

## ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH #277 SQUAMISH B.C.



Ted Arsenault 100 years



Jim Crombie 95 Years

### Honours Two Centenarians And Two Nonagenarians

On October 14, 2018, Squamish RCL Branch 277 held a VETERAN'S BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON CELEBRATION. The veterans were escorted to their seats by two members of the local pipe band and soon the hall rang with the sound of the fifty-six invited guests, veterans and family members of the four birthday lads, singing Happy Birthday. Following an outstanding lunch, the honoured veterans were presented with congratulatory certificates from the Queen, Governor General Julie Payette, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Lt. Governor of BC Janet Austin, Premier of BC John Horgan, MLA Jordan Sturdy, and Mayor Patricia Heintzman. From the Royal Canadian Legion, presentations were made by Valerie McGregor, BC / Yukon 1st VP, Bev Croft North Shore-Howe Sound Zone Commander, and Branch President Art McLain.

Ted Arsenault and Ted Gregoire both served with the Canadian Army while Jim Crombie served with the Royal Navy and Oscar Runzer served with the Royal Canadian Navy all during WW II. What a proud day for the members of the Squamish Legion to be able to honour these men and their families on such a memorable occasion!



Ted Gregoire 100 Years



Oscar Runzer 95 Years

### THE TWO TEDS (Centenarians)

When asked if he thought the war effort was worth the terrible cost of life and property, Ted Arsenault said, "Yes! Emphatically. Civilian People in Europe on both sides of the war (Allied and Axis) were starving and suffering; their quality of life and hope for the future was dismal; their spirits were ruined. Had the Axis Powers been successful in winning the conflict – the freedom for the common folk would not be the same as it is today." Next, Ted was asked, had he ever returned in later life to areas that he fought in during the war? To this, Ted answered No! Considered it a few years ago with the Legion invitation but did not go. Finally, Ted was asked what was his secret to longevity? To this, Ted Arsenault replied, "Be Active, Hard Worker, and have a loving, congenial stress-free attitude".

Ted Gregoire had the question put to him, "Are you satisfied that the war effort was worth the terrible cost of life and property? And his unequivocal answer was Yes!" Next, he was asked, "Did you ever return in later life to areas where you fought during the war and what were your thoughts and feelings about your peacetime visit?

"No! It was hard to make a living after the war. It would have been nice to do so." A third question put to Mr. Gregoire was regarding longevity. "I have no secret to my longevity. I am lucky to have survived polio when I was eight years old. I am lucky to have survived being thrown from a horse in my teen age years. I am lucky to have survived D- Day with the many bullets that passed by me. I survived the many POW experiences. I survived being taken on a white horse in a cart to a medical makeshift facility where a French, British and German Doctor encouraged me to let myself fall so they could catch me and take me in to their facility. A few days later I recovered from whatever I had. It was great to be alive!"

### The Two Nonagenarians

Jim Crombie was lead gunner on the four inch gun aboard HMS INVERTAY, one of three minesweepers on sea patrol. On his first trip to sea, his ship sailed at night. Just offshore a Nazi aircraft attacked causing hull damage to the ship which immediately turned around and beached to avoid sinking. Later in the war, Jim was on a ship serving in the waters off Yugoslavia. After the war, Jim came to Canada via a Cunard ship looking for work and ended up in Ocean Falls, B.C., where his wife Mary joined him, staying 13 years. In 1965, Jim moved to Squamish and began working at the Woodfibre pulp mill. They raised their family in Brackendale and Hospital Hill until Jim retired in 1988.

Oscar Runzer began his RCN service in the Pacific and eventually was transferred to a corvette on convoy escort duty between St. John's and Londonderry. Later, Oscar was on the convoy run between Liverpool and Gibraltar. During that time Oscar also had azdic shore training listening to pings and echoes and put his training into practice at sea. Other vessels on which Oscar served were HMCS Calgary, Prince Robert, and Stonetown. – the latter being a new frigate aboard which he sailed to Bermuda. By the end of the war – VE DAY – Oscar was back in Londonderry.

Oscar never returned to the sea but worked in Langley, BC in construction, driving a school bus, and also a Greyhound bus. After living in Burnaby in a trailer and commuting to Britannia Beach to work, he and his family moved to Squamish in 1966. Oscar's take away from Navy life was three-fold – have a good routine, take care of obligations, and be resourceful.