



## Remembering

**Alan Benedictson** by Bob Bend

I had just started as a member of a four person staff at Teulon Collegiate. The day was over and as I was preparing to leave, a clean cut light haired boy appeared at the classroom door. "Sir, my name is Alan Benedictson. I come from Riverton. Is it possible to take grades 9, 10 and 11 French in one year?" he asked. "Possible, but not probable. Why do you wish to do that?" I replied. "I want to go to University and I have to get French before I can be admitted. Will you teach me?" "Yes", I said. "How much?" "Twenty-five dollars at Christmas and twenty-five dollars at Easter; if you don't pass you get your money back", I said. "When do I start?" "Tomorrow night at eight o'clock at my house." For two nights a week the boy turned up never late once. Actually our gate gave a slight noise when it opened. If you looked at the clock when you heard the gate the hands would show within one minute of eight.

One Friday night a few weeks later the late Mr. Walter Griffin Sr. showed up at the house. "I've



just finished digging up some potatoes and they're lying on the ground. Do you think you could get some boys to come with you to pick them tomorrow?"he asked. I rounded up Allen an three other boys and we reported for work. Mr. Griffin's "some potatoes" was the understatement of the year. They seemed to be everywhere. We started to pick but three of the boys quit at noon, leaving only Alan and myself. Never before or since have I seen his equal as a "Potato-picker" He fastened the pail to his belt and appeared to be on all fours as he went down the rows. Working as fast as I could, there was no way I could keep up. All afternoon he picked a row and half to my one. I know one thing: when we finished the job that night I didn't care if I saw another potato as long as I lived!

The last French lesson before Christmas Alan handed me a check for \$ 25. "Is this the money put up by your parents because the cost of sending you here to school is considerable." I asked. "No, Sir, this is my own money. In the summer I mend nets. It is a piece work and I am the only boy. The rest are all women. I can make pretty good money because I van men net as fast as any woman there and faster than

most of them," he replied. I immediately remembered the potato patch and I knew he was telling them the truth. "You can keep your money. I stated a fee because I wanted to make sure you were serious and would not be a waste of my time," I said. "No, a deal is a deal," he said. "If that is the way you feel we will split the difference, and you have now paid in full," I answered. I can be truly said that I have never worked with a finer one than Alan Benedictson. He was one of the many of that generation, who gave everything they had for those they left behind. As was mentioned, the lessons proceeded until Christmas. Following the holidays they were continued until the end of February when he joined the regular Grade XI French Class. On the June departmental final his mark was in the high seventies and he completed his Grade XI successfully.

Following High School, he entered University. About half way through his courses he felt he should enlist in the army. A few days before the war ended his commanding officer asked for several volunteers to carry out a most dangerous mission. Alan was one of those volunteers. He never returned.....