

WORLD WAR II SAPPER VETERAN CELEBRATES 100th BIRTHDAY

".. Brigadier Elliot Rodger, characterized by many as the finest staff officer produced by the Canadian Army during the war..." Granatstein

"The Generals, The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War"



On 30 Nov 2007 Major General Norman Elliot Rodger CBE, CD (ex RCE) (Retired) celebrated his 100th birthday.

Maj-Gen Rodger had a remarkable career in the service of Canada. He was born in Amherst NS and enrolled in the Royal Military College of Canada in 1924 - opting for a commission in the Royal Canadian Engineers in 1928. He followed the normal career progression of a young sapper officer at the time including a two year stint at the School of Military Engineering in Chatham UK. This was followed by an appointment at the War Office in London studying mapping from aerial photography - a skill he was to use in his career.

On returning to Canada at Army Headquarters (HQ), he served under two sapper officers who were to on to greater things; Maj E.L.M. Burns and LCol Maurice Pope. This experience led to his posting to the UK as General Staff Officer, Grade 3 at Canadian Military HQ in London during which time he attended the Staff College in Camberley. Maj Rodger was appointed Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General 1st Canadian Infantry Division in January 1941 and became General Staff Officer, Grade 1, as a Lieutenant Colonel, in HQ 1st Canadian Corps. His next position was with Canadian Military HQ as Brigadier General Staff where he was Personal Assistant to Lt-Gen McNaughton. He served briefly as General Officer in Command 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade prior to being appointed General Staff Officer in HQ 2nd Canadian Corps during the invasion operations in Normandy. He served under Lt-Gen Guy Simonds from February 1944 until June 1945.

After returning from Europe, General Rodger was, sequentially, Chief of Staff Canadian Army Staff in Washington, Quartermaster General at Army HQ in Ottawa, attended Imperial Defence College in UK, was General Officer Commanding Prairie Command in Winnipeg, and was Vice Chief of the Defence Staff at Army HQ for a year before retiring.

Upon retirement, the General returned to Winnipeg and became Chairman of the Manitoba Liquor Commission. While in Winnipeg he enjoyed summer canoe expeditions by retracing the routes of fur traders in Northern Canada. He estimates they traveled 2500 miles in this venture. He was also particularly intent in establishing nesting boxes for the wood duck along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

With his retirement, Maj-Gen Rodger did not sever his connection with the military and, in 1965, he was appointed the first Colonel Commandant of the Cadet Service of Canada.

Maj-Gen Rodger is a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and he was also awarded the Order of Orange Nassau (Netherlands), and the United States Legion of Merit.

Maj-Gen Rodger currently lives in Ottawa ON.