

No time for fear, sadness during battle: Avery

• from IN THE THICK on page 8
that trailed after the soldiers, collecting the information to send to loved ones.

For paratroopers, death didn't have to come from enemy fire. Not when there was that long descent from heaven to earth before the fighting even began.

"It's very exhilarating. You're always thinking the chute wouldn't open and often times it wouldn't," he said. "They'd go shooting right past you and that was it, then. Game over. They'd call that a Roman candle."

The deaths were mourned, but they were mourned later. Then there was no time for fear, no time for sadness.

"You don't have time to think of it. You move on," said Mr. Avery. "Everything goes so fast. You're all geared up. You're programmed for action."

He was in Italy when the war ended.

Germans defeated

"The Germans were defeated. They shipped us back to England for a three-week disembarkation leave," he said.

Mr. Avery used it wisely. He married his childhood sweetheart and whisked her away for a Blackpool honeymoon.

It lasted two weeks. Then he got notice he was needed in Palestine.

It was to be his last tour. After that his seven-year term in the armed forces was completed. He never looked back.

"Got that right. Game over," he said.

Soon after the war Mr. Avery packed up his wife and their son and moved them half way around the world to Milton.

For his seven years of service, Mr. Avery has a chest full of medals and a head full of memories.

Not all the memories are bad.

"My wife sent me cigarettes and wrote to me every week. She never missed one," he said. "Then there were the friendships."

Those friends are gone now, lost touch with or dead. Still, their memory looms a little larger when November 11 arrives.

"It's sad. Friends I knew, gone. Friends over here are gone, the old Legionnaires," said Mr. Avery. "It's emotional every year."

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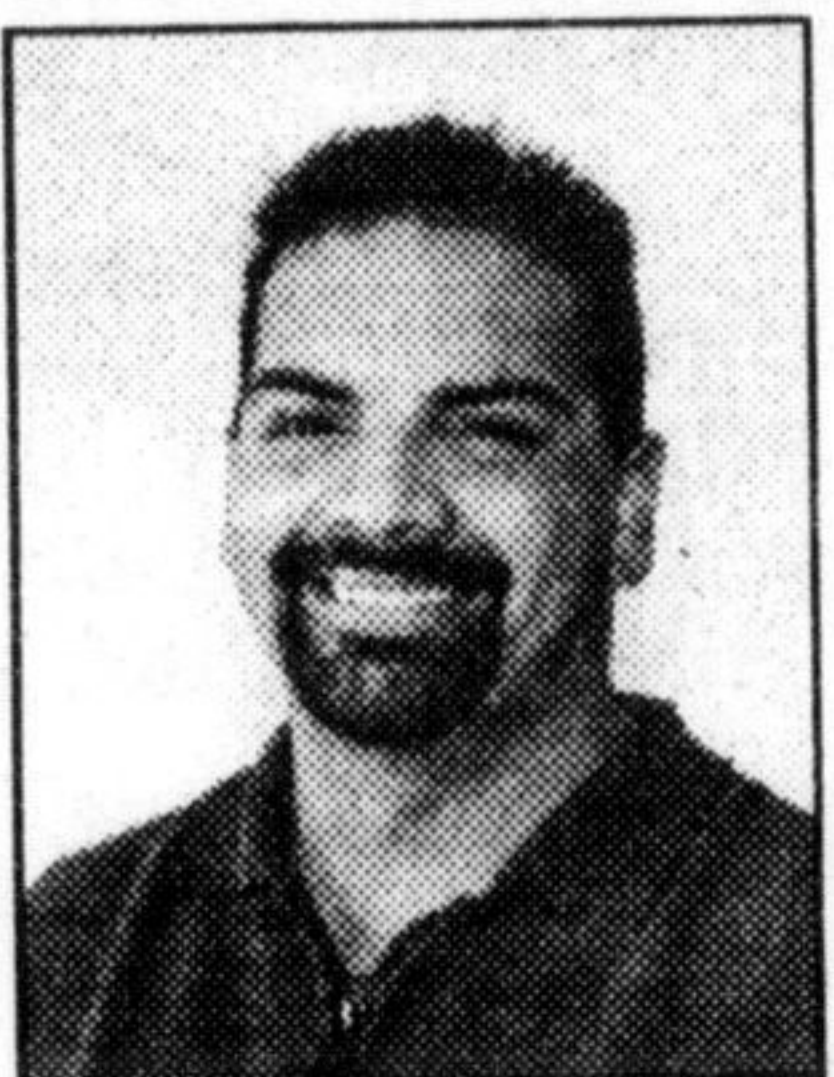
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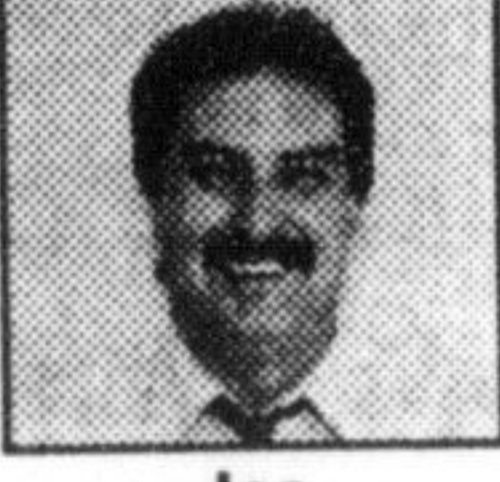
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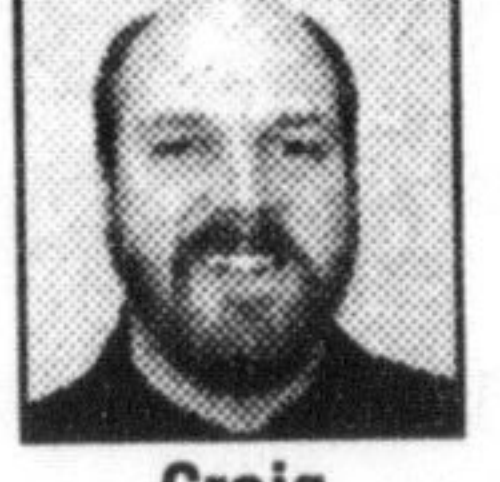
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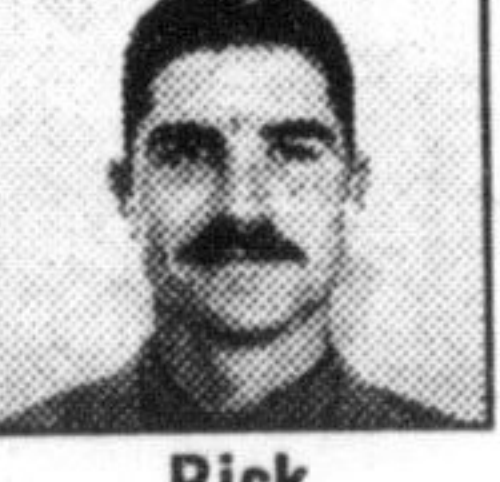
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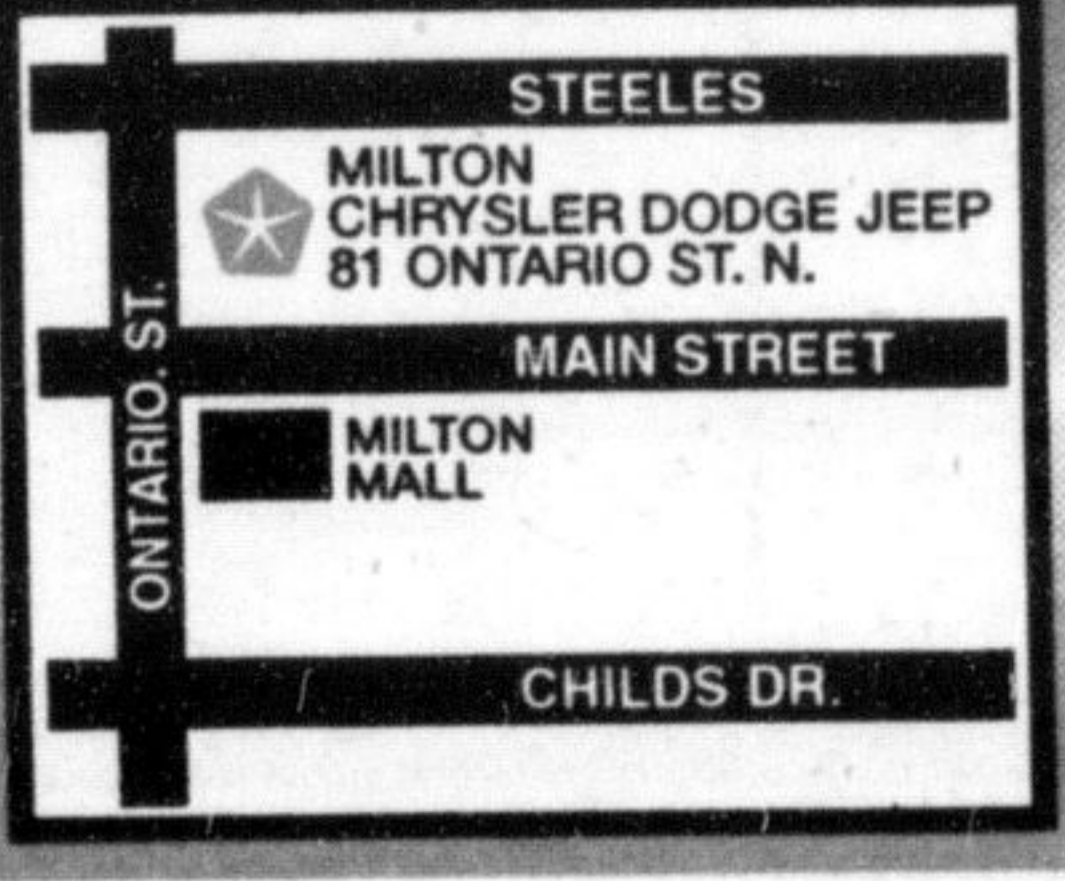
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