

...continued from page 15



have stories from their own families, or bring in medals or other family memorabilia. One student showed me a photo in his copy of *Dieppe: Canada's Darkest Day* on which he'd drawn a circle around one man's head in a group photo of prisoners of war. "That's my grandfather," he said. So I'd like students to realize that history is literally "our story," not something remote or dull that they have to learn about in school.

**Can you share with our readers the marvelous performances you have written, like *Canada, Fall In!* (a dramatic depiction of the events of 1914-18), and *Dark Days, Bright Victory* (a tribute to the Canadians in World War II), both of which "brought audiences to their feet and to tears"?**

Yes, these performances I've done with the Elora Festival Singers and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir conducted by Noel Edison have been really great experiences. I've discovered how potent a story can be when combined with affecting music and images. At the end of *Canada, Fall In!*, for example, the choir sings "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" while I show photos of young men in uniform and war graves and there is rarely a dry eye.

**What are you working on next?**

I'm planning a major extravaganza for Canada 150 in 2017, with choir and guest stars, tentatively entitled *With Glowing Hearts*. I've started a new play following up on my play about the Arthur Currie trial, *Last Day, Last Hour*, though set more recently in Toronto. And I have an idea for a romantic historical young adult novel, something quite new and different for me.

**What do you read for personal pleasure, and what are you reading now?**

I read mostly history and biography and fiction only occasionally. I used to be a big fiction reader but find I read less of it now. At the moment, I'm reading Erik Larsen's *Dead Wake* about the *Lusitania*. I'm a great admirer of everything he writes. I'm also enjoying a non-fiction book by Sebastian Faulks who is best-known for his novels like *Birdsong*. It's called *The Fatal Englishman* and is about three young men of great promise who all led shortened lives. Faulks, too, writes extremely well.

**Thank you, Hugh. ■**