



Ceremonies at the Acton Cenotaph, Saturday, will include reading the names of those who paid the supreme sacrifice in three wars. In this 2001 photo Legionnaire Frank Spielvogel reads the names for the hundreds gathered for the impressive ceremonies.

Children remember war years

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Food rationing, hand-me-down clothes and an over-worked mother. That's what life was like during World War II for some Acton families whose dads went off to war.

While the late Harold DeForest Sr. was fighting for freedom, justice and peace in Europe, his wife Mary Ellen, mother of their eight children, went to work at the Beardmore Tannery to put food on the table.

A grandmother was called in to look after the younger kids during the day and the older ones took on added chores and responsibilities.

As Acton prepares to honour the more than 116,000 Canadians — including 43 local men — who died in the three wars of the last century,

those who were left behind make light of their sacrifices.

"Sure it was tough for a family with eight kids, but it was tough for everybody in those days," said Hartley DeForest, fourth youngest in the family, of the years between 1939 and late 1945 when his father returned home.

"We got by. We all chipped in and survived because that's what we had to do," DeForest said on Monday as he recalled what it was like to have a dad in a far away place, fighting a war that no young boy could hope to understand.

"We didn't talk about the war a lot and we didn't talk about our dad getting shot or not coming back. We were too busy trying to make a go of it and we were just kids," he said, adding all of his siblings did odd jobs, like

shovelling snow, to help take care of the large family.

Anne DeForest Genoe was born while her dad was overseas and her first memories of him are of a uniformed stranger who came walking up their street and into their Elgin Street house.

"He asked where my mother was and when I said she was in the bathroom he tried to go by me and I said, 'You can't go in there. My mommy is a lady,'" Genoe recalled.

"I was scared of him for a long time — I was only four and wouldn't sit beside him — but there was no pressure and when I saw my brothers and sisters with him, I was okay."

Juanita DeForest Lamarche of Guelph said if her dad had told enlistment officials about how many

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In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below:*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields*

Punch
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