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Horse meat and soup a way of life in prisoner of war camp, says veteran

Ormie Carter was trying out for the Toronto Marlboros and attending high school in Toronto. Unhappy with his new school and looking for a way out, Carter enlisted in the military just 15 days after his 18th birthday.

Carter volunteered for the 1st Special Service Force, a unit of American and Canadian soldiers.

"I had no idea what I was getting into," he said. "I hadn't been in action before."

Carter spent eight months stationed in England and it was there he got the first taste of what he had got himself into.

"We were in the north-east end of London and there were miles of factories flattened, just obliterated."

Carter and his company would spend the next year moving through Italy and France. Carter was hit by an armour-piercing bullet that ricocheted off the sidewalk. He was shot at 4 p.m., in the hospital by 10 p.m. and back with the troops the next morning.

Carter had kept the bullet but it was taken away with other personal effects when he was taken prisoner by the Germans. (He got it back 40 years later at a reunion from a fellow soldier who had ended up with Carter's belongings.)

Carter spent eight months in Stalag Moosburg after being captured in France. "It wasn't very pleasant," Carter said. "It was usually horse meat and soup. One day

I hauled a horse's tooth out of my soup." At one time Carter became a very popular man in camp. While walking through the rail yard he saw something white leaking from a boxcar. It was salt.

"I filled up my pockets and mitts with salt, took it back and started trading," he said. The French had bread, Polish soldiers had garlic and of course cigarettes were always a popular commodity.

Carter was driving a truck, picking up prisoners from Dachau, a German concentration camp—he believes they were the first prisoners to be released—and could hear artillery fire nearby.

"I knew it wasn't going to be long," he said. The next day they met a group of American soldiers and by the time they returned to Stalag

Moosburg, the guards had fled. Despite the hardships, Carter would do the same thing again.

"Absolutely, but I was very fortunate to get through and get back home," he said.

Now on Remembrance Day, Carter thinks of those who weren't so fortunate.

"There are a couple of boys in the outfit," Carter said. "One guy was older and he was just like a mother to us. He looked after us. He got hit on the way to Rome and died the day we got to Rome. Just about every day someone got hit."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer





ORMIE CARTER

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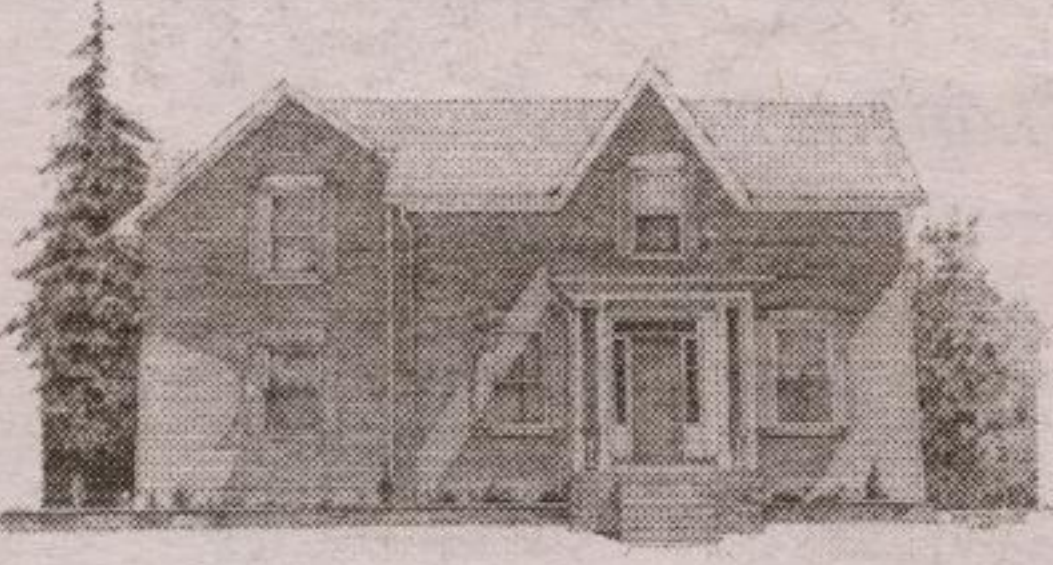
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