Dean Cassar (VE3SUG) and Jay Ritchie (VE3EMP), licensed HAM operators, volunteering with ARES, it is their goal to have thirty new operators by early 2008. It isn’t easy even though the old Morse code is now voluntary rather than a requirement. The test is 100 questions dealing with regulations and electronics and the minimum pass for a “basic” license is 70%. But the aim of the course is to make the honours level of 80% to permit access to all bands and allow us to participate as part of the Canadian Forces Affiliate Radio System (CFARS).

Once that has been accomplished, the next step is to have the unit’s own HAM radio station, whose license lapsed quite some time ago, brought back on-line. Other courses are planned for the future and members of the Regimental family will be given the opportunity to explore this wonderful hobby which so closely matches our primary military role.

Are you interested in finding out more? Here are some e-mail sites you can check out.

(Continued on page 19)



HAM Radio Course photos



Cadet Cpl MacPhail-Ferreira tries the Morse code key. S. Brickenden



Instructor Jim Taylor tries to make us understand basic electronics.

Right—MCpl Spessot and Cpl Skokovets at the ARES HAM radio station. Ted Cowie



Maj Stasyna tries to explain to 2Lt Quintana-Escalona and Sub Lt Beriault. S Brickenden

LETTERS (Continued from page 8)

to the only public telephone on our army base stretched for 400 metres. On the same day, the padre gave a roaring sermon on the nobility of dying for one's country. Within 10 minutes, the phone lines were overwhelmed. The only way to contact home was by letter.

My wife still keeps that hurried letter in a shoebox in our basement. Pressed into that box are other letters bearing stamps from around the world. One letter still enfolds the crushed petals of a bluebell from an English woodland. Another carries the faint aroma of violets and the sooty paw print of our first kitten. Moments in our family journey are entwined in world events, waiting to be reread.

A videophone call ends but a letter can speak forever. Legionary recruit Apollinaris in 11 AD writes to his mother Taesis promising he will write now he is in Rome. Canadian soldier George Adkins serving in the trenches in 1915 writes to his girlfriend Louise that he is still waiting for her letter. Their letters remain and the things they wrote about are the same for soldiers throughout time: They want news from home and they need to share their new adventures.

Letters from Corporal Lloyd, 19 years old, in the Golan, describe the sound of rockets from Lebanon and the Israeli artillery returning fire. He describes the friendship found among the peacekeepers of the Austrian contingent, and the adventure of exploring the Damascus markets. In the same letter, he asks about his dog. We have his letters saved for our grandchildren. Soldiering does not change, only how we remember it through our letters.

A videophone call is always now, whereas a letter is the past speaking to us in the present. When the writer has recently died, opening the envelope and reading their words has added poignancy. In 1915, when George Adkins was sorting the personal effects of his deceased

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Signals Officers Club Luncheon 12 October 2007

The Signals Officers Club annual luncheon was held at the Royal Canadian Military Institute (RCMI) on 12 October 2007. As in year's past, the Club's attendance has been on the decline due departing of old soldiers. This year only sixteen attended the meeting which included invited guests from the Toronto Police Services, Inspector Len Faul, CO 709 Major Greg Stasyna, and Lieutenant Alfred Lai.

After the luncheon, Lt. Lai gave a dissertation of his six-month tour in Afghanistan while attached to CIMIC.

All enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie and the meal was superb. Even though the membership is dwindling the Club will carry on as long as the funds and interests in the association exist.



Lt. Alfred Lai described his 6-month tour in Afghanistan.

Members and guests at the Signals Officer's Club Luncheon held at the RCMI on University Ave.



"One must not judge everyone in the world by his qualities as a soldier: otherwise we should have no civilization." *Field Marshal Rommel*

CO's Parade (Continued from page 14)

The Band, resplendent in their red uniforms, the flag party in patrols, and all ranks of the Regiment and the Cadet Corps formed up and numbered approximately 100 personnel. Some strange hat badges were present as 709 Cadet Corps was augmented by cadets from the Royal Regiment of Canada under the direction of their RSM, Cadet CWO Lichuk. The Signals cadets had just completed a 10-hour bus ride from a 4-day inter-provincial exchange to Quebec City (see other article).

In spite of some technical difficulties with the microphone, two high-profile awards were made during the parade. The Group Commander presented Cpl Natalie Gajewski with the Group Soldier of the Year award (see our June edition). In recognition of the fact that this award is a decision of the senior non-commissioned ranks, the actual presentation was made by the Group RSM. Cpl Gajewski's parents were also present to see their daughter receive this well-deserved honour. The whole Regiment is proud of you.

The second award was to Cpl Glen Pelletier who was awarded his Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 years continuous and dedicated service. Congratulations Cpl Pelletier CD!

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CO's Parade (Continued from page 17)

The presence of the Brigade Commander was a highlight to the movement of the Regiment into the direct operational command of the Army, effective April 1, 2008. Any change is scary and this is a big one to be sure, as 709 will become part of LFCA. Following the parade, at an all-ranks reception in the officer's mess, comments from both Commanders were encouraging and exciting in their plans for the future employment of the unit as part of 32 Brigade. As RSM White said in her comments, "It's a win-win situation."



Cpl Pelletier CD, receives his medal from the Group Commander. Photo S. Brickenden

Theodore (Jack) Bennett receives France's National Legion of Honour



The Ambassador of France presents his country's highest award to WWII Canadian Vets.

In 1802, Napoleon Bonapart instituted the Legion of Honour to reward those who had rendered exceptional service to France. The medal is the cross of Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur and as the Grand Maitre of the Order the President of France can award it to foreigners who served

Legion of Honour medal



France in exceptional circumstances. In a ceremony conducted at Moss Park Armoury on March 28, 2007, His Excellency Daniel Jouanneu, Ambassador of France to Canada, presented the medal to Bennett and five other veterans who demonstrated outstanding bravery during some of the fiercest fighting of World War II. Across

Canada, more than thirty medals were presented to veterans for the efforts during D-Day, the liberation of Caen and the Dieppe Raid.

Theodore (Jack) Bennett enlisted in 1939 and served as a radar operator with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. He took part in the Dieppe Raid in 1942, landing with the South Saskatchewan Regiment, where he was reunited with some of his Sigs comrades. When they reached Pourville, their Regimental HQ was bombarded with a heavy mortar attack, which killed or wounded three quarters of their unit. They survived and under heavy fire managed

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HAM Radio (Continued from page 15)

HAM radio in general, including local clubs and equipment <http://www.hfradio.net/EMO/ARES> group, <http://www.emoares.org/>

For the CFARS <http://users.xplornet.com/~scrouse/cfars.htm>

MWO Brickenden is a student on the course and the future VE3EVU.

Frank Adams, Bandsman, Marches Off After 40 years



I have served with Toronto Signals Trumpet band for almost 40 years when I enlisted with the “2nd Divisional Signal Regiment of Canada” as a Bandsman 50 years ago. What a ride! I came from a military and musical family. My father had been with Sig’s Band in the 1930’s and my mother was a professional musician. I had an uncle (Fred Adams) who was a bugler. He was killed at St. Juliaan, Belgium, the Second Battle of the Ypres in April 1915. I wear with pride the Memorial Cross which represents a my uncle Fred.

My parents and my uncle Fred were my role models. They inspired me. I have had the privileged of serving with many Royal Guards of Honour. The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada, Toronto Scottish of Canada and the 48th Highlanders of Canada. My journey started with Sig’s when it was at the old Spadina Armouries. I remember marching in front of the regiment with the band leading on the tiny parade square dodging posts and columns - it made me dizzy. I was told by other bandsmen that I was on probation as a player and they would let me know if I made the cut. Well, it’s been 40 years and I’m still waiting.

There have been events I enjoyed through the years and I also have experienced many changes. One of these was the change of our instruments. Coming from a one-valve horn and going to a two valve and presently to a three-valve horn. Through this transition the trumpet got bigger and heavier. Incidentally the heavier the trumpet got the more I thought about retirement - in fear that another valve could be added. The Lee Enfield 303 was replaced by the FNC1 which in turn was replaced by the C7 rifles.

One event, which was most memorable lately, was when the band celebrated its 75th anniversary at Fort Henry in Kingston in 2001. The band put on another performance at Fort Henry and Base Vimy commemorating the 100th anniversary of Signals in Canada where we entertained The Colonel-in-Chief, Princess Royal.

A sad event that touched me dearly was when my wife of 25 years marriage died. The band was performing in Ottawa at the time and a decision was made by the bandsmen to wear black armbands on the uniforms out of the respect of the passing of my wife. We’ve played in places where there have been dark clouds of sadness. However, I can remember many

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Regimental Council Meeting May 16, 2007

The President of the Council, Honorary Colonel Sally Horsfall convened the annual Regimental Council Meeting held at the Officer's Mess, Fort York Armoury on May 16, 2007.

The meeting is a combined dinner and council meeting to discuss matters relating to the Regiment, Cadets and the Band. Representing the 709 Cadets was Dr. Michael Leahy and the Toronto Signals Band was President, Mr. Orton Beaumont. Individually addressed the Council and presented their state of affairs on their respective organizations. Major Greg Stasyna gave the state-of-the-union address for the Regiment before the Council.

Three new members were nominated to the Council. Introduced were LCol Peter French, Lt. Heather McClory and Lt. Paul Cowley. The new members were accepted unanimously by the Council..

Frank Adams (Continued from page 19)

times when blowing my horn was enough along with my fellow bandsmen (women) to really turn sad occasions into joy.

Yours truly always,
Bandsman, Frank Adams
P.S I'll see you around

One of the serious problems in planning the fight against American doctrine, is that the Americans do not read their manuals, nor do they feel any obligation to follow their doctrine...

- From a Soviet Junior Lt's Notebook



(Continued from page 11)

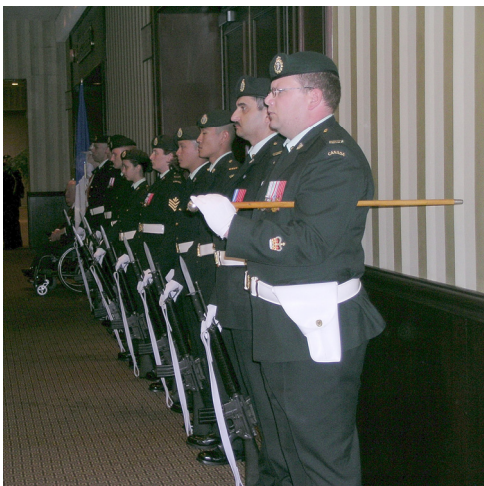
Board of Management of the Band and the following are the officers for the 2007/2008 fiscal year. President: Wilf Roblin; Vice-President: Bob Rivers; Secretary John O'Leary Treasurer Ellie Cameron; Business Manager Jim Kennedy; Public Relations Maude McHaffie; Member Without Port Folio Dennis Guzzo.

It is the Fall Season and Remembrance Day just passed and we reflect on those that are serving, have served and the ones who gave the ultimate sacrifice in giving of themselves so that we may live in a better World and our Canada because of them. "Lest we Forget"

Orton (Ortie) Beaumont
Past President Toronto Signals Band



Above— group photo of the personnel that took part in the visit of the Princess Royal. Members of the Regiment provided the honour guard, the band played the royal fanfare, the flag party carried the colours and the cadet corps provided ushers.



Left—WO Rob Carter and some of the members of the honour guard, wait the arrival of the Colonel-in-Chief. HRH has held that title for the Communications and Electronics Branch for over 30 years. Since this was not an official "Royal Visit" a more formal honour guard was not planned.



Remembrance Day Parade 2007



Rev. Dr. Nicholas Athanasiadis, Hon Col Sally Horsfall and Hon LCol Jack Lee take the salute at the march past.

The weather was sunny and temperatures were comfortable. The Band, while mourning the loss of two of its members this week, played marches that echoed in the crisp air, bringing people out to watch the passing parade and to be reminded about why we were there. Flag parties from both Jimmy & Associates and the Hong Kong Ex-Serviceman's Association, provided dignity and honour. Bright red poppies decorated every dress and cad pat uniform.

The service at Leaside Presbyterian Church was led by the Rev Dr. Nicholas Athanasiadis and was followed by the traditional march

past, where he stood beside Hon Col Horsfall and Hon LCol Lee. Members of the Cadet Corps also participated in services held at the Memorial in front of Queen's Park. A short reception was hosted in the WO's and Sgt's Mess for all ranks after the service.



Flag Party and Cadet photos are courtesy of Mrs. Cindy Nguyen



CADETS TRAVEL TO QUEBEC

By Captain Rick Leswick

The last grasp of autumn was slowly slipping into the icy grip of winter as we climbed up the Laurentian escarpment. Cold rivulets were already descending the steep slopes and the bite of the damp wind coming off the St. Lawrence River reminded me that blankets of snow would soon be shrouding the lovely countryside. Overhead, formations of Canada geese were streaming out of their homeland to warmer climes. Warm summer days were a distant memory. This was November in Quebec.

On Thursday November 1st, at about suppertime, following a comfortable highway coach ride from Toronto, we arrived in St. Marie de Beauce. The small town is comfortably nestled in a broad river valley amid low rolling hills about 45 minutes from Quebec City. The purple dusk embraced the town like a regal wrap, giving the entire scene a surreal quality.

For the next four days, the staff and cadets of 709 Toronto Communications Cadet Corps would be the guests of a local army cadet corps. 709 Cadet Corps, with four Royal Regiment cadets attached were the enthusiastic participants in the Inter-provincial Cadet Exchange (ICE) program. Funded by the federal government, the ICE is a way of exposing youth to the culture and history of another part of Canada.



Cadets drop safely on the tower at CFB Valcartier

Our gracious hosts, whose first language was French, did an excellent job organizing a jam-packed itinerary that included visits to the Quebec Parliament; the Citadel, home of the famous Royal 22nd Regiment, the “Van Doos”; as well as the old city of Quebec, in my opinion, the most beautiful collection of historic buildings in Canada. We were also kept busy with tours of a maple sugar camp and the challenging hike in the picturesque Laurentian hills. Some of us even finished it!

On Sunday we travelled, with our new friends to CFB Valcartier to experience the on-base rappel tower. With the Royal 22nd currently deployed to Afghanistan, the base was virtually deserted. Our Sergeant instructor, a member of the Van Doos, assisted by two CIC officers led us through an amazing routine. CFB Valcartier is also the home of the Quebec region summer cadet camp and the rules of the rappel tower are quite different from what we’re used to. The more adventurous of our group mastered the face-front “Australian crawl” that requires more courage than this writer could manage, but most of us went over the top of the five and ten meter towers.

That afternoon we joined our host corps, the local air cadets as well as officers and members of local reserve and regular force units at a church parade to the town’s cathedral.

Great friendships were made “between the solitudes” and there were more than just a few tears on Monday morning, as we had to take our leave. Joe, the friendly and capable “Tour Coach Operator” (don’t call him a “bus driver”) rolled his big vehicle out of town back to Toronto. Quebec City and the environs are probably among the most beautiful places in Canada and although the looming chill of November cut to our bones, the warmth we received from our hosts and the ordinary passers-by we met on the street provided truly soothing relief.



TORONTO HONOURS PEACEKEEPERS ON SCARBOROUGH WAR MEMORIAL

In the Service of Peace



Canada's fallen peacekeepers have been honoured by the City of Toronto with an inscription on the Scarborough War Memorial. The inscription was authorized in 2005 when the Mayor and City Council voted unanimously to proclaim August 9, 2005 Peacekeepers' Day and to inscribe "PEACEKEEPING" on City-owned war memorials. The Scarborough War Memorial is the third of eight memorials that will be inscribed over the next several years. The first at The East York Civic Centre was inscribed in 2005, the second at

Toronto's Old City Hall was inscribed in 2006.

The Toronto Chapter of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations was named in memory of Cpl. Michael W. Simpson who was killed with eight other CF members on August 9, 1974 on UN Flight 51. August 9 of every year has been chosen by Peacekeepers and legislators across Canada to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by those who have died in peacekeeping and peace support service, to honour those who have returned from peacekeeping and peace support service and to express our gratitude to those still serving.

Our Toronto chapter is proud to have been of assistance in gaining that recognition from the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario. Since being chartered in 2005 our Chapter has been supported by Mayor David Miller and City of Toronto Council in our efforts to recognize our Canadian peacekeeping and peace support veterans and those members of the Canadian Forces, police officers, diplomats and civilians working around the world in the service of peace. Council and staff assist CAVUNP in the commemoration of Peacekeepers' Day and they have funded our ongoing inscription project. A Private Member's Bill is currently making its way through the House of Commons and the Senate to declare August 9 National Peacekeepers' Day in perpetuity.

Any current or former member of the Canadian Forces, who has served in any UN Peacekeeping Mission (there have been 41 so far) is eligible to join the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping. If you are interested, please contact former RSM Leo Sansone for more information. cavunp_toronto@hotmail.com

In The Service of Peace



*Chapter President Leo Sansone
at the Scarborough War Memorial.*



Photos from CFB Shilo—BMQ / PLQ



Braving heat and insects in Manitoba, 709 Toronto Communications Regiment was prominent on both the staff and student lists at the Com Res School. Front Row (L-R) Cpl Gajewski, Capt Buller, Cpl Chan. Rear Row: MWO White, Cpl Lloyd, MCpl Sagar, Cpl Siddiqui, MCpl Horrigan, Pte Phan, and Pte Ng.



Promotion for MCpl Horrigan by Maj. Masters, CO of Com Res School



Above right: Former RSM of 709 Comm Regt MWO Marcel Malia was RSM for the graduation parade. Personnel from 709 Regt held many of the parade appointments for this event.

Legion of Honour (Continued from page 18)

to join with the Cameron Highlanders, who had followed the Saskatchewan's onto the beach. Although the Camerons were under heavy fire by the enemy, Theodore Bennett's regiment was able to temporarily hold the enemy at bay, in an effort to secure the beach. They tried to call for reinforcements but a sniper destroyed their radio transmitter. They then attempted to retake the landing beach, however, were unable to do so due to extremely heavy enemy artillery fire. Shortly after that Sgt. Bennet became a prisoner of war. Over 200,000 civilians and military personnel have received this award during its history.



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

The 709 Toronto Communications Regiment is sad to announce the passing of the following members of the Regimental Family.

Rev. James D. C. Jack, CD

Retired Padre Jack, Reverend James Jack passed away July 11, 2007. He graduated from Knox College and was ordained to the ministry in 1946. Rev Jack was Minister at the Leaside Presbyterian Church where the Regiment annually observes Remembrance Day church service. He served as chaplain to the 33rd Regiment in Cobourg and 709 Signals Regiment in Toronto. He is survived by his wife Mary, four children and their families.



Catherine Carr Chandler

Catherine Ivanoff Carr Chandler (left), the late wife of LCol Bud Chandler (Ret'd) CD, passed away peacefully at home on August 14, 2007 at the age of 89.

BOB RITCHIE:

Robert (Bob) Ritchie on November 6, 2007, after a battle with cancer at the age of 75. He was the loving husband of Shirley for 55 years and father to Rodney. Bob was with the Toronto Signals Band for 34 years. After his retirement from the Band he remained active organizing the Children's Christmas Party. Bob also played in other Bands before joining Sigs namely: Ark Royal Sea Cadets, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, Queen's Own Rifles and Jolly Jesters Drum Corps. Bob will be dearly missed.



Betty Sawdy

Betty (left) passed away Wed. Sept. 12, 2007. Her lengthy battle with cancer has come to an end. The Sawdy's were long time members of Jimmy & Associates until Ross Sawdy died in 2002.



Drum Major John Longstreet



John Longstreet (age 73), Acting Drum Major suffered a fatal heart attack during the Georgetown Santa Claus parade on November 10th, 2007. He was the loving husband of Norma for 52 years and father to Cathy, Marilyn, Robert and Laurie and grandfather to eight grandchildren. John was with the Toronto Signals Band for 39 years and was a snare drummer, a bass drum specialist, a lancer and Assistant Drum Major. John's father Harvey was a founding member of the Toronto Signals Band and held the rank of Drum Major for 20 years. John's daughter Marilyn also joined the Band as a bass drummer giving three generations as members of the Band. Prior to joining Sigs John was a member of the Western Tech Trumpet Band and Canada's Marching Ambassadors. John will be dearly missed.

sergeant, he opened a small envelope. It contained a cryptic note from the sergeant to his family: "On the Battlefields of Flanders. Goodbye Mother, goodbye all. Mart."

A voice speaking from the past has even more meaning when the death has been brought closer to home through national mourning. When Tyler Goodall, a student at Dr. Folkins Community School in Chauvin, Alta., wrote to the troops in Afghanistan he never expected to receive a letter in return. It was from Captain Nichola Goddard -- and it arrived on the day of her funeral.

Capt. Goddard was the first Canadian female soldier to be killed in Afghanistan; she died only 12 days after replying to Tyler's letter. She wrote: "Thank you for taking the time to write to us in Afghanistan. We love getting mail here. Getting letters from home helps all of us to remember why we are here."

In my own experience a letter is eagerly awaited and excitedly opened. It is personal, touched by those we love, to be secreted and savoured in the intimacy of a private moment. I asked a number of soldiers recently returned from overseas tours what they thought regarding receiving a message from home by videophone call as opposed to receiving a letter.

Returning from Afghanistan, one corporal said, "I had e-mails from my family a few times. We always had access to computers whenever we needed it except for blackout when somebody got badly hurt. I did a videophone call just before coming home with Mum and the family. Loved seeing them, it's emotional to see them. . . . The only person who wrote letters was my grandmother, she wrote every two weeks. With a letter, you can sit down and read it in the quiet times or night duty. It's something personal."

In this modern age, we are used to electronics and do not mind the transient nature of the image; we value the speed of communication. Yet, as I look at our box of tightly packed letters (and the new packet of letters from the Golan), I still prefer to hold history in my hand and smell the scent of violets.

Ken Lloyd is CO of 705 (Hamilton) Comms Sqn and former CO 709 Comms Regt. This article appeared in the Globe & Mail, October 3, 2007.



Your Family Might to TOO Army If:

Your wife's two favorite shades of lipstick are green and light green.
Before you go on vacation you conduct an O Group, complete with convoy route cards, and you ask one of the kids to do a first parade on your car.
Your kids call the back yard their "AO".
Your station wagon is equipped with blackout lights
Your kids refer to their mom as "domestic 9er".
You refer to your wife as the "RSM" - Residential Sergeant Major.
Your kids end cell phone conversations with "Roger out".
Your house has range cards at every window.
At Thanksgiving, you begin the meal with the command, "Fix Bayonets!"
Your daughter must fill out a leave pass to go on a date.
Each of your kids has at least one bug out bag.
Your kids salute their grandparents.
Your kids spit shine their shoes while watching Hockey Night in Canada.
Your mechanic is listed in your phonebook as "Bluebell".
You have at least one closet in your house or apartment solely for uniforms and equipment and it is so full that it can't close completely!
You take your family on camp outs and your meals are expired IMPs, or MRE's.
Your kids recite their ABC's phonetically.
You have at least three framed Certificates of Military Achievement on your wall.
You have at least one shot-up figure 11 target hanging beside the Certificates.
You divorce your spouse and the kids hold a "Change of Command" parade.
Your basement or garage looks and smells like an army surplus store.
You actually know and recognize what an army surplus store smells like!
You have read this list and nodded because at least two of them sound familiar!

709 (Toronto) Communication Regiment Social Events List

The events listed below are open to all associates and friends of 709.
All are indeed encouraged to attend:

Mon 10 Dec	Christmas dinner at FYA
Tue 1 Jan	New Years Day Levee, FYA
Mon 4 Feb	CO's pde and inspection
Mon 3 Mar	CO's pde and inspection
Sat 5 Apr	Annual Regt'l Ball hosted by the JRs Mess, location TBD
Mon 7 Apr	CO's pde and inspection
Mon 5 May	CO's pde and inspection
Mon 2 Jun	709 Cadet's annual inspection pde
Mon 9 Jun	Stand down pde and BBQ, FYA
TBD	Spring mixed dine in mess dinner at FYA
TBD	Jimmy & Associates summer reunion and BBQ

Contact Info:
Capt Hal F Buller
Adjutant
(416) 203-4614
Buller.HF@forces.gc.ca