
Note from Nora - June 7, 2019



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

June 7, 2019

Thirty years ago this week, I was travelling on a court circuit to south Baffin communities. After long days in court dealing with a range of criminal matters and all the anguish connected to them, the judge, court staff, court worker, and Crown and defence lawyers all spent the evenings in the hotel (there was only one hotel in town in each community). In respect of people's different roles in the court matters, some of which might be continuing the next day, discussion about the day's work was avoided. Our attention shifted to the evening news, broadcast on the TV set in the dining area or common room.

I had never heard of Tiananmen Square before that week, but I will always remember the images of the huge crowds of student protesters there, determined to have their voices heard by their government, followed by the terrible news of the military action that left many of them dead. I didn't fully understand what was going on then; I guess I still don't. But the hope and the heartbreak were raw.

The other story that week, although not so much featured on the news, was the 45th anniversary of D-Day. My own father, a World War II veteran, was not part of the D-Day invasion, and never talked about the war. The judge on that court circuit 30 years ago was Orval Troy; a veteran of the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II, who had flown bombing operations over Germany as a flying officer bomb aimer with the 576 Squadron of the Royal Air Force. He was determined that the rest of us, all from the post war generation, be aware of the significance of June 6. That week, I came to understand a little better how much the lives of his generation, my parents' generation, were shaped by the war years, with all the idealism and the horror of that time.



[Photo: A Veteran of WWII holds a flower as he visits Juno Beach while taking part in the D-Day 75th Anniversary Canadian National Commemorative Ceremony at Juno Beach in Courseulles-Sur-Mer, France on Thursday, June 6, 2019 Credit: THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick]

This all came back to me this week, with the extensive coverage about the 75th anniversary of D-Day on the news. Only a few of the veterans from June 6, 1944 are still living now, and before long it will be left to my generation and subsequent generations to keep the memory of sacrifice and loss alive.

I accept that role with some reluctance. As a Christian I believe in peace and love. I have never had to participate in a war, and I hope that I never have to. At the same time, I am grateful for the legacy of peace that the war of my parents' generation gave me, and I am conscious that the safety and freedom I take for granted are unknown in many parts of the world today.

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- John 16:33*

Blessings,

Nora