

Remembering the fallen

By Laura Kupcis
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It was October of 1943, Frank Young was 19 years old and stationed in England with the army service corps. He couldn't wait to serve his country in the Second World War.

Actually, Young just wanted to be with his friends, who had all enlisted, searching for something better. At that time if you earned seven dollars a week, you were rich. The army paid \$1.50 a day and for those young men and woman, it seemed to be the best option.

"When I joined up it was adventure and all your buddies were there," Young, charter member of the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command - Aurora Command, said. "You think you're indestructible when you're 18."

Looking back, Young realizes the effect he and the other soldiers had on Canada. "If we hadn't gone something bad could have happened."

While Young is proud to have fought while he was younger, he said now that he is older, he would never do it again.

In regards to current wars, Young is glad Canada didn't fight in the Iraqi war, noting the UN should be

allowed to do their job.

"The Americans are finding out now, it's not so easy after," Young said. "There's a lot of cleaning up."

Young said the peacekeepers of today should not be forgotten on Remembrance Day, as they are just as important as the older veterans from prior wars.

"They don't know who they're fighting," Young said. "At least we knew who the enemy was."

While the Canadian Armed Forces and its cavalry is generally known now solely for their peacekeeping mission and not much more, in 1945, Canada had the third largest navy, the fourth largest air force and the fourth largest army.

In 1945 over 1,100,000 people were under arms, meaning one in 10 were serving the country.

During WWI because so many soldiers were missing in action and sailors were lost in the bottom of the ocean, their bodies were never found so they had no grave. In order to honour these fallen soldiers, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was created in May 2000 at the National War Memorial. It stands as a memorial to all Canadians who fell or may fall in war.

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For Young, Remembrance Day is important "to honour the people who preserved democracy." It is a day to pay respects to the fallen and the living who served for this country, who fought for the freedom that citizens of today enjoy.

Children today enjoy the freedom and security of being safe from war, something which, for them, occurred only in history books or in countries far away from home.

What many don't realize is their own grandparents fought in wars to ensure a sense of freedom.

Jim Rank, navy officer in Korea and past-president of the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command – Aurora chapter, remarks Remembrance Day should serve as a reminder to the younger generation to listen to the stories of their grandparents, many of whom would be happy with just a thank you for freedom.

The youngest soldier

from WWII would now be 79 years of age, and for Young, it seems as though the war veterans from that period are dying off faster. Twenty years ago there were 700 veterans in the Aurora chapter of the Royal Canadian Legion, today there are 172.

The upkeep of the Legions are the responsibility of the members, who clean and run the establishments, earning extra money from weddings, dances and parties held there.

The money raised from the poppy drive helps veterans and spouses (who have the same rights as veterans) with food payments, accommodation, utilities, clothing, furniture, medical, dental and optical services. The money also raises funds to operate Service Bureaux which acts of behalf of veterans, ex-service people and their dependants seeking compensation for service incurred disabilities.

"The money is kept separate from all other funds and very discreetly managed," Rank said.

Whatever money is left over at the end of the year is put into a bursary fund to help students pay for education.

"The money is always within the trust of the public," Rank said. "We don't sell poppies; we ask for donations."

Remembrance Day: A day to remember the brave people in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Merchant Navy, who fought through WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Gulf War and countless United Nations Peacekeeping operations. Remember those who went and returned and remember those who fought and never returned, for they paid the extreme sacrifice for the freedom of Canadians.

*They shall grow not old, as
we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the
sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

The Legion Act of
Remembrance – Laurence
Binyon