



The Township of Essa

*Congratulates*

**JOHN MCCARTHY & ALL OF THIS YEARS  
INDUCTEES TO THE HALL OF FAME**  
Your Dedication & Commitment makes our  
communities an extraordinary place to live.  
**Council, Staff & Residents of Essa**

**Congratulations to  
John Wayne McCarthy  
and All Hall of Fame Inductees!!**

Thank you for all the years of volunteering,  
you make this community a wonderful place to live



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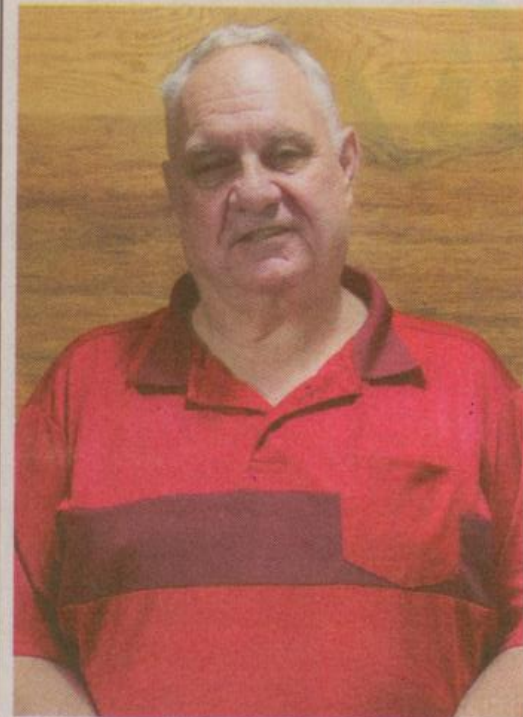
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# South Simcoe Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee JOHN WAYNE MCCARTHY

## “Santa’s Helper” John Wayne McCarthy Spreads Joy Wherever He Goes

By Laurie Wallace-Lynch



\*Photo submitted

“I have been “helping” out Santa in town for 35 years, so when I’m in the Santa Claus parade, I know most of the kids by name and even their parents, because I grew up here and everyone knows I was a volunteer firefighter in Angus,” smiles John Wayne McCarthy. “Children ask me ‘how come you know my mommy or daddy’s name?’ The worst question I get asked is “Are my mommy and daddy coming back from Afghanistan for Christmas? That’s a tough one. Mostly I get asked for computer games or some new gadget—I’m not up to date on all the technology; I just make the list!”

Being stationed far away from home is something McCarthy is familiar with. Originally from Halifax, John’s dad was in the military and the family was stationed in Germany. In 1963, John McCarthy joined the military and did a peace keeping mission in Cyprus, returned to Germany as a tank driver and then went to England where he took a course to drive a newly-engineered tank.

“Serving in the military made my life better as I got to see how others live and I came to appreciate what we have here in

Canada,” states McCarthy. “It was then that the idea first came to me to volunteer to help people.”

McCarthy worked in the ammunitions depot at Base Borden. After he left the military, McCarthy became a volunteer fireman.

“I was a volunteer fireman for 38 years and four months!” laughs McCarthy. “I was a Captain at Station Two in Angus, out of Essa, until my retirement two years ago. I assisted in three baby deliveries, assisted with shocking two people back to life and wore two heart pins on my uniform. Firefighting gets in your blood—it’s a great job. The best part is all of the people you have helped and when people stop you on the street and thank us for the work we are doing. The worst part of the job was when I was called to fight a fire at my own daughter’s home in June of 2011. She passed away at age 54. It was very hard, but you persevere—it’s part of the job.”

Always ready to jump in to offer assistance, McCarthy was also a volunteer with St. John’s Ambulance and taught CPR and first aid courses. McCarthy spent a week assisting the military during the 1998

ice storm in Brockville. He was awarded the Order of St. John in 1992 and has received numerous metals for his service in the military, and was named Citizen of the Year for Angus by the Angus Lion’s Club.

“I am a 46 year life member of the Angus Legion and I am the Zone Service Officer,” explains McCarthy. “We assist members with pensions and initiate paperwork and help people in need. It’s very gratifying to help someone. As part of my Legion work, I was able to help with the papal visit of Pope John Paul.”

John McCarthy and his wife Geraldine will celebrate their 46th year anniversary on October 23rd. The couple has three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

At this time of year, McCarthy is busy prepping Santa’s bright red Jolly Old St. Nick suit to be ready for his appearance at Angus Legion events as well as at the annual Special Olympics Bowling fundraising event for handicapped children.

“I work for free for Santa because I love doing it,” smiles Santa’s helper a.k.a. McCarthy. “That’s what volunteering is all about.”