

Supplementary Radio (SUPRAD) System Oldtimers Association

Annual Reunion - 'Service of Remembrance'

23 June 2024

Introduction / Welcome

Good morning. My name is Ray Lebeau, and on behalf of the Canadian Forces Supplementary Radio System Oldtimers Association committee members, Wayne Moore, Butch Whitlaw, Dave Berry, Bill Neelin and Karen Stacey, I want to welcome everyone. Thank you for taking the time to attend today's Annual Service of Remembrance. The purpose of this gathering of family members and friends at the site of the Gloucester Cairn, is to give us the opportunity to lovingly remember, and to celebrate, the wonderful lives of the Life Members, friends, and spouses, who have passed away since last year's 25 June 2023 service.

Service of Remembrance

Our family members and our friends mean the world to us. As we begin this Service of Remembrance, let us come together, hand in hand and heart to heart, to celebrate each one of these lives that was well lived. Their journeys enriched our souls with love and joy. The countless cherished moments that we shared with them will never be forgotten.

Although we grieve their loss, the precious memories we have of them will forever remain alive. A great way to honour our loved ones is to talk about our memories of them. The treasured memories of loved ones are the greatest gifts that we can share with family members and friends. The indelible marks left by their souls, touched our lives in so many wonderful ways. Those loved ones who are no longer with us were special and important in their own way. May we never forget that the dearly departed, whom we have known and loved, are intricately woven into our lives.

We should not cry because they are no longer with us. Instead, we should smile and be thankful for all of the enjoyable times that we got to spend with each one of them.

Because we were limited to only a handful of postings to SUPRAD coastal outstations, we became an intimately linked family. Our frequent tours of duty in Alert contributed towards cementing our life-long friendships. Our years of service as co-workers, and as friends, resulted in a special bond that cannot be broken.

Navigating through difficult times is always made much easier when we have the love and support of family members and friends. We have stood side by side through good times and through bad times, and we all have many memorable stories that could be told. Through the good times and bad, we have steadfastly remained close friends. Even when we have not been in contact with one another for a long period of time, when we do reconnect, we easily pick up right where we left off.

Thanks to the SUPRAD Oldtimers website and our 291'er Facebook, we are regularly reminded to keep in touch with one another through the monthly 'Buddy Check' system.

Another valuable resource for keeping in touch with our friends is through 'Monty's Monitors'. In memory of Monty Montgomery, (who passed away in February 2023), this support group was started by Karen Stacey, Scott McLean and Tracy Milne. At the present time, Monty's Monitors is a group of thirty-four volunteers who reach out to members of the SUPRAD family who are terminally ill. As well, they provide their support and assistance to anyone who is suffering with a psychological or physical injury.

The members of our SUPRAD family are very good at staying connected. For all of the e-mails, telephone calls, visits, GAGGLE get-togethers and Annual Reunions, I want to say thank you to all of those who have been taking the time to reach out and keep in touch.

On the subject of Oldtimers Association membership, I want to say how very thankful we are for the many new Life Members who have joined during this past year. A lot of the credit for these new members goes to Karen Stacey, who has been very proactive in recruiting recent retirees. I am sure most of our senior members can relate when I say that new members who are in their 50's, 60's and even early 70's are still youngsters. The future involvement of these younger . . . and might I say more energetic members, will play an important role in carrying our proud Association into the future. We welcome our new members with open arms and to Karen, we say thank you.

It always fills me with pride whenever I tell someone that even though I have been retired from the military for close to twenty years, I am still a member of a close knit group of life-long friends who love and care for each other.

Our Association

'Friends Forever'

Since 2005, with the exception of the 2020, and 2021 COVID lockdown years, members of the SUPRAD Oldtimers Association have been attending annual Services of Remembrance at the Gloucester Cairn. Before 2005, the services were held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #314 in the Village of Manotick. Before his passing in 2011, Ray Trudel acted as the Master of Ceremonies.

For the past thirty years, since 1994, thanks to the dedication and leadership of two very good friends, Wayne Moore, and Butch Whitlaw, we have been privileged to be members of the SUPRAD Oldtimer's Association. We should never forget the amount of work these two gentlemen have been doing for us, year, after year, after year. There is no doubt in my mind, that we sincerely appreciate all of their hard work and dedication.

Thank you Wayne.

Thank you Butch.

It's because of our SUPRAD Oldtimers Association that we have been able to stay in touch with one another from coast - to coast - to coast, and to continue to enjoy each other's valuable gift of friendship. Our website was started by Irv Finkleman, and managed for many years by Jim Troyanek. The members of our Association truly appreciate all of the work that was done by Irv, and Jim, and we give them our thanks.

Several years ago, the website was taken over by Dave Berry, who has done a tremendous amount of work to upgrade the site. If you have not been a regular visitor to this site, you should be, because it is

an invaluable resource for keeping up-to-date on what's happening within our SUPRAD family. As well, Dave designed a 'Locator Map' so you can see where all of your Oldtimers Association Life Member friends are living.

All military and civilian personnel who proudly served a tour in the Canadian Forces Supplementary Radio System or the Canadian Forces Information Operations Group are eligible to become Life Members of our Association. When the SUPRAD Oldtimers came into existence in 1994, we started with a membership of around 600 Life Members. As of today, Butch told me that his mailing list includes:

568 Life Members

130 non-member friends; and

25 widows who have requested to be kept informed of our happenings.

I am sure that we each know someone who served with us, who for one reason or another, has not yet become a Life Member. I would encourage you to invite them to join our proud Association. Instructions for becoming a Life Member can be found at the SUPRAD website: <https://supradoldtimers.ca>. And here's the best part, a Life Membership is a one-time payment of just \$20.00.

During our years of service, we were posted to:

Leitrim, CSE (771 Sqn) Ottawa, 771 Detachment Winnipeg (1993-1999), Gander, Coverdale, Masset, Ladner, Bermuda, Inuvik, Aklavik, Whitehorse, Frobisher Bay, Churchill and CFSRSHQ Detachment United States Field Station Augsburg (1989-1993). Because of the Canada / US Personnel Exchange Program, some of us served in several other out of country postings. Additionally, a number of our personnel spent time at sea as Electronic Warfare (EW) operators and Special Ops personnel in support of military operations.

We started, and completed, most of our Radioman Special (RS) trades training, as operators and as technicians, at HMCS Gloucester. When Gloucester closed in 1972, and RS rates were renamed MOC 291 - Communicator Research operators, the trades training was relocated to the Canadian Forces School of Communications and Electronics, Echo Squadron, in Kingston.

In addition to our limited posting opportunities, we served as members of Alert's 'Frozen Chosen' at the northern tip of Ellesmere Island. This small Signals Intelligence listening post has been given the Guinness Book of World Records distinction of being the most northerly permanently inhabited spot on Earth. Those who served in Alert, under exceptional circumstances, were awarded the Special Service Medal with the ALERT bar. Let it be known that our loving wives, who took care of the home front during our extended absences in ALERT, definitely own a piece of our Special Service Medals.

Scottish author George MacDonald said "A true friend is forever a friend". The official motto of our Oldtimers Association is 'Friends Forever'. Ralph Waldo Emerson got it right when he said: 'the only way to have a friend is to be one'. As members of the SUPRAD Oldtimers Association, we definitely know how to be friends, and we have lots of them! Better yet, and I repeat this every year. . . when we proudly say that we are 'Friends Forever', we don't just say it, we truly and honestly MEAN IT! We are FRIENDS FOREVER!

The members of our Association are called 'Oldtimers' for good reason. We have a shared history with one another. Many of us can go back thirty, forty and yes, even fifty plus years. As I said earlier, the members of the SUPRAD community are intimately linked. In addition to getting together at Leitrim GAGGLE's, and during our Annual Reunions, we have celebrated each other's promotions, birthdays and anniversaries and extended get well wishes to those recovering from an illness. We have shared in the excitement of becoming parents, grand-parents, great grand-parents and some even GREAT-GREAT grand-parents.

The Gloucester Cairn was built in loving memory of our comrades and family members and it was entirely funded through donations from the members of our SUPRAD Oldtimers Association. Mr. Van Geffen, who was born in Holland, constructed the cairn. He respected Canadians for their heroic efforts in freeing Holland in 1945. He placed a 1945 nickel, that he had been saving for years, in the cairn.

With Ren Molnar, acting as the Master of Ceremonies, the dedication of this Cairn took place on the 25th of June 2005. For all those who have not read the inscription on the plaque, it reads as follows:

Opened in 1943 as a Naval Radio Station utilizing High Frequency Direction Finding to aid in the combat against German U-boats in WWII, Gloucester evolved into a military Signals Intelligence communications and training establishment. This monument is dedicated to the men and women who trained and served at this site. Their many contributions to the security of this nation must never be forgotten. In War, or in peace, it matters not, the mission does not change.

Where the plaque reads that the monument is dedicated to the men and women who trained and served at this site, I want you to know that where it says women, this includes all of our supportive wives.

On this day, we have gathered at the Gloucester Cairn to lovingly remember, and to celebrate, the wonderful lives of SUPRAD Life Members, spouses and friends who are no longer with us. Today, we remember our beloved SUPRAD Oldtimers Association Life Members, spouses and friends who have passed away since our last reunion. For those who may not be aware, all those who were Life Members of our SUPRAD Oldtimers Association, are marked with small bronze crosses on copper leaves of the Life Member Trees that are displayed in the foyer of the Leitrim All Ranks Mess. Thank you to Lynn Wortman, and Butch Whitlaw, for the creation and installation of our SUPRAD Life Member Trees.

Because of the strong bonds of friendship that we shared with those who passed since our last reunion, we will always cherish the precious memories of the enjoyable times that we shared. Let's remember the best times, the love, the laughter, the song, the good life. Let's remember the lives they lived while they were strong.

Reading of the Names

Now, I will ask Rob Dunbar to please come forward and read the names of all those who have passed away since 25 June 2023.

(Rob will read the names of **24** Life Members and **45** Non-Member Friends and Spouses)

(reading of the names)

Thank you Rob.

In memory of all those SUPRAD Oldtimers Association Life Members, Non-Member Friends and Spouses and who are no longer with us, I would like to share this old Irish Funeral poem titled 'Remembered Joy'.

One of the poems great strengths is its positive outlook told from the viewpoint of the person who has passed away, urging those left behind not to spend too much time in excessive grief. Rather, it asks that we remember the thousands of tiny moments that made life special. It speaks of a life well lived.

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free!

I follow the plan God laid for me.

I saw His face, I heard His call,

I took His hand and left it all . . .

I could not stay another day,

To love, to laugh, to work or play;

And if my parting has left a void,

Then fill it with remembered joy.

A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss . . .

Ah yes, these things I, too, shall miss.

My life's been full, I've savoured much:

Good times, good friends, a loved-one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief –

Don't shorten yours with undue grief.

Be not burdened with tears of sorrow,

Enjoy the sunshine of the morrow.

Last Post

By bugler - Charles Armstrong

Minute of Silence

Please join me now by observing one Minute of Silence to remember all those SUPRAD Life Members, spouses and friends who proudly served with the Supplementary Radio System and who have gone before us.

Lament

By piper - John Virag

Rouse

By bugler - Charles Armstrong

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Response: WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Lord's Prayer

Gracious God, we give You thanks for the lives of all those we lovingly remembered today. In keeping with Your promise, we pray that our family members and friends have been welcomed into the glory of eternal life. You are an all powerful and loving God, and recognizing that all those around us are children of God, we ask that you bless and watch over each and every one of us. Merciful Father, as we lift up our prayers and praises as one, hear the words that You taught us, as we say together the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done

On earth as it is in Heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom

The power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

Final Comments / Thanks

In life and in death, the special bond of our strong friendships will never be broken. We were saddened by the loss of so many good SUPRAD family members and good friends during this past year. And we are thankful that we were able to come together today to lovingly remember them and to appreciate the wonderful difference that they made in our lives.

Thank You

Before we are piped to brunch, I would like to say Thank You to the following people:

Our piper from the RCMP Pipes and Drums - John Virag

Our bugler from the RCMP Pipes & Drums - Charles Armstrong

For donating the sound system – Vern Veinot

For preparing the grounds around the Cairn – Bob Todd

For the Greely Legion Brunch – Lynda Wyman

And thanks to Wayne Moore, Butch Whitlaw, Bill Neelin, Dave Berry and Karen Stacey, for their continued hard work and dedication towards keeping our close-knit SUPRAD family together.

Lastly, thanks to all of you for attending our Service of Remembrance. I wish you a safe and pleasant journey home.

March to Brunch

Please line up behind our piper John Virag , and follow him as he pipes us to the Greely Legion for a delicious brunch.

'Friends Forever' / Ray Lebeau