

CWO Donald Norval Campbell, CD

Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Donald Norval Campbell was born in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on 12 October 1919. His family home was always full of music, and he started violin lessons at an early age. As time went on, he tried piano, guitar, as well as many other instruments and, by the 1930s, was on radio playing fiddle in a country music band. He worked as a pipe fitter at several wineries, manufacturing and chemical plants in the Niagara region, and by then had met his future life partner Mary Somerville Craig. They married on April 20th 1939.

When he enlisted in the Canadian Army on September 22, 1942, he was assigned to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps (RCOC) as a Millwright, but he later qualified as both a Garage Mechanic and a Machinist. His army basic training, which he completed in December 1942, was done in Cornwall. He was posted to the RCOC Engineering School in Barriefield, Ontario, just outside of Kingston. He progressed rapidly in rank, becoming Lance Corporal in November 1943, Corporal in August 1944, Lance Sergeant in November 1944 and Sergeant on October 2, 1945. When the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (RCEME) corps was founded in 1944, he was transferred to the new Corps.

In early 1946, he was allocated "emergency married quarters". The Barriefield Camp had surplus "H" huts and some of these were divided into apartments, four units per hut. He converted one end of an "H" hut into an acceptable place to live, and Mary and their young daughter Donna arrived shortly after, having lived with her family in Niagara Falls during the war. By 1950 new "permanent married quarters" were built and he, Mary and Donna soon moved across the road.

In the early 1950s he completed the Physical Training Instructor Course, RCEME Group 1 Instructor Course and Group 2 Instructor Course. He was promoted to Staff Sergeant in October 1951 and, upon his posting to 194 Workshop of Continental Europe that fall, to Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2).

During this early 1950s period at what was now the RCEME School in Barriefield, his love for all things music re-surfaced, and he joined the RCEME School Bugle Band. He played bugle, glockenspiel and the bass drum. At the Corps birthday celebrations of 1950, the members of the band were presented with white gauntlets, forage caps and dress drum cords. At the ceremony, he was presented with a leopard skin (bass drummer's apron). With all these new trimmings the band looked spectacular and played accordingly. In the fall of 1951, the band (about 30 strong) competed in a tattoo sponsored by the Prince of Wales Own Regiment in Kingston and the RCEME Bugle Band won the competition. Hearty celebrations followed!

On 12 November 1951, he sailed on the MV Fairsea from Quebec City to Rotterdam with his new unit, 194 RCEME Workshop, 27 Canadian Infantry Brigade. The brigade was part of the continental Europe NATO forces, set-up for the defence of Western Europe. Initially the brigade's troops were in a "tent city" midway between Hannover and Hamburg, Germany. The encampment included more than 1,700 tents. Later his unit moved into the Chatham Barracks near Hannover. During that deployment the brigade conducted regular re-deployments and exercises, including river crossings. In December 1952 his tour in Europe ended and the troops departed Liverpool, UK, arriving in Canada on 15 December 1952.

Posted back to the RCEME School, he returned to instructing. In July 1954 he completed the RCEME Group 3 Instructor Course. During this posting he remained involved with the RCEME School Bugle Band. He also started curling, a passion Mary shared for many more years. In the summer, he golfed every chance he got and had a pretty good handicap.

On 25 July 1955, he sailed aboard the Canadian Pacific liner, Empress of Australia, to Liverpool for another four-months-long deployment in continental Europe. On September 17, 1955, he completed an All Arms Drill Course in Pirbright, England. He returned to Canada aboard the Empress of Scotland, departing England on 12 November 1955 and arriving in Montreal on 18 November 1955.

During the period from February 1957 to September 1959, he was employed as Company Sergeant Major (CSM) of Apprentice Training Company of the RCEME School. During this posting he completed the WO & NCO Instructor Course. In January 1959, at the Emergency Measure Operations (EMO) School in Arnprior, he completed the DND Rescue Course with distinction.

In July 1959 he was posted to 56 Canadian Infantry Workshop, a formed Canadian Unit within the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), and deployed to Rafah, Egypt. He held the appointment of Company Sergeant Major (CSM) of that independent unit. The unit arrived in Egypt in September 1959 and returned to Canada in July 1960. As is often the case on deployments, the technicians of the workshop adopted a few mascots. A well-kept photo album shows that a very young shabby brown donkey was first adopted by the troops and could be seen inside the workshop gates greeting visitors. She, the donkey was a lady, was referred to as Frances. Later, two young errant dogs became part of the landscape in the tent line. They were named Sandy and Skogie and the soldiers spoiled them. All three "mascots" became part of the hand-over plans for succeeding workshop units.

After his posting to Egypt, he returned to the RCEME School to the appointment of CSM of Regimental Company. On 1 January 1966, he was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 (WO1) and appointed Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of the RCEME School. He continued curling seriously. During his time as RSM at the RCEME School, he skipped a rink that won the 14th Company RCEME Trophy that was emblematic of the curling supremacy amongst RCEME units in Ontario. Another moment of curling glory for him occurred at the Kingston Garrison Curling Club, during their annual O'Keefe 24-Hour bonspiel, when the team he skipped scored two seven-enders in three games and won the competition.

In the summer 1968, Chief Warrant Officer (the newly-unified Canadian Armed Forces equivalent to WO1) Campbell became Base Chief Warrant Officer of Canadian Forces Base Kingston. He served in this capacity until June 1971, at which time he became the first School RSM of the newly created Canadian Forces School of Aerospace and Ordnance Engineering (CFSAOE), located in Borden, Ontario. CFSAOE was the unified and integrated composite of the former Army and Royal Canadian Air Force engineering schools. He served in this capacity until his retirement on 23 August 1974, having completed 32 years of military service.

After retirement, he and Mary moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake spending their winters in Lake Seminole, Florida. They moved back to Kingston in 2005. He was a member of the Royal Edward of Cataraqui Lodge

#92 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (AF & AM), a Life Member of the RCME Association and a member of The Canadian Legion Branch 560.

CWO Campbell died on February 5, 2011, at St Mary's of the Lake Hospital in Kingston, in his ninety-second year. He was survived by Mary, his beloved wife of 71 years and their only child Donna.

CWO Campbell was awarded the following medals and decorations:

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (CVSM)
- War Medal (1939-1945)
- Special Service Medal with NATO/OTAN bar
- Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal
- United Nations Emergency Force Medal (United Nations)
- Canadian Centennial Medal (1967)
- Canadian Forces Decoration (CD) with two clasps