

Lest we forget, every veteran is a hero

REMEMBRANCE DAY NOV. 7/08

My brother, my husband and I decided that it was time to tell this probably very typical story of a World War II veteran for two reasons.

First, although Dad was not a front line soldier, his life was definitely in peril on many occasions, making it clear that every member of the armed forces deserves to be called a hero no matter in what capacity they served or are serving.

Second, stories and experiences have a tendency to disappear if we, the generations following, do not make an effort to listen and take notes. We are, after all, a compilation of the knowledge and endurance and the suffering of our ancestors and if we are not aware of their experiences, how can we know ourselves? It would be so easy to forget unless each generation really tunes into the previous one.

So, with that in mind, we have tried to put down on paper the stories we heard from our Father as he told them over the years. We have tried to be as accurate as possible, but in some cases we may not have the correct date or exact location as the memory dims over the years.

Like many in the year 1940, Ken Winter enlisted voluntarily in the army, however, not before marrying Ethel Joice on August 6, 1940. By the end of that year, he was doing basic training in Peterborough and



Lance Corporal Ken Winter in Italy during World War II

Kingston. Incidentally, Dad was one of three Winter brothers, the others being Jim and Art, who also enlisted.

Dad left Canada in 1942 and as a member of the 1st Canadian Armored Corp., Heavy Recovery Section. He sailed for England in a troop ship which also carried equipment

including tanks in the hold. The crossing over the North Atlantic was very rough and stormy and the chains meant to hold the tanks stable broke free. The tank crews were sent into the hold to re-chain them but in the process four or five men were crushed to death.

Dad spent a while in England, where his

convoy moved out to the Cliffs of Dover. Here he made his first encounter with the enemy. In a convoy, all vehicles must keep a good space between them and for good reason. As they were coming around a bend in the cliff a German fighter plane

suddenly appeared. It strafed the convoy and once the damages were assessed, it was discovered that the bullets went between each truck. The fighter did not hit a thing.

By 1943, Dad was on his way to Sicily by boat. They arrived at the harbour but were told to remain on the ship in their compartments which held four men plus their personal possessions. By this time it was nightfall and pitch black.

The ships sent up barrage balloons. Then the Germans started bombing the ships in the harbour. Some of the bombs fell four to five feet away from the ship. The resulting concussions caused the ship to lift into the air, and then, of course, come back down again. In dad's compartment the movement caused all the duffel bags to be scattered everywhere and much to the soldiers' amusement, one man was sure he had been hit. He was — by a duffel bag.

After another very close encounter with a German fighter plane, once the men were let off the ship, they were ordered to move through Sicily with the Allied Forces.

They then landed in Italy at the time of a very prolonged stalemate in the fighting. The Allied forces only had occupation of the beachhead. The men were under

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