

Heritage Notes

No 6

May 1995

Special VE Day 1995 Edition

Jean Kyte

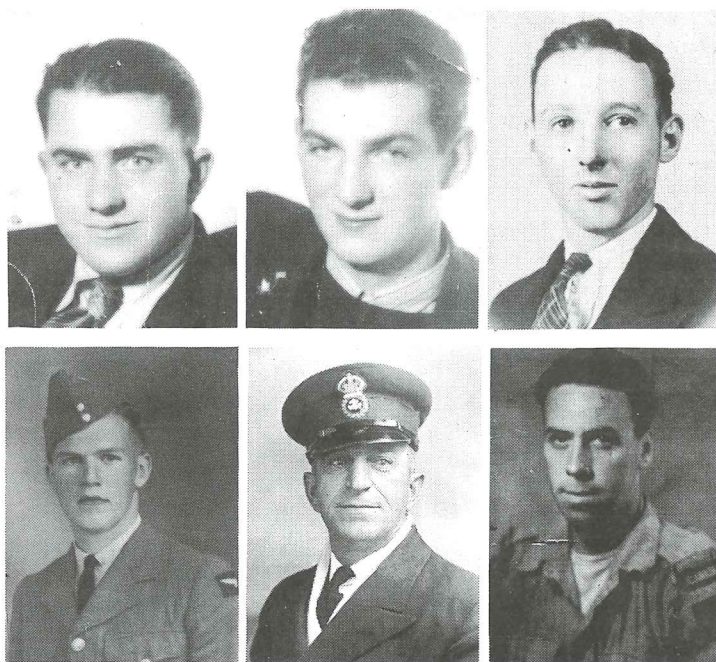
1939 & 1940

To the Louisbourg of 1939 the looming war declared by Great Britain and France on Germany on September 3rd was a minor affair that hardly rippled the even tenor of everyday life.

The previous February, Mayor Melvin S. Huntington arranged with Malcolm Patterson to introduce a bill in the Legislature establishing the boundaries of the town.¹ The opening of the new Post Office on February 14 and the Customs Office in the same building on February 23 were signs of progress.² Swordfishing went on in the summer and the fleet was welcomed as usual. On September 1, Huntington noted in his diary, "Germany invaded Poland today and the war that has been threatened for many months has begun." Up to then, nothing in the way of world news was considered worthwhile mentioning in his diary.

On September 3rd, Huntington and D.M. Johnston, then Chief of Police, attended a meeting in Sydney with other Cape Breton municipal leaders, "to organize the towns, City of Sydney, and rural communities in Cape Breton County, in preparation for possible air raids by enemy planes..." Dr. H. J. Townsend of Louisbourg was appointed chairman for Louisbourg to deal with the Mayor to organize an "Air Raid Precaution Committee" in the town.³ The first "blackout" was on September 7. On September 10, Canada declared war.

By September 14, an ARP Committee was organized, with Dr. Townsend as chairman, George Lewis, secretary, R.A. Peters, Fire Chief, D.M. Johnston, Chief of Police, Councillor Guy B. Hiltz and Mayor Huntington. For the duration of the war, this committee met faithfully to supervise the "blackouts" ordered from time to time by County officials.



Men from Louisbourg killed during the war included. Top l-r: John A. MacIntyre, William Bagnell, Patrick MacMullin. Bottom l-r: Ronald Cann, Daniel Townsend, Robert Thomas. (photos - Mrs. Mary Dominey, Mrs. Sadie Mrazek, Mr. Garfield Cann, Mr. Daniel Townsend, Mr. Dan Joe Thomas)