

Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

CANADIANS

Canadians remember Horsham

From *Memories from a town that disappeared, Horsham during World War II* (Horsham Museum, 1989)

By Stan Fuller, Rockwood, Ontario

It was spring of 1943 when I first came to Horsham, after receiving a mechanics army licence. I was attached to the D platoon of the 86th bridge Company, 1st Canadian Army.

This company was made up of 95% French Canadians out of Quebec, most of them could not speak English at the time, though the Lieutenant of the platoon was English speaking.

It was a long walk into town, but we used to do it quite often. There were many Canadian services stationed round Horsham, and on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon the main road was lined with soldiers heading for the movie theatres, pubs or YMCA.

My pal and I became friends with a couple named Perce and Betty Gates, and their son, Allan, at No. 9 St. Leonard's Road. We would take our laundry there, and Betty would wash it for us. Perce had a plot of land somewhere outside the town, where he had a garden, and also raised a few pigs. At night, on our way back to camp, we'd drop in on them, and Betty would cook us some broad beans, etc that Perce grew.

Our stay in Horsham was not that long, we moved out one lovely sunny day in the late fall of '43. I remember the people on St. Leonard's Road standing in front of their homes, waving and calling good-bye as we drove by in our new Diamond T trucks. Betty, Perce and Allan were right there waving too!

Before leaving England I went back to Horsham to bid my friends good-bye. They gave me a picture of their son, Allan, which I still have. I was sent home to Canada, to be met by my family and wife and daughter who I hadn't seen for 3 years.

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