



WAR AND PIECES

*From bomb-shattered cathedrals of Europe,
a Canadian chaplain created a stained-glass memorial*

By Roberta Avery with photos by Ted Shaw

TO THE ARMY CHAPLAIN hiding in the rubble of the bombed church, the bright red fragment from a stained-glass window looked like the blood spilled on the battlefield that morning.

It was 1944 and the late Maj. Rev. Harold Appleyard's Royal Regiment of Canada had just lost 40 men at Louvigny, France, following the D-Day landings. Appleyard, on leave from his parish in Meaford, Ont., on Georgian Bay, pocketed the shard.

Broken stained glass from more than 100 bombed European churches were picked up by Canadian army chaplain Harold Appleyard during the Second World War. He had them re-made as windows for his church in the Georgian Bay community of Meaford, Ont.





Installed in Meaford's Christ Church Anglican and dedicated to the parish's war dead, the windows contain some of the oldest stained glass in North America.

He already had a collection of stained-glass fragments he had gathered from the bombed ruins of more than 100 churches and cathedrals in Britain, Belgium and Holland during his three-and-a-half-year tour of duty, but it was that one red piece that became his inspiration. He decided to have his collection made into a window to take home as a memorial to the war dead. In fact, he had enough glass for six windows.

Appleyard's fragments were skilfully blended to form mosaic patterns and made into windows by Cox and Barnard of Sussex, England, then shipped to Canada in straw-packed crates. Leslie Aylward, 67, a young glazier's apprentice at Cox and Barnard during the war, remembers the distinguished Canadian officer arriving with a bundle of shards. "It was more than 50 years ago but I remember because he wanted us to use the old traditional method of using sawdust to dry the cement between the pieces," says Aylward.

Today the parishioners of Meaford's Christ Church Anglican are illuminated by what is arguably some of the oldest and finest stained glass in North America.

"During my first few moments in England, the appalling destruction of homes and churches alike, along with the courage of the British people, made

it desirable to link their sacrifice with ours," Appleyard said in an August 1946 service dedicating the windows to the war dead of the parish.

Olive Sims, 78, a member of the church since childhood, remembers the dedication service, which was broadcast across Canada and in Britain. "I was making the lunch but I went up for the service and found all those people had come to see our windows," she says.

"It wasn't about which denomination or where they lived, he wanted the windows to honour them all," says Archdeacon Ted Light, 84, who befriended Appleyard after the war. "The old glass has an incredible depth of colour. It has to be seen to be appreciated."

A southeast-facing window in the cloister is made of glass from some of the 53 London churches and cathedrals designed by renowned English architect Sir Christopher Wren. Appleyard also scooped melted glass from the rubble of Coventry Cathedral, which was destroyed by fire bombs, as well as fragments from St. James in Dover, which was demolished by shell fire during the Battle of Britain. Diagrams on the windowsills in Christ Church explain the origin of each fragment.

"I usually was able to find someone to approve what I wanted to take, but occasionally ... permission had to be taken for granted," Appleyard said in an



THE TORONTO TELEGRAM



STEVEN FROU/CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC

A 1946 newspaper photo (TOP) shows Rev. Appleyard unpacking the "new" windows.

interview with the local paper, the *Meaford Express*, after the war.

"Britain finally passed a law stating the glass couldn't be taken out of the country, but he got ours out in time," says Sims. Another Canadian chaplain, Maj. Rev. Robert Sneyd, also salvaged stained-glass fragments from bombed churches in England. Those were incorporated with new glass to form a memorial window in Calvary Baptist Church in Toronto in 1952.

Appleyard, who was awarded a military cross, returned to his Meaford parish after the war and became a bishop in 1961. He died in 1982. ♦

Roberta Avery is a writer based in Meaford, Ont. Photographer Ted Shaw is based in Owen Sound, Ont.