

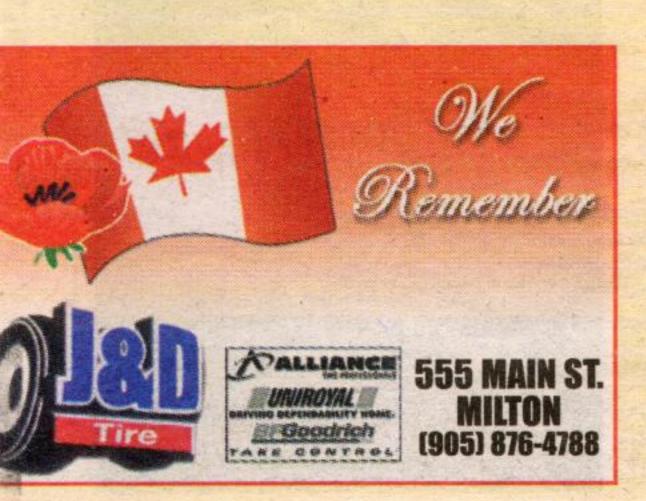


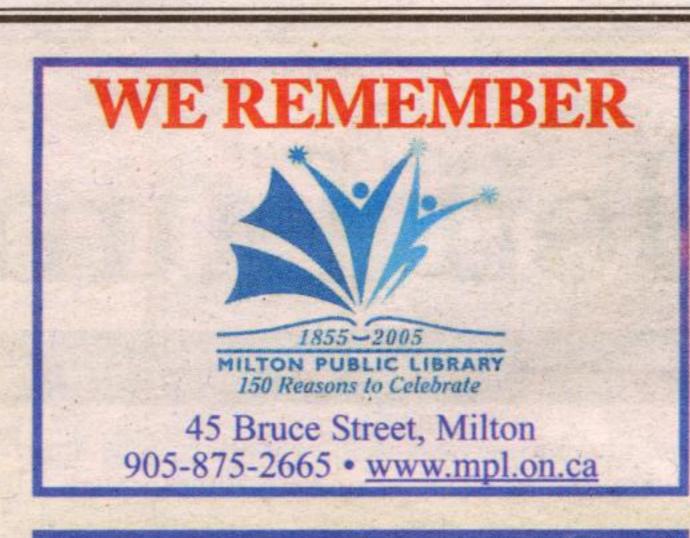
Mr Laking's medals

r Canada Centre. Last spring, he rew the first pitch at veteran's night Toronto Blue Jays. "He has fond cies of playing baseball in ille and that's why it was so imporhim to throw the first pitch," says

ne of the most important things that agy has taken from his friendship larence Laking is the idea to never serve as an excuse for not doing ing. "He doesn't think like an old insists Mr. Nagy. "His mind is ne loves the newspapers, especially nes from this area. He's never d learning. He has an extremely mind in a 106 year old body."

st year, Mr. Nagy teamed up with ned Rockwood artist Janet Wilson mission a portrait of Mr. Laking. lly framed by Chris Wilson with a nade frame crafted from ninety year ood, the portrait hangs in a spot of r in Mr. Laking's room at brook and Women's Hospital in o. "They dote on him there," says Nagy. "It's a real sense of communiyou can tell that the nurses really He doesn't understand why he's celebrity though. He's a living of history but he would consider f just a man." For Mike Nagy, the ship with Clarence Laking has had erwhelming affect. "Anything is le at any age, he's faught me that," n awed Mike Nagy. "I feel extremeunate and privileged that he was nough to let me get to know him."





BY ANN KORNUTA

for veterans, I push the door buzzer

and Edward Goodall greets me warmly.

He directs me to a table where several of

his war buddies are enjoying an autumn

afternoon. Every Wednesday, the friends

meet and talk about the past. One man in

particular, Murray Boyd, catches my atten-

Murray, an 82-year-old Milton resident

tion and I ask him to tell me about WWII.

and RAF veteran pulls his chair closer to

me and tells me he enlisted when he was

seventeen years old. In the background,

t the Milton Legion, the hangout club

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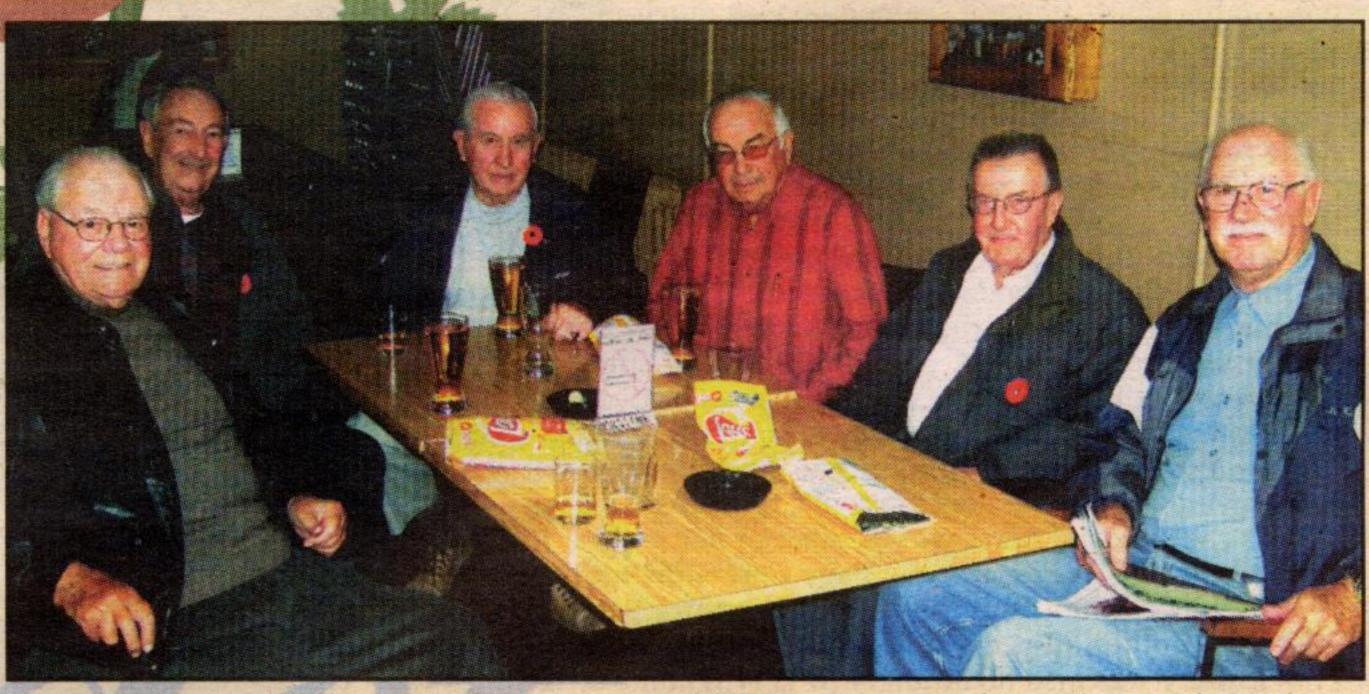
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Meeting every Wednesday, these honoured WWII veterans get together to share the good times, old stories, and a few drinks. Pictured left from right are Murray Boyd, Vern Vanderwater, Frank Sonoski, Lachlan McKersie, Ken Brush, and Edward Goodall.

veterans chatter, laugh and play billiards as Murray tells me his story of a lifetime ago. "I was born in Scotland. In 1937 I was

in the Boy's Air Service with many of my school chums. I was in a three-year apprenticeship for the Royal Air Force and in 1940, I was transferred over to the men's service with the 73 Fighter squadron in England. When I joined up I was only a young boy and I didn't have a care, but I got scared when they were bombing us and I lost friends." Murray was transferred to an airfield

in France with Fighter Command operating over the Belgium Border. "One morning I woke up-and I heard the German guns. I can remember the Germans started advancing very quickly and our air field was bombed day and night," Murray explained. "We had to pull out as fast as we could and we were caught. We lost many boys, lots of my friends during that time. Four hundred of our boys were killed that morning when we tried to escape."

One of the boys lost during those bombings was Murray's childhood best friend, something that brought home to him the horrors of war. The casualties were not faceless people but friends and neighbours.

I looked up to Murray and his face seemed off in the distance, but I urged him to tell me how he escaped being captured. "A few boys and I ran and we made our way to the docks and we stumbled upon a Salvation Army post," Murray recollected. "We were so happy to see them and the Salvation Army gave us a warm welcome. They were a great group of Brits, they looked after us, gave us meals. They were fantastic and I could finally telegram my parents to tell them I was

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safe. Unknown to me I was reported missing in action and it was a huge relief to my parents when they found out I was safe."

Murray then paused and took a sip of his drink. By this point I was ready to close my notebook, thinking that after witnessing the death of his friends that Murray would want to return home to Scotland and would have washed his hands of fighting. "I didn't quit, if that's what you were thinking," Murray said, noticing I had paused for a while. "After two months in England, I was posted to South Africa as a Flying School Trainer for two and a half years, and then in North Africa for three months. I returned to England and stationed at a Command Centre and that year in November, I was posted overseas again to India. It was classified as "Mission Unknown" at the time for us boys and when I arrived, I did a commando course and then we sailed out to "Destination Unknown." I finally found out where I was when we landed in the Cocos Islands off the coast of Java."

That is where Murray served until the

end of the war and carried out missions to Java and Sumatra. "On completion of our missions, I was transferred into the Royal Indian Air force as an instructor until 1947. I wasn't posted back to the UK until August of that year, and I was stationed in the RAF in Scotland where I remained until 1950 when I was discharged."

A year later, Murray packed up his family and moved to Milton. "In 1949, my aunt and uncle came on holiday to Canada and he talked me into coming here. We thought Milton was a nice place to come to. We brought up all of our four children in the town. They still live here and they are raising their own families. Milton is fantastic."

Murray was one of the lucky ones who fought and survived the War. Part of such a traumatic experience is wanting to keep in touch with old friends. One of Murray's old army friends lives now in British Columbia and he calls every month. One thing I noticed sitting drinking soda with these Air Force Veterans is how much they value their bonds of friendship.

A Remembrance Day Message

Michael Chong, M.P. Wellington-Halton Hills

For over one hundred years Canadian men and women have fought in conflicts around the world. Whether in the first War, in World War 2, in Korea, or in

peacekeeping missions around the world today, over 100,000 Canadians have died for their country. In this Year of the Veteran, on November 11th, please take time to pause and remember the ultimate sacrifice paid by your fellow Canadians.

"Lest We Forget"

