

83-year-old still entertaining troops

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer



MARGARET ACKROYD: Entertainer toured with The Happy Gang after Second World War.

Margaret Ackroyd's old Second World War uniform still gets a lot of laughs.

When Mrs. Ackroyd entertained a group of Whitchurch-Stouffville scouts and cubs at Stouffville United Church Wednesday evening, she had 60 years of comic material to draw from. One of her favorites is the Old Sow song.

"I snort and oink. I'm like a ban-shee. I holler. I make terrible faces. I hop around. My legs are just a-kick-ing. It's wonderful," she said.

Mrs. Ackroyd's old uniform is part of her act. She's still in demand.

"To get into my uniform is more of a convulsion than a fit; my cargo has shifted," she said.

During the war years, Mrs. Ackroyd was beautiful and spunky. She entertained troops with the Canadian Women's Army Corps. Touring Canada, England, Scotland, Holland, Belgium and Germany, she played in hospitals, on armed forces bases and even on tailgates of army trucks.

Mrs. Ackroyd took to the stage with one goal in mind: helping sol-

diers take their minds off what was going on around them, if only for a short time.

MAKE THEM LAUGH

"I did silly songs. It's a whole lot easier to make people laugh than cry," she said.

Mrs. Ackroyd liked what she did so much, she re-enlisted to play Korea.

After returning home, she spent the next 20 years on stage. During the 1950s, it was with the well-known Happy Gang.

"We always played the Flin Flon Trout Festival," she recalled. Mrs.

Ackroyd also toured Canada as part of the Mark Kenny Show.

"I lived out of a suitcase for a long time," she said.

Today, Mrs. Ackroyd lives in Markham. She can still draw a crowd even as she approaches her 84th birthday.

A member of the Markham Veterans' Association and the Stouffville Royal Canadian Legion, she's always willing to help others learn about the war. Mrs. Ackroyd plays schools, libraries, community centres and churches.

"People still laugh," she said.

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