

Post-war life difficult

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At one point, Mr. Mowat and Mr. Balfour were flying from a former German air base in France, which was disguised as a farm. The hangars looked like barns and there were even cattle in the fields. Mr. Mowat particularly treasures one photograph of himself and his pilot at that air base with their bomber and a cow behind them.

As an aero-engine mechanic, Mrs. Mowat was moved all over the English countryside to service airplane engines. Anyone who wasn't in the armed forces was assigned to a job in industry.

In England during the war years, all women who didn't have children had to help in the war effort. There was no choice in where the government assigned the civilians.

"It was a case of survival," Mrs. Mowat said.

Women took over the equivalent of the Coast Guard Service in Britain and did all the jobs usually performed by men in peacetime.

After the war, the women went back to being housewives because many of the men came back to their old jobs.

The transition went fairly smoothly because "everybody was tired and wanted to get back to normal", Mrs. Mowat said.

For the first few years after the war, people were so traumatized by what they had been through that no one really talked about their experiences, even to their children, Mrs. Mowat noted.

"You hope it never happens again," Mrs. Mowat said, "but you don't know."

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It was difficult for many veterans to find jobs when they returned after the war. The Mowat family persisted, however, and Mr. Mowat got a job with the Canadian National Railway.

The family moved around 40

times throughout Ontario and Quebec over the years. They were always able to come back to their house in downtown Stouffville, which was purchased by Mr. Mowat's parents, Lilian and Magnus Shewan Mowat, in the 1950s. It gave a home base for their five children, Heather, Sara, Teresa, Bill and Joanne, whenever they returned from schools or jobs.

Mrs. Mowat worked at the original Stouffville library on Main Street from 1964 to 1969. She was asked to start the children's program there in the days before computer games and TV.

"Children read a lot," Mrs. Mowat recalls. "It was quite a popular place."

Now both are members of the Stouffville Legion. Mrs. Mowat is a member of both the legion and the ladies auxiliary "because I think they do a lot of good," she said.

She praised Mayor Sue Sherban for being supportive of the Stouffville Royal Canadian Legion, which carries out a variety of projects such as helping veterans, supporting Markham Stouffville Hospital and providing bursaries for Stouffville District Secondary School students.

Young nominees sought

If you know an outstanding young person who deserves recognition, you can nominate him or her for an Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year award.

Co-ordinated by the Ontario

Community Newspapers Association, of which this newspaper is a member, the awards are seeking nominations of six to 17-year-olds who are involved in community service or performed an act of heroism in the past year.

The Sun-Tribune will present a certificate of recognition to each young person nominated by Nov. 30.

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