

Continued

"The air force at the time was opening the trade of photography for women and that's what I told him I wanted to be."

Weeks later, on July 27, 1943, she got her reply by telegram. It asked her to report to her posting in Calgary — as a photographer.

Thus began a career in photography that spanned almost five decades until her retirement in 1988 from The Intelligencer.

Chambers spent her last 18 months of

air force service with the medical division in Rockcliffe, near Ottawa, that was responsible for rehabilitating personnel who had suffered injuries or plane crashes or had been in prison camps.

She was released from the air force in 1945 and married Percy Chambers, a fellow photographer. The couple moved to Belleville and opened a photography stu-

dio, Alicia Photos, on Front Street.

Chambers left the studio to raise a family of six children.

She joined the Intell in 1958 to run its new photo engraving department. Her duties, however, extended far beyond that department over the next 30 years.

She loaded film, took advertising and news photographs, taught photography to

reporters, developed their film, and worked on many special projects and publications.

"Whatever was necessary, I did it. I took thousands of pictures that appeared in print somewhere."

Chambers enjoyed her years with the newspaper.

"Everybody got along really well and worked well together. But we had to work hard too," she said.

Chambers doesn't take as many photographs now.

"It's not the same feeling of achievement when things are so simplified in comparison to back then when you had to set lenses and adjust the lighting manually ... but I'm always looking at people to see their best angle because it's such a habit."

Nearing retirement, Chambers started taking art lessons with the idea of launching a second career. She has been involved with the Belleville Art Association ever since and has taken courses from various artists.

"I have taken oil and watercolours. I prefer watercolours because they are faster to do and they don't smell, although you still have to be very exacting," she said.

Chambers said she still gets a lot of satisfaction from producing a nice piece of art.

"When I have time, I like to sit and produce a painting. But I'm not a slave to painting."

She has been involved with the 418 Wing for almost 40 years, both on the executive and doing public relations and was recognized this past May with an Award of Merit plaque from the Air Force Association of Canada.

She is the Wing's awards chairman and looks after the Humanitarian of the Year Award that has been presented annually since 1981. This year's winner will be announced at its Charter Night banquet Nov. 25 at the Belleville Shrine Club.

Chambers also belongs to the local Legion and has served as poppy chairman for many years. She spent many hours this week counting money from the poppy boxes and the sale of wreaths.

She said she was honoured to escort the Silver Cross mother's representative, Helen Henderson, whose husband died while serving as a peacekeeper, for the Nov. 11 Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph.

"I'm also extremely proud to participate in every Remembrance service at Sir James Whitney School. It's important students don't forget the sacrifices of the men and women who served this country."