

# Lifestyle

Wednesday, November 9, 1988

**30% OFF Gold Chains**  
FULL LINE OF JEWELLERY AND REPAIRS  
**HOVELS & JEWELLERS**  
SHOPPERS WORLD: 590 MAIN ST. SOUTH, BRAMPTON, ONT. L6Y 1J7, 851-2645  
CARRIAGE SQUARE: 245 MAIN STREET EAST, MILTON, ONTARIO L9T 1P1, 876-2736

## Community Notebook

# Veteran concludes war is unnecessary

'Little children. They seem to know what was going on. Old people with forlorn looking faces, as if they had come to the end of the world.'

**Forum on Drugs:** Next week is Drug Awareness Week and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Oakville and Oakville-Trafalgar High School are presenting a public forum. Addition: Impact on the Family. The event will be held Wednesday Nov. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at Oakville-Trafalgar High School, Reynolds Road, auditorium. For details call CMHA at 845-5044.

**Art Auction:** Buy some early Christmas gifts or add to your own art collection at the first annual Gala Art Auction presented by Milton YMCA and the local branch of the Canadian Federation of University Women. The event will be held Friday Nov. 18 at Holy Rosary Parish Hall, Martin Street. Proceeds will go to the women's club's scholarship program and to the YMCA's pre-school programs, day camps and youth employment service.

**Noon Concert:** The first Noon Hour Concert of the 1988-1989 season will be presented at Hugh Foster Hall next Wednesday. The popular concerts have moved from Milton Public Library to the newly renovated meeting hall next to town hall. Ticket prices stay the same as last year at \$3 for adults, \$2 for senior citizens and students. Coffee is served at 11:45 a.m. and the music begins at noon. Rides are available to seniors by calling 878-3264 or 878-9093.

**Kids' Fashions:** Hornby Co-op Nursery School will provide a preview of children's fashions featuring clothes from local stores including Primates and As We Grow. The second annual Children's Fashion Show is being held at John Knox Christian School on McLaughlin Road, Brampton, from 2-3:30 p.m. on Saturday Nov. 19. Admission is \$6. For more information and to obtain tickets call Idona Wood at 878-9410.

**Women's Issues:** Barbara Sullivan, MPP Halton Centre has been appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. After Premier David Peterson's recent announcement, Ms Sullivan said it is an honour to work with a minister of the calibre of Greg Sorbara. The MPP for Halton Centre is also a member of the Select Committee on Energy and is a member of the Board of Internal Economy.

**Nurses Welcome:** Nurses and would-be nurses are invited to explore the career opportunities at Ontario's largest psychiatric hospital, Queen Street Mental Health Centre. Nursing department staff will be available to answer questions during an open house tomorrow (Thursday) from noon to 6 p.m. Call 1-535-8501 ext. 125 for more information.

**Tour Time:** Explore some of Milton's fine homes during the Big Sisters Christmas House Tour. Tickets are available at \$10 each which entitle the holder to tour five homes decorated for Christmas and a visit, complete with snacks, to Springridge Farm on Bell School Line. Get your ticket at Country Feelings, Martin Street, Milton Greenhouses on Main Street or the Lowville General Store. Tickets may also be reserved by calling 878-7772 or 878-0378.

By ROB KELLY  
His big hands cradle the fragile instrument the way a bricklayer might hold a kitten. The delicate violin sits high on his shoulder. The bow glides jauntily, the size-12 foot taps steadily, the tune tumbles out. Tom Bradley smiles. It is Milton in 1988.

The German biplane banks gracefully and its prop points toward the terrified teenager.

Numb with horror until this moment, the boy now knows he is the next intended victim of an aerial hunter who has just killed 16 men he knew. The plane bores in like a peregrine falcon and the nose machinegun erupts fire, tracer bullets.

Tom Bradley is a well-conditioned kid, fast for a big man. A former physical training instructor in the rear areas, his speed and stamina are the only things standing between him and almost certain death. The tracers chop up the wooden planks laid over the sea of mud. Tom Bradley dives for cover. The plane pulls up and away, seeking less elusive targets. It is Belgium in 1918.

The boy pulls himself out of the mud. He runs to where his friends stood only a few minutes before. He had left them to perform an errand, as ordered. He had seen the biplane dip a wing over their position, then drop a bomb squarely in their midst. They are all gone.

The boy runs and calls out. Around him all is quiet now, except for the distant rumbling explosions. The ground has been churned into a mire, impassable except on the makeshift wooden roads. The landscape is almost alien, with no grass, no trees, no points of reference except in the distance the unseen but certain presence of the enemy.

A voice hails him. Reassuring, it beckons. "C'mon laddie, I'll make you a cup of tea." Tom Bradley follows the voice to a shell hole, a blast crater that has partially filled with water. In it he finds a friendly face heating brackish water from the puddle to brew the tea. The older veteran calms the young soldier down. They share the broth.

"He had a rosary," Mr. Bradley, a Protestant, recalled. "I asked him if he was Catholic. He said he was, 'but it doesn't make a damn bit of difference here. It changed my attitude as far as religion and people were concerned.'" Mr. Bradley abandoned the religious stigma he had heard at home in Ontario once and for all.

At 90 he lives in a crowded room at Halton Centennial Manor. His mind maintains much of the agility his body was gifted with earlier in life. He recalls dates, faces, names from 70 years before. When he can't place an event or call up someone's first name from the distant past he says "isn't that awful," over the small failing.

Mr. Bradley's eyesight is dimming. He pores over a yellowed hardcover book documenting the exploits of the Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles, which was actually an infantry brigade, and to which he belonged.

The unit's course through the First World War is tracked in red, macabre and appropriate, over a map at the front of the volume.

explosions "just like fireworks."

The town itself, like so many of the ruins of once-bustling Europe, was an eerily silent collection of abandoned skeletal buildings as the troops moved in to fight over rubble. The civilians passed them, fleeing the other way.

"It was a pathetic sight," Mr. Bradley recalls. "Little children. They seemed to know what was going on. Old people with forlorn



It's been 70 years since Tom Bradley's war ended. Asked if he would do it again, he paused and replied, "It's a pretty hard question to answer. I think I'd have to be governed by what was at stake. If the country was in jeopardy, yes."

He can no longer read the red trail, so it is read to him. It charts places such as Passchendale and Ypres, Arras and Amiens, a list of devastated venues shattered and seeped in the blood of millions.

It was at Passchendale that the plane attacked. It is but a small bas-relief memory in a large panorama of tragedy. The unit's casualty figures attest to its conquests and its suffering. Of 304 men in Mr. Bradley's company, 200 become casualties. Sixty-eight are killed, 132 wounded. One is taken prisoner.

"It was terrible, terrible," the veteran says now. He does not dwell on the war or his memories, but he has them carefully preserved, a personal history lesson he would not care to see repeated by anyone.

At Arras he saw a cavalry charge by Canadians, one of the desperately flawed tactics of the war. The mounted unit followed an artillery barrage into the German positions, and was in turn followed by Mr. Bradley's infantry. The horsemen were decimated by withering enemy machinegun and infantry fire.

At Arras he was a sergeant-major, promoted because so many had been killed. It was there he was exposed to chemical warfare, a phosgene gas attack. The gas barrage was beautiful to watch as it rolled in, he recalls, a deadly mist counterpointing brilliant colourful

looking faces, as if they had come to the end of the world."

At Amiens the Canadians surprised the Germans. There was none of the meat-grinder Allied carnage as in some previous battles. "We caught the enemy flat-footed." They crushed the Germans in a lopsided victory, killing many. "It was awful."

A sense of the dreadful, determined combat becomes apparent in Mr. Bradley's recollections. Barrage balloons hovered high to observe enemy movements. Enormous artillery bombardments were called in, followed by waves of tanks and infantry surging in precise but often futile attacks.

His unit spent between a month and two months on the line once, (he can't remember exactly how long). It was a time of indescribable pressure. The Canadians had battled into a forward position. The Germans enveloped the root of the bottleneck, constantly threatening to cut off the intruders.

Men went mad. Covered in lice, never dry, smothered in mud and surrounded by pointless death they committed suicide, Mr. Bradley remembers. Others lay on their backs and swung their legs in the air, hoping to draw enemy fire and a flesh wound so they would be pulled out of action.

See VETERAN page L53

**MILTON MALL**

## MILTON'S MALL HAS GOT IT ALL!

Mon.-Fri. 10:00 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sat. 9:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.