

NEWS

Navy veteran who gives back named Mississauga's Citizen of the Year

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Andrew Irwin has always taken great pride in his time with the Navy.

A decorated Second World War veteran, the Port Credit resident still makes a constant effort to share his stories with schools and other community groups across Mississauga even as he approaches his 92nd birthday on May 28.

For his efforts, he has been named this year's recipient of the Gordon S. Shipp Memorial Award for Mississauga's Citizen of the Year, presented by The Mississauga News and the Mississauga Real Estate Board.

"He's humbled I know," said Irwin's wife Elaine, speaking on his behalf while he's in the hospital.

"He's proud and he says he doesn't know why he deserves it, but we told him he does."

Irwin has lived in Mississauga since 1979 and has received countless medals and awards for his service.

Within the last few years, he was presented with the Russian Medal of Ushakov and the French Legion of Honour.

He's also been honoured with the 1939-1945 Star, European Theatre Ribbon with the Atlantic Star, Defence of Britain, Volunteer medal, Victory in Europe medal, Canada's 125th medal, NOAC Gold Medallion, Queen's Silver Jubilee and Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

During the Second World War, he guided convoys on the Murmansk Run as they shipped vital supplies to the Russians in their fight against the Germans.

Irwin, who grew up in New Westminster, BC, enlisted at the



Metroland file photo

Andrew Irwin has been named Mississauga's Citizen of the Year.

age of 17, three months before his 18th birthday.

"His mother let him go because he went in in February and she knew he was going in May anyway," Elaine said. "He was the first cadet in his troop to volunteer and go in."

The next year, Irwin was on board the HMCS Algonquin as part of the gun crew during the Invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

He also helped in the development of An ABC of the Battle of the Atlantic, a teaching resource teachers can access online to assist with their teaching aids for Canada's role in the Second World War.

"He really feels the children need to know about what the Navy is doing, both then and now," Elaine said.

"He's said it many, many times, I wish I had started earlier. He gets so much out of it and the only regret he has is that he can't talk to them on Nov. 11. For some of the schools, that's the day they'd like to have him there, but (he can't) because he's involved with the church and the Navy parades and their services on the 11th."

Aside from his presentations, Irwin spent 25 years as the "foreman" of the boat launch and haul at the Port Credit Yacht Club.

He also helped with the Easter Seals Family Fun Day during the Port Credit Regatta, taking disabled children and their families out for an afternoon on the water.

Irwin is a longtime participant in Port Credit's Canada Day parade and the Port Credit Legion's Remembrance Day parade.