

Hospice Caledon home born of Great Escape

By WES KELLER
Freelance Reporter

There may have been as many differing emotions silently expressed at Cenotaphs across the nation yesterday on the anniversary of the Armistice of 1918 as there were people, but Lorna Bethell of Orangeville was among only a scant few who could have shared second-hand knowledge of an amazing and courageous event of 1944.

Ms. Bethell's late husband, Tony, was one of 76 prisoners of war who, in 1944, was part of The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III. He was one of the 73 recaptured, and one of only 23 of those not murdered in cold blood, shot from behind, by the Gestapo.

Tony's survival was not of his doing. Hitler had initially ordered that all recaptured PoWs be executed. He had relented over fears there would be retaliation

against German PoWs if all 73 were murdered. The selection was left to a Gestapo major who was, himself, executed for war crimes.

The Great Escape was the topic of a 1963 Hollywood movie which might have had one or two facts accurately portrayed. It was also made into a BBC documentary based on the historical record and memories of Tony Bethell - who was a young Royal Air Force pilot officer

when his Mustang fighter was gunned down by anti-aircraft fire in 1942 over Holland and his ordeal began when he was immediately collared by the occupying Germans.

The BBC documentary came to the Lord Dufferin Centre in Orangeville, where Ms. Bethell is a resident, Tuesday as part of an ambitious fundraising program for Bethell House at Inglewood.

Bethell House? Yes. Back at Stalag Luft III

Tony grieved as his recaptured comrades were led away in handcuffs to be executed beside the Autobahn in the lonely pre-dawn hours. The thought of dying alone in a lonely distant land appears to have haunted him for the rest of his life.

He never knew why he was not among those taken to the place of death. But he and his family have now provided seed money for establishment of "a beautiful country home" where

people unable to spend their final days in their own home will be "able to go to a home-like atmosphere" as their final hours slip away, says Diane McKenzie, a member of

the Campaign Cabinet raising money to pay for what is to be Hospice Caledon's Bethell House.

Bethell House, named for the veteran who was inspired by his horrifying

experience of the terrible Stalag Luft III years and the aftermath of The Great Escape, is a magnificent venture and "the Inglewood residents' little baby," said Ms. McKenzie.

Local couple win teacher of year award

Doctors Stephen and Stephanie Milone have been selected by the Ontario College of Family Physicians to receive the college's 2009 Community Teacher of the Year Award.

The award is presented annually to recipients for an outstanding contribution to precepting medical students.

The Milones are one of

two family physician couples in the province who will receive the prestigious award at a ceremony November 26 at the Hilton Toronto Hotel.

"Dr. Stephen Milone and Dr. Stephanie Milone are outstanding examples of community teachers," said Dr. Jeff McKinnon, Chief of Staff at Headwaters Health Care Centre. "Having commu-

nity family medicine preceptors as role models for residents is critical to helping us attract and retain

family physicians."

The Milones practised in a community family medicine setting as interns

and based on their positive experience chose Dufferin

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Photo DAN PELTON

WOMEN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH was proclaimed last week in Orangeville by Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock. His signing of the proclamation was witnessed by Norah Kennedy, executive director of Family Transition Place in Orangeville. Ms. Kennedy told town council on Monday that her facility has received 1,000 more calls to its crisis line in 2009 than in 2008. "The impact of this recession is significant and we're starting to see it," she said.

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