

**Champion**

# COMMUNITY Page

## Second World War veteran is honoured with commemorative medal from Dutch Embassy

By FANNIE SUNSHINE  
The Champion

**G**eorge St. Cyr is a brave man. At the age of 17, when most young men would be chasing girls, Mr. St. Cyr was dodging bullets.

"I signed up for the war when I was 17, even though you had to be 18 to enlist," he recalled. "I had to get my parents to give me permission to go."

He trained as a tank gunner and wireless operator before he was sent off to destroy the German enemy.

"I was never seriously injured, just some little scars here and there. I was lucky."

In appreciation of the Canadian soldiers who fought during the Second World War, the Dutch Embassy in Holland, through the Canadian Dutch Legion, presented Dutch Commemorative Medals to 70 veterans at a ceremony March 10 in Ancaster.

"To me, the medal means they appreciate what we did for them. The medal is just a piece of metal, but it's the thought behind it. It's nice to get a little recognition. I know it's sincere."

Mr. St. Cyr read about the Dutch Commemorative Medal while flipping through the Legion Magazine.

"I had to have a background check done and then I received the letter saying I was to receive the medal."

Although he might have been eager to sign up for the war, once he was actually in the middle of the crossfire, he wasn't as enthused.

"During training I enjoyed army life," he said. "My first shock of anxiety came when we had to travel from England to France by tug boat. You could hear the guns going with live ammunition. They just dumped you off the boat — that's when you knew you were in for it."

For 10 horrifying days, Mr. St. Cyr and his fellow soldiers were ordered to hold down Esterwegen concentration camp, which was located north-

east of Germany near the Dutch border.

"The German force was not strong but they made life miserable for us," he recalled.

"They would throw grenades at us and whipped the prisoners. These poor people were living in wooden huts and were all skin and bones. We tried to give them as much food as we could."

He even managed to steal seven medals he found in a drawer belonging to the German Commandant of the concentration camp, which are displayed in a frame on the wall near the entrance of his home.

But perhaps one of his most terrifying experiences during the war came when he was the lone soldier observing a German convoy from a hay stack.

"I had a field phone and I would call to give the range as to where the Germans were located. They figured the only place someone could be hiding was in the hay stack, so they started shooting. The clay shingles on the house in back of me were bursting all over the place. I wanted to get into the basement of the house, so I dove through the glass window and slid down the steps into three feet of water. The house was eventually demolished but I managed to crawl out."

But when the war was over, the soldiers were at a loss of what to do next.

"When it was announced the war was over, we just looked at each other — we didn't know what to do. We were kind of lost for a while."

Mr. St. Cyr returned to Milton and went back to his old job in the wood-working shop at Nortel, where he remained for 40 years.

He retired 17 years ago as the plant manager.

Nowadays, the 77-year-old can be found constructing model ships in his basement.

"Paying close attention to the detail of the ships is what makes it fun," he said with a smile.

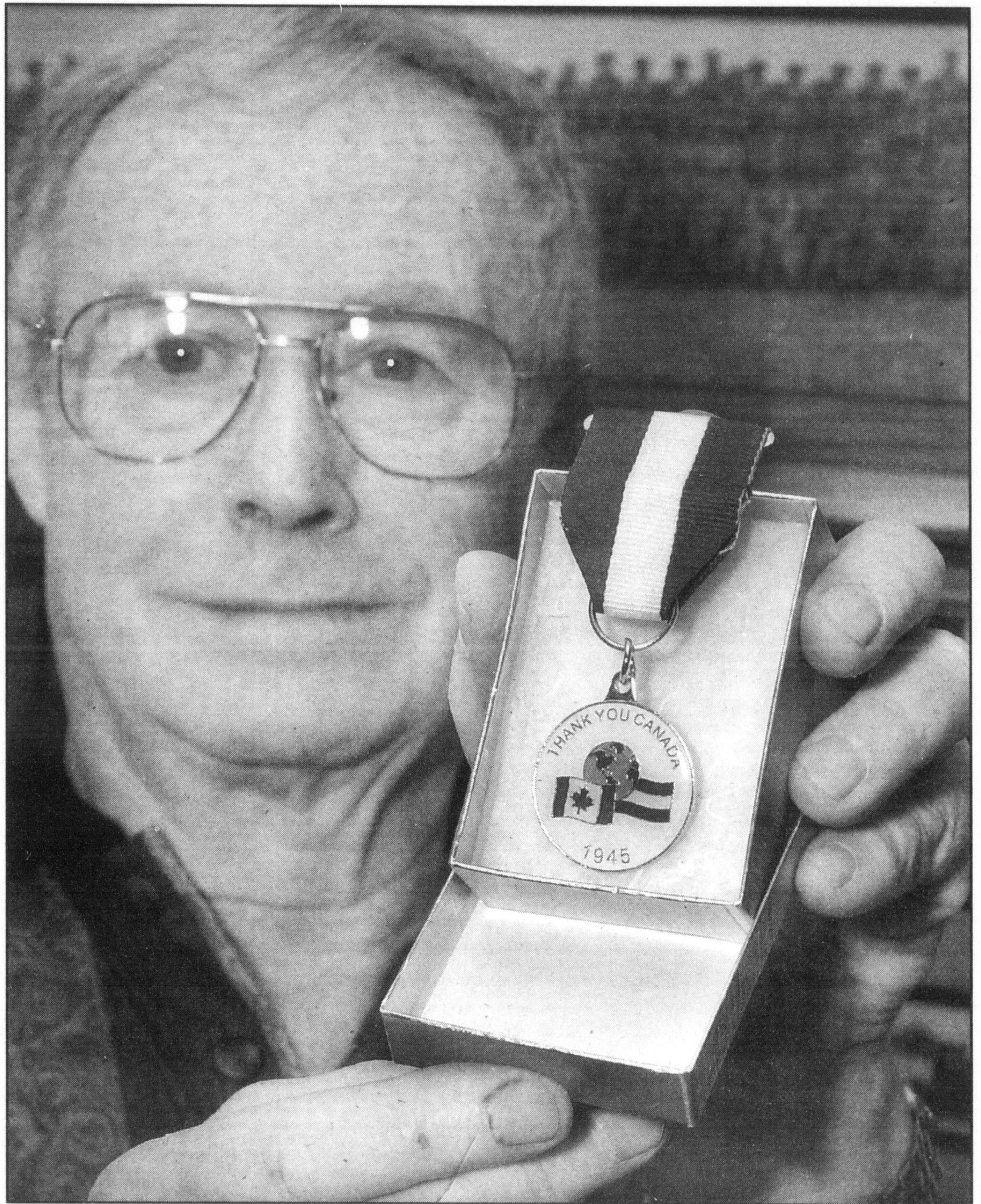


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

George St. Cyr shows the Dutch Commemorative Medal he was presented with during a special ceremony earlier this month.

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**COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — March 18th - March 25th, 2002.**

Monday, March 18th	Tuesday, March 19th	Wednesday, March 20th	Thursday, March 21st	Sunday, March 24th	Monday, March 25th
9:00am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am & noon Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	9:00am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition
10:00am Sunday Replay	10:00am Monday Replay	10:00am Tuesday Replay	10:00am Wednesday Replay	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	10:00am Sunday Replay
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	5:30pm Money Week	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition
5:30pm With Good Taste	5:30pm Seniors Showcase	5:30pm Osler Health Connection	5:30pm With Good Taste	6:30pm Seniors Showcase	5:30pm With Good Taste
6:30pm Money Week	6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	6:30pm Swap Talk (Live)	6:30pm Neighbour to Neighbour	7:00pm PeopleSpeak	6:30pm Money Week
7:00pm People Speak	8:00pm Georgetown Hockey Heritage Awards	8:00pm Auto Experts (Live)	8:00pm Ontario PC Leadership Debate	8:00pm Neighbour to Neighbour	7:00pm PeopleSpeak
8:00pm SportZONE Live					8:00pm SportsZONE Live

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