



Sabretache

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May 2017

William Overstreet Jr., was a captain in the U.S. Air Corps, and he famously flew

his plane beneath the Eiffel Tower in Nazi-occupied Paris in 1944, lifting the spirits of French troops on the ground. In 2009, he was presented with France's Legion of Honor award.

In the spring of 1944 Bill and his P-51C, the 'Berlin Express' were near Paris when the scene that is immortalized in the artwork here by Len Krenzler of Action Art took place.

Bill had followed this Bf109 from the bombers he was escorting when most of the German fighters left. The two planes had been in a running dogfight. The German pilot flew over Paris hoping that the heavy German anti-aircraft artillery would solve his problem and eliminate Overstreet and the 'Berlin Express', though Bill managed to get some hits in at about 1500 feet. The German's engine was hit, and Bill stayed on his tail braving the intense enemy flak. His desperation undoubtedly growing, the German pilot aimed his plane at the Eiffel Tower and in a surprising maneuver, flew beneath it. Undeterred, Bill followed right behind him, scoring several more hits in the process. The German plane crashed and Bill escaped the heavy flak around Paris by flying low and full throttle over the river until he had cleared the cities heavy anti-aircraft batteries.

For his valiant service, the French ambassador to the United States presented Overstreet with France's Legion of Honor at

the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia in 2009. Before the ceremony, Overstreet said that, if he lived long enough to receive the Legion of Honor, he would be accepting it in memory of his fallen brothers. In particular, he wanted to pay tribute to a friend, Eddy Simpson, who died fighting the Nazis on the ground so his comrades, including Overstreet, could escape.

Bill had completed his training at several air bases in the US. And then was shipped over to England when he was declared "Combat Ready". He was assigned to the 357th Fighter Group. On March 6, 1944 just after their first Berlin raid, the 357th received their first Citation, which stated: "On 6 March, 1944, the newly operational 357th Fighter Group provided target and



The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,
May 16th
2017**

7:00 pm

At the
Petty Officers' Mess
HCMS Tecumseh

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

Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on
Tuesday, May 16th 2017
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, **Alan Ross** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting for an informal time of fellowship.



withdrawal support to heavy bombardment aircraft bombing Berlin, which was the deepest penetration of single-engine fighters to that date. The 33 P-51 aircraft went directly to Berlin and picked up the first formations of B-17s just before their arrival over the city. They found the bombers being viciously attacked by one of the largest concentrations of twin-engine and single-engine fighters in the history of aerial warfare. From 100 to 150 single-engine and twin-engine fighters, some firing rockets, were operating in the immediate target area in groups of 30 to 40 as well as singly. Each combat wing of bombers was being hit as it arrived over Berlin and although they were sometimes outnumbered as much as 6 to 1, flights and sections of the 357th Group went to aid each combat wing as it arrived over the target, providing support in the air for over 30 minutes. Upwards of 30 enemy aircraft at a time were attacked by these separate flights and sections, and driven away from above and below the bombers. Some of the P-51s left their formations to engage enemy fighters below the bomber

level in order to prevent them from reforming for further attacks. Though fighting under the most difficult conditions and subjected to constant anti-aircraft and enemy aircraft fire, so skillfully and aggressively were their attacks on the enemy fighters carried out that not a single aircraft of the 357th Group was lost. In driving enemy fighters away from the bombers, 20 Nazi fighters were destroyed, one probably destroyed and seven others damaged. On withdrawal, one flight of five P-51s strafed a large enemy airfield in central Germany, damaging three twin-engine and single-engine aircraft on the ground and killing 15-20 armed personnel before regaining altitude and returning to the bombers."

After many more missions, his tour of duty ended in October, 1944 and Bill returned to the states. His next assignment was to teach at the gunnery school in Pinellas, Florida. Overstreet was released from active duty, but kept in Reserves. Retiring in 1984. Bill has been active and enjoying air shows and gatherings of WWII veterans through his long retirement, **Whenever the press interviewed him, he said, "I didn't do anything. We were a team"!** Bill passed away last year. **Another hero of a generation is gone**

Bill had many adventures as he relates in this story "Not long after (the March 6th Mission), I had a freak accident. I think it was a mission to southern France. While over enemy territory, a burst of flak cut my oxygen line. Since I was at about 25,000 feet, I soon passed out. The next thing I knew, I was in a spin, engine dead since the fuel tank it was set on was dry. Somehow, I recovered from the spin, changed fuel setting, got the engine started, and dodged the trees that were in front of me. Then, I looked at my watch. Ninety minutes were not in my memory. I had no idea where I was, but remembered where I had been headed so I reversed it. I was able to find the coast of France and headed for Leiston. By this time, I was low on fuel, so I landed at the Fourth Group base. The officer I talked with was Captain Mead, who had lived a couple of blocks from my home in Clifton Forge, Virginia. To top it off, the mechanic who repaired my plane was "Hot Cha" Tucker, a former schoolmate, also from Clifton Forge. I still have a picture of Tucker and me with a P-47. Many weeks later, this story got a lot of publicity – Lowell Thomas on radio, newspapers and TIME magazine."

Minutes of the last meeting of The Calgary Military Historical Society

Meeting held on April 18, 2017 at the Petty Officer's Mess, HMCS Tecumseh

1. **Meeting called to order** by President Allan R. at 7:05 PM. 26 members in attendance and 1 Guest "Susan" WWI researcher
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** No omissions or corrections. Member Bob M. moves that the Previous Meeting Minutes be accepted. Seconded by David G. Approved.
3. **Newsletter.** -No Issues or concerns.
4. **Treasures Report.** Report by Floyd S. Lists of monies collected from book auctions, donations etc. Listing of expenditures. Member Susan E. moves that the Treasures report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Dave S. Approved.
5. **Membership Report.** Report by Floyd S. Total 42 members (2 Life, 1 Hon., 39 Regular). Member David S. moves that the Membership report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Member Brian H. Approved.
6. **Correspondence:** None
7. **Announcements:** The MCC of C is hosting its Annual AGM & Convention April 14, 2017 in conjunction with the AACCA Easter Firearm Show. AGM dinner and auction event at the Hotel Blackfoot.
8. **Old Business.** Various members report on the 2017 AACCA Firearms Show.
9. **New Business:.** - David L. discusses his collection with the point that He as a resource is available.
- David S. request for spare Queen's Own Rifles WWII cap badges to be sent to a Dutch re-enactor unit who have adopted the QOR Regiment.

BREAK

10. Ticket book auction, conducted by David G

Note: A pair of Styrofoam display heads donated by **Brad M.** were supposed to be auctioned for the benefit of the club. Martin U. has purchased them. **Thanks Brad** for the donation in support of the Society.

12. Show and Tell:

Floyd S. - 2017 GAR event medal, General Custer Michigan Brigade event in Lansing Michigan.

Alan R. - WWI - Canadian Tank Corp. officer cap & collar badges; 58 Field Artillery, 102 & 221 Battalions & a WW II gilded artillery officers cap badge.

Martin U. - RCAMC WWII other ranks tunic and coloured service cap and a selection of insignia, pre-war, early and late war for a Col.

David S. Trip to Europe for Vimy events, Dieppe shingle rock and Juno Beach rock pickups.

Barry E. - WWI leather artillery shell carrier marked RCD #57 c/w 18lb shell mark II 1913.

David G. - WWI #10 Ambulance photo March 1916 and March 1919 photo of personnel left.

Medals to #10 members Harry Dewar, Calgary and Harold Porter, Winnipeg.

Bob M. - AACCA 2017 Show purchases, picked up a large selection at the show.

Dave L. - 3 Chaplain coloured service field caps, 3 communion kits, 2 Can & 1 US "Muslim".

Alan M. - 2017 AACCA display "Ireland in WWII. Discusses research.

James B. - 2017 Vimy event posters for free, Canadian Geographic 5m X 5m WWI Western

Front floor map, discusses educational activities.

Darrell K. - Can WWII entrenching tool, WWII PPCLI bronze cap badge.

Susan - WWI "Kitchener's Wood" research and excellent quality online images.

Garrett L. - Pair of WWI ID discs to 229 CEF Battalion, Moose Jaw, Sask."

Gary M. - Book "Victoria's Canadian Militia 1837-1901 by Rene Chartrand;

German 6.35 cal

handgun, his Father's WWII souvenir.

Adjournment:

President Allan R. calls for motion to adjourn. Member Floyd S. moves to adjourn. Seconded by Susan E. Approved.

Meeting Adjourned. 20:43



Bill being interviewed last year

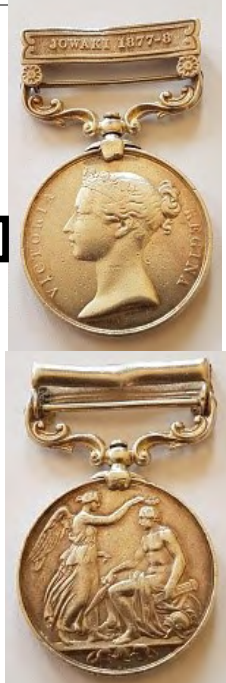
Thanks to Member Floyd S. for providing the story on Bill Overstreet

A recent request to our web site canwehelp@cmhs.ca

Dear_CMHS I have three medals which were my Great grandfathers. I need help in what is written on the rim/brim of the medals. My Great Grandfathers name was 'Sundar Singh' I am able to read on two medals "Soonder Singh" and the the third "Sundar Singh". I am told by family tha Sundar Singh was a "Daffadar" in the Bengal Cavalry, possibly 2nd. Do the inscriptions confirm this? The first medal is IGSM with 1877 Jowaki clasp, the second medal is Afganistan 1878-79-80. The third is the Victorian LSGC medal. Can you help and if so can I send photo Attachments. Thank you

Mr. Gurjit Singh Walia

India General Service Medal w Jowaki bar →



Tel-el-Kebir bar from missing Egypt Medal of 1882 and Khedives Bronze Star

Dear Sir... Your request to the Calgary Military Historical Society has been passed onto me to answer for you... I can confirm that only the 12 Bengal Cavalry were at both Jowaki in 1877 and Afganistan 1878-79-90 it is possible that your G. Grandfather served with them (the other units at Jowaki 2nd Punjab Cavalry and in Afganistan was 10th Bengal Cavalry)..... The miss spelt naming on the medals is not surprising as the medal lists were made up by British clerks and then sent to England to be named at the Royal Mint or a Private Contractor depending on how busy they are at the time..... The Long Service and Good Conduct medal (for 20 years service) would have been named in India at Delhi or Bombay..... The rank of Daffadar is the British Cavalry equivalent of Sergeant which will confirm he was in the Cavalry..... The Infantry and other units they were called Halvidar Some of these men were moved around from unit to unit and so therefore it is very possible that he served also in the 2nd Bengal Cavalry..... Your G. Grand Fathers military records should be held in the Public Records Office in London England in the Indian Army Section but these I am afraid are not on line and a personal visit or the hiring of a professional researcher which is very expensive..... Then again they may no longer exist as a very large amount of the WW1 and earlier records were destroyed by German bombing in WW2..... I hope this is some help. Mike.

Thank you for your quick and detailed reply. I have also sent photos to David. I do hope someone can determine the rank(s) of my G. Grandfather. Sundar Singh It is difficult getting shots as the inscription are worn. I know he received 50 acres of land. We assume 25 acres for every 10 years served. In the Punjabi language we say he received "dho murraba" "dho" means two and

"murraba" is 25 acres. The medals also survived the partiton of India 1947, as the family moved from now Pakistan into Present day India. Finally I have also sent a picture of the Tel-El-Kebir clasp, the medal, claw suspender has been lost. I know the 2nd Bengal served in Egypt in September 1882 and some re-search has suggested the 17th Bengal Cavalry was disbanded in 1882. Note the medals are inscribed "17 Bengal Lancers" and Soonder Singh After sending the pictures



Long service and Good Conduct (20 years)



Afganistan medal dated 1878-79-80

to Mike he responded : David.....The bar Tel-el-Kebir would have been attached to the Egypt Medal of 1882..... The medal was always issued with the Khedives Bronze Star..... **You could not have one without the other.....** The 2nd, and 6th Bengal Cavalry and the 13th Bengal Lancers were both at the battle of Tel-el-Kebar.....**So therefore one medal is missing.....**The naming on Indian medals are always a lot harder to read, especially with out a glass as they were Engraved rather than Impressed as the British issued medals.....Mike

Members. If you can provide additional information please contact Mr. Gurjit Singh Walia at gswalia58@gmail.com or Mike at qsamike@hotmail.com

History of 2nd Regiment of Bengal Cavalry

The 2nd Regiment of Bengal Cavalry was established as Gardner's Horse unit by William Linnaeus Gardner at Mainpuri and Farrukhabad in the year 1809. Later it was re-named as the 2nd (Gardner's) Local Horse in 1823. The regiment was modified as the 2nd Regiment of Bengal Cavalry in 1861 and was designated one of the Bengal Lancers in 1890. After the culmination of the First World War, the British [Government of India](#) re-organised and re-grouped the British army of India. The single battalion infantry regiments were amalgamated together to form multi battalion regiments. The 4th Lancers was joined 2nd Bengal Lancers regiment in 1921. The army battalion participated in a number military operations and conquests under the British East India Company and later served as a part of the British Indian Army. The 2nd Regiment of Bengal Cavalry was awarded with battle honours for Arracan, Sobraun, Punjaub ([Punjab](#)), Egypt (1882) and Tel El Kebir. **Source; www.indianetzone.com/63/2nd_regiment_bengal_cavalry.htm In the search area you can type in 17th Bengal lancers and also retrieve their history.**



2nd Regiment of Bengal Cavalry