

## Allan Bruce (Al) Johnson

March 27, 1923 - November 12, 2011



Al was born in Huntsville, Ontario on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1923. He came from a family of seven boys and one girl. Al was a young man when the family moved from Huntsville to Toronto. Like so many other young men, Al joined the army.

In 1944 Al enlisted in the Algonquin Regiment at North Bay. Following basic training he was stationed at the Botwood Airbase in Newfoundland where he was employed as an artillery observer.

Their duty was to be on the lookout for German submarines in the area. They had three guns overlooking the Atlantic and were permitted to fire at submarines observed close to shore. Submarines were spotted and the guns were engaged. No kills were reported.

When war was declared on September 3, 1939, the German freighter Christoph V. Doorman was docked in Botwood's harbour to load ore concentrate from the Buchan's mine. Unable to sail because of a technical malfunction, the vessel was seized at 11 a.m. by the Newfoundland Constabulary and some local residents. The ship's crew of 25 were taken to a prisoner of war camp in St John's, while the freighter was removed to Halifax. The incident is considered to be the first act of war in North America during the Second World War.

The war would end and Al returned to Toronto where he met and later married his first wife Betty. They along with daughter Helen made their home in the Toronto area.

It was in Toronto that Al began a sales career with Nabisco. He worked for Nabisco for over thirty years becoming their Regional Manager for Eastern Ontario.

In 1974, Al and Betty moved to Richmond and settled on Fowler Street. Al joined the newly formed Richmond Legion Branch 625 and Betty joined the Ladies Auxiliary. Both would also become members of Club 55.

Soon after settling in Richmond Al formed his own company and for the next twenty plus years sold Ganong chocolate products to stores and outlets in Eastern Ontario.

Al and Betty also joined the old Richmond Curling Club and both were active in fund-raising for the new club. Al served as President of the new curling club from 1984-85. He and Betty were instrumental in developing the senior daytime curling program which is still active.

When not curling, Al enjoyed skiing golfing and playing poker. He enjoyed walking his little Yorkie dog Cricket and also had a passion for reading, especially biographies.

Betty passed away in March of 1998.

In 2004, Al married Marcia Kitching and moved to Cockburn Street in Richmond. Once retired, Al and Marcia became snowbirds and spent their winter months in Florida.

Al suffered a stroke in 2008 and spent the next three years in St. Vincent's Hospital. He was later moved to the Carleton Lodge and passed away November 12, 2011 in his 89<sup>th</sup> year. He is survived by his second wife, Marcia, daughter Helen (Jim Freer) and several step-children.