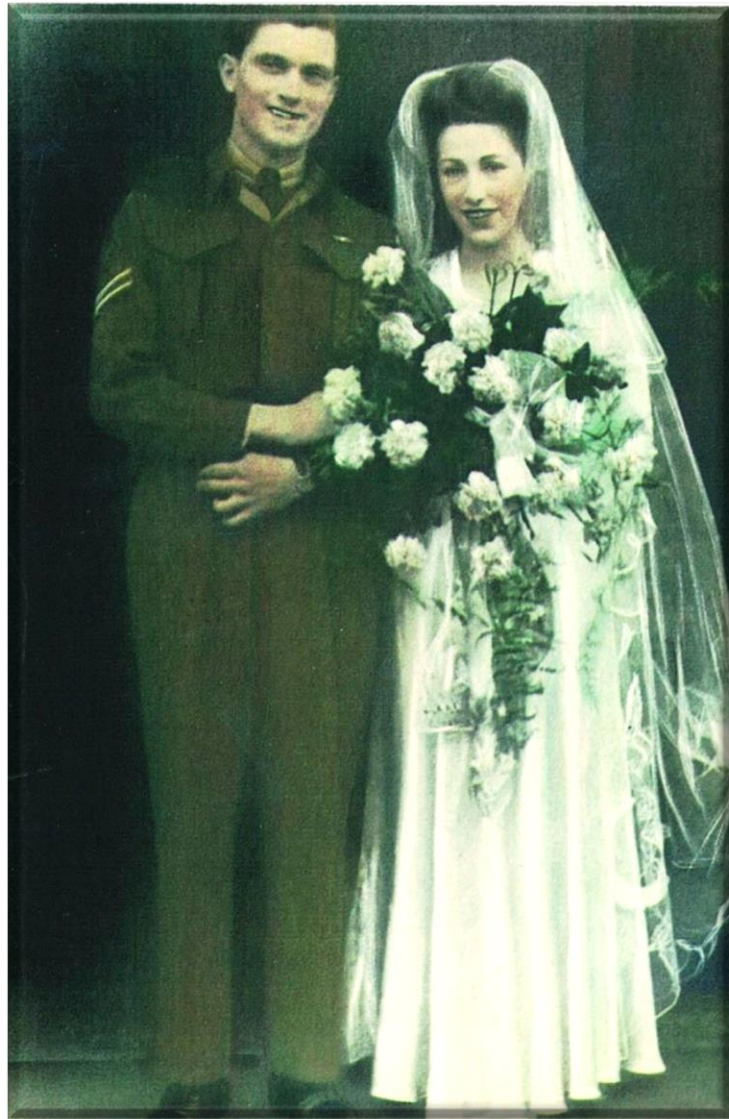




THOMAS RAESIDE & IRIS HUTT



Courtesy of: The **FIRST HUSSARS**

Written by: Nick Corrie

Assisted by: Iris Raeside &
Michelle Lundy

HODIE NON CRAS

Special card and love inscription given to Iris on the eve of D-Day, June 6, 1945



THINK
OF
ME

WHEN THE GOLDEN
SUN IS SINKING
AND YOUR MIND FROM
CARE SET FREE
WHEN OF OTHERS
YOU ARE THINKING
WILL YOU SOMETIMES
THINK
OF
ME.



Inscription: *Love Iris from Tom*

Name: Thomas C. Raeside

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: A 705

Born: February 4, 1923

Discharged: September 28, 1945

Served in: WWII and post war Canadian Army

Service: Canadian Army

Battle Group: 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade

Regiment: First Hussars - 6th Canadian Armoured Regiment



Service Details: Joined the First Hussars in Camp Borden on May 15, 1941. Trained in armoured warfare in Canada and Great Britain. On D-Day Corporal Raeside was the Loader/Wireless Operator in "Calamity," the tank of "C" Squadron's Officer Commanding, Maj. H. D'Arcy Marks.

Service Notes: Squadron plans to go inland were quickly thwarted by a bottle neck due to a bridge and culvert obstruction blocking their exit from the beach. While "A" and "B" Squadrons had their secret weapon, the floating DD tank, "C" Squadron was equipped with a British 17 pounder anti tank gun, the only gun capable of meeting German armour on even terms; their tanks were called "Fireflies." Corporal Raeside was badly wounded on August 14, 1944 in the battle of the Falaise Gap. He was evacuated to hospital in England where he remained until April 1945 when he was deemed fit for combat again and returned to the fray, rejoining his Regiment now heavily engaged in Holland, serving as a Crew Commander to the war's end in Germany.



HODIE NON CRAS

(Today Not Tomorrow)



MEDALS: NW Europe, Cyprus, CD



Thomas C. Raeside - Personal History: Before, during and after the war.

D-Day casualties amounted to 21 officers and men killed, a hard first day of combat, but alas, there would be more to come. Every day for weeks after the Regiment was literally “learning on the job” as they tried desperately to overcome a well trained, camouflaged and strategically placed enemy.

The determination of “C” Squadron to take the fight to the enemy on D-day and move inland was recognised in a letter from the Commanding Officer of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles commending, “Their fire power with complete disregard for their own safety...unhesitatingly crossing suspected minefields and in the face of known anti-tank fire...”

In the ensuing days the Regiment suffered many losses, most tragically on Sunday June 11, still regarded as their “Black Day.” Nevertheless, by the middle of August the combined brute force of the Allies had pushed the Germans into full retreat, forming a vulnerable “Pocket” perfect for capture if the gap between the Canadian and American forces could be squeezed shut in the now infamous “Falaise Gap.”

On August 14 in operation “Tractable,” Corporal Raeside’s *Firefly* tank commanded by Capt. Hugh Brydges, encountered German infantry whose experience demanded no surrender, only fight! A well thrown grenade was hurled into the open hatch of Capt. Brydges who tried desperately to grab the grenade, but tragically, it exploded before he could hurl it out.



The internal explosion created two immediate concerns for the crew. Capt. Brydges was killed instantly leaving the wounded crew to struggle free. Despite their wounds they also had to contend with



the flaming-up of their Sherman tank, an all too usual result when hit, plus the possibility of being killed by the enemy lingering nearby. For the surviving crew their future varied as luck rolled the dice. The driver, Tpr Laverne Pyburn, B 48918, was captured and became a POW. Gunner Tpr Joseph Hunt, C 38321, received the full blast in his back, lessened no doubt by his steel gunner's seat. Nevertheless, he managed to get free but was captured by the Germans who shortly thereafter left him in an orchard where he was found the next day and evacuated to hospital in England.

Corporal Raeside a trained gunner, was on this day a Loader/Wireless Operator which placed him on the opposite side of the turret from the grenade blast, behind the breech of the overly large gun. Despite this advantage Raeside was wounded on the legs and head, then further inflicted by burned hands and sizzling hair as he rolled over the tank's flaming rear deck, dropping to the ground and what little safety it afforded. His lucky dice were rolling.

As he lay on the ground looking all the world as a dead tanker, burned and bleeding, a German soldier nudged him hard on the shoulder with his rifle. Tom was raised in Canada but he was born in Scotland, call him a "Canny Scot," for he endured the pain of the hard knock, lying still he uttered no response; the German left him for dead. The next day he along with fellow crew member Hunt ended up in the same English hospital.

Special Note: Earlier on the day when Capt. Hugh Stanley Brydges (1914-44) was killed, he confided to a fellow officer that "This is it." He apparently had a premonition that he would be killed and refused the suggestion that he go on sick parade because his sense of duty to his crew out weighed his fear, offering that he "couldn't live with himself if I did."



By February 1945, Corporal Thomas Raeside had recovered sufficiently from his wounds to begin a new and lasting chapter in his life – he was going to get married! He married Iris Joyce Hutt on February 3, 1945. Like so many other Canadian service men, Tom had met and fallen in love with an attractive and lively English girl. No doubt Tom was struck not only by the girl's beauty but her sense of fun and good humour (still evident at age 92).

Iris Hutt was a war time parachute maker in Woking, so committed to the war effort she sewed a letter "V" on her blouse. She met Tom at a dance in Aldershot, that infamous home to so many unfortunate Canadian soldiers but, not this one evening. Iris and a girl friend had taken the train from their home in Woking to go dancing. Perhaps this was the first roll of Tom's lucky dice because that evening he was there too! It was an "excuse me" dance that allowed Tom to cut in and dance not once - but many times with his "new girl." The song playing that first dance: *"You'll Always Be In My Heart."* From that moment on they, in old Navy parlance, did - *"Make it so."*

Wartime for the English public was no picnic either; the threat of invasion, the Blitz, "Doodlebug" flying bombs, rations, all added up to be a depressing and challenging experience. Iris's mother was a resourceful woman, full of defensive ideas. She once advised her children, "If a German enters the house throw pepper in the bugger's face, right in his eyes, grab his gun and shoot him." Fortunately, no enemy made it that far, fortunate for an enemy soldier that is!



In July '46 Iris became one of 47,783 war brides who left their homes and way of life to join their husbands in Canada, to begin something new, unknown and

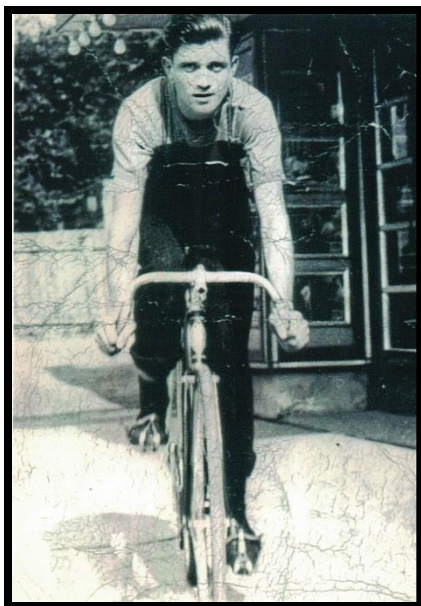
somewhat frightening. With some trepidation Iris left behind her parents, three sisters and younger brother to sail away on the *Queen Mary* carrying with her the newest Raeside, Alan, who celebrated his first birthday aboard on July 22. He became part of the 21,950 children to make the transfer across the Atlantic.

The town of Aurora and civvy street didn't hold much attraction for Tom after his wartime experience; in 1949 with his wife's support, he rejoined the army: the Royal Canadian Dragoons, serving in Camp Borden at the Armoured Corps School.

Tom might have been back in the army but he obviously took his family responsibilities seriously - a real family man. In his 1939 Buick, remembered as a large "gangster" type vehicle, he travelled the 38 miles each way, each day to be home and enjoy his family. By 1950 the growing family was transferred to Camp Petawawa, the RCD home base. It was also here in 1957 that the Fort Garry Horse was activated and stationed, drawing recruits from existing regiments: from the RCD Tom is now in the FGH.

Over the next 23 years Tom served his country with tours supporting the United Nations in Cyprus and alongside of NATO forces in Germany where he was accompanied by his family. Climbing the promotion ladder he obtained the rank of Warrant Officer, Class II, and retires in 1972.

A little-known fact to the Army, apparently never revealed, was his birth date shown on official records which read 1922 not '23. Eager to join and underage, Tom subtracted a year. One can assume it was a little lie he never regretted seconded by the army.



When Thomas Raeside presented himself to the recruiting office, they were no doubt impressed by this fine physical specimen who wanted to go to war. As a young man Tom was physically active, a true sportsman devoted to cycling, winning awards which brought him recognition from the press who acknowledged his sporting accomplishment when publicising his brush with death in France.

Eventually the family moves to London where Thomas Raeside's military bearing and innate sense of responsibility, qualified him for an important position as Provincial Court Clerk, a position he held for the next 15 years until retiring completely in 1988, age 65. His knowledge of the Criminal Code and ability to instill some military discipline into the court proceedings was much admired and ultimately missed.

Thomas Raeside lovingly nursed by his wife Iris, died at home of cancer on March 31, 1994. He was her "hero" never to be forgotten along with his four children.

In accordance with his wishes, on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, Tom's cremated ashes were carried to France by a contingent of First Hussars and buried in the veteran's cemetery in Beny-sur Mer.



Plaque installed on Juno Beach



Medals and Decorations:

1939-45 Star

France and Germany Star

Defence Medal

Canadian Volunteer Service Medal

War Medal 1939-45

UNFICYP Cyprus

Canadian Forces Decoration (CD)



HODIE NON CRAS

Today Not Tomorrow



Addendum: Britain's Secret Army Revealed and Other Family Mementoes:

In a speech to the British people at the outbreak of war, after he was asked by the King to form a government, Prime Minister Winston Churchill told the populace that his "Policy was to wage war by all our might" and his aim was "Victory at all costs against a monstrous tyranny." With bombs dropping daily all over Britain and the enemy perched on the European shore ready to pounce on the island race which had undergone invasions before in their ancient history, this time it was different: undaunted despite Dunkirk, bolstered by Churchill's words of hope and inspiration, the British were determined to stand and fight off the invaders "...whatever the cost."



It was upon this background, filled with personal resolve, Iris took the time to embroider a letter "V" upon her blouse the same "V" for victory sign which Winston flashed about with two raised fingers accompanied in the opposite hand by his ubiquitous cigar. His speeches and unfailing determination to withstand an invasion followed by overall victory, reached all corners of Britain, especially in Woking, in the Hutt household, taken to heart by a real Britisher, Mrs. Hutt.

Note: After 75 years a closely guarded secret has recently been released by the British government concerning the country's main line of defence against a German invasion in WWII. As incredible as it seems, this simple plan of attack drawing upon civilian audacity actually existed.

As a typical example, in 1940 Ethyl Hutt, wife of Fredrick Hutt and mother of four daughters and one son, all living in the southern city of Woking, she filled with "British pluck" and motherly instinct, working in compliance with government home defence directives, devised her own plan of defence against the invading Hun: each child was issued with a bag of pepper and was told if any Germans were encountered, they were to "Throw the pepper in the buggers face, get it right in their eyes then take his gun and shoot



The secret army in post war mufti

him.” The war raged on for four more years, the bags of pepper held at the ready but, no invasion ensued and no German had to write home to his mother that a “plucky” English mother and her gang of pepper throwing children blinded, shot and wounded him with his own gun, then took him prisoner. C’est la guerre.

Never before seen pictures of *Mrs. Hutt’s Secret Army*



Seen above is the war time extended - *Hutt Secret Army* - taking on a Canadian army recruit, one Corporal Thomas Raeside, a member of the First Hussars from London Ontario, marrying Hutt daughter, Iris.

Date: February 3, 1945 (Mr. & Mrs. Hutt, the *Army’s* C.O., on right)



When Tom approached Iris for the first time he did so as a “tank man,” a member of the newly formed Canadian Armoured Corps. The First Hussars prior to WW II was a cavalry regiment which by the time Tom joined in 1941, all cavalry had become along with its horses, a relict to history, a total unknown to him. Despite his shortcomings as a horseman, the Hussars cavalry background fortunately carried some weight when he met Iris’ father, Fred Hutt, who during WW I fought as a cavalry trooper in the British Army – nice coincidence.



The Thomas and Iris Raeside family: Father Tom, son Alan, daughter Carol, mother Iris, and in front, sons Mike and Robert.



The English family of Iris Hutt Raeside in later years.

The three military career stages of Thomas C. Raeside:

First Hussars, 1941 -45. Royal Canadian Dragoons, 1949 -57.
Fort Garry Horse, 1957-72. Retires as Warrant Officer, Class 2.



Wedding Party, Woking England, February 3, 1945

