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Former mayor rubs shoulders with royalty

By JULIE SLACK
 Staff

A short chat with Prince Charles last week left former Mississauga mayor Ron Searle, well, feeling like a king.

Searle was on hand with thousands of others at Varsity Stadium in Toronto as the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall presented the Toronto Scottish Regiment — Searle's old corps — with new colours.

Searle, 90, spent several minutes chatting with Prince Charles, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the Toronto Scottish Regiment. He said the event, and their conversation, were very special.

"It went perfectly. It was a day I'll never forget," he said. "I was very impressed with him."

They chatted about Searle's past experiences with Britain's royal family. Searle was part of the colour duty when the Queen Mother and King George first presented the colours to the Regiment in May 1939. He told Prince Charles that he, as part of the Toronto Scottish Regiment, was among the first Canadian troops to arrive in the UK during World War II, landing at Gourock, Scotland, on Dec. 17, 1939.

Later, they formed the King's Guard at Buckingham Palace. Searle said The Prince of Wales was particularly interested in hearing his stories about his time guarding Buckingham Palace.

He shared his memories of being on duty in the guard room, when the Queen Mother was calling to her daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret. They were "precocious teenagers who ran around,"



Former Mississauga Mayor Ron Searle (right) speaks with Prince Charles during a reception for His Highness last week at Varsity Stadium in Toronto.

he said with a chuckle, adding those memories seem like yesterday.

During the First World War, the

regiment was known as the 75th (Mississauga) Battalion. It became the Toronto Scottish in the early 1920s.

Searle served in WWII until Sept. 1945. He was shot three times in the leg by German snipers.

Paul B. Searle, Ron