



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

Remembering the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

NA15141

Volume 2, Issue 3

Fall 2007

Aim

To remember and further an interest in the experiences of those who took part in the Italian Campaign.

Welcome

Welcome to our eighth newsletter of the Monte Cassino Society.

Our membership is increasing and we are thrilled and heartened so many have taken an interest in the society. Along with the increase in membership is an increase in the workload, with Judith still handling by far the majority of the correspondence. We would therefore ask our second and third generation who would like to volunteer any spare time to a very worthy cause to please get in touch.

Many of the veterans' accounts, recollections and stories need to be transcribed and we are optimistic that the veterans will continue to send us more.

Although we did not have enough accounts for a supplement to this

newsletter, we have included two accounts by second-generation—one by Peter Wain and Doreen Belcher, the children of Sergeant Thomas Wain MM, Corps of Royal Engineers; the other by John Stapleton, son of Sergeant Al Stapleton of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals.

We are happy to report that we are planning a trip to Cassino in May of this year. Details will be sent to members shortly.

To all our members, thank you for your on-going support. We wish you a very Happy New Year.

— Rosalind Galloway

Daughter of David Galloway MC, 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders

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News

James Falck

Mrs. Falck has told us of the death of her husband, James Falck, **3rd Battalion, The Welsh Guards**, on 5th November. Mr Falck was 91. He was awarded the Syrian Order of Merit.

Major David Wilson MC

Mrs Betsy Wilson has written to tell us of the death of her husband, Major David Wilson MC, **1st Battalion, 12th Frontier Force Regiment**, on 11th April, 2007. Mrs. Wilson wishes to continue her association with the society.

James Angell

Shirley Angell has told us of the death of her husband, Jim Angell, **'D' Platoon, 495 Company, American Field Service**, on November 11th. Mr. Angell was in his 92 year.

Mary Thorman

We are sorry to hear from Peggy Sharples of the death of her dear friend Mary Thorman. Mary was a member of our society and died on 24th of November, her 93rd birthday. Peggy writes:

Objectives

- to collect, document and preserve information about the veterans' experiences.
- to establish a database of information accessible to the public and to members through a website.
- to develop materials for educating the younger generation, in particular materials for schools.

News (continued)

Mary's first husband, Major Mike Higgins, who commanded A Company, Lincolnshire Regiment, was killed near Cassino on 5th January 1944 in the battle of the River Peccia. Mike's best friend Major Thorman, who commanded C Company, located Mike's body by the side of the river, along with 17 other soldiers of the Lincolnshire Regiment. After the war Major Thorman married Mike's widow, Mary.

In 2002, my son, Stan, started to do some research into the death of his father, Sergeant John Pearson. After a long search, he found that he was one of the 17 soldiers killed alongside Major Higgins. Mary and Major Thorman were able to provide Stan with the exact location of where his father was killed near Cassino and thus enable us to visit the site and pay our last respects.

After 2002, Mary and I became great friends. Our first husbands are buried in adjacent graves in Cassino War Cemetery. We reminisced on many occasions.

Mary will be remembered affectionately by all who knew her.

Peggy Sharples

Cassino May 2008

We are arranging a trip to Cassino in May 2008 over the week of the 11th to the 18th. The tour includes travel from Manchester, Heathrow or Stansted to Rome for our UK members (Canadian and US members, please contact Rosalind Galloway); hotel accommodation at Gaeta on half-board basis; three days of excursions (including two lunches); attendance at the Cassino War Cemetery service and an RBL tour

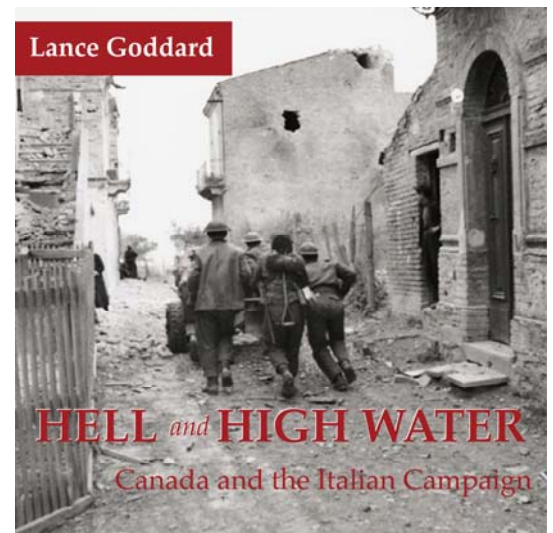
guide/manager for the duration of the tour.

UK members please note that the War Widows Grant-in-Aid Scheme is available for war widows who have not visited their husbands' grave/memorial before at Government expense. If they have travelled before, independently or with the help of other funding such as Heroes Return, they are still eligible for the grant. This covers widows (widowers) between the dates 1914 - 1967.

Further details about the tour will be sent to you shortly.

Books

Lance Goddard's book, *Hell and High Water: Canada and the Italian Campaign*, was published in October.



From the publishers:

Although it has been overshadowed by other events of the Second World War, Canada's role in the Italian Campaign, from 1943 to 1945, was significant. Canadian forces played a major role in this campaign, whose goal was to open

News (continued)

a second front in order to ease the pressure on Russian forces in the east. Canada fought under British command alongside British and American units, but our soldiers saw some of the fiercest fighting and achieved glory many times, including at the Battle of Ortona, one of Canada's greatest military accomplishments.

The pictorial history examines the Italian Campaign from the view of the soldiers serving there. Regiments represented in interviews in this book include the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, the Perth Regiment, the Governor-General's Horse Guards, the Ontario Regiment, the 48th Highlanders, the Calgary Regiment, the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, the Royal Canadian Dragoons, and the Royal Canadian Navy.

Lance Goddard has worked in television for more than 20 years. His previous Second World War history books with Dundurn, D-Day: Juno Beach, Canada's 24 Hours of Destiny and Canada and the Liberation of the Netherlands, May 1945, accompanied TV documentaries, which Lance also produced, and became instant bestsellers.

The link to *Hell and High Water* on Amazon.ca is:

http://www.amazon.ca/Hell-High-Water-Italian-Campaign/dp/155002728X/ref=pd_rhf_p_1

Polish Combatants Association Reunion in Toronto

On October 18th Suzanne and Rosalind attended the Polish Combatants Association annual reunion in Toronto. The reunion was organized by Henryk Sokolowski, the son of Polish WWII survivors. Henryk's father, Bronislaw trained with the Polish Second Corps as

an Artillery Battery Commander. In Egypt he was posted to the 9th Field Artillery Regiment and from there went to Italy with the corps in early 1944. His mother's brother was deported to Siberia following the Red Army Invasion. He eventually escaped and joined the Polish Carpathian Brigade in the middle east and fought in North Africa and Italy.

Their stories and many others are on two excellent websites devoted to the history of the Polish people during WWII: <http://felsztyn.tripod.com>, and <http://felsztyn.tripod.com/germaninvasion>

Information about the documentary film, *A Forgotten Odyssey*, about the 1.7 million Polish citizens who were deported from eastern Poland to labour camps in Siberia, Kazakhstan and Soviet Asia, is at <http://www.aforgottenodyssey.com>

A Polish Combatants Association reunion is tentatively planned for February 10, 2008 in Bradford, England. For more information, please e-mail Henryk at hsokol@sympatico.ca.

Kent Remembrance Day Ceremonies with the Royal British Legion and the Meridian Club

Dave Mann, son of the late **Harold Godfrey Mann, 31 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery**, with the Meridian Chapter was invited by The Royal British Legion (Chislehurst Branch) to join with them in the Remembrance ceremonies.

Dave Mann writes:

On Sunday twenty people gathered at Warr's S.E. for the short ride to Chislehurst, including one brave soul wearing a Kilt!

Shortly after arriving at the RBL we were welcomed and served some very welcome warm beverages. It was soon



Bob Cameron, of the Meriden Chapter, at the Remembrance Ceremonies in Chislehurst, Kent.

News (continued)

apparent that this year was going to be well attended with many other local groups forming both inside and out.

Almost to order the rain had stopped and the sun shone as Meridian Members joined the procession. Members from the RBL Riders' Section, The Vintage Motorcycle Club and Deaf Bikers U.K. joined us. Many members wore their Regimental caps and service medals. As always, we were made to feel very welcome and part of this important local community event.

The Royal Navy Cadet Band was superb in leading the group of around 200 people to the Chislehurst Cenotaph, as was the music. With all traffic at a standstill and total silence the echo of guns firing in the distance could clearly be heard, a truly moving moment as the Last Post was played to perfection by a quartet of brass instruments.

It was with great pride that we lay the wreaths, four in total, including one for the Monte Cassino Society and one for the Meridian Chapter before parading

back to the RBL where a buffet lunch had been laid on and the bar was opened.

What wonderful yet somewhat unlikely sight of old and not so old ex-service men and women mixing and chatting with other groups including Meridian Members, local Cub Scouts and police in a very relaxed and full club.

The amazing efforts and generosity of Meridian Chapter Members this weekend raised a total of £360 for The Royal British Legion.

I slipped away after about 90 minutes with the place still in full swing. Through the door into the street, I found rain clouds were once again looming, but there I was met by a broadly smiling elderly gentleman, who gripped my hand firmly, thanked us for coming along and 'hoped he would see us all again soon'. I'm not sure if it's something to do with a Handshake or Camaraderie, but I left with a feeling this Old Soldier was also an Old Biker!

New Members

- Ted Berry, son of the late Albert Edward Berry, The Northamptonshire Regiment
- Mrs Jane Gilbe and Mrs Susan Perkin, daughters of the late Major David Wilson MC, 1st Battalion, 12th Frontier Force Regiment
- Kenneth Isham, 17th LAA RA, RASC
- Iain McKenzie, son of the late Robert McKenzie, 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders
- Barbara Parker whose father served with the Lancashire Fusiliers
- Ernest Parker, The East Surrey Regiment
- R.E. Randall, The London Irish Rifles
- Mrs Betsy Wilson, wife of the late Major David Wilson MC, 1st Battalion, 12th Frontier Force Regiment
- Thomas S. Worthington, 'B' Coy 2/4 The Hampshire Regiment
- Garth E. Wright, 153/51 LAA Regiment, Royal Artillery

News (continued)

Correction

In the Summer 2007 issue of the newsletter we published a picture of Ernie Morris, taken in Cassino in May of this year, and printed his unit as 6th Battalion, The Black Watch. The possibility that we may have made a mistake was brought to our attention by Henry McKenzie Johnston, 6th Battalion, The Black Watch, who did not recognize his regiment's Ernie Morris.

We contacted Terry Wall, nephew of Ernie Morris (in the photo) who wrote that his uncle was "not a signaller or in any way knowingly connected to the Black Watch."

Terry's uncle was with the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, City of London Regiment, and our other Ernie Morris was with the 6th Battalion, The Black Watch.

Our thanks to Henry McKenzie Johnston for bringing the mystery to our attention and to Terry Wall for clearing it up.

Book Recommendations

The Society recommends:

- *From Oasis into Italy, War Poems and Diaries From Africa and Italy 1940 - 1946*, 1983, The Salamander and Oasis Trust. Editor, Victor Selwyn. 1983. ISBN: 0-85683-063-1; 0-85683-064-X Pbk
- *Poems of the Second World War*, The Oasis Collection. Editor-in-Chief, Victor Selwyn. 1985. ISBN: 0-460-01432-3 Pbk
- *Anzio, The Friction of War, Italy and the Battle for Rome 1944*. Lloyd Clark. Headline, 2006 ISBN: 978-0-7553-1421-8.

Iain McKenzie, son of the late Robert McKenzie, 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, writes "I have been rooting about under the eaves and came across this little poem by a Lance Corporal McFarlane in the October 1945 issue of The 79th News":

Panorama of Italy

If I were an artist with nothing to do
I'd paint a picture, a composite view,
Of historic Italy, in which I'd show
Visions of contrast, the high and the low.

There'd be towering mountains, a deep blue sea,
Filthy brats shouting "Caramello" at me,
High plumed horses, and colourful carts,
Two-toned tresses on hustling tarts.

Chapels and churches, great to behold,
Each a king's ransom in glittering gold.
Poverty and want, men craving for food,
Picking through garbage, practically nude.

A beautiful maiden, a smile on her face,
With a breath of garlic fouling the place,
Listless housewives, no shoes on their feet,
Washing and cooking out on the street.

Families dining from one common bowl,
Next to the fish stores a terrible hole,
Italian zoot-suiters, flashily dressed,
Bare footed beggars looking depressed.

Elegant caskets carved out by hand,
Odourous factories where leather is tanned,
A shoemakers shop, a black market store,
Crawling with vermin, no screens on the door.

I've tried to describe things I have seen,
Panoramas of Italy, the brown and the green.

I've neglected the war scars, visible yet,
But these are things we want to forget.

Field of Remembrance and the Cenotaph, London, England



The Monte Cassino Society plot in the Field of Remembrance

In November I was in England for the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey and the March Past the Cenotaph on Sunday, November 11th.

I arrived early on the morning of the 8th at the Field of Remembrance to plant our crosses—25 in all—which our members had asked us to dedicate.

The following is taken from the Field of Remembrance program:

The Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey is organised by the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory as part of the annual Poppy Appeal commemorations.

Every year around 250 plots are laid out in the names of military organizations and associations. Remembrance crosses are then planted in these plots—often with hand written messages from family, friends and colleagues.

The Field was started in 1928 by Major George Howson MC, the founder of the

Royal British Legion Poppy Factory. He and a few disabled ex-Servicemen from the Factory grouped together around a battlefield cross—familiar to those who had served in Flanders and on the Western Front. With trays of poppies they invited passers-by to plant a poppy in the vicinity of the cross.

Since then the Field has evolved to include a wide range of military interests. Ex-Service men and women, both young and old, turn out for the opening ceremony and to pay respects to their colleagues. ...

The Field is opened on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday and stays open until the following Thursday evening. Proceeds from the Field of Remembrance are given to the Poppy Appeal.

In the Field of Remembrance our plot was between the Russia Convoy Club and North Russia Club on one side and the Far East Prisoners of War



Association on the other. The morning was overcast and we were cold as we stood and waited for the Duke of Edinburgh to open the Field, but the atmosphere was warm—I was grateful to Bob Clarke (who had helped Judith last year) for stopping by to brief me and to the very cheerful Far East prisoner of war veteran with whom I chatted.

Mrs Sara Jones, President of the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory, whose husband Lt Col Jones VC was killed in the Falklands, gave the Exhortation to Remembrance. During his review of the plots, the Duke of Edinburgh stopped and asked about the Monte Cassino Society.

After the Opening, the BBC reported that there were a record number of dedications made—more than 29,000 crosses, 3,000 more than the year before.

On Sunday, November 11th, having some time to spare before the March Past, I returned to the Field of Remembrance. Few were there so early in the morning. It was, again, overcast and seemed much colder than the Thursday—and the rain had started. More crosses had been planted in our plot.

In Horseguards Parade I met Judith's brother Phil and his wife Di, whom I had not seen since the trip to Italy in May of last year. We were joined by Harry Launder, Royal Corps of Signals, who faithfully made the trip from Wales as he had done last year, and Mike Anslow, whose father D.E.H. Anslow had served with the Grenadier Guards. I was happy to meet again the Far East Prisoners of War veteran with whom I had chatted at the Field of Remembrance.

The drizzle which had become steady, miraculously stopped. We were ready to march and our small contingent set off

this year, as it had done with Judith last year, behind the Italy Star Association.

In Whitehall we formed up beside the Gurkha Rifles Brigade and waited to set off again. The March ended much too soon. Back in Horseguards Parade we said our goodbyes—Harry Launder leaving for the underground station and Phil, Di and I going for a hot lunch.

Judith, who was holidaying with her husband Geoff, was unable to attend the service this year, but on November 11th she sent me an e-mail on board their cruise ship. She wrote, "We took a horse drawn carriage trip this morning and at 11.00 asked the driver to stop. Geoff and I got out and observed the two minutes silence. What the locals thought of us I don't know, but a gentleman stopped people talking to us—I think he understood what we were doing. I have been wearing my poppy all day too."



At Horseguards Parade: Philip and Di Soady, son and daughter-in-law of Gerald Soady, 91st LAA, Royal Artillery; Harry Launder, Royal Corps of Signals, 15 Army Group Signals; and Mike Anslow, son of D.E.H. Anslow, The Grenadier Guards.

A Personal Pilgrimage

The Military Medal

On the night of 18th/19th October 1943, Sergeant Wain under his Platoon Officer was controlling mine sweeping parties up the TERMOLI – PETACCIATO Road

Throughout the whole operation this was done immediately behind the infantry and under shell and mortar fire. They were proceeding up the secondary road, which leads off from the road junction to the left, and at approximately 7278 they came up against a minefield. On attempting to approach this field they came under sharp machine gun fire from two posts about 20 yards away on either side of the road.

While Sergeant Wain was in this position he came under our own shellfire, which was attempting to knock out the machine gun posts. Orders had been received from the Battalion Commander that the Sappers must push ahead at all costs to clear a way for the tanks to get through. At about this time his Platoon Officer was killed but Sergeant Wain, who was then in command, swept a passage under machine gun fire and mortar fire which the enemy was then bringing down. The tanks got through and the machine gun posts were silenced, allowing our troops to advance to PETACCIATO.

Sergeant Wain, by his inspiring leadership, determination and courage, held his men together and completed an extremely dangerous job in face of what first appeared impossible odds.

We saw this citation only after Dad's death. Of course we knew he had the M.M. but not how it was won. But we did know about the young officer. His name was Billy Reid and Dad never forgot him and kept his photograph. We think he

thought of him as a son and felt responsible for him.

Our sister took Dad back to Cassino about twenty years ago and he searched the Cemetery there for Billy's grave but he wasn't there. In the visitor's book, he wrote, "I came back Billy."

Nowadays with the help of the Internet, we were able to discover that Billy Reid was buried at the Sangro River War Cemetery on the Adriatic side of Italy, near to where he was killed. This battle was the beginning of the Battle of Cassino.

His name was William Alexander Reid. He was 20 years old and from Glasgow.

So on the Sunday when others went to Anzio, armed with our poppy wreath we set out on our pilgrimage; Peter driving a strange car on the wrong side of the road and me navigating from directions written in Italian by Flavio.

Driving through that beautiful scenery it was hard to imagine it as a battlefield as it must have been 60+ years ago. We couldn't see Monte Cassino. It was covered in cloud.

Hours later after an eventful drive we turned into the road to the Cemetery, only to find the police had closed it. They sent us round to another road but that too was closed. We were so near and had come so far. Eventually we discovered there was a motorcycle race and after half an hour we were allowed through.

The Sangro River War Cemetery is so quiet and beautiful, surrounded as it is by snow-capped mountains on one side and fields leading down to the Adriatic



No. 2025113 Sergeant
Thomas James Henry WAIN
MM, Corps of Royal Engineers

Sea on the other. What a peaceful spot for a final resting place. We found Billy Reid, laid our wreath, said our prayers and wandered tearfully among the graves of those brave boys for an hour before facing the journey back. We felt a feeling of completion for Dad. The 400-mile journey had been worth it.

Our card read, “He came back to look for you Billy. He never forgot you. We, his children complete his pilgrimage. God Bless you both”

Peter Wain and Doreen Belcher, the children of Sgt. Tom Wain MM.

Reflections on a Return to Italy 60 Years Later

Italy was a very different place viewed through the eyes of Canadian veterans who came back to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Italian Campaign in late 2004. It was an experience of a lifetime. It was more than just heartening to walk with Canadian veterans along the main streets of Ortona, Cassino, or Agira. We watched ordinary elderly Italians clutching sepia photographs in one hand reaching out to shake their hands in gratitude with the other—all for something that happened so long ago.

Although planned to the last detail, the events had an air of spontaneity—little children in uniforms guided by a nun waving Italian and Canadian flags or holding helium balloons with messages of hope—armed forces personnel from Italy and Canada—Mounties, dignitaries and attaches, caregivers and nurses, reserves and police, sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters and friends. They were all assembled to honour the somewhat less than one hundred older men and women still healthy and strong enough to be there.

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson was a trooper and John Ralston Saul was very gracious and observant sitting among the ambassadors, prefects, mayors, councilmen and

dignitaries as the ceremonies began. The Minister of Veterans’ Affairs Albina Guarnieri was appreciated for her youth, her humanity and her willingness (like Mrs. Clarkson) to brave the dedications in three languages. The events were something beyond moving perhaps better described by those words normally reserved for exclamatory book and movie reviews: sweeping, monumental, even timeless.

As the veterans returned to the places of battle that unlocked the past, some moments that were meant to be profound are empty as memories have faded. And yet there were so many unexpected remembrances that took their place that it was all worthwhile—like standing on the promontory at Pontecorvo looking down on the Liri River near Monte Cassino and seeing and experiencing why Monte Cassino was defended.

So many of the places that the veterans could never travel to in wartime, they now saw safely for the first time. They toured the Abbey at Monte Cassino—they drove a hundred miles into Rome unimpeded as if they were American Generals. The senses filled as they traveled in minutes what used to take months in wartime. No land mines, no *pericoloso del morte* this time around.

They are old enough to fail to care about aspects of protocol yet honest enough to perform incredibly telling acts of honour. The veteran who moved his chair from the tent into the field of gravestones and olive trees in 27 degree heat at the Moro River cemetery to hear all the speeches surely wanted to be with his buddies as he listened to the tributes.

They are old enough to constantly tune in and tune out yet able suddenly to focus so greatly on pieces of a vacant field and standing for minutes at a time just staring and staring. They then burst forth with memories of 1944 telling of impossible horrors that took place on that very piece of ground.

They are old enough to stop on a piece of innocent road with neon signage and say: "Right there—that's where I heard the *ping ping ping* of enemy machine gun fire strafing the road".

They are old enough to be not impolite when they go silent so much so that you wonder what has gone wrong.

Yet they are young enough that over dinner the same night they come bursting with memories of the absurd and grotesque events that occurred 60 years earlier.

Cassino, Ortona, Cesena, Rimini, Agira and Pachino—we whisked them across countryside that is only familiar in its geography and climate—strange and unrecognizable in its modernity.

All their stories are recalled in extremes—the good and the funny along with the horrible—the boredom is only given a passing glance. They repeated their stories and appreciated the recognition: the unheard-of seven day pass to visit Rome, the famous Christmas dinner at Ortona, the relief of escaping Russi or Cesena in one piece.

And yet as satisfying as the journey was for those so fortunate to have been here, there is always the sorrow of the loss of their comrades and the loss of part of their own lives that could have been so changed had they only lived in slightly different times.

They recalled also that those 'slightly different times' may have meant a long life in Canada for their fellow soldiers who so impossibly remain in the remote soil, their names honoured but forever remaining in the ground, not speaking, silent and immovable.

At these celebrations, the disruptive was rendered impossible despite the intrusion of the unexpected but everyday events that are always impervious to orchestration. There was the relentless call of an automotive burglar alarm at the Moro River that was at least sufficiently reverent to await the Last Post and the Piper. There was the long wait for dignitaries at the Piazza del Popolo at Ortona (gathering place of the people) saved only by the incongruous crooning of Elton John from the sound system test tape.

There were the ceremony-long meanderings at Cesena of a curious small dog who displayed his advanced skills in the art of avoidance of graceful capture, first noted by Mr. Saul to Mrs. Clarkson. There was the gift from Canada to the mayor of Cesena that simply does not surrender to the heroic attempts to unwrap it in the moment until the unflappable Master of Ceremonies Simonetta d'Aquino smilingly described Canada's prowess in the craft of secure gift-wrap.

The inexorable fact that there were something less than 100 veterans representing the somewhat fewer than 100,000 Canadians who landed in Italy,

invited a realization of this millennial ratio that silenced distraction and persuaded us to persist in recognizing the moment.

We flew over or drove past Campobasso south of Rome and we plied the waters from San Giovanni to Sicily. At Agira, we arrived at a completely Canadian place commemorating war—perhaps only one of two in the world outside Canada.

If Vimy is the first, then this is surely the second. Of all the war cemeteries, this harsh piece of ground below the symmetrical mountaintop of Agira—a place that only a mountain goat could love—is the sole war cemetery from the Italian Campaign where only Canadians from the Second World War are buried. It is a quintessentially Canadian place—remote and sparse yet blessed with expansive vistas.

Etna belched bits of smoke and ash in the distance. The terrain is harsh as the weather of All Saints Day was temperate and inviting—room temperature with a nice breeze.

A trio of Canadian dignitaries two of whom are Senators divided themselves along three linguistic and cultural lines (Italian, English and French) both at Agira and closer to the sea at Ispica to deliver in the three languages flawlessly what would have likely tested each of the three in the other two tongues. The whole is much greater than the sum of its parts.

In these days at Sicily, the veterans made their way through the gravestones, saluted, applauded, and remembered. They finally consummated their journey by walking the final twenty five yards of beach and reaching down to dip their fingers in the salty waves of the Mediterranean. They marvelled at the shallowness of the water and

suspiciously regarded the sand bars similar to those that kept the landing craft so dangerously far at sea in the warm pre-dawn darkness of July 10 1943.

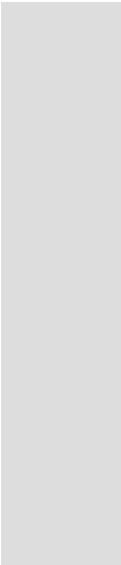
The final event at Ispica drew to a close and the veterans looked up, some doing so uneasily. For each veteran at a fortieth or fiftieth reunion knows that there is a possibility that there can be one more—but at the sixtieth, they know that the arithmetic of life expectancy and major events punctuated by a decade in between will mean that this may truly be their last. Not because they won't be healthy enough to do it once more, but because they know that their numbers will dwindle so significantly that it cannot be the same.

So they took their leave at Pachino and Ispica thinking now of the last time they left 60 years ago at Livorno before the sailing to Marseille and the ultimate reunion of the Canadian forces in Holland. Now as then, they have the same satisfaction—in honour without precedent, the task completed and with the knowledge of a job well done.

John Stapleton, Toronto

John Stapleton is a Commissioner with the Ontario Soldiers Aid Commission and Toronto based social policy consultant. He traveled independently with his father to Italy from October 24 to November 4, 2004 to observe the events commemorating Canada's role in the Italian Campaign during WWII.

Al Stapleton, 87 enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces on September 5, 1939 and was a Sergeant in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. He spent 20 months in Italy from July 1943 to March 1945 and had not returned to Italy since the War.



Membership and Subscription Fees

As a member you will receive the quarterly newsletter and supplement four times a year in the winter, spring, summer and fall and an interim newsletter (no supplement) at other times throughout the year. There is no subscription fee for veterans or spouses of veterans. If you are a son, daughter, relative or have a special interest in the society, the yearly subscription fee is £12, \$25 Canadian or \$20 US. Please make your cheque payable to The Monte Cassino Society. Please send cheques in pounds sterling to Judith Coote in England and cheques in Canadian or US dollars to Rosalind Galloway in Canada.



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

NA15141

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