

Sergeant Major Glen Crowe (1917-1966)

Glen Crowe was a local boy with a life altering story.

George Glendon Crowe was born is one of five children in Nogies Creek to Eva Quibell and John Crowe. He graduated school after grade 8 and worked in lumbering and eventually mechanics until he volunteered in Peterborough (1939) for the Canadian Army. A call came out for soldiers to volunteer for a secret 'suicide' mission. Glen boarded a train with other fearless men and headed to Helena, Montana. There the Canadians were joined by a rag-tag bunch of American soldiers many of whom had not volunteered to be there.



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After many weeks of training in commando combat, skiing, parachuting, enemy weaponry and more the First Special Service Force (FSSF) was formed. Their mission was to parachute behind enemy lines into Norway in 1942. Churchill cancelled the mission so the unit was sent to Alaska to roust the Japanese there but they were already gone. So the FSSF boarded trains to the Eastern seaboard of the USA and went to Morocco. From there they infiltrated Sicily, Italy, Corsica and France. The Force was used by the military to do the impossible. They scaled mountains at night held by German forces.

They lived in dirty fox holes on the beaches at Anzio then slipped behind enemy lines at night.

They would leave notes of their bodies stating in German that 'The worst was yet to come'. One of the most famous FSSF members was Tommy Prince. The Germans called them the Black Devils which turned into the Devils Brigade.

Glen was wounded twice in action and was one of the few Canadians to liberate Rome in 1944. The Force was disbanded in 1944 and the Americans and Canadians, now fast battle buddies were separated forever. In 2015 the Force was recognized by United States President Barack Obama with the Congressional Medal of Honour (America's highest military honour).

Glen returned from the war, married Ruth Thurston, the daughter of Roland Thurston and Mary Sutton and raised two children in Bobcaygeon but sadly the ravages of war weighed heavily on him. He suffered from PTSD and developed heart disease. Glen seldom spoke of his experiences and was strongly anti-war and anti-military. He would never have seen himself as heroic although his bravery was commended many times in dispatches.

The Bobcaygeon Legion, Branch 239 has commemorated Glen's war service and he's remembered as a true son of the village.

Submitted by Glenna Burns (nee Crowe)