

Highway dedicated to FSSF

(Continued from page B2)

Lately, Cutmore has been thumbing through his collection of war history with new enthusiasm.

A section of highway in Alberta has been named after the First Special Service Force. A military ceremony to dedicate Hwy. 4 between Lethbridge and Coutts on the Alberta-Montana border as the FSSF Memorial Highway was held on Sept. 18th in Milk River, 20 kilometres north of the border.

In 1996, a group of surviving American FSSF veterans convinced the USA department of highways to rename a portion of Interstate 15 between Helena and the Alberta-Montana border.

"That prompted my aunt, Judith Dimond, to have a section of highway in Canada named after these lads," explains Cutmore, adding she started the Canadian campaign. She was joined by Barbara Waters, wife of the late Sen. Stan Waters, a FSSF general and the first elected member of the Senate in 1989.

The initial official reaction to this request was "no, we don't dedicate highways." The pair enlisted the support of Reform Party leader Preston Manning, and also received support from retired Major-General Lewis MacKenzie. The rest is history.

"Then, about two years ago, a section of Hwy. 416 linking Ottawa to Hwy. 401 was renamed Canadian Veterans Memorial Highway, and the

letters came pouring in support of dedicating a highway to the FSSF," said Cutmore. "The precedent had been set. The Alberta department of highways could no longer resist."

The dedication at Milk River was attended by about 30 veterans and 500 guests, including the Cutmores.

"It is the first highway in Canada to be named after a specific unit. My uncle traveled that route in 1942 from Calgary to Helena for his training."

Sgt. Cutmore was one of nine siblings raised in Bronte. Previously the family lived at the English Inn beside Appleby College. "He is the only one missing from my father's family." The remaining siblings range in age from their early 60s to their late 80s.

He joined the FSSF in August 1942, and had been a member of the Oakville Lorne Scots since 1940.

"I don't recall ever meeting my uncle," continues Cutmore. "There's an old picture taken in about 1941 of my uncle holding me on his lap when I was about 1 1/2 years old."

The joint Canadian-American FSSF consisted of about 2,500 men, about 1,800 of them fighting soldiers. The unit was about equally represented by Canadians and Americans.

The unit suffered a 135% casualty rate. "They had more casualties than the number of men who originally signed up," explains Cutmore. "They just kept replenishing the ranks."

The FSSF saw 251 days of action

from 1942 until it was disbanded in 1944 in southern France. It had captured more than 35,000 prisoners, won eight campaign stars, and earned eight Canadian battle honours. It never failed a mission.

The brigade "was the first unit in Rome on June 4, 1944, and spearheaded the liberation forces," said Cutmore. They faced fierce fighting at the hands of "battle experienced German soldiers. There were also a lot of demoralized Czechs and Poles fighting for Germany."

"This historic event is overshadowed by the Normandy Invasion which took place two days later."

The unit was attached for the US Fifth Army, says Cutmore. "For this reason, we don't hear much about them."

The vehicles the FSSF used, called T-15 Cargo Carrier Lights, dubbed 'weasels,' were tested on the Columbia Ice Field in 1942. "It was the only place where they could find the closest resemblance of snow." The vehicles could be dropped from a cargo plane, and proved effective in transporting men and cargo over snow and ice covered terrain.

Cutmore owns one of these 'weasels' which he stores out of town, and arranged to have it transported to Milk River for the ceremony.

"I took a few of the old veterans for rides in the 'weasel,' said Cutmore. "We had a lot of fun."

Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday

Oakville's annual Tree Lighting Ceremony takes place this Friday, Nov. 12th. Festivities begin at 7 p.m. at the Towne Square, Lakeshore Road at George Street, with town crier Betty Kading and Mayor Ann Mulvale leading the carol singing. The tree will be officially lit at 7:30 p.m.

The Oakville Wind Orchestra and The Salvation Army Band will perform holiday favourites. Salvation Army volunteers will be serving hot cider.

The public is being asked to bring a new unwrapped toy to the Tree Lighting Ceremony for to the Salvation Army Jingle Bell Fund.

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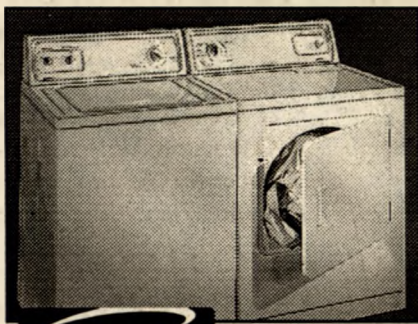
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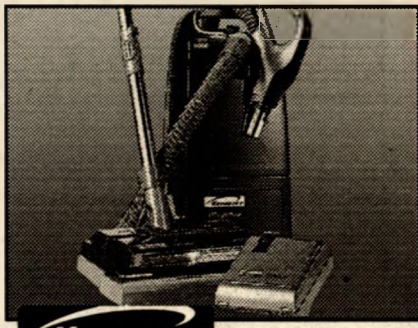
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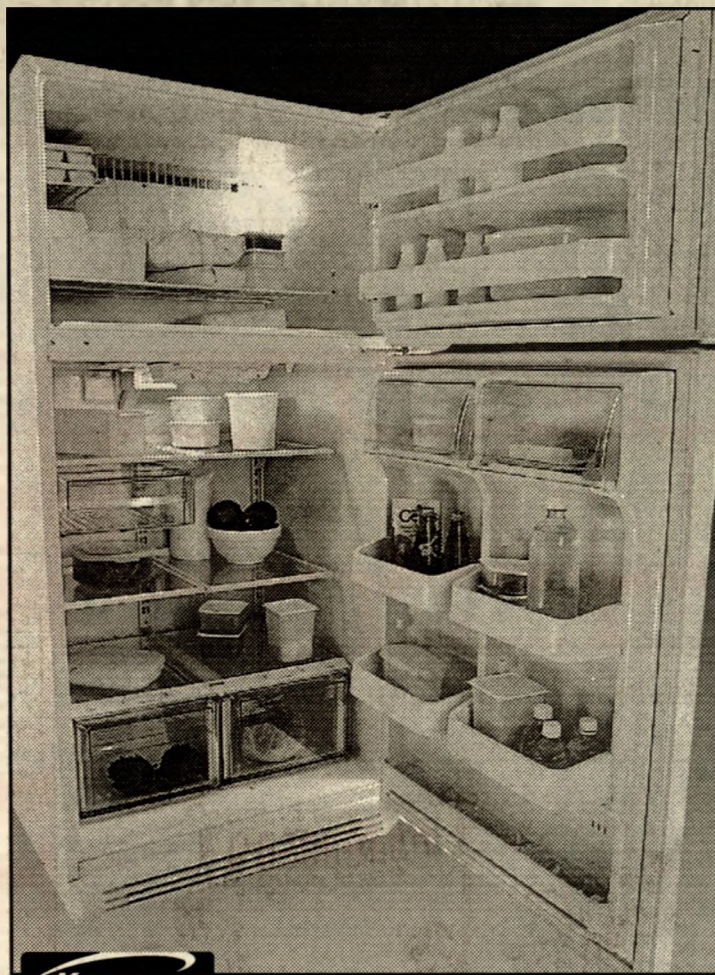
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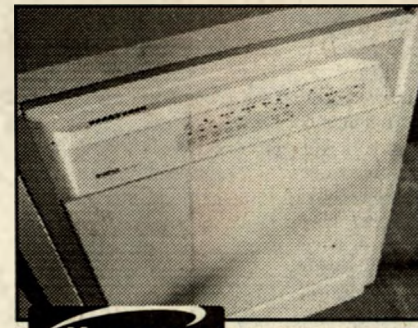


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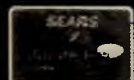


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by Kym Funnell

What better way to start your day than with a frothy Cappuccino (or a steaming cup of tea) in one of downtown Oakville's many quaint coffee shops? Whether it be a lounging, leisurely day or a day when you need to get things done, all your wants and needs can be found here, and any day can begin with a Cappuccino! Oakville was founded in 1827, and as a quaint, historical town has preserved its rich heritage, especially downtown. Strolling through downtown Oakville you can't help but notice the exquisite 19th century buildings that are home to 350 shops, services and restaurants.

Enjoy a relaxing day, starting at one of the many beauty and hair salons, pamper yourself! Move on to the art galleries, gain some insight on how to fill that blank spot on your wall you've been looking at for so long. If art galleries aren't your cup of tea, you can't go wrong checking out some of the mens', womens' and children's fashion boutiques. Then stop for lunch at one of the 30 different restaurants or pubs, offering a variety wide enough to please even the pickiest palate! Make a day of it, and enjoy the beautiful colours of fall in Lakeside Park, at the foot of Navy Street. Walk a

little further and explore one of Oakville's two harbours, a charming atmosphere for a leisurely afternoon. If you arrive with a to-do list, the options are plentiful. From doctors to dentists, lawyers to counseling services, anything you could need - you can find here. Other businesses you can find downtown are a variety of banks, accountants, florists, funeral homes, pharmacies, gift shops, and specialty food stores, to name a few. You can even visit one of the two local radio stations, ask them to play your favourite song.

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