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Champion COMMUNITY Page

Returning from Second World War biggest moment in local veteran Kelman's 82 years

Served in several countries during five years of service

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Huck Kelman doesn't much resemble the person in the photo — a fresh-faced young man in uniform, barely 19, ready to kiss his family goodbye and leave for war.

The once smooth face is now lined from a life of joys and hardship and the chestnut hair is now snowy white.

But the eyes prove without a doubt the two are, indeed, the same person.

The shockingly light blue eyes dance with life and sparkle as they do in the photo, obvious even in black and white.

And as Mr. Kelman, 82, remembers the day he returned from war, it's easy to picture him marching with pride through the streets of downtown Toronto, those same eyes shining.

"It was a lovely day," Mr. Kelman said of the parade he participated in on the day he returned. "We marched down Yonge Street. I think everybody in Toronto came out. All my family was there. I saw my mother for the first time in five years."

Mr. Kelman — whose real first name is Duncan — has been looking forward to Remembrance Day, as he does each and every year. Today, he'll take part in the Remembrance Day service at Evergreen Cemetery and tonight he'll attend the Remembrance Banquet at the Legion.

On this particular day, he's busy preparing for Remembrance Day activities. His uniform jacket hangs on a coat hanger, proudly bearing its medals. In front of him, the coffee table is scattered with old photos and clips of newspaper articles he's been featured in.

Mr. Kelman fought in the Second World War from 1940 to 1945, serving in such countries as Italy, France, Germany, Belgium and Holland. He stayed briefly at a hospital in Malta for a minor injury.

Although Mr. Kelman doesn't speak



Second World War veteran Huck Kelman holds a picture of himself taken in June 1940, shortly after he enlisted to serve in the Canadian Army.

Photo by
GRAHAM PAINE

much of the atrocities he witnessed, he's more than happy to talk about what it was like returning to his family and home in Milton, where he's lived since the day he was born.

"It was the biggest moment of my life," he said, referring to the exact date he returned — October 1, 1945. "I kissed the ground."

After getting off the train at Union Station, he and the other returning men and women marched in a parade along Queen Street to University Avenue. Four other Milton "boys" were with him.

There were about seven with whom he left for war. "My family came down to see the Milton boys. It was really something. I'll never forget it."

He remembers hugging his mother, the two of them crying.

Mr. Kelman said he returned to the house

on Main Street he had left five years earlier, and tried to resume his life. Though it took a while to re-adjust, he counts himself one of the lucky ones. He didn't turn to alcohol to cope as it seemed so many returning servicemen did.

After leaving the living room and returning with an armload of more photos, Mr. Kelman talked about his most traumatic time during the war.

He held out a photo of himself, four years earlier, standing beside a gravestone. The young man who died, Wilbert Coxe, was 23 and from Milton. He was Mr. Kelman's best friend. A moment later, Mr. Kelman found a photo taken in 1940 of the two of them together.

Mr. Kelman made the emotional visit to the graveside when he travelled to Sicily for the 55th Anniversary of the Italian Campaign Veterans' Pilgrimage in 1999.

He said he cried while standing beside the grave stone. "We grew up together, went to school together and joined the army together. We were always together."

Though Mr. Kelman will never forget any of the pain from the war, he said he's had a good life.

Two years after he returned, he got married. He and his wife, Lilly, have now been married for 57 years.

It's only been in the past few years that he has talked to his children about his experiences, Mr. Kelman said, explaining that he "wanted to forget about it for a while."

Now, he often brings out his war memorabilia. "I look at it all the time. My wife thinks I'm crazy half the time," he said, blue eyes sparkling.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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Programming Schedule — Tuesday, Nov 11th - Monday, November 17th, 2003

Tuesday, November 11	Wednesday, November 12	Thursday, November 13	Friday, November 14	Sunday, November 16	Monday, November 17
5, 6 & 7:30pm Plugged In! Early Week Edition 5:30pm Seniors Showcase 6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live) 8:00pm Halton Hills Council: November 3rd	5, & 6 pm Plugged In! Early Week Edition 5:30pm The War Amps present... 6:30pm Be Inspired 7:00pm Swap Talk (Live) 8:00pm Georgetown Santa Claus Parade	5, & 6pm Plugged In! Early Week Edition 5:30pm Oser Health Connection 6:30pm Main Street 8:00pm The War Amps present...	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5, 6 & 7:30pm Plugged In! Late Week Edition 5:30pm Be Inspired! 6:30pm Seniors Showcase 7:00pm Oser Health Connection 8:00pm Georgetown Santa Claus Parade	5, 6 & 7:30pm Plugged In! Late Week Edition 5:30pm The War Amps present... 6:30pm With Good Taste 7:00pm Be Inspired 8:00pm SportsZONE Live

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