

Ottawa street named for Paul Metivier

By Warrant Officer Ed Storey, Mapping and Charting Establishment Unit Historian

On November 8, the City of Ottawa and Veterans Affairs Canada hosted the annual Candlelight Tribute at Lansdowne Park in which Veterans and Canadian Forces members were be paired with students to commemorate those who have served our country during times of war, military conflict and peace. During the service, Mayor Bob Chiarelli announced street-naming initiative in the Chapman Mills subdivision in south Nepean. The first one will be named after late Great War veteran Paul Metivier.

Paul Metivier was born on 6 July 1900 in Montreal. In March 1917 he enlisted in the Canadian Army at the age of 16. Trained as a Gunner, he went overseas and served in Belgium and France with the 4th Division Ammunition Column from July 1917 to May 1918. When his true age was discovered, he was sent back to England where he served in the Young Soldiers' Unit until he was repatriated in October 1918. For his military service he was awarded the British War and Victory Medals as well a Class A Service Badge.

Mr. Metivier joined the Public Service of Canada in 1920 and worked for the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys [now known as Natural Resources Canada]. While with the Public Service, Paul enlisted in the 1st Corps Field Survey Company, RCE (Ottawa) and rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant. When that unit was activated in September 1939, Paul was very disappointed that he was considered to be too old to remain with the unit. Paul started with the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys as an apprentice metal printer, became Assistant to the Chief, Photo-Mechanical Section in 1948 and in 1961, was appointed Chief of Reproduction Services Division. Paul retired in 1965.

As a knowledgeable voice of the Great War, Mr. Métivier participated in several foreign documentaries on the Great War, both for film and television. Mr. Métivier provided the producers with an oral account of his personal experience on the Western Front during the First World War.

In 1998, Mr. Metivier, together with several other Veterans, was presented with the Legion of Honour at the French Embassy in Ottawa, by His Excellency the Ambassador, Denis Bauchard. A certificate of appreciation for his selfless contribution to the war effort, signed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, was also presented to him on this occasion, by the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

In addition to faithfully attending the annual November 11th ceremony at the National War Memorial, Mr. Metivier accepted annual invitations from the Canadian War Museum to attend their ceremony on Remembrance Day and to meet the visiting public and respond to questions from Canadians about his role in the First World War.

One of a very small number of First World War veterans, Mr. Metivier joined in two pilgrimages to Europe as part of a Canadian delegation on commemorative tours to famous battlefields. During the repatriation of the remains of the Unknown Soldier of Canada, Mr. Metivier participated in the services at the Vimy Memorial in France and at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa. Paul was an Honourary Member of the Military Engineers' Association of Canada and participated in major functions with Mapping and Charting Establishment. Paul Metivier passed away peacefully, on 22 December 2004, in his 105th year.