

Masons salute World War II vets “It’s all too easy for us to take our freedom for granted”

April 15, 2000

PLANTAGENET -- World War II veterans Garrett Ryan and Harvey Clemens were honoured recently with “For The Cause of Good” awards by the Masons of Plantagenet Masonic Lodge No. 186.

Bob Cleary, current Master of Plantagenet Lodge, was assisted by John Clemens and Lowell Blaney in paying tribute to Garrett and Harvey. The veterans were each presented with a plaque in appreciation of their service to Canada at the annual Ladies’ Night Dinner Dance held at the South Plantagenet community

hall.

“It is all too easy for us to take our freedom for granted and in this millennium year the lodge members felt that it was timely to pay tribute to our veterans,” the Masons stated.

Garrett Ryan joined the Royal Canadian Army in 1941, and was sent to England in June of 1942. He was then posted in France with the 4th Division, 5th Anti-Tank Regiment, 3rd Battery, where he sustained a shrapnel wound to the leg. After spending two weeks in a British hospital, Ryan returned to his own unit

and went on through Belgium, Holland and Germany.

When the war ended, Ryan returned to America on the *Queen Elizabeth*, landing in New York City where he met Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Released from the army December 8, 1945, he returned by train to Fournier, where he married Nina Nicholson, took up farming and raised two daughters. Garrett Ryan was Master of Plantagenet Masonic Lodge in 1948 and 1975, and remains a prominent member of the community.

Harvey Clemens joined the Governor General’s Foot Guards in August of 1940. While receiving basic training in Canada his unit was changed from an infantry regiment to an armoured regiment, and Clemens went overseas in 1942 to receive tank training, after which he was shipped to France.

On his second day in France, Clemens’ tank was hit and destroyed by enemy fire, but he was rescued and carried on in another tank. Amazingly, this would not be the last time: while in action through Belgium, Holland and Germany, Clemens had three other

tanks blasted out from under him.

After the war, Harvey Clemens remained in Europe with the occupying troops and, like Ryan, returned to Canada on the *Queen Elizabeth*, following his release from the army in 1947. He married Marjorie Wilson, became a farmer in the Riceville area, and raised a large family. Clemens is also a well known and respected member of the community.

With the knowledge that both veterans are humble men, Bob Cleary asked their daughters to escort them to the front of the hall and assist in the presentations.

In honouring the veterans, Cleary noted the irony of the fact that while one man served in a tank regiment, the other served in an anti-tank regiment.



(photo submitted by Lowell Blaney)

At the recent Plantagenet Masonic Lodge Ladies’ Night Dinner Dance, World War II veterans Garrett Ryan and Harvey Clemens were honoured for their services to Canada. Pictured left to right are Garrett Ryan and his daughter, Diane Ryan Shane, Harvey Clemens and his daughter, Karen Hovey.