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CONNECTIONS

Kindness to a Glace Bay airmann

'We wanted to go to Glace Bay and to walk a little in David's shoes'

BY SHARON MONTGOMERY-DUPE
CAPE-BRETON POST

GLACE BAY

A soldier's lonely gravesite and a stranger's kind heart have bonded two families an ocean apart.

Cathy MacDonald of Port Hawkesbury said a stranger took the time to highlight and honour the French gravesite of her uncle David Matthew Murphy, a flight sergeant in the Royal Air Force in the Second World War with a plaque and photo, after discovering he was buried alone in the local cemetery and separated from his crew.

"I feel very emotional," said MacDonald in a shaky voice.

Everything began in 2008 when MacDonald went over to France in connection with her employment. While there visited her uncle's gravesite at a cemetery in Montoir-De-Bretagne.

"The day I found it the sun was shining from the east — I felt coming from Cape Breton — shining right on his headstone in France."

MacDonald said when Dave's heavy bomber crashed on July 25, 1944, there were seven airmen on the plane; it was believed the plane must have broken up in the air and David's body went in a different direction from the rest of the crew.

"He was actually considered missing in action for six months to a year."

MacDonald remembers her father, Jim, talking about how any POW would be posted in the newspaper and how her grandfather would get the paper looking for David's name and never seeing it.

The townspeople of Montoir-De-Bretagne eventually found David's body and buried him in the local cemetery.

"That's why he's not found in a commonwealth graveyard."

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Edgard Fuss, centre, of Overhoffen-sur-Moder, France, walks along the coastline at the end of Ocean Street in Glace Bay with his wife Ute Fuss, left, and Cathy Murphy MacDonal, of Port Hawkesbury, near an area where MacDonald's late uncle David Matthew Murphy, a flight sergeant in the Royal Air Force who died in the Second World War at age 20, would have frequented as a child. Fuss found David's gravesite in a local cemetery in Montoir-De-Bretagne, France. He felt and bad that the airman was buried alone instead of in a memorial cemetery with his crew, so he did research to find out why and ended up having a plaque made and erected at the cemetery, resulting in the families later connecting.

SHARON MONTGOMERY-DUPE/CAPE BRETON POST

In the past, she had seen photos of the gravesite on a war memorial website, but was shocked to see with her own eyes an impressive plaque at the site with David's picture on and plenty of other information on him, including his squadron and where he was from.

MacDonald's father was too young for the war but his four older brothers, Bill, Colin, John and David, all went to war, with only two coming home.

Her uncle Colin died in Italy and was in the same troop with his older brother John.

"John was with Colin when Colin died and when Colin was buried."

But David was alone when found and buried in the local cemetery.

"To me, no one was with Dave, he was always alone," she said. "Then to find out someone took that much care to put a picture on his grave and information of who he was — he put a face to a name and it was emotional."

Two years prior to MacDonald's visit to the French gravesite, Edgard Fuss, of Overhoffen-sur-Moder, had been



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The plaque Edgard Fuss of France put on the gravesite of the late David Matthew Murphy, a Royal Air Force airman buried in a local cemetery in Montoir-De-Bretagne, France.

working in that area and staying in the village when he discovered what he saw as a lonely grave of a Canadian airman.

"It was a very lonely grave as it wasn't with the rest of his crew," he was in the local cemetery."

Fuss said all that marked the gravesite was the soldier's name, that he was in the Royal Air Force and his number.

"I became curious of why he was laying lonely there by himself and wondered where the rest of his crew was."

Fuss started to research and continued to come up with more details about the soldier, including that David's bomber crashed near the Donges oil plant, one of the main submarine bases on the French coast

for the German air troops during the war.

"It was the last bombing attack against this a heavily defended area."

Fuss also found photos of David and his family, including his other three brothers who were in the war.

"He impressed me so deep (that) I wanted to do as much research as possible."

Fuss decided to have a plaque made to honour David that included his photo and the information he had found.

See BOND, page A2

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THIS DATE IN History

Aug. 31

In 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed in a horrific car crash in a tunnel near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Also killed were her Egyptian-born companion, Dodi Fayed, and their driver, Henri Paul. Bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, the only one wearing a seat-belt, survived.

In 1955, the Church of England in Canada changed its name to the Anglican Church of Canada.

In 1988, the Conservative majority in the House of Commons gave final approval to the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, with a vote of 177 to 64.



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CONNECTIONS



Edgard Fuss placing a plaque on the gravesite of David Matthew Murphy, buried in a local cemetery in Montoir-De-Bretagne.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bond created between families an ocean apart

FROM AT

The rest of his crew were buried a war cemetery about 20 kilometres to the south, near the coast, in La Baule-Escoublac.

After MacDonald's visit to the gravesite, she began to research who put the plaque there and came across a blog Fuss had written looking for David's family. She emailed him right away.

"The reaction from the family was very overwhelming for me," Fuss said. "We (exchanged) a lot of emails after that."

Last year, MacDonald and other family members traveled to France to view the Vimy Ridge monument in July and the families were finally able to meet.

"We met in person, it was a very big thing," Fuss said. "We came together in Vimy Ridge."

On July 25 — the date of David's death — they had a lit-
tle ceremony at his gravesite.

Fuss said because of his de-
sire to someday go to Canada

arrived in Canada two weeks ago, making their way to Cape Breton on Saturday. They've been staying at Becky's Bed & Breakfast in Reserve Mines.

"We wanted to go to Glace Bay and to walk a little in David's shoes," he said. "I feel so close to this person I wanted to get nearer to him."

Through his research, Fuss has also connected with family members of four of the seven other airmen from his crew.

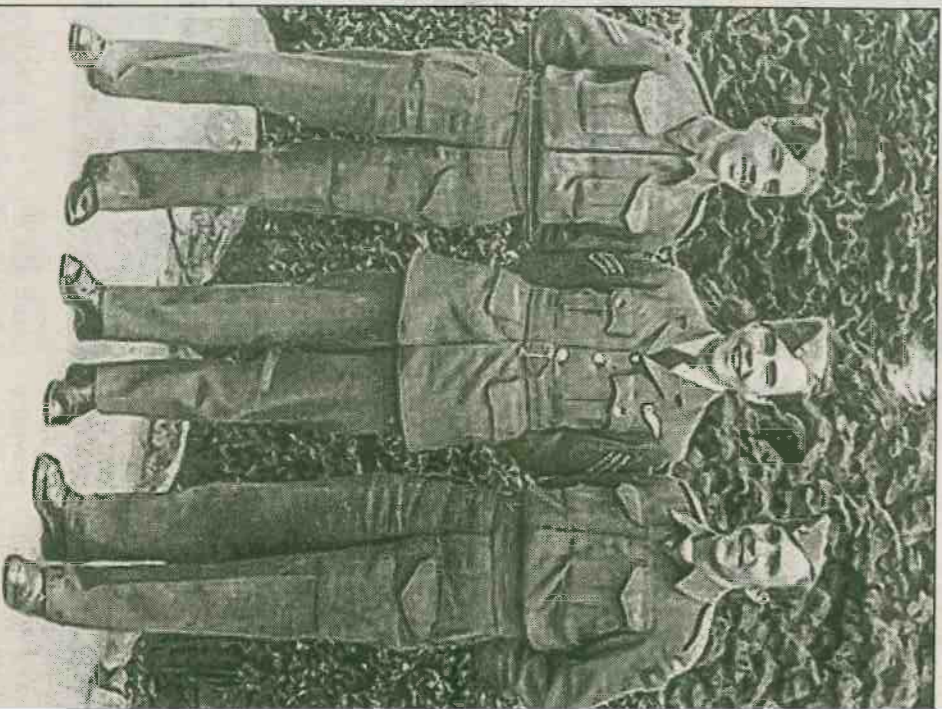
MacDonald said they've developed a deep bond with the Fuss family.

"How could you not, with someone with such a kind heart who put a face on your uncle's gravesite?"

In the meantime, MacDonald said they've also connected with family of the late Joseph Kommes, the only other Canadian on the aircraft with David when the aircraft went down.

The family is originally from Regina, Sask., but MacDonald tracked down some family members in Port Hood.

"His nephew Tom told me



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Bonus: 39

ATLANTIC 49
03, 21, 28, 39, 41, 47
Bonus: 24



SUBMITTED PHOTO

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FROM A1

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"His nephew, Jon, told me this brought spirit of his uncle back to life."

sharon.montgomery@cbpost.com



SUBMITTED PHOTO

David Matthew Murphy, centre, formerly of Glace Bay, with brothers John left, and Colin. Both David and Colin were killed in France during the Second World War.



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CAPE BRETON POST

CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA

INFRASTRUCTURE

Second try at second berth

'The wharf location, length are precisely the same'

BY NANCY KING
CAPE BRETON POST

SYDNEY

There are three principle changes to the design of Sydney's second cruise ship berth in an effort to bring the project in at its \$20-million budget, its consulting engineer says.

People making use of the berth, however, shouldn't notice any difference, Richard Morykot said.



Morykot

Earlier this month, the Cape Breton Regional Municipality said it intended to re-tender the project after every submission it received under the original process came in significantly over budget, with the lowest being more than \$24 million.

The 577-page second tender was posted to the provincial government's procurement website Aug. 24.

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specifically the number of piles."

The narrower deck allowed them to reduce the number of piles required, which Morykot said will have no impact on people walking on the structure, and he likened the width of the revised pier as being close to the width of the Esplanade, and he said it remains "considerably wide."

Secondly, the original design had fixed water-based mooring points, where the ship would

tie up to fixed, piled structures. That has been changed to a floating design, which Morykot described as being more cost-effective.

"They're like a big, large buoy that they'll hook their lines to and tie the front of the boat to those as opposed to these fixed ones," he said. "The back arrangements, mooring lines, are slightly changed but very similar, in fact."

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BIO BOX

• David Matthew Murphy, formerly of Glace Bay.

• A flight sergeant with the Royal Air



Murphy