

# Mariapolis

## Letters Home

The Mariapolis local history book, *Echoes of Our Heritage* (1991), contains samples of letters sent home from the front, and even one from a mother to the Minister of Agriculture and Immigration:

When Great Britain declared war in 1914 against Germany, Canada immediately took steps to aid the British War effort. The first Canadian soldiers landed in France in February 11, 1915. Canadian soldiers played key roles in places like Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Arras and Mons.

The soldiers life in the trenches of Europe was often a very difficult one as is shown but the following excerpts from a letter printed in *La Liberté*. The date is November 3, 1917. The letter is from Henry Trudel of Mariapolis, a private with the 78th Battalion, stationed in France.

*"Dear parents.*

.... I believe that you have learned that I was wounded by a blast of shell fire, on my left knee and also to my head. These are not serious injuries...we marched 3 miles to get to the Red Cross under a storm of shells. From there we took the Red Cross train. It took several hours to get to the hospital . . . . Here, it rains every day. We are in the mud up to our butt. The cold in Canada is still better than the weather here . . . *Will this terrible nightmare ever end?*

From your son who thinks of you always in his prayers. Kisses to the whole family,

Henry."

Another letter dated July 20, 1918 from the same Henry Trudel.

*"Dear parents,*

I believe that you have already heard that I was gased the night of my birthday, July 22. After several days of rest, we took the train to go to the battlefield. All went well for several days, when one night, while we were digging a trench, at about 11 o'clock, the Germans bombarded us with shell fire and gas and all sorts of shells imaginable. We had to leave the area and walk two miles with our gas

masks. Everything was going pretty well until the next morning when we became sick and blind. I lost my sight for 5 days . . . one morning I saw daylight next to my little nurse whom I had never seen before. Several soldiers of my battalion are here because of the same incident.

Your son who loves you always,  
Henry.”



*Archie Joseph Arthur Charette* – Enlisted and joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion overseas and was a victim of mustard gas poisoning from which he suffered until his death in 1942. (*Echoes of Our Heritage: Mariapolis and District 1891-1991*, 213)

In Canada the war effort kept everyone working hard to help the families of the soldiers with physical and moral support. Canada was truly the bread basket of the world. The farmers could sell everything they grew at a good price. Things are never as simple as they seem however and so it was with grain production. The crop of 1917 was not bountiful. The plight of the families left to work the land is shown by the letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Immigration from a Mariapolis mother begging for the return of her son to help on the farm. It is dated June 11, 1918.

*"Dear Sir,*

I am not educated but my heart will speak for me. I write to you to beg of you to give me back my son. He is my only support and he has sowed 200 acres which will be lost if I cannot get him back for at least 6 months . . . I cry to you, let my son come back for 6 months. Take pity on me for it means ruin for myself, him and my two other young children . . . I am a widow and my case is certainly a deserving one.

Hopefully yours,  
*Hermine Desrochers*  
(My son is Albert)"

The newspapers printed articles asking for contributions for the Red Cross and for the Tobacco Fund. "For every 25 cents you contribute to Canada's tobacco fund some soldier on active service will receive a large package of Canadian Manufactured Tobacco regularly priced at \$1.00." Sugar was in short supply as was fresh fruit. Reported in the December issue of both *Baldur Gazette* and *La Liberté* papers, Mr. August Delichte did a door to door appeal to collect shin plasters (\$.25) to buy flour destined to help the Belgium War Victims. He collected the great amount \$200.00

# Melita

## Local Military Life

Our First Century, the local history for the Town of Melita and Municipality of Arthur, contains these extracts concerning local military life, and of the unveiling of the war memorial:

The "C" Squadron was first formed in Melita in April, 1908 with Lieutenant G. W. Archibald in charge. In 1909 the "C" Squadron 12 Manitoba Dragoons under Captain J.G. Rattray gave a good account of itself at brigade camp in Brandon: drill riding – 90; outposts – 85; horse Q & C – 95; care of horses and saddlery – 90; care of lines – 90; dress and discipline – 85. Best shot badge was won by Corporal Williams of Melita.

The first annual Military Ball in Melita on February 19, 1909 was a great success as were those to follow. In 1910 the Melita Department changed districts. What was to be known as the 20 Border Horse was being organized. This was to include troops from Reston, Pipestone, Melita, Weyburn, Estevan and Carnduff. Major Rattray was promoted to Colonel. In March of this year "C" Squadron of the Twelfth Melita Dragoons became "A" Squadron of the 20 Border Horse. Through 1914 the annual camp was attended at Sewell.

In 1911 Lieutenant Archibald became Major and the squadron was considered to be part of one of the smartest militia cavalry regiments in Western Canada. In August, 1914 the Melita Department sent out instructions for volunteers to leave for the east. A large number of citizens and the band assembled at the station to wish them godspeed. In November 1914 an impromptu farewell was arranged by leading citizens for local departing members of the second contingent.

In 1921 Tom Ring visited Melita trying to organize the 20 Border Horse and in 1924 several members of Melita attended Camp Hughes. In 1925 "The Black Cat" premise was being fitted up for an armoury for B Squadron Border Horse in command of Captain Art Ross. Captain Ross, Schnell, Snedden and others attended a Border Horse function at Virden in December. In 1926 the annual banquet was held at the Palace Hotel, with Virden, Elkhorn, Oak Lake, Lauder and Melita represented. The camp was moved from "Hughes", 10 miles south, to Shilo in 1935. Captain Schnell, A. And R. Lawson and George Dowse were in training at this new camp in 1935.



Melita Dragoon, 1910. (*Our First Century: Town of Melita and Municipality of Arthur*, 171)

### **Cadet Corps 1914-1916**

On June 14, 1914 Colonel E. A. C. Hosmer, Virden, Commissioner of Cadets was in Melita officially. A cadet corps was formed here at that time with Rev. Forbes Robertson in charge. The boys received training and drill in the evenings when they held their meetings. The boys spent two weeks at camp in Sewell in July, 1914 and they presented a drama at the Opera House in October to raise funds. In December 1915 the boys placed fourth in the Award of Strathcona Trust for drill and efficiency. This brought a grant of \$35 to the cadets. In the following year Mr. Eadie and Mr. Moore, both qualified instructors assisted Rev. Roberston.

### **Soldiers of the Soil – 1915**

March 18 – Mr. Paris was appointed enrollment officer here. Messrs. Lamont, Estlin and Duncan were on a committee to look after placement of the boys with farmers and to see to their welfare. Boys between 15 and 19 years were eligible. In this way 25 or 30 thousand youthful helpers assisted in keeping the Imperial bread basket full. Some who enlisted were Joe Donahue, Howard Kenner, Ernest Oxley, Douglas Sturgeon, Tom Park, Tim Oberlin, James Garrett, Fred Estlin, William Dingwall, George Pitcher, Frank Graham, Harold Edwards, Borden Dobbyn and Clair Heath. Badges were awarded after three months of service.

### **Victory War Loans**

Victory War Loans were organized by The Dominion Government. On November 1, 1917, a Victory War Loans Committee was set up in Melita. This committee consisted of: President, John Williams; Secretary, A.B. Estlin; and committee members J.H. Kenner, R. Sterling and F. Walker. In 1940, a Victory War Loans Program was again established. All elevators in western Canada and theaters sold war saving stamps. Unit 37 included the Rural Municipalities of Arthur, Edward, Albert and Brenda plus the village of Napinka and town of Melita.

### **Memorial at Central Park**

The plans for the Memorial at Central Park were approved by all concerned in July, 1931. The main base of the cenotaph was to be 10 feet square, two smaller squares to be on top of this before the memorial shaft, nine feet in height and four feet wide is erected. Marble panels with the names of those who died in the Great War will grace the sides of the shaft. Cinder walk will lead to the north east and south west corners of the grounds with a drive way from the cenotaph to wrought iron gates on substantial posts of Manitoba field stone at Oak and Summit corner. Flower beds will be placed at intervals throughout the park. Cost was about \$1,100.

The War Memorial Dedication took place November 11, 1931 with Mayor Lamont, Lieutenant-Colonel Clingan, E. Willis M.L.A., Hon. D. L. McLeod. Reeve McCallum (Arthur), Reeve Hartry (Branda), Revs. Franklin and Lee, and W.R. Cosgrove Secretary Treasurer, Napinka on the platform. This cenotaph was re-dedicated to the memory of those who gave their lives in World War II, 1939-1945.

# Miniota

## War Memorial

An entry in the local history for the Rural Municipality of Miniota, *Bridging the Years*, focuses on the war memorial:

The first community Memorial Service was held in the Miniota Hall, presided over by Reeve Mitchell. The music was led by the Miniota Band, and the offering was donated to the Miniota Memorial Fund. These services were then held annually.

In August 22th, 1926, over two thousand persons attended the Memorial Service and the unveiling of the Cenotaph, which made it the outstanding event in the area. It was presided over by Reeve Mitchell. The church choirs of the district performed. The outstanding feature of the service was the unveiling of the Soldier's War Memorial, erected by the citizens of the municipality to the memory of those who enlisted and sacrificed their lives. The duty of unveiling was undertaken by the Officer commanding Military District #10: Major General H. D. B. Ketchen. The District Padre read the Honor Roll which included forty-one names.



Cenotaph (*Bridging the Years: Rural Municipality of Miniota*, 47)

For several years during the Thirties the Brandon Salvation Army Band, with Bandmaster Sergeant Major George Dinsdale M.L.A., and sons Walter and Harold, headed the parade and supplied the music. Also taking part in the parade were flower girls representing the Sunday Schools of the municipality, Miniota Brownie Pack, Girl Guide Company and Birtle and Miniota Boy Scouts. The band also held a concert on the Sunday evening which was well attended.

Over the years many of our Veterans have passed on, and there is a decreasing number left to take part in the service honoring comrades. Services are still held annually with the combined church choirs in attendance. Lunch is served to the Veterans and their families after the service by members of the Women's Institutes of the Municipality.

"Whatever their own philosophy, these men died for us. Memories mean responsibility – not just to reassure the past but to conquer the future. There can be no greater tribute than to crown the sacrifice of war with the abiding victory of peace. This is not someone else's responsibility, but ours – yours and mine."

# Minnedosa

## Local Soldiers

In the Minnedosa local history, *Minnedosa Valley Views*, various passages suggest the activities of local men in service:

With the exception of Armistice Day and Memorial Day, we tend to forget our servicemen and women. Generations are growing up not knowing of the sacrifices made by these men and women. The following chapter will present the information available to us in our effort to record Minnedosa's contribution to these efforts.

Following declaration of war in August, Major Dyer was requested to hold his company in readiness and before the month passed they were off for more training at Valcartier, Quebec, Rev. Wells with them. By September, a second Minnedosa group joined them.

Troop trains began passing through Minnedosa going east. First Canadian killed in action was a cousin of E.O. and a committee of Mesdames Andrew, Mellor, Cannon, Gugin, Drummond and Miss Shaw sprang up.



Minnedosa Soldiers off to War -1914. (*Minnedosa Valley Views*, 88)

By October Minnedosa troops were aboard the *Laplant* en route to Salisbury Plains, England. Lt. Robin Harrison continued recruiting more men at home. Dyer and Wells kept the folks here informed on Minnedosa troops overseas throughout the war.

In December, after a farewell dance, a large group left Minnedosa as part of the 32nd Battalion; 75 more recruits still training here. Charlie Roar began buying horses for the Army. By February 18, 285 men from Minnedosa and immediate district had enlisted. The 75 recruits, together with men from Brandon, Souris, Dauphin, and Virden, became part of the 45th Battalion. Minnedosa's first white resident, Al Scouten, tried to enlist from Riding Mountain but was rejected as too old.



Minnedosa Soldiers -1914 (Photo from *Minnedosa Valley Views*, 88)

Letters from men at the Front arrived. Frank Sewell writes from France that German biplanes try to bomb them every morning. Major Dyer is seriously wounded in Belgium while carrying a message when lines are down thereby 'saving thousands of Canadian lives' and gets a DSO; later a CMG and CB. Basil Ewens and Lt. F.R. Elliot have died of disease and exposure.

Wounded in spring 1915 include Cpl. Henry Dunbar, John Attenborough, machine gunner Cpl. (later Lt.) W.J. Burgess at Festubert, John Rogan, W. Ramsay, George Sparling, Lt. F.M. Davies, George Wollrow, Sgt. Ernest

Constable, James Lamont, Ed Hodgson, Lt. R.L. Denison, John White. George Sparling describes his platoon 'mowing down with rifles and machine guns' a mass formation of charging Germans at 60 yards. Dyer describes Minnedosa and other Canadian soldiers holding fast when German gas rolls in while others like those of France panic and flee.

First Minnedosa soldier killed in action was John Comrie in March, followed several weeks later by Harold Hulbert; soon after, G. Black, George Holder, Cyril Hunsley and A.M. McNair.



Cpl. Logie Cutchart. (*Minnedosa Valley Views*, 87)

D.A. Gill is one soldier killed that fall. Cpt. E.C. Jackson gets a DSO and J.H. Lindsay a DCM; Dyer writes his battalion has acquired the nickname 'the Fighting Fifth.'

At home, persons with German and Austrian backgrounds are refused Canadian citizenship at the courthouse, soldiers training at the armoury enter the 226th and help with seeking before going overseas. A homeguard again operates and Minnedosa Patriotic Association helps the federal government register all persons in the area. Many families are deeply involved in the war. By May, 1916 the H. McLeans have four sons in the service, James McKays and F. Greens three,

Mrs. E.O. Denison, Mrs. S. Fairbairn, C. McQuarries, Ed. Pearsons, Grovers, T. Donlons, J. Burgees', Mrs. Sewell, A.J. Bells, W. Wrights, John McQuarries, two, and many with one. Wounded during the first half of 1916 include Harold Fairbairn, Harvey Foster, T.L.O. Legion of Honor; Ed Wolf killed in action.

One local woman at the Front was nurse Lulu K. Walker.

Eric Pearson who has just received a bullet through the chest in the Battle of Courcellette when the 5th 'went over the top.' 'The Somme's some lace alright.' Flt. Lt. Stanley Kerr adds, "I think every one of the 37 who came from Minnedosa have been knocked out." Wounded include Lt. Harry Dyer, P.M. Kinney, E.S. McQuarrie, E.A. Chandler, Younger, Sgt. J. Sangster, Bryden, Alex Coote, Wm. Devlin, Harvey Rea, 'Scotty' Stevenson.



Minnedosa Armoury (*Minnedosa Valley Views*, 89)

Minnedosans pioneered in the air war in what later became the Air Force. These included W.J. Burgess, who transferred from the Army, Stanley Kerr, Frank McArthur, G.T. Turley, Vernon Dixon Lawrence Roche, M. Bigg. Con Farrell, who listed his hometown as Minnedosa, enlisted before he was of age and flew in the same unit as 'Wop' May with whom he became close friends. Former Minnedosan W.G. 'Billy' Barker of Dauphin became a world famous ace by destroying 50 German planes, winning the VC, DSO, MV. Another former resident, Cpt. Sutherland Stewart, was shot down in flames, survived but died in Egypt in 1920.

Following conscription, of 175 men registered at Minnedosa post office in November, 132 claim exemptions. For families like one with seven sons of whom one was killed in the Boer War, two already in this one, two now in trenches and another just enlisted, such attitude seems intolerable.

Suddenly the terrible war's over. Minnedosans flock to a united service of worship in the armoury 'to return thanks to Almighty God for bestowing victory and peace on us.' When the joyous news came over the wires at 2 a.m. to get everyone out of bed, 'pandemonium reigned supreme. Whistles were blown, bells rang, Roman candles burned and firecrackers exploded without number, the noise getting farmers up for miles around. During the day the greatest procession of automobiles ever seen here, gaily decorated with flags and streamers, went through several streets. A band of music was secured. Kaiser Bill was burned in effigy, and field guns were brought into action.' As the troops came home, a special welcome celebration ceremony's held in the Lyric theatre.

# Minto

## The Memorial Hall

A passage in *Minto Memoirs 1881-1979* describes in detail the November 29, 1921 opening of the Minto Memorial Hall:

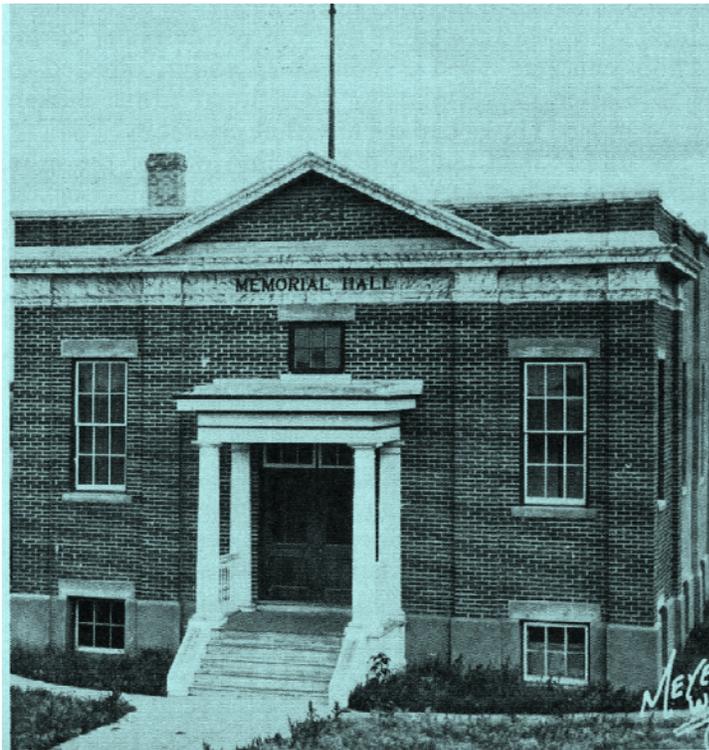
Great deeds deserve due commemoration, and the district with Minto as its centre, flocked on Tuesday last to the new Memorial Hall, to pay tribute to its glorious dead. Fully four hundred people were crowded into the auditorium to witness the unveiling ceremony and hear the dedicatory address.

Promptly at 3 o'clock, Sir James Aikins, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, followed by Dr. Finley, M.P. and Mr. George McDonald, M.L.A., entered the hall and were accorded a great ovation. Mr. McDonald occupied the chair, and did not waste any time in opening the proceedings. The first item on the program was the singing of "O Canada." The chairman in his opening remarks, congratulated the people of Minto and district on their splendid achievement, and complimented the committee in charge for the efficient manner in which they had terminated their efforts.



James Albert Manning Aikins, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba 1916 to 1926.

Dr. Finley then spoke along patriotic lines, and recalled the gallant deeds performed by our Canadian soldiers in France. Then came the unveiling of the Memorial Tablet, which is a magnificent piece of bronze, and a genuine work of art. The tablet was set upon a raised dais on the stage, draped with the Union Jack. The dedicatory sentences pronounced by Sir James Aikens were most impressive, and at a given signal from Sir James, two returned soldiers, in uniform, raised the veil and the beautiful tablet was exposed to public view for the first time. Those who paid the supreme sacrifice and bronze are: John Abbott, David M. Calderwood, Alistar Girg, Sidney Halliday, Charles Lovat, James Meek, Alfred McLatchie, Elmore Pringle, David Ribbons, Zachariah Sheppard, Thomas Tyreman, Norman Waddell, James Wark, Lawrence ward, Harold White, Angus McIntyre.



Minto Memorial Hall, ca. 1925. (*Minto Memoirs 1881-1979*, 47)

Sir James called the roll, and in answer to each name a floral spray was placed at the foot of the tablet by the school children. Then a choir of 25 voices, directed by W.F. Carter, sang Kipling's "Recessional"; Mrs. Blakely at the piano. This ended the unveiling ceremony.

Sir James then launched forth into one of the most stirring addresses ever heard in Minto, he eulogized the members of the C.E.F. and as compared with the heroes of the past, our "Tommys" were the greatest heroes of all time. In speaking of those who rest in Flanders Field, Sir James said: "that no matter what their shortcomings in civil life might have been, they had accomplished a purpose, and thereby proved themselves the very highest type of manhood."

"Great as may have been our achievements, loyal as may have been our hearts, glorious as may have been our sacrifices, the gallantry and unselfish devotion of our men would mean little indeed to the generation yet unborn, had no cost been made to preserve their memory, and Minto has every reason to be proud of its beautiful tribute to its fallen heroes."

The Minto orchestra, under the direction of W. Oliver, very ably assisted in the dedicatory services.

# Moline

## Plaques and Cairn

The local history for Rapid City and area, *Our Past for the Future* (1978), provides some observations about local honour rolls and the war memorial:

Immediately after World War I the Moline Womens Institute erected an Honour Roll for the men of the community who had served in the war. Mr. Harry Fulcher of Rapid City was hired to make a wooden plaque and have the names printed on the plaque. This was built of oak lumber. The top and sides were shaped to give a pleasing effect. This Honour Roll was placed on the front wall of the Moline Church behind the pulpit and altar where it could be viewed by all.

Following World War II the community wished to have another Honour Roll. They were fortunate to be able to obtain Mr. Harry Fulcher's services – now semi-retired – to make a plaque to match the one of the first war. When this was completed the two plaques were placed in an attractive setting at the front of the church.



The Honor Roll of World War II also made by Harry Futcher of Rapid City (*Rapid City and District: Our Past for the Future*, 150)

When the church closed in 1972 the Honour Rolls were moved to the Moline Community Centre and placed on the south wall of the south room.

On the same day of the Moline Co-op 50th Anniversary – June 27, 1964 a ceremony was held to unveil a cairn recently built by the community on the N.W. corner of the townsite on Sec. 8-14-20. This cairn was dedicated to the memory of the men in the two World Wars 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. Also to the memory of the pioneers of the district from 1878 and on. This cairn was financed by money from the sale of the Moline Rink and the one plaque was bought by the surplus of money raised to send boxes to men overseas.



Cairn at Moline, unveiled 27 June, 1964 (*Rapid City and District: Our Past for the Future*, 150)

The cairn was unveiled by Mrs. James (Edith) St. John and Mrs. Fred (Agnes) Yorke. Rev. Victor Bowins offered a prayer of dedication for the cairn and gave a short address. Mrs. George (Mary) Underhill placed a wreath at the cairn in memory of the members of the services that had paid the supreme sacrifice in the two World Wars. To conclude the ceremony Donald Gilchrist of Rivers – on the bugle sounded the Last Post.

# Neepawa

## A Calendar's Story

The Neepawa local history, *Neepawa Land of Plenty*, contains a brief passage from Mr. John Graham:

This 1917 calendar was saved by my wife Edith, and now hangs on my wall in East View Lodge. It is a cloth calendar and is precious because it reminds me of my brother-in-law Private R.E. Jones who enlisted in the 181<sup>st</sup> Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force on January 1, 1917 and of my brother Private Sam Graham of the 226<sup>th</sup> Battalion C.E.F. Neither of these young men returned to the home fires which their families kept burning.



The Way It Was – A Calendar's Story. (*Neepawa Land of Plenty* 1883-1983, 221)

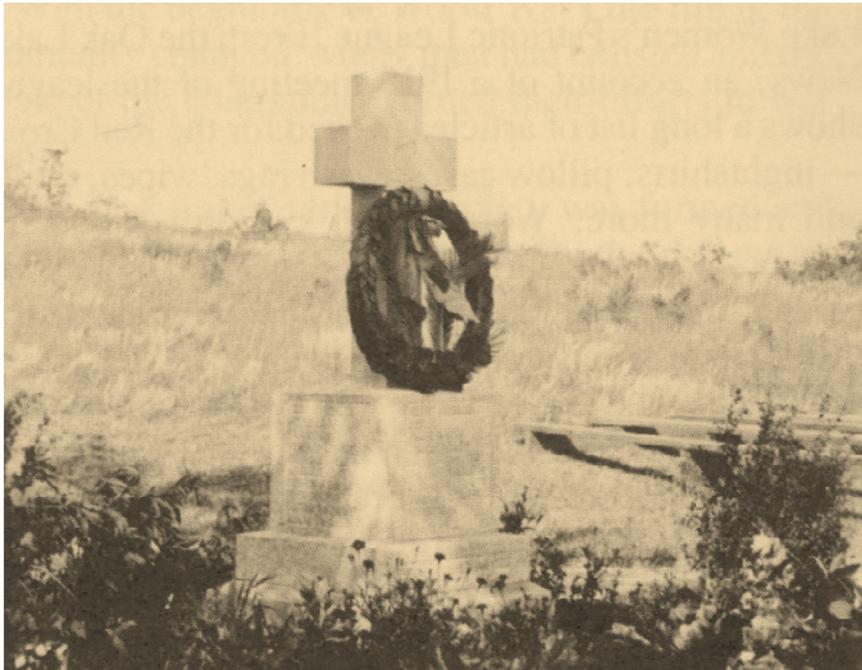
# Oak Lake

## The Cross of Sacrifice

In the Oak Lake and area history, *Ox Trails to Blacktop*, an entry describes the origins of a local Cross of Sacrifice:

The members of the Women's Institute had always been involved in the upkeep of the cemetery. This seemed to be their special project and they and their husbands did hours of work out there. Their idea was that a suitable memorial to the men killed in World War I should be placed at the cemetery, not in town.

In 1922 they obtained a plot in the cemetery and had a flagstaff erected there. The Union Jack was flown from the flagstaff and a very impressive dedication ceremony was held on Remembrance Day that year.



The Cross of Sacrifice when it was in Oak Lake Cemetery, 1932 (*Ox Trails to Blacktop*, 104)

In 1923 the ladies canvassed the women of the town and district raised enough money to have a monument, "The Cross of Sacrifice" was built. Messrs. J. Daum, T.J. Smith and J. Rozell did the work. The Cross of Sacrifice was placed in the

cemetery, in front of the flagstaff erected the year before. For years after that, the Memorial Day services were held at the cemetery.

In the late 1930s the Cross of Sacrifice was moved to the town park. In 1972, the property was sold and the monument was moved to the yard of the Legion Hall.

# Pipestone

## War Memorial

The local history, *Trails Along the Pipestone*, includes a section devoted to the war memorial and park:

The museum which stands on the grounds is another story but the history of Reston Park has its foundation on the war memorial for which it was to be a fitting background. The monument is of Italian marble and it is topped by the figure of a Canadian soldier. The cost, when purchased, was \$3,600.

It was unveiled by Sir James Aikins, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, on June 30, 1922. Dr. Chapman read the names inscribed and the address was given by Lloyd Armstrong. The agenda stated that a parade then proceeded to the chautauqua tent where addresses were given by Sir James Aikins, Dr. Clingan M.P.P., Colonel Rattray, and John Williams M.P.P.



Memorial statue Reston Park (*Trails Along the Pipestone*, 1981, 418)

Since then, memorial services have been held yearly on the spot. The treed arbor or grove where these services, and also family picnics, are held was originally a filled-in slough and it was landscaped in 1923. There are also picnic tables and electric wiring there now.

In 1915, bronze plaques were added to the monument. These were paid for by donations. Previous to this, the monument had only the names of First World War victims, one half on each side. As the monument is a very light grey, these did not show up very well so the decision was made to put on the plaques. Inscribed in the bronze on one side are the names of the twenty-three First Great War victims and on the other side the names of the seventeen from World War Two.

The flag staff was donated by the Women's Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion Elizabeth Branch. It was made by Vulcan Iron Works Supply from second hand piping. It sits in a cement base with the date of erection and the donor name on the bronze plaque.

Alf Archer received no salary. At an annual town meeting, it was moved that he be given \$100 a year, not as salary, but as a donation in appreciation of his services. At different times, this was raised and, in the last years, it was \$400. In 1962, the Manitoba Horticultural Society honored him by making him a life member and the local park board followed suit with a surprise presentation of a purse of money.

It was felt that something more should be done to honor this man who had taken the lead in making this village park a spot about which a local tribute said, "there is not a spot to equal it anywhere in the western part of the province, for a place of its size." So in 1967, money was collected and a memorial gate was erected at the west entrance to the park.

The plaque faces the street and the wording on it reads: "Erected in memory of Alf Archer who gave with complete dedication of his time and talent toward the development of this park. 1922-1967." The gates were unveiled and dedicated in 1970.

The flowers and shrubs and trees are memorials also. Those who watch the tulips bloom in spring, the peonies, delphiniums, lilies, roses and other flowers in summer, and finally the chrysanthemums in autumn, know that it has all been well worthwhile.

# Portage la Prairie

## Stories about the War

In *A History of Portage la Prairie and Surrounding District*, a variety of information about World War I can be found:

It is impossible in a book of this size to list the names of all the boys from Portage and district who joined the fighting ranks between 1914 and 1918. However, a list of names of the first volunteers who passed the medical inspection carried out by Dr. H. J. Hassard on August 13, 1914 are as follows: Fred. C. Mills, Herman Hartley, Jack King, James Woods, George Robertson, Charles Rea, Charles Tarling, Sidney Bonney, John Edward Lamb, Fred Archie McKenzie, Fred Morand, Elmer Prout, Thomas Carmichael, Stanley Garrioch, Charles Abbott, Alvert Livesay, Jack Prereth, W.J. Guttridge, Francis William Mirtle, George E. Willis, Frederick Fletcher, William Baldwin, Fred Trevelin and William Pedin.

Just two weeks later, the Manitoba Liberal paper published the names of the men who entrained at Portage for Valcartier. The list was made up of: Lt.-Col. C.D. McPherson, Major D. M. Ormond, Capt. Chas. A. Ogletree, Sgt. Macdonal, Corp. Stewart, Corp. Douglas and 105 Privates.

Men were selected on their physical fitness, ability as shots, and training received in militia was also a factor. Unmarried men were the first selection, married men without families second and with families third. Height could not be less than five feet three inches, chest 33 ½ inches.

At Valcartier, Quebec, the soldiers received rigorous training before continuing on to the battle front. It was there also that they were introduced to mother earth as a bed!

Women contributed much during the war years too. Housewives made as any sugarless recipes as possible and every cent that could be saved went toward the war effort. There wasn't an organization in Portage la Prairie that ignored the needs of comforts and necessities for the boys overseas. The work done by the Salvation Army, Red Cross and I.O.D.E. is well known.

Four Portage ladies who deserve special mention here are: Mrs. M. B. Snider, Miss Younghusband, Miss Bertha Barnes and Miss Mary Panton, the latter two

being graduates of the Portage General Hospital. After war was declared they immediately offered their services to go to the front in the capacity of Red Cross nurses.

On November 7, 1918, the Daily Graphic carried big headlines – “VICTORY IS OURS” and in only slightly smaller letter – “GERMANY SURRENDERS.”

At twelve minutes to twelve the city bells announced to the people of Portage la Prairie that the Allied armies had been successful and that the war was virtually at an end. The ringing of the city bells was followed by those of churches and with the din of whistles from the railway yards it was not long before people knew that the terrible war had at last come to an end, that right had triumphed over might and that all sacrifices had not been in vain.



Portage la Prairie War Memorial. (*A History of Portage la Prairie and Surrounding District*, 92)

Mayor Marlatt got out a proclamation declaring the rest of the day a half holiday, asking the business places to close and for stores and homes to be decorated and illuminated that night. "Make all the noise you want to," he said. "Make it a day long to be remembered"

The celebration was a little premature but the handwriting was on the wall by that time anyway. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated and fled to Holland on November 11, 1918; and on June 28, 1919, a Peace Treaty was signed at Versailles.

Sixty thousand Canadians never lived to rejoice in the victory. Some of them were boys from Portage la Prairie and surrounding districts.

Two hundred thousand Canadians came home wounded. Some of them from Portage la Prairie surrounding districts too.

No one has ever tried to estimate the number of tears that were shed by broken-hearted mothers, wives and sweethearts.

Names of the Portage boys who made the Supreme Sacrifice for the freedom of others, are engraved on a cenotaph which was erected by the Prairie Gateway Chapter of the I.O.D.E. in the centre of the city on Saskatchewan Avenue.

# Rapid City

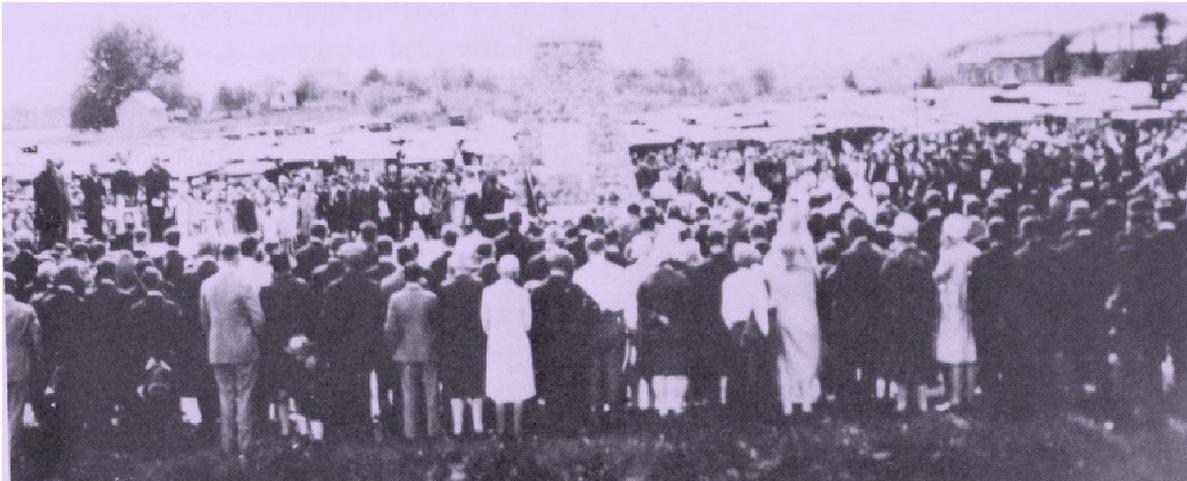
## War Stories

The Rapid City local history, *It's Time to Remember*, contains the following observations about life during World War I:

Locally, Camp Hughes (Shilo today) was established as a training ground as a huge tent city appeared. The first boys from our district had enlisted and left for training at Valcartier, Quebec, by August 13, 1914, under Major (later Brigadier General) H.M. Dyer of Minnedosa.

The 226th Platoon was trained at Rapid City by Lieutenant Paul Kane and many men from the district signed up there. Some boys, thrilled with the new idea of flying, rushed to join the Royal Air Force, and later the Royal Canadian Air Force trained at Camp Borden.

In the family histories and the pictures of the Rapid City Platoon are given most of the names of the local volunteers. We cannot attempt to make a list. Cooper Stone, in the Reporter, kept a close account of enlistments, military honors and the missing, wounded and killed in action.



War Memorial service at Rapid City (*It's Time to Remember*, 192)

On the home front, food production was increased, the work being done by the older men and young boys and girls. A "Soldiers of the Soil" group was organized to encourage young boys, 15 to 19 years, to do their bit on the home front. Patriotic meetings were called and drives made for funds for the war effort. Victory Bonds were sold. Red Cross organizations were busy knitting, sewing and packing boxes for the troops overseas. At harvest, troops from Camp Hughes were given time off to help with the harvesting.

Finally on November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed. The Allies had won the war but at a terrific price.

Large celebration were arranged to welcome the boys home again. Memorial services were held for those who were not returning. The Dominion Government passed a Veterans' Land Act to help returned soldiers get established on farms, if they so desired; others were offered free higher education.