

REGIMENTAL NEWSLETTER

CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDERS ASSOCIATION

Perpetuating the 94th, 85th, 185th, CBH, 2NSH (CB)

Special Pre-Reunion Edition August 21, 2005



The Liberation of the Netherlands 60th Anniversary

*Commemorating the Year of the Veteran
60th*

**Anniversary of the end of the Northwest Europe
Campaign and of WW II and our 36th Annual Reunion**

REUNION PROGRAM

Friday, 23 September

Victoria Park Officers' Mess

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Registration/Meet and Greet

Saturday, 24 September

Registration open all day at Victoria Park

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Service at the Monument

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Annual Meeting

12:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Lunch

1:30 p.m.- 4:00 - Meet and Greet

6:30 p.m. - for 7:00 p.m. - Dinner and Dance

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Canada has declared this year as the **Year of the Veteran**. Never an organization to lag, the Cape Breton Highlanders Association actually began commemorating the unit's role and exploits in the Italian Campaign (1943-44), last year, at the 60th Anniversary of cessation of hostilities in that phase. Members of the Association and current members of the successor unit, 2nd Battalion, The Nova Scotia Highlanders (Cape Breton), were present at the official ceremonies, and visits were made to Coriano Ridge, and other sites in which the CBH played a part. At the Reunion Dinner, last year, Dr. John Harker, President of Cape Breton University, spoke on the importance of a military presence in the community, and of the CBH role in Italy, as part of the British 8th Army.

This year, marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the European Campaign, saw a delegation (covered in detail in the previous Newsletter), again comprised of veterans, members of the CBH Association, and current serving members of 2NSHighrs(CB) visited The Netherlands and participated in ceremonies at Holten Cemetery (where 23 Cape Breton Highlanders-along with close to 1,400 Canadians are buried) and at the City of Delfzijl, scene of the last action of the CBH (Apr-May 1945). The ceremonies, incidentally, were actually 60 years (to the week) of the Highlanders' liberation of that city.

Our Reunion, this year, 23-24 September, will commemorate the Year of the Veteran, the end of the Second World War in Northwest Europe, and of course, the last action of the CBH. Along with the customary Service of Remembrance, we will be presenting an on-going slide show of the Delfzijl visit, and some

recollections of the visit, by CBH veterans, who also were there some 60 years previously.

For planning purposes, it would be a great help, if you would confirm attendance at Services and/or dinner on 24 Sep, by contacting:

Clyde Ripley – Tel: (902) 562-1795 or,
by Email: steve_kavanagh@capebretonu.ca
or Ian Macintyre: iainbeag@syd.eastlink.ca

*Sìol Na Fear Fearail,
Ian Macintyre
President, CBHA*



THE CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDERS MEMORY SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship fund established in memory of all those who served with the Cape Breton Highlanders continues to grow. Your donations to this fund are really appreciated and we feel that more than bricks and mortar or books and paper, will truly perpetuate the memory of the Cape Breton Highlanders. We hope to have the first Scholarship recipients to attend our Reunion Dinner in September 2005.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH OLDFORD, JULY 18, 2005

— ORIGINAL MESSAGE —

From: alex morrison
To: edit@cbpost.com
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2005 3:17 PM
Subject: Letter to Editor, Death of Joe Oldford

Re: Death of Joseph Oldford, 18 July

Cape Breton and Nova Scotia lost a distinguished soldier when Joe Oldford died on July 16th. He was a brave, courageous and decorated veteran of the Second World War and of decades of post-war service. Mr. Oldford was one of the few Cape Breton Highlanders (CBH) veterans to serve with the unit for the whole of the war, in Canada, England, Italy and North-West Europe. The citation for his Distinguished Service Medal notes his “courage and leadership” on the Gothic Line in Italy and also his action in taking command of his company at Coriano Ridge when the commander was wounded. It goes on to recount that, during the pitched battle of Delfzijl in Holland, he “again displayed magnificent powers of leadership.” He ended the war as a Company Sergeant-Major, much admired and respected.

After the war, he served in the CBH and its successor unit, 2nd Battalion, Nova Scotia Highlanders (Cape Breton), becoming Regimental Sergeant-Major, the appointment he held when I joined the unit in the mid 1950s. He was a master of drill and discipline and we all valued his advice and counsel as he trained us to be good soldiers. Mr Oldford was also a poet

and when Ted Slaney and I were writing “The Breed of Manly Men: The History of the Cape Breton Highlanders”, we sought his views and recollections to make sure we had our facts right. His poems are featured throughout the history and it is appropriate to quote the last verse of “A Soldier’s Prayer”.

“Then, let me be fair, and truthful, So that constant I will stand. Summing up this prayer; please, Lord Help me be - a man!” Regimental Sergeant-Major Joe Oldford was a man and he will be missed.

Alex Morrison, Halifax, NS

COMFORT FOR THE BEREAVED

In my father's house there are many mansions:

If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:2

*So let us strive, in the
moment we have,
For peace and good will;
'cause time is yet our master
And time will not be still.*

*From Time
by Joseph Oldford*



*CBH veterans with the Lord Mayor of Delfzijl
L to R Paul Wile, Alex MacInnis, and John MacKay*

A booklet on the Delfzijl Tour (Apr-May 2005), is being produced and will be ready for distribution at the Reunion. Among other things, there will be quotes of incidents and individuals surrounding the ongoing relationship between the Dutch and we Canadians.

For most of my life I had heard veterans talk, in glowing terms, of the appreciation, hospitality, friendliness and genuine gratitude of the Dutch citizens to their Canadian liberators. To see it first-hand, however, is of another dimension entirely. The Delfzijl delegation, courtesy of Elizabeth McMichael (one of the tour organizers), had made each of us, a ribbon with pieces of Cape Breton and Regimental tartan, with pins of Canada's flag, CBH Cap badges, and Year of the Veteran. It was amazing to have people *zero in* on the display of pins and speak with us. At a concert (arranged for us by the Delfzijl citizenry) a lady came up to me, saw the CBH pin and my blazer crest and asked me if I knew Melvin MacLean. I said I had, and his nephew and son, and brother, Charlie (the fox) as well. She had been 8 years old when the area was liberated and Melvin had given her the first



*Alex MacInnis and Paul Wile hold the CBH wreath
(donated by the Municipality of Delfzijl) at the
Remembrance Ceremonies (May 2005).*

chocolate bar she had seen in 4 years of occupation.

I had a similar experience at a Laundromat, in which the proprietor, again, noticed my pins and also related a chocolate story. The first Canadian soldier with whom he had contact, was a *tanker*, who hopped off his tank to give this little Dutch boy a handful of treats which had not been seen for years. Anything you hear about the warmth of the Dutch people toward Canada, believe it; they have not forgotten.

Ian Macintyre

Cape Breton Highlanders Association

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