

Son of Canadian soldier 'now at peace'

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man I'd wondered about for most my adult life. I was both angry that he'd left my mother behind, and yet I was so pleased to be able to say 'this was my father' at the same time."

Peter stayed in Canada for four weeks, and got to know his siblings, as well as his step-mother. He and his wife Petra have returned numerous times to enjoy their company, and even landed for Christmas one year.



GEORGE NURSE (1985)

"I feel at peace now," said Peter, "When I met my Canadian family, my life changed. My daughters say that I'm a different man since I found my father."

His daughter Barbara agrees, saying she saw a dramatic change in her dad once he learned of his Canadian siblings.

"He's so relaxed now," says Barbara, "Before he found his background, he was always restless about something. It was like it was always on his mind."

Barbara also had an interesting story to tell. While Riet and Tom Schenk of Georgetown were conducting a tour of Holland for Halton Hills veterans last spring, they were checking out of a hotel, signing the register, saying they were from Georgetown, Ontario, Canada.

"I was working the desk at that hotel," said Barbara, "And as soon as I heard where they came from, I immediately went after the Schenks to ask if they were really from Georgetown. When they said

'yes' I had to get them together with Dad. I told them my grandfather had lived in Georgetown."

She arranged for Tom and Riet to meet Peter, and they spent an evening in the bar, talking about Georgetown.

Although the story has had a happy ending for Peter van Daalen, and he has finally located his Canadian family, there are more victims of the war.

Linda Wilson admits she was a little disappointed that her dad would leave a pregnant woman behind in Holland, a woman he had arranged to marry.

"All my life, I always put my dad up on a pedestal," said Linda, "But that pedestal has crumbled a little. I'm happy for Peter, and I'm so glad we've been able to become family, but it still bothers me a bit. I like to think there were valid reasons Dad had to leave, and I'm still looking for answers."

Consequently, Linda Wilson is also a casualty.

"I guess it's the down side of the story," adds Linda, "I recall my dad telling all his war stories, but never once did he mention Peter's mother in Holland. I think I'll always be searching for those answers, and why that marriage never took place."

Sister Georgina is more relaxed about the past, and is enjoying her new-found brother. Linda admits the two have a unique bond and she's pleased they have gained so much from Peter's search that began when he was 17 years old.

And how does Peter van Daalen feel after it's all-out in the open?

He admits he's now content to leave the past alone now and enjoy the family



Peter van Daalen of Holland at his father's Georgetown grave.

Photo by Ted Brown

he never knew. He knows it's impossible to pack 55 years of living into the present, so he intends to enjoy what he has today.

He's resigned himself to the fact he'll never recapture those lost 55 years that he spent without a natural father.

And in that way, Peter van Daalen will always remain a casualty of the horrors of war.

—By Ted Brown, staff writer

Four services planned for remembrance

Halton Legion will hold its Remembrance Day service on Saturday, Nov. 9.

Legion members will march from the post office at 10:30 a.m. to the 11 a.m. service at the cenotaph located in front of Trinity United Church. A memorial service will be held at the Legion at noon with lunch at the Legion served at 1:15 p.m.

The Georgetown Legion Remembrance Day Parade will be held on Sunday, Nov. 10.

Members will mark from the Legion at 2:30 p.m. to the 3 p.m. service at the cenotaph located in Remembrance Park. The Legion requests the general public not crowd the Veteran's Walk and the cenotaph to allow the marching veterans to march through and form up around the cenotaph.

A memorial service will also be held at the Glen Williams cenotaph at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 10.

On Monday, Nov. 11 a special remembrance ceremony will be held at the Remembrance Park cenotaph. The service commences at 10:45 a.m. with a moment of silence following at 11 a.m.

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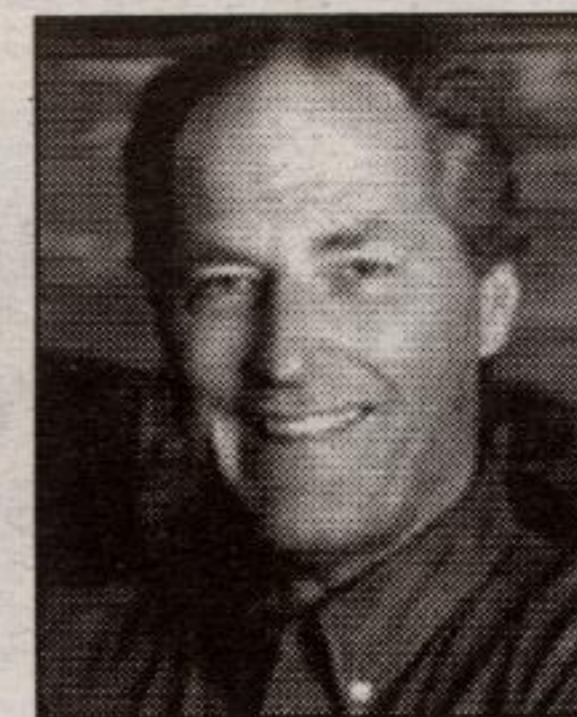
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