

# Life stories

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## Veteran Carm Shier was admired by everyone

BY LISA QUEEN  
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If anyone needed a helping hand, they never had to reach out farther than to Carm Shier.

"He was generous, very generous. You have the cause and Carm would support it," his friend, Norm Smart, said while reminiscing about Shier's life at the Newmarket branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, with fellow comrades Don Bishop and John King.

"He should be remembered for his kindness and generosity. If you were his friend, you were his friend for life."

Shier, the last living founding father of the legion and a charter member of the Newmarket Veterans' Association, died Dec. 22 at the age of 90.

It was standing-room only at his funeral at New Hope Methodist Church on Dec. 28.

"Sometimes, when you get into your 90s, you don't think you have many friends around, but it (the church) was loaded," Bishop said.

"It was a tremendous send-off for a great guy," Smart added.

Shier enlisted with the 2nd Royal Canadian Artillery on Aug. 13, 1943 at the age of 18.

After serving as a gunner in France, Holland and Germany, he was discharged on June 14, 1946.

Shier was awarded the 1935 to



Carm Shier

1945 Service Medal and the France Star.

After returning home, he began a career as an aircraft worker.

He met his future wife, Margaret, while she was working at a bank in Aurora and a romance blossomed.

The couple had a son, David, who died about 20 years ago.

Margaret died about 14 years ago, after battling Alzheimer's disease.

"They most definitely had a lov-

ing relationship. When she was in hospital, he went every day to feed her morning, noon and night," Smart said, adding Shier had a good sense of humour.

"I remember Carm coming into the club one time and he said, 'I think my wife is getting better.' I said 'What do you mean, Carm? She has Alzheimer's.' He said, 'I know, but every day I go in and say, 'Do you know who I am?' and Margaret says, 'Yes, I know who you are.' Today, I went in and said, 'Margaret, do you know who I am?' and she said, 'If you don't know, I'm not telling you.'"

In 1947, Shier joined the legion and over the next seven decades, served in a wide variety of roles, including first and second vice-president, sports officer, sick and visiting officer and a member of the financial committee.

Always helping out at the branch, it was unheard of for Shier to turn down a request to help in any way.

He assisted every year with the Remembrance Day poppy campaign, a cause near and dear to his heart.

He also helped for many years with setting up the crosses and candles for the candlelight vigil at the cenotaph.

Until it was cancelled, Shier helped with the legion's annual soapbox derby on Main Street.

Always an active participant in the legion's sports and recreation activities, Shier was particularly proud of being on the winning 10-man provincial championship cribbage team in 1960.

"He was as proud as a peacock," Bishop said.

If Shier, an avid card player, ever lost a game, his friends at the legion would tease him by taking the championship plaque off the wall and vowing not to return it until he was on a winning streak.

"I'll have you up on charges," he'd say," Bishop laughed.

Shier was a founding member of the veterans' association and served on the executive board for more than 30 years in many roles, including president more than once.

One of his most noted contributions was performing the roll call every year at the Decoration Day services, a role he performed up until last June.

Shier also played baseball in the veterans' league in Bradford well into his old age.

For 49 years, he volunteered with the annual Newmarket house league hockey tournament, always honoured to be the one to drop the puck on opening night.

Shier was a proud member for many years of the men's a cappella singing group, the Upper Canada Chordsmen Chorus.

He donated financially to more than a dozen charities, including the Alzheimer Society of Canada, and also sponsored two children through UNICEF.

Always up for anything, Shier and a group of friends began taking annual trips together after Margaret died.

He enjoyed ice fishing and never met a breakfast he didn't like.

"He would eat breakfast four times a day. He loved to go out for breakfast. He loved fat and salt," Bishop said.

"And he was just a little guy," King added.

Shier was well loved and respected, Bishop said.

"He was the type of man who would never say anything derogatory about any person. He always had something nice to say about everybody," he said.

"He was very well admired by everybody in town. There was nobody who disrespected Carm."

King agreed.

"The women used to say he was a very sweet man, which was true. You can't get around that," he said.

Shier is survived by his twin sister, Linda Silver, and sisters Verna Williamson and Gwen Brown, brother-in-law Richard Bielat and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by sister June Lee and brothers Wes and Trevor.

Life stories



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