

My Neighbor's Shed

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My neighbour is a veteran. His name is Bill, well William, I guess. His brick bungalow next door was built after WW2. In his backyard stands an old little shed. Fading white paint is peeling and flaking away, busy black squirrels live in a nook underneath, and the original door has been replaced with a crooked, rough piece of plywood. Attached to the shed a flagpole flies the Canadian flag, tall and proud. Twice a year, when the flag gets faded, or torn by harsh winds, my dad hoists a bright new one. I see this flag every day, reminding me that my neighbour Bill saw war and stood up to fight for our freedom so we could have peace.

When I contemplate what I have heard about the war, I try to imagine how Bill was affected. When I see him outside, I see the young man he was behind the "mask" of wrinkles and grey hair. I can't understand the memories he must have. He may not remember what he did yesterday but remembers the war vividly and has stories to tell. He had faith to persevere through every day although he felt tired and weak. He encouraged others to stay strong and endure; just like the paint on the shed. Though the paint is peeling, the sides are sagging, and rotting wood is showing through, the shed remains strong in its history.

He must have protected other soldiers. I imagine Bill pulling others through the trenches who were wounded or gassed; a leader taking on a challenge even when it was terrifying. This leader is the protective, caring veteran who lives next door to me. He is like his shed. The black squirrels find shelter under it and the shed protects them through the hard winter and keeps them strong and alive.

I imagine he did not show fear. I see the brave face he wore for others to stay strong and courageous. I feel the misery he would have felt. He must have been scared on the inside. This is the veteran who lives next door. Just like the plywood door on the shed, Bill shielded others from fear by showing a brave face and did not show what was going on inside.

I wonder how he might feel now. I think Bill looks out of his small window and feels sorrow for the many women and men who still fight and die in horrifying wars. I hope he feels hope, that right will triumph over wrong.

My neighbour Bill humbly served to protect our values and way of life. He flies a flag on his little old shed, and we keep it fresh because we are so proud and grateful. When I see Bill, I see a young man and I feel the pride he had when he chose to sacrifice and serve Canada in a time of great need. This is the brave, kind and caring veteran who lives next door to me.