

**John “Jack” Gray, OLS # 684
1921-2014
Submitted by his family**



When Jack Gray was 18 months old, he emigrated with his family from Glasgow, Scotland to London, Ontario. His family often moved to find work during the depression. Jack took small jobs to help the family. These tough times no doubt instilled a strong work ethic in Jack and a life-long practice of quietly helping those in need.

When the war broke out in 1939, Jack was a member of the Non-Permanent Active Militia in London, Ontario. On June 3rd, 1940, he was recruited into the 2nd Battalion Royal Canadian Engineers. On Sept. 4th, 1940 the 2nd Battalion landed in the British Isles where England was to be their area of engagement until July 26, 1944 - when they would embark for France. Jack's profession at the time of entering the 2nd Battalion was architectural draughtsman. Over the more than 4 years of active service as a RCE sapper, he would apply his skills of draftsman, surveyor and driver to the many very demanding projects to rebuild roads, bridges and airdromes that were critical to the final liberation of France, Belgium and Holland. It was here that Jack served under Colonel Samuel Wallace Archibald, who would play a major role later in Jack's life.

Jack was discharged on Sept 30, 1945. He returned to his family home in London, Ontario, where he soon met Kathleen Clark, a nurse. During this period, Jack began to article under his former Colonel, Samuel Wallace Archibald. Kathleen and Jack were married at the Elmwood Presbyterian Church on November 29, 1947. Two years later, Jack was commissioned as an Ontario Land Surveyor on May 7, 1949. During this busy time of establishing his career, they began their family with the birth of their first child, Bonnie in 1948.

Jack continued to work for Colonel Archibald as the company began to grow and diversify in the post war economy. In January 1958, Jack and Colonel Archibald joined with their fellow colleague, John Alexander Mackay, to form Archibald, Gray and Mackay (AGM) Ontario Land Surveyors. Sadly, John MacKay passed away too soon in March 1960.

Jack and the Colonel continued to grow AGM, expanding into legal surveying to capitalize on the post war boom. Jack's philosophy was simple but effective... do a quality job at a fair price and the clients will always be there. Despite being a partner, he loved working in the field and interacting with his clients and the community. Jack was able to do so only with the support of Fred Fleming,

AGM's long-time Office Manager who took care of all the day-to-day management of this growing company. Jack believed in giving people an opportunity when they were in need, providing many with training and jobs to get them on their feet. A hard working man who worked long hours, he expected all around him to put in an honest day's work. He spoke his mind and did not suffer fools gladly, but was always a fair, principled man.

The long hours of hard work took its toll on Jack's health in the late 1970's, at which time he began the process of selling AGM to the able hands of Drew Annabel, Carl Celesten and Jack Webster. AGM continues to flourish to this day, based on the principles and foundation built by Jack Gray.

In this next stage of their lives, Jack and Kathleen travelled the world, dancing up a storm whenever the occasion permitted. Back at home, they enjoyed playing bridge, golfing, fishing and spending time with their five children and seven grandchildren at their cottage in Grand Bend. Jack became an accomplished woodworker, first building furniture and later, turning wood into beautiful bowl, pens, letter openers and such, many of which he donated to charity to raise funds to support students in Tanzania.

Jack continued to maintain contact with his fellow RCE veterans of the 2nd Battalion. In retirement, he devoted much of his time in support of Canadian veterans and in travelling to England, France and Holland to celebrate the major national anniversaries of Liberation in 1994-95 and 2004.

He was a leader in bringing together the veterans of the 2nd Battalion RCE and keeping everyone in touch, organizing annual gatherings and encouraging all RCE's to gather together in support of their shared experiences. He personally travelled across the country to visit members of the group individually, often when they were too ill, or financially unable, to attend group events.

He was proud to include his children in D-Day ceremonies in France in 2004. Despite ailing health with the onset of Parkinson's disease, he celebrated the 60th anniversary of D-Day in France on Juno Beach, with three generations of his family, including, two sons, two daughters and his 12 year-old grandson. It was momentous trip which retraced Jack's war experience from England to France through to Holland and Belgium.

Jack lived a full life over his 93 years, always there to lend a helping hand, often quietly. He was proud of his accomplishments as a surveyor, and of the many with whom he mentored and worked. He will be missed.