

Honouring Our Local Veterans

2005

June Belanger (nee Marshall)

Birthdate: June 1, 1923

Rank / Branch: Captain's Writer, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (Wrens)

Unit: HMCS Star, HMCS Conestoga, Canadian Naval Headquarters in London, England

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

Served: 1944-1945

Community: Owen Sound, Kitchener, Hamilton, and Francis Lake

Medals / Decorations:

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Overseas Bar
- 1939-1945 War Medal
- Dutch "Thank You Canada" Medal
- Legion Service Medal
- Legion Past Officer Medal
- Legion Past President Medal with bar and leaf
- Legion Past Officer Medal with bar for youth education



Military Service

June signed up for naval service in 1944 at HMCS Star in Hamilton. She spent four months in Hamilton without receiving any basic training. She remembers being given a uniform and told she would work in recruitments with Commander Dressler, and to show up at 9:00 the next morning for work. June didn't know how to tie a tie or salute or anything. She used to cross the road to avoid officers so she would not have to salute them.

June was then sent to Galt (Cambridge) to take her Captain's Writers course at HMCS Conestoga. This course took a few months and was very intense. She became a Wren and a Captain's Writer.

June was then sent to Halifax and finally was sent to London, England arriving on Christmas day in 1944, where she worked at Canadian Naval Headquarters on 10 Haymarket Street. June was demobilized at the end of the war in 1945.

Andrew Cox

Birthdate: June 5, 1919

Rank / Branch: Warrant Officer, Royal Air Force

Unit: 50 Squadron

Region: Great Britain, Germany

Served: 1936-1958

Community: Halifax, NS; Tyne, England; Windsor, ON;

Waterloo, ON; London, ON; Owen Sound, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- Distinguished Flying Medal, September 9, 1940
- 1939-1945 Star
- Aircrew Europe Star
- Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945



Military Service

Andrew enlisted in the RAF in 1936 at Newcastle on Tyne. He was trained at the Cramwall RAF Electrical Wireless School to become a radio operator and air gunner, he graduated in 1938.

Andrew was promoted twice during his service, in 1940 he was made a Sergeant and in 1945 he became a Warrant Officer.

Andrew was posted to many places in England during his service. He was a member of 50 Squadron and completed 44 bombing missions before he was shot down.

After being shot down over Germany, Andrew was captured and made a Prisoner of War. He spent almost 5 years in POW camps. Andrew spent time at Stalag Luft 1, Stalag Luft 3, Stalag Luft 6 and Stalag 357. A lot of his time in the POW camps was spent trying to escape.

Andrew was a member of a flight crew, an air gunner, radio operator, air traffic controller and part of Coastal Command. He stayed with the RAF until 1958.

Bill Dane

Birthdate: February 12, 1923

Rank / Branch: Flying Officer, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: 101 Squadron, Bomber Command

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

Served: 1942-1945

Community: Toronto, Niagara Falls. Owen Sound, and Sault Ste. Marie

Medals / Decorations:

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



Military Service

Bill enlisted in the RCAF in 1942. He reported to Manning Depot in Toronto in October for preliminary training. He took some courses at the University of Toronto and then went to Calgary for guard duty. Bill went to Edmonton for Navigation ground training in April 1943 and then to Bombing and Gunnery School until August 1943. Bill then went to Air Observer School in New Brunswick. He received his wing in January 1944.

Bill was sent to Bomber Command as a navigator when he arrived in England. He did operations with 101 Squadron, One Group and was part of Bomber Command from January 1945 until the war ended in Europe. Bill completed 21 bombing runs plus six that were stopped at the last minute. The longest sortie Bill went on lasted 9 hours and 45 minutes, to Dessau in Germany. His crew also dropped food to The Dutch and made 3 trips to bring P.O.W.'s home.

Bill started out as an Aircraftsman 2, was promoted to Leading Aircraftman, Sergeant and Pilot Officer. He was discharged on Sept 24, 1945.

Robert Fairley

Birthdate: December 27, 1926

Rank / Branch: Bosun's Mate, Merchant Navy

Unit:

Region: Great Britain, North Africa, France, Germany, Canada, Russia, and India

Served: 1943-

Community: Liverpool, England; Toronto; Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Atlantic Star
- France & Germany Star & clasp
- Italy Star
- 1939-1945 War Medal
- 20th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th Anniversary of "Victory in the Great Patriotic War" medals
- Normandy 50th Anniversary
- Norwegian Convoy Cup



Military Service

Bob volunteered for the Merchant Navy in 1943. He went to Mersyside England to get training as a seaman. He started off as a Junior Ordinary Seaman and went on to become a Senior Ordinary Seaman, an Efficient Deckhand, an Able Bodied Seaman and a Bosun's Mate.

Bob's first ship was a troop ship carrying American relief troops to North Africa. Bob then worked on a ship that carried American troops to France for the D-Day invasion. He worked on a ship carrying German prisoners to Canada and a ship carrying Russian troops, who had been forced to fight for Germany, back to Russia. This trip to Murmansk, Russia was a very dangerous one. Bob was sent to Italy with 3000 British troops and supplies in time for Christmas 1944. He then made more trips to Halifax. Bob was in Halifax for VE Day. In June he sailed for Bombay, India with troops to invade Japan. On his way home from India they found out the war was over.

Sam Gow

Birthdate: November 25, 1924

Rank / Branch: Messman-Steward, Merchant Navy

Unit: SS Drumaho, SS Ericus, Grafton Park, Clearwater Park, Mount Oxford Park, and High Park

Region: Canada, United Kingdom, North and South Atlantic Ocean, the Azores, Egypt, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Burma, and Algeria

Served: 1944-1946

Community: Owen Sound, Port Colborne

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- Burma Star
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Suez Canal Medal
- Merchant Navy Medal



Military Service

Sam enlisted in 1944 in Montreal he joined the Marine Pool (Canadian Merchant Navy). He did not receive or need any specific training but immediately became a Messman-Steward. Sam sailed on a number of Merchant navy ships during his service. He was a galley Boy on SS Drumaho from March to May 1944. On the SS Ericus he was a Messman-Steward. This ship was in England from May to August in 1944.

Sam was posted to the Grafton Park from October 1944 to April 1945 and was a Messman-Steward on the oil tanker Clearwater Park from May to July in 1945. Then he was on the High Park from December 1945 until April 1946.

Donald McConachie

Birthdate: January 15, 1925

Rank / Branch: Sub-Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Navy

Unit: HMCS Cornwallis, HMCS Hespeler

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service),
North Atlantic, and United Kingdom

Served: 1944-1945

Community: Owen Sound, Toronto, and Muskoka

Medals / Decorations:

- Don never followed up on which medals or decorations he would have been awarded. However he should have been given the War Medal 1939-1945.



Military Service

Don went to Toronto in January of 1944 to enlist in the navy. He was called up for service in the summer to complete basic training in Toronto.

From Toronto, Don went to HMCS Cornwallis in Nova Scotia for two months of advanced training. In November he went to Halifax for more training and then served on the HMCS Hespeler, a Castle Class Corvette.

The HMCS Hespeler was part of the mid-ocean escort group that picked up convoys about 200 miles off the coast of Newfoundland and travelled to Londonderry, in Ireland. The main job of the Hespeler was to zig-zag behind the convoy to prevent enemy attack and pick up anything that fell in the water from other ships.

In March of 1945 Don was sent to St. Johns Newfoundland for more training, to become an officer. He graduated in June 1945 and was sent to Quebec to train to be sent to the Pacific. The war ended before he left for the Pacific. Don was discharged in December 1945.

Robert Rutherford

Birthdate: November 29, 1922

Rank / Branch: Colonel, Canadian Army

Unit: Grey and Simcoe Foresters, 5th Armoured Brigade

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service),
Great Britain, Africa, Italy, and Northern Europe

Served: 1939-1945

Community: Leith, Owen Sound, and Toronto

Medals / Decorations:

- MBE (Military Division)
- Order of St. John
- 1939-1945 Star
- Italy Star
- France and Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal
- Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Confederation
- Canadian Forces Decoration (CD) with three bars
- Etoile Civique



Military Service

In 1939, Bob Rutherford joined the Grey and Simcoe Foresters militia and went to Camp Niagara. At the end of camp in 1941, he joined the staff as a Sergeant Instructor, teaching the Bren gun to Canadian Officer Training Corps students. He was then recommended for a commission and went to Brockville to take the officers course. Upon receiving his commission, he joined the Armoured Corps as instructional staff and was posted to the Grey and Simcoe Foresters (Active).

In 1943 the Army needed reinforcements and the Grey and Simcoe Foresters regiment was broken up. Bob was transferred to the 5th Armoured Brigade and went overseas. He spent the next two years fighting in Africa, Italy and Northern Europe. Bob was there when Canadians first broke the line at Cassino, Italy and captured Rome on June 5th, 1944.

Bob joined the Governor General's Horse Guard while in law school and commanded it until 1960. He was commander for the terms of office of three Governors General. He was made Honorary Colonel in 1984 and retired from the Governor General's Horse Guard in 1989. He was also Honorary Colonel of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters from 1980 to 1998.

Robert Turner

Birthdate: June 5, 1922

Rank / Branch: Private (Trooper), Canadian Army

Unit: Grey and Simcoe Foresters, Three Rivers Tank Regiment, and 1st Canadian Armoured Division

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Northern Africa, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, and Holland

Served: 1942-1945

Community: Prince Albert, SK; Kilsyth, ON; and Jackson, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- Voluntary Service Medal
- War Medal
- 1939-1945 Star
- Italian Star
- France & Germany Star
- Dutch "Thank You Canada" Medal



Military Service

In 1942 Robert enlisted in the Army in Toronto. From there he went to Basic Training in Newmarket, Ontario, and had Advanced Training at Camp Borden in Ontario. Robert was trained to be a Tank Gunner but was made a Trooper (Tank).

He went overseas in 1943 with the Grey & Simcoe Foresters, and was a part of the Northern Africa Joiner. Robert was a member of the Three Rivers Tank Regiment part of the 1st Canadian Armoured Division, and fought in Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany. Robert also took part in the liberation of Holland. He was discharged and returned to Canada in 1945.

Alex Twaddle

Birthdate: March 20, 1920

Rank / Branch: Sergeant, Canadian Army

Unit: Troop Transport 1st Canadian Corp, British Commandos, and British Airborne Paratroopers

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service), Great Britain, Europe (specifics not provided), and the United States

Served: 1941-

Community: Hamilton, Guelph, Goderich, and Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- War Medal 1939-45
- 2 Long Service medals for police services from the OPP



Military Service

Alex joined the militia in 1935 as part of the 2nd, 10th Dragoons, a Cavalry regiment. He trained over the summers at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Alex tried to enlist in the army in 1939 and was turned away three times for medical reasons. Alex finally enlisted in 1941. He joined the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps in Hamilton and had basic training in Newmarket. He went to Camp Borden for advanced training. In October he was sent overseas and was assigned to Troop Transport 1st Canadian Corp. Alex was then attached to British Commandos for training and won the Dagger as first in his class.

In 1942 Alex was assigned to the British Airborne for training as a paratrooper. He became an instructor and jumpmaster. Alex was then attached to the U.S. Army at Fort Benning to train with their paratroopers. He was there six months and then moved to Shiloh Manitoba to open the Canadian Parachute School. Alex was made a Corporal in 1941 and a Sergeant in 1942.

Barb Uttley (nee Lewins)

Birthdate: 1922

Rank / Branch: Leading Aircraft Woman, Royal Air Force

Unit: Radar Operator, Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF)

Region: United Kingdom

Served: 1941-

Community: Tanfield Lee, England; London, England; Toronto, ON; and Owen Sound, ON

Medals / Decorations:

- Defence Medal
- War Medal

Military Service

Barb's civilian job was considered a reserved service so she was not allowed to enlist. Nonetheless she found a way to quit this job and enlist.

Barb enlisted early in 1941, in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, (WAAF). She did basic training in Bridgenorth and was trained as a radar operator at Cranwell. During the course of her service as a radar operator she was stationed at Stenigot, Clee Hill, and Greystone in Northern Ireland. She was then posted to West Prawle and then to Swingate (Dover).

Dover was the worst. Barb averaged 2 and ½ hours sleep every 24 hours for the first 10 weeks of 1944. She didn't want to miss out on dancing. Dover was also shelled a lot. When they were being shelled they weren't allowed to come off duty.

Barb was made a Leading Aircraft Woman (LACW) and retained her rank throughout her service.

