

From Letters and Memoirs to Rugs of Remembrance

By Larry Vaters, Communications



What a March That Was, was one of 25 rugs designed and completed for the project. Inspiration for the rug, as hooked by Mary Anne and Frances Ennis, evolved from a letter written by a **soldier** named Howard Morry in 1916 to his family back in Newfoundland.

July 1, 1916, is a day forever etched into the memory of all Newfoundlanders. A day that illustrated our strength as a people and our determination to persevere in spite of life's incomprehensible devastation. It was the first day of the Battle of the Somme during the First World War.

On that fateful day, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (RNR) was part of an allied offensive aimed at breaking through German lines near the French village of Beaumont-Hamel. Of the 801 RNR soldiers that emerged from the trenches, only 68 answered the roll call the next day. This tragic loss, which is said to have occurred within a 30-minute period, was devastating to those who survived and to families that lost loved ones.

In 2007, nearly a century after the terrible sacrifice made by the RNR, Mary Anne Murphy, conflict resolution advisor, Office of Values, Integrity and Conflict Resolution, and other members of the Holy Heart of Mary Alumnae Choir began a project to honour the sacrifice of the RNR during the First World War. The project: to depict scenes of the War through the culturally-unique art of rug hooking.

As one of the project originators, Mary Anne says "the idea of hooking

that it would provide people with a new skill.

To realize the full potential of the project, a call went out for artists, to which more than 30 women answered. They began their tribute by viewing *I Remain, Your loving Son*, a locally produced documentary based on letters and memoirs between RNR members and their family and friends. This was followed-up by a workshop that tapped into their response to the video and their individual research and personal artifacts to produce images on burlap.

The women themselves decided what images they would create. Inspiration for the rug, *What a March That Was*, as hooked by Mary Anne and Frances Ennis, evolved from a letter written by a soldier named Howard Morry in 1916 to his family back in Newfoundland.

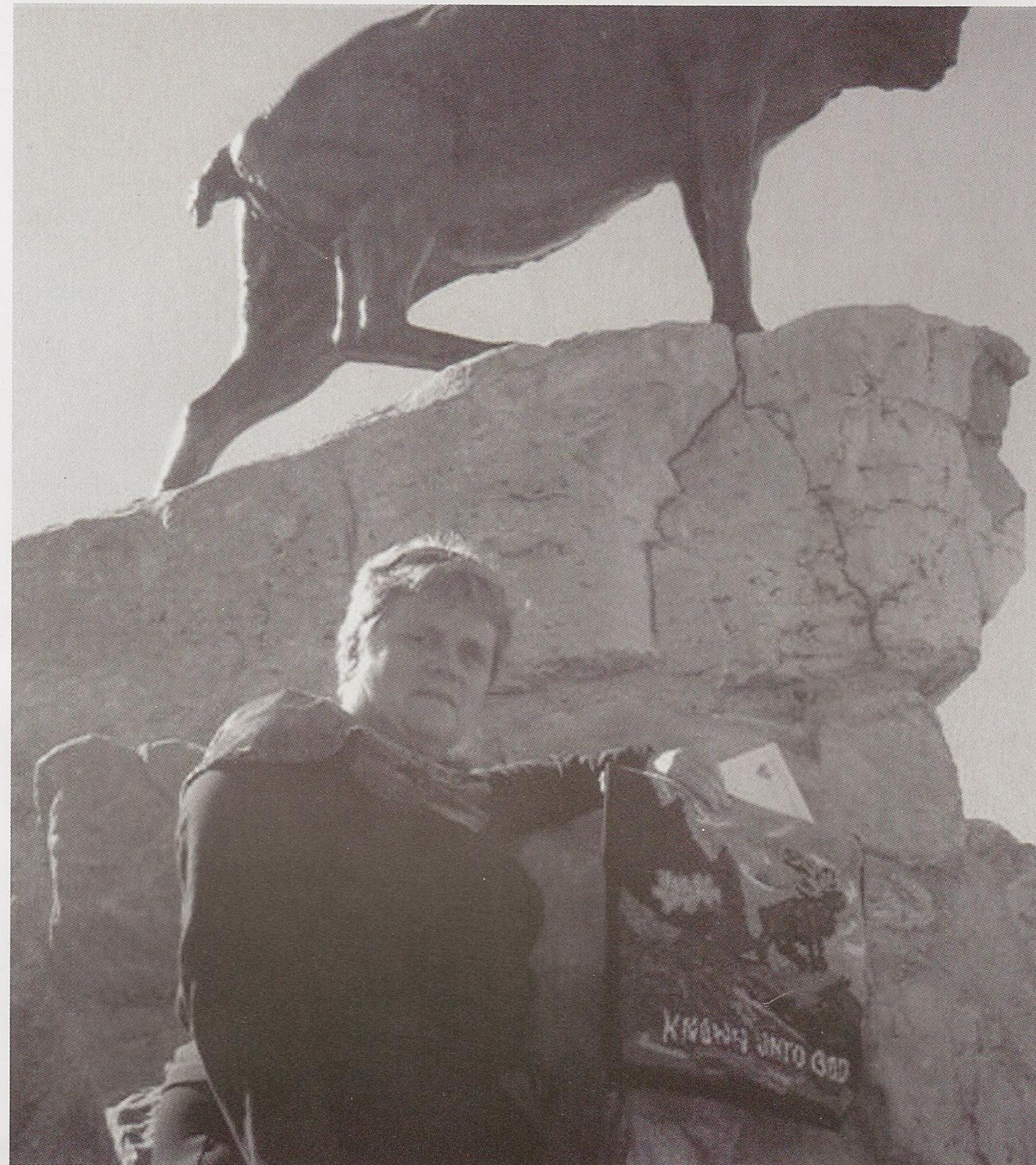
"After the 1st of July, about the 6th I think, we left for a rest and what a march that was. All our chums gone. We were just dragging along the road when Sergeant

... continued on page 13



Entitled Known Unto God, this mat was completed exclusively by Mary Anne Murphy and depicts the caribou monument site at Beaumont-Hamel. It is the only piece not currently with the collection as it was left at Beaumont-Hamel as a reminder of the sacrifices that Newfoundlanders made at the Battle of the Somme.

... continued from page 12



Mary Anne is seen here holding her mat, Known Unto God, at the bronze caribou monument at Beaumont-Hamel during her visit there with the Holy Heart of Mary Alumnae Choir in July 2008. As the emblem of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the caribou stands on a mound, surrounded by rock and shrubs native to Newfoundland, proudly facing in the direction of the former foe, and overlooking the trenches and ground across which the battalion advanced on July 1, 1916.

Major Hicks brought a couple of accordions and put one in front and one in the rear. They started up The Banks of Newfoundland and we all cheered right up."

"These words resonated with us," says Mary Anne. "They truly exemplify the positive influence of music even during life's most difficult times." On July 1, 2008, the Holy Heart of Mary Alumnae Choir performed at the official commemorative ceremonies at Beaumont-Hamel. "The sense of singing and walking on these hallowed grounds where my forefathers fought for my freedom was a very proud occasion for me," says Mary Anne. "I can only imagine the terror they experienced on that sombre day of July 1, 1916."

While the rug project began as a fundraising initiative for the Choir to attend the ceremony, they have been encouraged to keep the rugs together to tell their poignant story about the effects of war on family life.

The collection of 25 completed rugs has been described as original, unique, historical and educational. Their efforts are now focused on preserving the collection. To this end, the Choir was very pleased to learn that the collection will be displayed at the Department of Veteran's Affairs Pavilion at the Miller Center in St. John's. "This is a great honour for us," says Mary Anne. "We hope that this collection serves as a constant reminder of the sacrifice that these soldiers made for our freedom."

DFO Employees Enjoy the Tely 10

By Bill Goulding, Small Craft Harbours

Hot temperatures, high humidity and the threat of heavy rain on Sunday, July 27, did not deter a number of DFO employees from participating in the 81st Annual Tely 10 in St. John's – a ten mile race with over 2,100 entrants that also happens to be the largest road race in Atlantic Canada. This year's departmental participants included Cyril Bannister, Jeff Barnes, Fraser Davidson, Ben Davis, Bill Goulding, Jane Kelsey, Dave MacKinnon, Corey Morris, Derek Osborne, Geoff Perry, Greg Redmond, Ken Scott, Paul Shea, and Patricia Williams.

Congratulations to all participants!



Front row (L-R): Bill Goulding; Jeff Barnes; Derek Osborne; Corey Morris. Back row (L-R): Paul Shea; Ken Scott; Geoff Perry; Dave MacKinnon; Ben Davis.