



Nov. 11 has real meaning for World War II veterans Walter and Aurelia Smith, Rose Avenue, Stouffville. Walter served overseas with the R.C.A.F. Aurelia (Jennings) enlisted in the navy (W.R.E.N.S.) and was stationed at Halifax. Both are long-time members of Stouffville Branch 459, Royal Canadian Legion and the Legion Ladies Auxiliary.

Husband and wife pause to remember

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — It was 'business as usual' in Stouffville Wednesday. Traffic didn't grind to a halt at 11 a.m. Neither did pedestrians stop what they were doing for two minutes of silence. To most, it was just another day.

But not to Walter and Aurelia Smith of Rose Avenue, Stouffville. They remembered.

Both Walter and Aurelia served in World War II, an event in history that's just as real to them in 1987 as in 1939.

"I can't believe 42 years have gone by," said Walt in the quiet of the couple's quaint, comfortable home.

The conflict ended in 1945. Walt enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942 as an air frame mechanic. He received his basic training in Galt and St. Thomas, going overseas a year later.

Lloyd Weldon, formerly of Stouffville and now of Uxbridge, was on the same ship. Aurelia (Jennings) signed up with the women's navy corps (WRENS). She too received her basic training at Galt and was later posted to Halifax.

A switchboard operator by profession, her services were in demand at this vital Maritime port.

Meanwhile, Walt was hedge-hopping across France, Holland and Germany in the rear of a single-engine 'spotter plane', not unlike a Piper Cub. His unit worked in close communication with the artillery, so close in fact, he felt as much a part of the army as the airforce.

"Worry?" he questioned, "no, we never worried. It was a case of eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow you may die."

Many did die.

Fortunately, Walt came through un-

scathed.

Both Walt and Aurelia remember the day the Armistice was signed. Walt was in Lille, France.

"We took everything in stride," he recalls, but the French people didn't. "There was dancing in the streets," he said.

There was even more excitement in Halifax where a near riot occurred, remembers Aurelia. All the liquor and beer stores were closed, a decision many didn't appreciate. People took out their resentment on government buildings and private properties.

Aurelia was given her honorable discharge in '45.

Walt came home in '46.

"They kind of forgot about us," Walt says with a smile in explaining the delay.

Walter vividly remembers the appreciation shown by native people when their towns and cities were freed.

"We were treated like kings, especially in Holland," he says.

Walt and Aurelia were married in 1948.

Every year prior to the Remembrance Day service at the Stouffville Legion Hall, Walt places a poppy at the grave sites of Aurelia's father, Del Jennings and Mr. Jennings' close friend Bert Lickorish.

"Bert did a lot for the boys. He should never be forgotten," says Walt.

But many have forgotten, Walt and Aurelia admit, mainly because they don't remember. War is only something they see on the TV national news or read about in history books.

But not Walter and Aurelia Smith. They remember 'the real thing'. And they'd do it all again.

"It was an experience," says Walt, "like nothing one can describe. Boys became men real fast."

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