



# Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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July Extra #3, 2020

SERGEANT ROBERT MILTON CATO, ESQ.  
Born on the Caribbean Island of St. Vincent , he would  
join the Canadian army in 1939. After the war he would  
go on to become the Prime Minister of St. Vincent

**Article researched and compiled by Members  
Indra Teekasingh and Allan Ross**

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## Editors Note:

Last week we had a article on **PRIVATE JEREMIAH HENRY JONES, C.F.M.D.S. 106<sup>th</sup> Battalion Nova Scotia.** It was Researched and compiled by **Members Indra Teekasingh and Allan Ross**

It stirred a memory and I thought that I had seen or read something about Jeremiah Jones before. After some searching this week I found my July 2009 newsletter on the #2 Construction Battalion and its “Colored” members. The last article was a story from the Truro Daily News dated August 17th, 1917. Its about “Pte. Jerry Jones” and the D.C.M. recommendation.

We know from last weeks article that it never was awarded, The July 2009 newsletter is shown on Page 4 and 5

**Page 6 copy of original #2 Construction recruitment poster**

**Page 7 A war story “shotguns” WW1**

**Page 8 More nostalgia pictures**

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
The 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

**Acknowledgements and Thanks**

The March supplement was provided by President Dave Love.

**The 1st April Extra was by Rory from the Boer War Forum. We thank him for allowing us to publish his work.** It was forwarded to us by long time member Mike Clare

The 2nd April Extra article was researched and provided to us by Member Garrett Lapp

**The 3rd April Extra paper was researched, and provided by Member Michael Clare**

**The 4th April Extra article was provided by Member Tim Popp**

The May Extra #1 article was provided by Member Roy Akins

The May Extra # 2 article was provided by Member Garrett Lap

The May Extra # 3 is a reprint of 2015 newsletter

The June Extra #1 & 2 was Part 1 of 3 by Dave Love

The June Extra #3 was provided by President Dave Love

The June Extra #4 was provided by David Gale and "button" story by Dave Love

July Extra # 1; Canso story by David Gale and the "Bad Angel" story by Glenn Skene

July Extra # 2 by Michael Clare, Indra Teekasingh & Allan Ross

**July Extra article contributed by Indra Teekasingh & Allan Ross**

**SERGEANT ROBERT MILTON CATO, ESQ.****1st Canadian Volunteer Army**

Sergeant Robert Milton Cato was born June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915 on the Caribbean Island of St. Vincent. His life had been no easy path. He won a scholarship to the local grammar school in St. Vincent but couldn't find employment until he became an articulated clerk at the age of 26. In 1945 he enlisted with the 1st Canadian Volunteer Army, serving throughout the North-West Europe campaign during the Second World War. In 1948, after reaching the rank of sergeant he was demobilized - left the army. He then studied Law in London with fellow student Pierre Elliot Trudeau and was called to the bar in 1949.



Sergeant Milton Cato in Uniform while with the 1st Canadian Volunteer Army. His Sergeant's stripes clearly visible on his right arm.

Image: Facebook.

In 1951 at the age of 35, he married Lucy Claxton and returned home to St Vincent to practise as a lawyer. Cato however was an instinctive politician. Now that he had experienced life outside of the Caribbean, he deeply resented the atmosphere of poverty, neglect, and general drift that seemed to pervade his home Island of St Vincent. Shifting his carrier into politics, in 1956 he co-founded and became leader of the St Vincent Labour Party. He led the opposition until 1967, when he assumed the office of Chief Minister. Following his election victory, his title was changed to Premier in 1969, and the Island of St Vincent achieved Associated Statehood. The Island was on it's way to independence. From 1979 to 1984 Cato became the first Prime Minister of the new, independent state of St Vincent and the Grenadines. His prime loyalty was to his state. He was meticulous, and shrewd. Quicker than most to assess the depth of American and Canadian interest as the West Indies ceased to be British, he negotiated skilfully for aid from all three, tailoring his tactics to their sometimes opposing aims. In the end his achievements were notable.



Sergeant Milton Cato on base in North West Europe.  
Image: Facebook



The transition of those backward islands of 40 years ago into today's well-founded state vividly reflects Milton Cato's drive and vision. And that, to him, was reward enough. Milton Cato died on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997 at the age of 82. He is laid to rest on his home Island of St Vincent.

Milton Cato in office as Prime Minister of St Vincent.  
Image: The Caribbean Current



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July 2009

"It was a lovely spring day when the Battalion came marching down Ochterlone Street. I was only a young girl but I can still remember that day. The band was playing the Colonel Boggey March. The soldiers all looked so smart. Their buttons and boots were shining, and they were marching proudly and straight. It was just a picture to behold, it was splendid. A day or two later they all sailed away to France. I'll never forget that parade as long as I live." Ms. Edith Colley, March 1917

*"This is not your war; this is a white man's war. We don't need your kind; we'll call you if we need you."*

*A number of volunteers from Pictou County joined No. 2 Battalion and served overseas in some of the war's most famous battles. As a construction unit they were called upon to do many things to support the front lines, such as caring for the wounded, building roads and bridges and diffusing land mines. Often working in unprotected areas just behind the lines, they faced mustard gas and the danger of enemy field guns. Some were killed in action. Many others were wounded in representing their province and country with distinction.*



**In This Issue:**

- Minutes from the last meeting
- Dispatches from the front
- Notice of next meeting
- 

NOTHING IS TO BE GAINED BY BLINKING FACTS, THE CIVILIZED NEGRO IS VAIN AND IMITATIVE; IN CANADA HE IS NOT IMPELLED TO ENLIST BY A HIGH SENSE OF DUTY; IN THE TRENCHES HE IS NOT LIKELY TO MAKE A GOOD FIGHTER; AND THE AVERAGE WHITE MAN WILL NOT ASSOCIATE WITH HIM ON TERMS OF EQUALITY," FURTHER, "IN FRANCE, IN THE FIRING LINE, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR A BLACK BATTALION, C.E.F., IT WOULD BE EYED ASKANCE; IT WOULD CROWD OUT A WHITE BATTALION; AND WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RE-INFORCE." "NO WHITE OFFICER WOULD ACCEPT ON ALL BLACK PLATOON. W.G. GWATKIN, MAJOR GENERAL

**CMHS Meeting**

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
July 21, 2009**

**7:00 PM**

At the  
Petty Officers' Mess  
HCMS Tecumseh



Band of No.2 Construction Battalion, c. 1917. During the First World War, most African Canadians could demonstrate their patriotism only in a segregated army unit.

To Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, Ottawa

Dear Sir:

The colored people of Canada want to know why they are not allowed to enlist in the Canadian militia. I am informed that several who have applied for enlistment in the Canadian expeditionary forces have been refused for no other apparent reason than their color, as they were physically and mentally fit. Thanking you in advance for any information that you can & will give me in regards to this matter I remain yours respectfully, for King & Country.

Arthur Alexander,



.In 1916, Rev. White enlisted in the No. 2 Construction Battalion, an all black segregated unit in World War I. He was the only black chaplain in the entire British Army and was a commissioned officer serving with the rank of Captain. He experienced rejection, because he was not considered acceptable as a Chaplain by white units. In his memoirs he told of a white doctor (**Dr. Murray**) being the only white doctor who would even come to their aid. Following the war Rev. White returned home to Halifax and was called to Cornwallis Street Baptist church where he ministered.



Officers of the 2nd Construction Battalion

**No. 2 Construction Battalion** was commanded by Lt.Colonel D.H. Sutherland, a prominent Nova Scotia railway contractor. Headquartered in Pictou, and later Truro, over 250 men were sent to New Brunswick in early 1917 to load rails for the Grand Trunk Railway. In March, 1917 the unit embarked aboard the troopship Scotland for Liverpool. Landing in England on April 8, the unit was shortly redesignated a Construction Company and underwent further training in road building, and building restoration.

On May 17, 1917 the unit crossed the Channel for France. Attached to No.5 District, Canadian Forestry Corps, the men of the unit were also engaged in road and railway construction.

After a year of support duty, the unit was finally authorized for service at the front. Understrength, the unit did not see full front service before the armistice was signed in November, 1918.

### News Clip from Truro Daily News August 17, 1917

#### A "D.C.M." for a Truro Soldier Pte. Jerry Jones, Ford St., Runs in Bunch of Huns

Captures Their Machine Gun, Facetiously Hands M.G. Over to His C.O.

Has been recommended for Distinguished Conduct Medal – what a Truro Officer in England writes.

We believe the well-known, industrious and highly respected Truro colored man, Pte. Jerry Jones, a resident of Ford Street, who went overseas with the 106th Battalion, has scored a big hit in his scraps with the Huns at the front.

When Jerry Jones joined the 106th under Col. Innis, he was a strapping big fellow – a fine looking soldier – he took a humble position; played his part well; went overseas; volunteered for the battlefield and has been a terror to the treacherous German on more than one occasion.

He was lately wounded in action and is just recovering and nobly getting ready for his "bit" again.

He has shown himself a patriot, brave, powerful and resourceful, and we understand he has been recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Here is a letter we have just received from a Truro officer in Witley Camp, England, about some Truro heroes.

(Witley Camp, Surrey, July 25, 1917) All Nova Scotians, and especially those of us from Truro were delighted when we heard that Fred Huntley had won distinction for bravery at the front.

Word comes from those heroes, who are daily arriving in English hospitals of numerous acts of bravery on the part of our boys from home, many of which should be rewarded with V.C.s but will never reach beyond the eyes of those who are now past recording such events.

One of the humble citizens of Truro, always an honest, hard-working man was reported wounded several weeks ago. I last saw him in Bramshott in January before he had gone to France, had a few words with him, next heard he had been wounded and only today, from one of the lads in hospital, who had been with him at the time, did I hear the complete story of how "JERRY JONES" had captured a German machine gun, forced the crew to carry it back to our lines, and depositing it at the feet of the C.O. said: "Is this thing any good?" ("Isn't that just like our big, honest, witty Jerry?" – Ed. News.)

The report is that he has been recommended for a D.C.M. I hope it is true. All honor to this man, who is ready for the front again.

May he live to return to Truro and receive the welcome he deserves.

We are glad for those encouraging lines for the boys from a Military Camp in England and the thoughtful writer need never fear but what if "Jerry Jones" returns to Truro with a D.C.M. He'll be the lion of the hour. We here can see that great big colored man, on the battlefield, without a word of German in his Ford Street vernacular order those cowardly Huns to pack up their machine gun and march to the British lines! Well done, Jerry.



## COLORED MEN!

Your KING and  
COUNTRY  
Need YOU!



NOW is the time  
to show your Pat-  
riotism ; Loyalty

Your Brothers of  
the Colonies have  
rallied to the Flag  
and are distinguish-  
ing themselves at  
the Front. Here  
also is your oppor-  
tunity to be identi-  
fied in the Greatest



LT. COL. D. H. SUTHERLAND  
C. O. No. 2 Construction Battalion

Will you heed the  
call and do your  
share? \* \* \*

War of History,  
where the Fate of  
Nations who stand  
for Liberty is at  
stake. Your for-  
tunes are equally at  
stake as those of  
your white brethren

## NO. 2 CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

*Now being Organized All Over the Dominion*

*Summons You. WILL YOU SERVE?*

The British and their Allies are now engaged in a great forward movement. Roads, Bridges and Railways must be made to carry the Victors forward. The need of the day is Pioneers, Construction Companies and Railway Construction Companies. No. 1 Construction Company has been recruited. No. 2 Construction Company is now called for.

Lt. Col. D. H. Sutherland is in charge of the Company's Headquarters at Pictou; at Halifax applications may be made at the Parade Recruiting Station; elsewhere to any Recruiting Officer, or by letter to—

**MAJOR C. B. CUTTEN**, *Chief Recruiting Officer, Halifax, N. S.*

# A War Story

According to files in the National Archives of Canada', in 1915 the Officer Command- ing the 10th Battalion, CEF, Lt. Col J.G. Rattray, recommended that sawed-off shotguns be adopted for use in the trenches. His suggestion was forwarded to his Brigade Commander, then Brigadier General Arthur Currie. Currie was impressed with the novel idea and Col. Rattray was despatched to London where he purchased 3 Winchester shotguns and 1,000 rounds of No. 5 buck-shot.



Lt. Col. J.G. Rattray



Brigadier General  
Arthur Currie



Meanwhile the recommendation was forwarded through the usual channels where the Commander-in-chief, Sir John French, refused approval on the grounds that the pellets in the shot shells were made of lead and their use may be regarded as a contravention of the Hague Convention. This convention, signed at the Hague, 29 July, 1899, states in part;

*"The Contracting Parties agree to abstain from the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body.."*

Rattray's suggestion that bicycle ball-bearings be substituted was not pursued. According to semi-official sources, the shotguns were subsequently used in the 2nd (Canadian Infantry) Brigade for sporting purposes until the red band around the cap of a well known staff officer, observing from a trench in the support area, was mistaken for a cock pheasant, whereupon the guns were withdrawn.

Notes; 'NA RG24, Vol. 1847, GAG 11-71D. DHist files.



Commander-in-Chief Sir  
John French





These tunics and skirts were designed by a fashion designer and were considered tres chic in the 40s. As for the shoes, they're simple brown oxfords for the CWACs and black oxfords for the RCAF WDs.

Considering this was at the end of the Depression, it was a boon to have a nice set of clothes and get paid 90 cents a day to wear them. Not to mention serving your country.



What year is this?  
Who are all these  
good looking  
people?

