



Remembrance Day services were held across Halton Hills on Sunday. John Wemyss (above and at age 19 inset in story) carries the Canadian flag during the Georgetown service. Orvil Paul (right) lays a wreath on behalf of Second World War veterans in Glen Williams. Frank Spielvogel (below) reads the names of those killed in action during the service in Acton.



Photos by Herb Garbutt



War stories

Memories, good and bad, come flooding back on Remembrance Day



Ormie Carter begins recounting the day in the South of France that he was captured. He recalls how his patrol walked up a mountain path for almost eight hours, crawling through two rolls of barb wire toward German mortars. How the patrol moved to within 200 feet before the Germans opened fire on them. How their commander was shot as they tried to take cover. Then he pauses.

"I've probably said too much already," he says. Then after a short pause adds, "I just thank my lucky stars I'm still in one piece."

Later, as Carter goes to search for a pass issued by the Nazis that allowed him to leave the POW camp to deliver food, Carter's friend, who has been listening to the conversation says that he's never heard his friend discuss the war in such detail in the 50 years he's known him.

The scenario is replayed a couple of hours later as John Wemyss talks about his five years as a prisoner of war. Wemyss describes how he marched almost a thousand miles across three countries after being captured. He recalls how 10 men would be given a loaf of bread to last them three days.

He vividly recalls story after story, even some that his wife says she hasn't even heard in their 50 years of marriage.

Included is one memory of an American soldier. However, after it's told, he asks that it not be repeated. He has said too much.

"I wouldn't want people to see what we saw," Wemyss said.

Although today is about remembrance, some things bring back painful memories and they are best forgotten.

"Most (veterans) would rather wipe out the memories. They don't like to bring them back," said Wemyss, who arrived in France four days before his 19th birthday as a member of the 51st Highlanders. "There are some things you don't want to remember, some you have to keep to yourself."

You like to bring back the nice things—the day we were liberated, the first day back in England, the first day back home."

For Carter, those 'nice things' include hearing that the war was over while driving an International Red Cross truck to deliver parcels to POW camps and flying back to England on VE Day, looking out of the plane at the Cliffs of Dover.

He joined the army at 18 as "a young, silly fool" who thought the military would be better than school. He shipped out a year later was stationed in England for three months. He spent the next eight months in Italy before moving into the south of France. He would spend the next eight months in Stalag Moosburg.

Though prisoners were treated relatively well, Carter said, "I'd rather have my freedom, no matter what."

His wish came true when the camp was liberated on April 29, 1945.

Thanks to Ormie Carter, John Wemyss and the thousands of other veterans we have our freedom.

Quite likely, we'll never have to worry about our freedom. And thanks to them we will never have to see and experience those things that are better off forgotten.

—Story and photos by Herb Garbutt, staff



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The Halton Regional Police Services Board will meet on Thursday, November 26, 1998, at the #11 Division Police Station, 217 Guelph Street, Georgetown, for their regular monthly meeting. The meeting will commence at 9:00 a.m.

All are welcome to attend.

For further information, please contact the Police Service Board office at 878-5511, Ext. 5014.



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