

The Sarnia **Journal** Your Local Independent Newspaper

SARNIA REMEMBERS

A special tribute to our local heroes



SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Saying “thank you” to our current and fallen veterans

About 70% of the more than 300 men from Sarnia who have died fighting for Canada lie in graves scattered around the globe.

Their remains rest in 120 cemeteries in at least 17 countries, including such far-flung places as South Africa, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Iceland, Barbados and the Azores.

But another 89 Sarnians killed in military conflicts have never been found. They have no known grave.

The special publication you see before you is both a tribute to the men and women who serve today, and a commemoration of those who served to protect our country in the past.

Most of the stories — like the statistics above — can be traced



to the Sarnia War Remembrance Project, a remarkable record of the city's military contributions started six years ago by the retired teacher Tom Slater and a group of volunteer researchers.

Many of the stories you are about to read have never been told before, beyond the families of the participants. And many concern the First World War, which mercifully ground to a halt 100 years on Nov. 11, 1918.



THE CENOTAPH in Veterans Park and Sarnia's historic “Big Tom” cannon as they appeared prior to 1955. Clayton Studios photo

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A big thank you to all the dedicated researchers and writers who contributed to the project, including Slater and Tom St. Amand, Randy Evans, Gary Shrumm, Phil Egan, and all the families who so kindly shared their anecdotes and photos.

Gratitude as well goes to our sales team, graphic artists, carriers and especially to all our advertisers, without whom this special edition would not be possible.

The anniversary of the Armistice makes this is an

extra special Remembrance Day. The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 62, has moved the traditional services held at 11 a.m. to the Sarnia Arena from Veterans Park to accommodate what could be a large crowd and to avoid complications from bad weather.

And at 12:30 p.m. the sound of church bells will ring out across the city, commemorating the joy that spread through Sarnia a century ago at news the guns had finally fallen silent and the war was over.

Please take a moment this Remembrance Day to thank a veteran for his or her service, and to remember all those who have fought to protect our freedoms.

COVER ART BY Tyler Viscount. Image used: *The Taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday, 1917.* Painted in 1919 by Richard Jack (1866-1952). Displayed at the Canadian War Museum.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn;
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

-Laurence Binyon, “Ode of Remembrance”

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Epitaphs: Saying goodbye to loved one in a sentence

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND
THE JOURNAL

In the 1920s, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission began removing the wooden crosses from the graves of fallen soldiers and replacing them with uniform markers of white stone.

The Commission encouraged surviving families to compose personal epitaphs for loved ones laid to rest in foreign lands.

Never in history had this been done, and many Sarnians took the opportunity to compose heartfelt tributes.

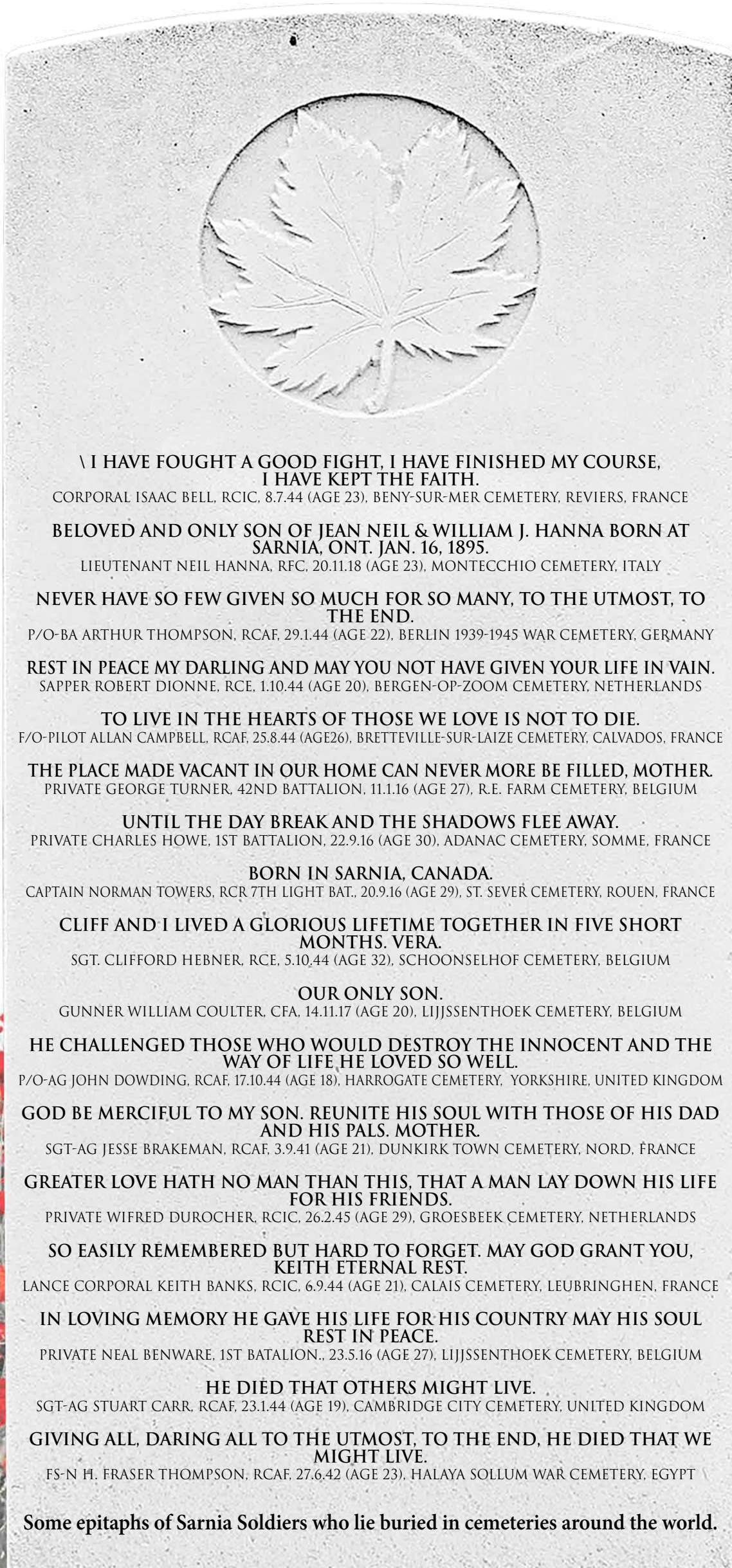
Initially, the families were allowed only 66 characters, including the spaces.

But how do you do justice in 66 spaces? How do you capture in a few words the essence of a person taken too soon, written on a gravestone you most likely would never visit?

Some families took solace in mentioning their hometown while others turned to poetry and literature for inspiration.

Many found comfort in faith and scripture, or honoured a loved ones' patriotism and sense of duty.

Several epitaphs capture the devastating impact the loss had on their family.



A total of 213 Sarnians, representing 70% of our city's fallen, are buried in Canada and at least 16 other countries scattered throughout the world.

From South Africa and Iceland to Barbados and Algeria, their bodies lie in more than 120 cemeteries.

Today, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission ensures the 1.7 million servicemen and servicewomen of the Commonwealth who fought and died in the two world wars will never be forgotten.

Canada's headstones are a uniform style. The same commemoration is given to all, so that Canadians lie buried side-by-side regardless of rank, religion, colour, social standing or creed.

The markers are engraved with the iconic maple leaf, or a regimental badge, and for Newfoundlanders, a caribou. Each features the soldier's rank, name, enlistment number, decorations conferred, date of death, age of casualty and a religious symbol.

But the bodies of 89 of Sarnia's fallen soldiers have never been recovered.

Though their names are inscribed on war memorials in nine countries, from Egypt to France to South Korea, the families they left behind never had a chance to write an epitaph, to say goodbye.



Some epitaphs of Sarnia Soldiers who lie buried in cemeteries around the world.

SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Sarnia man killed at Battle of Ypres, his body never found

RANDY EVANS
THE JOURNAL

Once Angus Garrod had completed his two-year stint with the British Royal Navy he packed his trunk, said goodbye to his father in England, and emigrated to Sarnia.

By 1914, the twenty-six year old bachelor was living at 122 Mary St. and had a labourer's job at Imperial Oil Ltd. He had relatives in town and a sister in Stratford

– a short hop on the very accessible Grand Trunk Railway.

Civilian life was apparently falling into place for Angus Garrod, with a peaceful future on the banks of the St. Clair River.

But that isn't what happened.

When the black clouds over Europe erupted into the First World War, Garrod's sense of patriotism eventually won out. Like thousands of other Englishmen who had moved in Canada,



SARNIA'S ANGUS GARROD died fighting in Belgium in 1916. His name is not inscribed on the Sarnia Cenotaph.

Photo courtesy, Library and Archives Canada.

Garrod of Sarnia, killed, was an old British navy man and had seen much previous service."

Eight days later The Observer had more:

"Pvt. Angus Garrod, whose death was mentioned in yesterday's casualty list, leaves many relatives here to mourn his loss. They are his aunt Mrs. J. Baker, Martin St. and several cousins including Private Archie Baker, Private Willie Waller and Private Alfred Weston Private Garrod had resided in Sarnia for several years prior to enlisting. While here he was employed at the Imperial Oil Company Works."

Angus Garrod is commemorated on the Menin Gate honouring Allied soldiers killed in the Ypres Salient without a known grave.

His death was publicly cited by the Canadian War Department in its daily casualty lists under the heading: "Sarnia – Killed."

His sacrifice is cited in Parliament's Books of Remembrance, and the name "Garrod, A." is inscribed on the Sarnia Legion's Enlistee Plaque.

Nevertheless, the name of Sarnia's Private Angus Garrod does not appear on the city's Cenotaph.

Lest we forget.

he volunteered for active service overseas with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces.

He enlisted in Sarnia on Oct. 23, 1914 and, after basic training, found himself six months later docking in England aboard the S.S. Gramian.

Garrod was back in his homeland and in uni-

form. War had taken him full circle.

Things were not going well for the British Commonwealth and Allied forces when Garrod and his 18th Battalion arrived in France in September of 1915.

The German Army held fortified positions all across France and

Belgium, and the area around the city of Ypres was a particular thorn in the side of the Allied brass. The Canadians were moved into a bulge in the Allied line – the notorious Ypres Salient.

Private Angus Garrod was killed while attacking the enemy on April 10, 1916.

He has no known grave; a fate shared by 20,473 other Canadian soldiers in the First World War.

The London Free Press reported on April 27, 1916: "Pte. Angus

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

City man's capture of German sub 'the stuff of Hollywood'

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

When he leapt over the side of the HMCS Oakville and landed eight feet below on the deck of a crippled German submarine, Stoker Petty Officer Art Powell was acting on instinct.

Wearing only his underwear and carrying a flashlight and .45 revolver, the 23-year-old Point Edward

man had no definite plan in mind. With him was Sub-Lieutenant Hal Lawrence.

The two officers knew they had to commandeer U-94 by capturing the Germans on board, or kill them if they resisted.

The submarine's deck was slippery and rolling and a dead German they passed washed into the warm Caribbean waters.

As they ran to confront two submariners near the bullet-riddled conning tower, a wave knocked



STOKER PETTY OFFICER ART POWELL, right, of Point Edward, together with Sub-Lieutenant Hal Lawrence, left, captured a crippled German submarine during a dramatic confrontation in the Caribbean.

Photo: George A. Lawrence, Department Of National Defence, Library And Archives Canada—Pa106526



**Mayor Mike Bradley
and Sarnia City Council**

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Lawrence over the side. A desperate Powell pulled him back aboard.

At that point both men realized their ship, the damaged Oakville, had lost power and was drifting away.

The two Canadians were now completely on their own. And what unfolded was, as one witness described it, "the stuff of Hollywood."

HMCS Oakville was a corvette escorting Canadian oil tankers on convoy between Halifax and the island of Aruba. Oil was "the life blood of the war" and the Germans were determined to stop its flow.

In a seven-day stretch that summer U-boats had torpedoed twelve ships in the Caribbean.

On Aug. 27, 1942, a moonlit night, U-94 was hunting in the waters between Cuba and Haiti. The Oakville was one of nine escorts on a convoy of 21 tankers heading to

a U.S. port on the east coast.

Powell admitted later that, "We knew the convoy would be hit that night."

As midnight approached, the Oakville's radar still hadn't detected U-94, but an American Patrol Bomber did. Before the submarine could fire its torpedoes the plane dropped four, 650-pound depth charges that exploded around the sub. The bombs disabled the U-boat's two bow hydroplanes, making it impossible for the crew to control the sub underwater.

The Oakville then launched its own depth charges.

The U-boat surfaced not long after about a football field away, looking dark and sinister in the moonlight. The Oakville tried to ram it, twice, but both attempts failed. But her guns didn't miss.

Each time the sub surfaced

and German sailors poured onto the deck to access the sub's own guns they were cut down by the corvette's fire. The Oakville's guns also destroyed one of the sub's two deck guns and battered the conning tower.

With U-94 now nearly stationary, Oakville rammed it squarely, and when the corvette slipped alongside Powell and Lawrence jumped onto its deck.

Powell was resourceful, and a proven man of action. Before enlisting, his quick thinking had saved two miners overcome by underground gas, and while on leave months earlier he'd saved a small girl in a Sarnia Bay elevator slip.

The first two Germans they confronted near the conning tower didn't resist. Revolvers in hand, the Canadians ordered them to go aft and to jump overboard.

Continued on page 7

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Two-man boarding party from the Canadian corvette 'Oakville' subdues crew of German sub in Caribbean

THIS PROPAGANDA POSTER issued by the Wartime Information Board in 1942 was based on the real-life heroics of Point Edward's Art Powell.

Canadian War Museum

Continued from page 6

The next two submariners emerging from the conning tower hatch lunged at the Canadians. Powell and Lawrence shot both men, who toppled overboard.

Lawrence then shone his flashlight in the open hatch and ordered the rest of the men on top. The Germans understood and, fearful of being trapped in their sinking sub, bolted up the ladder.

Powell mustered them in a line towards the stern, his revolver always visible. Lawrence went below to try and save U-94. He was up to his chest in water, checking the gauges and valves, when he heard Powell shout, "Come on top, sir—she's sinking."

Powell ordered the Germans into the sea and Lawrence and he followed.

A few minutes later, U-94 sank.

Fearing sharks and holding their revolvers above water to keep them dry, Powell and Lawrence trod water near the Germans until a U.S. ship arrived.

Word of the Canadians' heroism spread quickly. A propaganda poster was created, and Powell laughed when he heard he was getting a medal. What he did, he said, was part of the job.

Nevertheless, Powell received the Distinguished Service Medal and Lawrence, the Distinguished Service Cross.

Nineteen of the Germans were dead, and the remaining 26 detained as prisoners at Guantanamo in Cuba.

After the war, Art Powell returned to Point Edward, where his parents and siblings had settled in 1941. In the early 1950s he moved to Sarnia and lived there another decade until his work took him to London. As a civil engineer, he surveyed waterways throughout the Great Lakes.

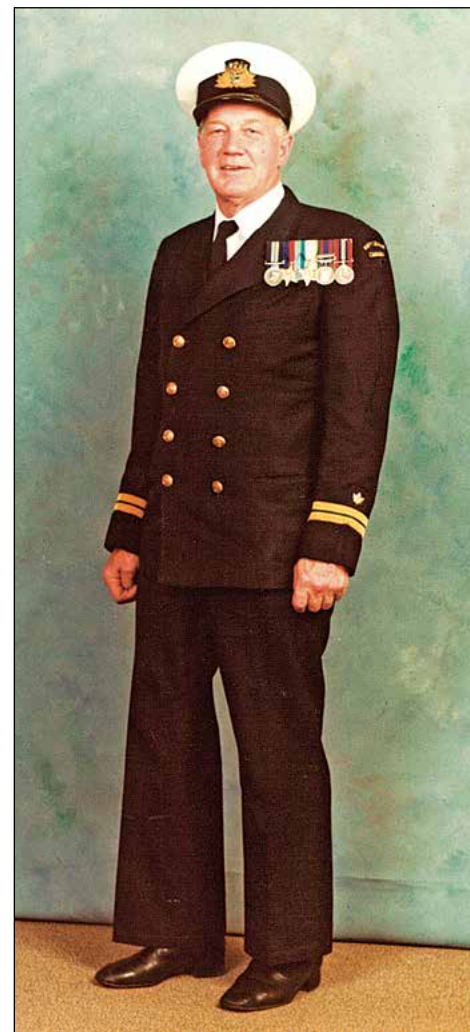
Powell never entirely left Sarnia, however, returning regularly to train Sea Cadets and march with Sarnians on Remembrance Day.

His daughter, Barbara Crichton, remembers her dad "as decisive and generous, a man who lived an adventurous, fulfilling life."

When Art Powell died in 1997, people recalled his heroism that August night. But perhaps the greatest sign of respect he received came the day after U-94's capture.

When the submarine's commander spotted Powell aboard the U.S. rescue ship the German officer saluted.

Powell returned the gesture.



SARNIA'S ART POWELL won the Distinguished Service Medal for bravery for jumping aboard and seizing control of a German U-Boat during the Second World War.

Submitted Photo

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sacrificed for us*



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Waterfront once home to Sarnia's own machine gun battery

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Prior to the start of the First World War the British Army adopted what would become one of its most reliable weapons of war. It was known as the Vickers gun. Capable of firing 450 to 500 rounds per minute, the machine gun remained in production for the

next 46 years. And as its use spread, the Canadian Machine Gun Corps was created on April 16, 1917. The machine gun came to be seen as an essential component of military power, and after the war a second corps was created with various Canadian militias formed into companies. In 1920, plans for Sarnia's own machine gun battery were nearing completion. It was to serve as a company of the 2nd Canadian



A VICKERS GUN being used by a British machine gun crew in Belgium during the First World War at the Battle of Passchendaele.

Photo by Ernest Brooks, collections of the Imperial War Museums.

Remembrance Day

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Machine Gun Brigade headquartered in London, with Lieut. R.M. Thompson as its commander. The search for a local headquarters had just been solved, with rooms atop the old waterworks building at the foot of George Street to be renovated for the battery's use. The 44-year-old waterfront building was expected to be ready within weeks. In addition to a gunroom it would feature a large lecture and recreation room, a mess for the sergeants, an orderly room and quartermaster's stores. Eight Vickers guns were already en route to the city.

The Sarnia company was to be comprised of 43 men of all ranks, wearing khaki uniforms and known as "F" Battery of the 2nd Canadian Machine Gun Brigade. Among those already recruited were soldiers who had served overseas during the war, including some qualified machine gunners. A notice in the April 19, 1920 issue of the Sarnia Observer advised candidates the company was still seeking recruits. Those interested could see the recruiting officer at the armoury on North Front Street on Monday nights between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Once the Sarnia battery

was at full strength, Lieut. Thompson would be transferred from Sarnia and Capt. N.L. LeSueur, M.C., a local citizen who had distinguished himself overseas, would assume command. Machine gun companies continued to be part of the Canadian militia in Sarnia and other communities until three years before the Second World War, when the militia was reorganized and the corps disbanded. But the machine gun continued to be recognized as a specialist weapon, and during the conflict to come many infantry regiments were formed into designated machine gun battalions.

HONOURING OUR HEROES

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SARNIA REMEMBERS

War's end unleashed delirious celebration all across the city

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

In the early hours of Monday, Nov. 11, 1918, Canadian soldiers learned that peace would officially begin that day at 11 a.m.

After four long years of slaughter and starvation, the First World War was about to end.

And it couldn't come soon enough.

On Nov. 11, fifteen Canadians were wounded in skirmishes and one, 25-year-old Private George Price, was killed by a sniper's bullet near Mons, Belgium just minutes before 11 a.m. The unfortunate Nova Scotian was the last Commonwealth soldier killed before the Armistice.

After the clock struck eleven, Canadian liberators throughout occupied Europe were welcomed with hugs and kisses, and wine and flowers.

In Sarnia, residents awoke that morning to a newspaper headline

that read, "Humanity Saved," and a city erupting in unrestrained joy. Strangers became friends in spontaneous street celebrations.

Mayor Crawford immediately declared the day a public holiday and issued a proclamation that declared, in part, that God had helped the Allies defeat "the powers of ruthlessness and despotism."

Industries shut down, schools closed and businesses and stores locked their doors for the day. The city had never seen anything like it.

Thousands marched through the streets in unrehearsed processions, pounding on drums and old cans and any object that could make a suitably loud noise. Hundreds of carriages and vehicles of all kinds paraded past the celebrants as men, women, and children, young and old, cheered and sang joyously together.



CANADIAN TROOPS RECEIVE a hero's welcome as they march through the streets of Mons, Belgium on Nov. 11, 2018. Spontaneous street parties erupted in Sarnia that day as well as news of the Armistice spread.

Photo courtesy, Library and Archives Canada

Among the participants were veterans who had fought in Europe, some still wounded and on crutches. Full congregations attended special masses and services churches offered.

Incredibly, the spontaneous outburst that Monday was only a prelude to the following night, when Sarnia hosted an even

more massive celebration of peace.

On Nov. 12, thousands of citizens joined in the festivities, including hundreds from Corunna, Courtright, Forest, Petrolia and Walpole Island. Starting at what is now called Veterans Park, throngs of cheering participants headed north through the downtown,

forming a noisy torch-light parade in the darkness.

A cacophony of tin cans, bells, whistles, and horns competed with the musical effort of seven marching bands, including those from Forest and Petrolia.

The diverse participants included members of the local and boisterous Chinese community, who brought in a Chinese band from Toronto; visitors from Port Huron; members of First Nation communities in full war dress, feathers and paint; hundreds of Imperial Oil employees carrying torches beside

the company float and every truck it owned; and a number of Spanish War Veterans and members of the Great War Veterans' Association.

An estimated 25,000 celebrants — twice Sarnia's population — eventually gathered at the "old golf grounds," now the site of Norm Perry Park.

With confetti and fireworks rocketing skyward, a pile of boxes twenty-five feet high was ignited to create an enormous bonfire. After the Kaiser was burned in effigy, the crowd began dispersing at 11 p.m., but many continued the merrymaking on Front Street until the early morning.

The death of Sarnia's young heroes was never far away and soon citizens would officially mourn the more than 110 soldiers who never returned, including Neil Hanna and Frederick Doxstater, who both died a few days after Nov. 11.

And Sarnians would eventually greet and cheer its returning veterans, and see the damage the war had wrought on body and mind.

But that would come later.

One hundred years ago, on Nov. 11 and 12, residents let loose to enjoy what one observer called "a once in a lifetime civic celebration."

To the Men and Women
who served, and especially
those who made the
ultimate sacrifice,
we honour you
this Remembrance Day.

Lest we Forget

Marilyn Gladu, MP Sarnia Lambton
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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Final days of the war 100 years ago were brutal and bloody

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

German First World War veteran Erich Maria Remarque wrote in 'All Quiet on the Western Front' that he'd seen men "unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another."

He could have been describing the final days of The Great War, when the march to The Armistice on Nov. 11 saw soldiers on both sides die before the clock struck 11 a.m.

Twenty-one Sarnians were

among the thousands killed during Allied victories at Arras, Amiens, and Canal-du-Nord and Cambrai, and 12 more local men would fall in Canada's Final 100 days of the war.

By early October, German positions had been broken all along the Western Front with heavy front line losses.

Morale among the Germans was understandably low. Three allies—Bulgaria, Turkey, and Austria—had surrendered by early November and the devastating effects of the Spanish flu were weakening and killing thousands.

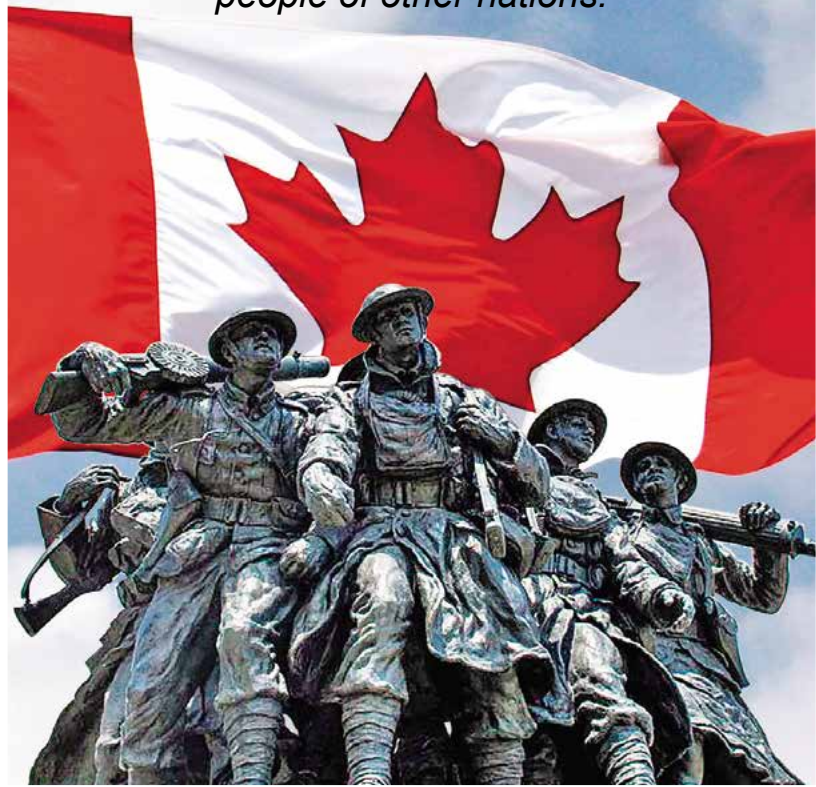


THREE WOUNDED CANADIAN SOLDIERS and a French Sister of Mercy at Valenciennes, France during the final days of the war.

Library and Archives Canada photo

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The Germans were retreating, but they never quit. So, when the Canadians were ordered to pursue and to hound them, the Germans inflicted as much damage as possible.

Take the Battle of Valenciennes waged on Nov. 1 and 2. Valenciennes was the last major French city held by the Germans and gave every strategic advantage to its captors, who outnumbered the

Allies three to one.

The Germans lost Valenciennes, but not before killing 121 Canadian men and inflicting 501 casualties. Though Valenciennes would be the last pre-arranged assault by the Canadian Corps, the fighting never stopped.

As Canadian troops advanced east, usually through mud and heavy rain, enemy snipers and machine gunners made pursuit hazardous.

The countryside was dotted with farms, hedges and sunken roads, all of which provided perfect spots for ambushes. The Germans also destroyed most of the roads, bridges, and railways. They planted landmines and booby-trapped trenches and their aircraft attacked concentrated groups of Allied soldiers.

Continued on page 11



Private Albert Potter



Private Charles Barnes
Photo courtesy, 1st Hussars Museum



Lieutenant Thomas Hazen
Photo courtesy, 1st Hussars Museum

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS



Private Herbert Stott



Lance Corporal Thomas Wright

Continued from page 10

A dozen of those killed in the final days came from Sarnia.

Private Charles Barnes would die of acute pneumonia.

Lieutenant Thomas Hazen and Private Daniel Thomson both died in action, with no details available.

Sapper George Johnston, Private James Steele, Private Herbert Stott, Corporal Edward Timpson, and Gunner George Jones all died from gunshot or shrapnel wounds.

Private Albert Potter and Private Albert Rodber were killed from shell blasts.

On Nov. 6, Private John Howarth was killed by enemy

shellfire.

On Nov. 9, Lance Corporal Thomas Wright died from influenza and pneumonia.

Four days before the Armis-



CANADIAN SOLDIERS on the streets of Mons on the morning of Nov. 11, 1918, the day the First World War officially came to an end.

Library and Archives Canada photo

stice, the Canadians crossed into Belgium and by Nov. 10 had progressed to the outskirts of Mons, a key coal-mining centre. Throughout the night and into the early morning of Nov. 11, the Canadians engaged in running gun battles to take Mons from the Germans.

The number of deaths as the Armistice approached was stag-

gering. The fighting from Nov. 7 to 10 killed or wounded 645 Canadians.

Liberating Mons came at the sacrifice of an additional 280 Canadians.

The good news that the Armistice would be signed at 11 a.m. came at 6:30 a.m. on Nov. 11; about the time German defenders had surrendered or

were dying in Mons.

A few days after the Armistice, Canadian Commander Arthur Currie wrote to Prime Minister Borden that he wished for a decisive peace. After all, Currie said, "We do not want to have to do this thing all over again in another fifteen or twenty years."



From our Family to yours.

We are proud to support the Royal Canadian Legion, Veterans and serving military and RCMP members.

Thank you to the men and women who sacrificed so much, and continue to protect all Canadians and those who visit our country.



Above: Hudson Milburn - Proud Life Member, and resident of Harbour Hill.



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

A million reasons to remember this “Dead Man’s Penny”

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

Pete and Cindy Ancevicus never suspected watching Don Cherry on an episode of “Coach’s Corner” would help solve a family mystery.

But during a Remembrance Day segment the patriotic Cherry displayed a large bronze coin and offered details about the so-called

“Death Penny” or “Dead Man’s Penny.”

Ancevicus thought he’d seen one tucked among his family’s possessions but had no idea what it was. He eventually located the bronze coin, but that was the easy part. The hard part was discovering what it represented.

The Sarnia couple would learn the British government made 1.3 million memorial coins after the end of the First World War.



“DEATH PENNIES” like this in memory of Sarnia-Lambton native Leo Gleason were issued to the families of 1.3 million soldiers from the British Empire killed in the First World War.

GLENN OGILVIE, The Journal

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Along with a Memorial Scroll and a letter from King George, the coins were issued to the families of any soldier from the British and Empire forces that died in service.

Formally called the Next of Kin Memorial Plaques, the coins soon were known as “The Death Penny” or “The Dead Man’s Penny”.

Each bronze coin is 11 centimetres in diameter. The central symbol is a figure of Britannia, bowing her head and holding a laurel wreath in her left hand. In her right hand is a trident with a lion, the symbol of England, at her feet. A smaller lion bites into a winged creature representing the German Imperial Eagle.

The first mystery for the Ancevicus family was solved but another one remained.

Each soldier was to receive the same honour, so every coin features only the name of the deceased with no regiment or rank listed.

“Leo Gleason” was the name on the family coin but

they had no real idea who Leo was. Through diligent research, Pete and Cindy’s daughter, Kristin, found the answer.

Leo Gleason was Pete’s great-uncle’s son, who was killed in action on Sept. 3, 1918. He was born in Oil Springs in 1892, the youngest of eight children, and lived in Petrolia in his teens before moving to Sarnia.

He lived on William Street and was working as a boiler-maker when drafted under the Military Service Act of 1917.

Private Gleason arrived in England on Feb. 16, 1918 as a member of the 4th Canadian Reserve Battalion. He went to France that June with the 47th Battalion, and in August was transferred to the 44th Battalion, the Manitoba Regiment.

The high death rate among Canadian infantrymen during the Battle of Amiens meant reserves would supplement the front lines for The Second Battle of Arras, the next campaign of Cana-

da’s Hundred Days Objective.

Private Gleason was one of 100,000 Canadians who attacked the Hindenburg Line on Aug. 26th. With the battle nearly won, he was killed near the French village of Dury.

Notes in the Circumstances of Death Register state, “[Private Gleason] was instantly killed by the heavy shell fire opened up by the enemy.”

Leo Gleason, 26, died one century ago and has no known grave. His name is inscribed on the Vimy Memorial in Pas de Calais, France and on the Petrolia cenotaph.

The Ancevicus family is doing its part to keep his memory alive. For two years, Pete and Cindy’s son, Jamie, an elementary teacher in Durham County, has shown the family’s “Death Penny” to his classes on Remembrance Day.

Thanks to Don Cherry and Kristin, he will have more of the story to share with his students this November.

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Being Italian in Sarnia was perilous during Second World War

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

“The people’s righteous anger has been aroused,” the judge said testily, “And the thing for you fellows is to keep yourselves quiet.”

With those words, Sarnia Magistrate C.S. Woodrow glowered down at the defendant, Pasquale Cosco.

It was June 19, 1940. Just nine days earlier, Canada had declared war on Italy, which had allied itself with Germany. In Sarnia, as elsewhere in Canada, anti-Italian sentiment was running high.

The federal government, Under the War Measures Act invoked at the outbreak of the Second World War, had designated Italian nationals and Italian-Canadians naturalized after 1922 to be enemy aliens.

Life became more difficult for all Italian-Canadians living in Sarnia. Some lost their jobs.



AN ITALIAN GROCERY STORE in the 1950s located near the intersection of Ontario and Mitton streets. Photo courtesy, Italian-Canadian Cultural Club of Sarnia

Others were physically attacked or subjected to racist epithets. Italian stores were boycotted or had their windows smashed.

With habeas corpus suspended, some 600 Italians were rounded across

Canada up and placed in internment camps.

Pasquale Cosco was a caretaker at a building on Lochiel Street. He’d been arrested by Sarnia Police a week earlier on suspicion of being a member of the outlawed Fascist Party.

Fascist societies were illegal under the Defence of Canada Regulations of the War Measures Act.

The depth of anti-Italian sentiment can be read in the fact Cosco had already languished in police custody for a full week,

and in the comments made by Crown Attorney H.M. Taylor to the judge.

“We are of the opinion that he is a member of that society,” Taylor told Magistrate Woodrow, “but we have not been able to produce the evi-

dence to prove it.”

Cosco’s lawyer J.G. Logan, told the court the police were wrong.

“Cosco says he is not a Fascist. He is an Italian naturalized in Canada and a loyal citizen.”

“If he is not,” Logan acknowledged, “he will have to be punished.”

The defendant began to loudly assert his loyalty to Canada but the judge cut him short.

“I hope that your statement to your counsel is correct,” Magistrate Woodrow said. “Don’t start to argue with me or I might change my mind about this matter (releasing Cosco).”

The judge seemed reluctant to free the man, but he appeared to have little choice.

“I want to warn you and others like you that these are troublesome times, and that you must behave.”

For loyal Italians living in Sarnia during the war years it was definitely a difficult time.

We shall remember the Men and Women who have sacrificed for our freedom.



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Broken, neglected war veteran unable to adapt to civilian life

RANDY EVANS
& GARY SHRUMM

The sad story of Robert McDonald says a lot about how returning veterans were treated after the First World War.

McDonald was born in April of 1888 and moved from England to Canada around the turn of the century.

His life turned full circle in 1914 when the war broke out during a visit to the old country. McDonald followed his loyalties and enlisted as a Private in the Royal Engineers.

Somehow, he managed to survive the artillery, the

snipers and the diseases of the front and returned to Canada, where by 1921 he was living in Sarnia.

By then, however, he was only a shell of his pre-war self. An acquaintance reported:

“He went through four years of hellfire which no doubt wrecked his constitution and made it impossible for him to re-establish himself in civilian life.”

When the Great Depression came along McDonald lost his job. Already disabled by his wartime experiences, he became reliant on the civic Central Relief Agency for survival. His residence was a room at the single

men’s hostel in the old Normandy Hotel, which was located at Ferry Dock Hill.

World War One veterans who returned suffering from psychological disabilities got little or no assistance from the government. Benefit claims were routinely met with skepticism and disbelief by Pension Boards.

In January of 1933 McDonald fell ill and he died in hospital on Feb. 5.

An organization called The Last Post was dedicated to ensuring vets received a respectful burial befitting their service. But in McDonald’s case, it dropped the ball. No one was there when he



THE FINAL RESTING PLACE of Robert McDonald. Following an outcry from fellow veterans upset at his burial in a “pauper’s grave,” McDonald’s remains were moved to another site at Lakeview Cemetery.

Gary Shrumm

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THE BACK OF THE Normandy Hotel near Ferry Dock Hill, where a psychologically impaired Private McDonald spent his days in the men’s hostel.

Sarnia Historical Society photo

died and so it failed to make the required burial arrangements.

Instead, following an autopsy, the city had his remains interred at Lakeview Cemetery.

When The Observer reported on the burial, in a spot regarded as a “potter’s field” for paupers, veterans were in-

dignant at the disrespect shown a fellow military member.

The Last Post responded defensively by promising to reinter McDonald in a more suitable location with an appropriate headstone.

An investigation of the records has shown that three months later

his body was dug back up and reburied beneath a flat, modest stone at Lakeview, albeit with an incorrect birth year.

Disabled, isolated, penniless and, essentially, forgotten at death, war veteran Robert McDonald deserved much better.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 530 would like you to join us and our members as we commemorate Remembrance Day on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year.

Let's we forget

SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Wartime Seamen's Union strike sparked a waterfront melee

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The procession of men heading westbound on Exmouth Street knew there could be trouble ahead. On the afternoon of April 18, 1940 at exactly 5:46 p.m. a police officer on a motorcycle began to lead the small parade.

It included a bus carrying 22 hastily recruited men – sailors, desperate for work and headed for a showdown on the picket lines of striking longshoremen.

Behind the bus, a police cruiser followed, loaded with detectives and uniformed officers. They were part of a tiny force of 14 provincial officers that tried – and failed – to prevent the ensuing havoc on Sarnia's waterfront.

At the docks, the men on the picket line were restless. They had been tipped that the strikebreakers might be coming because replacement workers had been seen leaving a downtown hotel.

Armed with sticks and clubs, and determined to enforce the four-day old strike against Canada Steamship Lines, they waited.

Reinforcements rushed to the docks and the striking workers of the Canadian Seamen's Union swelled to 125 men.

The bus approached the

picket line slowly. As it drove through, the strikers attacked, hurling invective at the shaken men within. A bus window smashed. A sailor named Jack Beatty, a cook, was badly gashed on the wrist.

The strikebreakers scampered from the bus and all hell broke loose. Fists flew and the fighting grew hot. In the dim light, it was difficult to see from where the next blow might come.

For two minutes, a battle raged on the waterfront between the striking longshoremen, the replacement workers and provincial police. Several were injured, including Captain R. Scott Misener, president of Sarnia Steamships Limited.

Eventually, police were able to help partial crews board the freighters Berryton and Matthewston. Both were en route to Toledo for coal, then to Fort William for grain.

It was the first real violence on the waterfront since 13 strikers were arrested in 1915 at the Northern Navigation Company docks, after 85 men walked off demanding higher wages.

The following day, on April 19, 1940, another attempt was made to get the new shipping season underway.

With provincial police now reinforced to 24 officers and picket lines re-established,

another parade of strikebreakers and police escorts ensued. This time, the cars carrying the replacement sailors were forced off the road, and they were forced to get out and walk. Protected by police, they managed to board the steamship Hamonic without a repeat of the previous night's violence.

In Police Court, two of the striking sailors were each sentenced to one month's imprisonment in the county jail for striking constables and resisting arrest.


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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Family kept alive memory of son, the first Sarnian lost in war

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

Mary Moulden, 85, still recalls the moment her mother got the news.

It was October of 1940 and Mary, then six, noticed a uniformed delivery boy get off his bicycle at the family home on Lydia Street. He was clutching a yellow telegram.

Moments later, Mary found her mother in the living room, sobbing, the telegram beside her.

Her son, 18-year-old Bruce Powell of the Royal Canadian Navy was missing and presumed dead.

Ernie and Cora Powell

received official confirmation two weeks later: the HMCS Margaree had been sunk in a collision in the North Atlantic and Ordinary Seaman Stephen Bruce Powell was not among the survivors.

He was the first Sarnian killed in the Second World War. His body was never recovered; his name is inscribed on the Halifax Memorial.

In Sarnia, hundreds of families would soon have to find ways to cope with the wartime death of loved ones. How the Powell family dealt with the loss is a study in courage, patriotism, and hope.

Just before Christmas that year, Ernie and Cora went to a downtown

cinema to watch a movie. A clip from the wartime newsreel that preceding the feature film showed three sailors in pea coats walking on the deck of a ship. A close up revealed the face of one of the sailors and it was their son.

Mrs. Powell fainted.

The following day, the manager opened his theatre to the Powells alone, and this time they managed to watch the entire newsreel.

Ernie and Cora responded to Bruce's loss by staying active in the war effort.

"Our family's nickname for Bruce was 'Buster,'" Mary Moulden recalled. "But my parents rarely mentioned his name after



THE POWELL FAMILY gathered at 462 Cromwell St. in late 1939. From left are, back row: grandfather Ernest Powell Sr., father Ernest Powell Jr., mother Cora and Bruce Powell; middle row: brothers Robert and Allan Powell; front row: sister Mary and brother James.

Submitted Photo

his death. They kept his memory alive in their own way, though."

Her British-born father, a First World War veteran, embodied the "stiff upper lip" approach. Ernie became an active member of the Legion, speaking at schools about the war to students. At the Imperial Theatre, he would lead singalongs to raised money for the war effort. He became a Flying Officer with the Air Cadets from 1942 to 1955, and every year at Canon Davis Church, on the Sunday closest to Remembrance Day, he read aloud the list of soldiers killed in action.

"My mother was a gentle soul who could do just about anything," Mary recalled. Cora

volunteered with the Navy Mother's Auxiliary and Red Cross: knitting afghans and small squares for soldiers to place under their helmets; wrapping up bandages; exchanging food stamps; and collecting milkweed pods to stuff in life vests.

Two children at home kept them busy—two other sons would also serve in the war—but they still found time to billet sailors building sub-chasing naval ships in Sarnia.

The war ended in 1945 and nearly eight decades have passed since Buster's death. Mary has only a few personal recollections of her older brother, but she remembers her mother's passion for keeping alive his memory.

After the war, Cora spent hundreds of hours compiling a detailed scrapbook of Buster's life. Among the photographs, letters, and newspaper clippings was the Memorial Cross (Silver Cross) she received in 1941, engraved with Bruce's name, rank, and service number.

Cora passed away in 1978, eight years before Ernie, but she never forgot her first-born.

"Perhaps it's because Bruce's body was never found," Mary explained. "But I will always picture my mother sitting in the living room, looking at the front door and expecting Buster to walk in at any moment."



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Faced with certain defeat, Germany belatedly pleaded for peace

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

It is a fascinating artifact of the final days of the Great War.

A Journal reader recently shared it with the Sarnia Historical Society. Encased in glass to prevent further deterioration, the yellowed leaflet is written in English on one side and French on the other.

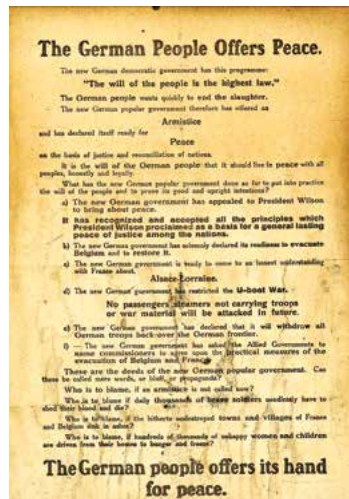
Proclaiming to come from the “new German democratic government, it is a plaintive plea for peace.

As early as August of 1918, Germany knew the war had been lost. That spring and summer, German forces had been repelled in five major offensives. The Reich’s manpower was nearing exhaustion.

Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 had brought America into the war, and U.S. soldiers were now arriving on the western front in force.

By Aug. 8, Canadian forces had begun their now-legendary 100 Days Offensive that pushed back German forces in a series of battles. These included the Battle of Amiens, the Second Battle of the Somme, the Battles of the Scarpe, the Canal du Nord, Cambrai, the Selle, Valenciennes, and, finally, at Mons on the final day of conflict

before the Nov. 11 Armistice. With Germany crumbling, desertions mounting and enthusiasm for war gone, the leaflet was part of a German plea to negotiate terms other than unconditional surrender.



A LEAFLET DISTRIBUTED by German officials during the final days of the First World War. Submitted Image

“The German people want quickly to end the slaughter,” the leaflet declares. “The new popular German government” was offering “an Armistice, and had declared itself ready for peace on the basis of justice and reconciliation.”

Copies of the leaflet were placed in the path of advancing Allied armies, explaining, “the new German government has appealed to

President Wilson to bring about peace.”

The leaflet claimed Germany’s intent “to evacuate Belgium and to restore it,” and pledged “to come to an honest understanding with France about Alsace-Lorraine.”

Alsace-Lorraine had belonged to France since the 18th century. France had been forced to relinquish the territory to the new German empire after losing the Franco-Prussian war.

Now, Germany was, belatedly and cynically, trying to offer it back as part of a negotiated peace deal.

As a sop to the Americans, the leaflet states that, “the new German government has restricted the U-boat war.” There would be no more attacks on passenger ships “not carrying troops or war materials.”

Finally, the leaflet tries to “close the deal.”

“Who is to blame,” it asks, “if an Armistice is not called now?”

“Who is to blame if, daily, thousands of brave soldiers have to shed their blood and die?”

“Who is to blame if the undestroyed towns and villages of France and Belgium sink in ashes?”

It was a cry of desperation and propaganda that was ignored by the conquering Allied forces.

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For one Sarnia teen, war in Europe was not for the faint of heart

RANDY EVANS

On Nov. 7, 1921 members of the local Great War Veterans Association attended the graves and memorials of their colleagues at Sarnia and Aamjiwnaang cemeteries. One of the graves they visited was that of Private Ivan James Collins. His tale is that of a tragic and possibly preventable death.

When Collins was born in Sarnia on Aug. 14, 1897 three generations of his family lived in town. At the age of 12 his immediate family moved to Toronto, where Collins completed school and entered the work force as a clerk.

But things changed when the eighteen-year-old visited a Toronto enlistment office on New Year's Day, 1916.

During the First World War, Canada's military brass constantly complained of the lack of manpower at their disposal. In an attempt to bolster the numbers, recruiters would often turn a blind eye to age and other matters that could disqualify a potential enlistee.

Such was the case with Ivan Collins.

His enlistment papers noted that a medical examination had confirmed Collins had a "Ventral



THE GRAVE OF IVAN COLLINS in Sarnia's Lakeview Cemetery.

TROY SHANTZ, The Journal

Systole Murmur," a cardiac condition that carries risks ranging from benign to fatal.

With his above average height of six feet, Collins' physique was just the type the Army needed and he was designated a driver with the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column.

Just two days after arriving in England, Private Collins was assigned to a detail unloading heavy transport. He over-exerted himself and the physical distress required emergency hospitalization on March 27, 1916.

According to medical records, he was "seriously ill" with an acute dilation of the heart and had suffered "cardiac failure."

Remarkably, Collins survived, and after three and a half months of hospitalization and convalescing the young man was discharged and returned to duty in June of 1916.

Because of his health, the brass prohibited Collins from joining his unit in France. It's not known if he was offered and declined a return home, which sometimes happened with soldiers.

In any event, his superiors did not order a medical discharge. Sadly, the inevitable ending began with a hospital admission on Oct. 19, 1916 for an "enlarged heart."

Private Ivan James Collins died three days later at 7 p.m. He was only nineteen years of age. The Sarnia Observer reported:

"The body of Ivan J. Collins a young Sarnia soldier who died in England on October 22 last will arrive here tomorrow ... [Collins] was well known to many of our citizens having practically resided here all his life... Funeral from the residence of his Grandmother Mrs. James Collins 261 Queen St."

Today, Private Collins rests beneath a military tombstone located at the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

His name is not commemorated on the Sarnia cenotaph.

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WE REMEMBER



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

The blue St. Clair River gave its name to “lend-lease” destroyer

My father, Joe Egan, was always proud of his naval service in the Second World War.

His ship, HMCS Prince Rupert, a frigate, sank one of Germany’s deadliest sea wolves, the U-575 – nicknamed Lilliput. Dad often spoke of Prince Rupert’s wartime exploits.

But Prince Rupert wasn’t his first ship. Dad also served, briefly, aboard the HMCS Niagara – an aging four-stack destroyer. He rarely spoke about Niagara. I think he and his shipmates found “the old boat” a challenge to keep afloat.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the United States was even more isolationist than it is today under President Donald Trump. The U.S. Neutrality Act forbade the sale of U.S. arms to enemy combatants of either side.

With France about to fall and



the United Kingdom standing alone, Winston Churchill warned Franklin Roosevelt that, if Britain fell, the United States could face the prospect of German troops being stationed in British colonial possessions in the Caribbean, Bermuda and Newfoundland. This posed an immediate threat to America, particularly with U.S. Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy describing British surrender as “inevitable.”

On Aug. 30, 1940, FDR approved an agreement that came to be known as “Lend Lease” – exchanging “surplus” U.S. war material for bases on British

possessions in Bermuda, Newfoundland and the Caribbean. The deal sent 50 American First World War-era destroyers to Britain. Seven of them came to Canada.

In late September, there was great excitement on the shores of the St. Clair River at news the former USS William, built in 1907, would be renamed HMCS St. Clair.

The St. Clair would join other river-class warships in the fleet, such as St. Lauren, Restigouche, Fraser and others.

Built in San Francisco and launched on July 4, 1918, USS William was a Wicker-class destroyer. Her name had been suggested to Ottawa a year earlier by Homer Lockhart, secretary-treasurer of the Sarnia Chamber

of Commerce. Lockhart had thought it appropriate to name future warships after Canada’s more famous rivers.

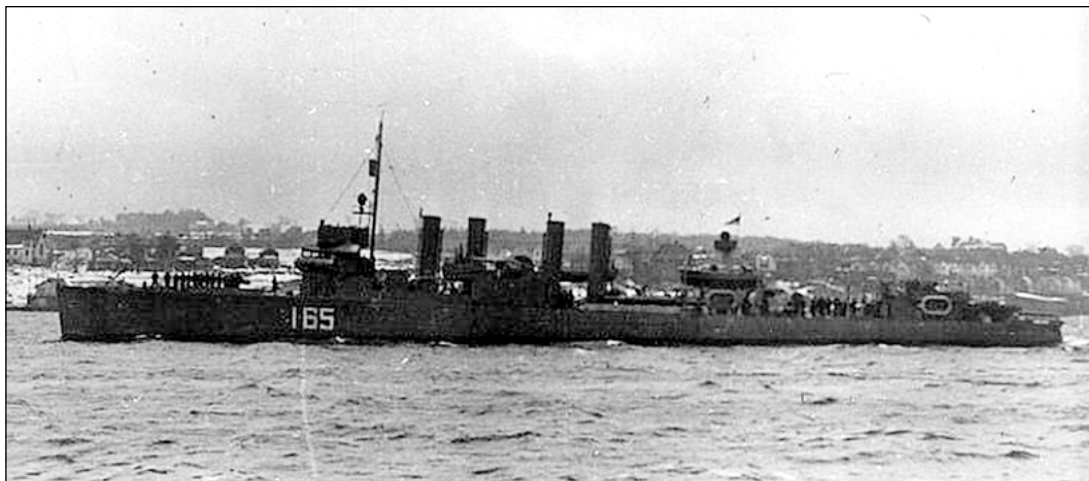
In August of 1940 a man named Lloyd Jennings, who lived at 173 Parker St. in Sarnia, resigned his position as first mate aboard the Great Lakes freighter Rammacher to join the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve.

Jennings’ brother, Charles, was a member of the Sarnia

Fire Department and another brother, Harry, was in England training with the 11th Field Company of the Royal Canadian Engineers.

So it became newsworthy when Jennings was named chief quartermaster of the “new” destroyer.

HMCS St. Clair, together with the minesweeper HMCS Sarnia, ensured this area was well represented on the high seas of wartime Canada.



OTTAWA RENAMED THIS U.S. destroyer the HMCS St. Clair in 1940 following a suggestion from the Sarnia Chamber of Commerce.

Submitted Photo

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

“Old” soldier’s death left widow and 7 children back home

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

In July of 1917 Sergeant William Chapman confided to his friend back home in Sarnia that the front line was “no place for an old man.”

The reality was that Chapman, nearly 41, was 15 years older than the average Canadian soldier in the First World War.

His age, however, didn’t prevent him from serving admirably on the front, a battle he wanted to fight.

Nor did his situation in Sarnia. A contractor by trade, when he left to serve his country overseas Chapman left behind his wife, Bessie, and seven

young children.

William Chapman would die in action, but his letters to Thomas Peacock, his good friend in Sarnia, survived the war. Always honest and occasionally visceral, they describe the horrors of the front and his unwavering belief in the Allied cause.

Sergeant Chapman landed in France with the 7th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops on March 29, 1917.

His letters reveal as much about the man as they do about the war. He took pride in the job and working well under pressure. As a member of the Canadian Railway Troops, he was tasked

with building and maintaining the rail lines that moved artillery and troops; with repairing trenches; and, at times, fighting on the front.

They worked “day and night under constant observation of the enemy [that] tried to put every obstacle in our way by sending over all kinds of shrapnel and high explosives,” he wrote.

Once, after repairing breaks in a line, he was recognized by the commanding officer for “coolness and bravery under shell fire.” Another time, Chapman confessed he “did not like the job, but ammunition had to be got up to the guns . . . so we have to do our duty.”



WILLIAM HERBERT CHAPMAN and Bessie Violet Chapman with daughters, from left, Florence, Della and Charlotte.

Submitted Photo

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Chapman never questioned the cause or nature of the war. Simply put, the enemy was “cruel” and it was a kill-or-be-killed world. After witnessing an enormous explosion engineered by the Allies, Chapman wrote, “It was a sight . . . few will ever have the pleasure of seeing again.”

He witnessed terrible events. After one advance he described “dead Germans lying all over, some partly buried by shells, others lying dead in their concrete dugouts where they had crawled to die, or by being bombed by our advancing Tommies.”

He also recognized the inherent inhumanity of war. Another Allied bar-

rage was a “grand spectacle if one could forget that part of the setting was human lives. Talk about rivers being red with blood; here it was shell holes filled with water that was red with blood.”

Like every soldier at the front, he knew danger and death were ever present. He survived a number of encounters with high explosive shells and shrapnel, with his “Easter Bonnet” — the steel helmet he’d been issued on Easter Sunday — saving his life.

This “godsend” sustained three different dents, each representing an escape from injury or worse.

His final letter was

dated July 15, 1917 and expressed hope the war would end before winter.

Two months later in Belgium, Sergeant William Chapman died from gunshot wounds to the abdomen.

At their home on Maria Street, Bessie Chapman received the letter from an army chaplain: “Your husband died at the post of duty. He came here knowing the danger, and he bravely made the noble sacrifice,” she read, suddenly a widow with seven children under the age of 11.

William Chapman is buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium.



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Veteran's final Remembrance Day a treasured family memory

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

When John James Alexander Nelson woke at London's Parkwood Hospital the morning of Nov. 11, 2012 there was no sign it would be his last.

Remembrance Day is a hallowed occasion at a Veteran's hospital like Parkwood, and the family of the 89-year-old patriarch had decided to honour him by gathering together for the service at the hospital chapel.

His son, recently retired Sarnia Police Chief Phil Nelson, had dressed formally for the occasion in his Number One police dress uniform as a sign of respect for the veterans.

Joining Chief Nelson and his wife, Elizabeth, were brothers and sisters from across southern Ontario, as well as the patriarch's various grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Diagnosed with lung cancer two years earlier, John James Alexander Nelson had agreed to hospital treatment only after a bed became available at the renowned veteran's facility.



ARMY MEDIC JOHN NELSON and his wife, Elizabeth, in 1946. The bride's father, Captain Charles Stevens of the King's Own Rifles, had served in France and Flanders during the early months of the First World War.

Photo courtesy, Nelson family

He born in Lobo Township in 1923 and raised on his grandfather's farm. At a young age, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and received his initial training in Peterborough before shipping overseas.

He was among the bravest of the brave – men trained

to serve in the heat of combat armed only with love and compassion for their brother soldiers.

While in England he met his wife-to-be, Elizabeth. The young medic obviously had charm; despite Elizabeth's family being decidedly English upper crust they married in 1946.

After the war, John Nelson worked 40 years as a truck driver with Maris Transport of Oakville. His co-workers respectfully referred to him as "Number One" for his longevity of service. Service was the great theme of his life.

That day the family gathered at Parkview was a memorable one, with the old vet meeting his new great granddaughter, Eleanor, for the first time.

But when it came time to head to the chapel for the service he declined, saying he didn't feel up to getting dressed.

And so, the Nelson clan spent their time together gathered around the TV and watching the Remembrance Day ceremonies from the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Mere hours later, the much-loved veteran was gone.



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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Many who died in First World War not recorded on Cenotaph

TOM SLATER
& RANDY EVANS

Not every Sarnian who enlisted and died as a result of the First World War is recorded on Sarnia's Cenotaph. Though their names are not etched in granite, we remember them here:

BROOKS, ALBERT EDWARD, residing 117 Julia St. at enlistment, 9 Jan. 1918, Canadian Infantry (Western Ontario Regiment), died 3 Feb. 1918, age 21. Buried Lakeview Cemetery.

BROWN, NELSON WILLIAM, born 6 June 1898 and raised in Sarnia,

462 N. Christina St., enlisted October 1918 in Royal Air Force, died 22 Oct. 1918, age 20. Buried Lakeview Cemetery.

CREIGHTON, THOMAS, residing 368 London Rd. at enlistment, married with one son, enlisted at Sarnia 16 Jan. 1915, Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment), died 27 Feb., 1915, age 37. Buried OLM Cemetery.

CUNNINGHAM, ALEXANDER, residing 347 Cameron St. at enlistment, enlisted at Sarnia 10 Oct. 1917, Canadian Infantry (Western Ontario Regiment), died of wounds 1 Oct. 1918, France, age 24.

GARROD, ANGUS, residing 122 Mary St., worked Imperial Oil Limited, enlisted at Sarnia 23 Oct. 1914, Canadian Infantry (18th Battalion), killed in action 10 April 1916, Belgium, age 28.

GRAY, GEORGE, born 30 Nov. 1888 and raised in Sarnia, enlisted Winnipeg 12 Dec. 1914,



THE CENOTAPH IN VETERANS PARK has commemorated Sarnia's fallen from the First World War for almost a century now, but remains an incomplete registry of names.

GLENN OGILVIE, The Journal

Canadian Infantry (Eastern Ontario Regiment), killed in action 30 May 1915, France, age 26.

HICKEY, FRANK, residing 312 Vidal St. at enlistment, enlisted at Sarnia 27 Jan. 1915, Canadian Infantry (11th Battalion), wounded Nov. 1915 in France, died 1 Sept. 1919 the result of his service, age 37.

LECKIE, NORMAN CHESTER, born in Sarnia 7 May 1889, enlisted Saskatoon 13 Dec. 1915, Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment), wounded October 1916 in France, returned to Canada for hospitalization where he died of wounds 10 Oct., 1918, age 29. Buried Lakeview Cemetery.

LITTLEFIELD, THOMAS EDWARD, enlisted in Sarnia 16 Jan. 1915, Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment) killed in action 2 June 1916, Belgium, age 19.

MANNING, DANIEL EDWARD VINCENT, enlisted in Sarnia 27 Aug. 1915, Canadian Infantry (Western Ontario Regiment), died of wounds 11 Sept. 1916, France, age 32.

McKENZIE, WALTER WAKE, born in Point Edward 28 April 1891, enlisted Niagara 8 Sept. 1915, Doctor in Canadian Army Medical Corps, died of disease 19 February 1917, England, age 25.

PLAYNE, LESLIE, enlisted in Sarnia 22 Sept. 1914, accountant at Canadian Bank of Commerce in Sarnia, Canadian Infantry then Royal Flying Corps, killed in action 27 March 1918, France, age 23.

PRINGLE, ALBERT STUART, born 18 June 1881 and raised in Sarnia, moved to Detroit, married with six children, enlisted in London 26 February 1918, Canadian Infantry (Western Ontario Regiment), killed in action 27 Sept., 1918,

France, age 37.

RAE, JOHN, residing at 121 John St. at enlistment, enlisted at Sarnia 13 April 1916, Sapper with Canadian Engineers, died in trenches 19 February 1918, France, age 29.

SIMMONS, EARL SYLVESTER, born Petrolia 1 May 1894, family moved to 112 Euphemia St., married and resided at 299 Vidal St., enlisted with brother Melville James in Sarnia 26 Jan. 1916 (Melville James Simmons was killed in action 6 April, 1918, France). Earl Sylvester Simmons was medically discharged Oct. 1916 at Camp Borden and returned to Sarnia. Died 17 Dec. 1918 of "accidental poisoning" in Sarnia, age 24. Military funeral and buried Lakeview Cemetery.

TURNER, GEORGE, born London, Ont. 25 Jan. 1888, enlisted Niagara 31 May 1915, Canadian Infantry, his next of kin was his mother in Sarnia. Killed in action 11 Jan. 1916, Belgium, age 27.

WALTERS, JOSEPH JOHN, born in Sarnia 26 Sept. 1894, family moved to London, enlisted St. Thomas 22 April 1916, Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment), killed in action 10 May 1917, France, age 21.

WILSON, JOHN ALEXANDER, born Oil Springs 27 January 1894, enlisted at Sarnia on 27 Jan., 1915, Canadian Infantry (Western Ontario Regiment), killed in action 19 May 1916, Belgium, age 23.

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

Illustrious Hanna family scion died tragically after war's end

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

The timing of William Neil Hanna's death was shocking.

The Armistice had been signed, the First World War was over, and Lieutenant Hanna had survived.

In Sarnia, his prominent family was preparing for his return from Europe.

But in late November his parents received the devastating news: their son had been killed in a flying accident with the British Royal Air Force on Nov. 20 — nine days after the war was declared at an end.

William Neil Hanna was born in Sarnia on Jan. 18, 1895, the only child of William John Hanna and Jean (Neil). Jean died a week later from complications giving birth.

The following year, William Hanna married Maude (MacAdams) and the union blessed them with Margaret and Katherine, half-sisters of Neil. The family eventually settled at 226 Brock St. and was respected in the community because of Mr. Hanna's high profile.

He was a local lawyer and politician who represented Lambton West in the Ontario Legislature, becoming in 1905 a cabinet minister in Conservative government.

When war broke out, he became one of Prime Minister Robert Borden's trusted advisors. He was also director of several

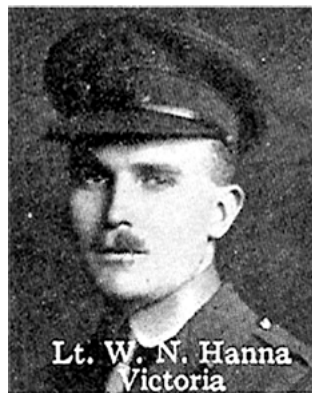
companies and became the president of Imperial Oil.

Neil Hanna attended SCITS, St. Andrew's College in Aurora and Victoria College in Toronto. Eager to become a lawyer himself, he enrolled in the Law Society of Upper Canada.

But the Great War changed those plans.

In 1915, at the age of 20, Hanna enlisted in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force and became a gunner with the Royal Field Artillery, 26th Battery.

He was severely wounded in the hip at Mametz Wood in France in July of 1916. Follow-



Neil Hanna

ing months of treatment, Hanna returned to Sarnia to convalesce.

The injured hip prevented him from rejoining the Artillery, but Hanna was determined to serve again. Despite its known risks he applied to join the British Air Force.

Flying was in its infancy and extremely dangerous. The wooden-framed planes were flimsy and equipping them with heavy guns was problem-



THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS was known to have a high death rate when an already wounded Neil Hanna joined in 1918.

atic.

The demands of war also meant pilot training was cursory. Many recruits had only a few hours of instruction time before flying solo; consequently, more pilots died from accidents and mechanical failure than from enemy fire.

Lieutenant Hanna, 23, joined the Royal Flying Corps, 36th Training Squadron and arrived in Italy in October of 1918. There, he was engaged in flying over the Austrian front. Shortly after his arrival, the Austrian armies surrendered and within a month the Armistice was signed.

But on Nov. 20th, Lieutenant Hanna was observing the Austrian retreat from the air when he was killed in some kind of flying accident. Few details remain but a news article mentioned he died while completing his training.

The loss of Lieutenant Hanna affected many, and none more so than his father. William Hanna was already suffering

from ill health and had travelled to Georgia that winter for its warm climate. He died there four months after Neil's death.

His eulogy mentioned that both he and his

beloved son had given themselves to the service of Britain and her Allies.

A tribute in St. Andrew's College yearbook read, "Quiet, unassuming and steadfast, Neil Hanna

endeared himself to many friends."

The University of Toronto's Victoria College still awards "The William Neil Hanna Scholarship" to a third year student who shows "outstanding promise of leadership and public service."

The Hanna name remains prominent in Sarnia, as much for Maude's philanthropy before her death in 1946 as for her husband's achievements.

A century ago, however, Lieutenant William Neil Hanna, their only son, paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country.

He is buried in Montecchio Precalcino Communal Cemetery Extension in Italy.

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SARNIA • REMEMBERS

The story of Sarnia's cenotaph is one of ongoing evolution

TOM SLATER
& TOM ST. AMAND

The morning of Monday, Nov. 7, 1921 was cloudy and chilly, but hundreds of bystanders waited patiently until the final speaker, Mayor George Crawford, introduced a piece of Sarnia's history.

During his brief remarks, Crawford reminded Sarnians "we can never pay off the debt we owe those lads and their friends for their brave sacrifices."

Then, as a glint of sunshine brightened the grey skies, he released a flag covering the monument and the solemn onlookers saw Sarnia's cenotaph for the first time.

Nearly a century later, the cenotaph continues to stand guard over Veterans Park (formerly Victoria Park), although its appearance has changed over time.

The original rectangular cenotaph featured two bronze tablets front and back, listing the names of more than 1,000 Sarnians who served with the Allied forces in the First World War, also known as

The Great War.

Another tablet on west side contained the names of 60 Sarnians killed in the war.

In July of the following year, Mayor Crawford began looking for a suitable statue to stand atop the cenotaph. The bronze figure chosen was of a Canadian "Tommy," a man in the full uniform of a Canadian soldier. Facing south, the soldier stands at attention, a rifle strapped over his left shoulder, his eyes fixed on some point on the horizon.

On Nov. 11, 1922, the Sarnia cenotaph with its new bronze statue was rededicated, and a fourth bronze tablet added to the east side of the granite block. It listed the names of 42 more Sarnia men who died in the Great War but whose names had inadvertently been omitted from the original tablets.

For more than three decades the cenotaph remained unchanged—even though the Second World War and the Korean Conflict came and went and at least 160 more Sarnians had been killed in action.

Local residents, of course, wanted to pay

homage to the fallen, and groups gathered to discuss how best to commemorate them. Several proposals were tabled, ranging from building an auditorium to cultivating a memorial park. But for various reasons all the plans collapsed.

The impetus to finally do something was provided by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, who visited the city in 1950. St. Laurent was surprised Sarnia did not have a cenotaph honouring its recently fallen soldiers, and said so.

In response, several dedicated groups and individuals saw to refurbishing the existing cenotaph. A decade after the Second World War ended, the renovated memorial was re-dedicated in a heartfelt ceremony on Remembrance Day, 1955.

The "new" cenotaph is essentially what we have today.

The four bronze tablets were removed and relocated to the outside west wall of the Front Street Legion. And the original monument was enlarged with the addition of two new wings, on which were inscribed the names

of Sarnia's fallen from both world wars.

A separate plaque near the base contains the names of Private Knight and Private O'Connor, who died in the Korean War.

But a few changes remained. When the new library was built in the late 1950s the cenotaph was moved slightly to its present location.

And in November 2008 a final plaque was added. It reads: "OTHER THEATRES OF CONFLICT—CPL BRENT POLAND—AFGHANISTAN 2007"

In 2013, the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 62, with some federal assistance, subsidized the restoration of damaged joints and tarnished plaques.

Sarnia's Cenotaph isn't perfect. Some names are missing and a few are misspelled, which was not unusual for the time.

But for nearly a century now the centrepiece of Veterans Park, funded by the citizens of Sarnia and subjected to several alterations, has been a constant reminder that the sacrifices made by so many will never be forgotten.

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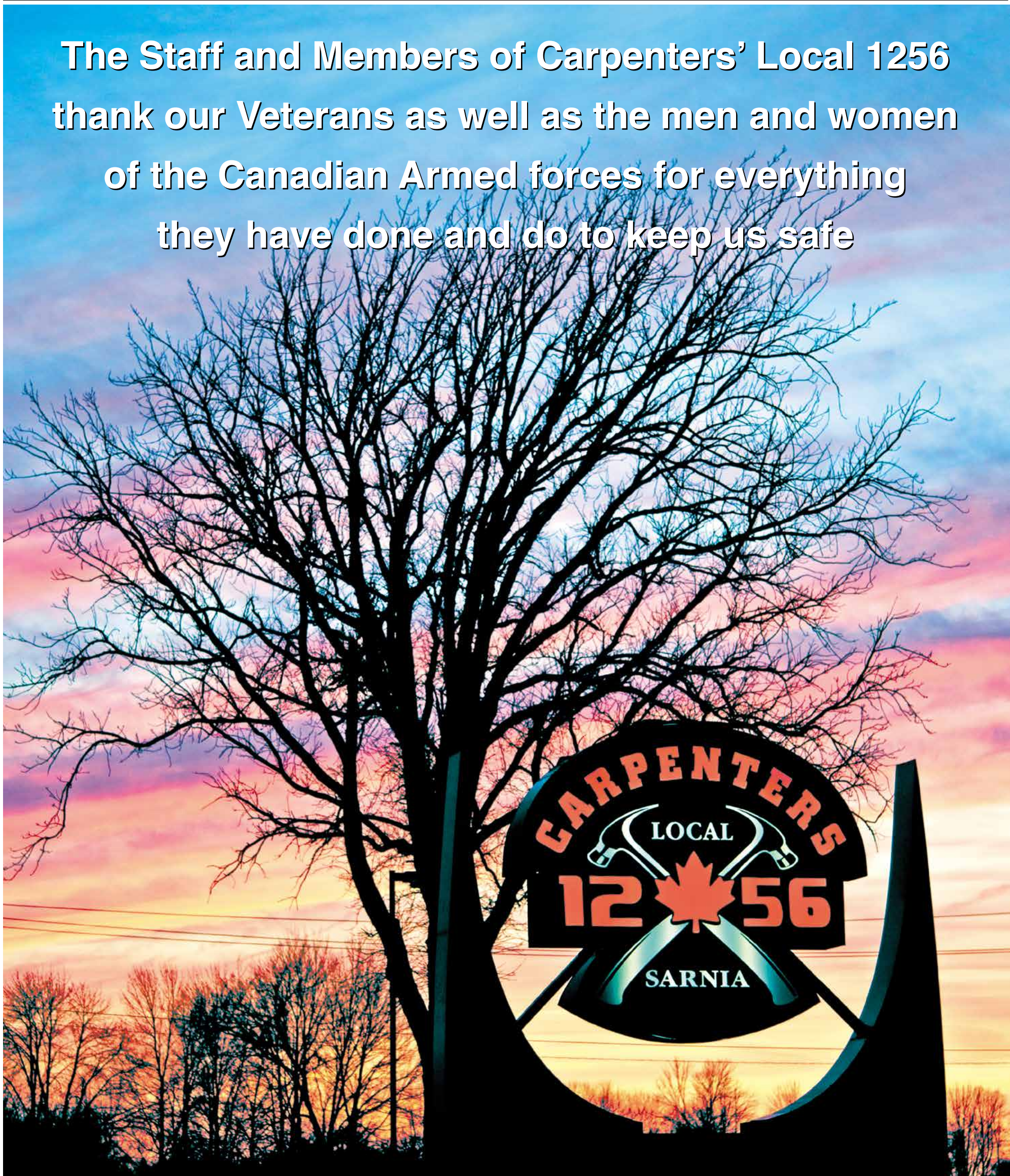


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