



Second World War veteran Hugh Beaty laughs as Roger Hadfield drives him and two comrades back to the Legion in a restored vintage military jeep during last year's Remembrance Day Service. *File photo by Graham Paine / Canadian Champion (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog)*

Beaty recalls harrowing experiences

"Three times I should have been killed," he said, recounting the first. "We'd travel in our vehicles, leap-frogging over each other.

"I was with Bill Marshall, a French Canadian who was driving and we got lost...it was just the two of us.

"Suddenly, we find ourselves down in the ditches," he said, noting German snipers surrounded them on every front.

"That day, I don't know why we didn't get picked off, but we turned around and got out of there really fast."

On another occasion, Beaty said he was face-to-face with a German sniper who "pulled the trigger instead of squeezing it," he recalled.

"I would have been dead if he squeezed it."

Raised in the small Milton village of Omagh, where he still lives in the same house he was born, Beaty was posted to the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, made up of soldiers from the Hamilton Light Infantry, Essex Scotts and the

Royal Regiment.

His job was repairing artillery and small arms, a skill he was taught after enlisting at 22 years old, just months after he married Melba.

The two had met at a Junior Farmers Dance quite by chance. It was lunch and sandwiches were being served, he chuckled, recalling the moment. "I had my hand on the seat next to mine, and she sat down — right on my hand." They were married for nearly 61 years before she died in 2002.

He clearly remembers his return home from the war, as his train rolled into Union Station in Toronto. Friends, his parents and Melba were all there waiting for him.

"She was glad to see me," he said, laughing, "at least I think she was."

During their long war-time separation, they exchanged letters regularly, which Melba kept, until their two children got into them one day, as youngsters are apt to do.

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