

Jamieson, Don

Mission: Juno Beach Centre

At 81 Second World War veteran Don Jamieson is fighting once again with all the vigor he can muster. This time there is no enemy, just an objective.

STORY BY BILL HUNT

Jamieson is vice-president of the Canada-Normandy Juno Beach Centre project that aims to create an educational museum on the coast of France to honor the Canadians who fought during the war.

"I've been back to France twice and out to the west coast on behalf of this Canada-Normandy project," says Jamieson. "It almost takes up every hour of my day."

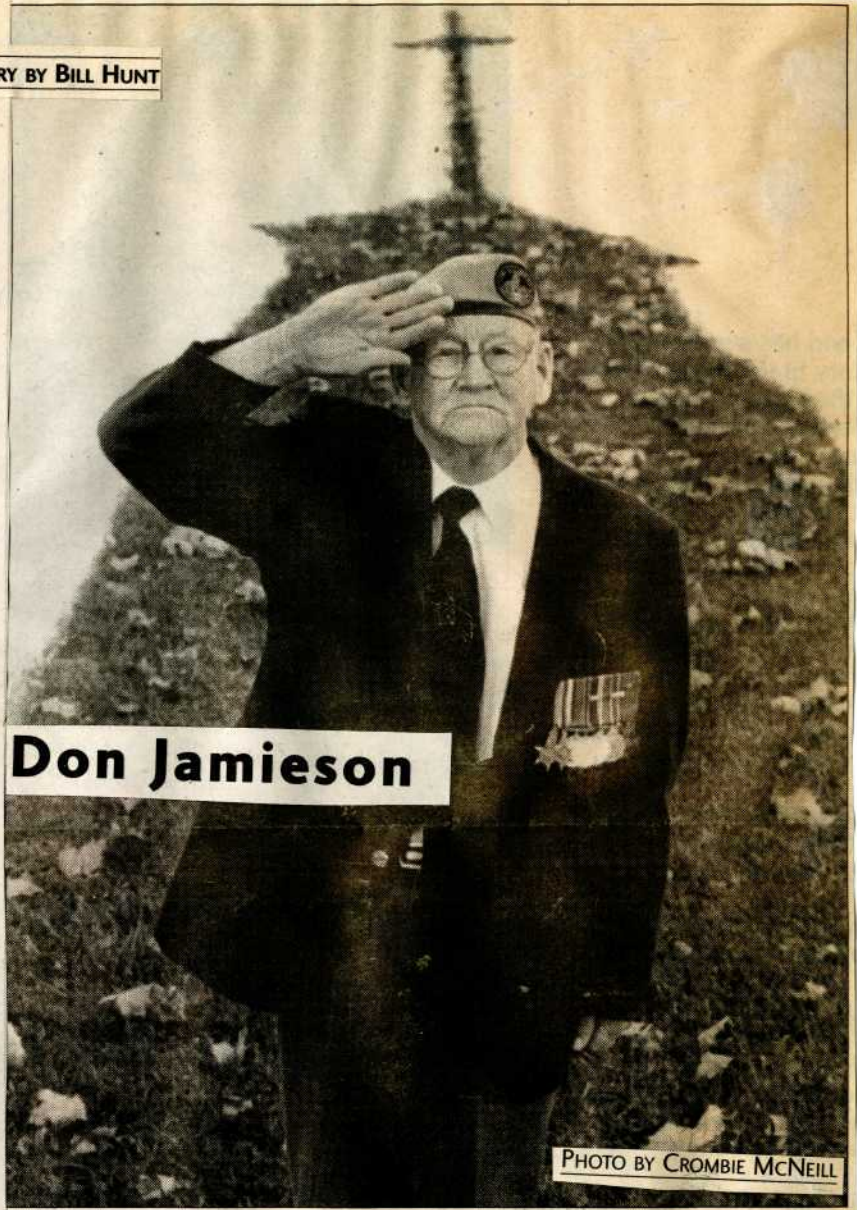
Jamieson was born in Kingston in 1919 and joined the Prince of Wales Own Regiment in 1938. He enlisted in the Canadian Army Active Service Force June 13, 1940 and went overseas with the 14th Canadian Field Regiment in July, 1941. His first battle experience came on D-Day. He acquired a number of medals for overseas service but Jamieson's highest honour came as the result of his actions during an attack across the River Laison, south of Caen. After his officer left Jamieson in his vehicle to go ahead on a reconnaissance, the area came under fire. As his citation reads, "Shortly after, his vehicle was engaged by enemy machine guns, causing casualties and dispersing our own troops who sought shelter. Gun. Jamieson remained on duty at his (radio) set, passing down vital information although exposed to this fire. On return of his officer he pointed out the enemy which were subsequently neutralized by our own artillery fire." For his bravery, Jamieson was awarded France's highest honour for service in combat, the Croix de Guerre. Like most veterans, he is modest about his role in the war. "It was a very minute part."

The memories of battle have never faded from his mind. "When you see an infantryman with his eyes wide open and up at the sky, you take a different view of war than if you were back five miles (from the front)," he says. "The stench of death never leaves you. I can smell it to this day."

In 1946 he married Susan Theresa and the couple had two daughters. In 1947 re-enlisted in the military. He served as a private in the administration branch of the headquarters for Eastern Ontario, in Kingston and was later transferred to Petawawa before serving in the Quarter-Master General's branch of army headquarters in Ottawa. Jamieson retired as a warrant officer in 1969. Asked what he liked about the military, he says, "the comradeship, the general deportment of a person. A serviceman takes a certain pride in the way he's dressed and everything else." He and Susan Theresa moved to Marmora in 1970 and Jamieson drove a school bus for a year before taking a job with the Separate School Board in the assessment and transportation department. Throughout his life Jamieson has had a positive outlook and attitude towards others.

"The kids who (went) to Marmora said I was the friendliest driver there was," he recalls.

"I always found it was easier to praise a fellow than to tear him down. There's something good in



everybody."

He retired from the school board in 1985. Susan Theresa died in 1995 and Jamieson now lives with daughter Donna Mary. He also has four grandchildren.

Outside work Jamieson collected stamps and coins and enjoys gardening. He was a founding member of the south-east zone community policing organization in 1995 but today most of his energy goes toward the Juno Beach Centre. In 1998 he was invited to Makkum, Holland for a municipal celebration on the 100th anniversary of the Dutch

Queen's visit to the city. "I went back and had a great time. They all call me Uncle Don," he says of the Dutch children.

'Sun Suppl'

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