

# Kincardine WWII paratrooper skydives 68 years later

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Kincardine News

When 86-year-old Jack Pym said "Yes" to an offer to someday skydive with his chiropractor, he didn't exactly expect it to be made reality.

The Second World War veteran, a member of Canada's 1st Parachute Battalion, jumped for the 11th time in his life from 11,000 feet at Dunville, Ont. on Sept. 11, 2012.

About 5,000-feet of the jump was free fall, which, aside from the pressure from the harnesses, didn't phase him after 68 years.

"It didn't bother me a bit," said Pym, who added his daughter Jane and granddaughter Nadine may have been bit more concerned than he was at first. "But now about six of my grandkids want to jump with me next year."

He was accompanied on the jump by Kincardine chiropractor Dr. Stan Soloduka, and got some moral support from fellow veteran and former Kincardine mayor Charlie Mann, a First Special Service Force veteran who was sidelined from the experience due to a recent leg surgery.

During a conversation about his service as a paratrooper, Pym said he was asked by Soloduka if he'd jump again with him if the opportunity arose.

"I said yes, but didn't think anything would come of it," he said.

The three flew to Dunville for the experience, which

ended up garnering national media attention in the process.

Both Pym and Mann earned the honour of donning the 'wings' paratroopers wear on their uniforms during their military service.

Pym said his five jumps in Canada were "altogether different" than the five others he jumped when deployed to England in 1944 as a 19-year-old.

In Canada, the parachutes were tightly-packed whereas in England the pack he received down a chute for his first jump was almost like a pillow, he said. Canada also had a backup parachute, which they didn't have the luxury of in England, and the chutes deployed almost in reverse.

"They told us if that one didn't open you could just come back and get another one," Pym laughed.

He initially trained in Shilo, Manitoba, jumping out of mock planes and towers and transitioning to balloons at 750-feet. Last week's jump was a completely different experience, he said, in that the plane was far more quiet than the DC3 Dakota aircraft he jumped out of 68 years ago.

"Back then, we trained so hard I didn't have any fear," he said. "We kept in pretty

Kincardine's Jack Pym is seen in a CBC Television screen capture from his Sept. 11, 2012 skydiving jump in Dunville, 68 years after he jumped during the Second World War. (CBC SCREEN CAPTURE)

good shape. It was double time everywhere."

While six others who signed up for the parachute battalion made it to training, it took him initially being cut from the list through slightly different path to earn his wings. Pym said the captain didn't like him because he'd quit school, worked at a Dominion grocery store and "in the bush" prior to signing up with the armoured corps in Newmarket.

"He said you don't stay with jobs very long," said Pym.

But another superior officer saw him through to training, where it turned out he was the only one of the seven trainees to earn his wings of the men he trained with. Just under 700 earned the same accreditation in Canada, he said.

"I think that captain knew even less about it than I did," he laughed.

Pym's jump was covered by



national media, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which featured it on The National and online. Thinking back to his initial jumps, or to last week's, Pym said he was focused more on the cameraman in front of him to realize the impact of the adrenaline or the keeping his arms and legs in the right position while in tandem.

"But there's something about it, something it does to your body that I can't describe," he said.

To view the CBC video search 'Jack Pym CBC on Google.'



Left: Kincardine's Jack Pym shows off a display of his 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion memorabilia. Above: Jack Pym is seen in his military photo from 1944. (TROY PATTERSON/KINCARDINE NEWS)

