

## WINNIPEG GRENADIERS HONOURED IN NAMES THROUGHOUT THE WHITESHELL

By Vince Lopata of Pinawa

**M**ost people have no idea where the names of rivers, lakes, creeks and other geographic features originated.

Geographic features such as rivers, lakes and islands have been historically named after explorers, politicians, prominent people or names of villages and towns from the original settlers' homeland.

After the end of World War II the Geographic Board of Canada (now Geographic Names Board of Canada) established a policy of using the names of decorated casualties for any unnamed geographic features. In 1955 the policy was changed to include any casualty whether decorated or not.

In Whiteshell Provincial Park there are many geographic features such as lakes, creeks and islands that have been named under the above policy.

In this article I will talk about the first soldiers to see battle during World War II. The soldiers of this group won the first Victoria Cross, suffered the first casualties and became the first prisoners of war.

The soldiers were members of one of Manitoba's finest regiments, The Winnipeg Grenadiers. Casualties from this regiment have geographic features named after them in Whiteshell Provincial Park. Some are easily accessed; others are in remote areas.

The 1st Battalion Winnipeg Grenadiers was part of "C" Force, the Canadian Army Brigade sent over to Hong Kong in October 1941. There were 911 soldiers in the battalion who fought at the Battle of Hong Kong from December 8 to 25, 1941. Those soldiers who survived the battle became prisoners of Japan returning to Canada between September and November 1945. The number of casualties suffered by this battalion was:

**Killed in action: 116**

**Missing in action: 112**

**Died of wounds: 6**

**Died while prisoner of war: 126**

Of the 260 soldiers who died while part of 'C' Force, 11 of them have geographic features in Whiteshell Park named after them.



**Private Samuel Robert Carberry** (Winnipeg) was 20 years of age when he was killed in action on the Dec. 19, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Wong Nei Chong Gap to split the defence of the Island of Hong Kong. He is buried at Sai Wan Cemetery, Hong Kong. Carberry Lake, northeast of Betula Lake is named in his honour

We regret there is no picture available of Private Nicholas John Charuk

**Private Nicholas John Charuk** (Oak Bluff) died at the Japanese Prisoner of War Camp Niigata-Rinko, Japan on Nov. 30 1943. He died of acute pneumonia and acute enteritis attributed to the poor working conditions and the lack of nutritious food, common in these camps. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Yokohama, Japan. Charuk Lake northwest of Falcon Beach is named in his honour.



**Private Percy John Ellis** (Wawanesa) was executed as a prisoner of war on Aug. 10, 1942 trying to escape from North Point POW Camp on the island of Hong Kong. There were three other Winnipeg Grenadiers who tried to escape along with him. He is buried at Sai Wan Cemetery, Hong Kong. Ellis Island in the south end of Brereton Lake is named in his honour.



**Lieutenant Charles Duncan French** (Norwood) was 20 years of age when he went missing in action on Dec. 19, 1941. He was in command of a platoon assigned to defend the Wong Nei Chong Gap area on the Island of Hong Kong. He is mentioned on the Sai Wan Memorial at Sai Wan Cemetery, Kong Kong. French Island in the Winnipeg River just east of is named in his honour.



FRENCH ISLAND ON THE WINNIPEG RIVER  
TAKEN FROM THE TRANS-CANADA TRAIL OFF THE  
WATER TREATMENT PLANT AT PINAWA



**Warrant Officer Second Class (Company Sergeant Major "B" Company) Walter Butched Fryatt** (St. Vital) went missing in action on Dec. 21, 1941 defending the southern approaches to Wong Ne Chong Gap. He is mentioned on the Sai Wan Memorial at Sai Wan Cemetery, Hong Kong. Fryatt Lake northnorthwest of Big Whiteshell Lake is named in his honour.



WINNIPEG GRENADIERS HONOURED IN NAMES THROUGHOUT THE WHITESHELL CONT'D...



**Private Joseph Furey** (Firdale) was 22 years of age when he was accidentally killed when the roof of the mine he was working at fell. He died of multiple injuries on the April 5, 1944 at the Niigata-Rinko Prisoner of War Camp in Japan. He is buried at the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan. Furey Island in the Winnipeg River at the end of Aberdeen Avenue, Pinawa is named in his honour.



**Lieutenant Colonel John Louis Robert Sutcliffe**

was the Commanding Officer of The Winnipeg Grenadiers during the Battle of Hong Kong. He died as a prisoner of war at age 44 on April 6, 1942 while in Shamshuipo Prisoner of War Camp, Hong Kong. He died of beriberi anaemia from lack of nutritious food. He is buried at Sai Wan Cemetery, Hong Kong. Sutcliffe Lake southeast of Big Whiteshell Lake is named in his honour.



FUREY ISLAND ON THE WINNIPEG RIVER  
TAKEN FROM THE TRANS-CANADA TRAIL AT THE FOOT  
OF ABERDEEN AVENUE, PINAWA



**Corporal George Harold Townsend** (Mapletown) was 29 when he died as a prisoner of war on Nov. 25, 1944 of beriberi from lack of nutritious food and harsh working conditions. He died while at the Oeyama Prisoner of War Camp near Osaka, Japan. He is buried at the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan. Townsend Lake, west of Caddy Lake is named in his honour.



**Private Cyril Sydney Woodward** (St. Vital) was 22 years of age when he died of amoebic dysentery and right pulmonary infiltration on the Sept. 9, 1944. At the time he was a prisoner of war at the Niigata-Rinko Prisoner of War Camp, Japan. He is buried at the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan. Woodward Island, south of Carter Island on Eleanor Lake is named in his honour.



**Private Herbert John Hull** (Fort Garry) was 23 years of age when he died of paralytic beriberi from lack of nutritious food. At the time he was a prisoner of war at Oeyama Prisoner of War Camp near Osaka, Japan. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan. Hull Lake north-east of George Lake is named in his honour.



**Private Harry Albert Shayler** (St. Vital) was 24 years of age when he died on Nov. 12, 1944 as a prisoner of war. At the time he was a prisoner of war at Oeyama Prisoner of War Camp near Osaka, Japan. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan. Shayler Lake, southeast of Otter Falls is named in his honour.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Vince Lopata** has been associated with The Winnipeg Grenadiers since 1961 when he joined as a cadet. In 1965 he joined the staff and started a long association with the Hong Kong Veterans Association

that continues today. At present he is Sergeant-at Arms for the Manitoba Branch of the Association. Vince has been developing a database of the activities of each individual soldier of "C" Force from the time they left their base to their return. He is also working on a number of books dealing with various parts of the "C" Force story. He is presently retired from Atomic Energy of Canada and Acsion Industries and lives in Pinawa.