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Between Us

The Perley and Rideau Veteran's Health Centre Foundation ♦ OTTAWA, ONTARIO



Brant Scott photo

THE GOLDEN BOY: Tony Golab is still remembered as a star with the Ottawa Rough Riders in the 1940s. A Grey Cup winner and Spitfire pilot shot down twice during WWII, he remembers the action from the comfort of his room at the Perley Rideau.

Football is coming to Ottawa you say? It's already here at the Perley Rideau!

By Brant Scott

As football fans anxiously await the rebirth of professional football in Ottawa this summer, the Perley Rideau Seniors Village is already well-stocked with gridiron talent from yesteryear.

Our health centre is home to a well-known Ottawa Rough Riders star player and a talented chiropractor who worked with Canadian Football League (CFL) warriors to speed the post-injury recovery process. In addition to their exploits with the Roughies, both Tony

Golab and Daniel Komesch earned reputations as capable World War II pilots with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Tony "Golden Boy" Golab was raised in Windsor, Ontario and played for Kennedy Collegiate before he became the pride and joy of the Rough Riders in the 1940s. Still a sizeable and gentle man at 95, Tony is the youngest of six children. He tore up the turf for nine seasons with the Rough Riders during 1939-41 and 1945-50. He played in four

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Perley Rideau resident wills \$50,000 to Capital Campaign project fund

By Brant Scott

Margaret Stott lived a quiet and meaningful life after she came to Canada from England, and since her death on July 12, 2013, her legacy lives on at the Perley Rideau Seniors Village.

Ms. Stott fended off multiple sclerosis in her twilight years and was a resident for three years at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre. She derived great comfort from the care that the health centre staff provided and left \$50,000 to the Perley Rideau Foundation in her will. Ms. Stott wanted her donation

to help pay for the new independent and assisted living apartments that opened last year at the Perley Rideau Seniors Village on Russell Road.

The Foundation has a mandate to raise \$5 million for the 139 apartments through its Perley Rideau Capital Campaign, and Ms. Stott's generous contribution brings the campaign closer to its goal. Donations from foundations, corporations, organizations and individuals have raised nearly \$2.5 million so far to help finance the brand new apartment buildings that house

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THE FOOTBALL PILOT:

Tony Golab somehow managed to merge two courageous careers in the 1940s. He was a standout on the field and in the cockpit.

WWII hiatus from the CFL, he played football for Ottawa Uplands in 1942 as a member of the RCAF.

After the war and back in the CFL, the 1948 record books show Tony scored nine touchdowns in 11 games. The Ottawa Citizen ran a headline dated September 1955 that noted, "Golden Boy's" Number Retired When Tony Did." The subsequent story explained that his famed #72 was retired and



COLLECTOR CARD:

Ottawa children in the '40s all wanted a football card like this one. Tony Golab was mobbed after games for autographs from admirers young and old.

Grey Cups and helped the Ottawa Rough Riders bring home the coveted silver mug in 1940.

The Golden Boy graced the sports pages everywhere during his career and won the Jeff Russel Trophy in 1941 as the outstanding player in the Big Four. That same year, The Canadian Press named him Canada's top male athlete and gave him the Lionel Conacher Award. During Tony's

WWII hiatus from the CFL, he played football for Ottawa Uplands in 1942 as a member of the RCAF. After the war and back in the CFL, the 1948 record books show Tony scored nine touchdowns in 11 games. The Ottawa Citizen ran a headline dated September 1955 that noted, "Golden Boy's" Number Retired When Tony Did." The subsequent story explained that his famed #72 was retired and hung up for good. Many of the photos from Tony's playing days bear another name of distinction – Ottawa's Yousuf Karsh.

A man of eclectic talents

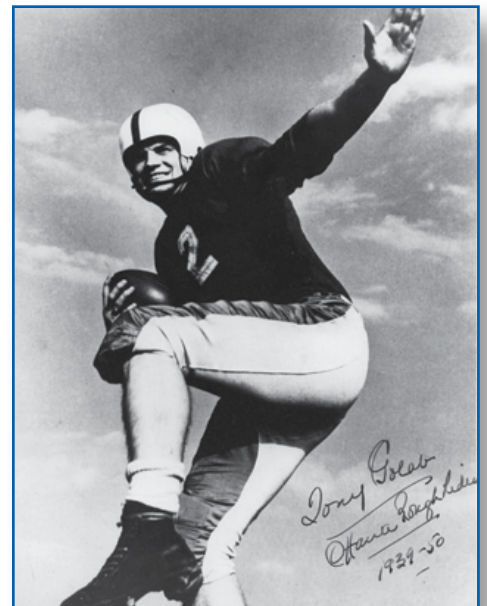
Tony still loved the game after he left the CFL and enjoyed developing the young bodies and minds of players on the Hamilton Panthers semi-pro football team. He went on to coach the Royal Military College team in Kingston and was later appointed vice-principal of St. Paul's High School in Winnipeg.

Tony was inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame in 1964 and the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame in 1984. He was named general manager of the Montreal Alouettes in 1968 and '69 and the cake was properly iced when Tony Golab was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1985.

The Canadian Football Hall of Fame and Museum posts the following tribute: "Anthony (Tony) Golab was known as the "golden boy" during his football career. He was one of the game's finest backfielders and was All-Canadian almost every year he played. Golab appeared in four Grey Cup games, but the 1941 contest was the most memorable. After kicking a high, short punt, Golab rushed up and recovered the ball, then ran it in for a touchdown. After being seriously wounded during the Second World War, Golab returned to star on the gridiron for several more seasons."

The Great Canadian Book of Lists places Tony Golab on the top 10 list of the best pre-1950 CFL players. It gushes, "Ottawa's "Golden Boy" (was) a powerful runner who could carry a team with his play or on his back." The CFL web site notes that Tony was 6'2" and weighed 210 pounds in his prime.

Tony's wartime record was no less impressive than his CFL career. He flew tactical reconnaissance over war-torn landscapes in Egypt, North Africa and Italy for four years. One day, flying at 5,000 feet taking photos of German troops on the move in Egypt, a plane slid



GRIDIRON PERFECTION: In the 1941 Grey Cup final, Tony Golab booted a high, short punt and received his own kick for a touchdown. The feat still stands in the record books.

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HALL OF FAME BOUND: Tony "Golden Boy" Golab was inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. When he retired from the Ottawa Rough Riders, so did his famed jersey number 72.

forced once again to bail out, this time taking shrapnel in his right knee. Tony was reported missing in action as he was receiving quiet care from the Italian resistance movement. Sitting in his room in the Perley Rideau's dementia unit all these years later, Tony rolls up a pant leg and points to his misshapen knee. Heaven knows how he built a football career on that knee when he returned to Canada.

"This knee has hurt since that day I bailed out," he says with a smile. "I had a brace on it. But, the photos were important. Our intelligence people passed them on to the army generals so they knew exactly what they were going to run into on the ground."

Returning to Canada and sports

When Tony's war years ended, he returned home to his wife, Frances, on King Edward Avenue in Ottawa. Canadian newspapers announced his return to Ottawa and local Rough Riders cheering fans turned out in droves when their favourite gridiron hero and war veteran took to the field once more.

"I was a fullback, so I carried the ball a lot and got

in behind Tony's Spitfire. The pilot lit up the Spitfire with his guns and Tony had to quickly bail out and hit the silk.

He cursed aloud when he saw his plane had been shot down by an inexperienced and confused American pilot. Tony was flying tactical reconnaissance in Italy later in the war when his plane was hit by German ground fire and exploded just behind the cockpit. He was

a lot of touchdowns," he chuckles. "I used to spend nearly an hour signing autographs after every game. There was always a big crowd outside the stadium that went right down the stairs. There were a lot of pretty girls there, too, looking for dates. They tried everything, but I was married man."

Tony enjoyed his dual career as an RCAF pilot and Rough Rider after the war and retired from CFL action in 1950. He worked with the RCAF in Ottawa and Hamilton as he made his way up through the air force chain of command. By 1958, Tony was Chief Administration Officer at RCAF 14 Wing Greenwood in Nova Scotia.

In 1960, he became Chief Administrative Officer at the advance flying school in Saskatoon and was named Commanding Officer just two years later. By 1966, Wing Commander Tony Golab joined the planning staff for the Western NORAD Region at McChord Air Force Base in Washington state and Hamilton Air Force Base in California as battle commander.

In his advanced years, Tony fondly recalls his passion for both the RCAF and the pursuit of excellence in sports. He says he was driven by a role model he admires to this day – his own sister.

"I was always striving to follow in the footsteps of my sister, Genevieve," says Tony. "She won an award as Canada's outstanding female athlete in basketball and track and field. She was about four years older than me and she was tremendous, always making headlines in the sports pages. I always said I



PROUD AIRMAN: Star football players don't get medals, but seasoned RCAF airmen do. Tony Golab was a WWII pilot who enjoyed a productive Canadian Forces career for several decades.



PILOT AND INSTRUCTOR:

Daniel Komesch was an RCAF pilot and flight instructor during WWII. He later worked with the Ottawa Rough Riders as team chiropractor.

wished I could do that.”

And so he did. When asked if he has any advice to share with the new Ottawa Redblacks players soon to descend on the nation's capital, Tony paused for a moment, then offered. “I would tell them to play for the love of the game, instead of only thinking about their own career. You play better when you love the game.”

Playing from the sidelines

Dr. Daniel Komesch travelled with the Ottawa Rough Riders a decade after Tony Golab hung up his cleats. Dr. Komesch ran a well-known chiropractic clinic in Ottawa, and could often be found hovering over damaged CFL players on and off the field. His parents came to Canada from Romania in 1912 and he was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan four years later.

As a teenager, Daniel made his way to Trail, B.C. and still holds the record for the 400-yard dash at his old school. He went on to play hockey with the scrappy Trail Smoke Eaters in 1935-39, and the team still cranks out talented young players today.

Daniel Komesch joined the RCAF to do his part in WWII and is a popular figure in the Perley Rideau dementia unit. He got his wings in Regina in 1940 and trained pilots in Canada throughout the war to prepare them for action. In addition to being a test pilot, he trained new recruits in Harvards and Tiger Moths serving in Regina, Moose Jaw, Portage la Prairie, Trenton and then Pendleton Airport just east of Ottawa.

“He used to fly eight hours a day every day,” says his proud son, Donald Komesch. “The Canadians trained American pilots, too. One time Dad heard that a young American student pilot was hungover from drinking the night before, so that was the day he

taught him him loops and rolls.”

Daniel married his wife, Mary, in 1944, who was a chartered accountant. Mary had a stroke in recent years and lives at the Longfields Manor in Barrhaven now. She was the engine behind putting Daniel through five years of Toronto Chiropractic College after the war.

Graduating in 1950, the Komesches moved to Ottawa and Daniel opened a clinic on Metcalfe Street. He hooked up with the Ottawa Rough Riders and worked the sidelines at home and out-of-town games for many years. His reputation for helping athletes spread quickly and soon there was a steady stream of players into his private clinic from other CFL teams. Daniel also treated a who's who of ballerinas, politicians and other local celebrities before he retired.

Dr. Komesch won his own Grey Cup ring in 1960 when a young Russ Jackson led the Rough Riders to a 16 to 6 victory over the Edmonton Eskimos. Dr. Dan later became part of the medical staff with the Ottawa Gee Gees football team and won a Vanier Cup ring in 2000. He worked with the Ottawa Bootleggers semi-pro team during their short 1988-92 tenure.

Staying on his feet all day took its toll over the years and Dr. Komesch collapsed in his clinic when his legs gave out from flesh eating disease. When specialists wanted to amputate, his son Donald asked them to explore any other possible solution. After extensive surgeries, Daniel still has his legs and continues to enjoy visits with friends and family at the Perley Rideau.

The Perley Rideau Seniors Village welcomes the Ottawa Redblacks to town. We are pleased to provide all the comforts of home for two former Rough Riders who helped to pave the way before you.

Have a great season! **BU**



Brant Scott photo

THE CHATTING DANS: Dr. Daniel Komesch discusses his illustrious career with Perley Rideau Foundation Executive Director Daniel Clapin. Dr. Komesch won a Grey Cup ring in 1960.