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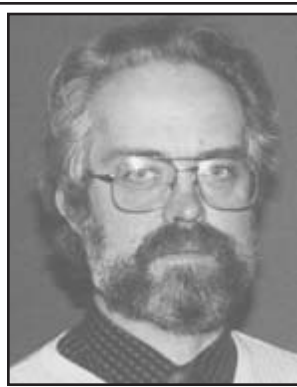
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**Bill's
Bulletin
Board**

By Bill Rea

Their numbers are dwindling, and many of those who remain are showing definite signs slowing 'way down.

That's one of the things I noticed Sunday as I covered two very well-attended Remembrance Day services in King.

I'm also told there was a sizable crowd at the service at the Cenotaph in Aurora, which took place at the same time as the one in Schomberg (I can only attend one at a time).

The number of men and women who actually saw service in the Second World War is dropping. I often reflect that my late father was 20 when the war ended. There were some veterans who were born after him, but not that many. My dad would be 82 if he were still alive, so it stands to reason that those left would be few and feeling the effects of age. And while that is sad, it's also a natural part of life that we all have to accept in our own way.

But as the number of vets drops, we still saw bigger crowds out at the services. Indeed, it was the biggest crowd I've seen at the service at Kettleby Cemetery in the eight years I've covered the event. One

man I talked to estimated there were 60 people there. While I did not do a count myself, I would say he wasn't too far off the mark.

So what got the crowds out?

The weather was certainly inviting. Not like last year, when they had to move the Schomberg service indoors. And there was the year when the rain came down in buckets at the Kettleby service, and Brian Beatty, husband of King Township's mayor, obligingly shared his umbrella with me. But there has been nice weather for Nov. 11 in the past, and the crowds haven't been that great.

Having Remembrance Day fall on a Sunday would have helped too. But I've covered weekend services before, and felt very uncomfortable for these aged veterans going through their motions of remembering, seemingly for themselves because so few others were there. I sometimes wondered how I would have felt, had I put my hide on the line 50 years ago and so few people could have given enough of a damn to show up.

I guess it's likely there's more interest in remembering these days because

Canada is involved in military operations to an extent not previously seen in my lifetime.

The front page of Sunday's Toronto Sun contained the pictures of 72 Canadian military personnel who have died in the Afghanistan operation. Lt.-Cmdr. Bob Gwalchmai, a resident of Schomberg, read out the list of names of the Canadians who have fallen in Afghanistan at Sunday's observances. He did the same thing last year, and later remarked at how the list had grown in 12 months; not quite doubled in length.

"That's too many," he observed.

It's sad that Canadians have to be put in harm's way in a foreign country for us to remember sacrifices that have to be made in times of war, but maybe that represents sort of a benefit too.

I come from a generation of Canadians who experienced war only through the movies or stories our parents told us. My dad spent about two years in the air force, but never saw combat. He never even left the country. He was in line to be sent into action in the Pacific theatre, but the war ended before that came about. He told me a few stories about his time in the service. But most of what I know about those times comes from what I have read and studied, largely from my admittedly amateurish interest and understanding of history. But not everyone is interested in history, just as some people are interested in baseball while others are not.

But the latest crop of

veterans are not coming from the history classes many of us slouched through or those great action movies they used to make in abundance and now only make occasionally. They are coming from the reality of our times.

Canadians have been pressed into service to fight in a foreign land that a lot of people might not be able to find on a map. The reasons for us being there are complex, involving such factors as the war on terrorism. Let us not forget Canadian blood was spilled Sept. 11, 2001. Our personnel are also in that country at the wish of the local government

There are some who believe we should not be involved in that conflict. I cannot agree. As I stated above, Canadian blood was spilled in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and that, if nothing else, obligates us to act.

And let us also not forget our history. Canada has developed a reputation over the years of stepping up in cases when military action is required. I covered a talk a couple of years ago by the late Pierre Berton, in which he outlined a number of these incidents, making the point that Canadians did well, even if it seemed they were doing it in spite of themselves.

It's part of the Canadian nature to step up now.

I am fully aware that it is very easy for me to make points like this. I'm pushing 50. I'm undisciplined. I haven't worn a uniform since I sort of dropped out of the Boy Scouts. I have spent maybe a grand total of 10 minutes of my entire

life with a gun in my hands (while I was a Boy Scout). If some officious military type started barking orders at me, I'd be inclined to blow him or her off with the one-finger salute my father taught me (you know what I mean). My health is good and I could run the hundred in maybe a minute (with a good tailwind), but my physical prowess is limited at best. If I'm ever pressed into military service in this country, it will be because they need people who can wave white flags. It's easy for me to be an arm-chair general and advocate sending young people into danger. I'll never be one of those sent.

But I also know the times in which we live, and the demands that are placed on some of us.

Demands were placed on my parents' generation, and many of those people answered. I saw a couple of them offer salutes Sunday. I don't apologize because such demands were not made of my generation. Different demands are made of different people in different circumstances. We are expected to respond accordingly when demands are made of us. And we are expected to remember those who step up when called.

We saw some of that on Sunday. Alas, we'll see more.

Gwalchmai was right when he said, "That's too many."

If he reads such a list next year, it will likely be longer still.

It's too many, but it's also necessary. And it's necessary that we remember that.

Editorial

**If police service is good,
what does it matter where it's based?**

Some people are never satisfied with what they have, but the reality is changing things might not be an improvement.

Take the example of policing. There are some who would say they are not properly served, when there really isn't a lot of practical room for improvement.

Like any service, we all have demands to make of our police.

We want them to make sure our homes are safe, and if they are violated, we want officers on the scene instantly, and we want those responsible to be apprehended and put in custody within

the hour, if not sooner. And if everything is going fine, we don't want to see police because that would be an intrusion in our private lives. And we certainly don't want to see a police officer pointing at us when we're driving, especially if we're speeding.

So we expect a sort of tight-rope walk from our police, and some of us never seem to be completely satisfied.

They can't be everywhere at once. It takes time to respond for a call from service, and when there are multiple calls, they have to set certain priorities.

Different police outlets serve different areas, and we sometimes hear calls for change. King Township is served by York Regional Police, and its residents seem satisfied with what they have. True, a more visible police presence in the township might be desirable, but they have only finite resources which must be spread out as needed.

The Town of New Tecumseth has been served for some time by OPP, sharing a detachment with Adjala and Essa Townships, but there is now a push to have the town go it alone.

Town council last week

was told that a stand-alone OPP service would come with a price tag, to the tune of about \$666,000 more per year than what is being paid now. And there is also the possibility of a reduced level of service.

A more pertinent question is, does anyone really care? Is the average person in need of a police officer really interested in where that cop is dispatched from?

If they call for police, they want to see a cruiser with an officer at the ready fast. They don't stop and think if that person has a colleague currently answering a call in another municipi-

ality. They probably don't give a lot of thought to how much they pay for policing in their taxes; not at a time of need.

There are some who would like to see changes to the way police services are delivered, and they probably have good reasons. There are others who would oppose such change, probably for reasons that are just as good.

But the vast majority of people just want a police service that's there when they need or want it.

And as is so often the case, the real issue is what's best for the majority?