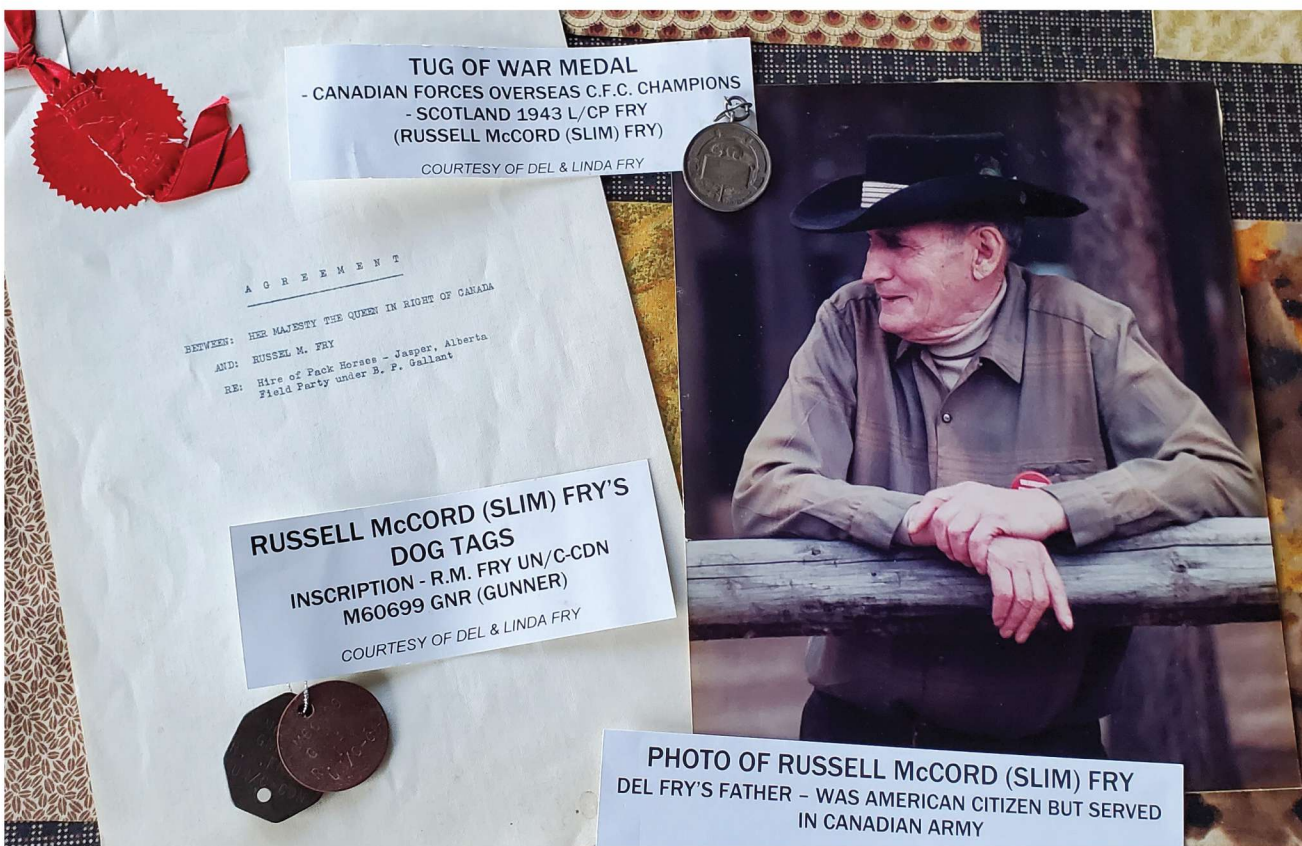




REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021

20% of revenue from this feature goes to our local legions!

Lance Corporal Russell (Slim) Fry



Russell "Slim" Fry (In the photos) received a medal for his part in the winning tug-of-war team. The document is a contract between Fry and the Queen for pack horse services. /ANDREA ARNOLD

By ANDREA ARNOLD

Russell Fry, more commonly known as Slim, was born on Boxing Day, 1906 in Michigan. Early on, his family moved west to Montana, then into Alberta in 1917. It was there that his love for horses began. In 1926 he even competed in the Calgary Stampede Rodeo.

Slim served in World War II as a gunner with the rank of Lance Corporal and was decorated with three medals. Although the actual reasons for these medals are unknown, one may be due to an injury he sustained while serving. He was struck in the stomach by a bullet. The wound was serious, but not fatal. Another was listed on his discharge paper as a defense medal - Canadian volunteer service medal and clasp war medal 1939-45.

As those who knew him would expect, even his time of service in war was not all work and no play. He toured Britain as a member of the Canadian Tug-of-War team. He reported proudly that they only lost twice.

McBride resident Del Fry, Slim's son, remembers he didn't talk about his time overseas very much. He was a very simple horseman who valued a good horse more than a good house. He worked in camps all around the valley and gained a reputation as an amazing camp

cook.

Reportedly, bear grease was his not so secret recipe, and he usually had a beaver tail in his freezer ready to cook.

"He was a pioneer of sorts," said daughter in law Linda Fry. "He worked hard to support those who were working hard to build the Valley."

Although he didn't talk of his time in the service, Slim always had stories to tell. He told of a time the water froze in the tub while he was taking a bath. He had to hop the tub closer to the fire and wait for it to thaw. Another favorite was that during a game of crib, Slim was accused of cheating. He stood, took his 22, and shot the coffee cup out of the hand of his accuser, leaving him holding only the handle.

Slim briefly owned a parcel of land in Croydon, but that was the only time he actually owned property.

"The grass always looked greener on the other side of the fence to me," he said.

After a lifetime of living without creature comforts like electricity, running water and indoor plumbing, Slim lived his final years under a roof he helped erect in Valemount at the Golden Years Lodge. He passed away on November 13, 1996 at the age of 89.

We remember those who fought for our freedom and peace.

From Mayor, Council, and Staff



Proudly honouring our Veterans



Village of McBride
Mayor, Council & Staff

Community Futures
Fraser Fort George

When we remember, the fallen live on.

www.cfcd.bc.ca

In Memory of
John Smith Garven Bell

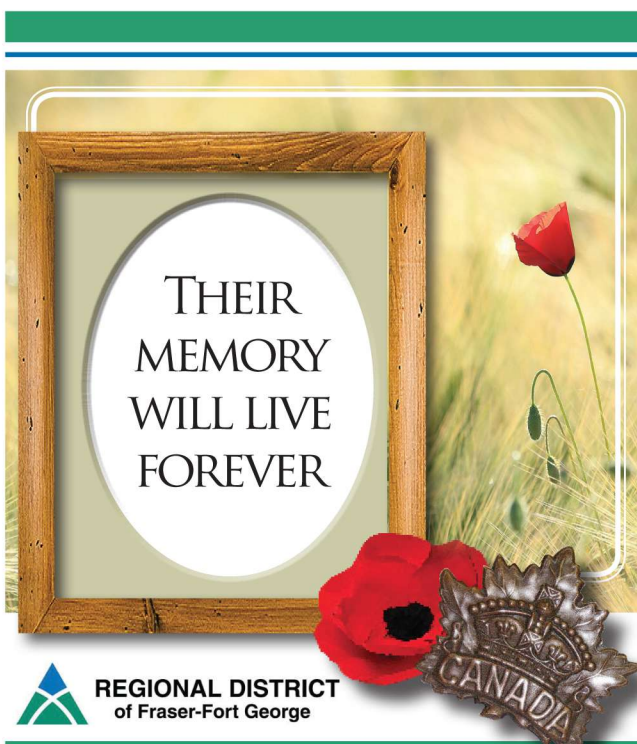


Corporal in the Second World War. Stationed in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
Born March 4, 1909.
Died April 2, 1999.



Shirley Bond, MLA
Prince George-Valemount
www.ShirleyBondMLA.bc.ca

Office: 1350 5th Avenue
Prince George, BC
Toll Free: 1.866.612.7333
Phone: 250.612.4181
Facebook: /ShirleyBondForBC
Twitter: @ShirleyBond



REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George

REMEMBRANCE DAY
LEST WE FORGET



BOB ZIMMER MP
Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies

1-855-767-4567
WWW.BOBZIMMER.CA
BOB.ZIMMER@PARL.GC.CA

Remembrance Day 2021

Valemount resident Graham Winsor spent 20 years serving his country

Credits time spent with Canadian army for coming of age as a person

By MICHAEL PIASETZKI

Master Corporal Graham Winsor, a 57-year-old Valemount resident who along with his partner Ruth Hanus currently operates the Slippery Slopes Bed and Breakfast in the village, spent 20 years in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In 1984 at the age of 20, wide-eyed and inexperienced, Winsor decided to sign up with the Canadian regular armed forces in Deer Lake Nfld.

“I was a young buck back then,” said Winsor. “There wasn’t a lot of work around the area back then so I joined up. They told me I’d be trained as a Performance Oriented Electronic person. That sounded exciting to me and I accepted their offer. The rest is history.”

That history included stints spent serving his country at Canadian Forces Bases in Cornwallis, Calgary and Edmonton where he was promoted to Master Corporal along with overseas duties in Lars, Germany and Bosnia. In 2004, he received a medical discharge and his military career came to an end.

Winsor said one of the biggest benefits from time spent in the Armed Forces was learning the importance of having a proper work ethic. He also credits the army for allowing him to experience and learn about life and all the ups and downs it throws at you and as a result, growing as a person.

“I was so green when I entered the forces,” he said. “I left a man with so much experience under my belt.”

When asked what Remembrance Day meant to him, Winsor pointed to a recent Facebook post he stumbled upon where Remembrance Day Canadian flags were on sale. One of the flags featured a Canadian soldier carrying a weapon adorned with a set of wings.

“That spoke to me,” he said. “As soldiers we’re not angels by any means. But when we’re out there protecting our country or our families, we do that for a reason. We don’t ask for anything. We do it for ourselves and our country.”



We are proud to salute our veterans on Remembrance Day



Chalet Continental Motel
JIN, YOON & FAMILY

LEST WE FORGET



Raabis Mechanical Ltd.
250-566-0063

Open - 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM
Closed - Saturday, Sunday & Holidays

ROBSON VALLEY BUSINESS SERVICES

We proudly salute our Veterans on Remembrance Day for their courage and dedication



250-569-7941

RVBS

To all who have served: Thank you for your service and sacrifice.



 **Robson Valley Home Hardware**
256 Main St McBride
250-569-2284

We pay tribute to the memory of those who served




 **Advantage Insurance Services Ltd.**
433 Main St, McBride
250-569-2264

In memory of their service:

JAMES MORRIS SNR 1944 - 1945	PETER MORRIS 1942 - 1945
---------------------------------	-----------------------------

WE HONOUR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM



FROM JIM MORRIS & FAMILY
MICA MOUNTAIN TRANSPORT

BLACKMAN BROS Industries
566-4349

With Gratitude We Remember





We thank those who have served to protect our country and freedom

John McGuire & Donnie MacLean



May we always remember those who served




INFINITY
Office & Health



Proud to honour our veterans of yesterday, today and tomorrow



Valemount Petro Canada and A&W

Byron Bustin remembers his father who paid the ultimate sacrifice

By MICHAEL PIASETZKI

Pilot Officer John William Arthur Bustin, whose son Byron lives in Valemount with his wife Carol, paid the ultimate price for his country during the Second World War.

Bustin, who was born in Salmo but enlisted as a volunteer in the Canadian army in Toronto in 1940, was killed in action on June 30, 1942 while flying over enemy territory as part of a Royal Air Force crew. Bustin was flying on a Vickers Wellington aircraft, a British twin-engine long-range medium bomber which only flew at night. He was 31 years old and Byron was just 7 years old.

Bustin courageously flew on 23 missions in total before losing his life for his country. On two of those missions he was forced to “ditch,” along with his crew. That meant aborting the mission and going down into the dark and murky English Channel waters where the crew quickly got out of the aircraft wearing life jackets and hopped into small life crafts, only to be picked up by Allied patrol torpedo boats and brought back to safety.

“My father’s role on the Vickers Wellington was as a wireless operator,” said Byron Bustin, 85, who moved to Valemount in 1968. “He was trained in Canada during the 1930s as a telegrapher with the Canadian Pacific Railway. When the war broke out, he set up wireless schools in different parts of Canada. Wireless operators used the Morse Code with a key.”

A severe shortage of wireless operators who knew how to use the Morse Code on British aircrafts triggered Bustin to sign up with the Royal Air Force in 1941. His role on the aircraft was to use his morse code experience as a telegrapher to send and receive signal communications from fellow Allied bombers along on the mission.

“When the Vickers Wellington would take off with the full crew and two tons of bombs my father would make contact with other aircrafts on the mission using his morse code experience,” Byron Buntin said. “Once they got past the English Channel, they went on radio silence. They only flew at night. They needed the wireless operator to coordinate things.”

Paying the ultimate sacrifice, Buntin was shot and killed inside his aircraft on his final mission. His crew however, was able to return to England. Bustin was buried on July 3, 1942 at Feltwell (St. Nicholas) Churchyard in Norfolk, England.

When asked what Remembrance Day meant to him, Byron Bustin said it shows how stupid war really is.

“That all these particularly young men, including my late father, gave up their lives while all the munitions could have been used for better results was a real shame,” he said. “Instead it was used for all this misery.”



Byron Bustin standing near the banner of his late father. /COURTESY BUSTIN FAMILY

Never Forget...

Wahoo Enterprises
820 1st Ave, McBride | 250-569-0320

VACC
Valemount & Area
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

We shall not forget

May we always remember those who served

Sandman
INN | McBRIDE
250-569-2285

We Honour Those Who Have Served To Protect Our Freedom

VALEMOUNT PINES
Golf Club & RV Park
250-566-4550

VALEMOUNT COMMUNITY FOREST

Lest we forget, those who defend our freedoms and those who gave their lives for our freedom.

valemountcommunityforest.ca

May we always remember those who served

I.D.A.
atoma
Pharmacist Approved

Valemount I.D.A. Tele-Pharmacy
1214 5th Ave | 250-566-4594

Remembering and Honouring our heroes

CIBC
250-566-4483
1221 5TH Avenue, Valemount

Remembrance Day
LEST WE FORGET

AG Foods
From staff and management at
McBride AG Foods
250-569-0140


Proud to Honour our Veterans of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

EMIL ANDERSON
MAINTENANCE | ROBSON

When we remember,


...the fallen live on

Tim Hortons
Valemount



Remembering all
the servicemen and
women who fought for
freedom and justice

Valemount &
District Volunteer
Fire Department



LEST WE FORGET





CAMPBELL & SCHREURS
Chartered Professional Accountants Inc.
1 (800) 846 9190

WE HONOUR THOSE WHO HAVE
SERVED TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM



CANADIAN LOG HOME
Guest House
780-621-7171

Thank you
to those who
have given so
much



Alaina Chapman RMT
250-566-1040

Honouring the
memory of those
who served our
country



Beanery 2 Bistro
250-569-0133

We proudly salute our
Veterans on Remembrance
Day for their courage
and dedication.



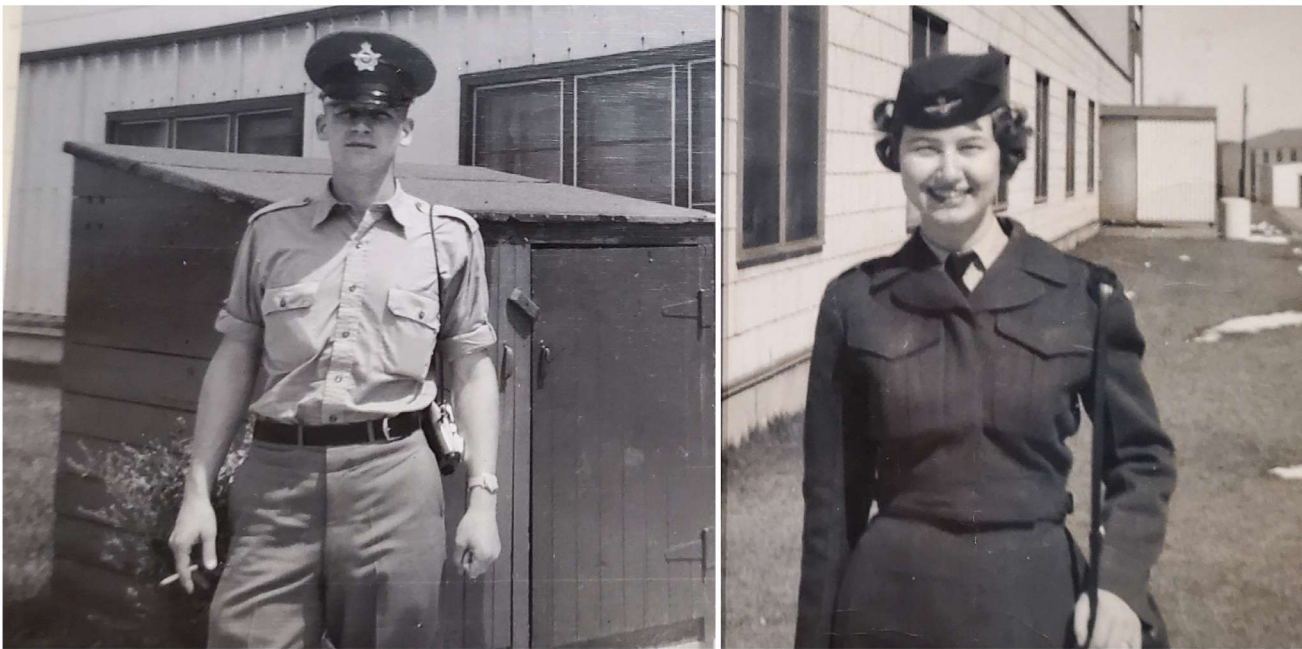


From everyone at the Best Western Plus
Valemount Inn and Suites, Cranberry
Lounge and the Summit Grill.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Balcaens Four generations of service



Bob Balcaen in 1961 and Hazel (McMaster) Balcaen in 1960. /ANDREA ARNOLD

By ANDREA ARNOLD

The Balcaen family involvement with the military doesn't start or end with McBride residents Bob and Hazel Balcaen. Both of their fathers, their daughter, plus Bob's grandfather all served among many more distant family members.

Bob and Hazel Balcaen met during basic training in Ontario. Bob went on to work as a radar technician during the Cold War 1960-1969 and rise to the rank of Corporal 3Z.

"We were always watching from radar sites," he said. "There were no satellites, only radio and telephone communication." He went on to advanced training in Mississippi during his almost nine years of service.

Hazel served as a Fighter Control Operator during the Cold War as well. The pair got married, so her service time was cut short after one year due to strict military rules.

"She was from a large poorer family," he said. "She came out of the experience a much wiser and well travelled individual."

Her father's involvement in the service may have played a small part in Hazel's enlistment. However, it was more out of necessity.

"Jobs were slim," she said. "Enlisting provided clothes, food and boarding."

Bob's father, Private Prosper "Buster" Balcaen came

from a family of 13 children, six of whom enlisted. He was a military mechanic from 1940-1944, and worked on a ferry that ran from England to Holland. They would transport any decommissioned vehicles that could not be repaired on site away from action, and return with replacements.

After Buster returned to civilian life, Bob remembers him saying, "I will never work for anyone else again." He never did and was self-employed for the rest of his life. He was a proud supporter of the Legion in McBride and Bob has stepped into many of the roles Buster held such as giving presentations at the schools and parade involvement.

Bob's Auntie Irene also served as a driver for "the brass." She was married to two of Bob's uncles (at different times).

His grandfather, Private Octave Balcaen served in WWI. Bob does not have too many details about his service. He served about three years, and never truly recovered.

"He didn't talk about his experiences much," said Bob.

He was a tailor by trade and a very honest businessman, he said. He would bring suits into the shop and make repairs, but then sell them for the same price he purchased them.

Hazels' father Private Gordon McMaster started his service in mechanics. However, after an altercation

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





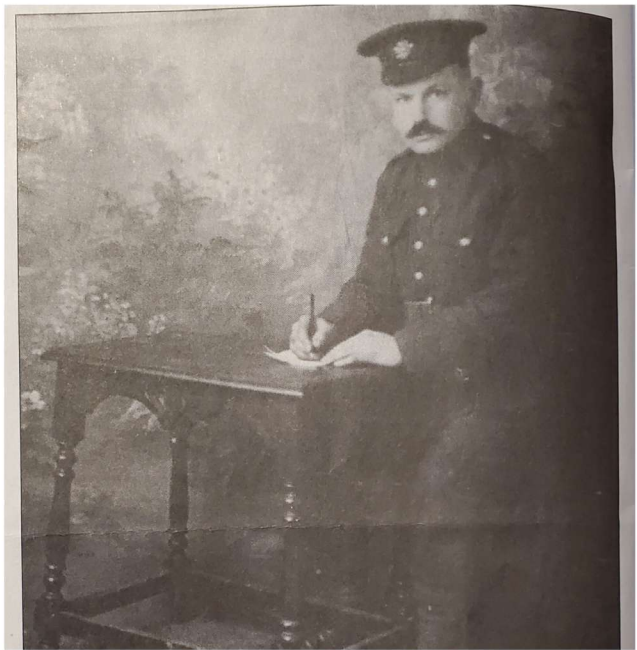
CRESCENT SPUR
HELI-SKIING
[crescentspur.com](#)

For those who have left
and not returned
For those who returned
but are not the same
Thank you for my past and
future freedoms





WILD MONTANE
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
Douglas and Gail Miller



This photo of Octave Balcaen was taken in 1917, just before he was deployed. It was published in the magazine “Western People.” /ANDREA ARNOLD

with a corporal, he quickly changed direction and became a cook. As a civilian, both before and after his service, he was a farmer, so he had a basic knowledge of produce and meat. However, that did not mean he was a good cook.

Bob and Hazel exchanged looks and hesitated with “um...he was ok” when asked about McMaster’s cooking skills.

“I came home to visit once, later on. I think dad was in his 70s. Mom was in bed still and he was cooking bacon and eggs. That is the only time I remember him cooking.”

Bob and Hazel’s daughter Corrine enlisted for Navy service in 1982 at the age of 19. Bob was thrilled



Gordon McMaster, Hazel’s father shows off the “shorts” uniform during his time in WWI where he served as a cook. /ANDREA ARNOLD





CONNECTING COMMUNITIES
ROBSON VALLEY
COMMUNITY SERVICES

We are proud to salute our veterans on Remembrance Day

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

*In memory of many,
in honour of all.
Thank you.*

Welcome Home Gifts & More
289 Main Street McBride

250-569-0215



Gordon McMaster with his wife Eunice and three oldest children, Allen, Helen and on her mother’s lap, young Hazel. /ANDREA ARNOLD

with the decision and drove her to Kamloops when it came time for her to leave home. She had been working at the bank and was looking for a new career. She attended basic training in Halifax and served a four year term as a Naval Seaman.

“When you’re in the military, it isn’t a five-day-a-week job,” said Bob. “It’s 24-7. If you want to leave the base, you need to have permission. They own you.”


In Bob’s presentations he was always sure to thank everyone who supported them.

“It takes 100 people on the ground to keep one in the air,” he said. “It takes 40 people on the ground to support a foot soldier.”



Corrine Balcaen enlisted to the Navy in 1982. This photo was taken about two years later in the middle of her time of service. /ANDREA ARNOLD

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



Scotiabank

311 Main St. McBride BC | 250 -569 -0135

We pay tribute to the memory of those who served



VALEMOUNT MUSEUM

250-566-4177

20% OF REVENUE FROM THIS FEATURE GOES TO OUR LOCAL LEGIONS!

We thank those who have served to protect our country and freedom



HAUGK HOME DESIGNS AND RENOVATIONS

Saluting our veterans who bravely answered their nation’s call



Home hardware
VALEMOUNT
250-566-4256

With Deep Respect and Gratitude We Remember




JNR Auto Services
250-569-2666

We remember




VALE COFFEE
valecoffee.ca


Honouring the memory of those who served our country



D.A.N. CONTRACTING
Dennis & Adam Neuman

We remember all those who lost their lives in defence of family, country and freedom.





CO-OP
Petroleum

Four Rivers Co-op
McBride Cardlock
Valemount Cardlock
Toll Free
1-866-309-2667

**IN LOVING
MEMORY**
TOM FORSYTH

Willow Burl Cabins
250-566-4898

**We remember all those who served in
defence of country, family and freedom.**

Real Tree Wood Products Ltd.
Robert & Eleanor Johnson
250-569-2459 • 250-569-7912

**Honouring the
memory of those
who served our
country**

VGTV
CHANNEL
BELL & TELUS SATELLITE 653

**Proud to honour
our veterans of
yesterday, today
and tomorrow**

**UI UNDERWRITERS
INSURANCE** 1222 5 Ave, Valemount
250-566-4464

**When we remember,
the fallen live on**

Robson Valley
I.D.A.
250-569-8811

Lest We Forget

**Forever in Our Hearts We Remember
and Honour Those Who Gave So
Much For Our Freedom**

Mike Wiegele
Helicopter Skiing
250-673-8381
Wiegele.com



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Paul Hulka: Vietnam Medic

BY ANDREA ARNOLD

Paul Hulka Specialist E5, was drafted into the US army in 1965 and spent one year training to be a combat medic before being sent into action in Vietnam. As a drafted soldier, they were offered several options for the type of role they were going to play, but selecting your own way meant a longer service requirement. Hulka had some higher level schooling under his belt so they sent him to medical training.

As a medic, Hulka saw and experienced a lot of tragedy.

“I went on a six day R&R trip to Hawaii,” he said. “When I came back, most of my unit had been annihilated. When I walked in, one of the soldiers said ‘Hi doc, we thought you were dead.’ I would have been if I had been there. Out of the four medics that were there, two had died, one was left a parapaligic and one, the new guy, had hid when the ambush had started.”

One moment during his service stands out as a life-changing one. He tells of a non-chemically-induced out-of-body experience.

They were out on ambush patrol, and had been for several nights. Their lieutenant felt sorry for them and allowed them to bunk in a hut for the night. As the medic, Hulka was granted the “bed,” wooden slats on a frame.

He hung his gun on the bedpost and fell asleep but then woke up suddenly, unable to move.

“I knew something was wrong so I tried to reach for my gun,” he said. He then found that he was floating, looking down at himself, laying on the bed. As he floated higher, and out of the hut, he figured that something had happened, that he was dead. He had an

overwhelming feeling that where he was headed was not going to be good.

“Then I woke up,” he said. He was back in his bed, and able to move.

“It had a profound effect on the rest of my life,” he said. “I was living pretty rough before that. It was the beginning of a new life. A wake-up call. It made my whole military experience worth it.”

Hulka and his family moved to Canada six years after he returned home from service.



**HONOURING OUR PAST
FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

VALLEY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES 521 MAIN ST, McBRIDE, BC
WWW.VALLEYMUSEUMARCHIVES.CA
250-569-3000

*When we remember,
the fallen live on*

From the Goat Staff

The Rocky Mountain Goat

**Proud to Honour our
Veterans of Yesterday,
Today and Tomorrow**

ROYAL LEPAGE
Aspire Realty
Independently Owned and Operated

Sherri Malone, Realtor
250-566-1022

**We honour those who
have served and are
serving.**

**MCBRIDE DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER FIRE
DEPT.**
250-569-3117

**Remembering those
who served to defend
our freedoms.**

**McBride Community
Forest Corp.**
250-569-0262

Remembrance Day 2021

HONOURING THOSE WHO SERVED



CAPT CLAY COCHRANE
Royal Canadian Artillery
11 Nov 1990 to 11 Nov 2020

Legion

Clay Cochrane

By LAURA KEIL

Valemount resident Ellen Duncan sponsored her cousin's son Clay Cochrane on a banner this year. Clay recently retired from the military, after serving 30 years in the Royal Canadian Artillery.

Duncan got to know a bit about what it was like for Clay and his family when Clay was deployed.

"I learned that when a soldier is going overseas, the first thing they do is take on intense training. And so they're away from their family for three to six months in training, then they go for their stint overseas, which can be six months to a year and a half or two years. Then when they come home, they just don't come home and pick up their newspaper, put on their slippers, and enter back into society. They have to debrief the whole time they were over there."

In other words, the soldier has to prepare themselves mentally before, during, and after deployment and they're gone from their families for much longer than the actual deployment.

"It's a huge process," she said.

She said many are aware Canada sends troops for peacekeeping missions.

"What lots of people don't realize is that there are still peacekeepers coming home in body bags."

But not fully understanding the work and the risk is part of why she wanted to honour Clay.

"I have no real understanding of the gifts that they've given us by, you know, leaving their family and going and doing things like this."

She said for her, honouring a veteran is not synonymous with supporting war.

"I'm not fully supporting war, never have," she said.

"But I do appreciate that some people have chosen to do that for a career or were enlisted to do it. And I'm grateful that didn't have to be me. And I love him."

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



Valemount Public Library
1090A Main St
250-566-4367

Tom McCready



Todd McCready's dad Tom McCready was one of the young men who enlisted during World War II. He joined the navy and served three years. He spent much of his time stationed off Canada's West Coast. Todd's wife Ellen Duncan says Tom was one of the lucky ones to come home. She said a lot of young men felt it was their duty to join at that time. "He was a very community-minded person and well respected in the Jasper community," she said of his life after the military. He played hockey and was also a skier and was part of Jasper's initial ski hill. /LAURA KEIL

PEAK SHUTTLES
ELEVATING YOUR RIDE

**PASSENGER
TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES**

250-566-3315

**Lest We
Forget**

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

**Three Ranges
Brewing Co.**
250-566-0024
www.threeranges.com

**We salute our
Veterans**

Travis Auto Services
250-566-8403

*To those who serve
To those deployed
At home and abroad
We salute you*

**Valemount Marina
Association**

**MAY WE ALWAYS REMEMBER
THOSE WHO SERVED**

WCCR
WHISPER CREEK CABIN RENTALS & BUILDERS
250-566-8483

**Honouring our
veterans proudly.**

RDA
VALEMOUNT & AREA RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
ridevalemount.com 250-566-4817

*Proudly supporting our
troops and their families*

SEWHOT
Embroidery & Heat Transfers

**Sewhot Embroidery
and Heat Transfers**
wendy@sewhot.ca
250-612-2820

yellowhead
HELICOPTERS LTD.
250-566-4401

**We proudly salute our veterans
on Remembrance Day for their
courage and dedication.**



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



Tete Jaune Lodge & Riverside Cafe
250-566-9815

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



Valemount
250-566-9171

Honoring our Simpcw Veterans

Clarence Fortier
Pete Joseph
Louis Celesta
Louis Matthew
Edward Fortier
Sam Joseph
Wilfred Matthew
Ernest Celesta
Alfred Saul
Alan William
Archie Pete
William Pierrish
Frank Eustache
Harold Eustache



Kukwstép-kucw
From the Chief and Council,
and Community of Simpcw First Nation



Simpco First Nation
7555 Dunn Lake Road
P.O. Box 220
Barriere, BC V0E 1E0
Phone 250.672.9995
<http://www.simpco.com>



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Neil “Piffles” Taylor & Sam Taylor

By ANDREA ARNOLD

In WWII, Dunster resident Nancy Taylor’s father, Flying Officer Sam Taylor was forced to jump from his flaming aircraft very close to the same spot over France that her grandfather Neil “Piffles” Taylor and her great uncle Sam Taylor were shot down during WWI.

The elder Sam Taylor served with the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Air Force along the Western Front until he was killed in action on July 7, 1918.

Nancy’s grandfather Neil Taylor, or Piffles as most people knew him, joined the Royal Flying Corps and qualified, along with his brother, to fly by mid-1917. He piloted a Bristol F2 two-seat fighter aircraft for about a month in action before being shot down over German-held territory. He was captured and became a prisoner of war.

In a letter he wrote to his brother Sam recounting the events. He said that he was forced to land when his eyes filled with blood. “Seven dived out of the sun and cut me off. I scrapped 15 minutes and the machine was riddled with bullets. It was half shot away, wires and all. How we escaped I know not.”

He had escaped death but he lost one eye, and spent almost a year and half as a prisoner, before being released and returning home in February 1919.

Taylor returned to play quarterback for the Saskatchewan Rugby Club, taking the team to a victory over Calgary for the Hugo Ross Trophy. His involvement in the club ran from player, coach, executive (when the team was renamed the Roughriders), and president. After his sudden passing in 1946, the home of the Roughriders was renamed Taylor Field. The name stuck to the playing surface even after the building was renamed Mosaic Stadium in 2006. The street outside the original stadium was renamed Piffles Taylor Way that same year.

Flying Officer Samuel (Sam) Taylor, Navigator Royal Canadian Air Force was part of a crew operating a Short Stirling type III bomber. This bomber was one of 120 that took off on May 1, 1944 to carry out a raid on rail yards and stores depot in Chambly Oise, France. While the mission itself was a success, the aircraft that Taylor was on was hit by German night fighters and went down in flames. Taylor and Eric Wright were the only two crewmen able to evacuate the plane before it crashed and exploded. Their survival was not known initially and Taylor’s parents received a dreaded telegram from the RCAF stating he was reported missing after air operations overseas. His father Neil “Piffles” was especially concerned as he thought back to his time as a prisoner of war.

Meanwhile, members of an underground organization called Le réseau Comète (The Comet Network) found the two survivors and transported them to safety in Paris. The network was a large group of volunteers that provided clothing, transportation and safety to allied soldiers and airmen trying to evade Nazi capture.

Their method changed from transporting evaders to containing them in 1944 and camps were set up in strategic hidden locations, many surrounded by German forces. The Fréteval Forest was selected for its tree coverage, fresh water supply, open space for air drops

and a supportive French community surrounding it. The forest also contained well known German ammunition depots and was only 100 metres from a road frequently patrolled by Germans.

On June 10, 1944 Taylor and Wright made the choice to leave Paris and make their way to the camp. Taylor’s group was stopped by German police and the two members of the Comète were arrested. The six airmen jumped from the wagon and took refuge in the bush along the road. Five days later they arrived at Bellande Camp. They lived under strict rules set in place to ensure safety, including no raised voices. At its biggest, 152 evaders lived in the camp, and they relied on supply drops for food and medical supplies. After each drop, men would work to stand crops back up, leaving no trace of their activities. A level of military discipline was maintained by senior officers to keep morale and health up until liberation. The men in camp passed their time quietly playing cards, golf and sunbathing.

The day before they were liberated they found out that a nearby community was free of Germans. The men were welcomed by the celebrating villagers. The camps were formally liberated on August 13, 1944.

Taylor’s parents received their second telegram from the RCAF announcing his safe arrival in England on August 23. He retired from service in December of that same year.

He followed in his father’s footsteps, managing the Drake Hotel in Regina and was an active part of the Roughrider association until he and his family moved to BC in 1966.

Taylor suffered from health problems caused by severe PTSD, and passed away in 1970 at age 46.

This information was gathered from a book that Nancy’s son Taylor inspired after a presentation he made about his grandfather at the Bulkley Valley Christian School in 2019.



Dunster resident Nancy Taylor’s grandfather Neil “Piffles” Taylor (WWI) and father Sam Taylor (WWII) were shot down during combat 27 years apart over the same area of German occupied France. /SUBMITTED



Je me souviens
I remember

Swift Current Services Ltd
250-566-5290



May We Always Remember Those Who Serve

