

Page 24 - With Hilda Mleczko, Glace Bay ISSUE : <u>Issue 54</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1990/6/1

Now, when you hear the whistle of a bomb, you always automatically hunch your shoul? ders and pull in your neck and say, "This might be for me." So I dove in the shelter where this girl was. But as I dove I looked back, to see the bomb explode right on the place where I'd been, just a min? ute, a few seconds, before. I tell you, that shook me. That shook me. 'Cause it was only seconds. I would have been dead. And then one other case I remember. We were talking about the nuns in our dis? trict. Of course, I'm not a Catholic, so I've even forgotten the name. The nuns had a big old house. But underneath were big vaults--I think they must have been keep? ing wine there years ago. But they trans? formed these vaults into shelters, to go down to. When the war was on, you always had to go down under things to get away from getting blown up. And they made these vaults- -they had blankets down there and milk for the children. You know how sisters are--they're very kind. So we were talking about it at work, and we decid? ed, instead of going to our usual shel? ter- -the Anderson Shelter--the surface type--concrete shel? ters just under the ground--the govern? ment issues them-- we'd go to this big convent. So we all arranged that that night, before the sirens went--we were waiting for them to go--we would go down CONTACT LENSES Fitting and Service ALLAN G. MOSS LC.LF. - C.O.T. 316 St. Peter's Rd., Sydney B1P3R1 564-5552 there. So, at the last minute they re? guired volunteers to do extra work for a few hours. And I was one of the volunteers that stayed behind. But most of my friends, in fact, all of the ones that de? cided to (go to the convent) shelter, they went home. They didn't want to bother to earn extra money. I did it more or less for the war effort, because I was very glad I could help in that way. So I did 4 more hours--that was more like half a shift, you might say. So of course by the time I got home--I walked all the way home. But on the way home, I was going to go straight to the shelter--this convent shel? ter--if I'd get there in time, before the enemy planes came over and the sirens start? ed wailing. I didn't get half there. So I spent my night in a straight air raid shel? ter. They were all over the place, for the convenience and the safety of pedestrians, and civilians. So I spent the rest of the raid in this strange shelter. And afterwards I picked my way, as I said, very carefully over the unexploded bombs and the incendiar? ies, and went home and went to bed. So the next morning, when I went in to the factory, you know, there were a lot of them not there. I said, oh, they must be late on account of the raid--they've over? slept. Especially my friends. And then we heard the shocking news that this convent had received a direct hit on it, and that the people in it were all killed. In fact they never did--were able--on account of the massiveness of the ruins or whatever. What they did--they never got the bodies out. They made a huge tomb of that one place. They put a great big monument over it. It's still there to this day. Now, I would have been in there, as sure as I'm sitting here, if I hadn't have volun? teered for doing that extra work. You see, it's things like that that make you think. Yellow Cello Cafe Bakery Pizza 'o'" Cff' ' (-'W ' Outdoor) Terrace L Facing thef Wharf in > baddeck] 1' Environment Canada Canadian Parl