

## Honouring Our Local Veterans

2010

### **Elmer Lloyd Barfoot**

Birthdate: November 3, 1925

Rank / Branch: Lance Corporal, Canadian Army

Unit:

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, Belgium, and Holland

Served: 1944-1945

Community: Owen Sound, Keppel Township

Medals / Decorations:

- War Medal 1939–1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal 1939-1945



### Military Service

Elmer enlisted with the Air Force in Toronto in 1944, his service number was B1164864. He attended Basic Training in Toronto 1944, but his selection in the Air Force was full so he ended up in the Army. Elmer went to A23 in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia for training in the Artillery Division Corps as a Gunner. Elmer was later promoted to Lance Corporal.

Elmer was sent to Aldershot, England in March 1945. Later he was sent to Belgium and Holland in May, 1945 after V.E. Day. Elmer's unit was sent to Europe via Belgium and Holland to assist in guarding the German Prisoners of War.

In May 1945 he signed up for the Japan campaign and was repatriated to Canada in June 1945 for training. While Elmer was on leave, the war in Japan ended.

## John (Jack) Bowers

Birthdate: May 5, 1921

Rank / Branch: Flight Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: No. 422 Squadron, 426 Transport Squadron

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, North Atlantic, and India

Served: 1942-1946

Community: Ripley, Wingham, Stratford, Courtright, Atwood, Toronto, and Chesley

Medals / Decorations:

- Atlantic Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Overseas Bar
- War Medal 1939 - 1945
- Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal, 1977



## Military Service

Jack enlisted in London, ON on April 10th, 1942. At the time he was assigned the service number 155144. He then began training to become a Pilot in Toronto, ON and then on to Edmonton, AB for Initial Training School. Jack completed his Elementary Flying Training in Verdun, MB and attended Service Flying School in Vulcan, AB. Finally, he attended Navigation School in Summerside, PEI.

Jack moved up the ranks from Sergeant to Pilot Officer, Flying Officer and Flight Lieutenant. When he had obtained his officer rank, Jack was assigned a new service number of J39584.

In 1944, Jack went overseas and began training in Oxford, England. He was stationed with No. 422 Squadron RCAF piloting Sunderland Flying Boats out of Wales. They patrolled the North Atlantic looking for and attacking German Submarines. After the war ended in Europe, Jack flew to India with the 426 Transport Squadron before Japan surrendered in 1945. Jack was discharged from the RCAF in 1946.

## Murray Warren Gibbons

Birthdate: November 1, 1917

Rank / Branch: Corporal, Canadian Army

Unit: Grey and Simcoe Foresters; 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Brigade, Royal Canadian Armoured Corps; and Fort Garry Horse

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, France, Holland, and Germany

Served: 1940-1945

Community: Meaford, Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal 1939 - 1945
- 1939 - 1945 Star
- France and Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939 – 1945



### Military Service

Murray enlisted on June 21, 1940 in Meaford, ON with the Grey and Simcoe Foresters. He was assigned the service number B 48836 and initially trained as infantry at Camp Borden. Murray's regiment was required to transfer to Armour so they trained as tank crews in Camp Borden and the Meaford Tank Range. This took place from 1940 through to 1943.

Originally slated as the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Brigade, the Foresters would begin their membership in the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps, on January 26, 1942. Murray was a gunner in Sherman tanks and later a crew commander. In August, 1944 his tank was upgraded to a Firefly (armed with a 17 pounder gun and he had brief re-training for that weapon). When Murray first joined he had the rank of a private/trooper, by the time the war ended he was a corporal.

The 1st Battalion embarked for England on June 16, 1943, having served as local protection forces in Ontario and Nova Scotia since mobilization. Unfortunately, on November 1, 1943, the battalion was broken up for reinforcements. Murray went to the Fort Garry Horse (Winnipeg) where he served the duration of the war. Murray took extensive training/practice in Sussex, England in armoured tactics and gunnery. He trained on duplex-drive tanks for the amphibious tank landings on D – Day.

During his time in the service, Murray participated in the D-Day landings on Juno Beach, fought in the defence of Juno Beach and the Battle of Normandy including the Falaise Gap. He fought in the liberation of Holland and the invasion and occupation of Germany and following Germany's surrender he volunteered for service in the Pacific War. Murray was discharged September 1, 1945.

## Daphne Iris Henderson Thompson-Hirst

Birthdate: September 18, 1919

Rank / Branch: Photography Technician, Special Services

Unit: Supply and Information Division of British Special Services

Region: United Kingdom, Germany

Served: 1940-1945

Community: Belfast, NIR; Hampstead, ENG; Lisbon, PT; Turkey; Whitehorse, YT; Hamilton, ON; and Chesley, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- Veteran's Badge
- Red Cross Medal



### Military Service

Daphne joined the Special Services in London, England in 1940. She trained to become a photography technician for the Supply and Information division. As part of the Special Services she was considered the equivalent to an Officer. Daphne photographed aircraft, she took aerial photographs and photos of aircraft as they were being made. She also made films of aircraft production. Daphne photographed London, England during the blitz documenting the damage. She would be out during the bombings taking photos. Some of the other women taking photos were killed, including 6 in her unit. Daphne was discharged in 1945.

## Robert (Bob) Johnston

Birthdate: December 16, 1925

Rank / Branch: Warrant Officer Class II, Canadian Army

Unit: 63rd Battery; 19th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery;  
57th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service), Great Britain, and France

Served: 1941- 1946; 1948-?

Community: Lindsay, ON; Guelph, ON; Fort Erie, ON; Lackawana, NY;  
Fergus, ON; Niagara Falls, ON; Bramalea, ON; and Owen Sound, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- France and Germany Star
- Defense of Britain
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp
- War Medal 1939– 1945



### Military Service

Bob first enlisted in 1941 with the 63rd Battery in Guelph, ON where he was assigned the service number of B-212122. In September, 1941 he enlisted with the 19th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery in London. He was given the new service number of A-65784. Bob then began his training at Wolseley Barracks in London, ON. In October 1941 he went to Kitchener and then on to Camp Borden from November 1941 until January 1942. From January 1942 until November 1942 Bob was stationed in Prince Rupert, BC. He was then stationed in Petawawa, ON from November 1942 to July 1943. Bob was training to be part of the gun crews, a signaler, tank driver, op crew (in the front lines), op advanced signaler training, landing craft training and OPING.

Overseas Bob held observation positions supporting the infantry. He saw action at the front lines and was part of the D-Day landings on Juno Beach. At the end of the war, Bob was five miles south of Wilhemshaven on the North Sea. Bob was discharged in February 1946. After the war in 1948, Bob enlisted with the 57 LAA Reg. in Niagara Falls and was given the service number B-511302. While in the service, Bob held the ranks of Gunner, Bombardier, Sergeant and Warrant Officer Class 2.

## Donald McSporrان

Birthdate: June 4, 1920

Rank / Branch: Flight Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: No. 11 Operational Training Unit; No. 61 Squadron, RAF Bomber Command

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, France, and numerous sorties over Europe

Served: 1940-1945

Community: Toronto/GTA, Sault St. Marie, Iron Bridge, and Brant Township

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939 - 1945 Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Overseas Bar
- War Medal 1939 - 1945



## Military Service

Donald enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force on October 16, 1940 at the Toronto Manning Depot. He was issued the service number R-78222. Donald then began his training as a pilot. He began with the Elementary Flying Training School at the Malton Airport. He then attended Service Flying Training School in Brantford, Ontario where he learned to fly the Avro Anson in preparation for other multi-engine aircraft. Upon graduation he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. Donald was sent overseas in June 1941 to join No. 11 Operational Training Unit at Royston, England. Here he was "crewed up" and the newly united crew was trained to work together in their aircraft. Upon completion of this course Donald and his crew were assigned to No. 61 Squadron, RAF Bomber Command. During his time overseas Donald was trained on three bomber types: the Wellington, Manchester, and Lancaster. In the Manchester he was shot down during his first sortie as a captain on April 10, 1942. The aircraft went down over the English Channel. The seven men were afloat in a rubber dingy for about six days before washing up on French soil. From that point on Donald was a prisoner of war. He was eventually released from captivity and returned to Canada upon his discharge on November 5, 1945.

## Kenneth Reimer

Birthdate: November 25, 1924

Rank / Branch: Flying Officer, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: 437 Squadron

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, and Germany

Served: 1943-1946

Community: Toronto; Fenlon Falls; Bolton; Owen Sound; Long Beach, California; and Meaford

Medals / Decorations:

- Certificate of Honour – Highest Proficiency in all subjects at the Jarvis Bomber & Gunnery 1944
- Officer's Certificate – for heading the class with the highest marks, 1944
- First Aid Medical Certificate
- Wireless Air Gunners badge
- Pilot's Wings
- Canadian Volunteers Service Medal with clasp
- War Medal 1939 - 1945



## Military Service

Ken enlisted in Toronto at Manning Depot in 1943. He was assigned the service number R-277879 which was later changed to J-48532 upon obtaining his officer rank. Ken trained to become a wireless air gunner. He began his training in 1943 at Guelph University for Communication. He then began his training at the Bombing and Gunnery school in Jarvis, ON until 1944 when he went to Calgary, AB for wireless flying. For the remainder of the year Ken moved on to Sheppard, AB for training in flying and communication, spending some time in Lachine, QC awaiting instructions and on to Maitland, NS for a command course and Chatham, NB until 1945 for Instructor Air-Wire training. Next, Ken went to Port Dover, ON for squadron selection and to begin flying. Later he went to Comox, BC with the 437 Squadron for crew selection and to begin flying duties. In 1945, Ken went to Moncton, NB for embarkation to England.

Ken worked his way up the ranks from Aircraft man 2nd Class in 1943 to Leading Aircraft Man, followed by Pilot Officer from 1944 to 1945 and finally Flying Officer in 1945 to 1946. Ken was stationed overseas in England at Bournemouth; Odiham, Hampshire where he joined the 437 Squadron, Passenger and Freight Section and Topcliffe in Northern England. Ken took weight & balance loading training at Bramshot and Nuneaton and an office training course. He returned to Odiham and took over as manager of the passenger and freight section. Ken went to Rostrup and Hamburg, Germany to inspect staging posts. He also helped evacuate some Army members from Rostrup, Germany and flew supplies to stations in England and Germany. Ken was discharged in July, 1946.

## John Medcalf Rowe

Birthdate: March 5, 1920

Rank / Branch: Warrant Officer Class 2, Canadian Army

Unit: Perth Regiment of Canada, 1st Special Service Force

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, Italy, France, and Germany

Served: 1939-1946

Community: Greenock Township, Kincardine, London, Toronto, Lindsay, Kenora, and Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Italy Star
- France and Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Overseas Bar
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Combat Infantryman Badge (USA)



### Military Service

In 1939 John enlisted with the Perth Regiment of Canada at Stratford and was given the service number A-11479. He was trained as an infantryman at Camp Borden and was stationed in Hamilton and Niagara Falls before being sent overseas to Britain in October 1941.

In the summer of 1943 he received training to become a weapons instructor in small arms. John remained on the Perth Regiment's roster until November 1943 when he was transferred to Italy in January 1944. Shortly thereafter he volunteered for the 1st Special Service Force which was tasked to the invasion of Southern France in the summer of 1944. John arrived at Anzio in April 1944. He was with the Force when they broke out of Anzio and was with the first one hundred troops to reach Rome. The unit fought its way to the Italian border where it was disbanded in December 1944 and John returned to England. He then joined the occupational forces in Germany. John was discharged in April 1946 having achieved the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2.



## Kenneth George Smale

Birthdate: April 27, 1923

Rank / Branch: Corporal, Canadian Army

Unit: 48th Highlanders, Canadian RECCE Squadron

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany

Served: 1939-1945

Community: Stratford, Toronto, St. Catharines, Oshawa, and Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939 – 1945 Star
- Italy Star
- France – Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal 1939- 1945
- War Medal 1939 - 1945
- Canadian Efficiency Medal
- Thank You Canada Medal – Issued by Holland



## Military Service

In 1939 at the age of 16, Ken enlisted in the Canadian Army with the 48th Highlanders in Toronto, ON. He was assigned the service number B-72683 which was later changed to B-73443.

Ken began his training in Toronto and at Camp Borden. He would later transfer from Infantry to Reconnaissance and formed the first Canadian RECCE Squadron. Ken became an armoured car commander, section commander, Bren gun carrier commander and Bren gun section commander. He achieved the rank of Corporal.

While stationed overseas, Ken spent time in South Eastern England, Scotland, Sicily, Italy, Southern France, Belgium, Holland, Western Germany. He fought in the Battle of Sicily, Italy, Belgium, Holland, the Battle of Britain, South and North Italy. Ken was discharged September 1945.

## Arthur Cyril Wragg

Birthdate: August 22, 1925

Rank / Branch: Senior Aircraftman, Royal Air Force

Unit: 55th Battalion, Essex, Home Guard;

TS Vindictrix; SS Cydonia; No. 4 Flying Training School

Region: Great Britain (various locations for training and service), Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean, and Malta

Served: 1942-1943; 1947- 1953

Community: West Ham, London, ENG; Woodford, London, ENG; Liverpool, ENG; Walthamston, London, ENG; Durham, ON; and Owen Sound, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939- 45 Star
- Atlantic Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939 - 1945
- General Service
- Coronation Medal



### Military Service

Art first joined the Home Guard in 1942 in London. He was discharged in 1943. He then joined the Merchant Navy and finally the Royal Air Force in London, England in 1947. He was issued the service number 4021417 by the RAF.

While in the Home Guard, Art did basic army training in London and belonged to the 55th Battalion, Essex, Home Guard where his basic duties were soldiering and awaiting invasion. In the Merchant Navy, Art was a Seaman and Steward training in Gloucester and serving on the TS Vindictrix and SS Cydonia. In the Royal Air Force, Art trained to become a flight mechanic and air frame fitter 2A in St. Athan, South Wales. He served with the No. 4 Flying Training School in Rhodesia as part of the RAF aircraft maintenance.

Art was involved in the Battle of Briatin, the Battle of the Atlantic and the Malta Convoy. He was discharged in 1953.