

The aircraft on board protected the convoy. Using their radar and Sonar equipment, they were used to seek out and attack the dreaded German U Boats who were a major threat in all areas of their intended route.

In the early months of 1945, ironically as fate would have it, there was an electrical explosion on board the aircraft and Bernie and a few of his mates were seriously injured. Bernie sustained multiple head injuries and a hernia.

He was sent to the hospital in Roseneath and operated on before being transferred to a hospital just outside of Aberdeen. There he was given a fourteen day sick leave to further recuperate. He was then re-examined and found to be medically unfit due to his injuries, and discharged from the navy. He returned home to Birmingham where he joined the Home Guard and went back to work as a machinist and fitter.

Bernie decided to immigrate to Canada in 1958. He worked as a machinist in Orillia, before taking a position with Stackpole in Barrie for three years. He then transferred to Scarborough where he was the shop foreman with the firm for twenty years, before finally retiring. He then moved to Ajax to be closer to his daughters and took up residence at Falby Court.

Bernie played the piano since the age of ten. He joined his older brother's band when he was a teenager, touring all over Birmingham. He eventually formed the Stan Ross Band and entertained at the famous Butlin's Holiday Camp in Skegnes on the east coast of Britain.

He played in many bands all over Ontario for many years. In fact he was still entertaining the elderly every Wednesday afternoon at the Sunnycrest Nursing Home in Whitby until the past few years.

Bernie was a member of the Legion executive for many years and held the position of Sick and Visiting Officer. He has two daughters and one son. Linda lives in Ajax, and Pamela lives in Newcastle. They are both members of the Branch. His son John resides in Birmingham England. As well, Bernie has seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

A person with the surname Bedworth no longer exists in Canada now. Bernie was the only person in Canada with that last name. He certainly was one of a kind, and definitely a very popular and well respected veteran and member of our Branch. He will be truly missed, but not forgotten.

Lest We Forget Lest We Forget.

Bruce Sharpe



## *A Tribute To Our Veteran*



### ***Ben Severs***

*August 25, 1922 – June 2, 2005*

Ben was born in 1922 and grew up in the Harmony Road and Highway #2 area of Durham along with his parents, two brothers and two sisters. As a point of interest the house he lived in became Fire hall #4 in Oshawa.

In September of 1939 at eighteen years of age he joined the Ontario Tank Regiment and his first Company Commanding Officer was Sergeant Major Robert Andrews who interestingly enough was the father of our own Butch Andrews.

In 1940 Ben was sent to Camp Borden and trained as a tank driver. His tank regiment escorted the first group of German prisoners of war that were captured in Dunkirk. They were then transported to Canada and then taken to Espanola Ontario.

In 1942 he was transferred to the Lincoln and Welland Infantry Regiment and was posted in Newfoundland where he met his lifetime companion Jean. In 1943 they traveled to Aldershot, Nova Scotia where they were married. Two days later Ben was sent overseas.

In Germany his first action came with the raid on Spitzbergen with the Number One British Commando Unit. Their involvement was the destruction of two radio towers that were sending signals to German submarines.

Ben served in France, Belgium and northwest Europe. He was wounded in a Bren Gun Carrier in the Falaise Gap in France. He was the only survivor in his vehicle of that military strike. The three other members of his crew were killed.

Ben was lucky to have survived although he did have to recuperate for a month in the hospital with a concussion.

Ben's greatest memory of the war was the Liberation of Holland on May 8<sup>th</sup>. 1945.

After the war had ended in 1945 Ben returned to Canada with the 1<sup>st</sup>. Canadian Repat Division who were the first group to be repatriated at home. A short time later he took a job at the War Assets Building, which was near the present site of the Ajax hospital.

Branch 322 opened in 1941, Ben became a member along with Tom Veitch in September 1945. Four years later he became President of the Branch and served from 1949 to 1950. He also has been chairman of almost every committee that has been established in the Branch. He was awarded his Life Membership in 1984 and the Legion Meritorious Service Medal on February 19<sup>th</sup>. 1987. He served the Branch for sixty years. Ben also served on Ajax Town Council in 1946.

Ben and Jean have three children and four grandchildren. Their oldest son Ken is an Engineer in the oil industry and lives in Calgary. Their second son Bob is a doctor of anesthesia and lives in Owen Sound. Their daughter Marnie is a lab technologist and has worked at the Oshawa General Hospital for the last twenty-five years. Marnie of course is a member of our Branch as well as her daughter Katie and her husband Bill Pelky. When Katie joined the Branch it was one of Ben's proudest moments.

I visited Ben quite frequently in the past few years and I was always amazed by first his honesty, and secondly the love and loyalty to his family and friends. One of Ben's wonderful comments when you ask him how he is doing was "not worth a damn."

Well needless to say, he has plugged a few dams for all of us in his time. Ben not only was a gentleman and a great veteran, he was also one of the many heroes that we have in our branch who should be recognized and appreciated for their bravery and undaunted commitment that gave us this great country and the freedom that we enjoy today.

Rev. Eagle commented at Ben's funeral service, "to say he will be missed by his family, so many members in our community, and by all of his comrades in the Legion would be an understatement," tells it all.

Bruce Sharpe





The Liberation of Holland will always be one of the most important moments in the history of World War II for Canadian Soldiers. As a result of their efforts, the German invasion of the Netherlands was reversed and the Dutch people were freed once more.

Canadian troops had been fighting in France, Italy, Belgium, and in Germany since the D-Day landing. These troops were moved to the Netherlands to push the German troops occupying the northeast back to the sea and to drive German troops in the west back into Germany.

The Liberation campaign was fought on several fronts including:

***The Battle of the Scheldt*** which, when successful, would open up the supply lines from Normandy through the port of Antwerp and into the Netherlands. The advance began in October 1944 and by November 8th, the several Canadian divisions with assistance from the 52nd British Division had put an end to all German resistance in the area. The German mines were cleared from the channel and November 28th saw the first shipment convoys passed through the channel lead by the Canadian-built freighter Fort Cataragui. There were over 12,000 casualties in the First Canadian Army and 6,367 of these were Canadian born soldiers.

***The Rhineland Campaign*** followed the Battle of the Scheldt and had a front over 200 miles long. The campaign took approximately 3 months and featured divisions of Canadian, British, and American soldiers. It was during this time that two Canadians, Sergeant Aubrey Cosens and Major F.A. Tilston, were awarded the Victoria Cross for their gallantry and courage. By March 10, the Germans had blown up the bridges on the Wesel and had retreated from their last main line of defence on the banks of the Rhine.

***The Final Phase*** took place in Northwest Europe. It began on March 23rd when the Allied forces moved across the Rhine and began the assault. Two Canadian divisions (the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade and the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion) participated in the joint Allied effort. A third Victoria Cross was earned during this effort, this time by F. G. Topham who was a medical orderly. The First Canadian Army's role was to open up supply routes to the north and clear the way into northeastern Netherlands, the coast of Germany and Western Holland.

Fighting had to be called to a halt and negotiations were held to permit relief supplies to be sent into parts of the Netherlands which had been starved over the course of a winter known as the "Hunger Winter". Canadian pilots dropped food packages from the air to the intense relief and joy of the Dutch people and as the Canadian troops liberated town after town, they were faced by the heart-breaking images of starving and beaten people crying and applauding in grati-