

# War hero swears in 120 new Canadians

It was an honor befitting a hero.

D-Day veteran, author and recent media darling Charlie Martin was made judge for a day Wednesday, and presided over a special citizenship court that saw 120 people sworn in as Canadian citizens.

A sergeant major with the Queen's Own Rifles Regiment, who stormed Juno Beach on June 6, 1944, Martin recently put pen to paper to describe the war from an infantryman's perspective in his book *Battle Diary*. A one-hour CBC documentary filmed in France was made based on his memoirs and he was featured in *Maclean's* magazine and *The Mississauga News* last June, on the 50th anniversary of the invasion.

Martin returned from the war to become a farmer. "I came back, I got myself a job and a house and wife. I became a farmer and then an agricultural officer with the Ontario government," said Martin, now in his mid-70s, at his Cooksville home. "I was busy with scouts and Sunday school and church until just a few years ago.

"I never said much about the war, but then I wrote this book. I wrote it to speak about the soldiers who actually do the fighting, since many others concentrate on the officers and the generals."

"It took about a year and half. I tried to put it on tape but that sounded terrible when it was typed up," said Martin. "So I wrote it out longhand."

While Martin's message was to show the good work of Canadian soldiers, there's little chance the story can be read as a glorification of war. "War is terrible, it's just the most terrible thing," said Martin. "I think most people understand that. But then sometimes there's a choice between war and slavery."

While talking of war has made Martin a pretty popular figure these days, there was no battle-speak at the citizenship

court session, where Martin displayed the proud patriotism that spurred him on all those years ago on European soil.

"I've seen Canadian boys die, and when you see what they did you can't help but feel proud," Martin said. "I think Canadians have to be Canadians, there should be no hyphens."