



**Jasper-Yellowhead
Museum & Archives**

Scroggie

During World War II, a troop of 600 Lovat Scouts were sent to Jasper for special alpine training in preparation for an alpine mission in Norway. The Lovat Scouts spent four months in Jasper and as a result a mutual bond was established

between the admirable young lads and town residents. The troop's Norway mission was cancelled and they were sent to Italy instead. It was in Italy that Scroggie was badly wounded by a mine and lost his eye sight and a leg; yet, despite the tragedy of his own injuries and the even greater tragedies he witnessed during combat, Jasper remained a touchstone. Here is an excerpt of some of his musings while he was recuperating in Naples:

... I can still see Jasper's railroad totem pole, Pyramid Mountain, the Colin Range, Whistlers, and far to the south its snows pink in the sunset, Mt. Edith Cavell. These are the sights that greeted the Lovat Scouts when they got off the train, formed up, and to the skirl the pipes marched to Jasper Park Lodge, their boots muffled in four inches of snow. Helen Taylor, a resident of Jasper, was later to say what a moving moment. The war, up to then a vague notion locally, seemed suddenly to have burst upon Jasper in those black and white diced bonnets, rifles, pipes, and squadron after squadron, boots marching past the Monceau café, Olsen's drugstore, the Chaba cinema. The full moon shone that night, Whistlers big and ghostly, and the ice on Lac Beauvert boomed and cracked as I made my way across it to have a look at this Jasper place... Elk browsed the bark of trees, a railway locomotive sounded off... I had not been in the townsite ten minutes before making a friend, this Helen Taylor, whom I keep up with to this day. When I lay in hospital in Naples, blown up by a German mine, there was a sachet of balsam needles under my pillow sent from the Rockies by Helen to that hospital bed...this can stand for other Jasper connections made by Scouts in those days of their military mountaineering around watchtower, Snowbowl, Tonquin Valley and the Columbia Icefields. There's not one of them, English as well as Scottish, Lowland as well as Highland, who doesn't look back on those Jasper days f theirs as the greatest thing that ever happened to them in their lives...(Scroggie Letter, Constance Peterson fonds, 78.01.62)

This past month notice arrived at the museum that Sydney Scroggie had passed away in early September. Scroggie lived in Dundee, Scotland and over the years had kept correspondence with Jasper

locals, the museum, and had even written a few accounts of his time as a Lovat Scout during the war and in Jasper. Scroggie along with the rest of the Scouts were immediately charmed by the mountain community and although the troop was only here for four or five months, the lads quickly won the hearts of locals. During their stay, the regiment bunked at the Jasper Park Lodge, which was closed to the public for the duration of World War II. The Scouts, however spent much time out in the backcountry honing their alpine survival skills, of course when the lads were not in training they would spend time in town getting to know locals and their hang-outs:

...the boys thought of themselves as the Drugstore Commandos, and far from pining for the hardships of the bush they preferred sitting on stools in Olsen's drugstore drinking coffee, listening to the juke box, and chatting up the alluring Doreen who worked there. Also the local Mountie was so often there that he seemed to have no other function in the town. It was alleged that the Lovat Scout Squadron Leaders ingratiated themselves with Doreen by scrubbing her floors in the evenings.(Scroggie, p.9)

Knowing the boys were a long way from home and that they would be sent into combat almost immediately after training, many Jasperites organized events to make the them feel more at home and offer a reprieve from the ominous nature of their visit. Notes found in the archives, written by Daisy Hartley, document a variety night that was organized by Mr. Baxter Sr. that included magic, music, and dance with performances by Mrs. Sheriff, Frank Darlow, Mr. Duncan, Noni Jones, Mrs. Snape, and Jacquie Driver's dancers. On January 25th, a Robbie Burns Banquet was organized in honour of the Lovat Scouts and once again Scroggie recalls the event with humour and appreciation:

Highlanders do not pay much attention to Robert Burns, but there was enough Lowlanders in the Scouts to appreciate the fact that Jasper held a Burns supper for them of the 25th of January. In this way the Scots of Jasper expressed their solidarity with the incomers... The haggis was piped in, Auld Lang Syne was sung, and under a moonlit Pyramid Mountain the spirit of Scotland was rekindled...(Scroggie, p.8)

Reading Scroggie's stories it is immediately apparent that Jasper was a happy time and place for the Scouts and when he returned to his beloved Jasper, after the war, although he was unable to see his beloved mountain-scapes the familiarity of the ground beneath his feet and the smell of pine, was just as well.

Some of you may recall a letter that was published in three parts a few months ago. It was a letter written by a Mr. Fred Hindle, a Grand Trunk Pacific Railway survey engineer, to Constance Peterson, the Jasper Yellowhead Historical Society's historian and president. Shortly after the letter was published, Mr. Bob Baxter came to visit me at the archives. He handed me three small books that were satiny to the touch. They were three volumes of Robert Service poetry. I taken by the books immediately, solely on the notion that they were portable volumes of Robert Service's poetry, but then Mr. Baxter told me that Mr. Fred Hindle had been a friend of his father's and that Mr. Hindle had given his father the little books and had even taught Mr. Baxter Sr. magic tricks; then, Mr. Baxter opened to the back of the book where previously blank pages to show me page upon page filled with meticulously printed poetry. Could it be the personal verses and longings of a lonely survey engineer? Who had to live along the seemingly endless line of railway camps, constantly in the company of uncouth bachelors, without the soothing presence of the gentler – sex?

ensuring that it will be preserved for generations to come.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hindle typed all his correspondence with Mrs. Peterson, so we were unable to compare the printing, but Mr. Baxter and I were sure that the pristine penmanship was surely the hand of a survey engineer, whose life was dedicated to mathematical accuracy and painstaking precision. We looked at a couple of Hindle's survey photographs already in the archives and the printing on the front seemed to be a match, but we needed more samples to be sure. Mr. Baxter then informed me that he knew a couple in Edson, the Grants, who looked after Mr. and Mrs. Hindle during their old age, as the Hindles had no children. The Grants had inherited the Hindle house as well as their belongings. He would take the books to Edson and see if they had any samples of Hindle's printing to compare.

The Grants were in possession of a small canvas portfolio, which contained over 100 negatives of Hindle's life in various railway camps along the Grand Trunk Pacific line; but most importantly, in the back of the portfolio was an itemized list and description of each negative in the same perfect print as the poetry. The Grants generously sent the negatives back with Mr. Baxter for me to scan at the archives and although many of the negatives have deteriorated beyond use, I thought perhaps the rest of Jasper would be interested in some that have survived and to catch a unique glimpse of life along the line.

I hope this story will inspire those of you who may hold pieces of Jasper's history to consider donating them to the Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives and making it available to researchers world wide and