

# All fired up

*Holy Name choir thrilled to honour alumnus at Spitfire memorial ceremony*



*Members of the Holy Name Catholic Elementary School choir practice God Save the Queen in preparation for Sunday's ceremony.*

(Essex, Ontario, Friday, Sept. 19, 2014) – Madison Shanahan thinks it's "pretty cool" that she gets to sing at a ceremony to unveil the new Spitfire memorial here this Sunday.

"The plane means a lot because it helped us in the war," said Shanahan, a Grade 4 student at Holy Name Catholic Elementary School and a member of the choir.

The school's choir will sing *O Canada* and *God Save the Queen*, as well as recite a poem when the recently-erected Second World War-era Spitfire plane is dedicated at a ceremony at 2 p.m. this Sunday at Heritage Gardens.

What makes the event extra special for the students at Holy Name is that the plane has been named "Priscilla" in honour of Priscilla Campbell (*nee* Voakes), a graduate of the school who passed away in August at the age of 30 as a result of complications from juvenile rheumatoid

arthritis. Despite her diminutive size, Priscilla was well known as a “Spitfire” for her strength and determination.

“It’s really nice to have that connection to her,” said Tina Tuer, principal at Holy Name.

A talented and creative artist, Priscilla was working at the time of her death on a portrait of Jerry Billings, a pilot who flew during the war and continued flying Spitfires at air shows across North America for 56 years.



A mural honouring Billings that was painted on the side of a Canadian Tire store was lost in 2005 when the building was demolished, but Priscilla’s unfinished portrait of him will be placed in a time capsule that will be stored at the new Spitfire memorial.

Now in his 90s, Billings is unable to attend this Sunday’s ceremony, but he would be honoured to know that his portrait was being preserved in his home town so close to the plane that he loved so much, according to Mike Beale, a member of the Spitfire Heritage Committee that brought the plane to Essex.

“This is really a beautiful tribute,” Beale said.

The Holy Name choir has been practicing during morning recess to get ready for the big event.

“They’ve seen the plane already, so they’re pretty excited to take part,” said teacher and choir instructor Rachel Mulvey.