



A TIME TO REMEMBER

By Joan-Rupert Barkley

To a passerby, the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #97 on Henry Street in Prescott, may seem like a place with lots of fun activities. The big sign, located at the front of the building, announces Thursday meals, Karaoke Fridays, Dart Leagues and upcoming events. However, once you enter the doors and look around the hall you are suddenly filled with emotion. Pictures of men and women who fought in WW1, WW2 and also in Korea, as well, certificates and medals cover the walls. Some of the pictures are of Prescott resident Robert Nuttall who served in both WW2 and the Korean War.

Bob was born in Lancashire, England and grew up in a military family. His father was a regiment Sergeant Major in the Lancashire Fusiliers Regiment in WW1. The family moved to Canada and in the late 1920's settled in Kingston, Ontario. Nuttall's father always instilled in his sons their obligations to Canada.

When Nuttall was only 14 he enlisted in the Non-Permanent Active Militia. When he was 18 he was activated for overseas service and sent to the Officers' Training Centre, then commissioned in the rank of Lieutenant. After a short term in England, he was posted as a platoon commander to the 48th Highlanders in Italy. There were about 35 men in his platoon and Nuttall grew very close with them.

Nuttall describes the weather in Italy as being extremely hot in the summer with lots of mud during the rainy season. His platoon was always on call during this wet weather and he remembers wearing wet boots for 29 days in a row. Common sights along the countryside were bloated dead horses and cows. The next year, the soldiers left Italy and traveled to Holland where the weather was much colder.

In an exchange of gunfire near the towns of Wilp and Twello, Nuttall was injured in the right hand and sent to England to recover. While he was in the hospital, Nuttall discovered that his two brothers were also recovering in the hospital. He was thankful to learn that both of his brothers were safe because they had wives and families back home.

The war ended two months after Nuttall was hospitalized. He heard the news over the radio and he was alone at the time.

"Although there was no cheering, there was a quiet display of happiness.

I felt happy of course at the news and glad my brothers and I were safe. I also had an overwhelming and profound disappointment that I would very likely not be able to rejoin my regimental comrades in Holland," expressed Nuttall.

Deaths and wounding of comrades, agony of women, children and refugee terror were things Nuttall dreaded in the war and when he returned home he found it very hard to adjust and maintain proper sleep and rest. However, during the summer of 1952, Nuttall volunteered for the Royal Canadian Regiment Special Force destined for Korea. He served in Korea for 3 years.

Today, Nuttall, now lives at Chartwell Conservatory Pond Residence in Kingston,



Candy Alexander at the Royal Canadian Legion in Prescott underneath the sign.

where he enjoys reminiscing about his experiences with the Regiment in World War II and with the RCR in the Korean War. Over the past 70 years, he has played a large part at Legions in various branches.

Another Prescott resident, Ralph Alkerton, joined the 1st Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry Airborne Regiment in Calgary, Alberta, he then served in Korea in 1951 to 1952. Today Alkerton, along with other veterans who were in the Navy, as well as Korea, meet at The Prescott Legion once a month to enjoy some Japanese beer and talk about war stories of a different kind. At The Legion, these men are referred to as "The Jug Club."

After the war, The Legion was considered to be home away from home for Veterans. Membership was limited to people who served in the war and their family members. It was a place where The Vets could share stories with people who understood. Today membership is open to anyone in the public. The membership fee is \$50.00

Candy Alexander has been a member of the Legion in Prescott for 17 years. She got her membership through her uncle who was in WW2. She also indicated that her grandmother's brother was killed in WW1.

Alexander explained the legion is a social venue for her. She enjoys the people and the activities. It is a nice, clean and friendly atmosphere. The Legion is also wheelchair accessible.

"I like to hear about their experiences and what their lives were like in the war. It is more interesting than just reading about it in a book. The Vets enjoy sharing their stories

and experiences and it is amazing how they can express both sorrow and pride in the same story. They bring the experiences of war to life," said Alexander.

However, Alexander stressed that some Vets never want to talk about the war or share their war experiences with others.

The Poppy Campaign will start at the end of October. At this time, Legion members, Air Cadets and volunteers will be accepting donations for the Poppy Fund of which 100 % goes to assist Veterans, Veteran's widows and or dependents.

On November 11, the Prescott Color Party of approximately 10 Legion members, along with representatives from the Fire Department, will be escorted by the police from The Legion to The Cenotaph, which is located on the grounds of Fort Wellington. Rev. Tracey Smith is the Legion Padre and will assist President Frank Murphy in conducting the ceremony.

Everyone is welcome to attend on Remembrance Day. **LH**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please check in your community with your local legion where Remembrance Day Services will be held and please honour our vets by attending the service. Also, ask your legion about joining as an associate/affiliate or non-voting member and help financially to keep your local legion in your community.)