

REMEMBRANCE

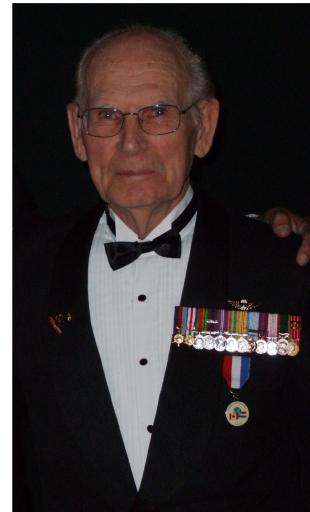
RSM JJT McMANUS, CD, CDN GDS

December 1921 - March 20, 2010

Delivered by:

Antony McManus

St. John Bosco Parish
Brockville, Ontario
March 24, 2010



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First, we would like to thank all of you for taking time to share with us the celebration of the Jim's life. Our family would also like to thank the Cameron Highlander's of Ottawa, for graciously providing the services of a piper to participate in the service. Our thanks to the Commanding Officer, LCol G. G. B. Aitken, CD, for attending along with the Deputy Commanding Officer, Major D. R. McNeil, CD, and Sergeant-Major R. A. Gagnon, CD. We would also like to thank CWO M. Chiasson, CD, from the Royal Military College in Kingston, for taking time to be with us today.

In preparing these words, Steve Brodsky, who was very close to my father and was not able to be with us today, assisted with some thoughts from the military years. His thoughts are as follows:

When I arrived at the Guards Depot in the 1950's as a young sergeant instructor, I joined a team of colleagues who were training the recruits who would be the lifeblood of the new Regiment of Canadian Guards under the direction of a living legend, RSM McManus. Jim was determined that these soldiers would be the best. Only the best.

The Army's choice of Jim as the first Regimental Sergeant Major of the newly formed Canadian Guards Depot was already very nearly a postscript to a distinguished military career. In the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa in World War 2 he'd already been the Canadian Army's youngest Regimental Sergeant Major; and for the Special Force newly formed for the Korean War he'd been selected as the RSM of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment. In the Canadian Guards his earlier nickname "Rocky" changed to become a title – The Rock. On him a regiment was founded.

Every soldier had to measure up to his unyielding standard of leadership - he demanded the impossible, and he got it. He inspired me and generations of others to give a "best" we had not known was in us.

Jim had no patience with weakness of will. He lived by an ethic of total responsibility – for oneself and for the soldiers in one's care. He never put his subordinates *down*. Rather, he made us measure *up*.

Jim also had a great sense of humour and it wasn't of the muted sort. He appreciated the lighter side of a situation and his laughter was as loud as his stamping steel-shod boots. He was a huge presence among us.

And that in turn was matched by his compassion. In short, he taught us by example how to lead. I once told him I owe him more than I can ever repay, and I know I'm not alone in that. To me he has always been an ideal, an inspiration, and a comrade, and I've counted it an honour to call him friend and mentor. The proof of all I've said here is the bond we've had for well over half a century, and my lasting love and respect.

Our thanks to Steve Brodsky for this fine tribute to my father.

To us his family, he was all of what Steve has penned, but he was much more. He was a husband, a father, a brother, a Poppa and a friend. He supported us all no matter what our purpose and provided guidance and help. He was always there for each one of us and nothing seemed to be a problem. He had breakfast ready for us no matter what ungodly time we had to be out of the house for hockey practice or school trips. His love and patience extended through the years to his grandchildren with the introduction of the 2 spoon egg and more recently to sunshine toast. He was never happier than to be with Syl and the children or grandchildren - the more confusion there was the better he liked it.

He was the father and grandfather that encouraged us to be strong and stand up for ourselves in difficult situations, but leaving us to make our own decisions and mistakes, if that is what it took to make us better people or learn a lesson the hard way. He taught us, among many other things, that we were responsible for our own decisions, not him or anyone else.

His early childhood experiences of helping out on his uncle's farm in St. Eugene (near Hawkesbury) never left him - as was so evident with his huge vegetable garden that was filled with so many tomato plants that he could have opened his own market. He would spend hours preserving the excess vegetable that we could not eat or give away to friends - plus, his maple syrup was never far away from the breakfast table.

And yes, we can never forget his love of chocolate. There was his ritual of heading to his not so secret stash after dinner to share a box or two with the grandchildren, with them asking him how many they could have - and of course, it was more than we would have liked. Surprisingly to me, in recent years, ice cream had now become an acceptable appetizer just before supper (at least for one special young lady) who would ask - "ice cream poppa" - and the response was - "oh I guess it won't hurt" - to my reply "what the heck is going on here - things sure have changed" - to which Jim only gave me a "wink" in return. The same seemed to be true for french fries at McDonald's when Nann was otherwise occupied.

He was never anything but positive and happy and he lived every day to the fullest - I never heard him complain about anything or, more importantly, anyone. The camp grounds at Charleston Lake or Desert Lake were the gathering place for summer fun and memorable times together. Swimming, singing, volleyball with Poppa and Nann being the instigators of all the commotion with friends being as welcome as family.

He adored his wife Sylvia and there was never a reason good enough for them to be apart. They would often take the truck and trailer and head off to Cape Breton, PEI, Southern Ontario or Myrtle Beach to visit family or just to be together. Every morning for over 35 years, Jim brought Sylvia coffee in bed on a tray, with the only downside of that being that she never learned how to make it herself - so Tim Horton's should see an increase in sales soon.

Thus, as we move now to the service that reflects the strength of his faith and his devotion to the church, we all have our own special memories of Poppa - Dad, that will stay with us as we continue on our individual journeys through life.