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## WRENS reunited in Ottawa

More than 750 WRENS — members of the wartime Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service and the Royal Canadian Navy — met in Ottawa recently for their seventh reunion marking the thirty-seventh anniversary of the founding of the corps.

Among the senior members was 84-year-old Florence Greenwood, who came from St. Walburg, Saskatchewan and who hopes to attend the next reunion in Vancouver in 1982.

The Canadian War Museum saluted the occasion by setting up a WREN display in the window of a downtown bank. The museum's deputy chief curator, R.V. Manning, also hosted a reception for a representative group of 70 to 80 from across the country.

Thirty-two WRENS came from Britain for the reunion, including Joan Carpenter and Dorothy Isherwood Stubbs, who ran the trans-Canada recruitment program in 1942; Muriel Currie, editor of the British WREN magazine, and 82-year-old Mabel Browne, who served with the Royal Navy in the First World War.

### Search for WREN friends

One particular WREN, from Scotland, Joy Lamb, spent some of her time in Ottawa searching for Canadian friends she had made 40 years ago.

In August 1939, Mrs. Lamb and a group of Scottish schoolgirls arrived in Canada to begin a three-week tour.

Some of the girls never returned to Scotland. Joy Lamb didn't return for 18 months. They were some of Canada's first "war guests" — about 8,000 children from the United Kingdom who were evacuated to escape the dangers of the Second World War.

On September 3, 1939, as the group was ready to return, Britain declared war on Germany. The schoolgirls, expecting only a brief stay in Canada, were told they must remain indefinitely, not knowing if they would ever see their parents and relatives again.

Mrs. Lamb says she will never forget how the girls waited aboard a ship in Quebec City after hearing the news that the *Athenia*, the vessel that had brought them to Canada, was torpedoed on its way from Glasgow to Montreal.

"There were a few damp tears because we knew the crew aboard the *Athenia*.

We had the run of the ship when we came over," said Mrs. Lamb.

The crew decided to return to Montreal, and Mrs. Lamb and the rest of the group were taken to a camp near Ste. Agathe, Quebec, where they remained for a week before being scattered across the country. Mrs. Lamb and 17 others were sent to Ottawa.

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## Wine from Quebec grapes soon on the market

Quebec's first wine from locally grown grapes will be available next year, the result of one resident's efforts to grow grape-bearing vines there.

Michel Croix started experimenting in 1972 in St. Bernard-de-Lacolle, an agricultural area 40 kilometres south of Montreal. He made the first wine from his vineyard in 1978.

While the wine is not yet for sale, it may be tasted on September 22 during the first vine-harvesting festival ever held in Quebec.

The harvest starts in mid-September, and no name has been given yet to the wine, to be sold only through the Quebec Liquor Corporation's handful of Maison des Vins outlets next year.

The decision to market through the specialty wine stores was made to ensure that Mr. Croix's wine is differentiated from wines already made in Quebec from imported grapes, juices or concentrates.

Mr. Croix, convinced vines could be grown in Quebec, sent soil samples from different regions of the province for testing in France. Results favoured three regions and he decided to begin his experiment in St. Bernard-de-Lacolle, close to the United States border.

### Old site

He did not know it then, but he chose the site of an old vineyard planted in the eighteenth century by the Seigneur de Beaujeu. He found living remains of the old vines and, while experts cannot determine the kind of vine plants they are, they can confirm they had been planted and had not grown wild.

Mr. Croix's vineyard is the result of experiments with 40 different kinds of vine. He intends to make his final selection from eight of these 40 types, winding up with no more than four or five, he said.

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## Blind man's sight returns

Bob Aubrey's seeing-eye dog Buttons is more than just a faithful companion — she's a miracle-worker reports Ralph Wilson in *The Citizen*, August 21, 1979.

Mr. Aubrey, blind for eight years, struck his head on the floor of his apartment in Ottawa, after tripping over Buttons. When he stood up he received the shock of his life. He could see again.

"I didn't even realize I could see right off the bat," the 50-year-old former Canadian National Railways trainman and jack-of-all-trades said recently, recalling his miraculous recovery.

"The first thing I saw was the little sign on the inside of my door: 'Come on in. What else could go wrong?'"

At the door were the building superintendent and two painters. "I just opened the door and shouted 'I can see! I can see!'"

Mr. Aubrey and his brother, Moe, a former Ottawa police officer, both suffer from a hereditary optic nerve disease called Lebere's optic atrophy.

### Doctor perplexed

Mr. Aubrey called his doctor who immediately ordered him to come to his office.

"He called me in and examined my eyes but he can't figure it out either. He didn't say much." Mr. Aubrey is scheduled to see his doctor again in six weeks.

On the way to actually see his doctor for the first time, he was taking in the sights. "It was a beautiful day. I was looking for buildings I remembered and I read every sign on the way there — road signs, signs on the side of trucks, everything. But, you know, I never thought to look at girls," said Mr. Aubrey.

Mr. Aubrey is hoping his new-found sight is permanent. "I'm taking it hour by hour. I'd like to really let go but I won't let myself." He says he is prepared for the worst, but does not know how he will react should he lose his sight again.

"The mechanics of my eyes are working fine. The ophthalmologists have a joke about it: 'There's nothing wrong with his eyes, he just can't see,' " he smiled.

Mr. Aubrey regained his sight once before, about six years ago, but only for a few weeks. He plans to volunteer his services "to the blind kids. I want to give them a little faith and confidence".