

Cyr, Brian CD (b. 1945)

Métis veteran and elder Albert Brian Cyr was awarded the Order of the Métis Nation in June 2005 and the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal in September 2012.

Brian was born on May 3, 1945, one of eleven children of Ulysse Albert Napoleon Cyr (b. 1917) and Susi Geisbrecht (b. 1922). His paternal grandparents were Honore Cyr (b. 1885) and Eleanore Courchene (b. 1896). His great-grandparents were Jean-Baptiste Cyr (b. 1848 at McKenzie River) and Madeleine Perreault dite Morin (b. 1868).

Brian joined the Army in 1961 as a 16 year-old and went to the Royal Ordnance Corps Training School in Montreal. Twice he won the best athlete award while there and was asked to volunteer as a Para-rigger posted to #28 Canadian Ordnance Depot in Camp Shilo. He earned his Paratrooper Wings in 1963. During a parachuting accident in 1968 he broke vertebra in his back and was hospitalized for seven weeks at Deer Lodge. He was retrained in an Air Force trade and during 1969-1973 served with 407 Squadron in Comox, BC, this squadron worked with NORAD on anti-submarine warfare in the Pacific. The ASW Team was stationed in Alaska; San Diego, Hawaii, Australia, Fiji, Yellowknife and PEI. He was then posted to NATO in Germany from 1973 to 1977.



“Three Amigos” in their vests at an MMF Annual General Assembly,
left to right, Lawrence Barkwell, Larry Haag and Brian Cyr
Photo by Vivian Cyr

In June 1977, he again broke his back working on an ejection seat of a CF 104 Jet. After spinal fusion and wearing a steel cage he returned to duty and finished his tour in Germany in 1977. He was then posted to Moose Jaw, working on the CT 104 aircraft used by the Snowbirds, 431 Air Demonstration Squadron.

Brian received the Canadian Decoration in 1973 and the NATO Special Service Medal after his release in 1996. He has also received the Corps of Commissionaire Long Service Medal (1996).

In 1965, Brian married to Vivian Sheppard. They have three children: Jeff who is a past Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres; Babette who is Facilitator Exams at Red River College; and Margaret who works for Manitoba Wills and Trusts.

After being released from the forces on a medical pension Brian and his family moved to Winnipeg where he attended college and attained a Business Administration diploma and also took psychology, anthropology and sociology at the University of Winnipeg. In the 1980s Brian worked for Statistics Canada and was Western Director Canada Census in 1985. He then joined the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires and became Operations Manager with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer for Manitoba and North West Ontario. He then joined Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) 2001 to 2006 working as a Canadian Forces Recruiter. Subsequently, he ran the Central Membership Registry Office for the MMF for several years.

Brian has served as President of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association Manitoba Chapter (1999-2001) then became President of the National Métis Veterans Association Manitoba, elected Vice-President of the National Métis Veterans Association in 2005 and then became the President of the National Métis Veterans Association. Brian was Ambassador at the Métis Pavilion of Folklorama for many years. Brian has served as both Secretary and Vice-President of the St. Norbert Parish la Barrière Métis Council.

Brian participates in Métis cultural activities. He is an accomplished square-dancer, jigger, beader, finger-weaver of Métis sashes, and Red River Cart builder. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the St. Norbert Foundation and has been a member of the St. Norbert Heritage Foundation.

Brian is the author of *Métis Veterans of Manitoba: From Buffalo to Battlefields*. (Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation, 2010); and with Larry Haag authored: *St. Norbert Manitoba and World War I*. (St. Norbert: Authors, 2012).

Brian is the great-great grandnephew of Pierre Cyr a well-known voyageur. Pierre Cyr (b. July 12, 1835, St. Boniface)¹ is famous as a voyageur with the Franklin Expedition as well as later working as a steersman for the Treaty 8 Métis Scrip Commission. In 1899, this commission travelled on the Athabasca and Peace Rivers in two scows and a York Boat. Cyr was steersman for the York Boat.

¹ Pierre was the son of Louis Cyr (b. 1795) and Catherine Martineau, the daughter of Amboise Martineau and Charlotte. Pierre was the brother of Brian Cyr's great-great grandfather Jean Baptiste Cyr (b. 1825 at St. Boniface).



Scrip Commission boat leaving Fort McMurray to ascend the Athabasca River.
Pierre Cyr in the bow of the boat.

Pierre married Marie-Anne Lagimodière, the daughter of Romain Lagimodière and Marie Vaudry on February 5, 1861 at St. Boniface. They had two girls and a boy. He then married Angelique Klyne, the daughter of Michel Klyne and Suzanne Lafrance on February 8, 1869 at St. Norbert. They had no children. On January 26, 1885 Pierre married Eliza Poitras, the daughter of Pierre Poitras and Marie Bruyere at St. François Xavier.



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