

# The Rideau Township Historical Society

*Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township*

## December 2017 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

### ***The Christmas Party***

**Date:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017  
**Time:** 6.00 p.m.

**Place** Knox Presbyterian Church,  
5533 Dickinson Street  
Manotick, ON



### ***The Winter/Spring Programme***

Our annual **Christmas party** will take place on December 13th at Knox Presbyterian Church in Manotick and will feature a catered meal.

**January** - Annual Meeting and Bring & Brag

**February** - Irene Stanton on A.Y. Jackson

**March** - 3 short segments: Dennis Osmond, "Magic Lanterns"; Rod Brazier, "Railways in Muskoka"; Gary Bagley, "Loyalists"

**April** - Valerie Knowles - either the history of Canadian immigration or William Van Horne

**May** - 3 short segments: Karen Craig on the Craig family; Owen Cooke, update on Tommy Watterson; Bill Tupper, "William Cowan"

**June** - Excursion to St. Clare's Church, Dwyer Hill; Pinhey's Point, Dunrobin; St. Mary's Church, Dunrobin.

### ***Come One, Come All***

The RTHS Christmas Supper will be held on Wednesday, 13 December, 6 for 6:30 p.m., at Knox Presbyterian Church, 5533 Dickinson Street, in Manotick.

It will be a traditional turkey Christmas dinner, followed by musical entertainment by Chris Rodgers. The cost is \$30 per person.

If you have not already reserved a place, please contact either Owen Cooke, 613-489-3962, or e-mail [oacooke@gmail.com](mailto:oacooke@gmail.com), or Susan McKellar, 613-489-3961, or e-mail [susanmckellar68@gmail.com](mailto:susanmckellar68@gmail.com) before Saturday 9 December. Will anyone who has a food allergy also please contact us that we might notify the caterer.



***Merry Christmas and a happy New Year***



***The City of Ottawa has awarded the Order of Ottawa to William "Bill" Tupper.*** A retired businessman, geologist and professor, Dr Tupper, (shown here with Mayor Jim Watson and Councillor Scott Moffatt) is a community leader in every sense. He served as a Councillor in the Township of North Gower, as the first Mayor of Rideau Township and Regional Councillor from 1974 to 1978 and as a Member of the House of Commons from 1984 to 1988.

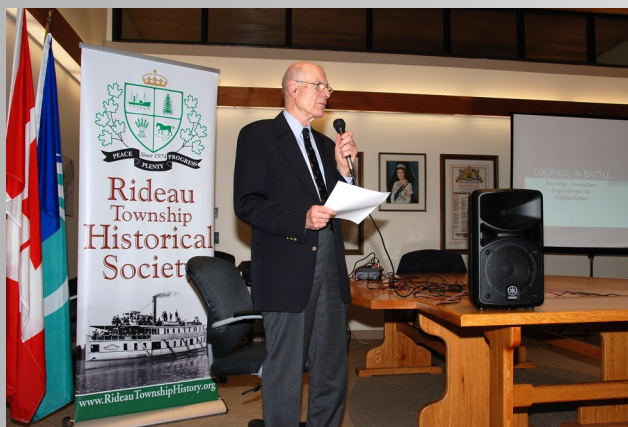
Bill Tupper has immersed himself in the history of Rideau Township, preserving Dickinson House in Manotick, and developing Dickinson Square as a heritage destination. He was a founding member and Past-President of the Rideau Township Historical Society. Along with his wife, he published "The Dickinson Men of Manotick", a book chronicling the family that founded the historical village. He has been a lifelong fundraiser for organizations like the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, the United Way, the Ottawa Hospital Foundation, and the Association of Former Parliamentarians Education Foundation. Mentoring young people, from Boy Scouts to graduate students has been among his many priorities.

# *Courage in Battle and the Canadian Experience in Afghanistan*

**Speaker: Robert Fowler**

*Article by Pat Earl, Photos by, Maureen McPhee*

On Wednesday, November 15, the Rideau Township Historical Society welcomed Robert Fowler to speak on the themes from his two latest books. His love of military history was set aside during his career at Computer Devices, with the Canadian National Railway and in the Civil Service. Since his retirement, he has been able to return to that love and has written four books and enjoys sharing his knowledge with groups such as the RTHS.



*Robert Fowler presenting*

He began by looking at the meaning of courage and asking several questions, causing us to put on our thinking caps. What is courage? What is a hero? Is bravery the same as courage? Can one be afraid and courageous at the same time? Does motive change degrees of courage? If one ignores danger, is the act courageous or reckless?

Courage is a quality of the mind. Bravery lies in the blood. In his book, 'Anatomy Of Courage', Dr. Charles Wilson, a medical officer in WWI and personal physician for Winston Churchill stated courage is will power. Courageous acts fulfill noble ends in the face of fearful danger.

The source of courage could be loyalty to comrades, a result of training and discipline, commitment to a unit, or personal honour and a sense of duty. Soldiers could have a fighting spirit or a strong belief in an over-riding cause.

Mr. Fowler showed pictures of Canadian medals given to soldiers in times of courageous acts. These were the Victoria Cross, (no awards of the Canadian Cross awarded thus far), the Star of Military Valour, (89 awarded) and the Medal of Military Valour (398 awarded).

Moving on to the Afghanistan Missions, Mr. Fowler focused on Athena Phase II, 2006-2010 in Kandahar. He showed maps of the country, pointed out areas where the Canadian troops were stationed and fought, and spoke of the difficulty of being unable to recognize a Taliban insurgent from a villager. We saw photos of IEDs placed by the enemy in the roads, pathways, fields and walls. Soldiers lived with the constant threat of stepping on one of these or being attacked by a seemingly friendly person.

Mr. Fowler interspersed his talk with stories of men who were courageous in the line of duty. One of these was MWO Richard Stacey who won the Star of Valour for his actions in a counter insurgency operation – Clearing the Horn.

At the end of the evening, Bill Tupper thanked Mr. Fowler and presented him with a honorary membership to the RTHS and Betty Bartlett's book 'Buildings of Old Rideau Township.'



*Bill Tupper thanks our speaker*

## ***A Volunteer Opportunity***

The Friends of the Canadian War Museum Research Committee are searching for volunteers interested in researching the biographical details of the recipients of medals and decorations held in the War Museum's vaults. The result would be a virtual exhibition on the internet. The War Museum can provide parking for volunteers.

For more information, please contact Jean Morin at [morin.jh@sympatico.ca](mailto:morin.jh@sympatico.ca).

# Remembrance Exhibits at Dickinson House

November, 2017

Article by Owen Cooke, Maureen McPhee and Andrew Ryerson

On November 11 and 12, the Dickinson House Museum presented its annual exhibit highlighting the contributions of local service men and women who served in times of war. This year the exhibit was in two parts. "Local Heroes at Vimy" told the stories of soldiers connected with the former Rideau Township who served at Vimy Ridge and lost their lives during the First World War. The second portion of the exhibit included our annual tribute to members of the Spratt family who grew up in Dickinson House and went on to serve their country during the Second World War or the Korean War. This year the display was extensively augmented by a collection of Second World War artifacts on temporary loan from a Dickinson House volunteer.

## Local Heroes at Vimy

Since the Great War, the Canadian people, and our government, have chosen to commemorate the attack on Vimy Ridge as the iconic Canadian action of the First World War.

Vimy was part of the larger Battle of Arras, designed to be an attritional, grinding conflict to relieve pressure on the French armies to the south.

The assault on Vimy Ridge was the first time that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps attacked together, supported by both British and Canadian artillery, engineers and logistical support. Its preparation and execution became a hallmark for other Canadian successes later in the war – detailed preparation and rehearsal followed by overwhelming firepower and methodical attack in phases. It was also the culminating success for British Lieutenant General Sir Julian Byng as Canadian Corps commander before turning the Corps over to Canadian command.

Taking the ridge cost some 3,600 Canadian lives, with double that number wounded, many maimed for life. Alt-

hough Vimy Ridge remained in Allied hands for the remainder of the war, much hard fighting by Canadian, Australian, British, French and American soldiers would be required to defeat the Germans in France in 1917-1918.

The exhibit told the stories of 11 local soldiers who played a role at Vimy. As an example, Private John R. Padget, 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, was born in Manotick on Dec. 29, 1885, the Son of Thomas Adison and Eliza Padget. He served three years in the 56th Regiment of the Canadian Militia before moving to the West with his family. He enlisted on Dec. 15, 1915 in Moose Jaw, Sask., listing his occupation as carpenter and his mother as his next of kin. In France he joined the 2nd Regiment, Canadian Mounted Rifles (2nd CMRs), then manning trenches at the foot of Vimy Ridge. During the attack on the Ridge, the Regiment took their objective of La Folie Farm. From May 20 to 25, the 2nd CMRs were out of the front lines but were providing work parties. Private Padget was one of three killed by shell fire on a working party on Vimy Ridge on May 22. He is buried in Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, France, where he is commemo-



"Local Heroes at Vimy" Exhibit



Few photos exist of the Canadian Corps attack on Vimy Ridge. These are likely soldiers of the 1st Canadian Division. (photo Library and Archives Canada PA-001087)

rated as John Robinson Padget, age 34, son of Thomas and Eliza Padget of Manotick.

By early 1917 airpower was an essential element of any battle. The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), both of which included many Canadians, had distinct roles to play in the period leading up to the Vimy attack. Artillery needed aircraft before the battle to locate and photograph enemy positions and both aeroplanes and balloons spotted and corrected artillery fire from the air by radio and telephone during the actual operations. Much of this work fell to the "corps squadrons", one allocated to each army corps, flying the B.E.2c.



*The Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2c Unfortunately, this aircraft had become obsolete, and April 1917 became "Bloody April" when the RFC suffered its greatest casualties of the war.*

The RFC had only five fighter squadrons to oppose the German "Jastas" of single-seat fighters, which shot down so many of the B.E.2cs; but help came from four RNAS squadrons flying the Sopwith Pup and Triplane. No. 3 Squadron, "Naval 3", flying the Pup was commanded by R.H. "Red" Mulock of Winnipeg and along with its British pilots, included a number of Canadians, among them at least three pilots from Carleton Place.

Low clouds and precipitation placed limits on aerial activity throughout the Vimy operations, but aircraft were busy flying contact patrols where planes located the position of friendly forces and reported back to headquarters.



*A Sopwith Pup*

A popular feature of the Vimy exhibit was a 1/4-scale model of an S.E.5a British single-seat fighter which was suspended from the ceiling and seemed to fly over the exhibit. The S.E.5a did not actually arrive at the front until the early summer of 1917 and thus did not contribute to the success at Vimy; however, it and the famous Sopwith Camel wrested air superiority from the Germans in the autumn of 1917.

Also on display as part of the exhibit were First World War artifacts, including:

- A collection of mostly Canadian cap badges, collar badges and shoulder titles that was assembled and mounted by a First World War soldier;
- An 18-pounder high explosive shell, with the explosive and fuse removed. Shells of this type were the most common fired by the Canadian Field Artillery batteries at Vimy Ridge.
- Mess tins used by Canadian troops, in this case a set issued to Private Allen Dixon of the 122nd Muskoka-Parry Sound Battalion. The battalion was broken up in England and never got to France.
- Bayonet and scabbard carried by Canadian soldiers for use with the Lee-Enfield no. 1 rifle.
- The silver Memorial Cross received by the mother of Sapper Hugh Stamp of Manotick.

In addition, the exhibit included a video featuring photographs of the Vimy Memorial set to the music of Edvard Grieg, "Ase's Death" from "Peer Gynt".

### **Spratt Family Commemoration and Related Second World War Artifacts**

The Spratt family of Dickinson House provides a striking example of the significant contributions that were made by local families during times of war. Each year, the Dickinson House Museum displays a set of panels telling the stories of the exploits of each of five children of Alexander Moore Spratt and Cynthia Evelyn Spratt (nee Edwards).

The Spratts were the second family to own and operate what is now known as Watson's Mill and to live in Dickinson House. Alexander Spratt passed away in 1935, as did the couple's youngest child Hubert in 1938, due to a ruptured appendix. Despite these tragedies, Mrs. Spratt and her family continued to operate the mill, until it was sold to Harry Watson in 1946.

During the Second World War, four of Alexander and Cynthia Spratt's surviving children served their country in various capacities, Charles in the army, and William and Ken in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). In the case of the Spratt's daughter Helen, she worked as a civilian cypher clerk employed by the Royal Canadian Navy. The Spratt's fifth child Richard followed in the footsteps of his older siblings, serving with the RCAF during the Korean War.



*The Spratt Siblings. From left to right: Charles, Helen, William, Kenneth, Richard..*

In addition to the panels describing the wartime involvement of the Spratt children, this year there were many original Second World War artifacts on display. Specifically, the items were intended to augment the involvement of the oldest Spratt sibling Charles, who served as a private in the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (Machine Gun). In essence, if one were able to go back in time to the Canadian army in 1945, bring Charles Spratt, the soldier, forward to the present and take all his army kit and spread it out over the three tables, that was what was on view in the exhibit.



*Spratt Exhibit*

The display was complete with a Canadian Second World War uniform, basic web gear, puttees, a cap badge, shoulder titles, a Lee-Enfield rifle, a Sten sub-machine gun, a Webley revolver, deactivated grenades and much more.

An original web small pack was displayed with contents such as a holdall, a housewife, mess tins and food rations, to show what a soldier such as Charles would have had with him to use on a daily basis during the war.

Central to the display was a deactivated 1943 Bren Light Machine Gun. It was such a firearm that Charles was described as using in his citation for valour in a battle in France in September of 1944. Charles fired a Bren Gun at the German Soldiers to keep the heads of the enemy soldiers down in their bunkers so as to give his fellow Cana-

dian soldiers the ability to move up and take out the bunkers and capture a large number of German prisoners and war materiel.



*A deactivated 1943 Bren Light Machine Gun.*

The 2017 remembrance exhibit was well-attended and received positive feedback. Visitors particularly enjoyed the Second World War artifacts, as well as the S.E.5a aircraft flying over the Vimy exhibit. The scale model was provided and installed by Doug Culham.

## Sources

- Ronald Dodds, *The Brave Young Wings* (1980);
- Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel files, RG150 and unit files, RG9, Library and Archives Canada;
- Bill March, "Air Power and the Battle for Vimy Ridge," <http://rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/article-template-standard.page?doc=air-power-and-the-battle-for-vimy-ridge/i89a1wkc>
- Military files, Rideau Archives Branch, City of Ottawa Archives;
- Newspaper archives;
- S.F. Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War* (The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vol. I.) (1980).

## *News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives*

**Hours:** *The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).*

**Resources and Services of the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives:** a monthly feature in this newsletter, celebrating the services and holdings preserved in your community's archives resource centre.

From myself and all of the volunteers here at Rideau Branch, City of Ottawa Archives, we wish you and your families "a happy Christmas tide" and all the best for the New Year.

Stuart Clarkson, Branch Archivist



*Fringed Christmas card, manufactured by Raphael Tuck & Sons, [1890s?]*

The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa.