

Stories I tell

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Prince Albert National Park

Crucible Forged

Crucible Forged - A Conflicted Man.

By P.W. (Winston) Smith©2012

Foreword:

"Manage the tension" is borrowed from a phrase often used by Parks Canada bureaucrats to describe the apparent conflict in the National Parks Act. The Act requires the parks to be **preserved** and **enjoyed** in perpetuity; thus the tension that must be managed.

During my 50+ year working life I have met many interesting people from Coral Harbour, NWT to Torquay, SK and from Revelstoke BC to Fundy, NB. One of these people was Hal Shepherd.

Anyone who has worked with or been married to National Parks employees will appreciate the lore and history of what was the National Park Warden Service, particularly in the West. I have grouped these folks together as "Parkies". This story only touches on one individual who proudly held the title Park Warden. There are many more stories out there as interesting and, perhaps, bizarre as this one.

I met Hal Shepherd in 1972 at Kingsmere Lake landing shortly after I started working in Prince Albert National Park. He was the Kingsmere District Warden and I was the newly appointed Operations Manager on my first orientation tour. My first observation was that he wore a "Forge Cap" version of a National Park Warden uniform headdress. My understanding was that Wardens wore the coveted Stetson in the summer and a fur cap in the winter; both with the distinctive National Park Warden cap badge. (A "ball cap" would NEVER be worn during this era!) Hal's cap resembled a WW II American Air Force officer's cap, suitably crushed to proclaim "savoir faire". Before I could say anything Hal explained that since 90% of his work was done in a boat with a low canvass-cabin, a Stetson was impractical. It sounded reasonable to a rookie but I was to learn that a non-issue hat was the least indication of Hal's non-conformity.

Fast-forward 35 years to me writing the PANP chapter of My Story. I did some research and ended up on the Hong Kong Veterans web-site where I left a message asking anyone who knew Hal and his story to contact me. Nothing came of this and I put the potential story out of my mind. Forward again to 2011 when a Ph.D.

candidate at the University of Ottawa who had seen my note on the Vet's web-site, sent me an e-mail asking if I had gained any further information on Hal. The recent news about Japan's apology had reminded him of an interaction with Hal that had changed his life and led him to a rewarding career (but that's his story to tell).

Spurred by his note, I undertook some new research, writing to as many ex-Parkies that I could think of, then followed the leads they gave me. The following is my version of what I already knew about Hal Shepherd augmented greatly by inputs from friends and family. This is far from the complete Hal Shepherd story but provides, I think, an insight into a man conflicted by demons from his War and an "original man".

A Conflicted Veteran or an Original Man?

Harold Barlow Shepherd MBE. 5/2/1919 - 7/4/1994

Hal was born in Bury, Lancashire, Great Britain and his family immigrated to Canada when he was 4 years old. They settled in Riverbend, QC where his father got work as a machinist in the Price Bros. paper mill. The present city of Alma Quebec was formed in 1962 from the merging of four villages: Isle-Maligne, Naudville, Riverbend and St-Joseph d'Alma. It was in that first summer in Canada, when he was still 5 years old that he lost the sight in his right eye in a breaking glass incident. *(I thought he had lost his eye as a POW)*

Then, as now, the population was 98% French speaking, one percent English and the rest "other" so he grew up speaking both languages fluently, which turned out to be particularly worthwhile in the prisoner of war years. He graduated from high school after skipping a grade here and there. *(I was told that Hal had been certified with a "genius" I.Q. but he never told me that nor did his family).* He went to work in the Price Bros. mill at age 16 and was the first aid man in the mill from that first year.

Joining the Army

When war broke out he decided that this was the time to become a pilot, a dream he had for some time. Unhappily he failed the medical because of loss of vision in

the one eye. This did not deter him for long and when he heard the Finnish embassy was trying to find Canadians who would join their air force he applied and was accepted. We don't believe they even had a medical test for approval. He left the embassy with a week to settle his affairs and with a boat ticket to Finland. Finland was willing to ally with anyone to keep the Russians out of their country. They ended up on the Axis side with the Germans and Hal would have been fighting Canadians instead of helping them. Fortunately, at least from his family's point of view, Russia invaded and there was no more Finnish Air Force to report to. Hal was determined to enlist and fight for his own country. He was rejected a total of 5 times as he kept running into the same doctor. He memorized the three different eye charts and when the Price Bros. organized and funded the Quebec Royal Rifles he begged to be allowed to volunteer and with a different Doctor, passed the medical. He was accepted only after he offered to sign a disclaimer holding the company and the Quebec Royal Rifles harmless should he be injured or killed in his war service.

Hal rose to the rank of Company Sergeant Major (Service Number E30180), a significant and responsible position. While stationed near St. John's Newfoundland he taught dispatch riders and officers to ride the old Harleys and Indians used in WWII. One assignment he thoroughly enjoyed was teaching the first Red Cross unit to go overseas to England how to March the Army Way. One of the young women in that unit was Norma whom he married after they both returned from the war.

Dec 7th 1941 went down in history as a day of infamy and because Pearl Harbor became such a big thing, the fall of Hong Kong to the Japanese became but a minor backdrop at the time.

Wikipedia tells us that the Battle of Hong Kong took place during the Pacific campaign of World War II. It began on 8 December 1941 and ended on 25 December 1941 with Hong Kong, then a Crown colony, surrendering to the Empire of Japan.

In Autumn 1941, the British government accepted an offer by the Canadian Government to send two infantry battalions and a brigade headquarters (1,975 personnel) to reinforce the Hong Kong garrison. C Force, as it was known, arrived on 16 November on board the troopship *Awatea* and the armed merchant cruiser

Prince Robert. It did not have all of its equipment as a ship carrying its vehicles was diverted to Manila at the outbreak of war.

The Canadian battalions were the Royal Rifles of Canada from Quebec and Winnipeg Grenadiers from Manitoba. The Royal Rifles had served only in Newfoundland and Saint John, New Brunswick prior to their duty in Hong Kong, and the Winnipeg Grenadiers had been posted to Jamaica. As a result, many of the Canadian soldiers did not have much field experience before arriving in Hong Kong.

The Japanese attack began shortly after 08:00 on 8 December 1941 (Hong Kong local time), less than eight hours after the Attack on Pearl Harbor (because of the day shift that occurs on the international date line between Hawaii and Asia, the Pearl Harbor event is recorded to have occurred on 7 December). British, Canadian and Indian forces resisted the Japanese invasion but were outnumbered nearly four to one (Japanese, 52,000; Allied, 14,000) and lacked their opponents' recent combat experience.

On the morning of 25 December Japanese soldiers entered the British field hospital at St. Stephen's College and tortured and killed a large number of injured soldiers along with the medical staff. By the afternoon of 25 December 1941, it was clear that further resistance would be futile and British colonial officials surrendered in person at the Japanese headquarters on the third floor of the Peninsula Hong Kong hotel. This was the first occasion on which a British Crown Colony surrendered to an invading force. The garrison had held out for 17 days. This day is known in Hong Kong as "Black Christmas".

Of the Canadians captured during the battle, 267 subsequently perished in Japanese prisoner of war camps, mainly due to mistreatment and abuse. In December 2011, Toshiyuki Kato, Japan's parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs apologized for the mistreatment to a group of Canadian veterans of the battle in Tokyo. (End of Wiki reference)

Hal was transported to Camp Omine on Kyushu Island, Japan. He and his troops worked in the coalmines for Furukawa Industries from January 23, 1943 to September 22, 1945.

His son Keith describes his POW experiences thusly:

"I doubt that anyone really knew his Hong Kong career beyond the surface information, that in his mid 20's he became the senior NCO at a Japanese Prisoner

of War camp where he went in at a healthy 175lbs and came out a yellow skinned 136lbs. At the same time he managed to be successful enough in looking after his men so that he earned an MBE for the survival ratio of the men under his command, a survival ratio that far exceeded any other Japanese POW camp whether commanded by senior or junior officers or other NCO's. Traits of protectiveness for his men and sheer bloody minded stubbornness that caused him to be bayoneted in the shoulder for refusing to send his sick men into the coal mines and for striking the Japanese NCO who attempted to compel the sick men into the mine. And which allowed him to withstand the psy-ops of being stood up to be shot for that offense daily and having the "Ready Aim and Fire" commuted to "Ready Aim . . . No. We do it tomorrow", while the wound healed. I am sure that such a personality made a number of Chief Park Wardens and later Superintendents feel that they attempted to 'manage the tension' that was Hal Shepherd. From a son's point of view he was great in a crisis but not very stable in the calm golden times where he often seemed to do his best to create that familiar tension."

Hal was the only French speaker in the POW group. He was able to communicate with a senior Japanese non-com who also spoke French until he picked up enough Japanese to get along. He actually learned to speak Japanese well enough to be sent back over to the war trials in Japan for 10 months as an investigator and interpreter for MacArthur's group, shortly after he had returned to Canada.

MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Warrant Officer Class II SHEPHERD, MBE (E30180)

(Company Sergeant-Major)

The Royal Rifles of Canada

Canada Gazette dated 15 June 1946 (No. 24, Vol. 80, p.3849) and CARO/6632 dated 17 June 1946.

NOTE: RG.7 Group 26 Volume 59 has recommendation for a Distinguished Conduct Medal; clearly altered to MBE.

Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd of the Royal Rifles of Canada was taken prisoner of war at Hong Kong in December 1941. When he was sent to Japan as a labourer. Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd was placed in charge of a section of 50 men and throughout the remainder of his period as a prisoner of war fought in the interests of his men. By consistently fighting with the Japanese, insisting on better treatment for the men, he did a great deal to maintain morale and succeeded in making conditions more bearable for all the prisoners of war in his camp. When making up working parties the Japanese took no notice of the physical conditions of the men they ordered to work and

this was a constant source of trouble. On one occasion a man who was too ill to work was being sent out on a working party; Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd asked permission of the Japanese guard to take him to the Medical Inspection Room for treatment. This was refused. Shortly after, this man fainted and Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd ordered him carried to the Medical Inspection Room. When the guard interfered and slapped Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd, Shepherd punched the guard in the face. The guard thrust his bayonet through Company Sergeant-Major Shepherd's arm, and he was then placed in the Guard room, sentenced to 21 days detention at half rations.

From the London Gazette:

THURSDAY, 25 JULY, 1946
CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
25 th July, 1946.*

The KING has been graciously pleased, on the advice of His Majesty's Canadian Ministers, to give orders for the following appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, in recognition of gallant- and distinguished services whilst prisoners of war in the Far East (to be dated 11th June, 1946): -

.....
To be Additional Members of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order: -

.....
No. E30180 Warrant Officer Class II (Company Sergeant-Major) Harold Barlow SHEPHERD, Canadian Infantry Corps.

In 1945 Hal returned to Canada and married Norma and returned to River Bend QC to his pre-War job as a foreman in Price Bros. paper mill sulfate production centre.

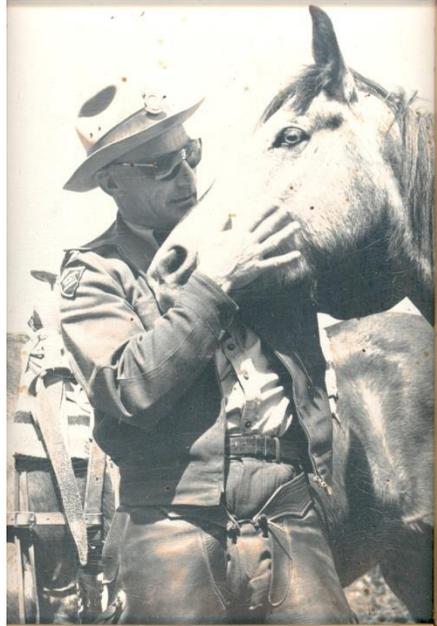
In 1953 he drove west with a wife and three sons where, typical of Hal, he started in Construction and ended up a cowboy. Arriving in Cold Lake on July 12 of that year he started as a labourer digging ditches at the Cold Lake Air Force Base. He became foreman of the construction crew within 3 months and eventually became an "expediter" or travelling purchase agent scouring the countryside for the required materials in this boom situation. He worked for Burns and Dutton Construction and we believe and spent one 6-month session in their office in Edmonton one winter. By the time the Cold Lake era ended there was another son in the family and they had 6 horses, 2 of which were registered thoroughbreds.

In 1957-58 Hal hired on with the National Park Warden Service as an Assistant Warden to "Beef" Woodward in Lake Louise and the three older boys all went to the one room school there attending classes and Friday night square dances faithfully with Mom and Dad. They could not afford a car in those days so grocery shopping was once a month by train to Banff with daily requirements met from the one little grocery store on site. They all loved those trips on the Canadian. Home in Lake Louise was an un-insulated, three room cabin with electricity but no running water (outhouse facilities at -35F contributes to personal efficiency). The boys chopped the wood and kindling, hauled out the 5 gallon slop bucket from under the sink when needed and kept the 2 galvanized water buckets full from the hole chopped in the Pipestone River. Norma managed to keep them clean and Hal in clean and pressed uniforms by washing clothes in a galvanized tub on a scrub board (same tub they all had a bath in on Sunday evening, small people first).

Hal had been a competent skier and junior ski racer in Quebec. This stood him in good stead when Beef would send him up to check on the fire lookout towers and shovel roofs in the middle of winter across a half dozen active slide paths in the case of the Little Beehive lookout. He became one of Walter Perrin's favorite warden partners because of his general physical competence and his refusal to be intimidated by heights in the mountains. He took part in a number of rescues and body recoveries over those years in Lake Louise. He also took over the ski patrol at the Lake Louise ski area (then just one poma-lift on Mt. Silverhorn) and was able to parley that into a family ski pass and by the second winter into free skiing and instruction for all 21 members of the local school on Friday afternoons in lieu of a school PT program. He was a founder and became President of the local Lake Louise Ski and Community Club whose racing team consisted of the 3 Shepherd boys and young Dave Sprlak whose father was part of the Parks maintenance crew. For three years, thanks to the superlative instruction of Franz Haas, the Swiss head of the local ski school, Lake Louise regularly outperformed the 25 member Banff Ski Runners Team at regional ski races. The two older boys, Ian and Keith, had to board in Banff for school from Grade 9 onwards.

In 1961-62 Hal got his own district, Panther River District or "Windy" as the house located at over 6000ft near the junction of the Panther River and Wigmore Creek, was (mostly) affectionately called. The move involved a lot of scrounged cardboard boxes and the horse truck showing up one sunny day. Windy was not in very good shape after a number of years of neglect. The house was a mess. It had no

electricity but did have running water when you ran down stairs and fired up the gas water pump in the basement. One amusing amenity was the 4 bunk concrete block fall-out shelter built in the basement which soon became can storage for the once a month Norma started by and finally the to keep his team of trips by truck. She battleship Grey disgusted and quite a nice deep-down far enough. propane stove and register above a with no less than luxury!



Hal and Tex.

Hal thought the The Parks painters had no intention of scrounged bits and pieces of old paint guns and a compressor from the maintenance shops in Banff and the painters were happy to supply unlimited warden brown with white trim for the house as well as green for the roof. They painted the entire house three times with the little one-pint paint sprayer sacrificing three pairs of Norma's nylons as paint screens. His plan was to make "his" district a showpiece and he would start with the headquarters and move out from there. He continued on to paint the garage, saddle shed and barn as well as linseed oil all the corral poles and rails then repaired the horse pasture fence. They eventually painted all the line cabins as well as the historic RMP # 3 cabin, later taken in to Banff to be an exhibit at the Whyte museum. The road maintenance crew reported back on the improvements occurring. Since subsequent visits by Ass't Chief Jim Symes, and Chief Bob Hand confirmed the place was shaping up, Hal was granted 4 loads of black dirt from which they created a lawn and terrace down to the drinking water pond. As well they transplanted a curving row of spruce trees. Hal's grandson, Landon, riding his first trail drive from the Yaha Tinda to Banff some years ago took a photo of the place showing the curving line of 30 foot spruce still standing proudly.

shopping trips to Banff by car. washing ceilings, then walls kitchen floor where Andy used huskies when he left on day had thought the floor was linoleum but was both intrigued to find that it was patterned red when she got Cooking had advanced to a the place had a central wood furnace in the basement two separate bedrooms -

exterior was just as ill kept. had not been out in years and showing up any time soon. He

With his son Keith as riding partner, Hal then tackled the phone line and trails and by the end of Year 1, every trail in the district was cleared to the full 4 foot wide by 6-foot high box. This was accomplished in three weeks with Hal on the ground with the power saw and Keith clearing everything above waist height by machete from horseback.

The recent Park Warden of a joke to Keith as during he carried a warden service holster and burned though becoming relatively competent Hal himself carried a semi-shoulder holster along with the scabbard or in the truck.



Glacier Warden

In 1963 Hal was promoted to a top of the Rogers Pass in For that period he was mainly occasional grizzly control. He traffic control for avalanche

after highway accident messes and occasional avalanche problems that reached the road. His defiance of authority and sense of humour led him to resurrect the old warden uniform of dark green form fitting jacket, breeches (like RCMP only in dark green), purchased RCMP knee high riding boots (no spurs though), and short brim aviator cap also in dark green. He wore that outfit for over a year on the highway and coupled with the mirrored aviator glasses and the .32 in the shoulder holster he was a confident, albeit occasional intimidating presence on the Trans-Canada.

firearms debate is a bit these trips on the trail police special .38 in a hip about 6 boxes of shells over that first summer. automatic .32 in a .270 in the saddle

highway district at the Glacier National Park. highway patrol and was responsible for shoots and cleaning up

Keith moved to Nelson to be with the National Ski Team in the fall of 1964 and only returned to his parent's houses for short visits from then on.

The family went to Prince Albert National Park and Kingsmere district in the spring of 1964 and spent two and a half winters at the Kingsmere cabin with son Don educated by correspondence for a full three years. The trips out to Kingsmere were classics as they were given an antique Bombardier of the sort that was used on ski hills and at the Columbia Icefield Snow Tours. On one trip the Bombardier went through the ice on the way onto the river into Kingsmere Lake. Since it was their first season out on the Lake they had no idea how deep the Lake was or

where any shallow parts might be so one assumes it was a real adrenaline rush the first time they went through the ice. Hal sent Norma and Don to the shore with the two available pairs of snowshoes while he tried to get the machine back on the tracks with no success. They made it out to the Kingsmere cabin on the next trip and didn't break through the ice until very close to shore at home bay. They were able to drive out of the water that time with a load of groceries that would last them until the ice was gone.

As District Warden Hal's district was essentially Kingsmere Lake. Hal patrolled the trails and visitor areas near the Lake and spent a great deal of time in his patrol boat, protecting the visitors and the park from each other. In later years, from freeze-up to break-up they lived in a staff residence in the Waskesiu Townsite. It was known that Hal spent a lot of his off-duty time fighting his demons through a bottle; he was obviously terribly conflicted with extreme highs and lows in his work and private life.

This was evident when we worked together at Prince Albert National Park. I was the Operations Manager and Acting Superintendent between Superintendents John Heppes and George Balding. It might be appropriate for me to say that I attempted to "manage the tension" that was Hal Shepherd! By this time he had accumulated a personnel file of 3 large volumes, filled with accounts of incredible and bizarre episodes, any one of which should have seen his discharge from the Civil Service, but none of which did. Some of his colleagues speculated that he must have been protected by someone in high places. Others suggested that the powers-that-be did not have the gonads to fire an OBE war hero.

During his time in Prince Albert National Park Hal took an interest in aviation and took flying lessons at the Prince Albert airport. One story is that he either purchased or had an option on a surplus RCAF Harvard and approached the Park Superintendent with a proposal that the fire tower protection system be replaced by a contract with him patrolling the Park with his Harvard and managing fire suppression from above. That idea did not fly but there was more to come in Hal's aviation career.

One day, while I was on duty in the Park, I received a radio call from Hal. He was overhead in a Cessna 172 with an instructor from the Prince Albert Flight School (and had a Park radio with him). He asked me if I would like to see him demonstrate a spin and I answered in the affirmative. They did what is known as

an "incipient spin" which is really the first turn before things get really interesting. He asked what I thought and I replied that it was nice but not a real spin. Mistake! The next I knew the aircraft was in a full spin of 5 or 6 turns. The radio transmit button was held in the "on" position and we could hear the airplane's stall warning screaming along with, I suspect, the instructor! We never spoke of that incident.

There was a rumor that Hal received a significant pension resulting from his Hong Kong experiences. That combined with a decent Warden's salary allowed for the pilot training and the almost-new Lincoln 4-door that he always drove.



National Park Wardens took themselves very seriously!

The Sime-Shuler Report of the 70's was a turning point in the National Park Warden Service. The Guardians were to be transformed into Technicians; Districts were to be centralized into Areas with supervising Area Managers.

This posed a barrier to many Wardens who lacked the education and administrative skills to succeed in this new role. Although accommodations were made for the old hands, Hal realized the potential for someone with his IQ and talents. Despite his high-octane personality, report writing, typing, planning and organizing were his forte and challenges to some became opportunities for Hal. He was so certain of his potential that he allegedly found a doctor who inserted a devise or capsule under his skin that would react to any intake of alcohol and render him deathly ill. Whether real or psychosomatic, the procedure seemed to work as I'm told Hal did not drink thereafter. More on this later.

Hal applied for every competition and aced every examination and interview that the skeptical promotion boards threw at him.

In 1972 Don Macmillan held a competition for the vacant Chief Park Warden position at Yoho. Hal was a candidate and while they were aware of his background he proved to be the best candidate and won the competition hands down. During the year or so that Don worked with Hal he found that despite the odd deviation

he brought a high degree of intelligence, dedication and loyalty to the job.

Having recently dropped out of college, Jamie Doyle worked in Yoho National Park as a young man in the early 1970's cleaning campsites, building trail and fighting fires. He contemplated a career in the Warden's Service and asked Mr. Shepherd what he needed to do to get a job with him. Hal, in his usual direct manner, advised Jamie that he was of little use to the Warden Service and if he had any interest in the vocation he had better get his butt back to school. Jamie did. As a result of following his advice, he has had the great fortune of having a very full and enjoyable career. Recently, as mentioned in my introduction, he returned to the University of Ottawa to complete his doctorate in Environmental Toxicology. All this was made possible by Hal's clear thinking and direct talk. It was a turning point in Jamie's life and he feels he owes him a lot.

Jamie talks about his time in Yoho with Hal. They were aware of Hal's reputation when he arrived in Yoho; however, he has always remembered him as a larger than life character in a very positive way. That summer Jamie was the park employee responsible for cleaning the Kicking Horse Pass campground site. Staff was very busy during the summer and often had to put campers at the overflow campsite in an open area in Kicking Horse Flats. The charge for camping in the overflow site was \$2 and was collected by one of the campground attendants, usually young women students. One day they had a bike gang (Hell's Angels or equivalent) settle in at the overflow site and the young campground attendant was too afraid to collect the \$2 from the "campers". Hal went with her to collect the fees. He did so with his usual flair and in full warden cum Douglas MacArthur attire and extracted payment. As he was leaving in the Chief Warden's vehicle, one of the bikers flashed a limp right hand in the air in the Nazi salute and uttered a sarcastic "Sieg Heil". Well, as you would expect, Hal did not take that too well and slammed on the brakes, jammed the car in reverse and jumped out of the vehicle to confront the biker as follows: "If you are going to do that at least do it properly": at which point he sprung into a tall and strong attention, thrust his arm in a straight, rigid, Nazi salute and in a booming voice announced "Sieg Heil". Hal then calmly got back into his car and returned to town. Whatever people thought of him and given his past experiences, he had one hell of a sense of humour!

Keith Shepherd talks about his dad's time in Yoho and the effectiveness of his tenure at Yoho and Field. He refers to his Superintendent there for whom he had great respect. It was Jean Pilon and his wife Lise with whom he enjoyed

considerable rapport and a number of productive years where he enjoyed the training of some wardens of considerable talent. Among them was Peter Whyte, Daryl Stinson, Dale Portman, Don Mickle and Canada's first female warden Kathy Calvert. Keith believes Hal was the only Chief Park Warden to openly state that he believed that women could earn a place in the Warden Service without special concessions and could prove as competent as the men. Hal was well respected as a competent and forward thinking CPW creating some of the first Park Emergency Plans as well as Fire Protection Plans. His personal life, which occasionally infringed perhaps on his official life, was not always considered as admirable.

He and Norma kept the love of flying alive with a succession of single engine planes and one twin engine plane parked in Golden. He went on to take Bird Dog training and was certified as a Bird Dog pilot for forest fire fighting although he may not have been allowed to perform the function.

Dale Portman, an author on subjects to do with national parks and nature, says there so many stories about Hal it's hard to know where to start. In 1973 Dale got his full time Warden position. In the spring of 1974 he contemplated transferring to Yoho and was invited by Hal to tour Yoho Park with him. He arrived one morning and met him at his desk in the administration office in Field, BC. Dale had never formally met Hal but certainly knew a lot about him and his intriguing reputation as well as having seen him at one or two park functions. He was a riveting character with his eye patch and forage cap and most intimidating until you got to know him. Sitting at his desk, he opened up the main drawer and pulled out a photograph of a fatally mauled Wilf Etherington, a wildlife biologist for the CWS who had been killed by a grizzly. The bear had been tranquilized and flown into the back county of Banff. Hal, one suspects, wanted to gauge Dale's reaction; why else would you bring something like that out. They went for coffee at his house and he ordered another warden, Bill Wallburger, to drop by for coffee. Once they settled down for coffee (Norma wasn't around) he offered the two of them some rare Napoleon Brandy that some pilot friend had smuggled into the country and that he said was quite expensive. He let them know that he no longer drank because he had had some anti-abuse drugs inserted in the lining of his stomach - so that if he drank he would get violently sick; the optics of which seemed quite severe to Dale at the time. Dale sipped his brandy and Bill bolted his, much to the consternation of Hal, who berated him for it, as he directed an approving glance toward Dale. In a weird way he was meeting some of Hal's expectations. They drove back to the office afterward in his government Station wagon when all of a sudden he sped up and

tore down toward the CPR bunkhouse on a gravel road and came to an abrupt stop in a cloud of dust by some poor individual exercising his dog off leash. He jumped out and told the guy to get his dog on a leash as he was contravening the National Parks Act. Dale knew the guy and his dog Gypsy and he was embarrassed. Hal didn't scare Dale off though and he took the job and never regretted it, although there were times when he questioned his decision in light of Hal's antics.

Don Mickle and Dale both worked in Roger Pass on avalanche control in the late 1960's and early seventies and they were fed a lot of Hal stories from two wardens there, Luther Ferguson and Stan Stachera. Hal retired in 1979 and Dale organized a big retirement bash for him at Lake Louise.

Dale believes Hal knew six languages and knows that he baffled the hell out of all of his colleagues with his brilliance one minute and his self-destructive nature the next. Those that worked with him will never forget him.

Dale also mentions that Jean Pilon and his wife, Lise were a great couple and he did a lot for Yoho as superintendent. He was well liked by all the park staff and was a great ambassador from Quebec. They used to have great parties at their place and he remembers teaching them how to Chicken Dance. They were so game to indulge in western traditions and culture. For Yoho, Dale thinks it was one of its most harmonious and productive periods.

Don Mickle was recently interviewed for the Warden Alumni Oral History and it refreshed many of his memories of Hal Shepherd. He and his colleagues all have very vivid and memorable stories about Hal. He could turn his hand at anything and was afraid of nothing - except, perhaps, the demon liquor that took him over once in a while. Hal was proud of his sons, who all have professional occupations. He would be proud to know that two of his grandchildren became park wardens.

The first time that Don met Hal was at the 'Windy' warden station in about 1963. It was a remote backcountry station about 40 km up the Cascade Valley from Banff. Don was in the guiding business then and his party was driving through on the Cascade fire road, returning from a hunting trip. They stopped at the warden station to get a gun sealed. Hal brought them in for coffee and took special care in wrapping a cloth around the hunter's rifle to protect it from the wire seal. They thought that Hal looked like John Wayne and found him quite intimidating at the time.

Don was working in Yoho when Hal came as chief warden. He looked like an army general with his peaked cap, spotless uniform and straight back. Hal's respect for the uniform was obvious, and he held others to his own high standard. In the 70's when everyone wore their hair a little long and their clothes a little more casual, Hal always made sure you were up to snuff; his favorite move was to gesture to an un-tucked pocket flap and keep the finger going until it flicked your nose.

Hal was one of the first chief wardens to promote hiring female wardens into a male oriented occupation. One of Don's favorite memories was when Kathy Calvert came to work for her first day in Yoho. We'll let Kathy tell that story later on.

Kathy brought a lot of experience to Yoho, including being an accomplished mountaineer. The wardens were doing some public safety training one day and Don questioned whether such a petite girl could hold him if he fell off the mountain. Hal told Don to stay on the ground and he would fall off the mountain in his place. Don felt a little ashamed and they did some practice climbing at Lake O'Hara, and sure enough, he fell off the rock and Kathy held him with no problem, as she gave Don a little grin.

Kathy's recollection of the meeting and some other anecdotes follow:

"I remember meeting Hal for the first time at an interview about job requirements prior to starting in Yoho National Park that spring. I think he just wanted to get an idea of how I would fit in as the first woman warden in a mountain national park. Needless to say, Hal was an imposing sight with his eye patch and prominently curved nose. The remaining eye felt like a laser beam that seemed to penetrate your thoughts. The military dress only added to the impression of a rather fierce eagle.

And yes, he pulled out the pictures of Wilf Etherington. It must have been a standard ploy for him to see what kind of a reaction he would get from new employees. I was more surprised than shocked as I was aware of how disturbing death from accidents can be from my experiences as a climber. Still, Hal seemed to think it important to know if potential wardens could handle this, as dealing with people who die badly in the mountains is very much part of the job - discomfiting as it may be. The interview was good as it illuminated more of what the job entailed and I was looking forward to the work.

That spring I loaded up my fairly dysfunctional car and headed for Banff on a very rainy day. After enduring several breakdowns and a run-in with the RCMP, I finally arrived around 10:00am (two hours late) and quietly told the secretary I had made it. With little fanfare, she showed me to the meeting room, quietly saying 'Ms. Calvert is here'.

The explosion that followed was quite startling. Ten very large men leapt to their feet sending chairs flying from the meeting table in every direction. The only one still sitting was Hal. The flustered wardens, all immaculately dressed, scurried around picking up chairs as they tried to regain their equilibrium. They all had pressed shirts and pants and even wore ties. This was definitely not normal dress for everyday work. Order was restored with Hal grinning at the head of the table where he invited me to sit. They had been at the table for over two hours and seemed jumpy as monkeys. It would take a couple of weeks before I was accepted as a co-worker as no matter who you are you have to prove yourself, but it happened. When I left in the fall, I would look back on the summer as an incredible experience and I knew I would be back. After working for Hal for nine years, he had become one of my best supporters and in the end, a friend."

Hal also pioneered hiring aboriginal trainees for the warden service, including Tim Laboucane, who has been with parks for his entire career.

One story that stands out was of an escape from a Vancouver prison. A hardened criminal was expected to drive through Yoho. The RCMP and Hal set up a roadblock. Hal stepped out with a shotgun in front of the suspect's vehicle. The escaped convict gave up right away. He said that he had been in prison with a lot of hard men and he knew that Hal would not have hesitated to shoot him!

On a similar vein there was a motorcycle gang that started to take over the Yoho Group Campground. Hal told the other wardens to stay back and he would handle the situation. He walked up to the leader and told them that he would set up a fire pit in a secluded area and they could camp there but they would need to behave while they were in his park! He then admired their motorcycles and was soon invited to take a ride. One expects that he probably took them up on it!

There are many stories to be told about Hal Shepherd. Some give an insight into his character and some are not very flattering. Two that I have not confirmed with the principals, if true, illustrate the character of this man.

The first is the story of, 'the bet' he had with George Balding and Andy Anderson over his personal acquaintance with the head of the Canadian Army (General Rockingham?). They thought he was bull-shitting them. Hal phoned him and passed the phone to Andy to verify the contact. The other story is one about him phoning up Moshe Dayan, the Defense Minister and then Prime Minister of Israel. It was either during the Yom Kipper War of 1973 or the Arab invasion in 1967. It was when Dayan was the Defense Minister that the story focuses on. He Knew Dayan from his days as an interpreter at the Japanese War Crimes. Dayan was also being used as an interpreter. The story goes that he phoned up Dayan and offered his service as a transport pilot during the war as he was past his prime as a fighter pilot.

The surgical intervention which assisted Hal to abstain must of lost it's potency as friends say that there were a number of "backslides" in the form of benders during his Yoho days.

His relationship with his last Superintendent was not as positive as with Pilon. One day, as Hal told Keith, he found himself lying across his Superintendent's desk pulling firmly on the tie around a rapidly purpling neck. He realized that if he really did believe that the organization was of more importance than the individual, and the organization would not remove a Superintendent after complaints from all the middle managers over the years, it was time to retire. So he did that in 1979.

He and Norma moved to Sicamous, on the Shuswap Lake in BC, after trading in the last of a succession of planes for a Great Lakes Cruiser "Commander" circa 1947 with mahogany hull and teak decks. He and Norma kept it in beautiful shape for a number of years. In 1983 they moved to Westbank.

In Kelowna he became in rapid succession, a member of the Kelowna Yacht Club, a member of the Yacht Club Board and Power Squadron Commander. He was proud that the Commodore insisted on using the "Commander" as his platform from which to take the salutes in the annual Kelowna Yacht sail-past. The "Commander" was a beautiful older lady kept in impeccable trim by a hard working crew; exterior Hal, and interior Norma, with occasional visiting sons' help. The "Commodore's" choice may also have had something to do with the well-stocked bar on this annual occasion.

By 1990 the older boat was becoming too much for the two of them to maintain to their high standards so Hal sold the boat and bought a motorcycle, a Harley Sportster. That was eventually upgraded to a 1990 limited edition battleship grey Harley Fatboy that he rode until a few months before his death. He rode it to Warden Days in Jasper a few times. He kept up with his weekend riding buddies, pup tent and all, in the Blue Knights Club, a motor cycle club of ex law enforcement types. It was probably a return to his original army roots.

He and Norma lived in Kelowna-Westbank until his death of lung cancer in 1994. After cremation Norma and his four sons scattered his ashes in Okanagan Lake at his request.

So there ends a condensed story of a one-eyed genius, a conflicted warrior and ex-POW Honoured by the King of England, and a successful Canadian National Park Warden. Was he really a "Conflicted Man" or was he simply an "Original Man" or "His Own Man"?

Afterword:

I have tried to do justice to this story. But I am also lazy and have not done all the research I could have. I have contacted a number of people and included what replies I received as "facts" but I have not double-checked everything for accuracy. I take responsibility for what I have written and apologize if I have misunderstood or misrepresented anyone or misspelled any names. I thank you all for your input.

My daughter Michèle assisted me with numerous editing suggestions. We discussed expanding the Hong Kong section and her comment was "give a greater sense of how Hal strongly was affected by the experience and how strong he was to have risen above it. Obviously, he was who he was before Hong Kong, but when you subject such a volatile person to that much pressure, like metal in a crucible, one is either tempered or broken." Perceptive.

In addition to my interest in Hal's life, it seems that I have an affinity with his family in that we all have dealt with PTSD, although it certainly was not called that in our time. In fact there really was not a word to describe our situation. My Dad

was a WW1 veteran who lost his arm in an action that resulted in his receiving the Military Medal for "Bravery in the Field". My eldest brother was on the first Canadian ship in WW2 to capture a German armed trawler and served on the prize crew sailing it to a friendly port not knowing for sure if all the scuttling explosives had been found. Post-war he became the Regimental Sergeant Major of the North Saskatchewan Regiment. My other brother was career soldier (Major) who had to deal with the massacre of a colleague's family by opposing factions in Cyprus. All had to deal with the bottle.

My hope is that someone else, more talented than I, might pick up this story and elaborate on it and, perhaps, incorporate it with stories of other unique individuals from Canada's National Park history.