



Sabretache

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The Battle of Loon Lake (Steele Narrows Battle) June 3rd , 1885

On June 3, 1885, the last battle of the North-West Rebellion occurred between Cree followers of Chief Big Bear and Canadian scouts lead by Sam Steele at Steele Narrows. The Cree band included Chief Little Poplar , Woods Cree chief Cut Arm and Wandering Spirit. Following a small skirmish with government forces at Frenchman’s Butte, they arrived at a area now called Steele Narrows. They were accompanied by a number of hostages and prisoners. When the Cree reached Loon Lake, they stopped to rest.

An eight year old White boy later reported that he heard one of the Chiefs, Little Poplar, outline his plans:

“After resting in the wilderness, Little Poplar said the Indians would emerge and capture Battleford and Prince Albert, killing all the Whites. After that, they would take a steam paddle-wheeler down the river and across the big lake to Winnipeg. Here they would join the Metis and kill all the Whites. Then they would take a train to Montreal, kill all the Whites there and, finally, take a big boat to England and kill everybody there.”

Obviously, Little Poplar did not have as much understanding of the White man's world as Big Bear and the other chiefs did. The next morning, 47 White troops, known as Steele's Scouts caught up to the Natives. At ten o'clock in the morning, they attacked. One group of Steele's Scouts went through the Cree camp, hoping to set the White captives free, and the other group cleared the Cree off a nearby hill. There was fierce fighting. A bit later, from another hill, Wandering Spirit encouraged his warriors to attack. But many of the Natives had little impact on the fighting because they were short of ammunition and were firing stones. The fighting gradually died down as the Natives retreated into the safety of the bush.

It has been recorded that five Cree were killed. But the one group of Steele's Scouts claimed they killed five and the other group claimed an additional seven. Chief Cut Arm was among the killed. While none of Steele's Scouts died, seven of them were wounded bad enough so they needed medical attention. As well, during the turmoil, for various reasons, three Natives were murdered.

The Natives moved further through the bush. One of the prisoners described seeing Wandering Spirit at this time. She reported that:

“We saw, coming down the south hill, Wandering Spirit, a sad and dejected figure. His hair when we first knew him was jet black; but now it was almost white.” [He was about 40 at the time.]

A little later, the Cree found out from their scouts that the White soldiers were coming from all directions. The Cree let their prisoners loose. In the weeks that followed some of the Cree circled back to Fort Pitt where they gave themselves up. Wandering Spirit had joined this group because he had also decided to give himself up. A few of the others headed to safety in the United States.

Big Bear was able to elude the soldiers. He traveled for a hundred miles with his twelve year old son and a councillor. It was July 2nd when he entered a camp near Fort Carlton looking for food. The police were called and he was taken prisoner.



Sam Steele



Illustration of the Battle of Loon Lake

CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,
May 19th.
2015**

7:00 pm

At the
Petty Officers’ Mess
HCMS Tecumseh

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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 19th, 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.

Wandering Spirit, KAPAPAMAHCHAKWEW (Papamahchakwayo), occasionally known as **Esprit Errant**), war chief of a band of Plains Cree;

From the fragmentary evidence concerning Wandering Spirit's earlier life, he seems to have been the ideal Plains Cree warrior. In appearance he was tall and lithe with an arresting countenance distinguished by large piercing eyes, a long straight nose, and thick curly hair. His voice had a smooth, velvet quality and though usually soft could rise to ringing tones. A member of the band that followed Big Bear he attained the prestigious position of war chief, an office separate from the social chieftainship held by Big Bear, as a result of his daring battle exploits. He was reputed to have killed between 11 and 13 warriors of the Blackfeet, hereditary enemies of the Crees – more than any other member of the band. His unique war bonnet was made of a whole lynx skin looped double with the head fixed to the tail, open at the top, and decorated with five eagle plumes.

1845- 27 Nov. 1885 by hanging at Battleford (Sask.). He was survived by at least one daughter



Big Bear also known as **Mistahi-maskwa** (1825 – 17 January 1888) was a powerful and popular Cree chief who played many pivotal roles in Canadian history. He was appointed to chief of his band at the age of 40 upon the death of his father, Black Powder

Many people felt Big Bear would be found 'not guilty' as he had tried to stop the Massacre at Frog Lake and tried to protect those that were taken prisoner. At the time of the trial, Big Bear was 60 years old. The trial was confusing for Big Bear as the trial was in English, and had to be translated into Cree. Hugh Dempsey has stated in his book, that Stanley Simpson, a man who was taken prisoner at Fort Pitt, was the only man to appear for the Prosecution. Much of the evidence was in favour of Big Bear innocence. The evidence was clear that Big Bear had not taken part in killings at Frog Lake or the looting and taking of prisoners at Fort Pitt. However, Big Bear was found guilty of treason and sentenced to three years at Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba. In 1887, after serving two years of his sentence, Big Bear was released due to failing health conditions. Big Bear died soon after being released on the Poundmaker Reserve in January 1888 at 62 years of age.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held April 21,2015

Meeting called to order by Pres. Kevin R.. at 7:13 AM .

Minutes of previous meeting questioned by the usual suspects. Declared no more errors or omissions than usual and moved to accept by Bob McP. and seconded by Mike C. Unanimous

Newsletter. Discussion of main story .

Membership report. Brian H gives membership report. 45 members which is down 2 from last year.

Treasures report. Treasurer Brian H. gives report which lists donations and funds received and also funds paid out. Brian H. moves that the membership accepts treasurers report and is seconded by Mike C. Accepted by all members.

Old Business. - Gun show report from Easter show. Discussion follows. Over 980 tables rented and approximately 300 are military. Attendance was over 10,000.

New Business - Mike C.- States that there is a rumour that a Canadian Soldier has been nominated for a Victoria Cross and a investigation is proceeding. This would be a action that took place in Afghanistan. Discussion on auction site that was mentioned last meeting. A number of members are taking part. Site is explained to others that are interested. **www.the-salesroom.com Notifies you of current auctions (live) in Europe. Click off boxes that your interested in and they will notify you. Warning ADDICTIVE Note: Make sure you read the small print re; commissions charged.**

Break. Draw for old books by ticket master Neil. Many happy winners

Show and Tell

Brian H.-Article from local newspaper 1942 which states a Canadian Army Train visited Settler showing weapons of war. Discussion follows and it was suggested that Savings Bond Drive was tied into this.

David G. –Grandfathers medals and story on 100th anniversary of Battle of Ypres.

Al. –reports that the first fire up of the Lancaster Bombers engines will occur in Nanton this weekend.

Marjorie-Questions about getting records from the Gov't archives and discussion follows on best methods.

Barry E.-Trade badges WW! Trumpeter and drummer badges.

Martin U.– Records , photos, paperwork and badges from sister in laws relative. Roy Murray. Royal Scottish Essexs. Served in 4 regiments.

Mike C. Canadian WW2 DSO Medal Calgary Tanks. Boer and WW1 medals for Lt. Edison Lynn includes DSO and military cross awarded April 22 1915 Gassed at Ypres.

Bob McP. WW1 silk embroidered cards, Chinese medal, Mexican Medal found from shipwreck in 1743 Al D. Shows 2 different Mothers memorial cross to his father who went down with the HMCS Ottawa that was torpedoed in 1943.

Darrel. Badges from Forestry Corp. WW1 and WW2. Cleaning kit and various fighting knives from different military units.

Garry.– show part of display that he has shown at different show. 300 years of military history from his family. He has won awards for his display.;

John E.– talks about previous meeting hand grenades shown and will update us on further finds.

Meeting Adjourned Moved by Floyd S. and seconded by Mike C.

**Member Brian H. has enclosed a
notice of a pending auction for books from John McLeod's collection.
Note; This auction will happen at the JUNE 16th Meeting.**

Squadron Leader Bob Johnson. Robert Gordon Johnson, born in 1917, was the son of a Canadian Pacific Railroad switchman. He was educated at the McIntyre Collegiate school in Winnipeg. After working on a farm and driving a truck he joined the Fort Garry Horse in October 1939. A year later he switched to the RCAF. After being trained on Harvards he arrived in Britain just after the battle of Britain. He was then sent to India, where he joined No. 28 Squadron in the Imphal Valley.

On April 18, 1944 Johnson was attacking ground targets over Kohima when his starboard cannon exploded, ripping off all the wing coverings and forcing him to land with wheels up at 175mph. He sustained only minor injuries.

On January 14 1945, Johnson, a pilot with No 28 Squadron, RAF, was leading a two-man sortie some 150 miles from base and photographing a boat being loaded with drums of petrol when his Hurricane was hit by an anti-aircraft round. The round just missed his legs but blew a hole in the instrument panel. As his aircraft went down he managed to cross the river and establish radio contact with his No 2, Flt Lt Gawain Douglas, who replied: "Good luck, old chap", just before Johnson bailed out. Douglas subsequently failed to locate him, but his parachute was immediately spotted by the enemy as he landed near Pagan. Clutching his homemade escape kit of maps, compass, torch and rations, Johnson started to run some 500 yards ahead of a pursuing posse of Burmese, led by a Japanese sergeant. He dived into a crevice beneath a bush, where he lay undiscovered for the rest of the day. Having consulted his maps, Johnson decided to make for a junction of two streams which would lead towards the Allied lines. He set off by moonlight, but was soon driven off his chosen path by the sound of voices coming from a village. For the next six nights he struggled on in what he hoped was the right direction; but finding no water to drink, he became delirious. It was only on coming to some paddy fields that he was able to suck some water from the bottoms of rice stumps. On reaching a pond he drank the dirty water until he was sick, but discovered he could think clearly again while lying down. Later a clear stream enabled him to fill up his canvas water bag.

On the 12th night Johnson became completely lost and had to double back, on one occasion stealing past a sleeping Japanese soldier guarding rafts loaded with bamboo baskets. At 2am on the 18th day he heard a twin-engined aircraft overhead and flashed his name in Morse, but to no avail. Hearing voices at dawn, he hid behind a thorn bush and watched as a Japanese soldier slowly approached with rifle at the ready. Johnson drew his knife and jumped on the soldier. As they struggled on the ground, the soldier dropped his rifle and Johnson plunged his knife into the man's back.

Springing up, Johnson then ran along a cart track, ducking behind some more bushes as six bullock carts passed by loaded with Japanese soldiers.

That night he made his way towards a hill where he had spotted a Dakota dropping supplies. But on seeing three Indian soldiers he raised his hands and was greeted by tommy-gun fire – the men apparently having assumed, from the flying helmet he was wearing, that he was Japanese.

The next evening he walked to the bottom of the hill, took off his shirt to show his white skin and met four Burmese peasants who were cooking rice. In return for money they reluctantly agreed to take him towards the Allied lines. Finally Johnson met some more Indian soldiers, whom he asked to take him to their CO. He had been on the run for 23 days and was awarded an MC – one of a handful of airmen to be so honoured – for the bravery and resourcefulness he had shown during his escape.

Looking back, Johnson recalled how he had once found the bodies of members of a captured Army patrol who had been hanged by the Japanese in the jungle. Though he did not enjoy the business of killing, he recalled: "You had to. And because of the way the Japanese treated our people, I was really kind of glad to do it." After his escape from the Irrawaddy, Johnson never flew operationally again. Instead he was ordered to give lectures on survival to squadrons in India and Ceylon and to personnel on aircraft carriers preparing for the invasion of Japan.

On returning home in 1946 he married Shirley Laver, with whom he had four sons and a daughter.

He joined No 402 (City of Winnipeg) Squadron, flying Vampire jets at weekends for three years while working as an insurance salesman. He discovered an enthusiasm for insurance claims adjusting and after spells in Detroit and Georgia he moved to Prince Edward Island, where he worked as a loss adjuster until his retirement in 1977.

Squadron Leader Bob Johnson, died October 30 2014



NOTICE - Pending Auction
To be held – 16 June, 2015

Below is a selection of books from John McLeod's collection. It was one of John's final wishes to have some of his reference books auctioned off at a club meeting. Many are out of print and hard to come by. All proceeds to be John's final gift to the club.

Please note: The auction will be held at the clubs regular June meeting. If you are out of town or not able to attend the meeting and are interested in some of the lots, this gives you time to contact someone to bid on your behalf.

THE LIST OF BOOK LOTS ARE SHOWN BELOW FOR YOUR REVIEW

- 1 The Concise Lineages of the Canadian Army 1855 – Date**
 By C.H. Stewart Published 1980
- 2 Flying Headgear of the World 1934 – 1945**
 By J. Weld Published 1980
- 3 Buttons of: The Canadian Militia, Army, Naval, Air Force 1900 – 1990**
 By E. Smylie Published 1995
- 4 Serial Numbers of the C.E.F.**
 By E.H. Wigney Published 1996
Canadian – Foreign Awards, Awards to Nursing Sisters, Mentioned in Dispatches WWI 1914-1919
 By J. Wallace Published 2001
- 5 Canadian General Service Medal Roll 1866-70**
 By J. Thyen Published 1998
The Medal Roll of the Red River Campaign of 1870 in Canada
 By R.W. Irwin & G.H. Neale Published 1982
- 6 Skinners Horse**
 By C. Rothero Published 1979
Coronation and Royal Commemorative Medals 1887 – 1977
 By H.N. Cole Published 1977
Canadian Medal Rolls - Distinguished Conduct Medal & Military Medal 1939-1945, 1950-1953
 By M. Ashton Published 1983
- 7 The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army**
 By Authority of Minister of National Defence Published 1964
- 8 Jane's Aerospace Dictionary**
 By B. Gunston Published 1980
 "Appears that any word, term or acronym to do with aircraft/aviation is in here"
- 9 3 Volume Group: Military Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal, Distinguished Service Order of CEF**
 By D.K. Riddle & D.G. Mitchell Published 1991
- 10 Red Berets '44 - The British Airborne Forces in 1944 (Magazine Format – 115 pages – Ex. Library)**
 Published by London News **OF NOTE: Has Roll of Honour – List of Airborne Personnel Killed or Died of Wounds on D. Day and in subsequent battles of 1944.**