

From December 2013 Beacon

Great storm of 1913 still horrifies after 100 years

*With files from the
Moore Museum*

The gales that pummeled the Great Lakes in November, 1913, are now known collectively as the *Great Storm of 1913*. After 100 years, this chilling example of Mother Nature's fury still has the power to horrify. A display commemorating the 100th anniversary of the four-day storm and its destruction is now open at the Moore Museum Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The storm has other names, like the *Witch of November* and the *White Hurricane*, but no matter how fanciful a name you give it, the Great Storm of 1913 was a merciless killer that took 12 steel-hulled freighters to the bottom of the Great Lakes, most in Lake Huron, with all hands. Of the 253 sailors who are known to have died, only 25 per cent of their bodies were ever recovered. The crew of one ship were discovered lashed to the mast and frozen to death. Inland, numerous other lives were lost. In addition, 31 other cargo ships and barges were disabled.

In the days that followed, it is recorded that farmers would come to the shore each day to recover bodies from the sand and snow.

Reports of the weather that caused the incredible loss of life indicate that, at the height of the storm on Nov. 9, winds gusted to 70 miles per hour with waves cresting at 35 feet, 10 feet higher than a telephone pole.

Many of the dead washed ashore on the beaches of Lake Huron.



Moore Museum photo archives

Decorated Sombra airman operated general stores

Files from Heritage St. Clair

The recent observation of Remembrance Day gave us a chance to honour those who served in the defence of their country. One of our local heroes, Flight Lieutenant (F/L) Warren Hargrove of Sombra, not only served with distinction during World War II, he returned home safe and sound to continue serving his community as part of his family's business.

F/L Hargrove, born in Sombra in 1912, served as an observer with No. 410 Squadron of the RCAF as part of a two-man crew that participated in many sorties. In October, 1944, he and his crewmate, F/L Benjamin Plumer, were engaged with an enemy fighter near Venlo when their starboard engine was hit and caught fire. F/L Hargrove kept a cool head and successfully fought to extinguish the blaze while F/L Plumer continued the battle.

Their efforts resulted in the destruction of the enemy aircraft and a safe landing at the battle's conclusion. They both received the Distinguished Flying Cross, an award that acknowledged their courage and resourcefulness under fire. The London Gazette noted the award was effective as of Dec. 15, 1944.

The Hargrove family, along with partner Charlie Doan, operated the Red and White General Store in Sombra. Warren eventually became sole proprietor of the business and operated it until he retired in 1984. The building burned in 1992 and the property it had been located on is now the site of the Sombra Museum Cultural Centre and the General Store Park.

F/L Warren Hargrove is shown here with his father, William, right, and general store partner Charlie Doan.

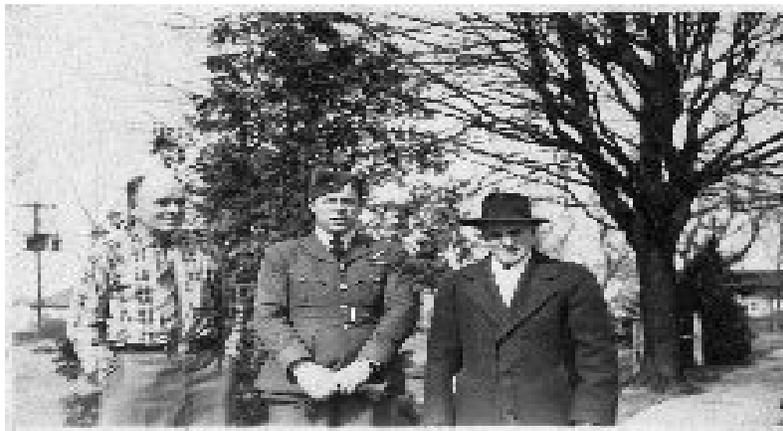


Photo submitted