

Korean War Veteran

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Gordon John Strathy, CD, former national president of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada passes away at age 80



Gordon Strathy CD, 1934-2015

Gordon Strathy in photograph taken at the Canadian Senate in 2012 when he was a guest of honour of Senator Yonah Martin on the day that she read her Canadian Korean War Veterans Day Act bill in the Senate Chamber. Also present was Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs, and Peter McKay, Minister of National Defence (Now Minister of Justice).

He had a gruff demeanor for effectiveness, a great bullish voice for corralling his veterans at various events, and he was a gifted orator who put color and spirit into his words.

In Korea, Gordon Strathy served with the Royal Canadian Engineers, having enlisted for service at age 17 – which means he “fibbed” slightly, by a couple of years.

Many are not aware that engineers lead very dangerous lives and that they often go out in front of the infantry to do their work in things like planting or removing mines, and in other combat roles.

Gordon Strathy was assigned to the horrible Hook position while in Korea. He worked in digging the huge tunnels that went in after the November, 1952 attack on the Black Watch, and when the position was held thereafter by the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, and then by the Royal Canadian Regiment.

Along with comrades he excavated a huge, well designed tunnel that included shorings and steel and concrete reinforcements. The tunnel went deep into the hill then went up vertically to the summit where a concrete observation post was installed.

In this work Gordon Strathy lost a finger, while operating a pneumatic jackhammer.

Perhaps showing his gentility and compassionate bent, Gordon later transferred to the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, although as old soldiers know, in the military, that, too is a dangerous job. He completed 18 years of army service, taking his military retirement at just 35 years of age.

Mr. Strathy then enrolled at the University of Ottawa and completed a bachelor of arts degree and a bachelor of education degree.

He returned to Petawawa, where he had been stationed, and there became a veritable pillar of the community.

While his veteran comrades in the Korea Veterans Association of Canada saw mostly his gruff, sergeant major-like demeanor, he was in fact a richly gentle and kind hearted fellow who immersed himself in community work and who tended to a beautiful garden at the family home on Violet Street.

He taught in grades three through 13 in various schools and before his retirement served as principal of Petawawa’s Killaloe Public School.

His community service was immeasurable and Petawawa and its citizens benefitted immensely from his kindly outpourings of goodwill, support and endless work.

He served two times as president of the Petawawa Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and was a co-founder of the Petawawa Legion Community Band.

Gordon Strathy was founder of the Petawawa Horticultural Society and also of the Petawawa Farmer's Market and worked tirelessly in supporting both of those community assets.

He was national president of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada for the period, 1999-2000.

From 2000 until the time of his passing, he continued to serve as the Association's National Secretary.

In 2002 he was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, and in 2012 he was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

In 2005 he was awarded the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Certificate for his service to fellow veterans.

For all of his significant achievements and his lifelong volunteer work, Gordon Strathy was a private man.

There is no published obituary of this community leader in the Petawawa newspaper, or posted by the funeral directors that have handled final necessities – only the listing of his name and dates of birth and passing, and a picture of a Canadian Maple Leaf.

Veterans and friends who may wish to post comments on the book of memories – there are only two there as of this writing, are welcome to call it up on the following link and write their words or tribute or remembrance.

<http://www.murphyfuneralhome.ca/book-of-memories/2087245/Strathy-Gordon-John/obituary.php>



The Strathy Family Garden on Victoria Street in Petawawa



Ken Strathy and his wife Doris, who predeceased him



Kenneth and Doris Strathy with granddaughter Nissa



On a very happy occasion in Korea with comrade Paul Rochon surrounded by Korean school children. Paul served as an officer with the Korea Veterans Association of Canada, most recently as national first vice president.

Of course, We Will Remember Him!