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A & E
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A Metroland Media Group publication • Vol. 151 No. 25

Thursday, June 3, 2010

64 Pages • \$1.00 (incl. G.S.T.)

Remembering D-Day like it was yesterday

"I was scared then. That was the first time I was really scared"

-- Lucien Berube

By Stephanie Housell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

As deadly shells from German aircraft spewed around him, Lucien Berube burrowed into a mound of earth, trying to cover himself and imitate the lifeless bodies that lay strewn along the beaches of Normandy.

It was June 6, 1944. D-Day. And Berube's first taste of combat.

"I was scared then. That was the first time I was really scared," he said.

He spent the night that way, lying there and no doubt thinking about his young bride, Alice, at home.

Playing dead served him well that night. But in no way did it represent a man who backed down, in love or in war. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Berube, 92, doesn't think of himself as a hero or deserving of particular recognition, no matter what the five medals he dug out indicate.

In fact, he was reluctant about having a story written about him, despite — or maybe because of — the fact he remembers the D-Day landings with razor-sharp clarity.

But he agreed, perhaps because this Sunday marks the 66th anniversary of D-Day. And for nearly two hours he's taken back to a different time.

His war stories, though, are couched between longer and more detailed stories, ones he relishes telling, of his late wife, Alice — how they met, how hard it was for them to be apart during the war, their fairytale reunion and their long and happy life



MICHAEL IVANIN / METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

GOING BACK 66 YEARS: Second World War veteran Lucien Berube doesn't think of himself as a hero no matter what his five medals indicate.

together afterward.

If his life were a movie, it would be a romance, with his time in the war just a few scenes.

Alice passed away in 2003, and with Berube — at the time of this interview — just days from moving out of what was their home for almost 50 years together in old

Milton, it's no wonder she's forefront in his mind.

"This is where she sat," he said, pointing to his chair — one of two at a small table in the dining room of the nearly packed-up house. They bought the house brand new in 1956 for \$15,000.

"I told Alice, 'I'm going to look after you

the rest of my life.'"

And, as his neighbours can attest, he did just that, he said.

He speaks of her final days when he'd push her down the sidewalk in her wheelchair, making sure she was covered and warm.

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