

# 971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

*January 2010*  
*www.971wingafac.com*



Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief  
Michaëlle Jean

## *Air Force Association Newsletter*

### **Social Calendar**

- Nov 11 About 500 attended including 15 from the Wing. Among the dozen wreaths laid was the 971 Wing one with Frank Fraser and your Scribe officiating. Once more Darrell Levitt did such a professional job as master of ceremonies that he made the involved task look easy, but I do thank him for ensuring that an RCAF flag graced the stage. Gen. Marcel Duval was guest speaker.
- Nov 18 18 of us had an enjoyable evening at the Airplane Restaurant
- Jan 16 Commencing at 1800 Margit and Roy Thompson will host our traditionally-belated Christmas party. As of old, each attendee is asked to bring a gift valued at about \$10 labelled Male or Female .

Michaëlle Jean at Remembrance Day ceremonies in Ottawa where she was joined by Prince Charles in his Canadian uniform. She has been to Afghanistan twice and attends repatriation ceremonies in Trenton. The previous encumbant, Adrienne Clarkson, spent two New Year's in Afghanistan and her husband, John Ralston Saul, led a platoon up a muddy mountain near Kabul. See page 6.

Photo courtesy of Maclean's Magazine.

Please submit scintillating essays, complaints, spit balls, or what have you to:

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## The Editor's Corner

**It Seems to Me** - That this part of America - the 50 states that call themselves "The United States" is actually in great disarray and in considerable trouble. It has a brave new president charged with rebuilding yet they expect him to do it, leaving in place fractured foundations while ignoring the root causes of the current rot.

It is not that this country lacks its fair share of world thinkers. At this moment I have 33 recently-purchased, in-depth books ranging through topics economic, environmental, historical, military, political, religious, and social. Only 6 of these 33 books are by foreign authors due, in large measure, to a reluctance to import foreign-published books thus robbing us of the wisdom of so many others.

If anyone out there is listening - or interested - here are some personal views:

**Economics:** This country has a \$14.3 trillion economy built, it is said, by rugged (often heartless) individualism and capitalism. Like all addictions, Wealth craves more wealth so we endure the dictatorship of the wealthy. Now, 10% of families hog 50% of the income - always grounds for bloody revolution. There is a debt and a deficit growing rapidly. Now \$12 trillion, increasing \$1 million a minute. The 2009 deficit was \$1.5 trillion, and the interest paid \$359 billion. Solutions? The hated IRS must become more hated until we return to a pay-as-you-go economy. Allied with this must be drastic reductions in wasteful expenditures such as political fund raising that robs us of a democracy by confining us to the whims of the wealthy. Years of sound-bite electioneering implies we are a bunch of ignorant slobs easily influenced by repeated half truths or lies. Brave and concerned individuals, willing to endure the thankless (but remunerative) chore of governing, are grossly hampered by the paramount need to raise vast sums to squander on propaganda. Much cheaper and rewarding would be limited federal grants to candidates for media publicity. One good TV debate, for instance, is more revealing than thousands of sound bites that benefit only the media. We can expect good government only when we relieve politicians of the fund-raising burden. Ever since coinage was invented by the Lydians (Turkey) 2,620 years ago (or was it the Chinese 2,900 years ago?) it has been misused for dominance. Something is horribly wrong when we require \$50,000 a year for the life style we got for \$5,000 only 50 years ago.

**Health Care:** What a farce! Politicians and the Military get good taxpayer-financed care, so too often forget about the rest of us who must examine the small print of numerous for-profit insurance companies that add over 20% to costs. Also adding to costs are outrageous malpractice payments, expensive procedures for the terminally ill that add only a few days of painful existence, billions of dollars in fraudulent claims that lack an efficient policing system, and too many vested interests that spend \$millions fighting change.

**Environment:** Those enjoying a cozy life style, short-lived as it might be, continue to erect obstacles to remedial actions that could save us from catastrophe. For at least the past 30 years there have been increasing warnings of impending disasters yet, even as they occur, reluctance to change remains. Polar and mountain ice and snow disappears, water sheds are dying, greenhouse gases are increasing as are droughts, fires, beetle infestations of forests, while ocean levels have risen 1.5 inches. Yet many plead human innocence.

**Military:** Ever since Sumerian times we have known that force begets force. As too many humans remain savages, defensive forces that make aggression too costly are still required, but there is no need for our current super power with almost a dozen carrier groups, squadrons of supersonic jets, fleets of submarines, and thousands of nuclear warheads, not to mention close to a thousand military bases. As we have gone beyond the \$1.20 a day pay this has become somewhat expensive and has created more generals than we can count or need. If we insist on expanding our military presence in other countries then we must bring back the draft with no exceptions that limit the sacrifice to the less affluent - and we must increase taxes to pay as we go.

**Annoying Restrictive Regulations:** Yet, until all learn that each is a tiny element in a crowded world and has responsibilities to the whole, we need benevolent, firm, and enforced rules. Police remain needed as well as additional police to police the police and more to police the police who police the police.

**Education:** Humans are remarkably alike, all with pliable brains and billions of neurons firing aimlessly until educated. This country is no different to countless groups over the ages who have evolved styles of living and then attempt to convince others of their superiority by warfare or proselytizing, but much more common and effective has been one group developing a useful technique and surrounding groups recognizing it as such and adopting it resulting in it diffusing around the world. Sadly, millions of superior minds have evolved only to lock themselves away in monasteries or universities, fearing they cannot prevail against those who wield the sword.

**Fanaticism:** We all exist, for a brief moment of time, in a violent, fearful universe, armed with feeble and inadequate intelligence. We all need something to cling to be it a spouse, family, flag, religion, or cause. We all know that we are all doomed to exit this world alone, so too many can be led to believe they can serve a useful purpose by fanatic allegiance to a cause, even to sacrificing one's life to it. The first step in educating any human is to ensure that he or she has, or can acquire, the means to produce a living free of hunger, cold, preventable diseases, oppression, or subjugation. Only then can we direct mind sets for the benefit of all.

**Domestic Enemies:** With 5% of the world's human but 25% of its prison population (affluence also breeds crooks), Al Qaida and the Taliban seem minor irritants. Scam and con artists, drug addicts, drunk drivers, hate groups, thieves, rapists, corrupt executives in the economic and political fields, all cause us excessive grief.

Anyone brave enough to lead us out of this mess deserves our backing, co-operation, and gratitude.

**A PERSISTENT KNIGHT:** In Stirling Castle, Scotland, about 1400 AD there lived a bold knight.

One day he sallied forth to battle, returning with several teeth missing.

He survived.

A while later he sallied forth again, returning with an arrow in his back.

He survived

Undaunted, he sallied forth yet again, this time returning with an axe wound in his skull.

He survived, three times lucky. Hardy these Scots.

So, he sallied forth fourthly. This time he got a sword up his nose.

This time he did not survive. So he left us his skeleton to tell us his story.

#### **A SMALL SECLUDED LAKE ON BAFFIN ISLAND**

is attracting scientists from universities including Alberta, Queens, and Colorado. It is only 30 feet deep so, in past glaciations, it froze solidly thus protecting its bottom from being scraped by moving ice sheets. Drilled cores now give us accurate data over 200,000 years - 80,000 years before the start of the Greenland ice cap. They reveal the current rapidity of insect and plant changes is unique with no parallels - and is human induced. Far-reaching changes are here. Trees should arrive soon. Now is a good time to buy your Baffin Island retreat before prices escalate.

#### **TATTOO ESTES 2010 - from Bob Tracy**

The pipe band will be known as the COPS Band (Combined Ontario Police Services) Band. It will be comprised of the best musicians from six Ontario police pipe bands: six pipers from each band, 20 snare drummers, five bass drums, five tenor drums, five drum majors. There will be eight Highland Dancers, including two (or three) internationally recognized leading Highland Dance professionals. There will be four female singers, headed up by SSgt Laura Fortier, US Army, of Ft. Riley, KS.

We will seek a two-year commitment from each performer, for Tattoo(s) Estes 2010 & 2011.

**Transportation:** Police busses will take performers to Buffalo for roundtrip commercial airlift to DIA on 08 Sep 10 and return Monday 13 Sep 10. Accommodation at YMCA of the Rockies.

**Signature Piece** (by Joe Poch) on the Tattoo venue will consist of: one female singer singing (unaccompanied solo) the first 4 bars of Amazing Grace, followed in succession by each female voice singing the second four bars, third four bars, fourth four bars; followed by all singers joining in unison to sing in harmony the complete second verse; followed by: all singers joining to sing in unison, backed up the Marine Band the third verse and finally all singers singing Amazing Grace backed up by both the Marine Band and all Pipes & Drums.

**Tattoo Opening Ceremony:** Each one of the four female singers will step forward in turn to be accompanied by the Marine Band as each sings

one of the National anthems (O Canada; The Soldier's Song; God Save the Queen; Star Spangled Banner)

(There'll also be a later requirement for the four singers to join in singing God Bless America, accompanied by Brass & Bagpipes.)

**Highland Dance Requirements:** The Dancers will perform a choreographed set-piece dance when they participate as part of the COPS Band performance on the Tattoo Field. As well, the dancers will march with COPS in the one mile Saturday street parade in downtown Estes Park. The Highland Dance troupe accompanied by selected pipers will perform a dance presentation and workshop Friday afternoon at the Highland Dance tent on the Festival Field.

**Promotion and Pre-publicity:** Both Bob Skinner and I are aware of the need to move arrangements quickly along so that you can promote this unique show as soon as possible, and particularly with a view to promoting the Canadian content with Canadian Consulate in Denver and the Cdn Air Force contingent and retired RCAF families in the NORAD/Colo Spgs area.

**POWs OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS:** In 1797 the government bought a 22-acre site near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, on which to build barracks to house expected prisoners during the Napoleonic wars 1797-1814. Some 7,000 were incarcerated there of whom 1,700 died of typhoid 1800-01.

**NAV CANADA,** by investing \$1.3 billion in updates, including a new GPS surveillance system, that will allow 16 trans-Atlantic flights to occupy the same airspace now restricted to one. With polar flights, separation will be reduced from 80 to 5 nautical miles. There were 8,000 trans-polar flights in 2008.

This non-profit company was formed in 1996 to control Canada's airspace and has made steady progress. It is estimated that, by 2016, it will save \$4 billion in fuel costs and 4.3 million tons of emissions.

**GRASSOLINE:** Retired farmer, Camille Coors, has warned us of taking corn harvest remains to make fuel: *"That residue is desperately needed right where it fell to renew the soil. All of it and more are needed to sustain our already-low organic matter levels created by years of ploughing and other unsustainable agricultural practices. Soil can and does die and then it is unable to produce food. Energy creation is important, but so is our ability to feed our world."*

**THE SILVERDOME IN PONTIAC, MICHIGAN,** that cost \$55.7 million to build in 1975 has been purchased by a Toronto developer for \$583,000. He never expected his low bid to be accepted, but the destitute area, desperate for cash, was eager to sell it and its 217 acres as annual maintenance costs are \$1.5 million.

**PAVLOPETRI, GREECE:** This 5,000-year-old harbour city has been submerged off the SE coast of Greece for some 3,500 years. It was discovered in 1967 By Nicholas Fleming of Cambridge but it has taken 42 years to work out agreements between the Greek government and the University of Nottingham to commence in 2009 a 5-year study of the site. A large rectangular hall, 15 other buildings, 5 roads, and several tombs were studied this summer after much damage by fishing trawlers and tourists to this rich source of data about Mediterranean sea trade especially with the Minoan civilization on Crete.

It is linked with the legends of Atlantis and the eruptions on Thera and Santorin about 1,500 BC that destroyed the Minoan navy and its civilization.

**QUANTUM TO COSMOS FESTIVAL:** The Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, Ontario, hosted, 10-25 Oct 09, a symposium of some of the world's leading thinkers. You can see and hear their talks on [www.q2cfestival.com](http://www.q2cfestival.com) They are all good but I strongly recommend listening to Peter Diamandis "**The Best Way to Predict the Future is to Invent it Yourself!**" He is CEO of the X Prize Foundation. Using numerous examples dating from the British prize for a solution to determining longitude to his own prize of being the first to take 3 passengers into space twice within 2 weeks, he describes current world problems needing solutions from keen minds. He runs that company that takes people into the air for 7 minutes of weightlessness. What a treat it is to see the happiness on Stephen Hawking's face as he floats about, free from the confines of his wheel chair. Amazing how people will spend far more than the prize money in competing for it and achieving amazing breakthroughs in various fields of endeavour. You will enjoy his talk. He also runs a school to guide people along paths to invent to save humanity.

**UN-NOMINATED BEST 2008 POEM:** Written by an African child and submitted by Barry and Marianne Edward:

When I born, I black  
 When I grow up, I black  
 When I go in Sun, I black  
 When I scared, I black  
 When I sick, I black  
 And when I die, I still black

And you white fellow  
 When you born, you pink  
 When you grow up, you white  
 When you go in sun, you red  
 When you cold, you blue  
 When you scared, you yellow  
 When you sick, you green  
 And when you die, you gray

And you calling me colored?

**AMAZING: SOMEONE ACTUALLY READS AND APPRECIATES OUR NEWSLETTERS!**



**OVER 67 YEARS LATE:** In the November newsletter I described 11 of my RCAF friends killed in WWII. Among them was Arthur Morlidge killed at age 20 over Krefeld, Germany, 02 Feb 42. On 14 November I received a phone call from Lloydminster, Alberta, from his younger brother, George, who had just learned from a padre about my blog site ([www.yeoldeinquisitivescribe.blogspot.com](http://www.yeoldeinquisitivescribe.blogspot.com)) and our Wing web site where this data was also posted.

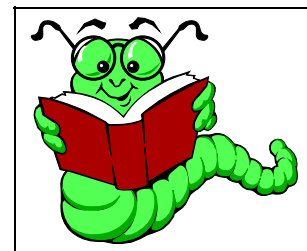
I mailed George a flat envelope with several pages of squadron data, my memories of Arthur, and two large photos of him taken with 419 Squadron friends just a few days before he was killed.

A flood of emotions have washed away the years. I can see so plainly Arthur's handsome, boyish face and that last letter he had written to his parents for posting should he be killed.

I am back in that cold Nissen hut in Croft, again watching Arthur's back as he disappears into the night down that long path across many fields to his Wellington's dispersal point, never to return. Or, did he? I did sense ghosts as I returned, still groping for meaning, to what was left of Croft in 2005.

**PERMANENT ARCTIC ICE** is melting at the rate of 70,000 sq km annually. Dr. Barber of the University of Manitoba (any relation, Russ?) surveyed by ship extensive areas of the Arctic this fall that revealed that what appeared to satellites to be multi-year ice was actually thin, rotten annual ice and that permanent ice that once covered 90% of the Arctic is now down to 19%.

# Book Reviews



## *The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and Quantum Mechanics*

As I reviewed *The Quantum Enigma* in the September 2009 newsletter, I am restricting the review of *Quantum Leaps* by Jeremy Bernstein, Harvard University Press, 2009, to extracts concerning the Dalai Lama, being surprised of his deep involvement in the subject.

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama died in 1933. In 1937 a search party found a 2-year-old boy in Amdo, NE Tibet, whom they recognized as the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, but had to bribe Chinese officials a huge sum to take him back to Lhasa to begin his Buddhist education in the Potala Palace which the Chinese have now turned into a museum for wealthy tourists. Tibetans cannot afford the Chinese entrance fees.**

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama tried to modernize Tibet but it was during a British-Chinese power struggle. The Chinese invaded in 1910 and he had to flee to Sikkim where the British official, Charles Bell, befriended him, giving him a telescope, an intricate watch, and an Austin automobile. Later the boy 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama found these, drove the Austin, disassembled the watch and put it correctly back together again, and used the telescope to study the heavens. With it he also discovered an Austrian in Tibet - Heinrich Harrer, famed for climbing the difficult Nanga Parbar. They became friends and the Dalai Lama's first contact with the outside world after he and another Austrian escaped British internment in WWII. They taught him geography and designed a hydro-electric plant in Lhasa.**

**China invaded Tibet in 1950 and the Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India in 1959. He made his first visit to the West in 1973 to the UK where he met scientist Karl Popper another Austrian but one who also had to flee his country. His second visit was in 1979 when he began his study of Quantum mechanics with two German physicists.**

On 30 Aug 1983 he led a delegation of 14 monks to CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire). They met and talked with physicist John Bell on similarities of the Big Bang with Buddhist eternal recycling. The Dalai Lama said there was room for manoeuvre in Buddhist thinking, adding "In Science and Buddhism understanding reality is pursued by critical investigation. If science proves that some Buddhist tenets are false then Science must prevail." However, physics was ephemeral and ever changing, concerned with only parts of phenomena so Buddhism remains a much broader and sounder base for beliefs.

In 2005 he published "*The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality*".

## NEWSLETTERS CAN BE DANGEROUS

I am trying, with numerous stops to correct typing errors, to explain what happened: In the midst of typing Christmas letters, I was rushing to finish a second book to review for the otherwise-finished January newsletter. Then, at this keyboard, suddenly I did not recognize anything and could not remember how to shut down the computer. Both hands were shaking. I tried the TV remote but did not recognize any of the buttons so could not turn it on. I feared I was having a stroke. Joan and Barbara drove me to the emergency ward.

After initial tests they said they would have to admit me for further tests, leaving me on a cot in the hallway for 6 hours before finding a room for me. I was put on oxygen with intravenous feeds inserted. After getting to a room, they wheeled me around for a 16-minute brain scan, MRIs for the brain and the carotid arteries, EKGs (4 all told), and a chest X-ray. I got very little sleep. Try as I might I could not get the newsletter out of my mind but kept re-wording paragraphs over and over again, accompanied by a slight headache.

The next afternoon 3 doctors (heart, brain, and nervous system) told me that everything inside was in perfect shape, that I did not have a stroke but that I did suffer a brain overload that caused certain functions to shut down. I was stuck in a newsletter mode that did not relent until 1130 two days later. They put me on new medication and warned it would take some days to return to normal. My hands still shake but only when I try to use them.

I am inserting this where the second book review should go and calling the January newsletter finished.

And, it has taken me 50 minutes to type this explanation.

**OUR MONARCHY - WHAT A BLESSING! WHAT A BARGAIN!**  
**Like the flag above politics and a symbol of Commonwealth unity**

When Europeans conquered America, the Monarchs of Britain, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain were the acknowledged rulers. Of these the ones with the least power were the British who were subject to Parliament. This monarchy still flourishes in every continent.

Canada has now been blessed with 65 Governor Generals, 16 French, one of whom was Canadian-born, 39 British, and 10 Canadian including 3 women. Practically all of these have been dedicated public servants who have contributed greatly to the welfare of the country and were chosen because of proven service.

Like all governments, monarchies include duds, especially hereditary ones as we humans do not breed or develop consistently well. Even the good ones are not always appreciated. Of our first 4 Georges by far the best was George III who took a genuine and unselfish interest in the colonies, an interest that interfered with a minority and their vested interests so a civil war ensued in 13 of Britain's 29 American colonies, a war that resulted in Canada becoming a bi-cultural country, with a change of monarchies. Out of his own pocket, George III financed the re-settlement of thousand of United Empire Loyalists in Canada and the West Indies.

Our current Royals officiate at some 4,000 functions annually, relieving the prime minister of this heavy chore and allowing him or her much more time to attend to affairs of state. For \$1.28 each we get a capable, hard-working monarch. For 25 cents more we get a governor general - and Charles and Camilla are thrown in for another 6 cents. Much cheaper than our senate that costs each of us \$2.45 annually.

Charles, a Canadian citizen, is much more accomplished than his press has acknowledged. He was considered eccentric and laughed at when he was one of the first to warn us on global warming, to venture into large-scale organic farming, and to criticize modern glass-and-steel architecture that were eyesores and robbed us of the charm of older buildings. He is a paratrooper, has flown fighter jets and helicopters, and has commanded a minesweeper. His 20 charitable organizations raise \$260 million annually for health, environmental, and educational causes world wide. He is an author of children's books, and a water-colour artist. Those who have met and talked with him are impressed with his wide-ranging knowledge and interests. He has made major improvements in relations with the non-Christian world. Camilla may be new to Canada but her ancestry has deep Canadian roots. Her long and interrupted romance with Charles is now flourishing and she has, like most wives, contributed greatly to her husband's stature. Both were admired on their November 12-day tour of Canada.

There are those who, like rebellious children divorcing their parents, call our founding nations "foreign counties". There are enough divisions in this world without creating more. For simplicity we lump scores of founding associations under the term "First Nations" . This makes France the second and the United Kingdom and Ireland the third. All deserve a special place in our hearts as well as gratitude for the blood and treasure they have sacrificed on our behalf. These bonds should never be broken.

**MIKHAIL and RAISA GORBACHEV - ANOTHER COUPLE INSUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATED**

My appreciation of this couple commenced when in Ottawa in 1982, Mikhail took a liking to Alexander Yakovlev who had been a thorn in the side of the Politburo and had been sent off as the 1973-83 ambassador to Canada to get him out of Moscow. When Mikhail became the leader of the USSR in 1985 he selected Alexander for key positions that were to include freeing the media, exposing the dark side of the Stalin era, rehabilitating political prisoners and generally infuriating hard liners. Part of Mikhail and Raisa's charm were their strong interests in world publications and philosophies. Lasting impressions have been made by Mikhail's remarks, such as:

*"Communism is man exploiting man - Capitalism is the reverse,"*

*"We must view the world with eyes open, bypassing personal interests."*

Mikhail and Ronald Reagan disliked each other on their first meeting. Mikhail described Ronald as locked in the Past and Ronald thought Mikhail a Bolshevik. Mikhail, believing the Cold War could result in nuclear annihilation, pressed on and was the spark plug for the nuclear disarmament agreement with the US.

In March 1985 he told the Warsaw Pact: *"You are responsible for your policies and we will not interfere."* Mar 89 saw the first democratic election in Russia. Some 35 Communists were defeated but over 80% were re-elected. In June 89 Gorbachev met with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Erick Hornecker in East Germany but both insisted on gradual reunification. Gorbachev saw that most Germans wanted it now and he sided with them. 300,000 elite USSR troops were in East Germany, yet change began there. When in October 1989 he was back in E. Germany, groups from 28 regions urged him to stay. The dam burst and the walls came tumbling down.

Interviewed in Moscow, 23 Sep 09, by Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of the Nation Magazine and her husband, Stephen F. Cohen, Gorbachev argued that the US is wrong in believing it won the Cold War. Perestroika did it. Then, the US, believing it won, decided it did not need to change as the USSR had capitulated and was now history. Yeltsin became a US vassal. The US decided it did not need Russia whose industries fell into disrepair. Russian plans for a new Europe disappeared. NATO started to take over the world. Higher oil prices saved Russia. When Russia needed aid it got none. Now US needs Russian help in Afghanistan. He added:

*"Russia needed its perestroika, the US now needs its own perestroika."*

**COMMEMORATING VETERANS:** Jim Cross, DFC, of Victoria BC, a contributor to this newsletter, had a letter-to-the-editor published in the Toronto Globe and Mail, 05 Nov 09.

Jim, may I take advantage of this to enlarge upon it? You expressed gratitude for the contributions of your father and grandfather in WWI but complained that, in the 80 years you have attended 11 November ceremonies, they continue to emphasize WWI to the neglect of subsequent wars and peace keeping. The symbols all relate to WWI: the date, the poppy, *In Flanders Fields*, the monuments - yet we have shamefully dropped the "Royal" when we remain a proud monarchy. Yes, we should re-establish the RCAF, RCN, Royal Mail, and so on - and your suggestion to move the November remembrance to the more friendly weather of May or August has merit. I, too, have shivered through many November ceremonies - yet I felt it was a small price to pay especially when it would remind me of the hundreds of friends shot down to drown in the cold North Sea.

Yes, we need to remember our veterans and one day a year is quite insufficient. But why limit it to recent wars? And, do all veterans deserve our gratitude? We too have committed atrocities and too many went to war for personal gain, thoughtless or ignorant of the main issues. What about those we labelled enemies when they were, like us, too often the innocent victims of uncaring leaders.

Should we not remember all those who have contributed to what we cherish today? What about those brave youths, Huron, Algonquin, and French, who willingly sacrificed their young lives in 1660 to stem Iroquois vengeance that would have slaughtered all in Montreal? The Greeks who died to preserve incipient democracy need remembering but not those who thrived on aggression. The hundreds of Quebec doctors and nurses who died of typhus while helping destitute Irish arriving in crowded, disease-laden ships fleeing the potato famines of the 1840s earned our thanks.

Let us remember all those who left kin and comfortable homes to serve desolate and oppressed people in far-off lands. These are debts we can partially repay by living compassionate lives ourselves. Stone monuments are useful in prodding our memories and poppies, with their blood-red colour, are ideal symbols enhanced by their association with millions of young men lured by adventure into the hell of an unnecessary war provoked by a few men in power with allusions of grandeur and disdain for the sufferings of others.

Let us have a REMEMBRANCE DAY that remembers all those who have earned it.

**AFGHANISTAN - WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?:** Due in large measure to our inept, poorly co-ordinated, and changing intervention it is close to a lost cause - but it need not be so. Under King Zahir Shah, 1933-73, it was a poor, struggling assemblage of tribal groups striving to become a proud member of the modern world. Women had relative freedom. They were 50% of doctors, 75% of teachers, 55% of civil servants. A coup toppled the King, leading to Soviet intervention to support a new, shaky government that sought Soviet protection. To Afghans this made the government a puppet regime so it was fought as was the USSR invasion. Actually the Soviets built roads, schools, hospitals, and a secular society with equal rights for women but they killed a lot of Afghans (like us). Still fearful of the Bear reaching warm water ports, we supported many bad-guy war lords with cash and weapons for the main purpose of defeating a Cold War enemy who, suffering heavy casualties, was forced to retire. This left Afghanistan ruled by the most backward men who fought among themselves. Initially, a brave Karzai returned from exile to rebuild the country, but he seems trapped by war lords whose help he must buy. His wife is a doctor but confined to the home which she may leave only when he approves. To appease the West, Women hold 17% of upper house and 27% of lower house seats but are pressured to do or say little. Some of those murdered are: (1) 20 May 05: Shaima Rezayee, 24, TV journalist who hosted music and talk shows on Tolo TV, Australian built and the #1 show with Afghan youth, but opposed by mullahs. (2) 06 Jun 07: Zakia Zaki, 35, teacher, radio journalist, killed in her home in Parwan. (3) 12 Apr 08: Sitara Achakzai, advocate of women's rights, member of the Kandahar Provincial Council, (4) Sep 08: Malalai Kakar, highest-ranking woman police officer, 40, mother of 6, killed in Kandahar. (5) In 2005 The London *Independent* interviewed 5 women activists. By Oct 08, 3 were murdered and a 4<sup>th</sup>, Zarghuna Kakar, fled the country after her husband was killed for allowing her out of house, (6 and 7) Spring 09: Parwin Mushtakhel, actress, fled after her husband was killed for allowing her out of house. Setara Hussainzada, a singer, also fled.

87% of women are still beaten regularly. Young girls, are still forced to marry old men, repeatedly raped by brothers and sons of the old man. Such raped women are often confined to jail as they are blamed.

Our building of an Afghan army to defend the Karzai regime has been a disaster. Initially they were poorly trained and armed and suffered many more casualties than Western armies. They still have little incentive to fight for a government that is riddled with corruption, has done very little for the common folk, and is seen as a puppet of the West. Too often they desert with their weapons to the Taliban.

We cannot win until we first establish a government, free of corruption, concerned about the common folk, and free from foreign control. Much easier said than done. We also need a common NATO strategy. Gen. McChrystal is now adopting the Canadian-inspired way of connecting with the local people.

Basically the Afghans are a brave, hospitable people who had nothing to do with the Cold War or 9/11, but who have suffered greatly because of it. We have created a moral obligation.

**A SAD AND AND REVEALING WWII DIARY, FOUND IN 2007, HAD EXTRACTS PUBLISHED 11-12 NOV 09** in the National Post. John Hall of Ottawa has sent us the 5 pages on which the diary is described.

Flight Lieutenant Anton Novak of Kenora, Ontario, was one of three survivors from a 7-man Lancaster crew shot down in Oct 44. He lost his right heel, had a broken leg, 2 ribs broken and 3 fractured, and a torn right arm. After being patched up by the Germans he was sent to Stalag Luft III where, in a book of blank pages provided by the Canadian YMCA, he maintained a daily diary from 07 Nov 44 to 19 Jul 45. I still have my copy of this book.

In many of his entries he is talking to his greatly missed and much-loved wife. He describes daily life, the approaching Soviets, the long, cold, and hungry march westwards ending up in Luckenwalde, some 30 miles south of Berlin where Soviet tanks caught up with them. He criticizes the stupidity of some RCAF and USAAF on the march, when so close to freedom, trying to escape the columns into a devastated winter land and most likely to be shot by Germans or Soviets who would have no idea who they were. Actually, he claims two ended up being shot as they tried to flee by our own guards. After the Soviet take-over he describes the thousands of Germans invading their camp for protection from widespread Soviet raping and beatings but then these German women offered sex in exchange for scraps of food and hundreds of former prisoners who had some Red Cross food left took advantage of this. Anton berates the human species for being so bestial and expressed his disgust at the inhumanities he witnessed in the month before the Soviets allowed them to move westwards.

Anton, full of joy, arrived by train in Kenora in July 45 only to find his beloved wife had left him for another man. He took to drinking, and left town, giving his diary to a friend who put it, unopened, in a drawer where it was found by family members after his death and returned in 2007 to a relative of Anton who had died in 1986. Having been in the same camp and on the same march the only thing I would add to Anton's diary is a description of our Luftwaffe guards. They were by no means ruthless men as so often depicted. Most were old in poor health, suffering from ailments and longing to be home with their families. They were as cold and hungry as we. Many threw away their rifles as too heavy to carry. We were on our way to freedom. They faced captivity and little mercy. They were at the end of their tether. I never knew of any shooting or maltreating prisoners. We were all bombed and strafed by Allied aircraft so our wisest choice was to be helpful to our guards who were innocent victims of man's inhumanity to man.

**THE TRAVELS, INSIGHTS, AND INTERESTS OF CARLA VISCONTI:** I could write a book about Carla. Recently returned to her Torino, Italy, home from touring India, Tibet, and China, Carla has send us two DVDs of photos and numerous comments. I have mentioned her in these newsletters since meeting her in L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, in 1997 while she was hitch-hiking around Newfoundland and Labrador and her 1998 visit with us here. During that visit I had her relate her Dad's not-too-happy WWII experiences in the Alps, Balkans, and on the Russian front and to type them out for both of us.

Very observant and capable, Carla remains a world traveller and a care giver to refugees and the persecuted. She has made 3 trips to Canada during which she went into a travel agency to book flights to Cambridge Bay and Grise Fiord. She had to explain to them where they were! She investigated course at the UofT and skiing in Whistler. In the US, she toured by rented car all the western national parks. In Argentina she related the poverty she encountered and advised not investing in that poorly-governed country, then she took an Antarctic cruise on a Russian ship operated by a Canadian company. She spent time helping destitute people in the Balkans, took a course in Swahili, and managed her time among her seaside, mountain, and town homes in France and Italy. She claims she would never marry an Italian man as too many of them chase off enjoying themselves while leaving their wives at home with the children. A few of her other comments:

China: very clean, modern, and ordered with no congestion or litter even in the large cities. Architecture vastly superior to American, well-stocked stores, very friendly people who will whisper about an unseen, strong, control that executes far too many for minor crimes or political opposition. She saw no memorials to war dead.

Tibet: Genocide. The large flow of Chinese into occupied Tibet is robbing Tibetans of jobs and many are dying of massacres and starvation. A Buddhist monk caught with a picture of the Dalai Lama can be shot.

India: Apparent lack of government. Haphazard building lacking all logic. Chaos in the streets. Far more poverty than in China. Too much freedom while Tibet and China have too little.

On top of all this Carla maintains an excellent collection of Barbie dolls.

**ME AND SUDBURY:** 1.85 billion years ago, somewhat before my birth there in 1919 and making a greater impact than I did, a meteor made a hard landing creating a 200 km wide crater and donating huge mineral wealth. Now scientists claim it did even more. It shaped the evolution of life. It terminated the bacteria-assisted formation of iron formations by creating enormous tsunamis that churned up deep oxygen-starved ocean levels with oxygen-rich upper layers, providing a niche for new oxygen-tolerant organisms to evolve.

**IMPRESSIVE DANISH KNOW-HOW:** The 16,000 delegates (180 from Canada) at the Copenhagen Climate Conference were greeted with bicycles, and Metro passes. The few available cars were algae-diesel or hydrogen fueled, with 65% of the food organic, no bottled water, only tap. Biodegradable carpets on floors, wind-turbine electricity. To compensate for jet travel emissions, 20 coal-fired furnaces in Bangladesh will be replaced reducing carbon emissions 90%. If others follow suit we may see action rather than talk from world conferences.