

Remembering war has a purpose



CLERGY COMMENT

By RICHARD E. RUGGLE
St. Paul's Church, Norval

This past September I was serving at the chapel on the Canadian Forces Base in Baden. The 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War took place while I was there, but most of the people there seemed unaware of the fact. There wasn't a word in the forces' newspaper, and hardly a mention on the Canadian radio station there. Nobody wanted to remember.

By contrast, I was surprised by the extensive attention paid to the anniversary in the German magazines and newspapers. For a week, there seemed to be nothing else on the radio. The networks broadcast a lot of documentaries, and there were also countless interviews with people who were around at the time. They told of the pressures they felt, or of the way they got caught up unthinkingly in the enthusiasm of the day, or of the family members they lost, or of some of the terrible things that happened to them. As questions were asked, they opened up and talked freely. They wanted to remember.

When we start to recall, there are things we sometimes would rather remain hidden. In a woods just outside the base, there is a memorial to about 15 German soldiers who fell on the same day in 1945. They tell two stories about it. One is that they were killed by a mortar. The other is that the war was coming to an end, they decided they had had enough of fighting and were just going home, and they were shot by one of their own officers.

While I was there, a controversial book by a Canadian author was published here, which charged that after the end of the war German prisoners-of-war were kept in French and American camps where they were denied the food and tents that were available, where the Red Cross was kept out, and where thousands upon thousands died as a result of a deliberate policy of revenge. Historians have questioned some of the numbers in the book, but

grudgingly admitted that the author seems to have uncovered a dark secret.

Anyone who has experienced war, whether as a civilian or a combatant, knows of horrible things they would rather forget. But we remember, and we remember with a purpose. Almost every interview I heard on the radio that week ended with the question, "What would you say to people today?" And almost everyone answered, "We can't let it happen again."

756 Squadron director is "Director of the Year"

The director of Georgetown's 756 Air Cadet Squadron has been named the "Director of the Year" by the Air Cadet League of Canada.

member of Wing 400 of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association.



Rod MacDonald

Rod MacDonald, founder and first acting director of the squadron, was honored by the annual meeting of the Ontario Provincial Committee branch of the ACLC held Nov. 3 and 4.

Mr. MacDonald was given the award by Harold Fowler, National President of the ACLC.

Fifty directors were competing for the award. Mr. MacDonald is vice-chairman of the provincial committee and has served on various selection boards for the

He has served in both the RCAF and the RAF in Britain, Europe and the far east.

Remembrance Day recalled in verse

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our places; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

No matter the country
no matter the belief.

The youth was sacrificed
to an ancient creed.

They did not know
they did not care.
That youth in bloom
means harvest fair.

Then came the reaper
with scythe unsheathed,
And claimed the crop
of youth unleashed.

When time it came
to see the fault,
Sad eyes beheld
the lame and the halt.

—John McCrae

IN REMEMBRANCE

The years go by,
The seasons change,
But bloodied memories
remain the same.

Wounded in body
and wounded in soul,
The youths that were
were suddenly old.

The youthful glow
when first they passed,
That sparked the world
and held them fast.

Their world had changed
and so had they,
But let no one forget
they led the way.

—Colin Gibson

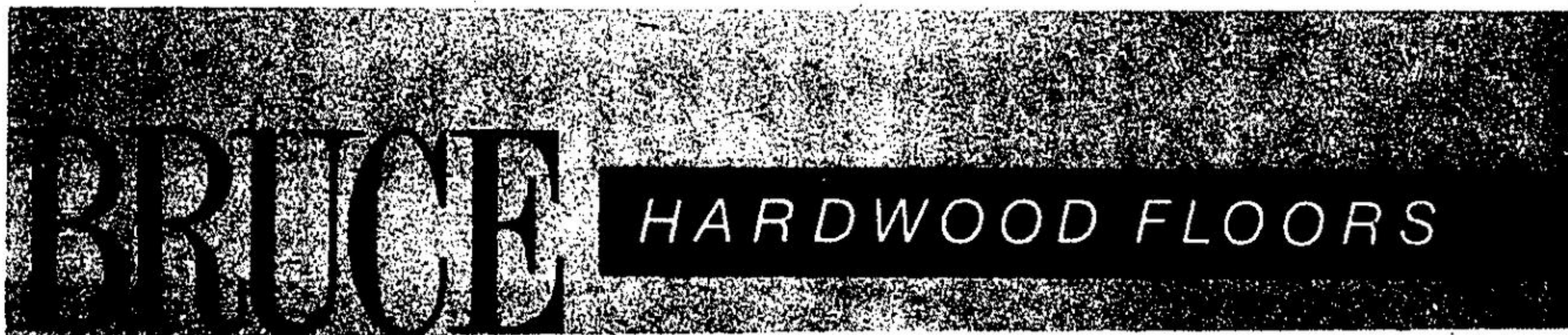
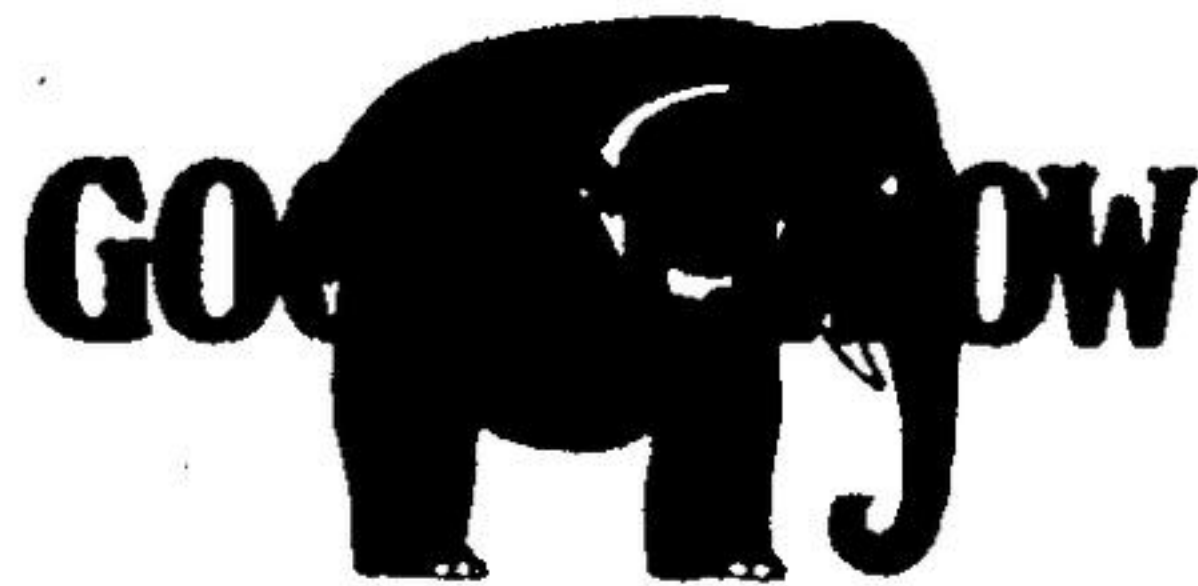
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