

Second World War ends

# Word of victory spread like wildfire

**F**rom the day Canada declared war on Germany, Canadian families waited nervously.

Thousands of Canadian soldiers fought in the war's biggest battles at Dieppe in 1942 and at Normandy in 1944. Back home, families wondered whether they would see their loved ones again. The waiting finally ended on Monday, May 7, 1945.

"The great news that Germany had surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies and Russia was flashed to the world 9:36 a.m. last Monday morning", reported The Georgetown Herald under the headline, Victory in Europe.

In both Acton and Georgetown, the news was greeted by overjoyed residents. Businesses closed and people left work to join in the celebration and impromptu parades marched down the main streets of both towns.

The Acton Free Press described the scene: "Acton's celebration of the surrender of Germany seemed spontaneous with the receipt of the word.

on Main St. suddenly turned into a joyous, exuberant crowd of town-folk.... factory whistles, the fire siren and church bells proclaimed it to the

King, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U.S. President Harry Truman.

The day was also marked with church services, which brought the towns together. In Acton, "The crowd filed into the United Church where the special service was held for the whole community. The church was packed to capacity with many standing and others unable to get into the service."

Over the next few weeks, both papers proudly announced the return of residents from overseas on the front page. They came in small groups of three to eight each week.

Sadly, in the week before the war ended, the paper announced those who would not return, those who made "the supreme sacrifice" by paying with their lives for the freedom of their family, friends and of complete strangers half way around the world.

More than 50 years later, they are still remembered every Nov. 11.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



The tannery whistle shrieked and there was no mistaking the message it was conveying. It was the real thing. Germany had surrendered.

A similar scene was played out in Georgetown.

"Word of the victory spread like wildfire through Georgetown where an ordinarily quiet Monday morning

town.... Merchants hurried to decorate their store fronts. Local factory workers left their jobs to join in the celebrating and decorated cars were soon seen in the downtown district."

Tuesday was declared a holiday. Dances were planned and residents listened to the radio addresses of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie



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