



Kay Madill

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Young people, I'd like to share a few thoughts with you to help you understand World War II. Please listen to this voice from the past to help you remember that this war was really a BIG DEAL.

My name is Kay Madill. I grew up on a dairy farm in Stouffville, Ontario and lived there until I joined the WRCNS in 1943. My parents were both hard-working, managing 48.56 hectares and a large dairy herd. I had one brother who joined the RCNVR (Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve) in 1942. We were very close, having shared an apartment near Casa Loma in Toronto and both working at Consolidated Optical in the Lumsden Building at Yonge and Adelaide. I really missed him and thought for some time that I would like to be in the navy too. I'm sure there was a sense of adventure in there also. Looking back, we both could have been a great help to our parents on the farm but they never tried to discourage either of us. My brother survived D-day and I spent most of my time in Quebec City doing payroll for ship's crews. I loved my work, made a number of good friends and never regretted my choice for a minute.



Canadian frigate HMCS Magog after being torpedoed by U-1223. Library & Archives Canada

Actually I met my husband in the pay office and we had 64 great years together, raising a son and four daughters. I did not see any action like most of the men, but I was at the Quebec docks when they towed in the frigate HMCS Magog. It had been torpedoed in the St. Lawrence River. There was a huge hole in the side—three sailors were killed and a friend of



mine was rescued after being blown out of the ship into the water. This was never publicized at the time. It brought the war a little closer to home and made us more aware of the dangers. Most of what we knew about the war was read in the papers and almost every movie that we went to, we saw a news reel of the war in Europe and some of the details were pretty graphic. This is where I first learned of the Holocaust. We were glad that we were helping in some small way and always proud of our flag and our country. I celebrated with other service personnel on VE Day (Victory in Europe) and again on VJ Day (Victory over Japan) when we boarded ships and revelled in the spray from ship's hoses and the noise from their horns and cheers of the sailors. I have attended a number of Wren Reunions over the years and there is still a camaraderie that is indescribable. It was a wonderful time of my life because I was young and actively contributing to my country. Although I do not wish war on you in the future, I do hope you find a way to contribute to Canada.