

# REMEMBERING MONTGOMERY.

## A History of Montgomery Place, 1945-1956

by JOAN CHAMP

The neighbourhood of Montgomery Place on the west side of Saskatoon, has been described as "more like to a resort village than an urban residential subdivision."<sup>1</sup> Developed in the mid-1940's under a federal government plan to create housing for returning World War II veterans and their families, Montgomery Place today retains its unique rural character. Some of the original half-acre lots--designed to allow veterans to augment their incomes through the tending of garden plots, fruit trees, chickens, apiaries, and so forth--remain. More significantly, the strong sense of community that characterized this development during its early years, still exists in Montgomery Place today. Although they are located next to industrial complexes such as Intercontinental Packers and the AGPRO Grain Elevator, people living in this west side oasis would no doubt agree with the statement made by one of the neighbourhood's first residents: "Montgomery Place is a great place to raise your kids."<sup>2</sup>

### **Founding**

Montgomery Place is named after Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery (1887-1976), a British military leader given the title 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein for his great victory at the Battle of El Alamein in North Africa in 1942. The founding of Montgomery Place was directly related to the Veterans' Land Act, enacted in 1942. Early in the war, the Canadian government realized that accommodation would have to be found for the thousands of returning soldiers, sailors and airmen--most of them young men recently married or about to be married.

The Veterans' Land Act was a measure to assist veterans of World War II

...to settle in Canada as full-time farmers, part-time farmers (small holders) and commercial fishermen. Assistance [was] also available to veterans who wished to act as their own contractors in the construction of their homes.<sup>3</sup>

Grants and loans were to enable qualified veterans to settle as small agricultural holders, coupled with other employment. A veteran was eligible if he was honorably discharged, met specific service requirements, and



*Lt. General Bernard Law Montgomery in 1942.  
(From Nigel Hamilton's Monty; The Making of  
a General, 1887-1942, London: Hamish Hamilton,  
1981).*