

Astronaut presents student award via video link

By GILLIAN CORMIER
Special to The Champion

The first graduates of Chris Hadfield Public School received a special electronic visit from the school's namesake astronaut at the grade 8 ceremony Tuesday night.

"We've been planning this all year long," said Principal Rick Nodwell. "But it took three or four months of heavy planning."

The 85 graduates, students, parents, Mayor Gord Krantz and Halton Regional School Board Chair Paul Tate were present to witness Col. Chris Hadfield's broadcast, which was made live via video link from the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas. The appearance was made possible through a joint effort of the Canadian Space Agency, NASA, and the Halton District School Board.

"I'm really pleased you invited me here tonight to celebrate the first alumni of Chris Hadfield Public School," said Col. Hadfield, who appeared on a large projection screen.

He was able to see those in front of him as well as be seen by the crowd in the school's gym.

After greeting the crowd and offering his congratulations to the graduates, he announced the winner of the Chris Hadfield Award of Excellence. Mayor Krantz presented the award to Matthew Carson on behalf of Col. Hadfield.

"I don't have anything prepared," said Matthew as he approached the microphone with his sizable trophy. "But I would like to say thanks for this prestigious honour."

Col. Hadfield then offered him some advice on public speaking.

"Thank somebody, and then talk about the weather. Hopefully by then you've thought of something to say."

Matthew replied, "I would like to

thank my parents, and how about this heat?"

The crowd laughed, and Col. Hadfield flashed him a thumbs-up of approval.

Matthew, who graduated with honours, was also presented with the Student of Excellence Award for 2003 and the Excellence in English Award. He was chosen as the recipient of the Chris Hadfield Award of Excellence for being the best all-around example of the spirit of Chris Hadfield Public School, and someone with extraordinary academic potential.

Matthew was grateful for the award and said he would take Col. Hadfield's advice on public speaking to heart.

Students ask questions

Students then asked Col. Hadfield some questions about his work as chief of robotics at NASA.

"Next week we are going to smash a satellite into comet to see what comets are made of," he said.

He also announced there would be a shuttle launch in the next two weeks, which would utilize a space arm that had been partially built in Milton.

"Canadians should take great pride," he said. "We build the best space robots in the world."

Col. Hadfield had just returned from a speaking tour of schools in Scotland, and told students that his message was nothing is impossible forever.

"When I was growing up, the idea that a Canadian could go into space seemed impossible," he said. "Things change. I'm living proof of that."

In his closing, he reminded graduates that this was their night, and they should take the time to enjoy and remember it.

He encouraged the graduates to take a look at the people around them when they received their

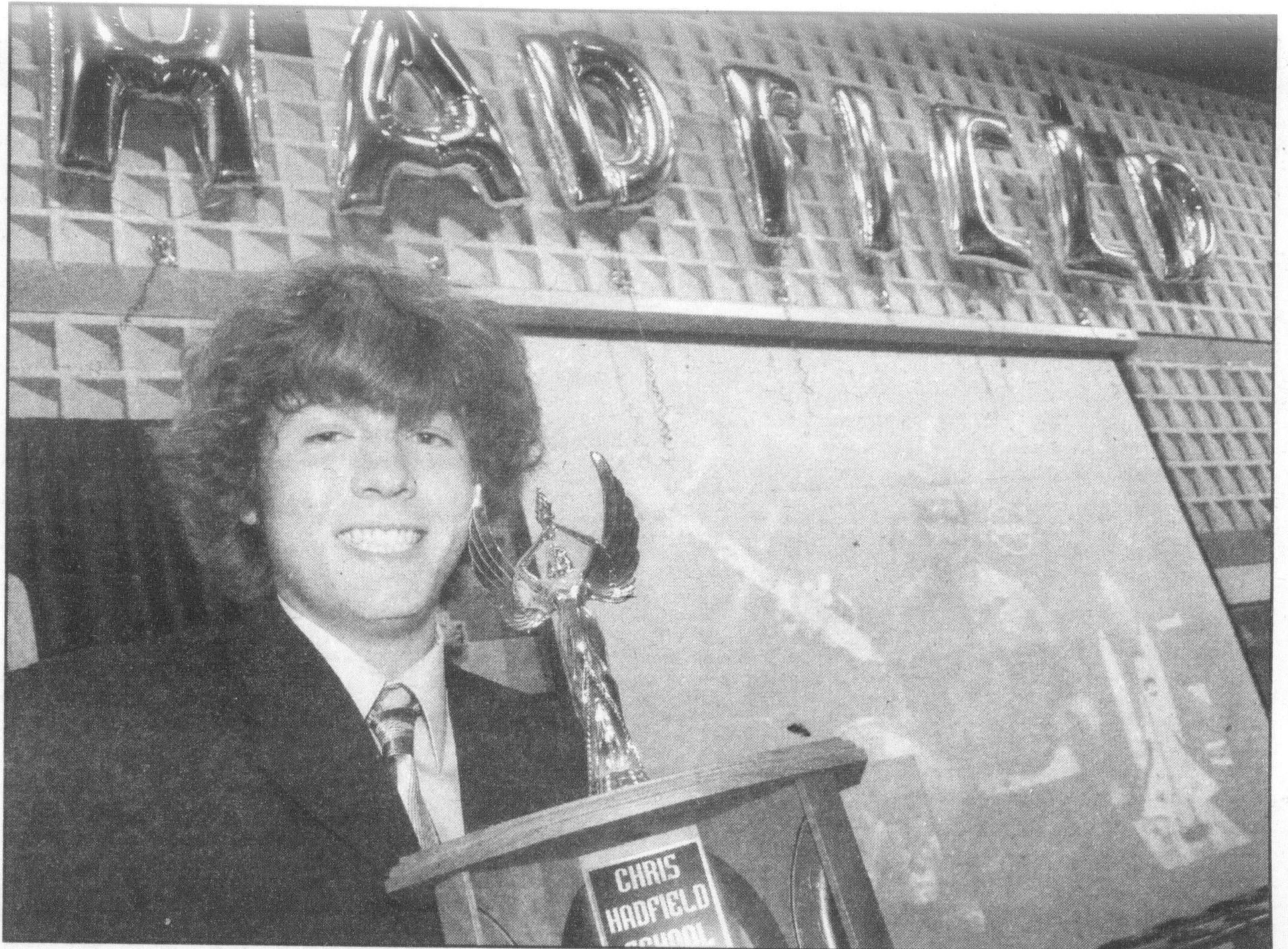


Photo by ASHLEA WESSEL

Award winner Matthew Carson stands proudly before Col. Chris Hadfield's image on the video link from the Johnson Space Centre.

diplomas, because some of the people they see will be friends 60 years down the road.

He also said that they were probably feeling the same excitement and nervousness as the astronauts who will be sent into space in a few weeks.

But he told them they should also feel the same sense of accomplishment in completing this phase and starting something new.

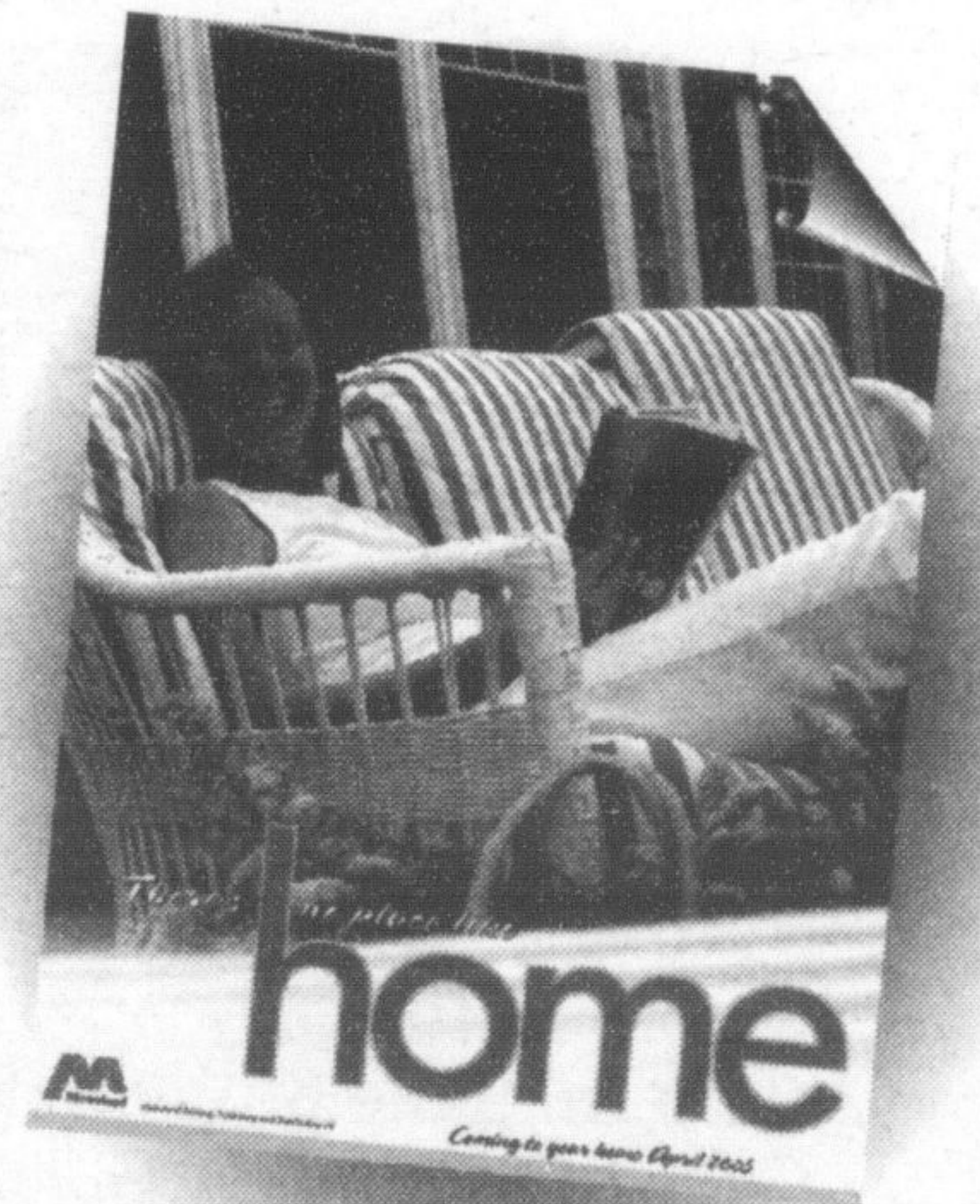
"You are finished your training," said Col. Hadfield. "Tonight is your launch."



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNER!

From left to right: Steve Houston, Scarborough Mirror, Peter Alfermann, Black and Decker, the winner Robert Billingham, Chris Rausch, Metroland, Corporate Sales Division.

Robert's grand prize package includes a MM875: 19" Electric Mulching Mower, NPP2018: 18 Volt Cordless Pole Pruner, CHT500: 14.4 Volt Cordless 22" Hedge Trimmer, BV4000: High Performance Blower Vac, NST2018: 12 Volt Cordless Trimmer and a LE750: 2 in 1 Landscape Edger



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WATCH FOR OUR FALL ISSUE OF THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME COMING TO YOUR DOOR SEPTEMBER, 2005



OAKVILLE

Quality of Life

TRAFALGAR WAR MEMORIAL

Honour Roll Now Available for Final Review

Construction of the Trafalgar War Memorial is nearing completion. This memorial, located at the corner of Central Park Drive and Oak Park Boulevard in Oakville, will include an Honour Roll specifically dedicated to Trafalgar Township residents who served in one of the Great Wars (WWI, WWII), and the Korean War.

A comprehensive list of names compiled by the Trafalgar Memorial Committee is being published from June 30th to July 31st to confirm existing details and gather additional information. The list, as well as "correction" forms are available on the Town's website at www.oakville.ca, and at the following locations:

Oakville: Town Hall, Sir John Colborne Seniors Centre, Oakville Seniors Centre (Kerr St.), Community Centres, Libraries, Legions and the Halton Regional Centre.

Milton: Town Hall, the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre (MSAC) and the Legion.

Burlington: City Hall, the Burlington Seniors' Centre and the Legion.

If you have any questions, or are interested in donating to the Trafalgar War Memorial please contact:

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