

Maj Norman “Norm” A. Graham, CD

Major Graham was born on 13 Feb 1927 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. In 1944 when he turned 17, he joined the Canadian Training Corps, a military group who took 17-year-old recruits and taught them a trade. Norm joined the regular army the following year and was promoted to Cpl in Oct 1946 and Sgt in Nov. 1947. In 1949, he was selected to attend a “Tiffy Course” in England where he met his future wife, Jean Dryson, and was promoted to SSgt while on course.

In 1954, he was recommended for officer training. However due to the shortage of Classified Officers billets in RCEME, he received his commission in the Royal Canadian Artillery and was promoted to Second Lieutenant on 1 Jan 1956. In 1957, he was transferred back to RCEME with a Regular Commission.

Maj Graham’s first RCEME posting was to the School in Kingston where he was a Platoon Commander in Apprentice Company and later Asst Chief Instructor. In 1960, he was appointed Commanding Officer of 2 CIBG LAD in Camp Petawawa and promoted to Capt. In 1962, he was posted to Germany as 2IC of 4 Field Workshop. It was in this appointment in 1965 that he established the practice of doing a car raffle to raise funds to help defer the costs of celebrating Corps anniversaries. On his return to Canada, he was promoted to Major and served in Ottawa and Kingston. In May 1970, he was posted to Ghana with the Canadian Armed Forces Training Team Ghana (GAFTTG). He retired with the rank of Major in 1974. Throughout his military career Maj Graham was recognized for his excellent communication skills and outstanding organizational abilities.

After his retirement, he maintained his military connections with the army by joining the Electrical Mechanical Engineers Association, serving as its president from 1985-1987. In 1989, he sponsored the printing of tickets for the first car raffle that became one of the main fund-raising initiatives to raise funds for the celebrations of the RCEME 50th anniversary in 1994. In 2005, he was made an honorary lifetime member of the EME Association.

Retiring to Brantford, Ontario in 1974, he embarked on a second 30-year career by purchasing his first McDonald's restaurant. Over the years he owned and operated several McDonald's restaurants in the Brantford area and received many awards for their operating excellence. He became the first president of the McDonald's advertising and marketing cooperative. He served on the board of directors of several companies including: the Needler Group, Dafoe and Dafoe and Blarek Inc. His other business interests included co-ownership of Goliger's Travel Agency in Brantford. Always active in the community, he served on the board of Farringdon burial ground and Farringdon Church. He was a past president of the Brantford Rotary Club and a founding member of Crime Stoppers Brantford. As a member and later Chairman of the Visitor and Convention Bureau at the Chamber of Commerce, he was instrumental in bringing a tour train to the city to boost tourism. The boys and girls club were another one of his interests and he served on the board for 10 years including President in 1980. In 1995 he chaired a successful fundraising campaign to build a new boys and girls club. In 2004, he and his second wife Barbara retired to Kingston Ontario.

In 2007, Maj Graham published a book titled “From the Barrack Room to the Boardroom”. It is the story of a unique man’s journey through life, the obstacles he encountered and the methods he used to forge two successful 30-years careers.

Sadly, Maj Graham passed away peacefully on 30 Nov 2019.

Medals and Decorations

Major Graham was awarded the following CF medals and decorations.

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (CVMS)
- War Medal (1939-45)
- Special Service Medal with NATO bar
- Canadian Armed Forces Training Team Medal (Ghana)
- Canadian Forces Decoration (CD)