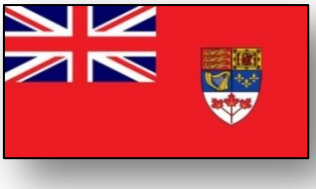




Marshall and Sheila DeJaegher

Curtesy of: The First Hussars

Written by: Nick Corrie

Assisted by: Michelle Lundy

HODIE NON CRAS

(Today Not Tomorrow)

Name: Marcel (Marshall) C. DeJaegher

Rank: Trooper

Service Number: A 55719

Born: January 9, 1924

Discharged: 1946

Served in: WWII

Service: Canadian Army

Battle Group: 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade

Regiment: First Hussars – 6th Canadian Armoured Regiment

Service Details: Trooper DeJaegher joined the regular army in 1941, age 17, then transitioned through various units and specialised mechanical training (Light Aid Detachment –*Rank* : Craftsman) before being taken on strength as a Trooper with the First Hussars just prior to D-Day. In total, by war's end he belonged to four different units of the Canadian Army.

Service Notes: Trooper DeJaegher was dispatched from England as a driver with "B" Squadron in their DD self propelled floating tanks. He volunteered as a last minute replacement for a driver suffering from an attack of appendicitis. Unfortunately for DeJaegher as a non swimmer, his tank was one of the first to sink, having been launched far off the beach in rough water. It's an ill wind that blows no good and for Trooper DeJaegher a good turn of events came from his four crew men, all swimmers and trained in survival who dragged him to shore where all survived to fight another day.

HODIE NON CRAS

CANADIAN MEDALS: NW EUROPE

Marcel (Marshall) Camille DeJaegher – Personal History: Before, during and after WWII

Marcel DeJaegher was unofficially renamed – Marshall - while a young, immigrant student in his new rural, Canadian elementary school. Apparently there was a girl in his class who had a similar name which confused the boy challenged by his youth and a language gap. Marshall was born in Belgium, near Ghent, in the small village of Zwijnaarde on January 9, 1924. His parents were Victor and Anna Maria DeJaegher (their surname means ”Hunter”) who decided in 1927 to bring their two children to Canada and start a new life in a country undisturbed by war and political unrest which was the recent history of war torn Belgium at that time as it struggled to shake off the four year German occupation and oppression in WWI.

The Rape of Belgium

The circumstances which brought them along with other Belgians to Canada are varied but well documented. Before considering some of these more formal appeals enticing the DeJaeghers, there was some special coaxing coming from Victor’s brother who had earlier arrived on Canada’s east coast and was impressed with all he saw, sending back to the old country happy accounts and pleas to follow his lead.

Immigration from Belgium to Canada began much earlier than the Post WWI wave, in fact it is regarded as the Third Wave. Beginning in 1859, Belgians began to spread across the entire country from coast to coast as productive citizens, much sought and respected. In the early years it was the Canadian government which launched the recruiting drives, successful in all aspects; after 1918 private Canadian interests took up the challenge.

Early in the twentieth century in South Western Ontario, a burgeoning sugar beet industry sprang up. One original company founded in 1912 was the *Dominion Sugar Company*, which after the war recruited directly in Belgium for immigrants to man farms

in Canada. Railways always seeking new freight, joined the crusade but perhaps both of these initiatives paled by the efforts of the newly established, king crop of all time – tobacco.

In the Tillsonburg and Delhi areas where the sandy soil and good climate favoured the addictive leaves, many nationalities sought out farms, non the least were the Belgians. It was to this area that the DeJaeghers were first introduced to Canada to find new work and new lives.

There is another connection which may have compelled the DeJaeghers along with other immigrants, to select SW Ontario as a destination. This possibility stems from Herbert Hoover, the future President of the United States who during WWI established *The Commission of Relief for Belgium (CRB).* This was largely a North American movement to which Canada contributed through generously sending food stuffs to the destitute Belgians, to "Poor Little Belgium" as the press had dubbed them and their plight.

From St. Thomas in Elgin County, *Empire Flour Mills* followed normal procedure by bagging needed flour in white cotton sacks. It is these sacks which were much coveted by Belgian women that reminds us today of our SW Ontario connection to this cause. The manager of the mill was Captain W. H. Corrie of the Elgin Regiment, this author's grandfather. The flour sack seen here was one of many which was saved in tact and is on display at the Elgin County Museum. The flour sacks were used by various Belgian groups to make new clothing, accessories, pillows, bags, and other functional items. Many women chose to embroider over the mill logo and the brand name of flour, but entirely original designs were sometimes created on the sacks and then embroidered, painted, or stencilled on the fabric. Perhaps the city's name along with its Canadian connection, acted as further inducement in selecting this area for settlement?

Victor DeJaegher eventually followed the lead from his brother already in Canada, by leaving home one year in advance to earn money and experience for himself the suitability of the new country for his family's future. In 1927 the family, seen here some years after arriving from Belgium, landed in Halifax and made their way to a farm in Harwich Township, just east of Chatham. (Parents, Marshall, sisters Yvonne and little Mary.)

In time the family grew in size, expanding to four children, one boy and three girls, (the third girl, Jeannie, died age 1). To supplement family income during the "Dirty Thirties," Victor in addition to farming, turned his hand to draw upon his Belgian work experience by re-entering the masonry and construction field. It was from this farming and construction background that Marshall emerged to join the army in 1941 at age 17. (Farm boys were much coveted in the army due to their stamina, dedication and willingness to train and work without complaint.

Marshall's first introduction to the army came through his enlistment in the Kent Regiment which was an enlistment regiment, never active during the war. Itchy feet or the impetuous of youth compelled the young Marshall down the road to Windsor along with a friend to join – the Navy. He couldn't prove his age, they disbelieved he was 18 which he wasn't, only 17, so – he joined the army which wasn't particular at all. Recruiting officer: "Can you walk and talk at the same time? See your two feet? Hear a horn blow? Like lots of fresh air, cold water shaves, bad food? Right! Sign here. Welcome to the war time army soldier." *Such a lucky lad was he!*

Between 1900 and 1939, Canadians had been called to arms three times: the South African War, WWI and then a repeat, back to fight Germany again with its added Hitler-Nazi twist. Despite the opposition to war involvement emanating from Quebec, the bulk of Canada's mankind and women drew their origins from Great Britain, distinguished

like no other country by its earth circling Empire. There is ample personal testimony to accredit the call-to-arms in these past wars, openly displayed from coast to coast, to this innate loyalty to King and Country. The old country needed them and they were willing to go. At the out break of WWII this was still a deep seated motivation for many recruits in all the services but not only for those of British origins. For Marshall DeJaegher, born in Belgium, still the homeland of his extended family who were about to see yet another round of terror, a welling up of his sense of duty to them is unquestionable.

Shortly after Marshall's Windsor enlistment, there appeared in a local newspaper a picture of Marshall doing just that, the first his family, in particular his mother, knew what he had done. His parents had survived WWI; the horrors of war were vivid memories and now their only son was off to experience what they were trying to forget. Tears flowed, but they no doubt understood. C'est la guerre.

An examination of Marshall's Serial # A 55719 is warranted. The letter "A" indicates he joined in Military District #1 which was also the district of the First Hussars only they, like other army units, had a block of numbers ascribed to them; in the Hussars case it was A 1-1999. The Kent Regiment's block was 49,500 – 54,499, the highest numbers in the district, which means, Marshall's number indicates a unit outside MD #1, a national unit.

Armies are usually criticised for fighting the last war, after all it's what they know best. Images which have survived as this one from Queens Park in London, show men in WWI uniforms digging trenches – a la WWI. By mid-1940 the First Hussars had retired their horses in favour of tanks (albeit they were WWI vintage) following the German Blitzkrieg into France in May 1940 which had settled all doubts as to how the war

was to be conducted – mechanised and armoured. With cavalry regiments converted to armour along with many infantry regiments, coupled to more and more vehicles of all types appearing in camps across the country, the “Brass Hats” in Ottawa realised these vehicles needed maintenance and men better be quickly recruited, trained and put to the task. Marshall, sporting a strong farm boy physique was just the job: he eventually became a Craftsman (equivalent of Private or Trooper) in the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME).

> Note: RCEME wasn’t formed until October 1942 relieving the mechanical responsibilities from the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps who previously handled functions such as the repair of weapons, optics and vehicles. Therefore, In 1941 Marshall was first recruited from the Kent Regiment into the Ordnance Corps then to RCEME which means - by war’s end he had served in four different units, the last being the First Hussars.

Like so many recruits in MD #1 coming on after the initial intake in 1939-40, Marshall was introduced to the fine art of “square bashing,” saluting, uniform care, etc., in Chatham, his home town. From there he transitioned to London and H. B. Beal Technical High School (Tech) which had ramped-up its renowned facility to offer all recruits of all services, to both men and women, introductory courses of machining and mechanical skills so much in demand by the military.

Eventually after other stops to a driving school in Woodstock then Montreal and on to Camp Petawawa for more advanced training, Marshall boarded the Empress of Scotland in June 1942 to sail off to England. Once there, they were billeted in an old theatre in Epsom where he became part of a new concept within RCEME: a Light Aid Detachment (LAD). They remained in Epsom until D-Day.

In December 2013, Major (Ret’d) Gene Smith, CD of the First Hussars, was fortunate and honoured to interview Marshall in preparation for an application to receive a special medal, the *National Order of the Legion of Honour (France)*. (Unfortunately, Marshall passed on before it was approved. It was an award of which he most deservedly would have received.) Included here are Marshall’s reminiscences on the trip to England as recorded by Major Smith:

In June of 1942, Marshall boarded the Empress of Scotland with 10,000 other Canadians heading off to war. He believes the ship had been a cattle boat before being pressed into military service and the crew were all Chinese. It was here that Marshall started his animosity towards the RCAF. When he and his friends first went aboard they were told to go to a certain deck which turned out to be two decks above the water line. After they had settled in, they were unceremoniously ordered to move to a deck three decks below the water line. He found out that the gentlemen of the Air Force had taken over their initial accommodations. Each man had to declare where they wanted to sleep; in a hammock; on a table; or on the floor. Marshall decided that if anyone was sick, the fluid would flow downwards so he elected to sleep in a hammock – which he had never done before. The food aboard the Empress of Scotland left much to be desired - Marshall believed they put embalming fluid in it to keep it from spoiling - so he lived on cookies and bread he stole from the bakery. That was the only good thing about their deck which was three below the water line – their accommodations were across the passageway from the ship's bakery. He and his mates found that they could fix bayonets, lay on their bellies and spear and recover loaves of bread that had been placed in the hall to cool.

Once in Great Britain and member of a LAD, the one obstacle Marshall would have been confronted with was a lack of new mechanized equipment to maintain. When the Hussars arrived in England in late 1941 they, like the whole Canadian army guarding Britain against invasion, had no tanks and probably little transportation of any kind. The United States which became "The Arsenal of Democracy" was still a non-belligerent, their war machine still waiting to be cranked up, supplying all the Allies with needed equipment. Canadian industry was pushing ahead with war time production but the British needed these items more than Canada's forces given that the British army was actively engaged in the Middle and Far Eastern war zones. A big setback came for the Canadian Army in 1942 at the Dieppe debacle, losing both men and equipment - these were strained times!

While new equipment at this time was in short supply and all units waited for new issues, there was certainly no shortage of old outdated varieties. Older types were badly in need of regular maintenance to which Marshall's LAD could turn their attention and learn valuable lessons in the process. A clean LAD Craftsman was a slack individual that no NCO would tolerate.

Note: without first hand testimony, it's difficult to establish the numbers and types of vehicles available at any one time. The maintenance depicted here is based on the overall historical context taken from many sources which deal largely with bigger issues while ignoring the day to day activities of the average serving soldier. Some allowances for inaccuracies are required.

At times like these army wisdom prevails, dictating that no man should be idle. We know from testimonials of veteran First Hussars that the army resorted during the invasion waiting period, to a number of schemes to maintain training and discipline. Some examples are: drill of course, always a time killer; tank and vehicle instruction when available, including maintenance; machine shop skill honing courses; even bouts of parachute training are part of the Regiment's history during its time in Britain. In Marshall they found a perfect instructor for a not too new component of any well functioning army with a modern mechanical twist: he became an instructor of motor cycle skills: aka - how to be a Dispatch Rider.

His qualifications for this role were earned back home as a young man determined to pay his way in life, and to that end he rode a motor cycle delivering for a pharmacy in Chatham. Lets see: motor cycle, money, lots of dash and glamour – could girls be part of his scheme? The army wasn't interested in any added benefits derived from cycle riding, they needed trained riders and Marshall fit the bill as a competent, trusted instructor. As for those English girls? Time and circumstances have blurred the memory.

On the eve of D-Day, June 6, 1944, Marshall found himself in South Hampton somewhere near the Hussars' staging area, they waiting to board a Landing Craft Tank (LCT). The story goes as related to Major Smith by Marshall, that as he was waiting for his boarding instructions as part of a LAD, an officer approached his group enquiring if anyone knew how to drive a tank. One of the first rules a soldier learns in the army is to NOT volunteer for anything; Marshall was caught out in a weak moment and his hand shot up. Yup, he knew how to drive a Sherman tank. Trouble was this particular

Sherman was a floating DD tank, Duplex Drive, a floating monster designed to land independently and hopefully ahead of the infantry to give them much needed covering fire against the gun emplacements.

In a peace-time army to accept an untrained soldier for a dangerous mission of this type, one in which it was anticipated high casualties powering to shore might incur (they didn't fortunately) would be branded as irresponsible and if anything should happen resulting in death or injury the officer involved would find himself immerged in deep doo-doo. But this was war time where spur of the moment decisions are made constantly, like the officer's and Marshall's, all under the heading of "needs must."

An examination of the special training needed for this floating tank is in order to appreciate the serious risk this volunteering gesture posed to both Marshall and ultimately his crew mates. Corporal James Fisher has in recent times related how he and other Hussars were given life saving gear similar to that used by submariners because if they sank they both had something in common – the need to surface and survive. To that end their training consisted of a full crew bodily placed in a tank, the hatches closed then lowered into the water from a barge. Once the tank filled with water the drill was to activate their gear, open the hatches, rise to the surface, get into a dingy and get the hell out of there! (As one might imagine, this drill under combat conditions varied as the situation dictated.) In addition to the dunking, both "A" and "B" picked as DD squadrons, had undergone training in their tanks with the floatation screens activated, powering through the water and onto a beach. All this Marshall had missed which meant he underwent a crash course from his crew mates who by then had benefited from the extensive training in survival and operation of the awkward tanks. It would have been at this point that our young volunteering Marshall learned the full implication of his impetuosity and passed on to everyone a very important fact – he couldn't swim. Whoops!

In a floating, powering to shore DD tank, occupied by a five man crew, only two are really engaged and important: the driver and the crew commander. The commander was required to stand behind the turret and manoeuvre a whacking great tiller-rudder contraption, to supplement the directional capabilities of the two rotating props controlled by the driver. Firmly placed in the driver's seat, overhead hatch closed and sealed, Marshall tackled this last task untrained and untried; it's a pity that the tank sank through no fault of Marshall or his crew, thus, depriving him of the satisfaction of achieving a remarkable feat under the circumstances. (Wave action from the Channel and constant churning from larger ships manoeuvring nearby, could swamp the fragile screens requiring a quick exit from the 30 ton sinking and dangerous armoured monster.)

At war's end horrendous events remaining so sharp in the veteran's mind, become statistics to the regimental historians. The First Hussars are no exception having by 2004 produced three volumes with the last, *The Gallant Hussars*, the most ambitious given its scope and professional presentation thanks to author Michael R. McNorgan of Ottawa.

Still off shore

Both "A" and "B" Squadrons were comprised of 19 floating DD tanks. Marshall's "B" Squadron successfully launched all 19 but only 15 made it to shore, Marshall's being one of the four lost along with Squadron Commander, Major 'Stu' Duncan's "Bold" which today sits proudly on Juno Beach as the Regiment's unique war memorial. Most of the tanks to reach shore did so ahead of the Regina Rifles who they were to support, thus accomplishing the purpose derived from powering to shore independently in the first place, to deliver advance fire onto the beaches before the infantry arrived, the PBI (Poor Bloody Infantry). This arrangement

lessened considerably the possibility of losing entire LCTs with their total tank compliment leaving as a tragic consequence the PBI to fend for themselves without armoured fire support.

Turning again to Marshall's account that day as related to Major Smith, he recalled driving his tank into the water which "slightly sank". At that point he was submerged in water and in the tank as a non-swimmer. Thankfully, his crewmates with foreknowledge of his handicap, pulled him out then held him up long enough to all "enjoy" hitching a ride on the back of another more fortunate tank making its way to shore. Their next challenge was to survive on the French beach *sans armour*. (See Addendum for more details on his D-Day experiences.)

In a valuable source, *A History of the First Hussars* published in 1951, there is a recounting by Trooper A.O. Dodds who was the gunner in "B" Squadron's Battle Captain's tank, Dick Wildgoose, his also a sinking casualty, of how they and other survivors from all disabled tanks managed to survive on the beaches that day. Marshall has left no personal account for his first day ashore, but perhaps he joined with Trooper Dodds and others to help bandage the wounded, or recovered equipment stranded close to shore, some even taking up small arms to fight alongside the infantry. As the day wore on they encountered more stranded crews doing the same all punctuated by the odd Me-109 dropping bombs and strafing the beach head followed by a heavy pounding from artillery fire. "At 2100 hrs," Dodds later recalled, "Lieutenant Deans gathered the party and marched us to an assembly area." They had survived their first day of combat with determination to stay to the end; for twenty-one Hussars KIA that day it was their end to a very, very short war.

Sherman scrap yard

June 11, 1944, is still recognised today as the “Black Day” for the First Hussars. By this time, five days after landing on Juno Beach, Marshall was back driving a tank with “B” Squadron which was the unfortunate recipient of overwhelming German defensive positions that shot up the Squadron quite badly. Quoting again from Major Gene Smith’s notes which he submitted to the French committee responsible for issuing their Legion medal, the devastating losses received that day is revealed:

> “D” Company, the Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada, about 120 strong, joined with the Hussars “B” Squadron for an attack against the hamlet of Le Mesnil-Patry. Regimental history records that the Hussars lost 45 men that day, 7 officers, 6 NCOs and 32 men. Of these, at least seven were murdered and six others listed as missing and still remain unaccounted for. A total of 37 tanks were destroyed and another 13 damaged but repairable. This was the bloodiest day in the history of the First Hussars. The QOR losses were 98 men out of “D” Company.

Having survived twice the debacle of war, Marshall’s charmed life was interrupted as the Regiment neared Caen where he received a non-debilitating wound, or so it seemed after a quick inspection by a Squadron officer. We pick up the story as recorded by Major Smith during the interview with Marshall:

> Marshall was wounded near Caen while repairing a broken track on his tank. A grenade went off near him and he took shrapnel in his right calf. Bleeding profusely, he asked if he was to be hospitalised to which his Officer replied, “Pull out the shrapnel, put a dressing on it, finish repairing the track and get back in the tank.” Years later the shrapnel wound was to give Marshall some severe pain but, it was never acknowledged by Veteran Affairs as a war wound.

Author’s note: all too typical even to this day.

Marshall remained with “B” Squadron throughout the rest of the war, receiving no other identifiable wounds. (The post-war recurring, haunting dreams and reluctance to talk about his experiences were only known to his family. He carried his burden well, a true indicator of strong character.) In a 2011 newspaper account of his war experience, on the eve of departing for Europe on a return visit, he expressed his and the Regiment’s strategy in dealing with superior fire power manned by the enemy. He told the reporter:

> “You knew the 88s could shoot through your tank. You had to keep an eye open and whenever you saw the barrel of a gun you had to try and keep the front of your tank facing it because the front armour was thicker than the sides. If they got a shot at you on the side it could go right through.”

A soldier’s life while in combat has been described by many who were there, as pure hell! But a soldier is first and foremost a human being holding a basic fundamental characteristic of seeking some way of relieving stress and blotting out bad memories; a soldier in combat conditions had to find relief when and wherever it occurred. Three such occasions arise where Marshall is concerned:

1. In December 1944, the Regiment was near Grosbeck, an area which was their home for two months. As Christmas eve approached, a clever Officer in “B” Squadron recognising Marshalls’ Belgian origins, “suggested” that he utilise his birth right and go find some beer for the purposes of - drinking it of course, after all, it was the festive season despite the war. Off went Marshall in a suitable vehicle and with cunning dexterity he winkled out a brewery that, yes, they had beer to sell. After an exchange of money for beer, promising to return the bottles which were in short supply, Marshall was off back to his own lines. Along the way he and his mates who had willingly volunteered for this dangerous mission, spied a pig

and nothing else would do but they must have the pig for a slap-up pork dinner. Into the back of the truck it went (not without some direct prodding; pigs are like that) and they returned the heroes for the day: beer and pork for everyone!

2. With the war over and the Regiment in Germany as an Occupying Force, leave was granted. Nothing could be more natural for Marshall than to return to Belgium and reunite with his family after an 18 year absence. The German occupied countries were struggling to regain their former peace time stature, fragile after two world wars. Many collaborators were being called out for punishment, a fact which put everyone on edge because it was too easy to be branded as such. When Marshall resplendent in uniform, knocked on the family door , a young cousin of his completely unaware of who this soldier was, sprang to the conclusion he was there to seek out collaborators. This tense exchange was quickly dispelled when Marshall's grandmother appeared, recognised him and all was well. One can only imagine the joy and love felt in that Belgian house that night as Marshall, the Canadian soldier hero from their own family, had returned and in a manner of speaking, was there to liberate them.

3. Whether it was Marshall returning to Belgium and gaining some notoriety from the family reunion or some other source no one knows, but somehow the Belgian government learnt of his presence and attempted to conscript him into the Belgian army. You see, Marshall had never taken out Canadian citizenship, he was still a Belgian and they wanted him! The rest of the story is just as vague and crazy as the first part. The quickest solution to the problem would be to send Marshall home out of the clutches of the government; this avenue wasn't taken, but for why, who knows? Instead, a Canadian officer approached on his behalf – perhaps - a hastily assembled British Consulate in Germany who until 1947 were issuing Canadian passports, or was it the Hussars Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Brooks who may have had the power at that moment to give him

citizenship? Whatever were the circumstances the deed was done with uncharacteristic speed and efficiency and Marshall became a Canadian citizen in – Germany! Go figure!

Marshall returned to Canada aboard the Queen Elizabeth enjoying a five day journey sated like a king with food and drink, arriving at New York on January 9, 1946. After a leisurely train trip he arrived in London and was mustered out of the army from the Dundas Street Armouries. From there he continued on down the road to Chatham, absent for five years, to start a new life as a civilian.

Post war Canada was marked with a flood of veterans returning, clamouring on a personal level for new lives and prosperity they probably had never seen before. Courtship and marriage was the order of the day fuelling the baby-boom which followed; Marshall was no exception. He married a local woman Beatrice, fathered two sons, Michael and Danny and along with a daughter, Judy, the DeJaegher family settled into a new world emerging from ten years of depression followed by nearly six years of war. It was a time of hope and promise and a good time to be alive.

What to do? Drawing on his pre-war all physical farm and construction work experience, Marshall went to work with his father as brick layer and general construction contractor from 1946 to 1963. At age 39, he decided that there must be an easier way to make a living. The 65 pound blocks in the morning grew to 125 by day's end – time for a change before the back gave out. A big and important employer in Chatham was *International Harvester*, manufacturer of highway semi-truck tractors. It was from here after 23 years working as supervisor in the Quality Control Department , at age 62 he took his leave. They intended to introduce computers and train Marshall in their intricacies; his response: "No thanks!" With that said he left for retirement.

Marshall had the good fortune to meet and marry a woman he affectionately regarded as his “jewel.” She is Sheila Margaret DeJaegher, born in Halifax, Yorkshire England, and is the mother of daughter Karen and twin sons Peter and Malcolm. Today she lives in Chatham as Marshall’s widow (Marshall passed on August 14, 2014) still maintaining through the Association the First Hussar connection begun by Marshall.

It would be interesting to know Marshall’s reaction when Sheila asked him if he was going to get her a birthday present; you see she was born on June 11, 1936. Maybe he bought her a miniature tank so they could recognise the importance of that day in two ways? For sure he had no excuse to forget her special day.

Marshall’s post war activities outside of work are impressive:

He was a dedicated member of the Royal Canadian Legion. Begun shortly after returning home, he held many important posts, some are: President Branch 28; Zone Commander; Secretary of the Poppy Fund; District Deputy Chair; Dominion Life Member; holder of the Legion’s highest honour - the Meritorious Service Medal with Palm Leaf. He put his strong back into laying the blocks for the St. Clair Street building. Remembering his war time experience he was a member of the First Hussars Association and the Essex Kent Scottish Association.

Besides legion and military dedication he found time to be a District Scout Master in the Boy Scouts; a Knight Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem plus engaged as a Knight Commander serving as Director General of Insignia. On Sovereign Council he was awarded the Grand Priory Medal of Canada. His charity work extended to becoming a Goodfellow, a group of folks who filled food baskets at Christmas time for the poor.

Recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal

As a Roman Catholic he was inducted into the Knights of Columbus, Fourth Degree, aiding this world wide organisation in their important charity and social work.

And last but not least he was instrumental in having a street near the family complex in Chatham named – 'Juno Landing.'

Carrying on the military heritage from his grandfather, son of Danny DeJaegher, is a member of the Canadian Army:

Grandson: Corporal Keith Danny DeJaegher is presently in his fifth year of service with the Canadian Forces Military Police stationed at Trenton.

Reviewing Sheila's outside interests they read like a contest between hers and Marshall's – who can do the most good works? The list she submitted speaks for itself:

I am an Associate member of the First Hussars Association which I joined for a reason: to carry on my husband's legacy and also to give my support to the Regiment whenever I can. I am also an Associate member of the Essex and Kent Scottish Association. A member of the Royal Canadian Legion for 47 years and Life Member. For 32 years I was Poppy Chairwoman and active in the Ladies Auxiliary including President.

In 1981 I joined the IODE Kent Regiment Primary Chapter. Over the ensuing years I have held every position in the organisation while still retaining the office of Citizenship Officer. Granted Life Membership at this level.

Member of the IODE Canada National level. Here I have held three officers positions over a 10 year span. At that level I am still a Councillor and was granted a Life Membership for my work.

I hold the position of Standard Bearer at the Ontario Provincial level; a member for 20 years. South Central Area Vice President, Councillor and was Citizenship Officer for 10 years until last year. Granted Life Membership at this level for my work.

I am a member of The Knight Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. Knight Hospitaller for 30 years and hold the title of H.E. Grand Bailiff Sheila M. DeJaegher DH Sovereign Council Grand Marshall and Director General of Insignia. I was awarded the Grand Priory Medal and Certificate of Special Commendation from the Grand Priory of Canada. I also received the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal.

I am a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church in Chatham enjoying membership in the Catholic Women's League.

In my spare time I love to lawn bowl and paint.

To that last claim this author asks – what spare time?

A review of Sheila's male descendants involved with the military is warranted:

Son: Master Corporal Malcolm Irving Wratten, served with both the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment.

Served in Germany for five years; Yugoslavia and Bosnia for four tours where he came under fire while in the Rainbow Holiday Inn in Sarajevo. He had the displeasure of uncovering a mass grave.

He was awarded a Commendation for his actions in the Medak Pocket in Croatia while serving with the RCR and attached to the PPCLI.

Retired after 32 years service to Canada.

Grandson: Joseph Wratten served with the Royal Canadian Regiment, 1st Battalion. Three tours in Afghanistan awarded him a Commendation for his service. Now in his 18th year of service, stationed at Dwyer Hill with the Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2).

As a matter of record, both Marshall's and Sheila's fathers were military veterans. Marshall's father served in WWI with the Belgian Infantry while Sheila's in WWII served with the Royal Artillery in coastal defence.

Regimental Badges for DeJaegher and Wratten Service Men

Addendum: A personal account of Marshall's D-Day experiences appeared in the Chatham – Kent newspaper in June, 2004; the added details are worth recording:

Marshall at that time was preparing to make, call it a pilgrimage, back to the Juno Beaches he stormed (somewhat wet after an unfortunate sinking) on June 6, 1944. He was part of a detail of 55 veterans and Regimental serving personnel, who were benefiting from $30,000 raised to help defray the costs of so large a contingent. This was a must do trip for all associated with the First Hussars.

Marshall recalled his advanced training for the reporter: "We knew something was up because they would take us out every day to the coast of England and put us on a boat. We would practice driving the tank off the boat into the water and on to the beach. The training was nothing like real life. It was terrible." (Note: without Marshall to verify this account we must guess that this training was with the LAD which might be expected to help deliver tanks onto the beach once the Canadians were established and needed replacement tanks. He is not describing driving a DD tank which he volunteered to drive on D-Day.)

He went on to recall: "On D-Day we left the shores of England at 3 a.m., sailed across the Channel through very rough seas. (He is now with the Hussars in a DD tank.) I wasn't sick, but a lot were. We arrived in France about 6 a.m. Our landing craft was driven by American sailors. Because of the wind, they were afraid of being

DD tank enemy- the sea!

grounded so they wouldn't go in far enough to shore. They were afraid they couldn't get back out so they dumped us off.

"We were suppose to drive off the landing barge into four feet of water but instead they dumped us off in 25 feet of water. I couldn't swim. The tank which weighs 30 tons, had a skirt around I to make it float. It did in training but mine sank right to the bottom. There were five of us in the tank, we wore floatation devices and made it to the beach.

"There was so much noise with all the guns going off. We were firing at the Germans and they were firing at us. I was just hoping they weren't looking at me. I made it to shore. I could see hundreds of fellows already dead floating in the water, others dead or dying strewn all over the beach.

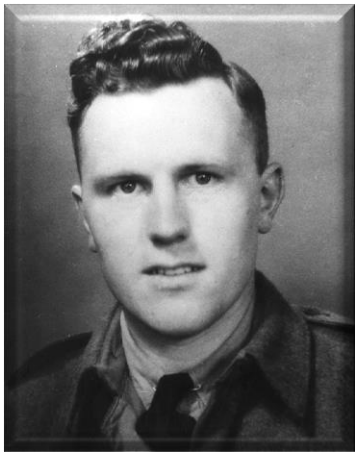
"It was terrible. I have often said anyone who wasn't scared was a fool. We landed on the shores of Normandy and kept on going all the way to Caen. We were the the only regiment that got to where we were suppose to be on that day. We fought our way through France, Belgium, Holland and ended up in Oldenburg, in Germany on V-E Day, May 1945."

Marshall at war's end, one of many single men, stayed on in Europe to gather up vehicles and tanks, then all were driven to a central location near Holland. Yesterday's vital weapons became that day's junk. The war was definitely over.

When he finally arrived back home in Chatham, wandering about uptown looking for old friends and acquaintances, he discovered "…the friends he left behind in Chatham were now married with children." As for himself, "I always say, I went as a boy and came back as a man."

Marshall the boy becomes Marshall the man -

Note: for those who don't know – what's under the head-dress is yours; what's outside is the army's.



As for the war and its aftermath, Marshall believed that "…people in Canada need to go over and look at all those cemeteries and look at the ages on the stones. They're young boys from 18 to 25 years old."

Canadian Medals: NW Europe

1939 – 45 Star

France and Germany Star

Defence Medal

Canadian Volunteer Service Medal

War Medal 1939 - 45

Badges From Marshall's Four Units: The Kent Regiment – Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps – Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers – First Hussars

HODIE NON CRAS

(Today Not Tomorrow)