



**WILLIAM DONALD STRETTON
1920 - 1992**

Bill Stretton was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to Arthur John Stretton and Helen Harriet Campbell, on June 1, 1920. At an early age, he moved with his family to South Burnaby, British Columbia, where he received his secondary school education.

"He thinks small towns are fine for such activities as skating on frozen rivers, swimming in shady pools, helping to set up a circus at 4:00 a.m., and knowing everyone for miles around. Being a stutterer, he had to fight every boy in every new town to stop the mockery of his stammer. Later, after moving to Burnaby, British Columbia, where it seemed rather reckless to take on the whole 1,200-member school body, he learned control over both temper and stammer."

The Canadian Surveyor, Supplement March, 1974: W.D. Stretton Retires from the Editorial Committee, Supplement Editor for Seven Years, by: W.D. McLennan.

In 1939 he joined the Canadian Army and served with the 3rd Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, in England and in Italy. He retired from the Army in 1945 but reenlisted in 1947 in the Royal Canadian Engineers. (In the interim, he worked in various types of construction, helping to build a brewery, which he described as 'a very satisfying job', a house, and later bridges on the Alaska Highway.) A year later he was posted to the Army Survey Establishment where he served for the next 19 years. In the ASE he became one of the leading experts

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in topographical surveying. He once noted that one of his more interesting jobs was "satellite triangulation with a U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey party in the Arctic in mid-winter". His experiences in field included travel by nearly every means of wilderness transportation: canoes, pack horses, planes and helicopters. He was a confirmed enthusiast of helicopter transportation even after surviving a serious crash in 1956.

After serving his articles with Robert D. Davidson, D.L.S., he received his DLS commission in 1960, and his OLS commission in 1966.

In 1967, he retired as a Warrant Officer II, Topographical Surveyor Group 4A, to continue surveying in the Legal Surveys Division of the Surveys and Mapping Branch, Energy, Mines and Resources. His work in this division consisted chiefly of cadastral surveys in the Eastern Arctic. He retired from government work in 1978.

Bill was involved in many activities of a community nature, notably the YMCA, Boy Scouts, United Church and his local community association. He served as cub leader in the 52nd Scout Group and secretary of the Group Committee before assuming the office of chairman of the 52nd Scout Group. He was described as a man of perpetual motion willing to take on any job at any time as long as it fit into his already cluttered calendar. He did however find time for sports, learning to swim at age 38, ski at 40, skate at 42, and cycle at 50.

However, it will be for the writing Bill did for the *CISM Journal* that he will be best remembered by future generations. He had a gift for writing short biographies of members of the surveying profession that encapsulated the essence of his subject's personality and accomplishments in a most interesting way. This and his happy involvement as editor for seven years of the *The Canadian Surveyor Supplement*, was the fulfilment of an urge since his teenage years to be a writer. Bill also wrote *From Compass to Satellite*, the excellent history of Canadian surveying published in 1982 as Volume 36, No. 4 of the *CISM Journal*. This was written to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the CISM (CIG).

Bill passed away on January 31, 1992. He is survived by his wife Gay (nee Melanson) and his sons Arthur John and George Bernard.

Based on material provided by The Canadian Surveyor, CISM Journal ACSGC and M.J. O'Sullivan.
