

Acton vets remember D-Day

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

The 50th anniversary of D-Day, the Normandy invasion, was saluted on both sides of the Atlantic on Monday.

With military precision, aging veterans celebrated the valour and victory of those who hit the beaches and grieved for those who died so far from home.

To commemorate the historic invasion that signified the beginning of the end of the war, *The Acton Tanner* spoke Monday with the five remaining Acton veterans of the Second World War.

Ben Bayliss: George (Ben) Bayliss was a platoon sergeant with the Highland Light Infantry of Canada which landed on Juno Beach.

Bayliss's regiment staged a memorial service and reunion in Galt on Saturday.

"We have a reunion every year but this year was special," Bayliss said. "We're all getting older."

He enlisted in '40 as a 20-year-old and shrugs off any suggestion of bravery. "I signed up because it was the right thing to do."

Bayliss said the 50th anniversary stirred up many memories.



LIVING HISTORY: Art Ford, Ben Bayliss, John Turkosz and Herb Cook posed in front of the Cenotaph on Mill Street on Friday. Absent was Norm Price. (Doug Harrison photo)

"I remember the fellows that didn't make it back. We left a lot of good men over there. I'm glad I went," Bayliss said.

After serving in Europe for five years, and being injured numerous times, Bayliss returned home to Acton.

Herb Cook: Herb Cook joined the Highland Light Infantry with his buddy Ben Bayliss.

Cook was 19 years old and he had a single objective: "I wanted to help get rid of Hitler."

Cook saw action as a private in France, Belgium and Germany.

"We had no idea what we were getting into. We saw movies of the Western Front but our training couldn't fully prepare us for the real thing," Cook said.

"You never forget what happened on the beaches. It doesn't seem like it was 50 years ago. Now it's part of history."

Art Ford: Art Ford travelled to Guelph to join the 43rd Battery, 12th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery.

"I went to Guelph to enlist and had to tell them I was 20 years old. I had to lie about my age because I was only 18 and I didn't think they'd take me," Ford said.

"I signed on because I wasn't working and didn't have anything else to do. I was single and thought it was the right thing to do."

Norm Price: Norm Price was 19-years-old when he enlisted with Art Ford in the RCA.

Price was a bombardier in a gun tank.

"It doesn't feel like it's been 50 years since we landed on the beach. I don't know how I was so lucky to have made it home," Price said.

John Turkosz: John Turkosz has never collected the \$10 bet that a friend made with him when he decided to enlist.

"I joined the Highland Light Infantry in London as a 17-year-old. A buddy bet me \$10 that the army would find out how old I was and send me away. They didn't reject me, but I never did get that money," Turkosz laughed.

As a corporal, Turkosz spent several years in England before landing on Juno Beach.

"It's hard to believe that it's been 50 years. It was the best part of my life. I felt free. You were there to do a job and if you could you did it."

"At times it was scary but there were fun times as well."



DECORATION DAY: Legion Branch 197's Marj Louttet and Ladies' Auxiliary member Eva Cutting planted geraniums at Fairview Cemetery on Sunday morning. Marj's husband Bob served in the Second World War. (Lori Frechette photo)



PIONEER DAY

JUNE 11

FRIDAY JUNE 10
Open Air Jazz Event - Performance by Jazzarus
Sponsored by Rockwood & District Lions Club
Waterside Park, 7:30 pm

SATURDAY JUNE 11

10 am Rubber Duck Race - Waterside Park
11:30 am Parade Forms at Rockmosa Park to leave by noon
12:30 pm Parade Arrives at Lloyd Dyer Park
1 - 4 pm Displays, Games, Penny Table, Races, Draws, Dunking Booth, Demonstrations, Concert (Guelph Concert Band) plus MUCH MUCH MORE!
4:30 - 5:30 pm Baseball Game
Township vs. No-Stars!
7:30 pm - 1 am Outdoor Dance - ALL AGES WELCOME

SUNDAY JUNE 12
Rockwood's 145th Reunion, Rockmosa Park 9 am
Food Available - Bring Lawn Chair

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