

12. Private John Allaster McGregor

18 year old John Allaster McGregor was a farmer from Delaware County. He was listed as missing after a Battalion Raid on enemy trenches in December, 1916, near Vimy Ridge. His body was never found, and his name is on the Vimy Memorial. John's story recently came back to light when some poetry, newspaper clippings and military cartoons dating back to the war were discovered in the attic of a London home. The poems were traced back to John; researchers and descendants assume that they were sent back to his mother upon his death. Though they do tell the tales of the trenches he was in, some of John's poetry was more humorous than most war poetry: "Thrilling tales were told by the men next door, / How work under shot and shell was born, / But none would tell how with a spoon, / Some pants were cleaned in the 11th Platoon."



13. Bombardier James Henry Winslow

James Henry Winslow was a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College and worked as a travelling salesman. He was wounded while on duty at an observation post and died the next day. He was 27 years old. What makes his gravestone unique is that Winslow's "Dead Man's Penny" is mounted in it. A Dead Man's Penny, officially known as a Memorial Plaque, was sent to the family of any soldier killed in the war. The bronze medallion features an image of Lady Britannia surrounded by two dolphins and a lion (representing Britain) standing over a defeated eagle (symbolizing Germany). Around the outer edge are the words "He died for freedom and honor". The soldier's name is featured without their rank, representing equality of sacrifice in death.



14. Lt. Bartholomew Cottam

"Bart" Cottam was passionate about birds, was a student, worked as a tanner and for the newspaper, and spent 2 years in cadets. He enlisted in 1915 in St. Thomas' Battalion "The Elgins". When Bart went overseas he stayed with family friends, the Minnits, in England, and fell madly in love with their daughter Winnifred, who returned his affections. The pair planned to marry, with the Minnits' enthusiastic blessing, the next time that Bart had leave. The wedding was announced in Winnifred's church and was set for mid-December. Bart was killed on December 1st when he was shot through the head by a German sniper while leading a snatching party into a German trench. His body was never recovered, and he is memorialized at Vimy Ridge as well as at Woodland, where his gravestone tells the story of his final moments.



4. Lt. John Labatt Scatcherd

John Labatt Scatcherd was the son of Alan Scatcherd and Katherine Labatt, both of prominent London families. In the summer of 1914, John wrote to his mother to tell her that it was his plan to enlist in the war, as he could not bear sitting at home and only hearing about the action. He received a stern letter from his great uncle, warning him that the bloodshed would be unimaginable, and that it would kill his mother if he went. He enlisted anyway, his mother moving to England to be closer to him while he served in France. He was fatally wounded on September 3, 1918, only 2 months from the end of the war. After his death he was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His original grave marker, a wooden cross, now hangs in St. Paul's Cathedral.



5. Lt. Horace Edgar Kingsmill Bray

Horace Edgar Kingsmill Bray was a passionate student with an aptitude for poetry. He attended Galt Collegiate, and later worked for 2 years as a private signaller. He enlisted in January of 1915, when he was only 18 years old. He suffered extremely ill health during his time in the trenches, mostly the result of a shrapnel wound to the leg and forehead. He eventually requested a transfer to the Royal Flying Corps, one of the most dangerous positions in WWI. He never made it back to the battlefield, as he was killed in a mid-air plane collision during training. His poetry survives him, giving us a rare glimpse into the pain of war: "He passed me in a crowded street / We did not meet again, / He showed me in a sudden flash / Our England's pride and pain, / And when all else is long forgot / His memory shall remain."



6. Maj. Victor John Kent

Victor John Kent was born into a family with military history, his grandfather having fought to quell the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. He attended the Royal Military College in Kingston and worked as a Civil Engineer in London until the war broke out. He enlisted in March of 1916, a mere four months before his mother died. He remained in France, and was killed in action on March 4, 1918. His was regarded as a hero's death, as Kent died looking after his men. His last words were recorded as being "Don't worry about me, I'll be alright... I'm just going down to check that the men are all under cover." He proceeded into a trench and was struck by shrapnel seconds later. He was commemorated with a brass plaque at St. Paul's Cathedral.



The Great War



The Great War, later dubbed the First World War, was the bloodiest conflict in Canadian history. As a former British colony, Canada was an ally for Britain, France, and Russia. The battlefields of WWI also provided an important setting for Canadians to distinguish themselves on an international stage, with certain battles (Vimy Ridge in particular) being cited as the first moments in which Canadians experienced national pride. The Canadian War effort was almost completely driven by volunteers, and thousands of Canadians were eager to serve their country. Over 600,000 Canadians enlisted, and fought in the trenches, the air force, the navy, or to heal the injured. They took part in famous battles such as Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge, and Passchendaele. Though the war was a source of patriotism and growth for Canada, it was also a time of unbelievable loss and grief. Canada suffered over 61,000 war deaths between 1914 and 1918.

WWI and Woodland

Each war casualty left behind family and friends. Loved ones' sorrow was made particularly poignant because of the fact that soldiers in WWI were buried where they fell, in Commonwealth Graves near the front lines. This left families with no grave to visit, and no concrete place to go to find closure and mourn. Woodland Cemetery, which was opened in 1879, became important to these families as it provided them such a place. The families of the soldiers on this tour are ones that chose to memorialize their sons with gravestones or inscriptions in our cemetery, though the soldiers themselves (with few exceptions) are not here. There are over 50 memorials of this nature in the cemetery. It is one of Woodland's longstanding goals to uncover the stories of these individuals, bringing important local history back into the public consciousness.

Our Veterans Section

Following your tour, we encourage you to visit Woodland's Veterans Section, where you will find the graves of Canadian veterans from 1939 to the present day. Established after WWI, this section contains the graves of veterans who survived their service and returned to London. Viewing the rows of stones is a solemn reminder of the heroes who honourably served their country in war and peace.



Woodland Cemetery

THEY ARE NOT HERE

London Soldiers from the First World War Memorialized at Woodland



Historical Self-Guided Walking Tour



7. Lt. Col. Henry Campbell Becher

Henry Campbell Becher was the eldest of the three Becher brothers. Coming from one of London's most prominent families, he continued his father's legacy by practicing law before moving on to open a stock brokerage business. He loved sports, horses, nature, amateur acting, and, most of all, his family. Despite this love, when the war was declared, Henry's sense of duty to his country was stronger. He was one of the first men in London to enlist, and was immediately appointed a high position in Canada's 1st Battalion. During his service, Henry was revered as an excellent leader, both among his troops and in newspapers back home. He achieved the status of a hero when he was killed in action on June 15, 1915, leading his men into battle. His last words were: "No man can live in that fire, but I'll go." As he went over the top, a bomb detonated, shattering both his legs. He was being transported to a field ambulance when a German sniper shot him in the neck, along with his stretcher bearers. He survived for several hours, his comrades reporting that he was cheerful until the very end. He was buried the next day in France. A memorial service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, for which there was standing room only, a testament to his character.



8. Maj. Archibald Valency Becher

"Archie" Becher was the youngest of the Becher brothers. He attended the University of Western Ontario's medical school, but interrupted his studies to enlist in the Boer War in South Africa at the turn of the century. During his time in London, he served as an Alderman on the City Council and as one of London's coroners. Archie did not enlist as early as Henry did, however, perhaps because he had a young family (he married Flora "Topsy" Wilson in 1902 and had a son, John, in 1903), or because he was disillusioned with the concept of war after his time in South Africa. After his brother Henry was killed, Archie decided to enlist as a surgeon. He signed his own enlistment papers saying that he was fit for duty, and proceeded to a Quebec military hospital. He left behind a two year old son and, likely unbeknownst to him, another one on the way. He cared for his patients for only a month before he contracted double pneumonia. His wife and mother travelled to Quebec to be by his side, and he passed away on Christmas Day of 1915. He was transported back to London for burial in Woodland Cemetery, with full military honors and hundreds in attendance.



1. Private John Harold Isaac

John Harold Isaac worked as an electrician in London, and was happily married to Edith May Wallace. However, Edith suffered from cardiac disease, and she passed away in 1915 at the age of 22. The couple had no children. John must have still been in a deep state of grief when he enlisted in January of 1916, a mere 5 months after Edith's death. Being a member of the Medical Corps, it is possible that John knew he would not survive his time overseas. He was admitted to military hospitals for a series of infections in 1916, and in 1917 was admitted with enteritis, a sign of the illness that was to come. John served until the end of the war was declared, but stayed overseas as he was too ill to return home. He was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia, a type of cancer, and died in Basingstoke, England on April 22, 1919, at the age of 28.



2. Maj. Henry Ardagh Kingsmill

Henry "Harry" Ardagh Kingsmill was a member of the famous Kingsmill family who owned the store on Dundas St. A Confederation baby, Harry worked in the store as a youth and went on to graduate the University of Western Ontario's medical school in 1895. He also studied medicine in England, and had practices in both countries. In 1902 he married Inez Ethelyn Smith, a blonde American singer, and they had 2 children. Harry was a member of the 1st Hussars of London, but did not officially enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces until April 10, 1918, at which time he served in the Medical Corps. He is one of the only WWI soldiers to be buried in Woodland, as he did not die overseas but at home, where he fell victim to the soldier's flu epidemic in 1920.



3. Capt. Edmund Rochfort Street

Edmund Rochfort Street was a career soldier, serving first in India, then in South Africa during the Boer War. During this service he contracted enteric fever and retired to British Columbia to become a farmer and convalesce. He later moved to Guelph, where he spent the majority of his time developing the Boy Scouts club. Street was on a vacation with his mother and sister in Europe the day the war broke out. He immediately reported to the British War Office and offered his services. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for conspicuous good work under heavy fire and for the rescue of men from a gassed mine. Edmund was fatally wounded at the Battle of the Somme while standing on the trench parapet to encourage men to go over the top in an early morning attack.



9. Private Lewington George Davis

Lewington is the youngest soldier that we have memorialized at Woodland. On his attestation papers, he claimed he was 18, the age required to enlist. In reality, however, he was only 16 years and 5 months old. After 3 months of service, Lewington's lie was discovered. His true age may have been reported by his father, who wanted his son home. He arrived back in London safely; however, it was not even three weeks before Lewington enlisted again, once more lying about his age. He was likely one of the many boys captivated by the glory of war. He died of gas gangrene a month after being shot at the Battle of the Somme.



10. Maj. Cuthbert Finnie McEwen

Cuthbert Finnie McEwen grew up on London's most famous farm, competing at Ontario Agricultural Fairs with his first-class Southdown sheep. When he enlisted, he joined the Light Horse Infantry, due to his expertise with animals. He quickly rose through the ranks and became friends with military greats such as Billy Bishop. During his time in France, he kept a journal and wrote hundreds of letters to his family, detailing everything from the loss of his friends, to his horror at German gas killing horses, to his doubts about the usefulness of the war. "Finnie" was about to go on leave in October of 1918 when he was asked to go on patrol duty. While walking near the front line he was struck by a shell fragment, and died 10 minutes later. It was only two weeks before the end of the war. After his death, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.



11. Private Charles Clifton Carr

Charles Clifton Carr was a graduate of Upper Canada College, where he played on the football team and was recognized for his swimming prowess. He and his father worked at the Imperial Bank of Toronto. In 1913, a year before the war began, Charles jumped into a river in New Orleans to save the life of a stranger. For this, he was awarded \$2000 from the Carnegie Hero Fund (equivalent to \$50,000 today). He enlisted 3 months after WWI was declared, likely not for the soldier's salary, but to prove that he was, in fact, a hero. However, neither his athletic prowess nor his golden heart could protect him on the battlefield. While fighting at the Battle of Ypres, Charles' right thigh was shattered. He died a few days later, of tetanus, after being taken Prisoner of War by the German forces.

