



# CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2004

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL CHARLES H. BELZILE

### Commemorations 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day

This issue of the Newsletter is sent to you earlier than usual, in order to make you aware of the activities surrounding the commemorations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. Veterans Affairs Canada has had a Special Advisory Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Major-General Richard Rohmer, a member of our Board. I represent the Foundation, as well as the Royal Canadian Legion on that Committee.



The following are the official commemorative activities which will take place in Normandy:

- June 4 (AM) Cavalcade of Veterans along the Normandy Coast with an opportunity for local communities to greet Canadian Veterans
- June 5 (3:00 PM.) Ceremony and wreath laying at the Canadian War Cemetery, Beny-sur-Mer
- June 6 (10:30 AM) Ceremony and wreath laying at the Juno Beach Centre In Courseulles
- June 6 (2:30 PM) International Ceremony at Arromanches (by invitation only)
- June 7 (2:00 PM) Ceremony and wreath laying at the Canadian Memorial Garden at Le Mémorial in Caen (hosted by the Canadian Battlefields Foundation)
- June 7 (3:30 PM) Ceremony and wreath laying at the Place de l' Ancienne Boucherie in Caen (hosted by the Foundation)

- June 7 (4:30 PM) Ceremony and wreath laying at Abbaye d' Ardenne in St Germain la Blanche Herbe (hosted by the Foundation)
- June 8 (10:00 AM) Ceremony and wreath laying at the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery in Cintheaux.
- June 8 (2:00 PM) Historical Perspective, presented by Professor Terry Copp at point 67 (Verrières Ridge) (hosted by the Foundation)
- June 8 (3:30 PM) Historical Perspective, presented by Professor Terry Copp at the Belvédère at St-Lambert-sur-Dives.(hosted by the Foundation)

Several other activities will also take place under the auspices of Service, Regimental or Corps Associations which may be unknown to us. The ones that we are aware of include:

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- May 31 ( time to be confirmed) at Omaha Beach. Unveiling and Dedication of a Plaque commemorating the clearance work done by the 31<sup>st</sup> Canadian Minesweeping Flotilla, in support of the American landings at Omaha Beach
- June 7 (9:30 AM) Unveiling of plaque by the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps Association, mounted on the BOLD Memorial Tank at Courseulles
- June 7 (Unknown time and unconfirmed) Unveiling of a plaque by the Régiment de la Chaudière, also mounted on the BOLD Memorial Tank at Courseulles.

All veterans of Normandy will get special access to the beaches and ceremonies planned in France. As some security measures will obviously be in effect, a special pass, particularly for the June 6 events, will be required and will be arranged by Veterans Affairs Canada. In order to ensure the timely issuance of such passes, veterans are encouraged to fax their name, unit information, address, phone/fax number to (902) 566-9501, send an e-mail to: [communications@vac-acc.gc.ca](mailto:communications@vac-acc.gc.ca) , or call toll-free at 1-800- 387-0930. Also, please fill in the travel information form, on page 5, and mail, e-mail, or fax the information to Veterans Affairs Canada as soon as possible.

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CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS NEWSLETTER is published by Canadian Battlefields Foundation. Submissions on past and present issues of Canadian Battlefields Foundation and letters to the editor are encouraged. Forward to the attention of the editor below.

#### ATTENTION NEWSPAPER EDITORS

Permission is granted to reproduce, in whole or in part, articles from CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS NEWSLETTER. A credit line is desired. For enquiries contact the editor, Capitain Peter Forsberg (Ret'd) (613) 236 9903; (fax) (613) 236 8191; e-mail: [pw.forsberg@rogers.com](mailto:pw.forsberg@rogers.com).

#### D-Day Activities in Canada

Veterans Affairs Canada is also planning, in conjunction with provincial and local authorities as appropriate, events across Canada, as well as in Ottawa. It is expected that some Service, Branches or Regimental Organizations will sponsor their own in various places. Those wishing to find out what is happening in their region or locality, should contact VAC at 1-800-443-0394.

#### In Memoriam- Colonel Jacques Ostiguy DSO, CD

As can be seen in our Last Post feature, we have lost yet another of our Normandy veterans, Colonel Jacques Ostiguy, in his 86 th year. Jacques was a  
(continued p. 3)

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#### LOST TRAILS

**Recent correspondence addressed to the persons listed below has been returned to us. If anyone can give us a current address for any of the following persons, we would be grateful.**

Mlle. Marie-Noel Duhaime (Kingston ON)  
 Mr. John S. Edmondson (Victoria BC)  
 Mrs. Marjorie Kemp (Nanaimo BC)  
 Old Boys – Lake Superior Regiment (Motor)  
 Association (Thunder Bay ON)  
 LCol EA Olmsted (Stittsville ON)  
 Mr. Keith Spicer (Paris, France)  
 Mr. John Starnes (Ottawa ON)  
 Mr. Adam Westrakowski (Moose Jaw SK)

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#### LAST POST

**We regret to announce the passing of the following members of the Foundation:**

Lt. Col. Jacques W. Ostiguy, DSO, CD (Ottawa ON)  
 Captain Mark Robinson, MBE, CD (Nepean ON)  
 Rear Admiral Antony Storrs, DSC (Victoria BC)

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relatively recent addition to our Board of Directors and had been an active participant in all of our activities.

Only last year (2003), the local authorities in Étavaux (St-André-sur-Orne) honoured him as their liberator naming a Boulevard after him. The honour bestowed upon him by a grateful commune recalled an action fought singlehandedly by this officer, when his company in the Régiment de Maisonneuve was pinned down by heavy enemy fire, in July 1944. In the hard circumstances of this local battle, his heroism, which permitted his regiment to occupy Étavaux and take more than 100 prisoners, has been recognized by the award of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). That high award was presented to him personally by Field Marshall Montgomery, in the field.

Jacques continued his service post war until 1954, at which time he served with the International Control Commission in Indochina. Following his distinguished military career he served with the National Research Council.

On behalf of all members of our Foundation, I wish to express to his wife Madeleine and her family, our sincere condolences.

### **Changes at Foundation “ Headquarters”**

At the last meeting of our Board, some changes to our list of Officers were approved.

Major General Clive Addy was elected to the post of Vice-President vice Hamilton Southam who had occupied the post for the last three years. In welcoming Clive to the appointment, I know you would also like me to thank Hamilton for agreeing to

remain on the Board as our Founder. Hamilton has always been a stalwart worker on our behalf, and has spared no effort in enlisting the help of many supporters and donors, this from the very start of our Foundation in 1992. As you all know, he is one of Ottawa’s great philanthropists and never ceases to look for new programmes to spark the imagination and interest of people, in learning about our History and in promoting its knowledge. He will continue to be the driving force behind the Valiants Memorial, to be built in Confederation Square. I am sure that all the Foundation’s members wish him the best of luck with this, his latest project.

Dr Chuck Gruchy, introduced in our Treasurer’s report, was welcomed as our new Treasurer and Registrar. I welcome him on behalf of all our members. As a good friend and colleague of Harry Needham, our current treasurer, I know he is under no illusion about the heavy load he is undertaking.

What can I say about Harry who will leave us as of the beginning of May? The best start would be to state clearly that without him as our financial comptroller, during those last five years our work would have been very difficult, if not impossible. A hard and very patient worker with several interests, he has always managed, despite his failing eyesight, to produce detailed and clear reports and to answer all our queries in a timely and cheerful fashion. Although he will be missed as an everyday worker, Harry will remain on the Board where we can continue to pick his brain.

Harry, my personal thanks to you. I know how much we all depended on you. We wish you and Sue the best, and hope you will both have more time to indulge in your hobby of historic re-enactment.

Charles H. Belzile

## **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Thanks to everyone who have sent in their contributions early this year, as we are sending 16 students, rather than the usual twelve, on the study tour to France. That, and other activities associated with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day and the Battle of Normandy, have made it necessary to fork out considerably

more money earlier in the year than usual, so your early contributions are especially welcome.

The audit of our books for 2003 is under way and, by the time you receive this newsletter, it should be completed and our annual financial statements, which will be presented

at the annual general meeting in the fall, should be ready.

After five years as your treasurer, I have decided to retire (again) as of 30 April 2004. Most of you do not know this, but I have been legally

*(continued p. 4)*

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Foundation will take place on Thursday, 18 November 2004 at 1400 Hrs in the Infantry Room of the Army Ottawa Officers Mess, 149 Somerset St. West, Ottawa, Ontario.

### *TREASURER'S REPORT (cont'd)*

blind for several years and lately my eyesight has begun to deteriorate more rapidly and I doubt that I will be able to actually do the job much longer. Now you know why I have made so many typos on your receipts! Thank you for your patience over the years. I have enjoyed working with you more than I can say.

The Foundation's new treasurer is Dr. Chuck Gruchy. Chuck is what people used to call "a man of parts". An ichthyologist by trade, he spends more time, these days, catching and eating fish than studying them. He has also been Director of the Canadian Conservation Institute. No, this is NOT an organization of nature protectors, but rather an internationally renowned institute that conserves and restores

historic documents, textiles and other artifacts, principally for museums, archives and historic sites. Under Chuck's leadership, CCI acquired a well-deserved international reputation in its field. As if that weren't enough, Chuck is also a highly skilled cabinetmaker. Chuck brings to the job of Treasurer a wealth of knowledge, devotion and common sense, which I know you will appreciate.



*Normandie 60 Normandy*  
 Jour J, le 6 juin 2004      D-Day June 6 2004

### Travel Information Form

All Canadians who plan to attend commemorative events held by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Battlefields Foundation while in France, for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, must complete this form below. The information you provide will be shared with the Government of France for security purposes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Travel companion(s), including date and place  
 (As appears on your passport) of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of arrival: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected date of departure: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you travelling with an organized tour group?  YES  NO  
 If yes, what is the name of the tour group? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a **Canadian Veteran**?  YES  NO Would you like to talk to the media?  Yes  NO

Regiment/Squadron/Ship \_\_\_\_\_

What language(s) do you speak?  ENGLISH  FRENCH  OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

#### Which events are you interested in attending while in France?

- 4 June** (A.M.) Cavalcade of Veterans along the Normandy coast
- 5 June** (15:00) Ceremony, Canadian War Cemetery, Beny-sur-Mer
- 6 June** (10:30) Official Government of Canada ceremony and events, Juno Beach Centre
- 7 June** (14:00) Ceremony and wreath laying, Caen Memorial Garden
- 7 June** (15:30) Ceremony and wreath laying, Place de l'Ancienne Boucherie
- 7 June** (16:30) Ceremony and wreath laying, Saint-Germain-la-Blanche-Herbe
- 8 June** (10:00) Ceremony, Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery, Cintheaux

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Return form as soon as possible to:

**Mail:** Veterans Affairs Canada  
 Canada Remembers Division  
 PO Box 7700  
 Charlottetown PE C1A 8M9

**On-line:** You can find a copy of the Travel  
 Information Form on-line at  
**www.vac-acc.gc.ca**  
**Fax:** (902) 566 8501

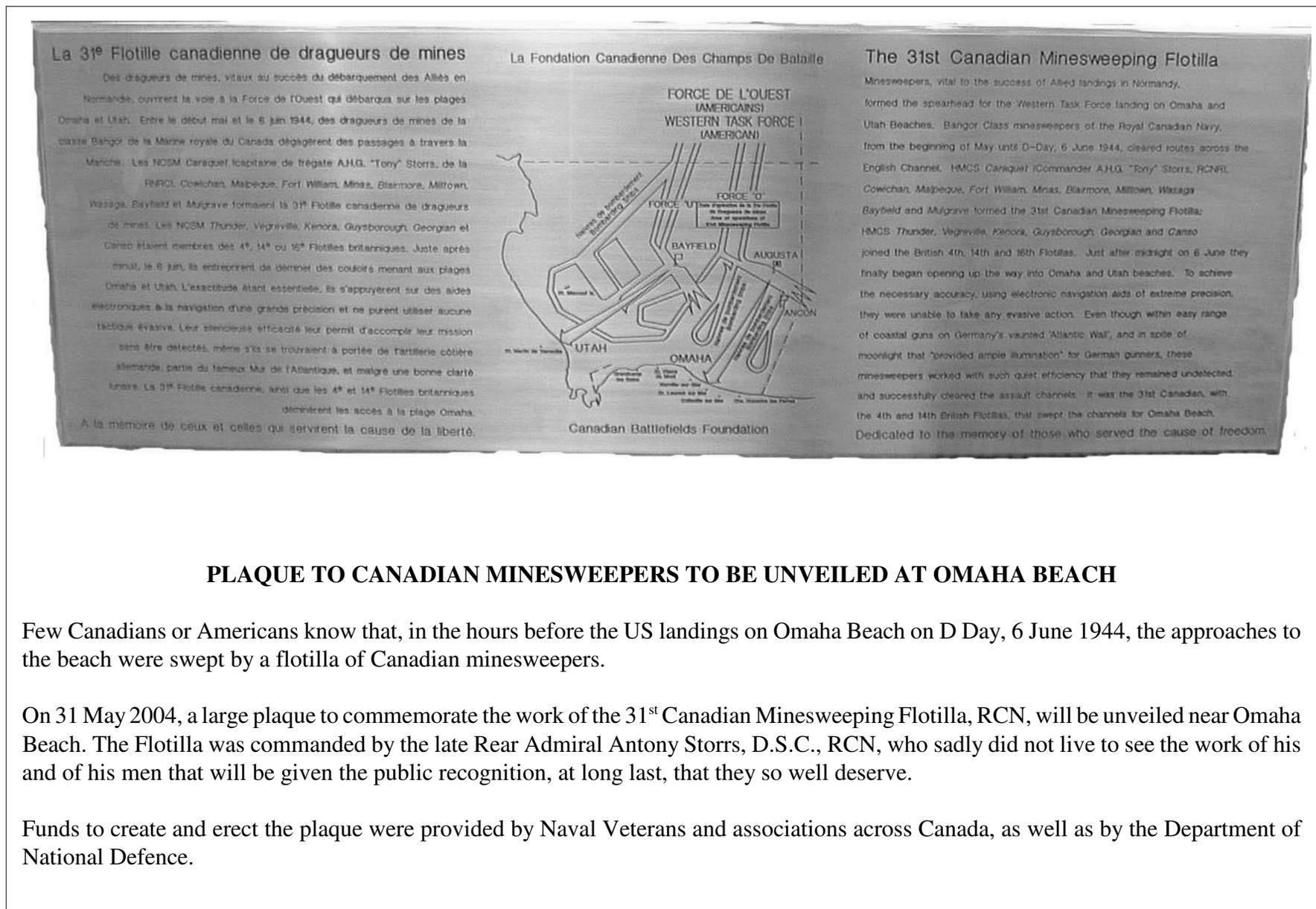


*Canadian War Cemetery Beny-sur-Mer*



**CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS NEWSLETTER**  
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*c/o Canadian War Museum*  
General Motors Court  
330 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa ON K1A 0M8  
CANADA



## PLAQUE TO CANADIAN MINESWEEPERS TO BE UNVEILED AT OMAHA BEACH

Few Canadians or Americans know that, in the hours before the US landings on Omaha Beach on D Day, 6 June 1944, the approaches to the beach were swept by a flotilla of Canadian minesweepers.

On 31 May 2004, a large plaque to commemorate the work of the 31<sup>st</sup> Canadian Minesweeping Flotilla, RCN, will be unveiled near Omaha Beach. The Flotilla was commanded by the late Rear Admiral Antony Storrs, D.S.C., RCN, who sadly did not live to see the work of his and of his men that will be given the public recognition, at long last, that they so well deserve.

Funds to create and erect the plaque were provided by Naval Veterans and associations across Canada, as well as by the Department of National Defence.