

## MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES



### Alice Taylor

When Alice C. Taylor (née Grimes) died Oct. 12, 1999, she was just 18 days shy of her 102nd birthday. She was the last Silver Cross mother for a WWII veteran and the only woman to be a Silver Cross mother twice. She followed up her first appearance on the national stage in 1991 with her second visit when she was 100 years old in 1997.

*Hansard*, for Nov. 6, 1997,

reports M.P. Marlene Catterall's recognition of Alice in parliament. "Mrs. Taylor represents all Canadian mothers who lost loved ones to the war. But she also represents all the homefront heroes who preserved a country of civility and love for our troops to come home to. She also represents a century in which this country moved from colonial status to a proud place on the world stage ...." On Nov. 11, 1997, the Speaker of the House presented Mrs. Taylor with the page from the *Book of Remembrance* that contained the name of her son Richard who died Aug. 17, 1944, on the march from Normandy to Falaise. Trooper Clifford A. Chute of the 10th Armoured Division, Fort Gary Horse, a comrade of Richard Taylor, visited with Mrs. Taylor in 1994 after seeing her on television during the 1991 Ottawa Remembrance Day ceremonies. Trooper Chute relayed details of the day they lost four tanks in combat. "We had a comforting visit with Mrs. Taylor and her family, and Richard's girlfriend who had never married. I was able to explain to Mrs. Taylor the care the crew was able to give Richard until the ambulance arrived. Richard as a member of our crew was highly respected and I will always remember him as a valued comrade."

By the time Alice Taylor died, she had lived with the loss of her son Richard for 55 years and the death of her husband, a WWI veteran, for 22 years. Councillor Wendy Byrne of Ottawa Regional Council paid the remarkable Alice Taylor tribute at her passing in 1999. "What truly illustrates, not only the importance of the Cross to Mrs. Taylor, but her courage and indomitable spirit, was her reaction three years ago to the attempted robbery of her purse in the courtyard outside her home. When some thugs grabbed her purse and ran off, she gave chase and got her purse back. When the police reprimanded her for her "dangerous" actions, she firmly told them that it contained the Silver Cross given to her in memory of her son, and she was not going to let it go." The active Mrs. Taylor worked in the War Records Office during WWII, did a lot of volunteer work, took up bowling at 86 years of age and never missed the merry-go-round at the Ottawa Exhibition.