

# Connections

Journal of the Quebec Family History Society

**JAPANESE SURRENDER;  
WORLD WAR II ENDS**

*Pearl Harbor Is Avenged!*

**AMERICAN POWER  
OVER**



**THE EVENING TELEGRAM**

**HOME  
AND  
SPORTS**

VOL. LXX, NO. 17

32 PAGES

TORONTO, MONDAY, MAY 7, 1945

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**IT'S ALL OVER!  
NAZIS GIVE UP**

Word Flashed At 9.36 a.m.  
That All Nazis Surrendered

Gala Fete Sweeps Toronto  
As Joyous News Is Broken  
But There Is Sorrow, Too

## The 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII

# Connections

The End Of WWII Issue 2020



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# QFHS News

**The COVID virus** continues to influence our lives. The QFHS Heritage Centre has closed down again, hopefully not for too long. We will keep you informed. Although our Fraser House HQ is closed to members and the public for the moment, all phone calls and emails will be answered - so if you want to reach us for whatever reason - we are here!



*The Moderator - Kelley, our principal researcher, kept everyone on track and directed traffic when necessary.*

**Our first virtual Roots Conference** was a lot of work, as the organizers followed a steep learning curve...but, according to the feedback, it was a success! Our thanks go out to Kelley O'Rourke and her team for making it work.

**We are still busy, despite COVID;** check out our website - there you find news and information that will keep you connected and busy on your genealogy research - including upcoming virtual sessions.

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Sunday 1:00 pm - 4 pm

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# My Family in WWII - Montreal, England, Italy

*Lois Hardy (with Don MacDougall)*



*Helena and Dick. Below, Bonaventure Station, Montreal, June 19, 1941*



When war was declared in September 1939, Richard Ernest (Dick) Hardy of Greenfield Park asked Helena Jones of Mackayville to marry him. He was 27 years old, a Quarter Master Sergeant (WOII) with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps in Montreal. Expecting that Dick would soon leave for Europe, they married the next month and had the first wedding in Greenfield Park United Church's new building.

Dick's story is not that of a fighting man; rather, he was part of the vast support team crucial to the success of those on the front lines. Early in the war, Dick's unit stayed to train others. In June 1940, he was posted to No. 14 General Hospital, a 1,200-bed unit activated at Westmount Barracks. It wasn't until June 1941, a month after his daughter Eleanor was born, that No. 14 left Montreal -- to Halifax by train and across the Atlantic on board the *Stirling Castle*.

Once in England, Dick was promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major, senior non-commissioned officer, with hospital administration duties. No. 14 occupied three hospitals near London: Pinewood (350 beds), Aldershot in Farnborough (600 beds) and finally Horley in Surrey (900 beds) where they received casualties evacuated



Artist's rendering of Monterey's rescue of Santa Elena passengers. Right: Excerpt, "Montreal Hospital Now Operates in Italy, Jan. 22, 1944 – delayed," Sholto Watt, Montreal Star.

The hospital's history in Italy has been a succession of remarkable feats of improvisation and enterprise, owing in part to an earlier loss of equipment.

The very building where the hospital is lodged was, for instance, entirely open to winter winds when the staff arrived, as the Italians had removed all doors and windows during the time between the Germans' departure and the Allies' arrival. It could only be supposed that they imagined they would hide them and earn rewards for returning them after the war. The hospital was obliged to organize a search through the surrounding countryside, and doors and windows were found in cellars, under haystacks and in all manner of extraordinary hiding places.

from Dieppe.

Needed in Italy, No. 14 sailed from Liverpool in October 1943 on the Santa Elena, which carried 1800 Canadian soldiers and nurses. The convoy of 43 US and British ships was attacked by German aircraft in the Mediterranean near Algeria at dusk on November 6. The first planes carried jet-propelled radio-guided glide bombs (for the first time in the war), and one hit the Santa Elena. The second wave struck the Santa Elena with a torpedo bomb -- the order was given to abandon ship.

No. 14's Wally Plumpton wrote to his parents about the sinking:

"It was very dark, but I could see that the ship was gradually getting lower in the water at one end. Just as I got near the bottom of the net, a big wave washed up and lifted me off the net and against the ship. Golly, that water was cold! ... I saw a raft a little distance off with some

men hanging onto it, so I made for that.... I heard someone speaking and thought I recognized the voice, and discovered that Dick Hardy was hanging on the other side... We couldn't do very much talking, because every time we opened our mouths we got a mouthful of salt water... the water was getting colder and colder the longer we were in it, and I was beginning to get very tired. ... after a few hours [the life jackets] began to get waterlogged, and it got more difficult to keep up. After a little over four hours I was beginning to feel that I couldn't hang on much longer."

All from the Santa Elena were rescued and continued on to Naples, Dick and many others on the US troopship Monterey.

On December 5, No. 14 opened at Caserta. By January 1944, the hospital was over capacity at 1400 patients. Montreal Star War Correspondent, Sholto Watt, reported that "three hard-working men at the hospital are the chief surgeons and R.S.M. R.E. Hardy, of Montreal." Watt describes one challenge they overcame in the clipping shown.

When No. 14 moved on to Perugia,



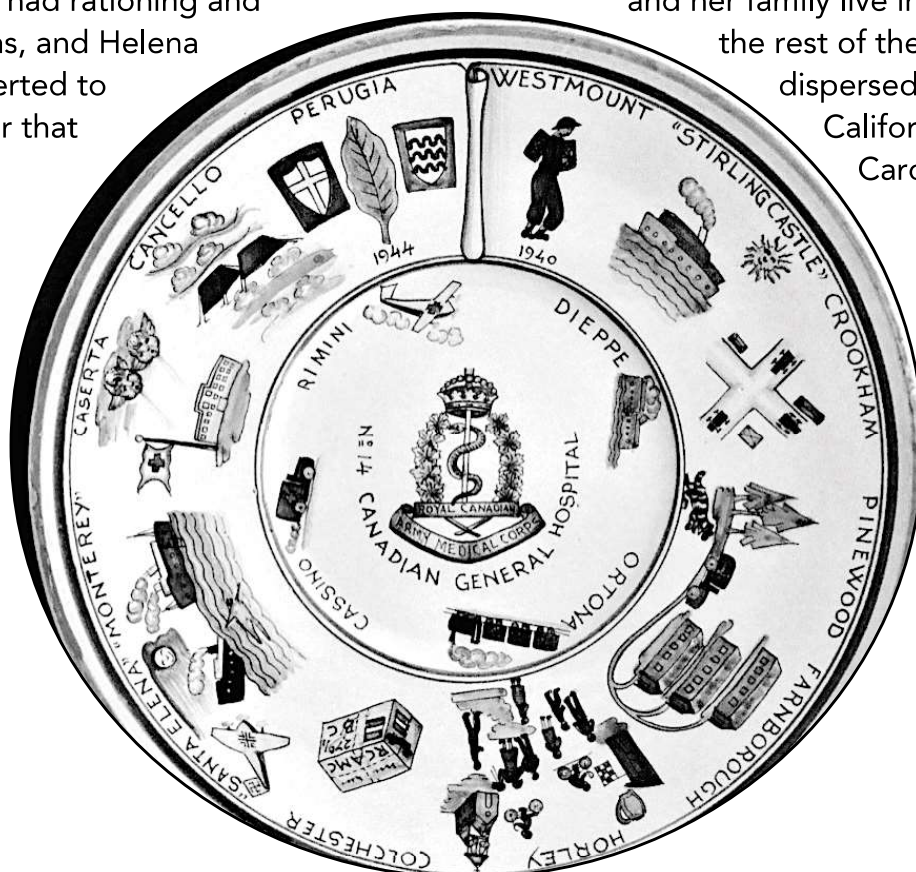
Dick was not with the unit. Severely ill, he was evacuated to be treated in England. Various postings followed before he returned to Montreal, more than 4 years after leaving his family.

On the home front, Helena joined her father at Montreal's Liquid Carbonic to work in purchasing; the company changed from making soda fountains to tank parts. Helena's mother looked after little Eleanor, who learned that her father was the uniformed man in the mantle photo – upon sight of a soldier, she would call out "Daddy".

Canada had rationing and food coupons, and Helena was disconcerted to later discover that the care

packages the family sent for Dick to enjoy were used instead to help smooth out situations that arose with his men. Definitely appreciated, however, was money Helena and Dick's sister Maud regularly sent through the Red Cross to a friend and her children suffering great deprivation in Japanese-occupied Hong Kong, especially as the father was serving in the British Merchant Marine. One daughter was given the English name "Eleanor" after the little girl in Montreal.

Dick and Helena would go on to have another daughter, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren. One granddaughter and her family live in Montreal, but the rest of the family have dispersed to Ottawa, California and North Carolina.



*This plate, produced for members of R.C.A.M.C. No. 14 General Hospital, illustrates the unit's journey from Westmount to Perugia, Italy, and four of the major battles they supported (artist: Major Jules Gosselin).*