

## Seaway News - Opinion - Columns - Dances with Words – by Nick Wolochatiuk

### “Jake’s Gift” is a Gift of Remembrance

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Topics : [Prescott](#) , [Normandy](#) , [Canada](#)

Once again, Remembrance Day is here. On it we are asked to remember. For some of us, we are asked to remember what we never experienced, what we were never taught, what we never learned.

I consider myself fortunate in that I have never experienced war. Unfortunately, so many others, far too many others have. However, I have learned much about war, by reading, through visiting museums, historical sites, watching movies, attending air shows that feature restored military aircraft and through conversations with and presentations given by soldiers, airmen and sailors.

This year, in Prescott, I had a unique experience, thanks to a moving monologue written and performed by Julia Mackey. This one actor becomes four characters (Jake, an aging WW II Canadian soldier on his first return visit to the D-Day landing site of Normandy; Isabel, a relentlessly inquiring pre-teen local girl; Isabel’s grand-mama who was Isabel’s age when D-Day took place, and Susan, a dulcet-voiced teacher from Canada who came to the 60th anniversary Juno Beach landing commemorations to lay her students’ wreath during the ceremony.

All the characters become present on the stage through Mackey’s mastery of the gesture, the change of a hat, the shift in posture and the alteration of the pitch and tone of her voice.

Gradually, the relationship between Jake and Isabel evolves and grows. They eventually exchange mailing addresses before Jake flies back to Canada.

How does this moving story end? I won’t tell you, but I will confess that it was so moving that partway through the play I had to leave the room so that my tears would not disturb the rest of the audience.

This is the only hint I’ll give you. If you saw the 1995 movie “Bridges of Madison County” (starring Clint Eastwood, Meryl Streep - and Eastwood’s Nikon), the ending of “Jake’s Gift” is similar to that movie.

To find out more about “Jake’s Gift” and where this monologue may be seen on tour, check out these web sites: [www.juliamackey.com](http://www.juliamackey.com) <<http://www.juliamackey.com/>> and [www.jakesgift.com](http://www.jakesgift.com) <<http://www.jakesgift.com/>> .

#### ILLUSTRATION:

**Julia Mackey – through her command of gestures, voice, posture and hats, Mackey becomes Jake, Isabel, Susan and Isabel’s grand-mama. “Jake’s Gift” is a moving tribute to all Canadian servicemen and servicewomen, past and present. (Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)**



*“Jake’s Gift” is a Gift of Remembrance - Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk.*