

The Auroran's Carrier of the Month: Donald Campbell



By Brock Weir

As an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander, Donald Campbell has always lived by the motto 'Sans Peur, Ne Obliviscaris.'

Loosely translated, it means 'without fear and never forget.' They have stood him well throughout his life, carrying him into harm's way and helping to steer him through life when it could have easily overtaken him.

Mr. Campbell, our Carrier of the Month, was born in Scotland, a proud member of the Campbell clan, and eventually destined to be a hereditary chieftain.

The son of an estate manager, Campbell left high school with top marks at the age of 14 to help his father manage three of the largest estates. At the time, there were no farm workers, so his after school activities consisted of farm work, crawling into bed after midnight, back out by 5 a.m. to milk the cows, all before heading off to school.

Eventually something had to give and by his birthday, he forged ahead without fear, into the family business. Nearing his majority, his father sat him down and pressed him what he was going to do with the rest of his life. He decided on agricultural college to carry on in the land management game.

Fate, however, intervened when he signed his name on the entry papers and found himself in National Service.

'I signed the papers very nicely, and a wee man comes up and says, 'Congratulations, Mr. Campbell. I see you're 18 today.' Mr. Campbell recalls. 'I thought, 'What business is it of yours?' He told me he was the Queen's man, recruiting buggers like me and I was now in the Navy. I said, 'In a pig's ear!'

Coming from a proud family tradition of raising highland regiments, with a pipe major for a grandfather leading his troops into battle, he persuaded the recruitment officers that if he was going anywhere, it was as a member of the family regiment 'the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

'I was ordered to Korea at the time because that's where my regiment was,' he says. 'Then, two days later, the orders were rescinded. The Americans had wiped out our regiment in Korea 'Napalm bombed them and wiped them out. We had retaken the hill from the Chinese they had lost the previous day and they did not believe the hill had been taken.'

It was a U-turn in his journey, back to Edinburgh, where he became a piper, specialized in highland dance, all at the same time, earning his marks and badges as a sniper, rising through the ranks as high as one can go. In the meantime, the British Army had been plotting their next move, and earmarked the Highlanders for the next boat to Africa to fight in the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya.

Halfway through their trip, they again changed course, stopping in the mid-Atlantic and swinging in the opposite direction bound for Trinidad and Tobago, with a port call in Port of Spain before their ultimate destination ? fighting off invaders, threats of rebellion, and the encroaching threat of Communism in British Guyana from its neighbours, including Venezuela.

He recalls the confusion of his crew both on the way there and on the ground when they eventually landed, but it soon became clear when their training was put into good use in what he described as facing full-scale war.

When things came to a relative calm, however, he was then given the unlikely task of getting into full pipers' gear and accompanying some of his fellow troops to the home of a very important official in British Guyana. He remembers being ?befuddled? by his ?wonderful, West Indian French hostess? and even more so when he looked up the stairs.

?I looked up and there as the most beautiful girl I had ever seen,? he says. ?That was for me.?

After a slightly fraught courtship, he eventually won her hand and their family's blessing, remaining together until her death from cancer this past April.

In the intervening years, his service took him back to Scotland, where he finished up his active service in Germany, settled in Canada, and became part of an elite team of investigators examining Federal crime in 1969, eventually lasting over 20 years.

In the younger generation, the spirit that defined his grandparents is still alive today.

?My youngest grandson was doing something, and I said, ?You're not having a very good time with that, Bradley.' He said, ?No, but I know the motto. I will not give in. I will do this.' He sat down until he did it. ?My dad doesn't give in, you don't give in, and I will not give in. My name is Campbell.?

It is a fitting tribute to the man who, when asked how he can manage at 79 to deliver over 1,200 newspapers each week, answers simply, ?Dam the torpedoes, and full speed ahead.?