

Francis, Larry

farming employer.

In 1953, he joined the RCAF and a year later began his long career in pipes and drums bands.

His first posting was in Rockcliffe near Ottawa. He played with the pipe band there until 1959.

"I was fortunate to play with two world champion drummers, Jimmy Blackley and John Kerr. They were renowned in their native Scotland for their drumming."

He also started teaching drums for a couple of pipe bands and became a Highland Dance team member.

Francis was stationed in Germany for almost four years and only played once over there. He returned to Ontario and in his two years at a base in Clinton, devoted all his time to schooling and his trade as an aircraft radar technician.

He picked up his sticks again when he arrived at CFB Trenton in 1964 and kept active well after retiring from the airforce here in 1977.

He played drums for the CFB Trenton Pipe Band (now the 8 Wing Pipe Band) from 1964-72.

A highlight for him was being involved with a national pipe band that travelled throughout North America and Europe for six months in 1966, performing and promoting Expo 67 in Montreal.

Then, in 1967, he criss-crossed the country with the Canadian Tattoo, drumming and dancing with what was then called "the big show."

In 1972, he left the CFB Pipe

Band and became a drumming instructor for the Port Hope Pipe Band. He remained in that capacity until the early 1980s.

He was also teaching other pipe bands in Cobourg, Napanee, Bancroft, Quinte Pipe Band in Trenton and the ANAF Pipe Band in Belleville.

Francis took a six-year layoff from teaching drums but returned in 1987. Since then, he's been teaching drumming to beginners for both the Brighton Pipe Band and the ANAF Pipe Band in Trenton (and the Quinte Pipe Band in Trenton until it folded a few years ago).

Teaching is enough, he said.

"With my years of experience, I do better teaching to up and coming drummers...besides, I'm getting too old to be marching and playing for any length of time," he said.

Francis retired in 1995 after an 18-year career with the former Trent Valley Paper Mill, now Sonoco, as an instrument and electronics technician.

Besides chairing the Scottish and Irish Festival, Francis has also been involved in other volunteer activities.

He served on the electronics advisory board at Loyalist College and is beginning a stint with the Special Olympics bowling program in Trenton.

He continues to be a member of the Ontario Pipers and Drummers Society.

"I'm happy just instructing now."