

Thomas has tried to join legion

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participated in the unveiling of an 8,000-pound granite recognition stone honouring those who serve in the Canadian Forces at the York Regional Police headquarters in Georgina.

Friday morning when the Stouffville Legion branch 459 holds its annual Remembrance Day ceremony, Mr. Thomas will not be there.

Instead, he will attend the ceremony at Parkview, as he has for many years. He's been a resident of Parkview for the past 25 years.

Mr. Thomas said he has applied to become a member of the local legion two or three times over the years, including back in the 1950s and within the last 25 years, but he's "gotten no response. I don't know why."

Mr. Thomas said that is not the only reason why he won't attend the legion's ceremony. The other reasons he would not discuss.

"If Stouffville doesn't want me, I don't care," Mr. Thomas said, adding a couple other legions have asked him to join but he has turned down the invitations.

Upon hearing about Mr. Thomas' struggle to become a member, Judy Bond, the legion's president, said she was surprised.

"I would go over and take an application to him to fill it out," she offered.

Born in Gamesville, N.Y., Mr. Thomas' family, including a brother Gordon, moved to Montreal when he was 5. In 1920, the family took up residence in Toronto. A self-made success, Mr. Thomas never advanced past Grade 4. He honed his skills as a toolmaker with Acme Screw and Gear, then located on Weston Road.

Following a move to Stouffville, he worked for several area farmers including Albert Elson, Joe Winterstein, Bruce Morton and



MEL THOMAS: The Second World War veteran has been a resident at Parkview for 25 years.

Richard Williams.

In 1935, he married Muriel Williams, Richard's daughter. Prior to her death in 1997, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

FRIDAY SERVICE AT LEGION

Tomorrow, Nov. 11, the legion's first Remembrance Day service at its new building, 150 Mostar St., will begin at 10:45 a.m.

About 150 to 200 people attend the annual wreath-laying ceremony, according to Ms Bond.

"It's to honour the veterans, to support the ones who are still living. That is what the legion is all about," she said.

A lunch will be served by the Ladies' Auxiliary following the ceremony. It is free and open to all.

— with files from John Slykhuis and Jim Thomas

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