



# Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL  
JOURNAL OF  
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April 2016

## The Fighting Ballendine Family

This family's impressive service record begins with their father, John Ballendine, and his older brother James. Both earned fame as crack snipers in the Great War. The boys were of mixed white and aboriginal heritage. Their original name wasn't Ballendine. Their father was Frederick Ermineskin of Hobbema, Alberta. But Frederick chose the surname of his adoptive father Peter Ballendine because he admired the Scottish fur trader.

Frederick moved to Saskatchewan and married a local Metis girl named Sophie Gardiner Cardinal. They had two sons: James, born in 1882; and John, born on August 9, 1883.

On November 20, 1906 John married Marie Adelaide Oullette, born in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan on November 24, 1891. John was twenty-three years old, and Marie was just four days shy of her fifteenth birthday. The young couple spent three years farming before moving back to Battleford where John worked for a federal survey crew. Marie bore five sons, one of whom died in childhood. The surviving boys were Thomas, born in 1907, followed by John, Frank and Wilfred.

In 1914, John bid his young family farewell and headed overseas to fight in the Great War, along with his brother James. John enlisted in the 32nd Battalion and transferred to the 8th Battalion of the 90th Winnipeg Rifles. He was sent to France and established a record as a sniper, received several medals, and was mentioned in dispatches. He is credited with killing thirty-six Germans. "He had thirty-six notches on his belt,"

Wounded in 1916, John spent six months recovering in Scotland before being invalided home. After recuperating, he rejoined the Canadian Engineers but before he got back to France, the war ended. *His brother James joined the 22nd Saskatchewan Light Horse in 1911, and left with the first contingent in August 1914. He also transferred to the 8th Battalion, 90th Winnipeg Rifles, where he became a top battalion sniper. He was also severely wounded on April 13, 1916 during the second battle of Ypres, and after a long convalescence was invalided home. (James became the town shoemaker, and spent the rest of his working life in Battleford known as "Shoemaker Jimmy."*



Pictured here are James on the left and his younger brother John on the right. They are wearing pre-war militia uniforms belonging to the 22nd Light Horse, a cavalry regiment. Later both belonged to the 90th Winnipeg Rifles.

### CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
April 19th  
2015**

**7:00 pm**

At the  
Petty Officers' Mess  
HCMS Tecumseh



John's Wife Marie Ballendine shown with their first four boys

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During the long years that John was away, Marie worked hard to raise her four little sons, all of whom became very independent and self-reliant.

When her husband finally came home, he returned to survey work and family life. The couple had another five sons, but sadly, one died in childhood. After a long wait, the family was finally blessed by a little girl in 1935, named Doreen.

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CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
is a non-profit registered society  
which fosters the study of the  
military and the police, and the heritage of  
Canada, the British Empire, and the world  
as well as the preservation of military  
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar month  
at: Petty Officers' Mess  
HMCS Tecumseh  
1820 - 24th Street SW  
Calgary AB T2T 0G6

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April 2016

## Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on  
**Tuesday, April 15th, 2015,**  
**19:00 (7:00 pm)**

At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

Members are reminded that an offering of foodstuffs for the Legion Food Bank is considered your unofficial entrance fee to our regular scheduled meetings.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:

Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting Correspondence, Membership report Treasurer's report, Old business / New business Break, Show & Tell  
The President, **Kevin Roberts** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting for an informal time of fellowship.

The Ballendine brothers were handsome, strong, athletic boys, and six of them played on the Battleford Sunrise Millers hockey team. John Junior even travelled to Japan with the team in 1936 – the first Canadian hockey team to play in Japan. Wearing red and gold jerseys, the team played twenty exhibition games to much fanfare from the Japanese.

Three years later, World War Two was declared. The brothers were determined to carry on the family tradition, and join the Canadian Army. "They all decided they were going, and that was it," their sister Doreen said. "Nobody could stop them."

Over the next few years the boys enlisted and left home from the North Battleford train station. "We all went down to the station and saw them off, one by one. They hung their heads out of the windows and waved." Here's a photo of Edward leaving home. All the Ballendine brothers wanted to go overseas, but only five of them were successful. Happily, all of them survived.

Here, listed from oldest to youngest, are the eight brothers and their service numbers. (The "L" in the serial # means they were from Saskatchewan.)



Sergeant Tom Ballendine (L27241) enlisted in June 1940 with the Regina Rifles and was discharged in Debert, Nova Scotia, when the regiment went overseas. He served two years.



Private John F. Ballendine (L108791) enlisted in Regina in May 1943 and went overseas with the Canadian Infantry in 1944.

## Minutes of the last meeting

### Minutes of the meeting of the **Calgary Military Historical Society** Meeting held on March 15, 2016 at the Petty Officer's Mess, HMCS Tecumseh

1. **Meeting called to order** by President Kevin R. at 7:10 PM. 27 members in attendance including two (2) new members, Garret & Frank Lapp.
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Discussed and call for approval by Member Kevin R. moves that the Previous Meeting Minutes be accepted. Seconded by Bob M. Approved, Unanimous.
3. **Newsletter.**  
No omissions or corrections. Question Gary M. Is there still a newsletter mailed out? Reply Dave G. Only if requested.
4. **Treasures Report.**  
Report by Floyd S. Lists of monies collected from book auctions, donations etc. Listing of expenditures. Member Barry E. moves that the Treasures report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Mike C. Approved, Unanimous.
5. **Membership Report.**  
Report by Floyd S. Total 52 members (2 Life, 2 Hon., 47 regular). Member Barry E. moves that the Membership report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Member Mike C. Accepted, Unanimous.
6. **Old Business.**
7. **Announcements:**  
Membership. David G. A member does not need to "collect" to be a member.
8. **Correspondence:**  
E-mail - Military Museums of Calgary Symposium Saturday March 19, 2016. Registration required.
9. **New Business:**
  - Mike C. Post Office shipping & receiving issues.
  - Tariff Code #9705 applies to collections and collectors' pieces of zoological, botanical, mineralogical, anatomical, historical, archaeological, palaeontological, ethnographic or numismatic interest.
  - AACCA Easter Firearms Show, March 25/26, 2016.
  - MCC of C 2016 AGM, March 25, 2016 at Hotel Blackfoot.
  - Calgary Numismatic Society's Coin Show at Clarion Hotel, March 19th and 20th, 2016.
10. **Break** - Book Auction by Ticketmaster Neil.
11. **Show and Tell:**
  - Floyd S. - 2 German Gold Crosses in Cloth.
  - David G - 175<sup>th</sup> Battalion CEF insignia displays with cap, collar and shoulders.
  - Barry E. - Pacific Coast Rangers lot including: a book, cap badge, Nov.5, 1942 newsletter photo
  - Allan R. - Flea Market pickup - Italian Maltese Cross?
  - Alan M. - Ireland neutral in WW11, 250,000 British Service volunteers, all ostracised after war.
  - Rob W. - South African Service medal.
  - Bob M. - Lt Col Mary Dover OC, Canadian Women's Army Corps
  - Mike C. - Boer War display, Cdn Artillery and Cdn Scouts. Convalescing soldier pins display. Medals to trooper Pierce, Royal Light Horse.
  - John E. - US Marine stilettos. His friend Ed Borkofski's 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Battalion - jump boots & blackened stiletto.
  - Gary M. - Photos: His father in 1940 Calgary Naval Band and himself a drummer in 1961 Calgary Naval Cadet Band.
  - Brian H. - Cdn Booklets, Canada in the Spanish Civil War, Canadian Dead in Spain 1936. Pamphlet "I fought for Spain".
  - Herb J. - Korean medals: Norway - NORMASH Korean Service Medal. Sweden - Medal of merit 1950. Ethiopia - UN Medal, Ethiopian Service medal. Philippines - UN medal, Korea Medal & Philippines UN Medal
  - Daryl K. - Cdn 1960'6 bush jacket, 1914-1919 Star blank (Cast repo?), Mazeas collection cap badges used for his drawings. Women's Red Cross Cap.
12. **Adjournment:**  
Member Dave S. calls for motion to adjourn. Seconded by Indra R.  
Meeting Adjourned. 20:30





Rifleman Frank S. Ballendine (L27232) enlisted in the Regina Rifles in June 1940 and was honourably discharged after six months



Private Wilfred Ballendine (L 106779) enlisted in the Royal Canadian Medical Corps in 1943, and went overseas in February 1944.



Company Sergeant Major Edward C. Ballendine (L 27152) enlisted in June 1940 with the Regina Rifles. He went overseas as a sergeant and was promoted to company sergeant major in England. In June 1943 he volunteered to go to Italy, and transferred into the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.



Corporal Paul Ballendine (L 27152), after several attempts to join his brothers overseas, enlisted in February 1942. He was posted to Guelph and Listowel, Ontario, as an instructing corporal in infantry tactics and was honourably discharged in 1943.



Lance Corporal Benjamin R. Ballendine (L 27264) enlisted in June 1940 and went overseas with the Regina Rifles. With his brother Edward, he went to Italy in June 1943 and was attached to the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. He was a well-known sniper during the war.



Private Walter E. Ballendine (S.L. 110301), the youngest son, joined the army at age seventeen. He was made an instructing corporal and was stationed at Prince Albert for two years. When he was old enough to go overseas, he gave up his stripes and joined the Royal Canadian Medical Corps in May 1943. He finished serving in Holland.

**All the Ballendine brothers wanted to go overseas, but only five of them were successful. Happily, all of them survived.**