

# 'And the young people ask, what are they marching for?'

Years ago, when I was a staffer at the Independent & Free Press, for Remembrance Day I researched various war stories, and wrote about local veterans and what they endured during our country's conflict.

It was a passion of mine, and I felt extremely privileged to be allowed and trusted to tell their life stories.

It wasn't easy - some of the old wounds I'd open up during my interviews were still quite raw. At times, after my veterans read my proof, they sometimes asked me to modify something. It was simply too painful to relive in print.

I sat with veterans who had tears well up in their eyes, as they described the loss of their comrades. It was tough for them - they came from an age in which 'men aren't supposed to cry.' We'd talk, and I'd assure them they were very much allowed to cry. When it comes to war, there are no rules.

I always came away from those interviews with a renewed respect for the contributions our local veterans had made to the betterment of our country. I usually also gained another friend.

Every story was unique, yet at the same time, carried a common thread, in which each veteran possessed a lifelong bond with their comrades - both living and memories of the dead - as well as the attitude that what they did wasn't that special, or



**TED BROWN**

A Ted Bit

made them brave.

"The boys who didn't come back were the brave ones," said one of my vets.

Being retired, I no longer write the stories about our war veterans. I still attend the services and remember all those old friends. Some are still living, others have passed on.

Looking back, I realize how I have been truly blessed, listening to their stories.

At times, I can't believe what I have heard.

In 1993, I interviewed Gilbert English, our last local veteran of the Great War. Gilbert and I sat at his son's home, sipped a beer and he told me about Nov. 11, 1918, when he was in France, and word of the signing of the Armistice filtered through the ranks.

When I interviewed him, Gilbert was over 100 years old, but the good Lord had blessed him with remarkable health and recall, as he recounted the last days of World War One with clarity.

I interviewed veterans who landed on Juno Beach on D-Day, and witnessed the bullets and shrapnel screaming past their ears,

as their comrades beside them were cut down.

I talked to veterans of more recent wars- the Falklands, Afghanistan, and countless other conflicts. In spite of the fact they're not WW2 vets, they are still veterans of another conflict and the sacrifice is the same.

So we must keep those memories alive, no matter what conflict our veterans fought. Our students need to be made aware of the hell our soldiers have endured- we owe that to them.

As I watch my old friends from WW2 at Remembrance Day services, and how they age with the years, I'm reminded of a song written by Eric Bogle, entitled 'And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda.' It tells the story of the Australian soldiers who were slaughtered during Battle of Gallipoli in The Great War.

For me, the final stanza says it all;

*'And now every April, I sit on me porch,  
And I watch the parades pass before me.*

*I see my old comrades,  
how proudly they march,  
Reviving old dreams of past glories*

*And the old men march slowly, old bones stiff and sore.*

*They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war*

*And the young people ask, what are they marching for?*

*And I ask myself the same question.'*

*Never forget why they march.*

*Lest we forget.*



Esqueving Historical Society/Photo

Built in 1971 by Gerald Inglis, the three-sided cenotaph in Glen Williams honours those who served in major conflicts, as well as to the founding of the village itself. In this photo, cadets are shown at the cenotaph with the Royal Canadian Legion colour party in the background on Remembrance Day, 1990.

## Santa Claus is coming to town

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volunteers to man our crowd control barriers in order to keep our costs down. We are looking for mature adult volunteers at each traffic barricade on the parade route.

At this time we are looking for 50-60 volunteers to help on parade day to keep both our spectators and parade participants

safe.

The amount of time required is about four hours and there is a great benefit, you will have the best view of the parade.

If you are interested in participating, please email us [georgetownlions@gmail.com](mailto:georgetownlions@gmail.com) or contact Linda Dilks at 905-702-1284 and leave us your name, number and email

address. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Santa Claus is Coming to Georgetown Nov. 18!

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**Louie Violo,**  
Chair, 2017 Santa Claus Parade

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