

The Story of Gino Farnetti

Written by: Lloyd Oliver

March 2005



The date was June 1944, during The Second World War, after The Battle of Cassino and The Breaking of the Gothic Line, north of Cassino. I was a young 22 year old, army truck driver, in the C-Section of the 5th Division R.C.A.S.C. Troops coy, stationed on the west side of the Liri River north of Cassino. The war had taken numerous other fellows and myself from our Canadian homes in the small hamlet of Miniota, Manitoba. It was during this time that I first met "our little soldier boy" a war orphan named Gino Bragalia, who would become my lifelong companion.

During this portion of the war, in June 1944, the Americans had taken Rome, so our job was to move petro and ammunition up to the outskirts of Rome. We were to make numerous trips. It was on our first trip, as we were quickly loaded up and heading out, that we got to Frosinone and ready to come onto Highway #6 (the highway from Naples to Rome), that we found the traffic was solid for miles back. We couldn't get onto the road and our officer said, "Lets have supper, go to bed and get up at 3 in the morning when the traffic is less". So, we had our supper and some of the men went exploring around. There were lots of bomb crates around from bombs that had missed Cassino. On one of the bomb crates, was this boy sitting with a pair of English army shorts on. He was about 5 years of age. When they got to asking around, a lady told them that his Dad was dead and his Mother had suffered from the

bombing, and thus mentally unable to look after him. The orphaned boy's name was Gino Bragalia. She suggested they take him with them, as she didn't have enough food for her own children. She really wanted them to take the small child, so Gino thus left with them.



(Nov. 2, 1944 at Riccononie,
Italy Gino age 5)

Early the next morning the road was clear of traffic, so we took off to Rome. We got onto the highway at Frosinone, got to the outskirts of Rome, put off our loads and headed home. Next day, we made another trip. I know that on one of the trips, I had a front

wheel that was acting up. I had to stop and take the wheel off, grease it up and put a 4-inch spike in it "for a keeper". Then we drove on, but this time I told Sgt. Les Bryant (a friend from back in Miniota), that I had a bad wheel.

We headed home, but sure enough, the wheel came off and we had to fix it, yet again. The good thing was that it was still daylight and we did get home OK.

The boys that had picked up Gino had by now looked after him for a few days. I had met Gino and like everyone else enjoyed his company. As men far from home and family, it was a novelty to have a small child around. We would sit in the evenings having a cup of tea, and maybe a smoke or two and chat. Gino would have a smoke too, and tell us a story of when he went with "Tededeski", the German soldiers, traveling from Cassino to Rome. We all believed him, but repeatedly told him, "not to smoke at the age of five years old"!

It seemed to me that a boy of 5 years of age should have a bath, so I gave him one. His cloths were just whatever we could find. After the bath, the fellows that had kept Gino must have been impressed, as they asked me if I wanted to look after him. I guess they realized that I truly cared about this malnourished little fellow. So, from that time on, Gino came with me, it was "Gino and Red". But, it was sometimes hard to take Gino on all the trips we made, so if it was a long trip, I'd take Gino to my good friend Mert Massey in

regular work hours. Thus, Mert was able to look after Gino too. They all referred to Gino as “their helper”. Gino being a content child, never pouting or feeling sorry for himself, made our days very interesting.

(Gino swimming in the Adriatic Sea, 1946)



A few years ago, Darcy Plante and I went to visit George Pittendrieh in Brandon. George was in the W/S Platoon. George’s job was fixing motorcycles. He said he remembered Gino, as the little boy who really liked to help fix the motorcycles. So, this is how Gino put in his time when left with the work shop crew.

to help fix the motorcycles. So, this is how Gino put in his time when left with the work shop crew.

Whenever I took Gino to stay with someone else, I always had to take his “wee bed roll and box of cloths” with him. You couldn’t forget “the pee pot” either, as it was really a needed item. Now, every one of his soldier friends was on the lookout for something for Gino, and you would never know what they might come along with. Gino’s English was improving and he could get his wants across to you, without too much trouble. Carrying on a conversation with him was much easier. He seemed to remember everyone’s name when he was telling you a story. We had the lid of the toolbox on the side of the truck. This was the black board, so to say. The alphabet and numbers up to 20 were marked on it and he got to know them all by heart. Also, he liked you to read him the kid’s books that were starting to arrive in parcels from Canada. For me, along with feeding and caring for Gino, teaching just came naturally.



(Gino summer 1944)

The Christmas we spent in Ravenna, Gino stayed with Mert. Gino had written his letter to Santa asking for a new bicycle. On Christmas Eve Gino was ready for bed, so the fellows who had painted up this old bike, left it behind the porch door till Gino was asleep. But when the fellows went to

get Gino's bike, it was gone, someone had taken it. Luckily another one of the fellows said there was a small bike at his place. So he retrieved it, and it proved to be better than the first bike the fellows had painted. Gino was very happy and by this time parcels started to arrive with yet more stuff for Gino. He got clothes, socks, sweaters and the bike. Then we had to get him a bigger ammo box to hold it all! Even in wartime, far from home, our Christmas spirit was strong.

As we were Gino's only caregivers, he would always come with us on trips at night and sleep on a blanket folded in four, tucked behind the seat. He was a small child, so this made a good bed. I remember one night going into a valley. All of a sudden German airplanes came flying at us. It was quite dark, so their bombs dropping made an awful noise. Gino woke up, just as I passed a blown out bridge. There had been a guard on the bridge, so no one would drive over it. Gino saw the guard jumped off the bridge approach, and yelled "perkay jump". Then, as we drove through the river, he said "perkay aqua" Everything, was "perkay" meaning "why"? There is no simple answer to any of these questions during a war.

Another time, the weather was very hot. So, I got a shovel and dug a wee hole and put a gas cap in it to hold the water. But, as soon as Gino saw me start to dig the hole, he took off. He went down the line of trucks and was looking at me from behind a big truck tire. So, I put some water in the gas cap, took my boots and socks off. Then I put my feet in the water. As I splashed in the water, Gino slowly started to come back. I guess he had seen so many men buried in a shallow hole, that he wasn't taking any chances. From then on he always wanted a "wee bird bath".



(Myself, Gino and good friend, Mert Massey)

Now, as August past by, it was starting to get cooler out. I made Gino a pair of pants out of an old pair of mine. They kind of fit and I got a girl to make him a little tunic. The outfit was pretty good so we took Gino to see Major Ekhart, our C.O. The major made Gino a Corporal, and now he had 2 hooks up on his sleeve. Then someone found him an old 6 shooter to complete the outfit. Being a small boy, this made him feel really good.

All in all, in the mist of war, it was fun looking after Gino. Everyone kind of took turns taking him someplace. He was always kept pretty busy and if we were in a small town, he would cross the street and play with other kids.

In about the end of January, C. Platoon had to go on a trip to Salerno area down near Naples, to get ordinase supplies. We left from Ravenna and it was a long drive, and we had to loaded up and start to head back. In the south of Italy, steeling off trucks was quite common. One thing the thieves would do is put crossing arms down across half of the railroad track, forcing us to slow down. As we decelerated, the Italians would get in the back of our trucks, and steel half of our load. So, we had to put our second drivers in the back of the truck with a pick handle or a shovel. Thus, when the hands came on the tailgate, it was wham with the shovel. Needless to say, the hands stopped coming up onto the tailgate. This happened more frequently in the southern part of Italy. You could always tell if they planned on steeling from you, by the number of people around the railway crossings. A lot was not a good sign.

There are numerous stories of Gino and all the trips we went on. One I remember, was when we were moving out one evening. We got to our road that was to be our place for the night and we didn't have tarps on the trucks.

We put up our tents, and made our beds. Gino, by this time had quite a bit of stuff. I got his bed and small sleeping bag ready and the pee pot under the bed. We bedded down, but as the trucks were full of ammunition, we put our bedding down quite a piece from them. Sure enough, we just got to sleep when along came the Sgt. Saying "OK boys, pack up, we're moving". So we got everything back on the trucks, and it took a lot of trips as I had both my stuff and all of Gino's. Then the tents came down last and we only went a few miles up another road when the Sgt. said "Get to bed", so up went the tents again. We just settled down when the Sgt. yelled, "load up again, we are moving out". If I remember right, it was damp, kind of like rain, as we reloaded all this stuff again! I took Gino's pee pot and throw it away saying, "I've carried this thing far enough" Well, Gino didn't think much of that.

Our next stop was a small town. We moved into a two-story house, and went up to the second floor, to a big long room. The windows and doors were gone, so we had a good draft going through it. It was really a lot of work to move all the beds and stuff up there, but finally we got to bed again. It was a short night, and it was times like this that looking after Gino was more difficulty. In the army trucks there was room between the cab and the box, which housed the spare tire, for Gino to sleep. Our beds and bedrolls fit in

there good also. We covered our bedrolls with old truck tarps, which served to keep them dry.

Another night, we were loaded up with ammunition and before we headed out the officer got us all together to tell us where we where going. Our spot that night was up under the big 5.5 guns. We were told not to nose around, as everything was booby-trapped. Our instructions were basically "not to enter any houses or buildings at all". So off we went and come onto this small town. It was a town similar to our rural town's back home, with streets, back lanes, gardens etc. So we drove down the back lane and got a spot to park. We didn't have tarps on the trucks and no tents either. So, we put our bed under the Olive trees and put our mosquito nets over us and went to bed. At around mid-night a storm came up and the rain started to pour down on us. Gino crawled into my bed, as the big guns fired away. It was a really poor night as the lightening flashed, guns fired and we attempted to sleep in the elements. I looked longingly over at the house, recalling our strict instructions not to enter it, and continued to sleep on the ground. In the morning we had breakfast and as instructed "loaded up".

John Basket, our cook had setup his stove in the middle of the garden, which was now on very, very soft ground. John had just got the Dutch oven made and was known to make excellent shepherd's pie. This consisted of dehydrated mutton from Australia, dehydrated potatoes and a pastry crust, and a couple gallons of water. This was dinner or supper. Anyways, I was trying to get my truck to the lane, but when backing up, I ran over John's oil stove and Dutch oven. They were beyond repair, and it put a stop to Shepherd's pie.

We were now lined up and ready to pull out. We noticed that the Italian people were starting to come back home after being off in the hills, away from the fighting. This young boy was running toward his house, the one we had been looking at all night. He ran in the front door, but a loud bang sounded, and the next thing I saw was his mother holding his foot with a boot still on it. This was what remained of her beloved son, this hard life's lesson taught me "always obey orders".

Another time, I had a boil on my knee, so I couldn't go to work, so Gino and I both took the opportunity to sleep in. When we later woke up, the kitchen was closed and I said to Gino "I sure would like something to eat". So, off

Gino went to return with two sandwiches. I inquired to where he had got them, and I learnt that Sgt. Major was just having breakfasted, so I guess Gino figured he didn't need sandwiches too.

Another time, we were off northeast of Cassino, up in the mountains, at a place called Sora. Now, the lady that originally asked my fellow men to take Gino had said that Gino had an Aunt in Sora. But, unfortunately, we were unable to find anyone who knew Gino's relatives by the name of Bragalia.

Our platoon of about thirty trucks had to make a trip to Salerno. It was a long drive down south to Naples. We loaded with Ordinance and headed back to Ravenna. We unloaded and in a few days were told to load up again as we were leaving Italy. I don't remember if it was the Irish Regiment or the Cape Britain Highlanders. I think it was the Irish Regiment, we took. We headed for Leghorn. We got as far as Florence, when it was dinnertime. I was busy gassing up the truck. I had an officer in the front of the truck with me, so Gino and my second driver were in the back. Someone spotted Gino as I was gassing up the truck. We were parked on kind of a racetrack. Vic Worley was behind me. He spoke up "Oliver I think you have company coming". Sure enough it was the head officials. They inquired whether I in fact was the one

who was caring for Gino. I truthfully replied that yes, I was. The officer said that he couldn't come with us, and he would take him back to the D.P. camp just down the road. I explained that I wished to take him back to Viserba to someone who knew him. The officer said, OK, but take the Sgt. with you and come right back. So, I had dinner, got Gino and Sgt. Les Bryant and headed east to Viserba. We arrived around 6 PM, and got Gino into the house of Cecilia Nerie, who's address was 86 Via Christopher Columbus, Viserba, Forli, Italy. I have never forgot the address, even after 60 years! I quickly looked up the town mayor, who was head of the town council also. He had been an old Captain in the British Army. I asked him to keep an eye on Gino, as he only lived a couple of house down the way. He promised he would, and thus we had to head south. When I left Gino, it was a cold, heartbreaking night in February that I will never forget.



(Gino with
the house
keeper in
Ravenna
Italy)

As we
returned, Les

was concerned about the cold weather, but I reassured him, not to worry as I knew some New Zealand girls, that would put us up someplace. We looked them up, and they said we could sleep in a room off the cookhouse. So, we did, and it proved to be nice and warm. Breakfast and lunch were given to us before we left, and we made Leghorn by 6 PM. We then spent a few days sight seeing at the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

On Feb. 24th we loaded up on an L.S.T. American boat. At 6 o'clock the next morning, we set sail for Maraseilla France. We sailed around Corsica and Sardinia on Feb 25, 1945. The sea was calm and I remember being on deck as we pulled out of port. As Italy faded out of sight, I recall wondering, if I would ever see Gino again.

Toni was now very fluent in English and Italian. So when I was in Leghorn, I Gino. Tino was successful though and found him. Toni's job was finished in Italy, and he was soon to go home. Toni made arrangements with Antonio and Rena Farneti, who were getting married soon, for them to take Gino. They adopted Gino on May 10, 1945, and they also made this date his birthday! The Farneti's gave Gino a good home. But because Gino wasn't a blood relative, his name couldn't be spelt the same as theirs. Thus Gino's was spelt, Farnetti, with two T's.

Toni got back home OK, and wrote to me, but at the time I was very busy trying to put my personal things in order. I didn't write back as soon as I should have, and thus I lost contact with Toni. I had returned back to Canada, met Elizabeth Lorimer, (my love of my life), and made her my bride. We were blessed with seven children, Dennis, Paul, Brian, Darcy, Ted, Julia and Betty. The years as a husband, father and a farmer were very rewarding but busy. Together with my own growing family, I found the time to share many "Gino stories and adventures". He was never far away from my thoughts, but the years slipped by, and not being the best letter writer, I lost touch with Toni.

In 1979, I went on a bus tour of Italy. We covered everywhere the Canadians had been over in Sicily and Italy. We landed in Rome, then caught a smaller plane to Sicily. We stopped at Catania, then to Landing Beeches; Agira then headed to Cassino. We then traveled across Italy to Ortona then Rimini.

It was here that my roommate John Handford and I caught the bus that was going to Venice. We got off at Ravenna and I asked around in a tea room café. A fellow over heard and offered to search around for the last address that I had for Gino. At this address, a lady opened the shutters on the second floor and yelled down “ the Farnetis were on the main street down town”. We soon discovered this address, which was a shop that sold moped bicycles (a motorized bicycle). Antonio Farneti was present and proceeded to get hold of his wife, Rena, and his daughter Manuella. It was dinnertime, and we got invited to go home with them for lunch. They had a nice new home, very comfortable and welcoming. Following lunch, Antinio took John and I around to see Ravenna. We had supper together, then we returned to Rimini.

Manuela is a half sister to Gino and she gave me Gino's address in Morocco.



My trip to Italy, 1980; supper at Farneti's home

I have been in touch with Gino ever since. Gino came to visit us in Miniota in 1980 from Venezuela with wife, Rita, and Elizabeth, their wee daughter. That summer marked 35 years since we had first met. I was now 57 and Gino was 42 years old. To me it felt like one of my own sons returning home. This was great visit as I got to introduce Gino to my children, who had only ever seen pictures and heard stories of our adventures together. This reunion was very therapeutic to both of us, as I had always felt like a part of my past was missing. Gino similarly said, "I am still looking for a past in a fog". This trip served to help him piece together memories of his trying childhood.



Miniota

July 1980:

Beth, myself, Gino's
wife Rita, Gino, and
daughter Elizabeth.



Friends who all joined up July 1940 till Dec 1945 at my farm.

Back row: myself , Geo Peterson, Bob Woods, Percy Geddis, Les Bryant,

Front row: Gino, Eddy Clark



D. Day Dodger's Reunion, May 1990
(L to R: ?, E. Dalrimple, Gino. Myself, Ernie Kane, Vic Worley
and Bill Vale)

Then again in 1990 Gino came to Orilla to the D. Day Dodger's Reunion. Everyone made a big fuss over Gino, and treated his family very well. That night we all had supper at Ernie Kane's home. There were at least 20 couples there, and this was also May 10th, Gino's birthday. It was truly a celebration! We had taken Nick and Dina Aureti from Brandon MB with us. Nick was to be our translator, as Gino's English was weak when he was amongst a crowd of people. Nick was a tremendous help. Nick had also been translating Gino's letters from Italian to English for me for quite sometime. Then Gino went to

Zambia to work, and English was his main language, which made him more fluent. Computers also became popular which helped with letter writing and communicating. Gino has proven to be a good letter writer and telephones for special occasion.

While we were there, Bob and Ruth McElroy also had Gino, Nick, Dina, Beth and I into visit them in Peterborough. We also drove to Niagara Falls along with Paul and Dorothy Hagan from Winnipeg. Gino and family then flew back from Toronto Airport.

Again on June 15, 2000, Gino returned to visit us in Miniota. Nick picked him up in Winnipeg and brought him out to visit us on our farm for a week or so. Around the bonfire pit and cups of tea, we got together with army friends and their wives. Many of our local friends also enjoyed meeting and hearing stories with Gino. It proved to be a great time.

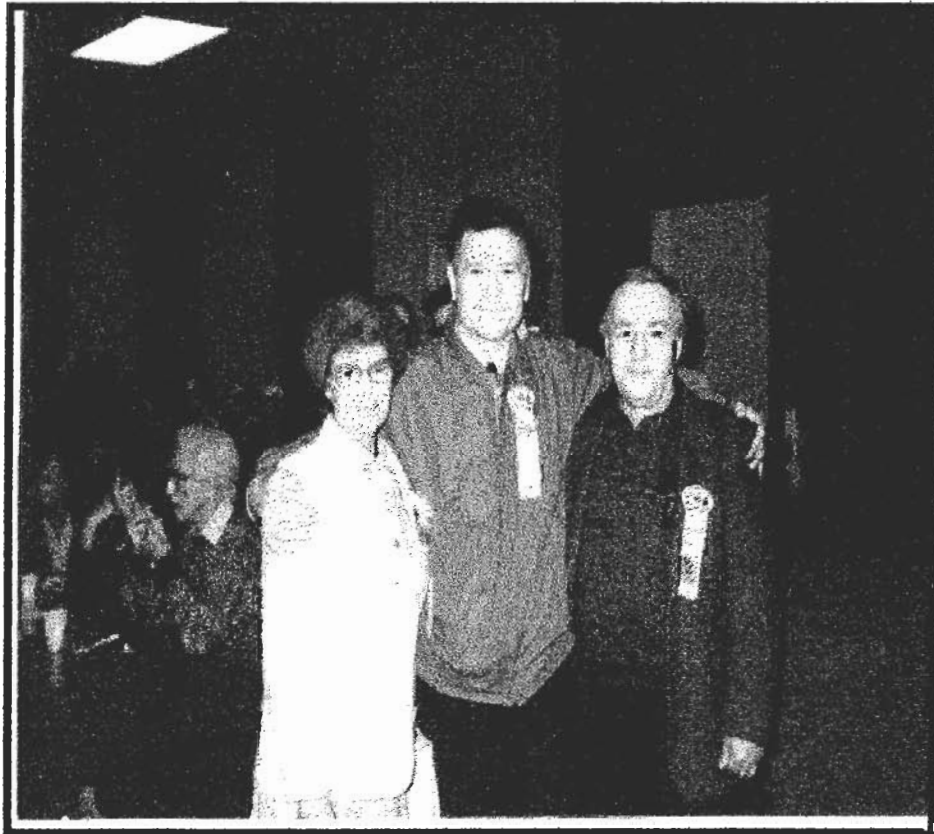
We enjoyed the company of Nick and Dina Auriti from Brandon over the years. Nick and Dina were both excellent translators. We had many good visits back and forth. I'm sorry to say that Nick passed away on August 3rd, 2002. We miss Nick, but have continued to see Dina quite often.



(Rita and Elizabeth Farnetti, Bob McElroy, Gino, Ruth McElroy, Dana and Nick Auriti at D. Day Dodger's Reunion, Orilla Ontario, 1990)

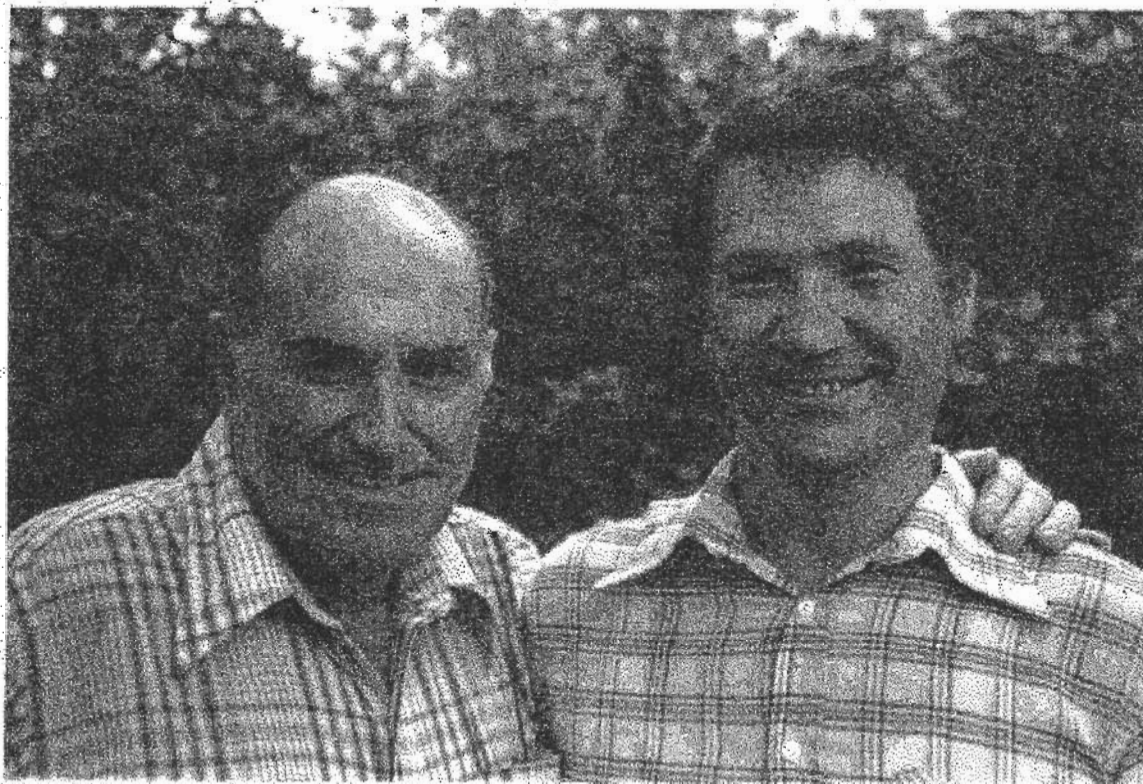


(Muriel Worley, Gino and Vic Worley, D Day Dodger's Reunion)



(Friends Lillian, Gino and Ernie Kane, Orillia, Ontario, 1990)

Since I have been reunited with Gino, he has worked in many interesting countries including, Morocco, Venezuela, Zaire, Zambia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He is an Engineer working in the construction operations of a large oil refinery. Gino's home is in the city Manfredonia, located on the Adriatic side of Italy.



(Myself and Gino reunited in Miniota, 1980)

It was over sixty years ago, during the Second World War that I first met this little boy, who would later be named Gino Farnetti. Gino was the first child that I initially fed, clothed and taught to read. Most importantly, in a war torn country, with no family around, he gave me a sense of purpose each day.

Gino taught me responsibility, and helped prepare me for my future role as father to seven children. But together, as bombs fired around us, we traveled along in my army truck, sharing what I have learnt are the most important parts of life; to live, love and laugh. I later spent years waiting, but always had the faith to know that I would find my “little soldier boy” again.

Waif of war visits rescuer

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. (CP) — Childhood is a painful fog to Gino Farnetti, but one thing is clear — he owes his survival to Canadian compassion.

It was wartime in Italy. There was hunger and bombs. At five years of age, Farnetti was parentless: his father was dead, his mother too confused to look after him.

When a corps of Canadian soldiers found young Farnetti at the side of a road, sitting on the rim of a 10-metre shell hole, they adopted him as their own.

For a year the Canadians, most notably soldier Lloyd Oliver, cared for Farnetti — feeding, helping and teaching him.

Eventually, an Italian family was found to raise the boy.

But it was the Canadian soldiers to whom Farnetti says he owes his life.

That was 46 years ago. Farnetti recently came to Canada to visit his foster parent again.

The meeting brought pain as well as affection. Speaking through a translator, Farnetti, 51, had to stop several times to gain his composure as tears welled up in his brown eyes.

"I apologize for the emotion taking over," said Farnetti. "I am having a very difficult time expressing from within what I really feel I owe everything to the soldiers who saved my life."

For Oliver, the soldier who took Farnetti under his wing in 1944, the reunion was with a long lost family member.

Oliver told of the day in late June when he saw Farnetti by the side of the road.

"He was sitting on a bomb



Canadian Press

TOGETHER AGAIN: Lloyd Oliver, left, and Gino Farnetti

crater," said Oliver. "All he had on was a pair of shorts."

An Italian woman came by, and begged the Canadians to take Farnetti with them.

"She hardly had enough to feed her own family," Oliver remembered. "So we threw him in and away we went."

Before his adoption, Farnetti had to fend for himself sleeping inside an unattended army truck — shells exploding around him.

His memories of his time with the Canadians are dim. But there are things he could never forget — like the toys the soldiers gave him.

"I had a bicycle, and not every kid during the war was fortunate enough to have a bicycle. I also remember a little wooden car I played with very very much."

As the end of the war approached in 1945, the Cana-

dians were called to add extra strength to forces liberating Holland. Oliver wanted to take Farnetti along but was ordered against doing so. It was a painful separation.

They placed him in the care of a U.S. soldier who looked after the youngster for a few months before finding an Italian home for him.

In 1980, Oliver and Farnetti were reunited for the first time when Oliver's family lived in Winnipeg.

This recent visit was just the second time they'd been together since the war.

Farnetti said of the trip to Canada: "I am still looking for a post in the fog," attempting to piece together memories of his trying childhood.

"The feeling is great to be back with people who helped me."

(Newspaper articles written about Gino's visit in 1990)



Worldwide search

Wartime waif finds befriending soldier

By Carol Picard
Tribune Staff Writer

Gino Farnetti and Lloyd Oliver were friends for only nine wartime months, but spent more than 30 years searching for each other.

That search ended at Mr. Oliver's Minnota home last weekend when Mr. Farnetti was reunited with the Canadian soldier who befriended him as Allied troops marched on Rome during the Second World War.

"How can I tell you what I'm feeling," Mr. Oliver said softly, staring at Mr. Farnetti, a tall man with graying hair. "He's been like a son all of these years, a son I barely knew."

"I always knew I would find him again. I just didn't know it would take this long."

Gino Farnetti was five years old when Canadian soldiers found him huddled in a shell hole just outside the Italian village of...

Oliver and Gino Farnetti reunited in Minnota, Minnesota. Picture on right was taken in 1944. See WARTIME, Page 5

35 years afterwards, war waif 'comes home' to meet saviors

By Dale de Gagne
Toronto Star special

MINIOTA, Man. — Lloyd Oliver and his group of Canadian soldiers found five-year-old Gino Ferneti huddled in a shell hole and wearing an old pair of British army shorts.

The soldiers were part of the allied force marching north toward Rome in June 1944. Young Gino, a cigarette-smoking war waif, would spend the next nine months with the Canadians, moving when they moved and sharing the rugged life of men at war.

This summer, more than 35 years later, Ferneti and Oliver, who was like a father to the boy, were reunited on Oliver's farm near this Manitoba village 125 miles west of Winnipeg.

"I was very glad to see him," Oliver, now 57, told Star, the emotion clear in his voice.

"It was just like one of the boys coming on home. I know, because we have seven of our own."

Said Ferneti, now 42: "I wish there were more men like Lloyd in the world."

"It was like coming home to paradise to see him finally. He and the other Canadian men who saved me, they are the only good things I remember about the war."

Life aged by war

When the men found Gino, who's now married and the father of an 18-month-old daughter, he was all alone. His father was dead and his mother was in a mental hospital. Like thousands of other youngsters, their lives shattered and aged by war, Gino hung around the army camps,



STAR PHOTO

Way they were: Oliver with five-year-old Gino, in a photo taken during the Allied advance toward Rome in 1944.

"He used to travel back and forth to Cassino with the German troops," Oliver recalls. "We were surprised to find him in that hole. We didn't know what to do with him, so we took him along."

Gino never cried nor fussed, although he was upset when gun and mortar fire would wake him at night. He used to sleep in the back of a truck.

He shared the routine — and the dangers — of life

with the Canadian soldiers. Oliver made the lad a pair of pants and found a seamstress to sew him a jacket.

"If I was naughty through the day they would save up all my punishments and only slap me once on the bum just before I went to bed," Ferneti remembers. "And they made me quit smoking."

One day in August 1944, during a heatwave, Oliver started to dig a hole he plan-

ned to fill with water so Gino could splash around. Gino ran away and didn't come back until he was shown what the hole was for, Oliver recalls.

"I guess he'd seen too many holes dug and men put in them."

When the Canadians returned home, they left Gino with a U.S. army sergeant who arranged for the boy to stay with a young Italian woman about to be married.

Oliver never forgot the boy and often wondered what had become of him.

Three years ago, Oliver met a former GI who remembered the names of Gino's foster parents. Oliver flew to Italy and met the parents, but Ferneti was living in Morocco. Oliver returned home and wrote Ferneti.

A long wait

"As soon as I got the letter, I started making plans to see these men again," said Ferneti, a draftsman. But he was transferred to Venezuela and his wife was pregnant so it took until this summer for them to come to Canada for the reunion.

Ferneti, who will shortly move back to Italy, where he and Oliver are already planning to meet again, was pleasantly shocked to find about 15 of the former Canadian soldiers at the farm here for the reunion party.

"I wanted all these years to find the men who saved me," said Ferneti. "I was very surprised and excited that Lloyd found me."

"I always knew I would find him again," said Oliver.

Sunday Star Toronto Aug. 24/80

Miniota Man.
Canada. Box 283

Romano. June 30. 05

Dear Gino Reta & Elizabetta:

I got those Books from Julia yesterday. So thought I'd send you one. I hope you think it is O.K. It's what I could remember after 60 years. It will be a story for people to read after we are gone. I sometimes wonder how we were able to do all we did, and yet be so busy with other work. I think it was because we ^{had} the Work Shop. As they really did help a lot. When we were busy. Trucking. I'll thank you again for the very nice letter you send first part of June. It was a nice letter.

I'm sure mine print as nice.

We are still getting lots of rain. We have had nearly 8" since June 1st. That's a lot of rain for this part of the country. We just sent a copy of the Book to Vic + Ernie I'll send one to Bob Woods. If he isn't too good he may enjoy reading it.

Beck was down to see the Doctor yesterday. As she has been having Head Aches He gave her some Pills and told her to take it easy for awhile. As for myself I'm not too bad. Don't walk too fast any more. But get there soon or later. I find it hard to breath if it's too humid out.

Yesterday was July 1st -
 A Canadian ~~Holiday~~ Holiday. All the Army Veterans were honoured yesterday. It was a good get

together. But again it rained.

Some had a short program.

He phoned the other day.

He isn't feeling too good. So

Bert & him had a long talk on

the Telephone. Today is a nice

day. Sun is shining. And it

is nice out. I'm afraid I haven't

any more news for you Gen's.

So I'll say Bye Bye for now.

Love to all.

As ever.

Lloyd & Beth
& Family.