

## The way we were



Here is the Dominion Seed House in winter around 1949, now known as Dominion Gardens and site of Georgetown's Light up the Hills, which were illuminated earlier this week.

Image courtesy of the Esquesing Historical Society; text Heritage Halton Hills

### FROM OUR READERS

## Sky high

The Royal Ascot at 26 Hall Rd. has been getting a facelift for the past several months. New windows and patio doors have been installed, the balconies have been refurbished, and now workers are caulking other windows and painting the flashing. Don Parker sent in this photo.



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## Canada working to better support our vets

Canadian Forces members defend and protect Canada and Canadians at home and abroad.

For their dedicated service and sacrifice, physical and mental, our veterans deserve nothing but the highest quality of care as they transition back to civilian life and retirement.

Since 2006, the government of Canada has spent almost \$30 billion on delivering benefits and services for veterans. The budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs has risen from \$2.7 billion in 2005 to \$3.5 billion this year, an increase of 30 per cent.

This increase in funding has taken place while the number of veterans has declined, even with veterans from conflicts like Afghanistan. For example, the number of war service veterans of the Second World War and Korean War have declined from 234,000 in 2006 to 98,200 today.

This increased spending has gone to enhance benefits for veterans.

For example, veterans no longer have to deduct disability benefits from their War Veterans Allowance, increasing the money they receive. Another example is the doubling of the money the government will pay for funeral and burial costs for low-income veterans, from \$3,600 to \$7,376.

However, more can always be done. Recently, the Auditor General highlighted shortcomings in the delivery of services for veterans.

The government has accepted the Auditor General's recommendations and is implementing them.

On Nov. 23, Veteran's Affairs announced an additional \$200 million for mental health care for veterans, serv-

ing Canadian Forces members and their families.

This money will enhance existing mental health care for veterans and their families.

This will mean better access to mental health professionals, better mental health education and better support for military families who are facing the difficult challenge of mental health issues, including Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

In addition, Veterans Affairs will open a new mental health clinic in Halifax, along with seven other satellite mental health clinics across the country, to provide

full mental health services for Veterans and their families living with operational stress injuries.

Furthermore, the Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the Department of National Defence, will fund additional research to find better treatments for veterans and Canadian Forces members with mental health conditions.

In particular, the research will focus on better understanding the transition from military to civilian life and better understanding the causes of veteran suicides in order to guide prevention activities.

The government of Canada is strongly committed to working with veterans and their families to ensure that they receive the care that they deserve.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact me at (866) 878-5556 or at [michael.chong@parl.gc.ca](mailto:michael.chong@parl.gc.ca)

—Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills



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