



# REMEMBRANCE DAY

# 2020

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Thank you for your work in our communities

## Royal Canadian Legion Branch 266 Valemount Remembrance Day 2020 Virtual Ceremony

There will be some changes to this year's Remembrance Day ceremonies.

The public are encouraged to not attend at the cenotaph. The ceremonies will be broadcast live on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/6-1bQUBf3Tg> and will be posted on Branch 266's Facebook page. Ceremonies will begin at 10:50.

We are encouraging a couple ways to show your respect on Remembrance Day. Join us for 2 minutes of silence on your front step or a silent drive by tribute past the Legion.

For those that normally sponsor and place a wreath in memory of a family member, we will be able to accommodate that on an

individual basis after the ceremony. Please contact Pete Pearson at 250-566-1115 to arrange.

Our Poppy Campaign has started and Poppy trays are in place in local businesses and we appreciate their support during these unusual times. We

Thank You for your continued support of Branch 266 and our Veterans, past, present and future!

We Will Remember Them!

## Royal Canadian Legion Branch 75, McBride

Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the McBride Branch will not have an official Remembrance Day service this year. Members of the Branch will raise the flags at the Cenotaph at approximately 10:45am November 11, 2020. If members of the public wish to show their respect and lay a wreath at the Cenotaph, they may do so individually throughout the day. If you need a wreath please contact Dennis Rejman at 250-569-2692.

The flags and wreaths will be collected up at approximately 5:00 pm.

The McBride Branch would like to thank everyone for their understanding and support.

The Branch would also like to acknowledge the support of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George for their Community Grant-In-Aid.

### Proudly honouring our Veterans



Village of McBride  
Mayor, Council & Staff

### We remember those who fought for our freedom and peace.

From Mayor, Council, and Staff



With deep respect and  
lasting gratitude we  
reflect upon the deeds  
of those who served



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*When we remember,  
the fallen live on*

From the Goat Staff



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John Smith Garven Bell

Corporal in the Second  
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Died April 2, 1999.



THEIR  
MEMORY  
WILL LIVE  
FOREVER



REGIONAL DISTRICT  
of Fraser-Fort George



We are proud  
to salute our  
veterans on  
Remembrance Day

McBride: 250-569-2266  
Valemount: 250-566-9107



# REMEMBRANCE DAY

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## 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY of the Canoe River Train Disaster



By PETE PEARSON

On 21 November 1950, tragedy struck. At 10:35 a troop train carrying members of the 2nd Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery bound for Fort Lewis, Washington collided head on with the eastbound "Continental," the Vancouver to Montreal passenger train. The engines and leading coaches of both trains derailed and the forward cars of the troop train were thrown over an embankment and destroyed. There were no passenger casualties on the Continental however there was a heavy toll to the ranks of the troop train. 17 members of the 2RCHA and the 4 CN crew members from the two trains perished in the wreck.

A critical error in copying train orders for the westbound troop train by 22-year-old Operator A.J. Atherton resulted in three words, "at Cedarside and"

not being relayed to the train crew. Without those words the troop train expected to meet the passenger train at the Canoe River siding while the passenger was expecting to meet at Cedarside.

A combination of extreme cold (-18 C), fresh snow, fire from an oil leak and steam from the ruptured engines made rescue and recovery of the dead and injured very difficult. Dr. J.J. Kimmett of Edson was a passenger on the Continental and along with his wife immediately began treating those injured he could with the supplies on hand. This timely help no doubt saved many lives before the hospital train sent from Jasper arrived hours later.

The following is the roll of those that perished on that tragic day that was the largest single military death toll on Canadian soil.

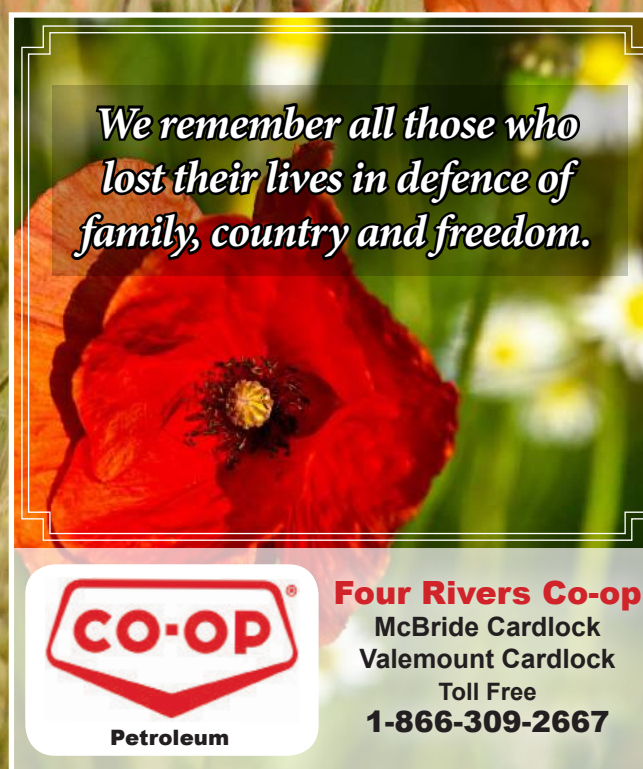
2nd Royal Canadian Horse Artillery Gunners:

Arden J. Atchison, Weldon Eugene Barkhouse, Norman William Carroll, Frederick William Conway, Robert Arthur Craig, Austin Emery George, Urgan Joseph Levesque, Robert William Manley, Basil Patrick McKeown, Albert William Orr, David Owens Leslie Albert Snow, Albert George Stroudk, Joseph Thistle, James Milo Wenkert, James Joseph White, William David Wright,

Canadian National Railroad Train Crews:  
Engineer Harvey Church, Fireman Adam Oleschuk, Fireman Hank Prosinuk, Engineer Jack Stinson

For more information on this tragic event, please contact the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 266 to arrange a visit of the War Heroes Museum upstairs in the hall.

We Will Remember Them







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# REMEMBRANCE DAY

# 2020



## Charlie Leake — SOARING THROUGH LIFE



BY ANDREA ARNOLD

When he was 10 years old, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Leake (Charlie) had a child-size WWII Airforce uniform and model airplane he remembers playing with. Despite those early toys, it wasn't until Grade 13 that he knew he wanted to enter the Air Force. He spent many years of his childhood in McBride but attended Grade 13 in Prince George. During

the year took an Airforce Entrance Exam for a Military College in Victoria. However, he failed the exam due to his lack of French language skills.

One of his school friends, Gerry Cunningham had been accepted directly into the airforce based out of Edmonton, spending a year working as ground crew before having a medical procedure that cleared him for advancement into air crew. Cunningham talked Leake into applying along with him. Late in 1950, at the age of 18, Leake took the first steps into what led to an almost 28-year career with the airforce and a lifelong love of flying.

Leake remembers his very first flight during the first two months of training. "The instructor took me on a familiarization flight," he said. "We went up in a Harvard. Normally the instructor would sit in the back while the student flew but on this flight the instructor flew. It was quite the experience. It set the tone for the next 48 years."

After completing his training, Leake was sent to Winnipeg, where he spent two years part of a Search and Rescue crew. It was work he really enjoyed. He remembers dropping supplies to stranded downed planes, specifically one plane in the Arctic. "The pilot had built a trench," he said. "We dropped in a bundle of supplies for him. Food, firestarter, warm clothes, that sort of thing."

It was during the two years in Winnipeg that Leake met the woman that became his wife, Patricia. Before his transfer to Trenton Ontario, the pair got married.

In Trenton, Leake began training as an instructor. He learned how to teach new pilots how to operate mostly the North American Harvard (The Yellow Peril), the same plane that he had his introductory flight on just a few years earlier. After his training, he was sent to Red Deer to instruct new recruits.

When his time in Red Deer came to a close, he was sent to Comox on Vancouver Island where he had the opportunity to train on CF-100 Canuck jets. These aircraft specialized in operating in all kinds of weather.

Leake's career took him to military bases all across Canada, and



FAR LEFT: Commanding Officer Charles Leake near the end of his military career was given command of a Helicopter squadron based out of Edmonton. / SUBMITTED

LEFT: Leake stands with granddaughter Allysia Gredling during Remembrance Day events in the mid 1990s. /SUBMITTED



Leake took Doctor Cowburn up for many flights in the Tiger Moth once the doctor was unable to fly himself. Leake is thrilled that the plane still has roots in the valley and that "it is being flown like it was meant to be flown." /SUBMITTED

upon leaving the service. He feels very fortunate that during his years of service, as well as in the years since, he has had very few scares while operating aircraft.

"I had one engine failure," he said. "But I was already landing when the engine cut out, so I just landed and that was it."

He also recalled the heart racing moments when other planes have intercepted his flight path, crossing too close for comfort. "Also, dealing with weather," he said. "All kinds of weather. But you always had something up your sleeve that could save you. Something like an alternate flight plan or landing location."

While Leake never had to eject from a plane in flight, they did perform drills in preparation for the worst. Wearing all their gear, parachute, life jacket and flight gear, from a stationary seat they pulled the lever that would send them shooting up a tower. Leake did apply to take a jump

course at one point, but was told he would have to take a leave from the Air Force to participate, and "if I got hurt, I was screwed," so he decided not to pursue the option. He was the pilot on many flights delivering paratroopers, and medical personnel however, so he had to be well versed in all the aspects of a safe jump.

The final position Leake held was Commanding Officer of a helicopter squad based out of Edmonton. When the Olympics were held in Montreal Quebec in 1976, there was concern of military action from overseas. Leake was sent as Air Commander for the Air Force squads on site. He led a formation of 36 helicopters, the biggest one in history.

In the fall of 1977, Leake's mother, now a widow, decided that she wanted to leave McBride and move to Vancouver. Leake, having been

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Respect and  
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We Remember

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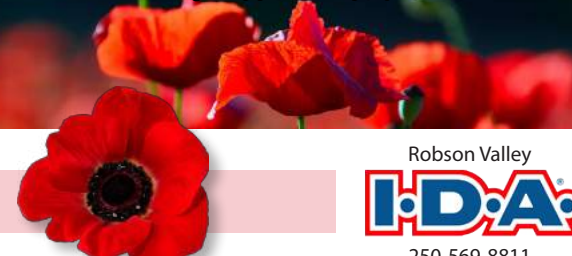
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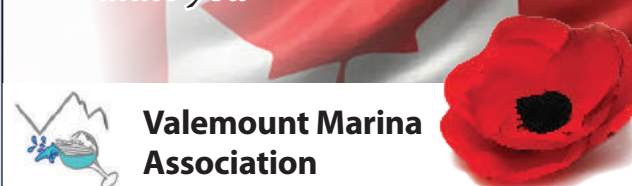
**Never forget.**



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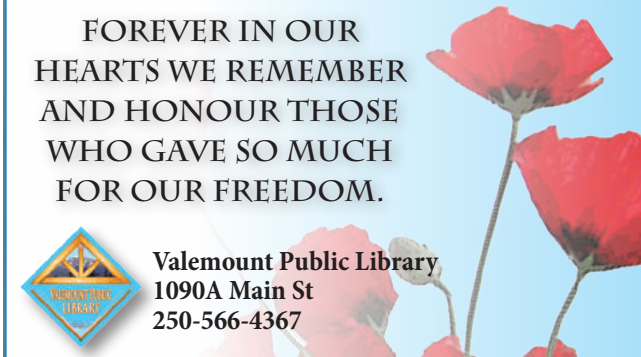
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Today and Tomorrow






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HEARTS WE REMEMBER  
AND HONOUR THOSE  
WHO GAVE SO MUCH  
FOR OUR FREEDOM.





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With deep  
respect  
and lasting  
gratitude to  
those who  
served our  
country.





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REMEMBRANCE DAY



Charlie Leake... Cont'd from P15



Leake and his wife spend many hours soaring above their new home, Vancouver Island./  
SUBMITTED

presented with a transfer he didn't want to take, used the opportunity to step away from the service, and return home to McBride to take over the homestead.

Once home, he was presented with the opportunity to use Derrick Wright's plane and renewed his civilian flight instructor license. Using Wright's plane, he taught several locals how to fly. He also partnered with Ian Monroe, establishing CCI Aviation. They transported people as well as supplies by float and wheeled planes.

When local doctor Geoff Cowburn became unable to fly his Tiger Moth, Leake became his pilot, taking Cowburn up whenever the doctor needed to escape the stresses of life.

Kelly Mortenson took up the initiative to have the airport in McBride named after Leake.

"You have more landings and takeoffs here than anyone else," he said to Leake.

During McBride's 75th Anniversary

celebrations, Leake was reluctantly torn away from the celebrations on mainstreet and taken to the airport. "Kim (daughter) found me and told me we had to go to the airport NOW," he said. "I didn't want to go, but she insisted. It was a total surprise. They had cake and I had to serve it."

Mortenson loaned Leake his plane so that he could be the first pilot to touch down on the newly named Charlie Leake Airfield.

Leake and his wife no longer reside in McBride, however they still return to the valley to visit friends and family.

Now at home in Comox BC, the 88-year-old has a two seater plane (one forward one back, like the first Harvard he flew in). A homebuilt Van's RV-4 with a bubble canopy.

"It flies like a fighter plane," he said. "I can even do aerobatics."

Leake still flies regularly, relishing the freedom to enjoy blue cloudless skies as he explores the island from above.

20% of revenue from this feature will go to our local legions.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK IN OUR COMMUNITIES



They are family, friends  
and neighbours; everyday  
citizens, yet so much more.



Valemount IGA & staff  
We remember them

We raise our glass to all those who have  
served and sacrificed all so that we may  
live in peace.





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