

Remembrance Day A Deeply Personal Occasion For Casa Abruzzo Resident

Remembrance Day means more than plastic poppies and a minute of silence for one of Casa Abruzzo's longest-tenured residents.

For Max Dankner, 92, Remembrance Day means commemorating those who fought, some sacrificing their lives, alongside him during World War II and others who served for their country before and after.

"I joined the active army when I was 18-years-old...and after training, I went to Italy, which is where I spent most of my time in the war," says Dankner, who, along with his wife, has helped organize dozens of social events at Casa Abruzzo, which he has called home for 20 years. Dankner also owned and operated a successful hat manufacturing business for decades after returning from the war.

"My unit was attached to the British 8th Army and we fought through the Hitler Line and the Gothic Line and all through Italy. I was wounded by a piece of shrapnel as well."

Dankner also spent time in France, the Netherlands and Belgium as a dispatcher, scout and front-line soldier during the war.

As Remembrance Day approaches, Dankner's thoughts are dwelling more and more on his experiences in World War II and what it means to him all these years later.

"I've lost a lot of my friends. There was one friend who I went to elementary school and high school with, and we met in the war when I was in Italy and he was killed right beside me," said Dankner from his home at the Casa Abruzzo apartments.

"He was a friend of mine for many, many years. Everyone had more than one friend like him, friends who were killed so that Canadians could have the rights and privileges they have today. That's why it's so important for people to remember, to never forget."

Dankner will be recognizing Remembrance Day this year as he has done every year for the last six years: by helping organize a small ceremony at Casa Abruzzo for residents.

"It was getting harder and harder for some of the residents to get out to other Remembrance Day ceremonies, so I decided to coordinate something here at the apartment," said Dankner about what inspired him to start this tradition at Casa Abruzzo.

"We get together and remember all the friends we lost and all the sacrifices that have been made for Canadians. It's very important to never forget all this, and not just on November 11, but every day."