

# Richard Jamer Honoured for Community Work

By Robert LaFrance - April 2003

Not many people receive awards for shooting guns, but in a way Richard Jamer did that very thing a few days ago, except that the shooting of guns was only a tiny part of why he was honoured at a recent ceremony in Oromocto.

The 76-year-old land developer and retired customs officer received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for his many decades of community service, much of it being his unswerving support for track and field athletics over the past 40 years. Anyone who has gone to a track meet in Perth-Andover in the past four decades is likely to have seen him standing near the starting blocks of the 100-metre or other sprints with his pistol ready to fire in the air and start the tensely waiting athletes down the track.

In Oromocto Jamer received the medal from Provincial Legion President Wally McKiel in recognition of those many years of being an outstanding supporter of his community, including four decades of track and field activities. The medal, presented on March 30, was only the latest of awards Richard Jamer has received for his community activities which include a half-century membership in Royal Canadian Legion Branch #36. He joined in 1953, a few years after returning from Merchant Marine service in World War II on the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian Ocean runs.

Now located on the west (Andover) side of Perth-Andover, Branch #36 was initiated by lawyer Stephen G. Mooney in what was then Perth in the 1920s and later moved to the Andover side.

During Jamer's 50 years as a Legion member, he was on many committees on three levels - branch, district, and provincial - and sometimes on all three at once.

"At one time in the mid-1970s," he explained in an April 14 interview at his home, "I was provincial track and field chairman but at the same time I was wearing three hats because I was district sports coordinator which included taking care of track and field, and then I was vice-chairman of the Dominion Legion Track and Field. Over the years I accompanied the New Brunswick team to quite a few meets from St. John's, Nfld. to Victoria, B.C. and then I backed off to let some younger ones take part."

Those younger ones included his daughter, teacher Sheila Cummings, and Andover Elementary Physical Education teacher Dave Spears. Among those Legion track and field activities and offices he has held are: District Sports Coordinator, Youth Leadership Chairman, Track and Field Chairman (1963-1988), Provincial T and F chairman (1967-1990), and a host of others at all three Legion levels. When a Wall of Honour was established at the River Valley Civic Centre in the 1990s, Richard Jamer, otherwise known as the poet Wet Vet, was the first inductee.

Included on the long list of Richard Jamer's community service is five terms as a Perth-Andover village councillor and several years on the Planning Advisory Committee, his work for the Legion in addition to track and field activities such as being the Legion Fair's Fireworks Supervisor for many years, work with the local #625 Air Cadet Squadron, as the Legion's Poppy Chairman for several years, as Youth Leadership Chairman, branch president, secretary, service officer, and as the national Legion Magazine's branch correspondent.

Richard Jamer lives on Richard Street with his wife Jane, the former Janet Caldwell. The couple has five sons and four daughters, and what Richard Jamer calls "25 and half grandchildren".