



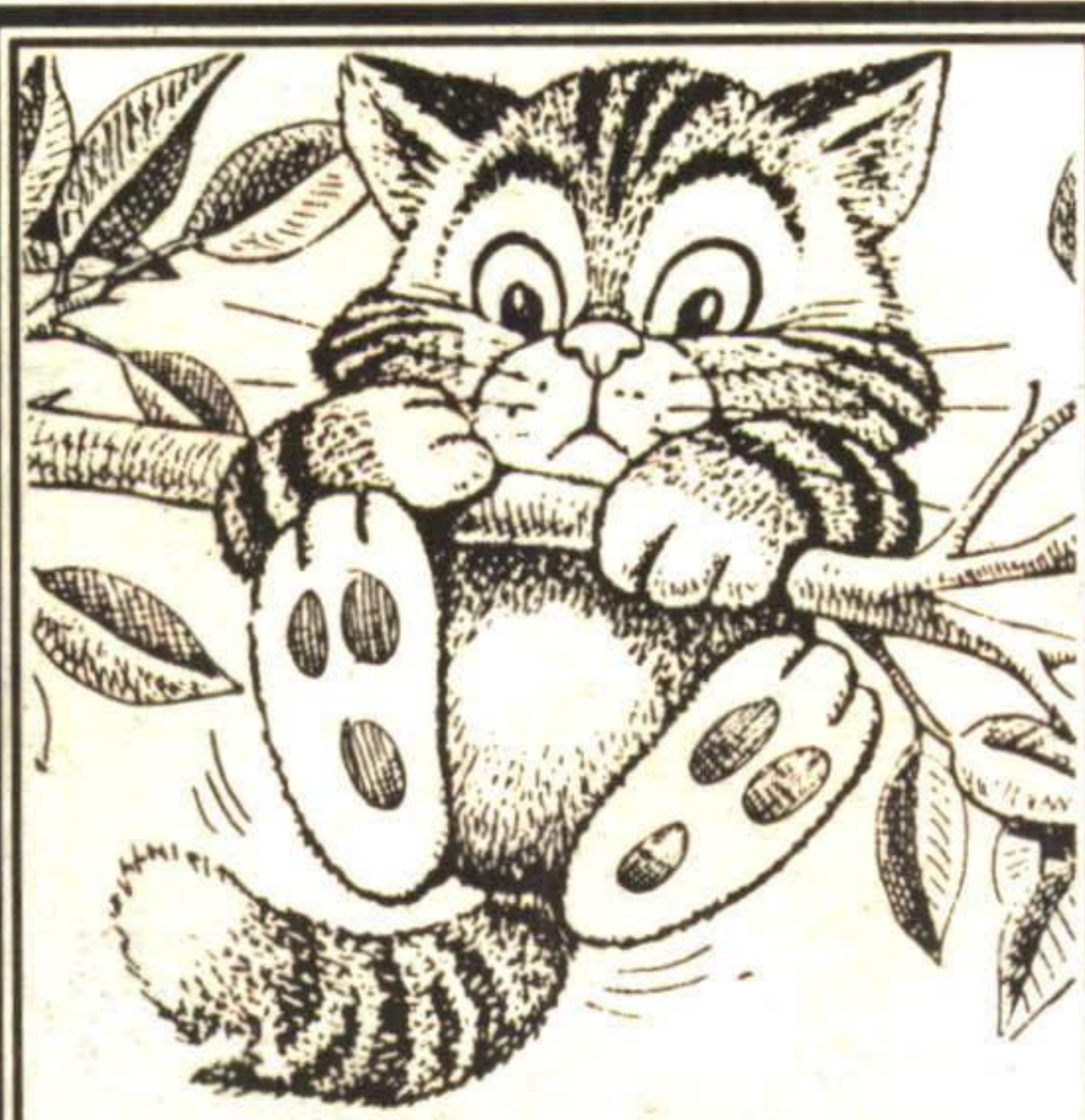
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Bayliss recalls the events

Continued from page 3

During the D-Day landings, while Trevor Williams was splashing towards Juno Beach, not far behind him, an Acton native rode the Channel waves in his landing craft, bound for the same destination.

George (Ben) Bayliss was also a platoon sergeant with the HLI, and landed shortly after 9 a.m. on Juno Beach.

From his rural Acton home, Bayliss also vividly recalls the day's events.

"We had a good landing," recalls Bayliss, "And we didn't lose a single man on the beaches. I think the fellows were so glad to get out of that landing craft, they just ran for the beach. I know I wasn't scared — but awful damned seasick!"

Bayliss explained how about 30 soldiers were crammed into the LCI (landing craft infantry) and after sailing from Southampton, had to endure the rough ride across the Channel.

They were infantrymen, carrying small arms and were quite portable. They hit the beach and immediately headed inland to the village of Lebusson.

"We were originally supposed to go right to Caen," said Bayliss, "But (General) Montgomery decided to hold us up until more equipment arrived."

They were delayed for nearly a month, as the German fortifications around Caen proved to much more formidable than the Allies had originally expected.

"While we were there, we were sent out on night patrols," said Bayliss, "One night, we got right into the middle of the German army. I can tell you, all hell broke loose!"

Bayliss and a colleague were wounded during that fight and he helped his fellow soldier back to safety where they were flown back to England to recuperate. In a

month, he returned to the front and rejoined his unit in France.

Weeks later, after a number of skirmishes, his outfit made its way to Boulogne.

"The (Allied) bombers had really pounded that place," said Bayliss, "And the German army had blown the bridge, so we had to cross the river on concrete slabs."

While positioned in a bombed out building, a German patrol attacked them, lobbing in a number of grenades.

And once again, Bayliss was wounded; this time in the neck and side.

"I had to cross that river where the bridge was blown while on a stretcher," recalls Bayliss, "So one of my officers picked a couple of big strong German prisoners of war to carry my stretcher across the river."



BEN BAYLISS

He returned to a hospital in France and after being once again patched up, rejoined his unit in Belgium. Later, while in Holland, Bayliss received word he was going home, back to Acton, after nearly five years overseas.

"We lost a lot of good men," recalls Bayliss, "But I'm glad I went. It was quite an experience."

Both Bayliss and Williams have returned to Normandy and walked along the beaches where they faced danger so many years ago. Both attended the fortieth anniversary tour, and Williams returned for the forty-fifth.

And as members of the Highland Light Infantry, they attend a reunion, every June, in Galt.

But as they reminisce and remember those events of 50 years ago, their feelings are best summed up by Trevor Williams as he reflected on the passage of time.

"Fifty years ago we didn't know if we would live for the next five minutes. It's gone so fast, but we still remember, and will always remember, just like it was yesterday."

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