

More Profiles in COURAGE

You continue to send us wonderful stories honouring Canada's war vets; here are more samples of the inspiring tales we received

■ Always Ready

Lee-Anne Quinn has the distinction of being the Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, one of Canada's most prestigious infantry regiments that forms part of 33 Canadian Brigade Group within Land Force Central Area / Joint Task Force Central.

She is the first female chosen, in the regiment's 150-year-old existence, and I asked her to tell me about her life in service.

"There is no greater honour than to care for an injured soldier," Lee-Anne says. "It is a humbling experience as a nurse practitioner as you become their mother, padre, mental-health support and confidante."

Lee-Anne has been asked by many people why she decided not to go to med school instead, and her response is always the same.

"If I became a physician, then I could never aspire to be Florence Nightingale! My ultimate hero. As nurses in the field, we are the first up and the last to go to bed," says Quinn. "I have 22 years in the Canadian Forces. Absolutely loved my career and all of the experiences it offered and would not change a thing. I did missions in Somalia, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and several postings to First Nations and Inuit communities."

For her work in isolated First Nations and Inuit communities in Northern Ontario, Quinn did in fact win the prestigious Nightingale Award in 2003.



She received the Governor General's Award (Medal of Military Merit) in 2007 and the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2012.

"No one ever told me it was going to be easy," said Lee-Anne. "I was a broken soldier at the end of my career but the Canadian Forces looked after me well and I am here to talk about my experiences today. I believe every human deserves to be treated humanely and we as humans need to do a better job at maintaining world peace."

My brief encounter with Lee-Anne left an inspirational impact. The combination of caring, kindness, dedication and duty defined the humble woman I met.

May Canadians take comfort in the fact there have always been, and always will be, dedicated souls who choose careers as military nurses in the Canadian Forces. Lee-Anne's allegiance and "always ready" attitude are to be honoured and remembered.

Lynn C. Bilton, Cobourg, Ont.

Above from left: Re-enactors Debra Turrall, Kathleen Manneke and Heather Caldwell chat with Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, Lee-Anne Quinn.



Above left: Private Felix M. Perry wearing the distinctive hat and badge of the Prince Edward Island Highlanders, and (above right) holding a black lamb on the railway tracks.

Long-Awaited Return

My father, Private Felix M. Perry, was born in St. Louis, P.E.I., on August 18, 1909, to French Canadian (Acadian) parents. His father later moved the family to a farm in Hunter River, P.E.I. In June of 1940, Felix heeded the call and volunteered to join the Canadian army to aid the Allied nations against German and Italian forces. He enlisted with The Prince Edward Island Highlanders and was shortly after relocated to Nova Scotia. While in Europe, however, he was transferred to The West Nova Scotia Regiment, more commonly known as the West Novies.

After basic training in Halifax, his unit was sent to Newfoundland and spent over two years (August 1941 to April 1943) in training before overseas deployment. While in Newfoundland, he met a young,



18-year-old girl, named Edna Dobbin, who was the sister of a pen pal he'd been corresponding with. Private Perry and Edna got married in July of 1942 and just prior to being shipped away, their daughter Mabel was born. On November 25, 1943, his battalion embarked for England and would eventually arrive in Italy in March 1944. He trained in infantry and served as a machine gunner in a support battery. He was also qualified as a courier driver for short periods and saw combat in Italy and France. In fact, Veteran's Affairs Canada has him listed serving 21 months in Italy and North West Europe. It would be two long years before he would see his beloved wife Edna and young daughter again.

Private Felix Perry survived the war, seeing service in Italy, France, Belgium and Holland before disembarking from France in March of 1945 to return home where he was honourably discharged on September 26, 1945. Felix and Edna were once again reunited and lived in several locations across Canada before finally settling down in Dartmouth, N.S., to raise a family of nine children. He died in 1981 at the age of 71.

My book *Red Soil*, tells Private Perry's story from his last day on the farm to the bloody battlefields of Europe, to his eventual return home and reunion with his family.

Felix L. Perry, Halifax

Answering the Call

The year was 1943 and the Beddington family of Coleman, Alta., was gathered together prior to the young men going overseas. Pictured (from left) is my uncle Fred Jr. (20), my grandfather Fred Sr. (49), my uncle William (18) and my dad Roy (23). Seated is my grandmother, Emily (44). Fred Sr. was in the RCAF at No. 8 Bombing and Gunnery School in Lethbridge, Alta., where Emily also worked in the Officers Mess as a steward. In 1945, Roy and Fred Jr. ended up in the same platoon in the Regina Rifle Regiment, fighting in Germany, where Roy was wounded in the Battle of the Hochwald Gap. After convalescing in Belgium, Roy was back in action, although re-badged as a member of the Calgary Highlanders. Fred Jr. soldiered on till war's end in the Regi-



Left: Portrait of the Beddington family includes Fred Sr. (second from the left), his wife Emily (seated), and (from left) their sons—Fred Jr., William and Roy. Pictured below: Bruce Steel today (inset) and as a boy during the war.

na's. William served in the RCN in a corvette during the Battle of the Atlantic, and also participated in the D-Day landings as a crew member on an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry). All returned home safely in 1946, but are now all deceased. William in 1951, Roy in 1971, Fred Sr. in 1980, Emily in 1997 and Fred Jr. in 2007. We shall always remember them.

Roy Beddington, Bath, Ont.



Canada's 'Youngest Soldier'

On September 7, 1939, just three days before Canada declared war on Germany, my paternal grandfather enlisted in the Canadian Army. Three months later, he told my grandmother that he was being shipped to England. She was heartbroken, so heartbroken that she raised enough money to take her and my dad by train to Halifax and then by ship, the *Duchess of Bedford*, to England. She arrived in Liverpool in March 1940 with just \$68 tucked in her brassiere.

Shortly after arriving, my dad, Bruce Steel, became the official mascot of the Canadian Overseas Army and Canada's "youngest soldier" at nine years of age. He was given the rank of Lance Corporal and for the next four years, he paraded and trained with the First Division across all of England, marching proudly at the front of his regiment and on several occasions was reviewed by royalty. Upon his re-

turn to Canada in 1944, Dad completed high school, joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1949 (where he spent the next 24 years until his retirement in 1974), married my mom in 1952 and had four daughters.

He and my mom presently reside in Brentwood Bay on Vancouver Island.

Debra Patterson, Stony Plain, Alta.



Leading The Way

My uncle, Errol Stewart “Bubby” Gray of Amherst, N.S., served with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, 1st Battalion, RCIC as a Captain during the Second World War. The regiment stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944, and fought their way inland through fierce resistance. Up to this point, the unit had proceeded with great dash and vigor. The advance guard had cleared out a large number of enemy pockets, without suffering any casualties, and were further inland than any



other troops at this time. Bubby had displayed unusual swiftness and initiative while commanding the vanguard, advancing as far as Authie on June 7, 1944. He exhibited great personal courage on a number of occasions by moving forward on foot, while under fire, in order to maintain progress.

When being fired upon in Les Buissons, he pressed on by leading his men through open field and successfully destroying an enemy 88-mm gun and rocket projector in the process. His efforts in directing and leading his supporting infantry were again successful in capturing another 88-mm gun in Buron. On July 8, 1944, Operation Charnwood was launched and The North Nova Scotia Highlanders planned to attack the vicinity of Authie, two kms west of Caen, however German shelling caused heavy casualties among the Canadian troops. Authie was eventually conquered in the afternoon, however it came at a cost as seven Sherman tanks were destroyed, and 160 Canadian and British lives were lost, including that of Major Gray, who was killed in action that day. He was 24 years old. The outstanding courage, aggressiveness and devotion to duty displayed by Errol Stewart “Bubby” Gray, throughout the advance, was a large factor in pressing forward against enemy ranks and because of his many acts of heroism, gallantry and distinguished conduct in the field, Bubby was awarded the Military Cross and promoted to Major after his death. He is buried in the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, in France.

He was survived by his parents, John James and Anna Gertrude Gray and three brothers, John, Edward and Jim.

“At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.”

I wish to thank my uncle, Air Commodore Robert John (Spotty) Gray—Bubby’s oldest brother—for providing some information for this piece.

William Gray, Halifax

Errol Stewart “Bubby” Gray was awarded the Military Cross and buried in the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in France.



Quiet Dignity

My father, John Watts, was born on February 11, 1911 in London, England and came to Canada with his mother, Florence Ethel, when he was 14 years old. John’s father, Percy, died when John was three. Percy was with the British Army in India and died of complications arising from his service in that country. When John was 16, he ventured out on his own, working at anything and everything he could in order to supplement the family’s earnings. He was a grocery delivery boy, whistle punk in a logging camp in Sooke, B.C., and a farmhand before riding the rails to Alberta to work on threshing gangs on farms and ranches. In 1933, he met Dora Coombe (my mother) in Rockyford, Alta., and they were married in 1936. In 1937, John and Dora moved into their own homestead in Crammond, just north of Olds, Alta., and lived there until John joined the Royal Canadian Engineers, 5th Division, 10th Field Squadron of the Canadian Army in October 1940. He left for England one year later. John was involved in the Italian Campaign and was stationed in France, Holland, Belgium and Germany. He was mentioned specifically for brave actions by himself and his squad in the Vancouver newspapers on a number of occasions during the war. He was the recipient of the Italy Star, France and Germany Star, the 1939-1945 Star, the Defence Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and clasp, and the War Medal, 1939-1945. He left the army as a sergeant in 1946.

My mother, along with my brother Ken and I, left Alberta in December 1940, and moved first to Pitt Meadows and later Hammond, B.C.

Upon John’s arrival in Hammond, he soon found employment with the Hammond Cedar Company, and later British Columbia Forest Products (B.C. F. P.), where he remained until his retirement in March 1976. Our family grew to include another daughter, Wendy, and two more sons, Raymond and Barry.

John was a quiet man. He was modest to a fault. He never demanded respect but earned it easily. He was also not a religious man but lived by the Commandments with ease. He was very compassionate and empathetic, and always had time to listen and lend a helping hand. John’s passing was a great loss to us, and the world is a poorer place for his absence—that is the finest legacy that any man can leave.

Joan Steadman, Chilliwack, B.C.

Below: A collage of photos of John throughout his life, from a young boy in England (top left) to shortly before he passed away (centre).





Arthur Haley is a proud World War II Veteran. Arthur, now 105 years old, happily lives in a long-term care home in Warton, Ont.

■ A Lifetime of Service

My father, Arthur Fredrick Haley, is a 105-year-old Veteran of World War II living in Warton, Ont. Art joined up in 1943 despite having a wife and a young family of three. After preliminary training at Camp Borden in Ontario and CFS Debert in Nova Scotia, he shipped out on the SS *Île de France*, reaching Grenoch, Scotland, on May 8, 1944. He received further training in England as a sniper with the Queen's Own Rifles. On July 30, he crossed the English Channel, landing north of Caen, France. He became a replacement member of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders as a newly minted stretcher bearer. His infantry division advanced against the Germans at Falaise in France, then advanced to Boulogne and on to Scheldt Estuary in Holland to liberate the Dutch. Art and his son, David, attended both the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the liberation of Holland. While overseas, Art wrote many moving poems (see his poem *Falaise* at right) and continued this hobby when he returned home in 1946. He has published two books of poems: *Haley's Comments* and *The Return of Haley's Comments*, as well as his autobiography, *No Regrets*. Art wrote more than 300 letters home to his beloved wife, Alberta, which she kept. Art has volunteered most of his adult life and has been presented with many certificates of appreciation, including the Caring Canadian Award in 2001, presented by Adrian Clarkson; the Veter-

ans Affairs Commendation Award in 2007 and the Bruce Peninsula Volunteer Award. He spent 20 years volunteering at the local school as a tutor and in the library. Art is also an 80-year member of the Masonic Lodge. He was inducted into the Billy Bishop Hall of Fame in 2001. Art's latest awards include the Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 and the Legion of Honour from France in 2014. In November 2018, his granddaughter presented him with a Quilt of Valour. Art and his wife, Alberta, who died in 1994, were married for 56 years and had six children, 15 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. Art now resides in a long-term care home but is very alert and is enjoying being looked after. His life's philosophy is "Think positive, have a sense of humour and stay healthy."

Jeanette Jackson, Warton, Ont.

FALAISE

*A thousand guns began to fire
"Let's go" the leaders said
Forward into Hell itself
Soon many would be dead*

*Fear and apprehension
Showed plain on every face
As the army moved towards Falaise
With death they ran a race*

*Each bullet had a death whine
The shells fell thick and fast
There was no time to even think
For the die had now been cast*

*Soon the shroud of darkness covered
The littered battlefield
The many shattered bodies
From our gaze now were concealed*

*Then daylight came a weeping
Across the eastern sky
We looked back at the carnage
And could only question "WHY"*

*Why did so many have to die?
Why were their lives so brief?
Why, oh why, must wars be fought?
When they leave behind such grief?*

Arthur Frederick Haley



■ Rest In Peace

My brother, Wallace, was born on July 14, 1923 to David M. Ross and Kate L. Ross of Dirleton, Alta. He enlisted in the RAF in 1942 and, after training as a tail gunner, was sent overseas and based at Skellingthorpe, England with RAF 50 Squadron. On a scheduled bombing run to Lille, France, their Lancaster LM 429 was shot down and crashed on the night of May 11, 1944 near Oostvleteren, Belgium, resulting in the loss of all crew members including Don Ball, air gunner age 22; Frank McFarlan, PO, age 20; James Elliott, navigator F/Sgt, age 20; Leonard Craven, air gunner, age 22; Doug Ingram, flight engineer, age unknown; Robert Cunningham, gunner, age 22; Wallace Ross, PO air gunner, age 21. They rest in Collective Grave 11 in Oostvleteren Churchyard in Belgium. The headstone reads, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus in Loving Memory of Wally from us all at home—Mom."

Harvey Ross, Calgary

Left: Wallace Milton Ross lost his life on May 11, 1944, and rests in Oostvleteren Churchyard in Belgium.

Below: George Masters was a veteran of World War I and World War II.

■ Proud Daughters

Our father, George Alfred Masters, was born in Kent, England, and came to Canada as a young man. During World War I, he signed up with the 204th Beaver Battalion, was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Royal Regiment and became a corporal. He participated with the Canadian Army at Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Passchendaele, Amiens, Arras and on the vaunted Hindenburg line, which was broken by Canadians. He was wounded six weeks before the November 11 Armistice and was sent back to Reading, England.

During the Second World War, after serving 18 months, he was transferred to the Veterans Guard of Canada, where he was engaged in guarding prisoners of war

in Winnipeg, as well as Espanola, Monteth, Nipigon, Windsor and Petawawa in Ontario, until the end of hostilities. He joined the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires in 1948 and, for the most part, was stationed at Sunnybrook Military Hospital in Toronto until his retirement. He was presented with the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires Long Service Medal for his 15 years of peace-time service at the hospital.

Gladys Masters, Richmond, Ont., and Rose Sutherland, Stayner, Ont.

