

SENIOR SCAPE: The Universal Solider

By **Jim L. Abram**

He's 5 foot 2 and he's 6 feet 4; He fights with missiles and with spears; He's all of 31 and he's only 17; He's been a soldier for a thousand years.

He's a Catholic, a Hindu, an atheist, a Jain, a Buddhist, and a Baptist and Jew and he knows he shouldn't kill and he knows he always will kill; you'll for me my friend and me for you.

And he's fighting for Canada. He's fighting for France. He's fighting for the USA. And he's fighting for the Russians. And he's fighting for Japan. And he thinks we'll put an end to war this way.

And He's fighting for democracy, He's fighting for the reds, He says it's for the peace of all. He's the one, who must decide, who's to live and who's to die. And he never sees the writing on the wall.

But without him, how would Hitler have condemned him at Dachau? Without him Caesar would have stood alone; He's the one who gives his body as a weapon of the war. And without him all this killing can't go on.

He's the universal soldier and he really is the blame. His orders come from far away no more.

They come from him, and you and me. And brothers can't you see. This is not the way we put an end to war.

In 1970, when Buffy Saint Marie wrote this, I learned that five of my American cousins were being conscripted to go and kill people in Vietnam. All these years later, that has moulded my life. We are responsible for what we do. Ends do not justify means. Means are the ends. What we do and how we do it is the goal. Thank you Buffy, but you don't have it exactly right.

My thoughts reflect upon my relatives and friends who fought in two World Wars, in Vietnam and on the kids of Aurora who I had coached in hockey and soccer who as recently as this week told me stories of their horrifying experiences in Afghanistan.

My wife's grandfather was asked at the point of a gun if he would like to join the German army. He had no choice. He was killed defending a bridge in Italy. My American cousins were given draft notices and sent to Vietnam to fight in that ?conflict?.

Fortunately, they all survived, but many of their friends did not. My wife's parents were both put in concentration camps as children living in what is now Yugoslavia. They lost everything they had. They escaped to Germany then immigrated to Canada as did many of their friend's fortunate enough to survive.

Now, the idea of a veteran being an old man having a beer at the Legion is not true. Well, it never was. Now, a veteran is not just you, your father or grandfather, it can be your own son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter. As a species, we seem to never learn from our past. There must be a better way to resolve our differences. We should be celebrating our differences. In peace.

In support of our friends and colleagues in military service and at The Royal Canadian Legion, all Seniors Association members are invited, and encouraged, to attend the Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremony on Sunday November 10th for the 11 a.m. ceremony at the Aurora Cenotaph.

The Aurora Cenotaph (located at the Aurora War Memorial and Peace Park), is Aurora's only memorial tower. Built in 1925, it stands 73 feet high, and recognizes the local soldiers from Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville who served and fell (77 local men) in the Great War.

The Altar of Sacrifice located at the base of the Cenotaph was dedicated in 1960 to those who died (55 local men) in World War II. The Cenotaph is constructed on the land once owned by the military leader William Graham. William Graham fought in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812.

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

The Aurora Seniors' Centre is hosting their Annual Holiday Bazaar on November 9 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors from the Farmers' Market and the Seniors' Association will be there. So should you! There will be a Tea Room and of course the popular Bake Table and much, much more! It's a great opportunity to do your holiday shopping. See you there!

My last word: Exercise your ?true patriot love? ? thank a veteran, hire a veteran, and help a veteran. Honour and respect go two ways.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.