



SUMMER 2013

Together we improve the well-being of the people we serve

# Between Us

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre ♦ OTTAWA, ONTARIO



## Spitfire pilot Chris Preston dodged flak over WWII Europe

By Brant Scott

**WWII** Spitfire pilots had a short life expectancy for good reason.

Chris Preston not only finished the war intact, he was still skiing at Aspen at 85. And now at 90 years young, he is an animated veteran who recently took up residence at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre in Ottawa. His health is sufficiently robust that Chris has since opted to return into the community. He has a

warm standing invitation to join us again in the future.

Chris spent part of his formative years in St. Catharines, Ontario, where he played hockey, soccer, lacrosse, won regional swimming awards, and volunteered at the YMCA. He also loved to build model airplanes at the kitchen table. In their early teens, Chris and his older brother, Jimmy, would hang out at the local airport to talk aviation with the pilots, who

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**PROUD PILOT:** Chris Preston is a Perley Rideau resident and proud former volunteer at Vintage Wings of Canada in Gatineau. He sits in the cockpit of a locally-owned Spitfire some 70 years after he plied the skies of Europe with his hand on the stick and his eye on the enemy.

## The journey from bedside to boardroom –

## CEO Greg Fougère leaving Perley Rideau after a colourful and challenging career

By Brant Scott

**T**he Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre has always had Greg Fougère to guide it, but those days are over.

The 55-year-old executive has been affiliated with the Health Centre and its predecessors for 26 years. He believes the time is ripe to move on to other endeavours. There is little doubt that Greg Fougère's tenacity has helped to make the long-term care Health Centre into one of the province's crown jewels.

His ability to allocate government

funding in the 450-bed Perley Rideau has benefited thousands of residents and family members over the years. As funding was cut back by cash-strapped provincial administrations over the years, the Perley Rideau bucked the trend to reduce its health care offerings and services. Greg has acquired a reputation for his ability to analyze the future of long-term health care. The Seniors Village concept introduced in recent years will also be part of his legacy.

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Perley Rideau  
Foundation

would often spirit them aloft to touch the clouds. They were hooked.

As soon as he was 18 years old, Chris Preston rushed to join Jimmy overseas to fight the Battle of Britain that would bring Hitler to heel. Like all new Royal Canadian Air Force recruits, Chris was assigned to spend a mere six hours flying with an instructor in a tough, but forgiving biplane, the Tiger Moth. Candidates who excelled on their solo flight in the seventh hour were streamed to become fighter and bomber pilots. When the Preston brothers were both assigned to Spitfires, their dreams had come true.

Chris joined the RCAF 416 Squadron and when he sat in his first Spitfire, his shoulders touched both sides of the tiny cockpit. His perilous journey for the next few years elevated him to flight leader, and he racked up more than 350 hours in some 200 sorties. His experience grew to match the horsepower of the planes he flew, including the Spitfire 5, 5B, 9B and 16. He strafed and bombed enemy targets over France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and deep into Germany. Some historians claim that the outcome of the war hinged upon the brave, young Spitfire pilots.

"We used to joke that you don't fly a Spitfire, you wear it," says Chris. "We loved our Spitfires, but we had to be careful when we fought with the Messerschmidt 109s. They were fuel injected and could maintain speed upside-down. When we needed to dive after them upside-down, the floats in our carburetors could stall the engine. The ME 109 was

a little faster, too, so we had our work cut out for us."

As Chris prepared his Spitfire for a bombing run near the Rhine River to take out advancing German troops and equipment, the new recruits asked if there would be much flak from the aircraft defence cannons on the ground.

"I told them the flak would be heavy enough to get out and walk on," recalls Chris. "I also told them to throw the stick around fast up, down and around so the flak



**ON A WING AND A PRAYER:** Spitfire pilot Chris Preston enjoys a photo-op between missions during WWII. He was unscathed after 200 missions into Europe, but lost many friends who were shot down in the heat of battle.

gunners couldn't line them up. Hitting the throttle hard wasn't enough. We got to the target and the young guys on both sides of me were shot out of the sky, just like that. I thought, why not me? I returned to base and they told me to stay in the plane and go out again. I lost another pilot on that run. That's what war was."

Chris would often set up for a dive from 6,000 feet with a 1,000-pound bomb under the belly and a 250-pounder

under each wing. He released his bombs at 2,000 feet and pulled up hard on the stick with the ground coming up fast. It was common for a pilot to grey-out, then black-out for a few seconds as the extreme g-forces drained the blood from his brain. He would regain consciousness in a few seconds, often just in time to see the flak banging holes in the Spitfire's fuselage and wings. Incredibly, he was never wounded and never crashed.

When the war ended, Chris was ordered to remain in Germany with the Allied Occupying Force. It was tough to see everyone else head back to Canada in 1945 for home cooking and clean sheets. When he did finally arrive, he married his pre-war sweetheart, Marie, and they raised a family in Toronto. Chris did well as a sales and marketing manager and the family moved to Ottawa in 1965, where he spent 20 years with the federal government in the Machinery Branch at Industry Canada.

Chris Preston is former vice-president of the Canadian Fighter Pilots Association and enjoyed volunteering as a tour guide at Vintage Wings of Canada, founded by local flier and former Cognos CEO Michael Potter at the Gatineau-Ottawa Executive Airport.

Chris's wife, Marie, died three years ago and Chris arrived at the Perley Rideau this spring. As a Cordon Bleu graduate from his tenure in France, Chris says he is available to share a few secrets with the kitchen staff if he returns as a Perley Rideau resident. In the meantime, he will be missed! **BU**

# Excitement abounds this spring at Perley Rideau Foundation

[www.buildingchoices.ca](http://www.buildingchoices.ca)

By Daniel Clapin, ACFRE, Managing Director  
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation



The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation office has been a beehive of activity with fundraising under way on several fronts.

Our generous donors fuel the Foundation to deliver on our annual commitments that enhance the quality of life for Perley Rideau residents. There is also mounting momentum with community-minded donors who will assist with raising the \$5 million needed for the new independent and assisted living apartments opening this year. As you may imagine, fundraising is a competitive venture with so many organizations seeking assistance, and we are grateful to those who hold our veterans and community seniors in such high regard.

The Foundation has produced its annual report, *Celebrating a Remarkable Year of Giving*, which provides details on donors' contributions during the period January 1 to December 31, 2012. The 12-page publication notes that \$1.3 million has been pledged or received as of year-end 2012 for the *Building Choices, Enriching Lives Capital Campaign*. We are confident that donors will help us hit our \$5 million target. For information see: [www.buildingchoices.ca](http://www.buildingchoices.ca).

The Foundation produced *Celebrating a Remarkable Year of Giving* because donors want to know they are having a positive impact on Perley Rideau residents. And that impact is obvious. The generous support of our donors has allowed

the Foundation to transfer more than \$900,000 to the new apartment buildings by year-end 2012. Last year, we also allocated \$141,388 to the Recreation and Creative Arts Service, \$100,025 for special bathing units and other essential equipment. The annual report also lists the names of everyone who donated last year, unless they requested anonymity. We hope your name will appear in the 2013 annual report. Please ask us for a copy of the 2012 annual report or visit our web site at [www.perleyrideau.ca/article/annual-report-1387.asp](http://www.perleyrideau.ca/article/annual-report-1387.asp)

The grand opening of the beautiful, new independent and assisted living building adjacent to Russell Road took place on June 19. We were honoured to host Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and many other dignitaries and community boosters. The larger apartment building attached to the west side of the Health Centre is scheduled to open this autumn. These independent and assisted living apartment buildings are part of the first phase of the exciting Perley Rideau Seniors Village. The Perley Rideau campus is leading the way as more seniors require housing with healthy living options suited to each individual's needs. The Foundation's need for donations directly reflects the need for expanded services.

I am delighted that so many community leaders have stepped up to the challenge so far. Commissionaires Ottawa donated \$500,000 at the outset

of the Capital Campaign. We have since been fortunate to receive other major donations from the Molson Foundation (\$150,000), the Trinity Development Foundation (\$100,000), Scotiabank (\$50,000), and many others.

The Perley Rideau Foundation hosted its 2013 Annual Donor Reception on June 5 and we were delighted to see the largest crowd ever for this event held in Lupton Hall. Donors enjoyed a lively keynote address from Grete Hale, Honorary Co-chair of our *Building Choices, Enriching Lives Capital Campaign*. We were also honoured to hear from Foundation board chair Ray Desjardins, Health Centre board chair Peter Strum, Veterans' Council representative Guy Robitaille, and Family and Friends Council member Ray Bailey.

The Perley Rideau Foundation is on its way to a banner year and we appreciate your support.

Have a wonderful, safe summer!

**The Perley Rideau is home to 450 residents, 250 of whom are war veterans**

*We appreciate your support in making a bequest in your will and/or making a donation*

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[www.buildingchoices.ca](http://www.buildingchoices.ca)  
613-526-7194**

# Ontario Premier opens new Perley Rideau apartments



The first of Perley Rideau's two independent and assisted living apartment buildings opened on June 19. The total 139 specifically-designed seniors apartments cost \$42.4 million to build.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne (top photo on the left) gets a grand tour with Perley Rideau Capital Campaign Honorary Co-chair Grete Hale. Several dignitaries attended to cut the ribbon and officially open the new 45-apartment building near Russell Road. An additional 94 apartments attached to the west side of the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre are scheduled to open this fall.

The Molson Foundation (bottom photo) has donated \$150,000 towards the \$5 million Capital Campaign. The Perley Rideau Foundation is very grateful to the Molsons and hopes other generous organizations will help to bring the Seniors Village to fruition. From left to right are Foundation board member Jim Seigny, Health Centre board member David Bell, Foundation board member Mary Ann Lamb, Health Centre board chair Michael Jeffery, Capital Campaign Honorary Co-chair Grete Hale, Health Centre board immediate past chair Peter Strum, Health Centre board member Terry McEwan, Foundation board chair Ray Desjardins, Foundation Managing Director Daniel Clapin, and Perley Rideau CEO Greg Fougère.

**For more on the Capital Campaign:**  
[www.buildingchoices.ca](http://www.buildingchoices.ca)



# Open Forum

By Greg Fougère, Chief Executive Officer  
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre



## Farewell and adieu to the Perley Rideau

**A**s I step down as CEO, I leave with pride with what we have accomplished over the years. Seniors' care and services have been my career over the past 34 years, the last 26 years with the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre. It has been a great place to work and make a difference in developing programs and services targeted to maintaining and enhancing seniors' well-being.

I'll never forget my early days as an orderly at St. Vincent Hospital in the late '70s. That experience, along with community support work at Ottawa West Senior Citizens Support Service and social work at Island Lodge Home for the Aged, paved the way for moving from front line service to management, following a Master in Health Administration at the University of Ottawa.

Working as an orderly also instilled in me a great respect for front line staff. Although rewarding in so many ways, staff work extremely hard for the residents they care for. When I first arrived at The Perley Hospital in 1987, I was fortunate

to have worked closely with support service departments and participate in this other side of service to residents. Staff in these departments work equally as hard as direct care staff to do their very best for residents. There are many other staff who have contributed to the well-being of residents and those we serve in the community. Volunteers and students of many disciplines have also been an integral part of the Perley Rideau's success. It's the combined efforts of many who have contributed to Perley Rideau's top notch reputation.

It's through the dedication of many that we have earned such a solid reputation for the care and services we provide, especially to seniors. Thus our motto, "Together we improve the well-being of the people we serve."

I have worked with many local, provincial and federal colleagues over the years. I have always been impressed that, despite differing experience and perspectives, the common focus has been on what we can do to improve seniors' care. Of special mention is the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors,

where I have had the opportunity to participate in government policy and funding advocacy.

There have been many successes with broadening the spectrum of care provided by the Perley Rideau, several in collaboration with other organizations with like missions. However, the one project that I had hoped would be approved for government funding before I left is a collaboration with the South East Ottawa Community Health Centre to create a Primary Care and Wellness Centre for seniors. It is the next major program we hope will be approved by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network as part of a seniors' hub of care. It will happen, it's a matter of time.

To everyone at the Perley Rideau, and to everyone I have worked with over the years, I wish you great success in making Ottawa one of the best places for seniors to grow old with respect, comfort and dignity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Fougère". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Greg Fougère, CEO

A good leader knows that “Mission Impossible” is just a movie. Greg never saw a challenge he wasn’t up to, and he has seen plenty since he won the Ontario Hospital Association R. Alan Hay Memorial Award in 1986. The auspicious award is given to a University of Ottawa student for outstanding achievement in the Master in Health Administration administrative practicum. Greg completed his four-month practicum at the Riverside Hospital when it was still an active treatment community hospital.

Early in his career in the 1970s, Greg worked as a nursing orderly at Ottawa’s Saint-Vincent Hospital. He was also employed in community home support for seniors in Ottawa West and social work with the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton Home for the Aged in the early ‘80s.

**John Lupton was early mentor**

Greg Fougère was an executive assistant in 1987 to then-CEO John Lupton at the old Perley Hospital. The former CEO’s name remains prominent in the Health Centre’s grand Lupton Hall to this day. John Lupton created the executive assistant position to hire Greg because he showed potential as a future administrator.

“The Perley Hospital was part of the Ontario Hospital Association at the time,” explains Greg. “We were a chronic care hospital and not a long-term care home before all the changes in the mid ‘90s. John Lupton was at the OHA conference awards ceremony when I received the award and he was looking for somebody because the current

Health Centre was already in the planning stages. He created a job for me. Everyone who gets to the point where I am now has been mentored along the way.

“I was included in the process to create the Health Centre,” he adds. “I started out overseeing Plant Services, Housekeeping, Laundry and Linen, and Food Services departments at The Perley Hospital. John then appointed me as administrator at the Rideau Veterans’ Home.”



**STARTING OUT:** Greg Fougère was administrator at the Rideau Veterans’ Home early in his career. He applied as CEO at the Perley Rideau and replaced John Lupton in 1996.

When the Transfer Agreement amalgamating The Perley Hospital, Rideau Veterans’ Home and the National Defence Medical Centre (NDMC) was signed in 1992, the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre on Russell Road was born. The building opened in the autumn of 1995 and when John Lupton retired in early 1996, a national competition was held to search for a new CEO.

That autumn, the board announced the hiring of 38-year-old Greg Fougère, and for good reason. He was already embedded in the local long-term care community and understood how the provincial health system worked. He would quickly earn a reputation for damning all manner of torpedoes as he ran one of the best long-term care homes and health centres in the province for the next 17 years.

The buildings that currently house the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre were originally designed to be a new chronic care hospital. That initial designation is the reason the building on Russell Road exceeds the design standard size for long-term homes of the day. Just as Greg was embarking on his new career, however, the entire game changed. His first hurdle was to transition from running a hospital under the Public Hospitals Act to a long-term care home under the Charitable Institutions Act.

“We had just moved our veterans and patients from The Perley Hospital into the new building in fall of 1995 and spring of 1996,” says Greg. “That summer, the Province of Ontario came to the Perley Rideau and told us we’re going to become a long-term care home instead of a hospital. At that time, we didn’t really know what that meant. We did some research and found out that the change included drastic funding cuts over five years because we were no longer a chronic care hospital.

“The hospital patients already moved into the new Health Centre

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# Fougère accolades from Board of Directors

*Greg Fougère is stepping down as Chief Executive Officer at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre.*

*Greg has been CEO for the past 17 years and has been affiliated with the Health Centre for 26 years. He will leave the Perley Rideau at the end of June.*

*Greg has given seniors in this community and the Health Centre, in particular, an inspired vision of aging with dignity and health. He has been a tireless advocate for a continuum of healthy aging, including long-term care, where he set the gold standard by making the Perley Rideau a model of excellence. Greg has built a strong base to enable the Health Centre to evolve as a Seniors' Village that will embrace long term care, assisted living and seniors' housing, and other health services in the community.*

*He has been an advocate of building strong relationships for the betterment of seniors' quality of life. The Perley Rideau is one of the most forward thinking long-term care organizations in Ontario. This success is the result of the collaboration and contributions of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, residents, families, donors and many community organizations. Funding is important to success. In collaboration with the Perley Rideau Foundation, the generosity*

*of donors has improved the lives of our residents and enriched their quality of life in the Health Centre.*

*In his career with the Perley Rideau, Greg has participated at the local and provincial levels in advancing long-term care, especially through his work with colleagues and organizations in the Champlain Local Health Integration Network and the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors.*

*His foresight has enabled the Health Centre's Board of Directors to create a 15-year strategic vision that is perfectly aligned with Ontario's emerging Seniors Care Strategy, and an experienced team is in place to be successful in moving the Perley Rideau strategy forward.*

*Greg has indicated to the Board of Directors that now is a good time for him to explore other interests and engage in the next stage of his career.*

*The Board wishes him well in all future endeavours and hopes to announce a new Chief Executive Officer by summer.*

*Peter G. Strum  
Immediate Past Chair and Honourary Director  
Board of Directors  
Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre*

## CEO Fougère leaving Perley Rideau... [continued from page 6](#)

were reclassified as long-term residents," Greg adds. "So, we had the same people, but our funding was more than cut in half. We went from \$225 a day per patient to \$96 a day per resident. I knew this was taking place when I applied to be the CEO, and it was my first big challenge when I got the job. We had to reduce 100 full-time equivalent staff over four years. I will remember those years from

1998 to 2002 as some of the most challenging of my career.

"It required a whole new way of providing care from the way we operated The Perley Hospital and NDMC," he continues. "We changed from having a vast majority of nursing staff being registered, to the vast majority being unregistered. We had to reflect what was happening in long-term care. Every year for four

years, it affected residents, families, staff and volunteers. It was what I call a slow bleed. It was hurting on many levels, but we had to provide the leadership to make it happen because there was no choice."

### **Funding cuts force court intervention**

That slow bleed was sufficiently dire that the Perley Rideau Board of Directors took the Province of Ontario to court in an effort to

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protect the funding. The board felt the court case was necessary to avoid any notion that the Perley Rideau was complicit in the erosion of patient care. With that said, Greg believes there was a silver lining in transitioning from a hospital to a health centre that has been beneficial in the long term.

"This was the first time that hospital patients became residents," he explains. "Overnight, they were starting to be called 'residents.' There was a philosophical shift between calling someone a 'patient' and a 'resident.' It changes the model of care and enables residents to do more for themselves, while we supplement what they can't do. It's one of the best outcomes of this difficult period. That was a positive change because with patients, you often take away their autonomy and do everything for them because they are sick. Now we help residents help themselves whenever possible.

"Bringing together the three different organizations under one roof, and then operating under different legislation and regulations changed our hospital into a home, and that helped everyone," Greg continues. "By 2002, we told the provincial government that's it, we're stopping, we can't go any further. We came through and maintained our national accreditation status. We met the standards and were successful. During my interview for the CEO job, I said we have a new reality and we have to get on with it. We had gone into a negative situation with a positive attitude

and the management team and everyone involved did a great job."

Greg recalls the schism caused when the 250 veterans in the new Health Centre were granted exclusive access to the Arts and Crafts Program. Since the program's federal funding was targeted for veterans only, a portion of the 200 non-veteran community residents were disappointed at being excluded from the program.

#### **Foundation assists community residents**

"We had community residents who wanted to participate in the arts and crafts program and they were in tears because it was limited to veterans," says Greg. "The day I saw a non-veteran resident in tears more than a decade ago, I said this can't happen, we can't be doing this. The Perley Rideau Foundation stepped in and has been funding recreation and creative arts for community residents since that time. The Foundation continues to provide about \$135,000 a year. That was the kind of thing we had to do and thank heaven we had the Foundation because we couldn't get that important funding from anywhere else."

Prior to his departure at the end of June, Greg is preparing for the transition to his successor, whomever that may be. Probably for the first time in his career, he is not actively pursuing new Perley Rideau initiatives because he doesn't believe it's fair to commit the next CEO to follow through. Greg knows it takes up to five years to accomplish major projects, and the Russell Road campus will reflect his initiatives long after

he departs. He has always been a fan of taking care of day-to-day business without losing sight of what will benefit the community several years down the road.

Witness the *Guest House – a home away from home*, where community residents with Alzheimer's and related dementias can stay to give their caregivers short respite periods. Witness also the seniors' day program, short-stay convalescent and respite units, and community outreach programs like assisted living services that allow seniors to live at home for as long possible.

Perhaps Greg's most notable legacy will be the bold, new Seniors Village concept that directly reflects the province's plan for the future of health care. The most recent phase of the Seniors Village includes the construction of two independent and assisted living buildings with 139 apartments. One building is already open and occupied, and the other building attached to the Perley Rideau's main building will be opening this fall.

#### **Seniors Village could be lasting legacy**

Phase 2 of the Seniors Village is scheduled for 2015-20 and Phase 3 will run in 2020-25. The initiative will help prepare for the community's aging baby boomers seeking health care assistance.

"In January 2008, the Perley Rideau Board applied for Aging at Home funding for business planning for the seniors' apartments and assisted living funding from the provincial Champlain Local Health Integration Network," Greg explains.

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Brant Scott photo

**BUILDING THE SENIORS VILLAGE:** Before Perley Rideau CEO Greg Fougère resigned his position this spring, he helped to establish the Seniors Village concept to prepare for the growing numbers of aging residents. Greg is departing just as the finishing touches are put on the independent and assisted living apartments built on the Perley Rideau campus on Russell Road.

"We just found out the funding was available the month before and we were already looking ahead to provide some kind of supportive housing for seniors. The Board said let's go for it. I put out a call to other long-term care facilities with similar interests and Bruyère Continuing Care stepped up. We put in a proposal together and we got funding to develop our joint vision. The Perley Rideau is now in 60 homes in the surrounding community and we're helping those people stay in their homes as long as they can.

"Now we're opening one of the independent and assisted living apartment buildings and so is Bruyère," he says. "It goes back to keeping an eye on the future and assessing what the needs will be. We were ready to respond to the

province even before the request came out. We knew where the investment should be made to meet the need. And, we were ready when the announcement came out, because you're always under the gun with very short notice for putting in government proposals. The Board is my employer and it's my job to be a leader and influence what we all accomplish. The Board and I believe that long-term care health centres are part of the solution to freeing up beds in hospitals.

#### **Award-winning CEO**

In May, Greg Fougère was recognized by the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors when he won the 2013 Leadership Award. The award recognizes his exemplary leadership and outstanding contribution to the long-term

care sector.

#### **Taking time off to consider next steps**

And now it is time for rest. Greg plans to do some travelling with his partner and take some time to decompress. He is retiring from the Health Centre, but it remains to be seen if he will retire from the career he loves.

"I want to take a break of at least six months to reflect on where I've been and where I want to go," he offers. "I'm keeping the doors wide open. When I announced that I was stepping down in January, a lot of people congratulated me on my retirement. But, I'm retiring from the Perley Rideau, not retiring from

life or a career. I just want to take a step back and look at what I may want to do in the future. And long-term care is still very much part of that picture. I may end up doing something completely different that hasn't even occurred to me yet.

"I'm not the same person that I was 26 years ago when I came here to work in several different capacities," says Greg. "I don't manage the same way now that I did when I came to the Perley Rideau. I work best when I'm learning new things. I'm not a status quo kind of guy. I need to see movement in the right direction. I'm keeping all my options open, but for the time being, I just want to go out and play."

Now that's freedom 55. **BU**

# John Parr: Army medic was on the ground in WWII, Korea and Vietnam

By Brant Scott

One can only imagine the sacrifice that a front-line medic has seen after witnessing the action in World War II. And the Korean War. And the Vietnam War.

John Parr's father came to Canada from England after fighting in The Great War and met a First Nations woman who was raised in the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory reserve on the St. Lawrence River. They married and moved to the Pointe-Saint-Charles area in Montreal and had a son, John Frederick David Parr.

John Parr, now 89, was just 18 years old when he finished basic training at Camp Borden and shipped out to catch the second half of WWII with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps in Italy. As a first aid attendant, John's care was instrumental in stabilizing wounded soldiers for transport to army hospital. It is well known in the medical profession that the quality of first aiders in the field often dictates a patient's chances of recovery and future quality of life. John learned how to triage, bandage, splint and transport broken bodies with the best of them.

With WWII in his rear-view mirror, John remained in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps when he returned to Canada. He continued helping armed forces personnel who were kept in hospital in Montreal. For many people, one war would be enough



Brant Scott photo

**GOOD TIMES AT THE PERLEY RIDEAU:** John Parr was on the scene for three different wars, including the infamous "Death Valley" during the Korean War. As an army medic, he held the line between life and death for countless soldiers in the field. At 89, John Parr is enjoying life immensely as a Perley Rideau resident. John says he feels more secure now than ever before.

to last a lifetime. But, John could hear the call of wounded soldiers all the way from Korea, so he signed on to help out in "The Forgotten War."

John Parr could have been living a M\*A\*S\*H episode. He

worked the Korean countryside preparing the wounded and loading them on helicopters and ambulances for delivery to crude hospital tents. John still remembers the strain of working in Korea's infamous "Death Valley"

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**THANK YOU, GENEROUS DONORS!** The Perley Rideau Foundation held the 2013 Annual Donor Reception on June 5 to express thanks for their generosity. The Foundation's gratitude was expressed by a panel of speakers. In the front row from the left are Foundation board chair Ray Desjardins, Capital Campaign Honorary Co-chair Grete Hale and Perley Rideau resident and veteran Guy Robitaille. In the back row are Health Centre board chair Peter Strum, Foundation Managing Director Daniel Clapin, and Family and Friend's Council member Ray Bailey.

### John Parr: Army medic was on the job ... continued from page 10

where thousands of soldiers from both sides of the conflict took their final breath.

Then he became a casualty himself. He was crossing a quiet rice paddy when all hell suddenly broke loose. A hailstorm of Chinese shells plummeted down on the paddy and John was blown forward through the muddy water. The shelling badly injured his leg and he was soon an unwilling guest in a Korean prisoner-of-war camp. Good luck would prevail when the war soon ended and he was shipped back to Canada to convalesce in hospital.

For most people, two wars would definitely be enough. John continued to work with the medical corps after Korea in military hospitals in Montreal and

Ottawa. When offered a chance to tour the medical centres in the Vietnam War, he couldn't pack his bags fast enough. While John didn't see active duty as a medic in Vietnam, he checked out the advanced trauma practices of the day and visited with wounded soldiers to buoy their spirits.

After seeing three wars first-hand, John Parr had acquired a pretty good idea of how front-line medical care evolved. In the wake of tending to the wounded in the three theatres, John has met many of the same soldiers he helped over the years, and many grateful wives have thanked him for taking such good care of their husbands.

John is proud of the medals in his display case outside his room at the Perley and Rideau

Veterans' Health Centre. He remembers receiving other medals in military ceremonies, but he lost track of them along the way. He takes particular pride in a medal he was given by Queen Elizabeth.

John's wife, Josephina, passed a few years ago and he came to the Perley Rideau in early spring. He says day-to-day life at the health centre is a delight. John speaks fondly of the apple blossoms on the tree outside his window and has asked for a bird feeder to adorn its branches. Pictures and porcelain figurines of birds are perched on his bedside table. He says the health centre is very comfortable and he feels more secure now than ever before.

He thinks it's the people. **BU**

# The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation

## Memorial Tributes

March 20, 2013 to June 14, 2013

Honour someone special with a donation to  
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation

Daniel Badgley • Marguerite Baker • Peter Blake-Knox  
William A. Boak • Margaret Bruce • John Carlson  
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