Vignettes of the Beach & East Toronto On the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

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Remembering World War II
Vignettes of the Beach and East Toronto

For Canada the Second World War began at 10:23 p.m. September 9, 1939 with an unrecorded vote in the House of Commons, six days after Britain and France had declared war on Nazi Germany. Things had changed since World War I when Britain's declaration of war had automatically included Canada. This time the decision was made in Canada and by Parliament.

In his address to the country, with an eye to Canada's political realities, Prime Minister Mackenzie King said "Our effort will be voluntary. The people of Canada will, I know, face the days of stress and strain with calm and resolute courage. There is no home in Canada, no family and no individual whose fortunes and freedom are not bound up in the present struggle. I appeal to my fellow Canadians to unite in a national effort to save from destruction all that makes life worth living and to preserve for future generations those liberties and institutions which others have bequeathed to us."

In 1939 Canada plus Newfoundland, which was still a separate British colony, had about 12 million people. Nearly 600,000 of them were unemployed as a result of the Great Depression which had dragged on for 10 years. By 1943 a million plus men and women would be working in war industries. The war would see the armed forces swell from about 10,000 to more than a million and that now included over 50,000 women in uniform including more than 4,000 nurses. The all-important merchant navy would grow from about 1,400 men to 8,000.

In 1940 what is now known as Ward 32 was Ward 8, which had a population of 82,465. Ward 8 was served by two city councillors, Walter A. Howell (who was first elected in 1928) and William H. Collings, from Danforth Avenue, who was serving his first term.

By the end of the war in 1945, the population of Ward 8 had grown little and stood at 83,000 people, reflecting the large number of men and women who were still engaged in active service or who had died.

These are some of the stories of the people from this community who won the war, either in battle or on the home front.

For King and Country

While many young men were eager to join the war effort, many were influenced by the lack of jobs at home. For some like Bill Hussey, it was just an impulsive act.

Bill Hussey

In 1940 Bill Hussey, then 21, was in the final stages of a printing apprenticeship and had just been

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Toronto on May 22, 1939 to take in the King's Plate at Woodbine Race Track then located at Queen and Woodbine. King George used his North American trip to press the US and Canada for support for the war against Germany that he knew was imminent.

bawled out by his boss. He went to visit his fiancée, a nurse at Toronto General Hospital for a little comfort, and learned that she was being transferred to Hamilton. Dispirited, he walked down University Avenue and found his way to the Armories where he signed up to serve in the army.

In a Beach Metro interview, he said that he decided not to get married until the war was over. "I didn't want to start a family under Hitler's regime. I felt I had to do something to stop him."

After nine months of training, he was sent to England where he trained with the Special Forces for another two years.

His grades were so high that he was sent for officer training and was commissioned as a captain, "but I felt like a fish out of water," he said. He resigned his commission and got his sergeants stripes. "I didn't want to send men out to die. I had to be part of it with them."

Hussey went on to serve in the Italian campaign, including the first marine landing of the Canadian army in Sicily. After that ended, he recalled being a part of a convoy of trucks and tanks travelling for 33 days from Ravenna in Italy through France and Belgium, across the Rhine in Germany and into Holland "to help mop up" in the final stages of the war.

Hussey was part of the liberation of Holland and after the war, he stayed in touch with the Dutch family he lived with in Hilversum.

Don Smith

Don Smith was a happy-go-lucky 17-year-old when he walked into an army recruiting office on the Danforth in December of 1941. He was immediately sent to the CNE grounds, where he was given a uniform and equipment. After training in Guelph for a month, he was assigned to the 48th Highlanders and soon after sailed to England for combat training.

"Everything was 'on the double'," he said in a 2004 Beach Metro interview. "or we'd get heck."

Smith served in Italy from 1943 to 1945, fighting his way through Ortona, Rimini and Monte Cassino. His most perilous moment happened when he fell off a bridge after getting shot at. "I had to make sure I got back to our side because the Germans were on the other side of the river."

The Italian campaign was called the 'Forgotten War', although nearly 20,000 allied soldiers were wounded and 6,000 killed. "They called us D-Day Dodgers," because the 60,000 soldiers fighting in Italy and Sicily missed the invasion at Normandy. The Canadian troops fought for more than 20 months starting in Sicily and on up to Rome. They were met by highly trained German troops ensconced in mountain positions throughout the country.

Smith said that instinct was the greatest key to his survival. After Italy, Smith served in the liberation of Holland. It was there he woke up in April, 1945 to the shouts of an officers announcing that the war was finally over.

"I was glad it was over. I was relieved that I could finally go home…It was an experience in itself to survive. I have no regrets and live each day at a time."

Dennis Corcoran

One of the first to enlist was Dennis Corcoran. He was born in Toronto and went to St. John's Separate School and Malvern Collegiate. He en-

listed in the army in the fall of 1939 and was stationed in Newfoundland for two years before being sent overseas. Dennis took part in D-Day and was wounded in the thigh by shrapnel on September.

Four days before he was killed he wrote a letter to his sister when said in part:

In the heat of action you hardly notice the passing of friends, but when you're in a position to take inventory, it's like running over your heart with a rasp when you realize the terrible cost that has been paid. By the time Japan is disposed of I will have lost all my boyish laughter. Sometimes I feel very old…

No amount of hardship can dim the deep sense of pride I feel in my unit. Once I was with those boys when they attached an enemy position, beat off two furious counter attacks and then with almost all our ammunition expended, we stood our ground with fixed bayonets, waiting for the enemy to make another attack, which he lacked the guts to put on.

Dennis Blair Corcoran was killed in Nov of 1944.

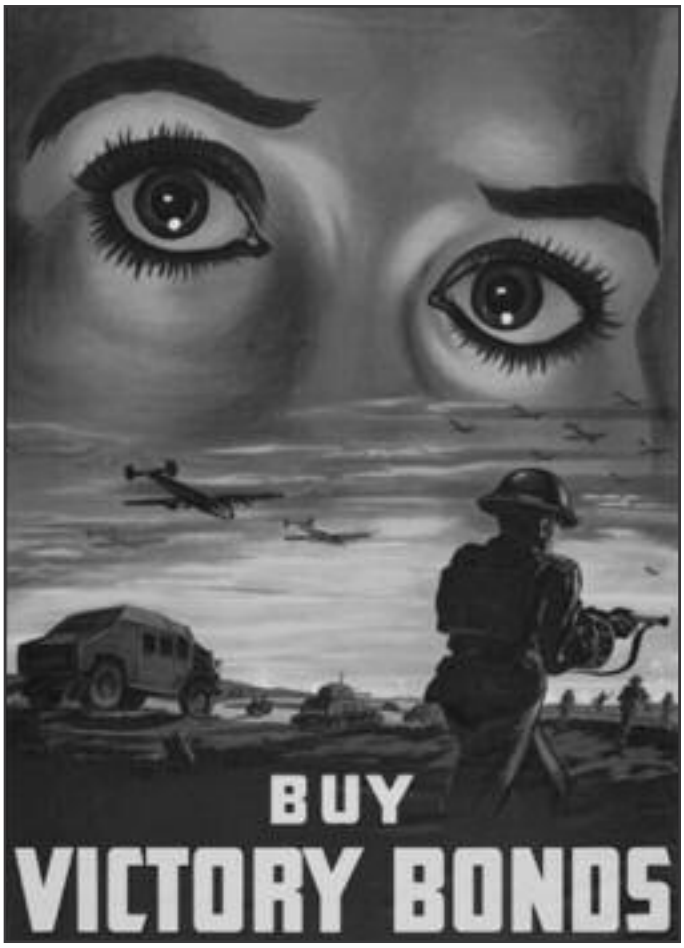
MacGregor (Mac) Roulston

Mac Roulston joined the Canadian Army before the start of the Second World War. In 1944 he was a sergeant in the Black Watch Regiment of Canada, sent to Caen in Normandy, a month after D-Day.

As part of Operation Spring, his unit was ordered to capture Verrieres Ridge, meet up with other regiments and gain control of the road between Caen and Falaise. Everything that could go wrong, did.

The attack was postponed for two days because of bad weather, by which time there were more Panzer divisions in the area. In the early dawn hours, the Black Watch encountered German soldiers on the road and were delayed by a gunfight. By the time the Canadians began running through wheat fields towards the ridge, they were being shot at from four sides and the top four commanding officers were dead. When they radioed HQ they were told that retreat was impossible, the ridge must be taken. Then they lost contact. The survivors were boxed into what the enemy called 'a witch's cauldron'. Mac was one of the few who reached the top, only to face more gunfire. He was hit in the leg, captured, and sent to a POW camp.

Of the 320 men who began the dawn attack, 300 were killed, captured or wounded. The attack on Verrieres Ridge was the costliest battle in a single day for any regiment since the 1942 Dieppe Raid. It is one of the most contentious and critically examined events in Canadian military history.



When Mac came home from the war, he fought another battle – this time with the Canadian government for an increase in his pension. Eventually his $3.50 a month was raised by $1.25 as he was a married man. He went back to high school to finish his final two years, and then on to university for a degree.

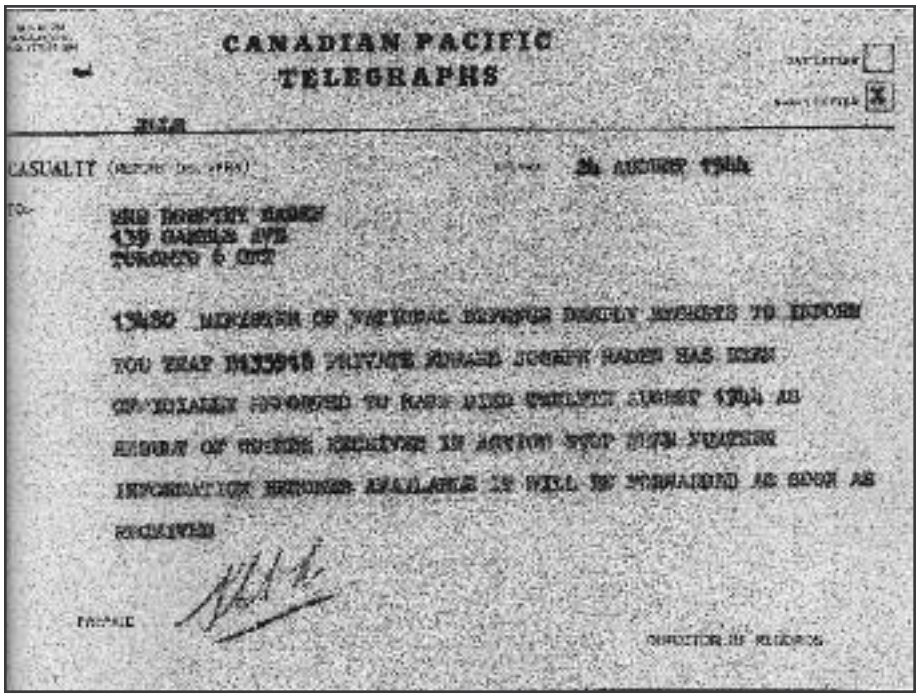
For many years, Mac and his wife Elsie lived at Birchmount and Warden. He belonged to the Canadian Legion at 1577 Kingston Road. He was a member of the Living History Speakers Bureau, recounting his wartime experiences to students ensuring they know and take pride in our country's history, and also talking to groups of new Canadians. He also appeared on History Television with three other survivors to recounted the events of July 25, 1944 in a docudrama ***Black Watch: Massacre at Verrieres Ridge***, in 2006.

In an interview with The Wayback Times, when he was 90 years old, Mac was asked that if he were 19 years old, would he still enlist and join our troops in Afghanistan. Mac and Elsie looked at each other, smiled and answered together "yes."

The Haden Brothers

Often more than one family member joined up to serve. Four of the Haden family's nine sons joined the army, Alfred in the artillery, Teddy in the infantry, Frank in the Princess Pats and Wilfred in the infantry. The youngest brother, Bernie said the family liked to sing, and that a sort of theme song during the war was the popular 'We'll Meet Again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day'.

But it was not to be. Teddy wrote to his mother that she didn't have to worry about him anymore because he had been assigned to driving ambulances. Three days later he was dead.



CANADIAN PACIFIC
TELEGRAPHS

CASUALTY

MRS HOSPITY HADEN
139 GARDEN AVE
TORONTO 6 ONT

13480 MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE DEEPLY REGRETS TO INFORM
YOU THAT [illegible] PRIVATE DONALD JOSEPH HADEN HAS BEEN
OFFICIALLY REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED ACTIVE SERVICE 17TH AS
RESULT OF ENEMY ACTION IN AFRICA STOP FURTHER
INFORMATION WHEN AVAILABLE IS WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS
RECEIVED

Donald and Reginald Hepburn

Malvern grads, Donald and Reginald Hepburn, joined the RCAF in the early 1940s. Don, 23, was a navigator with Bomber Command's 97 Squadron and flew in one of the first Lancasters to be used in the war. He and five of his six fellow crew members were killed in a rare, low-level daylight mission over Germany when their plane was hit by flak and crashed in flames near Augsburg on April 17, 1942.

His older brother Reg, 29, who had been lucky enough to be picked by pilot training was in Scotland preparing for service with the Royal Air Force's Costal Command when his twin-engine Beaufighter crash in a snowstorm on Jan. 8, 1943.

A quarter of air force volunteers were killed in flying accidents before they could even join an operational squadron.

Neil and Stan Mara

Neil and Stan Mara, who grew up near Main and Gerrard, both made it through training but were assigned to Bomber Command where the chances of survival were among the lowest of any branch of service.

Flight Lieutenant Neil Mara was a member of the RCAF's 433 'Porcupine' Squadron. He had been among the first to enlist in 1940 and won the Distinguished Flying Cross for nursing a damaged bomber safely home after a raid. He was killed just a few months before the end of the war when the Lancaster he was piloting collided over Belgium with a bomber from the 419 Squadron.

Flight Sergeant Stanley Mara, two years younger than his brother, was an air gunner in an RCAF 431 Squadron Halifax bomber, when he was killed while attacking the German naval yards at Wilhelmshaven in October of 1944. His body and those of the rest of the flight crew were never recovered.

Andrew and Jack Stephen

The Stephen brothers, Andrew and Jack, who lived at 92 Pine Cres., became pilots, the most sought after job in the air force. Andrew became a Hurricane fighter pilot with 615 Squadron, which fought in the Battle of Britain. Jack earned his wings and became a Halifax pilot with the RCAF's 429 Squadron.

Andrew was killed during a routine reconnaissance patrol over the wet coast of Wales in 1941 after his plane's engine failed. Jack was killed three years later when his plane, a Halifax named after Judy Garland, was shot down over Germany in 1944.

Max Sisley

Max Sisley lost two of his brothers, Bud and Donovan, boths pilots, in the First World War. Max also served in the conflict and was awarded the Air Force Cross in 1919. He went to a long career in the Royal Canadian Air Force and served a Group Captain with the Provost and Security Branch during the Second World War.

In fact many of the Malvern students and gradu-

ates who served in the Second World War were a part of the air force. The tradition began during the First World War when a number of Malvernites became airman including the three Sisley brothers.

Between the wars many Malvern students and even a few teachers joined the Air Cadet League, an organization that taught the basics of flying to young men. In fact 78 of the 103 names on the school's Honour Roll from 1939 too 1945 were members of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Doug Wall

After graduating from Malvern in 1942 with top class honours, Doug Wall volunteered for the air force. In February, 1944 at the age of 19, he received his commission and his navigator's wing. He was reported killed overseas on active service in October 1944.

Don Arnot

Malvern student Don Arnot enlisted early in the war and spent the next two years in Yorkton, Saskatchewan as a flight instructor before being sent overseas. On his first mission his Halifax bomber was damaged by ME-109 just 20 minutes after takeoff. With the fire extinguished the plane continued on its way and upon its return to England made a forced landing.

Don Arnot

As a member of the Lion squadron, he took part in some of the biggest raids on Berlin. He received th distinguished Flying Cross for his efforts in the air war against Germany. When he had almost completed his tour of duty, his plane was reported missing.

John Johnson

John Johnson was just 21 when he was killed on November 11, 1944.

Johnny whose family lived in Milliken, graduated from Malvern in 1941, eager to join up. He trained as a pilot in Ontario and then was posted to England in 1943. Though Canada had insisted on the RCAF maintaining its national identity, a good many Canadians were absorbed into the British RAF, and Johnny was one of them.

In April 1944 Captain Johnson was sent to RAF Digri air base in Bengal, India as part of the Southeast Asia Command. His Squadron 159, Burma

John Johnson

Bombers flew dangerous missions, disrupting Japanese shipping, laying mines, bombing bases, doing reconnaissance.

An English newspaper carried a story on a long distance record set by pilots in Squadron 159 who were flying Liberator bombers, the kind of plane Johnny was flying. It was a report on courage and feats of endurance. The record setters had flown 3,162 miles to drop mines in a channel near the Malayan mainland, a route used by Japanese ships carrying supplies to the army in Burma. The flight took 18 hours and 15 minutes. To have enough gas for the long flight meant starting out with two 300 gallon gas tanks mounted in the planes' bomb bays. There were 16 planes and each dropped four mines in designated spots. The newspaper compared the feat to that of a 'heavy' (bomber) doing a London to Moscow round trip "with bombs up."

Johnny's girl, Beacher Sonya Thomas Munro, still treasures his letters, including the last one he wrote on November 10, 1944.

Dearest Sonya,

A couple of Canadian blokes from group were here today enquiring how far I was with my tour and when I expected to leave the squadron etc. I gave them all the gen [information] and they told me that if I didn't get home to instruct I would most certainly be home by next summer for sure.

I don't think I told you about my new kite [His kite was a Liberator bomber]*, yep, about three weeks ago they gave me a bran' new kite. It's got all the latest gadgets and is a charm on the controls, nobody flies her but me and do I ever baby it.*

My bearer was just this minute bringing my tea

across on a tray when a huge kite hawk swooped down and snatched a sandwich. You should have seen the look on the bearer's face.

I interrupted this letter for a game of badminton, as usual I lost.

Wally Frazer is here with me, remember he drove me back to Trenton one time. You and I waited for him at the corner of Danforth and Main. He did a whizzo landing the other day with a cannon shell through one tire.

That's all for now, adios.

All my love,

Johnny

Fifty years later Frazer published a memoir with an excerpt from his diary for November 13: "Rotten, rotten news, Johnny Johnson's dead. His crew, nine men, got the chop two nights ago, mine-laying at Moulmein. Other crews saw A/A (anti-aircraft) guns firing, then a big explosion in the air.

"The news hurts. Johnny, face full of freckles, was a brash, exuberant kind of person, very much alive. And now he isn't."

In 1945 Johnson's commanding officer replied to a letter from John's sister asking about his death. The officer was Wing Commander James Blackburn, DSO and Bar; DFO and Bar; DFC (US).

Dear Ruth Johnson,

I'm afraid I can only give you the bare facts concerning your brother's – Johnny as we all knew him – crash. He was the captain of a Liberator aircraft on a mine-laying mission to Moulmein a few miles from Rangoon in Burma. The weather over the target was very bad, and although the attack was planned to make minimum use of the moon, the cloud was very low and the majority of aircraft were unable to come down to the necessary 400-feet dropping height above the water. Although this was one of the very rare nights when I did not go out myself and consequently did not see what happened, the other aircraft of the Squadron were in the area for some considerable time and several of them saw the crash.

Apparently Johnny managed to penetrate the cloud but did not come out in exactly the right place and flew at a very low altitude over a heavily defended area – Cape Martaban – immediately north of Molmein, on the other side of the estuary. All guns were seen to open up and the aircraft was seen to crash on the eastern ledge of Byelgyun Island about one mile west of Moulmein.

The nearest prison camp was at Moulmein itself, and in view of the nature of the accident and the fact that there has never been any news either of him or any of his crew I feel that there is very little hope of their survival.

I am sorry to have o break this to you in this way, but I hope that these few details of the very gallant way in which Johnny carried out his last operation will help to comfort you and you mother in your irreparable loss.

Johnny was a very great friend of mine and I shall always remember him with a deep sense of affection and respect.

Yours very sincerely,

James Blackburn

Alex Napier

One of the few area residents to join the navy was Alex Napier, but it wasn't his first choice.

Since Alex, 26, had been running his own service station, he applied to the air force as a motor mechanic but was offered a position as an air gunner. "When I found out that the life expectancy [of an air gunner] was about 20 minutes, I joined the navy instead as a second class stoker firing boilers." Then he read in the ***Toronto Telegram*** that the navy needed motor mechanics for a new wooden gasoline-powered ship [a fairmile] able to sail over magnetic mines without being detected. He became a leading mechanic and trained in Halifax.

A few months later he survived a shipwreck when

his fairmile hit rocks in the Northumberland Strait. The captain, who mistrusted the 'newfangled' radar, thought the ship was in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Tely reported that all hands were lost and he wanted to reassure his parents. Security was tight and all letters and hone calls were censored. He persuaded a girl at the farm in PEI were he was billeted to write to 'Dear Aunt Bessie' [his mother] saying that she recently seen cousin Alex who was in excellent health.

Alex spent the remainder of the war based in the Gaspe and Halifax chasing submarines and escorting freighters from Montreal and Quebec City to the Gulf of St. Lawrence where they joined convoys from Boston and Halifax crossing the Atlantic.

He was once fired on by a submarine. "That was scary – seeing a torpedo coming towards you. Fortunately their aim was off and it went right under the ship."

Andy Carwell

For flyers, surviving a crash was not necessarily the end of their troubles. A number of local men ended up as prisoners of war.

Andy Carwell was known as a funny guy when he walked the halls of Malvern. However his wartime experiences had a darker end. Enlisting in the air force early in the war, his plane crashed in Germany where he was taken prisoner.

Andy Carwell

He made two attempts to escape, once succeeding in seeing the boat which would take him to freedom but was recaptured. Only when the war ended could he return to Canada.

Don Lush

Don Lush was another Malvernite who ended up as a German prisoner of war, He enlisted in 1940 and was sent overseas as a Pilot Officer in 1941. He was shot down over Libya why flying a Hurricane and was captured. He was transferred to Germany where he was forced to march 800 miles across Germany to Hamburg where he spent the rest of the war.

He received one of three medals awarded by the YMCA for outstanding contributions in keeping the morale and spirits of the boys in prison camps high.

Walter Floody

Don Lush

And then there was the best known prisoner of war, The Tunnel King, Walter Floody.

Wally Floody (born Clarke Wallace Chant Floody) was born in Chatham, Ontario. In 1936 he headed north to work at the Preston East Dome Mines in Timmins, Ontario, as a mucker – shovelling the rock and mud into carts to be hauled up to the surface. At the onset of the war, Floody was working on a ranch in Alberta when he decided to return home to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). After learning that the RCAF was not quite ready for a huge influx of personnel, Wally married his wife Betty on May 24, 1940, and they moved to Kirkland Lake, where Wally could go back to work in the mines.

In 1940, Floody and his wife were back in Toronto visiting family. Anxious to find out what was happening to his enlistment application, Floody checked with the recruiting office only to find his application was at the bottom of the pile. The reason: he was now married. After convincing the recruiting officer that "My wife backs me in this 100%," he was advised that the train was leaving for the BCATP air

Walter Floody

station in Brandon, Manitoba that evening. After a quick goodbye to his family Floody was on his way to becoming a pilot flying with No. 401 Squadron.

Operating from RAF Biggin Hill in England, his Spitfire was shot down in October 1941 over Saint-Omer, France, where he was captured by two German soldiers. He was imprisoned at the POW camp Stalag Luft III. There he joined the X-Organization where he was put in charge of digging tunnels and their camouflage, for the upcoming escape attempts. He became known as the Tunnel King.

However, in March 1944, the German guards, always suspicious of escapes, caught the telltale sign of sand being dropped by one of the 'penguins' out the bottom of his pant legs and immediately rounded up Wally and 19 others and transferred them to another camp in Belaria.

The escape of 76 men went ahead on the moonless night of March 24, 1944. Eventually the Germans caught all but three prisoners, and to make an example of them to all the other prisoners, Hitler ordered the execution of 50 of the recaptured Allied officers under the excuse that they were shot while attempting escape. At the end of the war Floody gave evidence about conditions in POW camps at the Nuremberg trials.

On September 22, 1946, Wally was awarded the honour Officer of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI; the citation reading, in part:

"Flight Lieutenant (F/L) Floody made a thorough study of tunnelling work and devised many different methods & techniques. He became one of the leading organizers and indefatigable workers in the tunnels themselves. Besides being arduous, his work was frequently dangerous....F/L Floody was buried under heavy falls of sand.....but, despite all dangers and difficulties, F/L Floody persisted, showing a marked degree of courage and devotion to duty."

John (Jim) Baillie

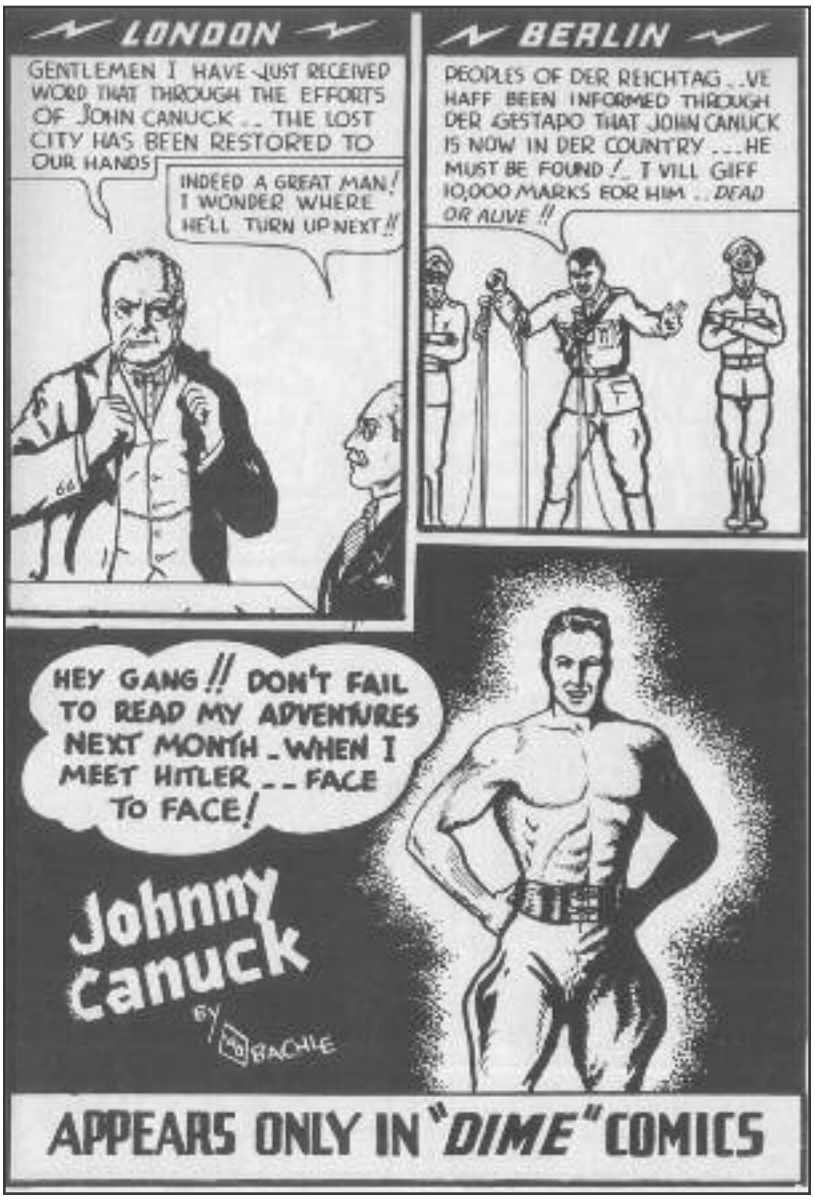
Floody was not only Beacher to receive a prestigious medal. During the Second World War only 23 Canadians had the honour of being awarded the George Medal for Bravery. One of those Canadians was John (Jim) Baillie. Baillie was cited for his "great courage and complete disregard for his own safety" in rescuing himself and three if his comrades from a fiery plane crash on June 14, 1945.

Ballie enlisted in the Pictou Highlanders in 1939 because he couldn't find work. In 1942 he transferred to RCAF. When the crash happened, Baillie was a navigator on loan to the Royal Air Force Squadron 194 on a mission over Burma.

This is an excerpt of the account of the incident he wrote for his children:

We flew up to town and crossed the river. We circled north over the airstrip, then east again over the river – ready for the drop.

As we came to the east bank, BAM! All hell seemed to break loose. It was like an old-fashioned movie when they speeded up the film. The first I no-



ticed was the sound of the starboard engine – it was running away like crazy. Bits and pieces of things were banging on the side of the plane and she was smoking back along the wing. A piece of metal was sticking in my right arm. I looked at it and thought, "that shouldn't be there," and pulled it out. Funny thing – it didn't hurt. I didn't feel it at all.

I ran forward to see the pilot. He was busy trying to hold her with the other engine. He said he could hold her if we would get rid of the load. We were about a ton or so overloaded, but this was normal. The right wing had dropped and we started a slow curve to the south. We were only about 300 feet up so there was no jumping from this one.

I ran back to fellow crewmen Smithie and John and we started to pitch the load... I remember I picked up a tea chest and threw it out the door. Any other time I could hardly lift the thing. We got rid of about one-third of the load, then I saw a tree go by the window and thought "Oh, oh, end of the line." I turned to the boys and yelled, "Down, everybody – get your back against something and hold on!"...

Wham! Bam! Rip! I saw a window fly by my feet – then out went the lights. The next thing I heard was the roar and cracking of a fire and somebody was screaming like mad. I suddenly realized that it was me that was yelling. I was burning up and could not get loose.

My left foot was caught just inside the door…my neck and shoulders were on the ground. I tried hard to get loose but it was no use. I was caught fast and could not get away from the fire. I asked the Man Upstairs to get it over with fast, but I guess he was busy with other people at the moment.

Then I got mad – "Come on you stupid jerk, get out of this mess before her blows." I pulled myself along my leg, and tried to find out what was holding my foot. Then I wiggled my foot free and rolled back in the dirt.

By this time I could hardly see. I had a cut above my left eye which was letting blood flow over my face and on to my chest. Then I saw one of the drivers [from the Indian Army Service Corp] lying in the dust near the plane, His feet were on fire. I got my arm around him and dragged him away from wreck and over to a big tree.

The second driver was sitting just inside the door. He was holding his head and moaning. I grabbed him and yelled, "Get the hell out of here you silly sod, this thing will blow any second." He would not move so I had to drag him over to the same tree.

By now I was floating. Everything seemed so far away and I felt I could lie down and take a nice sleep. I thought of Smithie – then I saw him. He was in the fuselage, just about where I had last seen him.

He was sitting in a large pool of fire waving his arms and hands around, trying to push the flames away from his face. Getting through the curtain of flames at the door was old hat by this time but I had a hell of a time with Smithie. He fought me off for a few seconds…Finally I got hold of a foot and started to pull. When I got him outside and we stood there a few second and he said, "Mr. Baillie, was I in that fire?" Then we went over to the tree.

I looked down at my chest – it was all bloody. I thought, "Old boy, you've had it this time." Then I realized it was the blood dripping from my left eye.

I noticed that my stomach was cut and that things were coming loose. I stuffed it back with my fingers and then used what was left from my shirt to wrap around my tummy to keep things in place. I had a

hell of a time trying to make a knot.

Just then two natives came running up. They took one look and were gone again. When they came back there must of have been 20 of them. One of them said, "I speak English, sir. I will get you back to the 14th Army."

Baillie spent the following 11 months in 13 different hospitals undergoing extensive plastic surgery to repair his body burns and smashed face.

Albert Hardy

One of a number of local men that served in both World Wars was Albert Hardy. Hardy was "a lucky one" who survived Ypres, the Somme and Vimy Ridge (where he was hit) to return to his home on Blantyre. There he operated a construction business and in 1928 his company helped construct the war memorial that stands at Kingston Road and Danforth.

However, in 1939 Hardy enlisted again and served until 1943. "It was my duty."

After returning from his second tour of duty, Hardy became involved with the Royal Canadian Legion, helping to establish (even holding one of the mortgages) a local branch on Kingston Road.

Oliver Martin

Among the most distinguished 'two-timers' was a former principal for Secord School named Oliver Milton Martin.

Martin was a Mohawk from the Six Nations Grand River Reserve. He joined the Haldimand Rifles Militia in 1909 as a bugler. In 1915 at the age of 22, he left his job as a teacher and enrolled in the regular army. He worked his way up the ranks, eventually becoming a lieutenant with the 114th and the 107th battalions. Martin spent seven months fighting in France and Belgium where he survived a mustard gas attack. By 1918, he earned his wings and became a pilot.

When the war ended, Martin returned to teaching and became a principal at Secord School during the 20s and 30s.

He returned to active service in the 1940s, training recruits. He was promoted to colonel and was appointed commander of the 13th Infantry Brigade at Niagara on the Lake. After a year he was promoted to the rank of brigadier commanding the 14th (Nanaimo) and 16th (Prince George) Infantry Brigades.

As brigadier, Martin held the highest rank ever attained by a member of Canada's First Nations.

He returned to live in East York until his dead in 1957. Branch 345 of the Royal Canadian Legion now bears his name.

Pauline Hebb

Let's not forget the women who served.

Many people from the Beach knew Pauline Hebb

as a librarian who worked at the Metropolitan Reference Library for 15 years. But in 1944, Pauline had a different life. She was a WREN, a member of the Women's Royal Nancy Service. Eighteen-year-old Pauline started her service in Scotland on a submarine depot ship anchored in the River Clyde where she sent and received communications about troop and ship movements. Submarines came in for refuelling and then guided back into the North Atlantic. She later served at a naval air base and then in communication in Liverpool.

"We were always being moved but I liked it. I was thrilled to be helping. We were fighting the menace in Europe together, although we didn't know about the death camps until later. We were determined not to let England be taken. Winston Churchill was a great influence and leader."

At the end of the war, Pauline married a Canadian seaman and moved to Canada in 1947.

A statue honouring the contribution of Canadian Wrens was erected in Galt (now Cambridge) at their old training grounds. "I am pleased that women are now receiving recognition for their wartime contributions."

Ruth Johnson

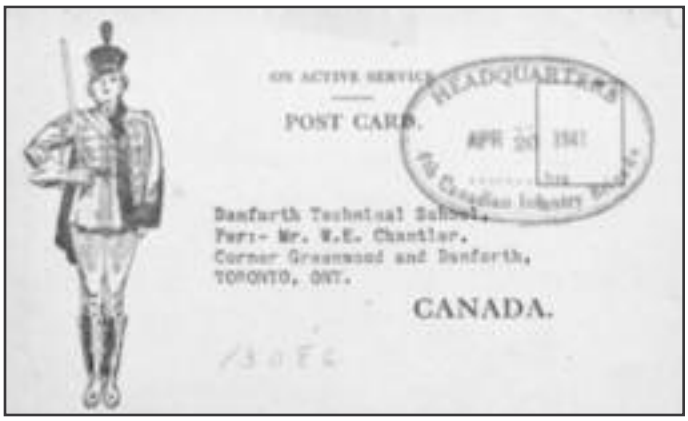
Ruth Johnson was an outstanding Malvern student, After graduation she took a business course at

Shaw's Business College and then enlisted in the service in 1941. She was posted overseas in July 1944 as a lieutenant in the Red Cross and was promoted to major in 1945. She was in charge of the handicraft department which provided materials for men receiving physiotherapy.

Ruth Johnson

Maude Steane

Out of the 241 Danforth staff and students who died in the war only one was a woman. Maude Elizabeth Steane, died, aged 28, on August 14, 1944, aboard a Norwegian merchant ship. Steane who had trained as a radio operator was prohibited by law from serving in the Canadian or American merchant marines. She travelled to New York where a Norwegian-flagged ship didn't have a problem taking her on.



In 2002 a plaque was unveiled honouring the eight female merchant marines, including Steane, who died at their posts in the two World Wars.

Danforth students and staff

Danforth played an important part in the local war effort. 2,235 graduates and students of Danforth volunteered for active service in the war, along with teachers and staff. It was, as a memorial brick at Juno Beach now says, the greatest number of volunteers from any school in the British Commonwealth.

One of the first volunteers from Danforth was Lieutenant Walter Bleaken who was wounded at Dunkirk in 1940. On Armistice Day, Nov. 8, 1940 the school honoured James Coleman, 19, who was killed in action in England. He is believed to be the first death among Danforth's enlisted students.

By the end of November, 1940 263 had enlisted for active service.

By 1942 Danforth students on active duty had sent more than 850 typed pages of letters back to the school. Today that collection includes a total of 400 post cards and 1,600 letters. Ron Passmore, a '64 grad, who has been working on a project to preserve the letters, said in a Beach Metro article, "There was definitely a strong connection between themselves, and with the school. They were always trying to look out for the other guy, giving out the addresses of classmates."

The ones that didn't return are buried in graves that stretch from Canada to Germany to Sri Lanka.

Malvern students and staff

From 1939 to 1945, Malvern also helped fight the war. Over eleven hundred graduates and students,

In this illustration, each poppy represents the next of kin of a person on active duty who died in the Second World War.

(some of them women), joined the colours; and 13 teachers enlisted, some to go on active service, others to fill staff positions. 103 died in active service.

The Geography of Grief

On the Global News interactive website (http://globalnews.ca/news/932833/griefs-geography-mapping-torontonians-killed-three-wars/) it is possible to get a feeling for the impact of the war casualtys on the community.

Patrick Cain first mapped the city's Second World War dead when as an editor at (now-extinct) openfile.ca, using a card file created by municipal officials during the war to keep track of the city's dead.The cards documented more than 3,300 people with next of kin in Toronto who were killed in the war. They died over Germany on air raids, fighting in Normandy and Italy, at sea as their warships or merchant vessels were torpedoed. Many were killed in training accidents. One is buried in South Africa, one in the Yukon.

At least six local men died at Dieppe (a total of 127 Torontonians died there. They died a Dunkirk and on D-Day, and quite a number died in training accidents and from being caught in Germany bombing runs of England.

But those in active service were not the only ones who sacrificed.

The Home Front

The children in Beach grade schools were not too young to be a part of the war effort. A history of Williamson Road says there were British evacuees attending school there. And the school bought more than $1,000 in War Savings Stamps. Their efforts were acknowledged when the squadron leader of #1 Training Command presented students with a plaque and told them that a plane had been named The Williamson in recognition of their efforts.

High school students took time off from classes to work on farms, and could do that without losing school credits. Kids at some summer camps also became part-time farmers.

Churches, service clubs, women's groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and individual families all contributed. The Beaches Lions' Club sponsored an Air Cadet Squadron and they held a Miles of Pennies campaign that had people lining up pennies from Woodbine to Pape Avenue. They supported the Canadian Red Cross and the British War Victims

Fund. The Lions and their Women's Auxiliary collected clothes and blankets for people in England and Russia.

In 1941, the Balmy Beach Club held an open house with dancing, bingo, bridge and lucky draws and donated the profits to a wartime cause and to send a few extras to the 24 members who were in active service.

Salvage drives collected aluminum pots and pans that went into war planes. Metal toys, including soldiers, were melted down as were items as small as tooth paste tubes and the foil from cigarette packages. Paper was collected and recycled. It was often the children who did the collecting and sometimes there were competitions between groups.

By 1944 Canadian volunteers had packed 10 million packages for prisoners of war, collected more than 28 million kilograms of salvage and sent huge amounts of clothing, food and books to servicemen and civilians overseas. To do all that they had found or created volunteers with the organizational and executive skills to coordinate all the effort and make it useful

Though Canadians didn't suffer privations, there were shortages. From 1942, everyone had a ration book that limited the amounts of tea, coffee, sugar, butter, meat and liquor anyone could buy, and everyone was urged not to buy anything they didn't actually need. Meatless Tuesdays and Fridays were encouraged. Gas was rationed, and after 1942 no new cars were made. Rubber was in demand and Boy Scouts made something of a specialty of salvaging worn out tires which drivers replaced with synthetics if they were lucky.

Women were preserving and canning, and there was a rash of wartime recipes to help deal with shortages. One sample was how to clarify fat left from cooking meat so that it could be used instead of butter for more cooking. It was done by putting the fat in water, bringing it to a boil, then chilling it. The impurities and strong tastes would be left in the water, and the clarified fat would be pure and tasteless, ready for the frying pan. It was also suggested that you could stretch butter by whipping milk into it.

Clothes were affected, too. Cuffs disappeared from pants, lapels on jackets were trimmed. Women were encouraged to remodel clothes. "Use it up, wear it out, make over, make do" was the theme.

.45 kg of fat/grease made .45 kg of dynamite. 7,700 pots and pans made one pursuit plane. Bones made gelatine for glue and explosives.

By 1944 volunteers had collected more than 28 million kg of salvage. They had packed more than 10 million packages for prisoners of war.

In 1943 there were 209,200 Victory Gardens in Canada producing an average 250 kg of vegetables.

Daylight saving was in effect across the country for the duration of the war by order of federal government.

Danforth

A diary of the school's activities during the war reflects the efforts made to support students who had enlisted, and to aid in the war effort. It reflects the ways, large and small, that life changed to meet urgent demands.

Fencing classes were stopped because the steel in the weapons was needed elsewhere. Girls were admitted to shop classes presumably to learn skills they could use in war work. Students who were 16 and over were reminded to register for the National Selective Service Registration at the local post office, filling out different forms for boys and girls. 'Canadian' was not an acceptable answer for a question about racial origin.

In 1940 an Army Cadet Corps was created as part of the school's World War II defense training program. A rifle range was constructed in the basement of the school's new wing and qualified instructors trained several hundred boys. In 1943 Air Cadets, also formed and became the 330 Squadron. An average of 200 cadets followed the same course as enlisted men in the RCAF, studying administration, aircraft recognition, drill, mathematics and signals.

The school sent copies of the Tech Tatler and a news letter called The Broadsheet to alumni in the armed forces and said it would record all promotions, casualties and decorations of the staff and students and preserve letters from them. Students collected 'coppers', nickels and dimes to cover the costs. The Broadsheet described news from home and listed names and details of those enlisted for active service. In 1942 the school mailed more than 1,000 copies of The Broadsheet overseas along with cartons of cigarettes. Sixty parcels of seaman's socks were sent to former students in the navy.

The Old Sods, Danforth Tech staff who had served in World War I wrote to students who had enlisted, and R.S. Foley contributed a poem.

WE chased them at the Marne,
WE kicked them at the Aisne,
WE gave them HELL at Neuve Chapelle,
And YOU can do the same again.

Malvern

Everyone worked to raise money for the war effort. In 1941-42 Malvern students decided that the school would raise money to purchase a mobile canteen. More than $5,000 was raised in the effort.

As a yard stick on the value of the money that was

Malvern student fund drive

raised, teachers' salaries in 1943 were $1,500 to $2,900 for men and $1,000 to $2,200 for women.

War stamps cost 25 cents and 16 of them became a $4.00 certificate which could be redeemed seven and a half years later for $5.00.

In September 1939, the Toronto Board of Education adopted a motion that every secondary school should have a Cadet Corps. Its training would include basic drill for grades 7 to 13, and signalling and first aid training for grade 11. Rifle ranges were to be installed or renovated immediately, at a cost of $850. There was to be provision made for safe storage of rifles and ammunition. The Department of National Defense would supply the equipment.

Malvern paid for this mobile canteen with war stamps

Malvern's training space was in the basement of the school.

During World War Two, hundreds of English children were sent for their safety, to North America. Several Beach schools played host, including Malvern and Williamson Road.

June Richardson Gross was one of the English war guests who was sent to Canada for safety and who attended Malvern. In 2001, when she was invited to a reunion, she wrote a letter reminiscing about those years. She was then 75 years old.

The reunion would have coincided with a visit to the family who looked after her during the war, but history intervened.

"I was absolutely delighted, but all my decisions are being delayed . . . I was due to visit 'my family' two days after 9/11. My plane seat was gladly taken by Canadians returning home. Eventually I flew over, October 2nd."

She wrote that, "Returning home, August 1945, I didn't return to Canada till 1981. Since my husband died in 1987, I have returned every year and in later years, twice a year, as the 'aunt' who looked after me is now 105 and I want to see her as often as I can. The debt I owe her is immeasurable.

"Since hearing of the reunion the memories have come flooding back. I was 12 when I arrived in Canada and had already completed the first year of secondary education. At Malvern I was put in the first year again, but I was still the youngest by a year or two and very unsophisticated – childlike – and it took me till the fifth

year to make good friends. I lost touch in the readjustment to a war-torn environment[in Britain] so different to Canada, but I have very happy memories of school at Malvern. The staff was very good and some [of the teachers] were extremely kind to me, as were the students.

"I have only to hear Glen Miller's 'Moonlight Serenade' to go back in time and visualize looking through the doors into the dimly lit auditorium and see the shadowy figures of couple dancing. This was during the lunch break.

"Malvern Collegiate gave me a marvelous grounding, and in more than academics. I remember (music teacher) Roy Wood, a very quiet gracious man. I was in the choir for most of my five years and in my last year I took the subject called 'Music Appreciation" …[I have] memories of those wonderful hours after school when we could go into Mr. Wood's sound proofed music room and listen [to records] to our heart's content. This laid the foundation of what has turned out to be my greatest recreational pleasure.

"Every time I return to Canada, I am struck by what a civilized country it is, caring, responsible and very kindly. I couldn't have come to a better place."

Entertainment

Entertainment, large and small, was used to boost morale and raise funds. Among all the other war work they did, the Second Toronto Company of Girl Guides offered two performances of a homegrown juvenile operetta titled ***Little Gypsy Gay*** at St Nicholas Church, Birch Cliff, and at St John Norway. They raised $18.36, part of which went to The Evening Telegram British War Victims' Fund.

On a larger scale, Kew Gardens was the scene on August 27, 1942, of a major concert that the Globe and Mail predicted in a promotional story, would be

Field and regatta events sponsored by the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Ark Royal were held under the direction of the Navy League of Canada's Toronto (Eastern Branch) at Pantry park and the nearby lakeshore. The winning cutter crew are following tradition by throwing their coxswain overboard. In the background is the Kew Beach boathouse before it was moved north of the present boardwalk. The cadets' cutters were stored on the beach at the foot of Fallingbrook Road.

brilliant. It was one of 10 put on in Toronto parks by the National War Finance Committee.

The band of the Queen's Own Rifles played. A group of smartly uniformed girls, each accompanied by personnel from the RCAF, would be presented to the audience. Marie Forester, the "charming, red-haired" Miss Canada would be there.

After the concert there was a movie presentation of war pictures showing Commandos returning from a raid on France, Winston Churchill "watching American paratroops by the hundreds floating to earth from high flying transports, and similar stirring events on the sea, the land and in the air."

Remembrances

Mary Smith Hibberd and Dave Hibberd were Beach kids during the war, Dave a few years older, were engaged in the things that kids did. He delivered the newspapers, the Star, the Telegram and the Globe from the day war was declared, and remembers heavy red arrows on the front pages radiating east to west from Germany across Europe, until finally, in 1944 they began to point the other way and the end was in sight.

In the meantime, he had also delivered telegrams no one wanted from a telegraph office on Kingston Road. "I'd leave it and get on the bike and I could hear the people wailing because someone was dead or missing."

His father, who was a master electrician, spent the war at a ship building yard at the foot of Bathurst, going out on Lake Ontario to test the electrical system on newly built mine sweepers as the ships were nearly ready to be handed over to a crew.

Dave, like a lot of boys his age, too young to join up, but wishing he could, joined the Sea Cadets (see photo below). He says they trained at a quarter deck on the gym floor at Riverdale Collegiate, and it was serious stuff. They were issued two uniforms, they learned Morse codes and semaphore, were part of field and regatta events in Toronto and went to Camp Minicog on Georgian Bay.

Dave's family lived on Kingston Road next to St. John's Catholic Church. The house was demolished when the convent was built. "There was no 401 then, the main road to Montreal was Kingston Road and a lot of (heavy war equipment) stuff went by our front door from the John Inglis plant, heading east, some of them on their own steam, some on flat beds.


OUR GIFTS

Music by Glenn Gould

We are the boys, We are the girls of

In October 2014 a former Williamson Road classmate of Glenn Gould took a copy of Our Gifts to the centennial celebration at the school. It is a song the world renowned pianist had written in 1943 when he was 10 years old. It had never been lost, there is a copy in Gould's file in the National Archives, but it had probably not been sung in many years.

In a report in the ***Beach Metro News***, Andrew Hudson wrote that Gould apparently wrote the words as well as the music:

"We are the boys, we are the girls of all the public schools

We have a Red Cross job to do, to furnish all the tools."

The children at Williamson Road sang the song in 1943, and they also sold copies of it for 10 cents each to raise money for the Junior Red Cross.

Sheila Brand, music and drama teacher, said, "It's astonishing that a child could write this with the right theory at age ten."

Then, decades later, a parent involved with the Governor General's awards, heard the song at the school's centennial spring concert, a group of parents donated time and money, and Williamson Road's 41-member choir got to go to Ottawa to sing it in the National Arts Centre for the Governor General's Performing Arts Award Gala on May 30, 2015.

"Kingston Road was a busy road. Sunday nights seemed to see a lot of trucks, just getting into high gear (after climbing the hill) when they passed our house. "

He also remembers that "All during the war there was barbed wire around the R.C. Harris plant and along Queen and down Nursewood Road."

Dave went to St John's Catholic school and Malvern, Mary to Williamson Road and Earl Beatty for a commercial course. She was too young to be involved in organized activities, but she remembers the barbed wire and her mother saving cooking grease to be re-used or turned in to the butcher and eventually into explosives. She took aluminum pots to the Fox or the Family or the Beach movie theatres to get in free to children's Saturday matinees. There were also black out drills when a siren would go off and your neighbor would patrol to make sure there were no lights showing. You could buy black out curtains or adhesive black paper to cover windows, but most people just turned the lights out.

She also has a non-warlike memory of being at Williamson Road school at the same time as Glenn Gould and volunteering to clean the blackboards at lunch time because that was when you could listen to the young prodigy practising.

A street photographer snapped Ruth Johnson and Sonya Munro on Yonge Street in 1942. Ruth worked at the Northern Miner newspaper. Sonya worked nights at Canadian Pacific Telegraphs.

Sonya Thomas Munro grew up in the Beach and like her friend Johnny Johnson (see page 4), went to Malvern Collegiate. She left in 1941 at the end of grade 11, when she was just 16. "If you had a war job you could leave and go back later." She worked at King and Yonge, trained as a telegrapher for CPR. She sat outside a censor's office, receiving and sending messages in a five-letter code that she couldn't read.

She remembers a small encounter on her way home the day she was hired. Delighted, she was singing, and a stranger asked her why. She said because she had just got a job paying $25 a week. The stranger was not amused. He told her he was only making $17.

It was a different world. Her home at the foot of Balsam still had a drive shed out back where the horse had lived. The ice box took 24 pound blocks, and the ice wagon and milk wagons were still horse drawn. That came in handy when people started

Lois McCabe, mother of Nancy Culver (from Community Centre 55), is in the back row, fourth from the left

growing their vegetable victory gardens and needed fertilizer. The street car ride downtown took about the same time it does now but some of the wooden cars had stoves in them and a tendency to rock that made some passengers sea sick.

While she was still at Malvern Sonya was in a fund raising show call Wartime Tonics. She knit socks for soldiers and went to dances at the Balmy Beach club on Tuesday and Friday. It cost 25 cents to dance to records and sometimes be invited to the real dances on Saturday nights. She also got to travel on CPR passes, until the passes were cancelled in 1943 because the trains were needed for troop movements.

Lois McCabe waited at Dawes Road for the company bus that would take her to her job in a huge munitions complex in Scarborough built on what had been 250 acres of farm land near Eglinton and Warden. The Beach was surrounded by wartime factories, including the converted Ford plant at Shoppers World, one of the car plants that switched in 1942 to producing trucks and armored vehicles.

The biggest of the factories was the General Engineering Company where Lois was one of 5,300 employees, many of them women. Most of them were doing potentially dangerous work, filling fuses and other explosive equipment. It was a proud record that by war's end there had been no fatal explosions.

Between 1939 and 1943 the number of women in the workforce doubled to 1,200,000 and more than 250,000 of them were doing war work. In 1942 the federal government required childless women between 20 and 24 to register for work with the National Selective Service, and later began to open nurseries for children between two and five so their mothers could work. When the war was over many of the women went home as returning veterans reclaimed their jobs, and factories closed. But not all of the women were ready to stop. Some stayed as the beginning of major permanent change in the post war workforce.

The 'Toronto Invasion' was an army training exercise on June 26, 1941 in which troops from Borden Camp (near Barrie) had to 'defend' Toronto from a plot to seize all power centres, waterworks, bridges, military headquarters, media outlets, City Hall, and (according to one local account) Kew Gardens. The exercise took everyone by surprise, including the mayor, the chief of police, and the numerous citizens whose names were taken by the soldiers after they were not able to produce their National Registration identification cards.

The Township of Scarborough took a giant step into the post war world and the growth of suburbia, when it bought most of the site of General Engineering from the federal government, and turned it into the then ultra-modern Golden Mile shopping area.

After the War

VE (Victory in Europe) Day, May 8, 1945 brought out jubilant crowds in Toronto. A sea of humanity it was called. Factory whistles blew, people danced in the streets. Streetcar rides were free. Unconditional Surrender blared the ***Toronto Star***, It's All Over, Nazis Give Up shouted the ***Evening Telegram***, and This is Victory trumpeted the ***Globe and Mail***. Nurses in the military wing at East General Hospital wheeled some of their charges outside to see the reactions.

But for all relief and release there appears to have been little trouble. Stores and restaurants closed, the LCBO closed the day before, and announced that no beer or wine could be sold in any premises. A forward thinking city council had celebrations planned for nine city parks, including one referred to as Beaches Lakefront Park, with speeches and fireworks, games and dancing.

There were also well-attended, thanksgiving and solemn ceremonies at the City Hall Cenotaph and at churches and synagogues across the city.

A good many businesses had closed in celebration, not just as a precaution, but the war plants reminded their employees that it wasn't over for them yet, Canada was still at war with Japan. Though the country had been less heavily involved in the Pacific, there was as much excitement and relief when that war was declared over on August 15. Then it was all truly over. The fearful awareness of the bombs that ended it would come later.

Shirley Richards Jones remembers Miss Dalby at

CITY OF TORONTO

PROCLAMATION

A Civic Service of Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God Will be Held When Victory is Achieved in the Present European Conflict

- - - - - - - - -

in front of the City Hall
at 12.30 o'clock in the afternoon

on the Day Following Official Announcement Of "V-E" DAY

All Citizens are invited to attend

THANKSGIVING SERVICES—DEMONSTRATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS ON

"V-E" DAY

in various Civic parks

Arrangements have been made to hold community services, demonstrations and celebration programmes in each of the undermentioned parks

During The Day That "V-E" DAY Is Officially Announced

EAST:
- Lakefront Park Beach
- Greenwood Park
- Riverdale Park

CENTRAL:
- Trinity Park
- Willowvale Park

WEST:
- High Park
- Sunnyside
- Earlscourt Park

NORTH:
- Eglinton Park

Ample opportunity will be provided in each of the said parks for an organized celebration with bands, community singing and display of fireworks, in which all classes of citizens may participate.

Tune in local radio stations for further details, particularly on "V-E" Day.

On "V-E" Day citizens are urged to observe the following requests:

Participate in the service and celebration in the park nearest your respective locality.

Refrain from driving vehicles into the down-town area and do not create pedestrian congestion in this district.

Remove all non-essential vehicles from the streets.

Remember, Victory in Europe is not final victory.

ROBERT H. SAUNDERS, K.C.
Mayor

GOD SAVE THE KING

Williamson Road school being called into the office and coming back to her classroom with tears running down her face. She told her students the war in Europe was over. Class was dismissed and the kids took off, running down the street yelling.

Coming Home

As the men and women came home, not soon enough for most, they were thrilled to be back in Canada.

Walt Shillinglaw was in the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, stationed in England, working in an army machine shop. He had vivid memories of the attacks on London late in the war by the unmanned buzz bombs.

He arrived home a few months after the end of the war. "We got off the train from Halifax, we went to the Exhibition, that's where our families were, and that was the first time I could give my wife a hug and see my new son. We got home just before Christmas. There's no place like home."

Shirley Richards family had three sons in the army, one of whom had been invalided home. Shirley had gone with her parents to meet him at the CNE where the trains from the east pulled in behind the Coliseum and anxious families first saw their sons.

She remembers "all these fellows coming out on crutches and in wheel chairs. Bob was on crutches. I was 11 or 12 and I remember my parents were weeping. It was just wonderful to see him."

Most of the wounded men were destined at least temporarily for the Christie Street or Chorley Park military hospitals. Bob went to Chorley Park, coming home on weekends for a while. He wasn't posted overseas again, but made a career in the army.

About a year after the war's end he was reunited with his English wife and their child. About 45,000 war brides came to Canada in 1946 and 1947, and 22,000 children.

Hank Farintosh was an engineering officer in

A portion of the Memorial Stained Glass Mural in Danforth CTI

Navy Coastal Command searching for submarines off the Canadian east coast. “Practically everybody that was healthy joined the services. On November 11, I think of the 17 guys that I knew who belonged to the Balmy Beach Club and Kew Beach Church who were lost and what those boys could do if they were still alive.”

Despite having won the George Medal, George Baillie (see story page 8) did not have an easy time when he returned to Canada.

Jim and his wife, Betty, like so many other returning servicemen, were unable to find housing so they moved in with Betty’s parents on Victoria Park Avenue. Later they settle permanently in the Beach.

Baillie never forgot his war-time experiences and in 1985, he told a newspaper reporter, “Everything has been free for me ever since that day. It’s like I’ve been living on borrowed time.”

Alex Napier (see page 6) was running his own service station at the beginning of the war, but once tires, gas and batteries were rationed, business fell off and Alex went to work for a paper company.

“The owner knew that is was just a matter time before I had to go, but he said that there would be a job waiting for me when I returned and that I would get any pay raises and benefits given while I was away. The idea of having a job to come back to was important. When I returned after the war, the owner kept his word and I worked for that company for 30 years.”

Memorials

As soon as the Second World War was over, a Danforth War Memorial Committee, made up of the Enlistment Committee; some ex-servicemen and women; some teachers; and a selection of day students, began organizing tributes to all who had served. There would be four Active Service Rolls (flanking the exterior library doors) prepared by Donald L. Howchin, Director of Art; two bronze plaques to the dead (inside the library) designed by Cyril J. Travers; six stained-glass windows, also designed by Cyril J. Travers; two cabinets to hold the school’s war records; a special doorway to the memorial library, designed by John I. Rempel. Roy S. Foley, Chairman of the War Memorial Committee, supervised the preparation of the 35-page booklet about the memorials.

When peace came at last, Malvern raised a sum of $4,000 to provide a memorial to more than a hundred who had fallen. An electric organ was installed in the assembly hall and a beautiful Book of Remembrance was inscribed and illuminated by Doris McCarthy and bound in hand-tooled red morocco by Madeleine Glenn Bennett, both artists and graduates of Malvern. The book is kept always on display under glass in an oaken stand in the front hall of the school. The organ and the book were dedicated and presented to the board of education in a beautiful

A highlight from the Calvary Baptist Church Memorial Window made up of glass recovered from bombed out churches in Europe.

service on November 11, 1948.

Calvary Baptist Church has a unique memorial made up of stained glass saved from bombed out churches in England, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, by Dr.R.F. Sneyd.

"On the first Saturday night in September 1940, London had its first 'Night Blitz'. The next day, I was paying my visit to Westminster Abbey. Workmen were sweeping up glass near the clerestory windows and some fluttered down and landed on the Tomb of Unknown Warrior. I picked up one fragment and said Captain Clark Wallace who was with me, "I would like to start a collection of broken glass."

Ernst Taylor, the artist, has placed most of the historic fragments around the edges of the window to be a realistic part of the pictures in these windows. He has painted six large and bright sunflowers here to give brightness and color and depth, but also to suggest that they are looking up toward the light. The butterflies suggest the matter of air and flight created by these insects. The seven doves suggest the motion of flight and, of course, symbolize peace. The uniformed figures represent "the flight to Glory" of those who have died sacrificially.

Other organizations and individuals did their part in helping to memorialize the sacrifices of the Second World War. Albert Hardy (see page 10) who served in both the Frist and Second World Wars help construct the War Memorial at Kingston Road and Danforth.

In September 1945 the Beaches Businessman's Association proposed to the city that a War Memorial be constructed in Kew Gardens. That October city council approved a motion for the war memorial and the tender was given to the Eglinton Monument Company. Work begin in the spring of 1946 for a fountain monument to be 20 feet long, 8 feet high and 18 inches wide.

Preliminary work started on March 19, 1946 and

was completed June 24, 1946.

Acting mayor, controller H. E. McCallum made the official declaration on June 25.

The memorial is now the site of the Remembrance Day ceremonies for Canadian Legion Branches 1/42 Baron Bing Beaches.

Remembering the War

Sometimes the war comes up in the most unexpected places. For many years Bill Hussey went to a barber on the Danforth. One day they were talking about the war and Bill mentioned he had fought in Italy. "So did my dad," said the barber, "but on the other side. In fact my dad was saved by a Canadian solder." He said that after Monte Cassino was taken, the Italian prisoners were being marched down the mountain when a convey of trucks coming up forced one prisoner, the barber's dad, very close to the edge of the cliff. "The solider saw my dad was in danger and rush over to pull him to safety."

Bill sat stunned. While it was just one of many acts, both good and bad, that happened during his service, he very clearly remembered saving an Italian prisoner just that way.

In 1995, the Dutch people invited thousands of Canadians to be their guests to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

Among those invited were Don Smith (see story page 2) and John Gallaugher.

The trip was very special for Don's wife, Wilma, who wanted more than anything to visit her brother's grave. He died in February, 1945. "After 50 years it will set my mind at rest. Leaving flowers there will be a final gesture."

For many young veterans, the early post-war years were a letdown. Work and housing were both hard to find. Don received a small cheque from the Department of Veterans Affairs for the first 10 months. He also worked at odd jobs for 47 cents a hour.

He met his wife, Wilma at a card party at St. Clair and Victoria Park and they were married in 1949. His gratuity from the army was "just enough to buy a stove and bedroom suite."

John was a driver in the Fifth Armoured Division of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. The regiment handled communications so John was usually stationed at division headquarters, back behind the lines, dropping off 30 lb. batteries from post to post. John's division left Italy in February of 1945, sailing from Leghorn to Marseilles, and then driving through France and Belgium into Holland. John was billeted in a private home in Groningen.

When he returned to Canada in 1945, he was told that he could visit his relatives in Vancouver "on George's dime." He survived the war without a scratch but on his trip west he was involved in two serious train crashes.

I don't regret being in the army, said John. I had a chance to travel. I wasn't shot at and I didn't have to shoot anyone. I worked with nice fellows. We were a good gang an I'm hoping to see many of them again.

The war of a major source of books and movies for many years. Only of the most renowned was The Great Escape, which featured a character drawn from the experiences of Walter Floody (see page 7).

When Walter Floody returned to civilian life he and his family moved to the Beach and once owned

In 2002, Don Smith, representing MP Maria Minna, remembers his comrades on Remembrance Day by presenting a wreath at the war memorial in East York.

Steve McQueen and Walter Floody on the set of *The Great Escape*. Floody's character was played by Charles Bronson. Floody was the technical advisor for the movie.

the Grover Pub on Kingston Road. He was also co-founder of the Royal Canadian Air Force Prisoners of War Association.

In 1950, another of the 'Great Escapers', Paul Brickhill wrote a book about his experiences. In 1963, it was made into a movie. Floody served as technical advisor for the film. Coincidentally, Bruce and Marg Ewing, the founders of The Great Escape Book Store on Kingston Road, named their business after the historic event not knowing Floody's family lived just steps away.

Floody died on September 25, 1989

In 2010 Don Gray produced a video called ***Your Child's Veteran*** in which World War Two veterans, all members of Kew Beach United Church, answered questions from children about their wartime experiences. Most of them were asked about what they thought of war, and what they thought about during the commemorative minute of silence on November 11. These excerpts are segments of some of the interviews.

Cal Peppler – RCAF: "I thought I was a conscientious objector. In other words I didn't believe in fighting, and then the Battle of Britain came along and I decided I should get into the war. The excitement of flying was so vivid in my imagination and in my actual living it gave me enough desire to try and become a pilot. When you fly you end up with the possibility of getting shot down and unfortunately I did, by a cannon that was on the ground." Of November 11: "It reminds me of all the friends I lost that were killed. We should be trying to get along, not fighting.

Jimmie Canning – Royal Canadian Army Service Corps: "In 1942 and 43 I was learning to drive a 4-wheel truck with the steering wheel on the other side. It took 25 soldiers in the rear echelon to keep one man at the front, a fighting man. The 86 Bridge Company went to France, to Belgium, and then to Holland. We broke up when we crossed the Rhine River.

We all went to where a bridge was blown out. (They replaced the bridges with portable bridges made of prefabricated steel sections, known as Bailey bridges, and were sometimes under enemy fire while they worked.) A Bailey Bridge is like a Meccano set, a king sized Meccano set. We weren't heroes, we got these medals because were there, and we were there because we had to be. [I was not afraid] because I was with the guys. It was like having a job." Of November 11: "I think of the young German soldiers we buried. They might have been school boys, 13 or 14 years old. They didn't even shave yet. They had pictures of their dog, their sister or mother."

Gord Swayze – Royal Canadian Navy: "Then I signed up on the Prince Robert which was an anti-aircraft cruiser and was in Hong Kong [as the war ended on August 15, 1945]. We took the [Japanese] surrender for the British. [Canadian prisoners of war who had been in Japanese camps for several years] who were able to walk and who didn't have to be

Alex Napier and Bill Hussey give back to the community by sharing their friendship and war experiences with the children of Coucellette School.

hospitalized came aboard the ship. They came out of this [nearby] camp. They had been treated dreadfully. It was one of the most moving experiences, we were all in tears. There were 240 lb guys that didn't weigh 100 lbs." Swayze said a postwar trip to Japan finally cured him of his anger.

Gord Haughton: Hitler had taken Poland, he'd taken Holland, he'd taken Belgium, he'd taken France and the only country between Hitler and Canada is England, so our group decided we better go over there and stop them over there. We don't want to stop them in Canada. So we all volunteered to go overseas. That was in 1942. [On D-day June 6, 1944] the first night we landed in Cannes, France. Cannes had been cleared of all Germans but they told us the 88s [artillery] were still there. They [fired] anti-personnel bombs that exploded as soon as they hit the ground. They were packed with bolts and steel cuttings and nails. One man was killed the first night we were there."

Other vets have also used their wartime experiences to help the next generation understand what happened in the Second World War.

Alex Napier and Bill Hussey grew up on Victoria Park south of Bracken and have been friends since childhood. They both went to Courcellette School.

A number of years ago, Bill, Alex and a few other veterans of the Second World War started volunteering at their old school one day a week in the reading clinic.

"We are not teachers," said Alex. "We are people interested in helping kids. They chatter to us and we look at books and pictures and discuss it with them one-on-one. We're like grandparents. They keep us on our toes and keep us young."

They also take part in the school's Remembrance Day ceremonies. "How will the kids know unless we tell them," said Bill.

Some thoughts on the post-war era

A serious housing shortage that had begun during the war lasted for several years. Not every woman was happy to leave the workforce. Not every man

got his job back. There was labor unrest.

On a wider scale, though, some of the mistakes made in 1918 were avoided. Wage and price controls stayed in place for several years to avoid major financial problems. Some rationing continued as Canada helped with supplies needed overseas. Shortages lingered while industry and agriculture converted to peace time production

The Canadian government had started postwar planning almost from the outset of the war, and there were real efforts to provide jobs or education or training for many of the vets.

Acknowledgements and Sources

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