

FOUR-PAGE PULL-OUT FEATURE PEACEKEEPERS DAY

The Shoreline
Journal

Peacekeepers Day Guest Speaker Herb Peppard Shares Experiences from WWII



Herb Peppard, guest speaker at the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony on August 9th at the Debert Military Museum, gave an entertaining presentation including many old familiar songs from WWII. (Harrington Photo)

By Linda Harrington

Herb Peppard was the guest speaker at the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony held at the Debert Military Museum on August 9th.

Seventy years ago Herb walked into the old Armory recruitment station in Truro. He says the recruitment officer asked him if the "fool of the family had been sent into the army" and he replied, "No, things have changed a lot since you joined up." This conversation rather set the tone for his military career.

Herb joined on Dec. 12th, 1940, fifteen months after the war started. He says he was afraid to join after all the stories he had heard, and read about, and he had promised himself he wouldn't join up until he had to. Eventually his

friends had all joined and so he decided it was time to join up as well.

When the recruitment officer asked what branch, Herb says he replied, "The Artillery". He thought if he was using the big guns he would be far from the front line. He stayed 1 1/2 years in the Artillery before joining the Canadian Parachute Battalion.

Herb soon discovered there was no place to train the Parachute division in Canada and they were sent to Fort Benny, Georgia. He says he was very nervous taking his first jump. He later transferred to the 1st Special Service Force, which was made up of Americans and Canadians and covered a wide variety of operations from mountain climbing and para-

chuting to amphibious assaults. When his training was over he was sent overseas where he landed in Casa Blanca, Africa and then on to Naples, Italy for some last minute training.

Mr. Peppard was wounded on the drive to liberate Rome. He recalls going down the side of a hill and being hit right in the thigh. "I didn't realize at first that I had been shot," he says. "It didn't hurt, just felt numb." A friend had also been hit by machine gun fire and when the medics arrived they took care of his wounds first, as they were more serious.

"I was terrified to look at the wound", says Herb. "They cut my pant leg off and told me I was one damn lucky soldier as all my privates were still intact. I remember saying, "Thank God". I had to wait about 2 hours, as they took my friend George on the stretcher first. Another friend helped me up the hill and into a fox hole, where he gave me some water. I was so happy my wounds were not more serious."



Myles Rushton(left) and Mike Taylor lower the flags to half mast during the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony at the Debert Military Museum. (Harrington Photo)

Mr. Peppard spent five months in hospital and was in England when the war ended. He remembers people going wild.

"There were 2000 Canadian personnel sailing for home. I will never forget the response as we sailed into Halifax Harbour. There were fire boats and thousands of people. When the band struck up to play "O Canada", there was not a dry eye in the place. We were so happy to be home and back to our loved ones and families. Many men met the girls of their dreams overseas and were married."

Many familiar songs were included throughout his talk at the Debert Military Museum and everyone joined in the sing along. "We will always remember the music and songs," he says. "It carried us through the worst conflict this world has ever seen."

Herb Peppard wrote a book about his experiences, "The light hearted soldier, a Canadian's exploits with the Black Devils in WWII". It was published in 1994.



Jack Sterling, John Flanagan, Ken Welton, Al Young, Tom MacDonald, Walter Perrin, Herb Peppard, Myles Rushton, Bob Hyslop, Mike Taylor, Rob Collins, Eugene Adshade, Dave MacPhee, and Earl Harvey- Sergeant at Arms (l to r) join piper Terry White (left) for a group photo following the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony at the Debert Military Museum. (Harrington Photo)



Some of the invited guests attending the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony on August 9th at the Debert Military Museum included: Museum President- Gordon Weatherby, Rev. Don MacQueen, MLA for Col. Musquodoboit Valley- Gary Burrill, Col. County Major Bob Taylor, MLA Col. North- Karen Casey, Robert George, Al Young, Herb Peppard, Walter Perrin, Tom MacDonald, Col. County Councillor Bob White, John Flanagan and Director of Business Development for CoRDA- Ron Smith. (Harrington Photo)



Piper Terry White leads the Colour Party- Earl Harvey (Srgt at Arms), Ken Welton, Dave MacPhee, Jack Sterling, Eugene Adshade and Robert Collins, followed by trumpet player Bob Hyslop, over to the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony at the Debert Military Museum. (Harrington Photo)



Debert Military Museum President Gordon Weatherby welcomed everyone to the National Peacekeepers Day Ceremony and introduced the guest speaker. (Harrington Photo)

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