

Henry Arthur Hall (Harry)

Harry was a young boy living in south east London during the war where he lived through the Blitz and had a personal, harrowing close encounter with a German Doodlebug bomb. He thought for sure he was a goner.

In 1951 Harry got a letter from the King requesting his service and he chose the RAF. When he went for his interview he was shocked by the appearance of the intake officer. He was a WWII fighter pilot and had been severely injured with his face badly scarred and half of his nose missing. Harry was a photographer and chose the RAF because he thought his skills could be put to use in reconnaissance. However, to his disappointment he was assigned to the airframe mechanics and served with them from 1951-1953.

Basic training, or as he called it, "Square Pounding" took place in Wheaton, just outside Blackpool in England. After completing basic training, he then served in Lincolnshire at RAF Hemswell where all the Lincoln bombers, a later model of the Lancaster. He worked on major repairs ASF, mostly in the tire bay changing tires. During his time at Lincolnshire George VI passed away and the whole base was called out to parade on the square to mark his passing. Harry completed his military service with both Leading Airframes Mechanic and Senior Airframes Mechanic designations.

Upon discharge Harry went back to Fleet St. working for Reuters in their photographic section.

Currently Harry is involved with the Markham Little Theatre where he has done a little acting but does prefer to stick to building sets.

Harry was a member of the Markham Veteran's Association for 10 years before moving to Newmarket where he joined the Royal Canadian Legion in 2009. In 2015 he transferred to Richmond Hill Branch 375 in 2015.



Harry Hall



Harry Hall with his Mom and Dad

Kenneth Harper (Ken)

Ken joined the army just after his 19th birthday. He enlisted in Montreal where he did his basic training in as a combat engineer with the 16th Field Company, 3rd Division, Royal Canadian Engineers. After basic training was completed he was sent to Camp Debert, Nova Scotia where his unit had to built their own huts. This camp was very near Truro, Nova Scotia.

In 1941 Ken's unit was sent to Aldershot, England before being attached to other units. From then until D-day he was in different bases across England learning about transport. Ken was later assigned to the transport section where he had his own truck which held all the compressor equipment making it a very large and heavy vehicle.

Ken's unit went to Normandy on D-Day however due to the size of Ken's truck he didn't arrive in Normandy until a few days (somewhere between 5 and 10 days) later. His truck was too large to go on any Canadian ship so he set off on an American one. From the time he landed in Normandy he was involved in some of the most storied battles of the war including, the Channel Ports, Emmerch, Capriquet, Caen, Falaise, Boulogne, and the Leopold Canal. Ken was severely wounded on the Belgian side of the Leopold Canal which divided Belgium from Holland, in October, 1944. He was hospitalized in England for six months in a Canadian hospital and then shipped home on a Canadian hospital ship, the Lady Nelson April 1945. Ken then spent about a year in hospital in Montreal where he met his future bride, Barbara who was a Registered Nurse.

Ken's worst memory was when he was filling in for someone else and was wounded. Three pieces' shrapnel became embedded in his right leg and another severed the main vein in his leg barely missing the artery. He later learned that his buddy Foster was also hit at that time. The medics thought that Foster would be okay and that Harper was a goner. It turned out to be the opposite.

However, Ken did have a lot of fun in England. He did some schooling re: transportation in Croyden and then in Brighton and then meeting the love of his life in the hospital in Montreal.

Belgium holds a Canadian Liberation March every year which starts and ends at Knokke-Heist, Belgium. For each of these marches one 3rd Division soldier from Canada is invited as a special guest and in 1988 Ken was that guest. He marched with a group from Belgium to different sites and cemeteries and was part of the wreath laying party at each. Ken also attended the 60th Anniversary of VE-Day in Holland in 1995 and was back two more times to Holland. He was always touched by the kindness and gratitude the people of Holland showed to the Canadians. He remains in touch with one of his host families to this day.

Ken was honoured with the following military medals and awards:

1939-45 Star; France- Germany Star; Canadian Volunteer Service Medal; and 1939-45 service with bar.

One of Ken's most prized possessions is a plaque made from a 25lb shell from major battles the 6th CFC was involved in, including D-Day, channel ports, Scheldt pocket, Emmerch, Capriquet, Caen, Falaise, Boulogne, Leopold Canal, Breskens, Cleve, Laag Keppel, Sonsbeck, Rees, Zutphew, Leer, Ralbergerwald. However, Ken is quick to point out that he was not involved in those battles that took place after the Leopold Canal.

Ken joined the Royal Canadian Legion in 1952 and became Vice President of the Legion branch in Greenfield Park, on the island of Montreal. He was then transferred to Ontario by his company and took time off from the Legion to raise a young family and travelling for business. He later rejoined the Legion in 1991 and has received his 25-year service as of 2016.



Ken Harper at the Leopold Canal 1988



Ken Harper