



Dawn patrol

Bill Smiley



As the two great wars of this century move gradually out of memory and into the pages of history books, our annual Remembrance Day recurs with alarming rapidity, for the veteran.

There was nothing "great" about either of those wars, except for their size. Yet, the old sweats call their war the Great War, and the middle-aged sweats have to settle for the title World War II.

The name of the day has been changed from Armistice Day to Remembrance Day. A good change. But I'm glad they haven't changed the date. November 11th is an ideal time to remember. It's usually cold, wet and gloomy. Even the skies seem to weep at the folly of man.

It's difficult to conceive of hearing those hallowed clichés: "fallen comrades", "In Flanders fields the poppies grow...", "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall remember them...", "lest we forget..."; on a hot day in July.

But I'm not being sardonic when I refer to hallowed clichés. They are clichés, but they are also hallowed, and they mean a great deal to the men — and many women — who gather once a year to remember that the cream of Canadian young men, in two generations, was skimmed off by a brutal fate on faraway fields.

It's hard to believe in these days of the burning of draft cards, of draft dodging, that in those two great wars, Canadians went not

only willingly, but in most cases eagerly, to fight in a war 3,000 miles away, against an unknown enemy, for hazy reasons.

At least with hindsight, the reasons were hazy. But at the time, they were crystal clear. The Kaiser was out to destroy the British Empire. Good enough. Hitler was out to stomp across the civilized world in jackboots. Clear. Let's stop the sods.

We didn't fight to subdue anyone, as the Russians, Germans, Japs, Italians have done. We weren't out to conquer new territories. We were out to prevent someone from subduing us, or conquering our territory.

In both wars, there was a minority who "joined up" for less than heroic reasons; to get away from a nagging wife; to avoid the law; to escape a boring job. But in the first great war, Canadians literally flocked to the colors, swamping recruiting offices.

In that war, they showed a dash and élan and fortitude, once in action, that made them respected throughout Europe, and especially among the enemy.

And in the second, despite the disillusion of the depression, despite the cynicism of the Thirties — perhaps the most anti-war generation of this century — they did it again. And once again they proved themselves, beyond a doubt, as doughty warriors on land, sea and in the air.

Personally, I didn't exactly flock to the

colors. Both my brothers had jumped in early. That didn't bother me. I was a product of the cynical Thirties, a university student, and I laughed at them as they went through endless months of dull training, while the war in Europe was a complete stalemate.

But a time came. The Germans broke through. Civilization, as we knew it, was in danger of being tramped into the mud by the jackboots.

That was when thousands of us stopped sneering at the "phony" war and took the oath.

Looking back, I shake my head wryly as I remember how desperate we were to get killed. It was a traumatic experience to be washed out of air-crew, where your chances of being killed were fairly good, and wind up washing dishes at a manning pool, safe as a sausage.

We knew what we were doing, in some instinctual way. We wanted to come to grips. That's why I feel a certain pity for the conscripts of the so-called free world, in these days. They are forced to go to war against an unknown enemy, for something they don't believe in, amidst an atmosphere of corruption and downright lies.

To all veterans: don't remember the blood and mud and sweat and brutality and fear. Just remember all the good times and the good friends. You'll never have them again.

No glum chums here . . .

After three performances in Acton—two at the high school and one at the Fall Fair—members of the Trampchamps, a spectacular trampoline act, rate people in Acton and district as the "happiest people we've performed for."

"We play at night clubs, fall fairs and exhibitions all across the province," one member of the troupe told the Free Press, "and we have never seen happier people than you have here in Acton."

Obviously warmed by the enthusiastic reception they received from high school students during and after their Friday performance here, the Trampchamps were partial but they were also serious about their statements.

It isn't the first time we have heard this stated by performers who come to Acton, but it is the first time we have heard it said with such sincerity.

There obviously is a happy ingredient amongst the people of this

town and district when they are being entertained. We obviously aren't so sophisticated that a talented performance won't draw warm applause, despite continuous exposure to some of the best and the worst acts in the world on the TV screen.

It is a characteristic that performers can sense and appreciate as well as being one which we would hope the people here can hold onto along with an allied sense of humor which makes living here pleasant and often humorous.

Free Press Editorial Page

A fine representative . . .

We are all prone to criticize politicians whether on the local, provincial or national scale, so when we are offered the opportunity to pass on a good word about the men or women who help govern this country we intend to do so, no matter how suspect it may look.

There is nothing suspect about the efforts of Halton M.P. Rud Whiting for his constituents and we feel he should be commended for the interest he has shown in the county grass roots.

Just last week Mr. Whiting was appointed to the very important post of vice-chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, after serving on it only two years. A non-partisan body headed by Wellington M.P. Alf Hales of the Progressive Conservatives, it was this committee which unearthed facts about the excessive spending on the aircraft carrier Bonaventure refit.

The 21 member committee probes into all expenditures where the Auditor General finds money spent unproductively or allocated to interests which in his view, may not be in the taxpayers' interests.

It is a measure of the man that Rud Whiting should be appointed to this post, replacing M.P. Tom Lefevre of Pontiac, Quebec. But constituents in this part of his riding are not really surprised, because Mr. Whiting has always demonstrated a readiness to represent Halton in the interests of his constituents, and now his powers take on broader scope, and his talents used to better advantage.

Through Rud Whiting's efforts, a local woman Mrs. Alex Mann, has been appointed as a claims agent of the Unemployment Insurance Commission in Acton. Mr. Whiting was alerted to the fact that unemployed people in Acton often had to travel 35 miles to

Waterloo to apply for unemployment insurance benefits. He succeeded in ameliorating the condition by the appointment of Mrs. Mann. Applications can now be filled out in Acton.

Reading where Keates Organ has been hit hard by the 10 per cent U.S. surcharge, he contacted the Acton firm advising them they could be eligible for grants of up to two-thirds of the amount the surcharge is costing.

There are only two recent examples where his interest in all parts of the riding. We know of many other causes he has battled for in the bureaucratic jungle at Ottawa and there are many people who can testify to his personal intervention when they got into difficulties.

We believe in recognizing merit when we see it and when our interests are being well looked after, it gives us assurance that parliamentary democracy has hope despite all the detractors.

Show confidence . . .

According to The Financial Post another decline in mortgage rates appears to be a good prospect for home buyers in early 1972. Mortgage rates have already come down about a quarter of a point since the Bank of Canada and the chartered banks cut their loan rates. Mortgage specialists expect only a marginal decline for the rest of the year.

Larger amounts of money should be available for mortgage lending early in 1972 and rates could come down appreciably, the Financial Post says, noting at the same time that an upturn in the economy could generate more demand for business and other general loans. This could divert some of the funds going into mortgages.

The expected upturn in the economy may have been delayed by pessimistic statements of certain political leaders because the consumer seems to be in a confident mood. For instance, major appliance sales reached a record level in the third quarter of the year, and to

date are running 15 per cent ahead of the disappointing level of 1970. Outlook for the balance of the year, said one prominent manufacturer, is extremely encouraging.

Corporate profits, indications show, will be about 10 per cent ahead of 1970's showing. Although subject to the uncertainties of future U.S. economic policies and their bearing on the Canadian economy, the outlook appears to be a continuous earnings revival.

While some politicians see only the gloomy side of the economy, there is a strong indication that Canada may have a record year in some segments of the economy. And once again it may be the Canadian consumer who sparks the drive back to a stable and strong economy that cuts huge gaps in unemployment.

It was consumer confidence that took the economy back during the recession of the early 60's and it looks like they will repeat the performance.

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Don Ryder, Editor

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From the editor's desk . . .

Did you know that the average working woman is 37 years of age and nearly a third of the distaff side who venture outside the home to work are over the age of 45?

These are facts from a small brochure distributed by the Ontario Department of Labour entitled, "Who are Ontario's Working Women?"

The brochure reveals that there were 1,030,000 women in Ontario's labor force in 1970, compared with 717,000 in 1963. That means that one out of every three workers in Ontario is a woman.

Thirty-eight percent of all Canadian working women live in Ontario. Largest age group working outside the home is 20-24. They constitute 59 per cent of the total population of that age. Next are the 45-54 year-olds who have 47 per cent working.

Sixty-three per cent of Ontario's working women are married—27 percent single, ten per cent are widowed, separated or divorced.

Clerical work attracts the greatest majority of working women—32.8 percent. Services and recreation make up 21.4 percent, professional and technical 13.7 percent and craftsmen and production workers 12.1 percent. Three per cent are in a managerial bracket while 3.3 percent are farmers or farm workers, 8.5 percent in sales.

Did you know the more educated a woman is the more likely she is to be in the labor force? Forty-six per cent of all women with some university education or university degree, or a complete high school education, are working. Thirty-three per cent of women with some high school education work while 23 percent of all women with an elementary education or less are working.

Interesting thing about all these statistics is that it bears out the contention of gentlemen who wore black derbies and handlebar mustaches and read under gas lights that if women were educated they'd start challenging men in all facets of living. Obviously they were right in their assumptions.

The lesson for men in all this is, of course, that women's liberation movement began when Eve started questioning Adam.

Fool that he was—Adam answered and woman started using some of man's knowledge to start her own struggle to escape from the dominance of men.

Needless to say the struggle continues. If the men don't wake up we will be home doing the cooking and having the children while the women wear the bowler hats and try to cultivate handlebar mustaches.

Kidding, of course.
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Perhaps it was a coincidence but did you notice the 75 years ago column last week where Milton town council instructed the constables of 1896 to enforce the by-law relating to the peace of the town?

Shades of 1971!
There was a general complaint of the "increasing lawlessness among the young men of the town," particularly at the CNR station at night, and a general decision derived at to back up the chief constable in any steps he might take to suppress the disgraceful state of affairs. It was stated that even married men take part.

The lawlessness was not confined to the young men of the town—"certain smart Alecks from the country came into town to work off their freshness."

Measures taken to curb this year's Hallowe'en hi-jinks in Milton will perhaps differ in some respects than what they proposed to do in 1896. Milton Mayor Brian Best would like to publish the names of the parents of all boys who took part in the Hallowe'en follies so everyone can see who isn't raising kids right. He also wants a curfew imposed on anyone under 16 years of age found loitering in a public place between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. without parental supervision. Under this act offenders are taken home or to a place of safety and parents are charged, fines of \$25 to \$100.

The disgruntled Mayor would also like to hire two more policemen and equip police with polaroid cameras to assist in identifying unruly elements of the community.

Back in 1896 it was "the chief constable's intention to inaugurate a vigorous campaign against all kinds of lawlessness in Milton."

Curfews? This writer can remember when one was enforced in Acton during and after the war years.

Everyone over the age of 16 was required to carry a registration card. So if the village constable (Acton was a village then) stopped you after 9 p.m. and you weren't able to produce a registration card, you were in trouble.

He marched you home and demanded to know why parents let you roam after 9 o'clock. The first offense was usually a warning. But the second and subsequent catches were regarded as pretty serious and parents could pay fines.

Although the more daring adolescents continued to roam nocturnal pursuits weren't likely to be anything that would attract unnecessary attention.

The system worked pretty well. It also instilled a lot of respect in most of us for the police. One glance was enough to send most of us scurrying for cover. Some of the more daring took two (glances), of course.

Nine o'clock was announced by the tolling of the old bell in the town hall steeple, since moved down and mounted on a cairn beside the fire hall. Of course, one of the common excuses when you were caught after curfew was that "I didn't hear the bell."

It didn't cut much ice but it was perhaps the really only legitimate excuse most of us had. We really didn't hear the bell when we were engrossed in some game or other kinds of hollery.

Well, the curfew has gone now, abandoned as a relic of the past. It seems odd to hear that they are thinking of reintroducing it in a neighboring community.

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"One of the reasons I feel so grateful I was poor when I was first married is that I could so easily have mucked it up," said Malcolm Muggeridge in a BBC broadcast. "Infidelities, sexual jealousies, all these things that occur to everybody — I wasn't in a position to walk out because I was poor and had four children. And how delighted I am now, after 43 years of marriage. The companionship of my wife is without any question the most precious thing I've found in this world."

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 22, 1951

A full auditorium greeted the Acton High School commencement exercises on both Thursday and Friday nights in the Town Hall last week. The program included numbers by the Glee Club. The addresses of welcome were given by Donald McVey and Yvonne Brunelle. Gymnastic exercises were shown by the boys under Mr. Heron. Miss E. Harris conducted the girls in their athletic display.

The play was a typical school play, The Bobby Sox Brigade under the direction of Miss Gammie with R. R. Parker doing the make-up and Ena Jennings as prompter. Those taking part were Audrey Wilkinson, Betty Williamson, Marilyn Mellor, Isabel Ritchie, Frances Fletcher, Bill Conans, Ken Mann.

Members of the Never Late Never Absent Club receiving their awards from Mrs. Orr and Miss Clara Grindley were Maureen Kinnead, Carol Petterly, Mary Braida, Vera Warne, Barbara Turner, Ida Archibald and John Ware. Proficiency awards were presented by Dr. A. J. Buchanan and Mr. G. A. Dills to Janice Baker, Nancy Lambert, Isabel Ritchie, Barbara Turner, Marjorie Warne, Donald Dawkins. Three new scholarships were given, the Amos Mason scholarship to Fred Turner, the Mayor Tyler scholarship to Yvonne Brunelle and the Stanley Wilkinson scholarship to Jo Ann Velhuis.

Fred Euringer delivered the valedictory address. He attained the highest standing in Upper School. Yvonne Brunelle was the best all round girl.
At the conclusion dancing was enjoyed to recorded music by Mr. Harry Arbic.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 17, 1921.

The third anniversary of the signing of the Armistice was fittingly observed Friday. The wearing of the memorial poppy was general. Promptly at 11 o'clock all work in town ceased. Every wheel stopped. Upon the stroke of eleven Mrs. John Kennedy, president of the Women's War Veterans' Auxiliary, approached the soldiers' monument on the lawn of the Soldiers Home and deposited at its base a beautiful wreath. Other wreaths were placed by Mrs. L. B. Shorey, regent of the Duke of Devonshire chapter of the I.O.D.E., and Miss Laura Scott, president of the Junior I.O.D.E.

Just at 11 in the Free Press office Private David Combrugh, an Imperial soldier of the 51st division, stepped in to have his passport endorsed by Police Magistrate editor H. P. Moore. He remarked, "Three years ago I spent this day at La Boisselle, near Lens." Private Ernest Brown of the Free Press staff who was in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces stepped up and said "Shake hands, comrade! I was at 'Valenciennes.' They had never met before but had been with brigades which were closely allied to each other on Armistice Day—a coincidence both interesting and pathetic.

Mr. Harold Wiles has retired from Acton Creamery and Thos. O'Neil is now the sole owner. Mr. Wiles will give his whole attention to his restaurant and candy business.

A letter to council from the Provincial Secretary requested their views on the question of extension of franchise to wives and daughters of property owners. The council unanimously endorsed the proposal.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 13, 1896.

Until a few months ago we had ten passenger trains running through Acton daily — five each way. With the winter timetable we have but three trains west and four east. The discontinuance of the Elmira train has caused much inconvenience felt mainly by the high school students attending Georgetown from Rockwood, Acton and Limehouse who must now leave home at 6.40 a.m. and have no means of returning until 7 p.m. It is hoped this serious inconvenience will soon be removed. Plucky Lawrence Swackhammer missed the 6.40 train Monday and walked all the way to Georgetown. Some Rockwood students will attend Guelph in the future.

Owing to the evening mail arriving later the post office is now open until 7.30 or 7.45 p.m.

The going-to-meet-the-eight-o'clock-train silliness will be discontinued in the evenings now, there being no eight o'clock train.

Mr. Nelson is organizing a lodge of the I.O.O.F. in Rockwood. A large crowd attended Monday.

In one year 372 men have been expelled from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers for intoxication.

The boys of Eden Mills purpose having a bush hunt shooting match some of these days, all games to count so many points and the losers to pay for the supper. An exciting time is anticipated.

Ernest Hall, a former Halton boy, writes of the mining excitement in Revelstoke B.C., the endless indications of resources possibly unparalleled. I know of no country that offers more promise than our far-famed Kootenay. We are badly in need of the Crow's Nest R.R. But a newcomer must have capital in his pocket.