

Leaving a bit of Esquesing Township behind in France

After leaving the quaint medieval order of Ypres (Ieper) Belgium, we've had a three-day stay in Bayeux, Normandy, France.

The coast of Normandy is the centre of the Second World War arena, with D-Day, June 6, 1944, the most significant historical event to occur in this region of Europe.

I've seen the beaches of Normandy before, walked on Juno Beach, seen the famous Queen's Own Rifles' house located there, and visited Pegasus' Bridge, where the 6th British Airborne landed three huge gliders in a space less than 50 yards long, to take the bridge intact, that very early morning in June of 1944.

And I've visited the Canadian War Cemetery at Beny-sur-mer, which is located less than two miles from Juno Beach.

It's a beautiful cemetery, perfectly manicured, with all the grave stones standing so straight and proud.

Knowing I would be visiting this cemetery again, I contacted a friend of mine.

Rob Burnett and I have been friends for years. His daughter Anna, and my daughter Jenn, have been good friends since Kindergarten, and still get together when they happen to be home from university.

Rob and I also share another common interest— we both live in our original family homesteads. His house is quite similar to mine, in both age and design.

During my last visit to the Beny-sur-mer Cemetery in 2005, I read the honour roll for local troops buried there. I realized that Rob's uncle, Lieutenant John Edward Bowman, was one of the thousands buried there. He died June 22, 1944, 16 days after the first troops landed on the beaches of Normandy.

At that time, I made sure I photographed the grounds of the cemetery, the grave stone and as much of the area, so I could present Rob with a memory of where his uncle's final resting place is.

When I learned this year's Keeping the Memory Alive Tour itinerary would be once again stopping at Beny-sur-mer, I knew I had to give Rob a chance to take advantage of my visit.

I left a message with his wife Sandy, suggesting I would place something on the grave if he wanted me to.

Rob called me back the night before I flew out.

"I'd like to come over for a bit Ted," said Rob, "I have something to place



Ted Brown
...in Europe
with the
Keeping
The Memory
Alive Tour

on Uncle John's grave."

True to form, Rob landed in with two beers in hand, and a little Zip-loc bag.

"It's some stones from the creek bed at home," explained Rob, "When I visited my mom today, we talked about what to place on the grave. We agreed that stones from the creek would be appropriate, since she said Uncle John loved to play in that creek as a boy.

"We figured, that way, Uncle John has a little bit of old Esquesing Township over in France with him, and it will stay there forever."

I was quite moved by their choice, and gladly accepted the task to bring a little home back to one of our war dead of so many years ago.

As I made my way to the grave, I looked at the tiny stones, all washed and clean from a steady flow of water over them for hundreds of years.

I knelt down, and took the 15 small stones, and arranged them in a tiny cross, in the earth of the flowerbed around the stone marker.

It was a nice feeling, as I read the name— "Lt. John Edward Bowman, of the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps, attached to 6th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers."

I wondered if he was looking down on me, smiling at the tiny bit of Esquesing Township I had presented to him.

I know the next time the grounds-keepers weed the gardens and loosen the earth around the grave stone, those pebbles will be worked into the soil. But I also know that they will be timeless, and it doesn't really matter if they remain in the shape of a cross or not, they will be with John forever— as will the thoughts of those who knew him, when he was cut down during the fighting following D-Day.

Naturally, I never met John Bowman— he was killed before I was even born. But after today, I feel like I'm a friend of his.

A friend who is most indebted to him for his sacrifice.



Independent & Free Press reporter/photographer Ted Brown helped a friend bring a bit of Esquesing Township to France and at the same time pay tribute to his uncle killed in the Second World War. Brown placed rocks, gathered from a local creek, on the soldier's grave at the Canadian War Cemetery in Beny-sur-mer.

Photos by Ted Brown



The Regional Municipality of Halton

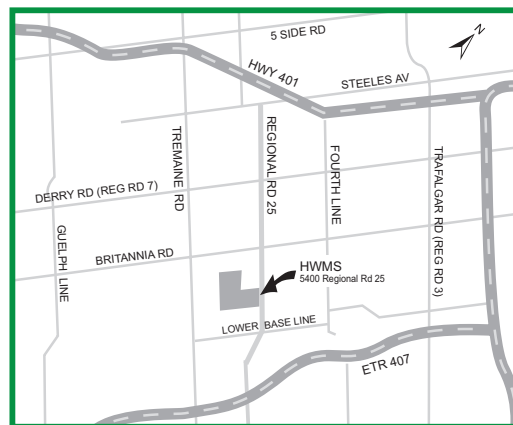


Tire Drop Off Day

Saturday, April 28, 2007
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

On Saturday, April 28, Halton residents are welcome to drop off up to eight passenger vehicle tires (rims included), bicycle and/or wheelbarrow tires free of charge at the Halton Waste Management Site. Tires that cannot be accepted include commercial vehicle, truck and tractor tires. All tires collected will be recycled.

As in previous years, we gratefully accept non-perishable food or cash donations on behalf of Halton area food banks.



HWMS

5400 Regional Rd. 25, Milton
Open: Monday - Saturday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed every Sunday and the following Holidays:
New Year's Day
Good Friday
Victoria Day
Canada Day
Civic Holiday
Labour Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas Day

Spring Cleaning? We can Help!

Bring your reusable clothing and household items to the Salvation Army Depot at Halton's Waste Management Site.



A Community Partnership



Halton's Government Access Centre

Do you need help finding government services? Halton's Government Access Centre is ready to help with one-stop access to regional, provincial and federal government information. Our Customer Service Representatives can help you find the services and programs you need, no matter which level of government is responsible for them. We offer answers to frequently-asked questions about government services, referrals for specialized help, free government publications and application forms, and on-site internet access to government websites. Telephone callers can be assisted in over 150 languages during regular business hours. Contact us by telephone between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm on regular business days, or by email, regular mail or in person at the Government Access Centre, 1151 Bronte Road in Oakville. Please also visit our website at www.halton.ca for information on important issues, programs and services.



Gary Carr
Regional Chair

Halton Regional Meeting Schedule

May 1	9:30 a.m. - Health & Social Services Committee
May 2	4:00 p.m. - Planning & Public Works Committee
May 2	7:00 p.m. - Creekbank Meeting

1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario L6M 3L1
Tel: 905-825-6000 • Toll Free: 1-866-4HALTON • TTY: 905-827-9833 • www.halton.ca

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<http://coorta.library.mun.ca/bp>

Buck & Doe

Andrea Alcorn & Dave Vogan (Campbell)
Saturday, April 28th ~ 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Georgetown Lions Club Hall
For info call Dean 519-853-4574
Food & Prizes ~ Tickets available at the door ~ \$10 each