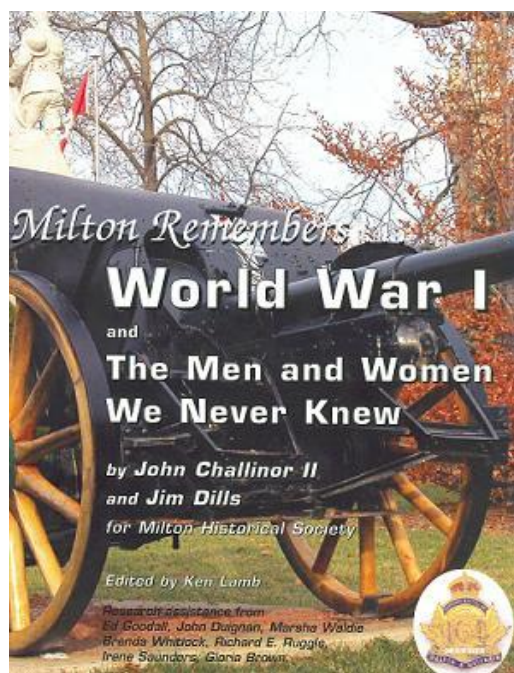


Milton Soldiers in the Great War 1914-1919

As Remembrance Day 2007 quickly approaches it is time for all of us, young and old, to take a look back to our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents to what they did for us and our community in the Great War. One such project that was initiated on Remembrance Day November 2005 was to bring Milton's Great War Soldiers (*those being the soldiers of the First World War 1914-1919*) to the forefront of modern technology – the Internet. Using this process, it was envisaged that the youth of Milton could quickly reach out and touch the past in a form that they enjoy and understand.

By February 2006 the project was well underway and background information had been collected on the Milton Soldiers, using readily available information from *Veteran's Affairs Canada, Library and Archives Canada, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Maple Leaf Legacy Project* and numerous other on-line and print references. Members of Canada's leading volunteer organization for the preservation of the history of Canada's role in the Great War ([Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group](#)) was already hard at work compiling information on the men, the units, the battles and the organization of the Canadian Military that lead to the great successes at Ypres, Mount Sorrel, Courcellette, Vimy, Cambrai and Valenciennes. This team has continuously added information for use in this project, even though they do not live in the community nor know little of these soldiers. It was all for preservation of the history of the Canadian's in the Great War.



Ongoing at the same time was a project of the *Milton Historical Society* to publish a book on Milton's soldiers in the Great War. That timely reference ("*Milton Remembers World War I and the Men and Women We Never Knew*") was published in October 2006. The book provides details on the local connections of those who served in the Great War from Milton and the surrounding area. The book goes beyond this project, as it deals with those that worked in Milton and the surrounding areas, to support the war effort, as well as those that survived.

Our parallel "on-line project" continued, to add the research links that would establish what the soldiers did, how they died, where they were buried, and how they contributed to the overall effort of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

By Remembrance Day 2006 the first on-line version of the Milton Soldiers was published by way of a Blog Site, which has been continuously updated (<http://miltonsoldiers.blogspot.com>). With the primary intent of the project to "*Keep the Flame Alive*", the web site version provides the computer generation with active links to the original documents in Canada and Europe. All of this was tied to ongoing projects at

the CEFSG to transcribe actual war diaries and unit histories and to bring these all together into a readily available format

With the publication of the MHS document in late 2006, the overlap in the work became more apparent and the effort then focused on taking the two sources of information and combining them into a single on-line project that would be readily available to anyone who had an interest in Milton's "*Great War Soldiers*". The first phase of the project was to record those soldiers on the Milton Cenotaph in Victoria Park.

The Milton Historical Society graciously provided access to all the soldier's service records that had been collected. This was combined with the additional information from the many other sources, resulting in a new up-to-date web based version of Milton's Great War Soldiers.



Milton Cenotaph – Victoria Park

The intent for Remembrance Day 2007 was to have a project completed that would tell an interested party how the soldier entered the war, how he moved through the system, where he met his final fate, and most importantly what were the conditions that led to those final moments – all related back to the overall actions of the Canadians in the Great War. To accomplish this meant tying the local soldier and his unit to the "*War Diaries*" of that era and then linking that to the authoritative war histories. We also worked closely with the "*Maple Leaf Legacy Project*" to bring photographs of Milton Soldier's graves to the project, whether in Canada, France, England or Belgium. We worked closely with *Library and Archives Canada*, *Veteran's Affairs Canada* and the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* to update and/or correct information on the various Milton soldiers.



New technology was also applied to the *2007 Remembrance Day Project*, to ensure that the end product would be of interest to those carrying out similar research. For example, *Google Earth* was used for the first time to link the community soldiers to their grave sites, not only to tell where they lay but to tell the story of how they ended up in that foreign grave. For those in Canada that had never seen the cemeteries of Europe, the project brings these home with satellite and ground level photographs of the areas, the cemeteries and the individual graves.

Working with the *Maple Leaf Legacy Project* in Ypres Belgium we have added all the Milton grave sites to the international database and gathered as many of the European gravesites possible for use in the Milton Soldiers' project. All of these are now viewable

on *Google Earth*. The project is not complete, thus new grave photographs will be added to the Milton Soldiers' site as they are sent in from Belgium.

The *Milton Historical Society* has graciously made their web site available as a place to post all of the details and web site links for each of the Milton Soldiers. At present this is only for the soldiers on the Victoria Park Cenotaph, however 51 soldiers was a significant project and more may follow for a Remembrance Day 2008 project. A link has been added to the front of the MHS web site so you can quickly connect to the Milton Great War Soldier page (<http://www.miltonhistoricalsociety.ca/>).

Finding the information for some of the soldiers was easy, for others it was a complicated task, and for some nearly impossible. Some soldiers perished before they ever left Canada, some died in training or at work camps in England. Those that were officers or were recorded for memorable work had more detailed records. Others were simply shot or blown to pieces on the battlefields of France and Flanders. A few soldiers were difficult to link to Milton, but with perseverance the link was found in most cases. One member, not a soldier, apparently never existed by name, was not from Milton and now is an "unknown" on the Victoria Park Cenotaph. On that aspect, our research continues.

Five (5) of Milton's Soldiers on the Victoria Park Cenotaph are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Milton. You can use the [Google Earth Project Site](#) to see exactly where they are interned, using GPS Satellite coordinates. There you will find:

- Corporal William Maddocks
- Private William Allan
- Trooper Harold Dent
- Private Alfred Evans
- Private Edmund Cooper

The same is now being applied to their comrades in Europe. Each of these soldiers was also highlighted at Milton's 150th Anniversary Tour, each site being marked by flags and a commemorative posting.



For the rest of the forty-six (46) soldier's final resting places, you need to refer to the Google Earth posting noted above. This site will be updated as more photographs and locations are received from the *Maple Leaf Legacy Project* in Ypres, Belgium.

Not all of Milton's soldiers met their fate in a hail of bullets or the thunder of an explosive shell. Some were killed in training, others died of natural causes and sickness. A few suffered from the use of gas, the "silent killer" and some met their fate in war time

accidents. A few Milton soldiers met their final fate from actions in the Royal Air Force, but none that we found in the Royal Navy. Many of the soldier's bodies were recovered, however some were not and they are thus memorialized on the *Vimy Monument* in France or the *Menin Gate Memorial* in Belgium. In those days, soldiers were buried close to where they fell, often to have their grave dug up and moved to a central cemetery, after the Armistice. Soldiers who died in the Great War were not brought back to Canada, as they are today. There were no "*Ramp Ceremonies*" and no trips on the "*Highway of Heroes*".

Here is a listing of the soldiers and some interesting stories of a few. The stories of all of them are on the web site ([Milton Soldiers of the Great War](#)).

Final Fate of the Milton Soldiers by Name:	Example Stories of Soldiers in this Category:
<p><i>Died In Canada of Illness:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Allan • Edmund Cooper 	<p>Private Allan, son of George and Christina Allan of Milton West Ontario, born in Georgetown on January 22, 1897.</p> <p>Allan joined the 20th Halton Rifles (Militia) on August 3, 1915 and was transferred to the 76th Battalion CEF.</p> <p>After 2 months in hospital in England for gastritis, he was transferred to the 36th Battalion on July 11, 1916. By August 8, 1916 he was back in the hospital, suffering from a recurring (childhood) kidney ailment. On August 16, 1916 he was sent back to Canada, where he was discharged as medically unfit on February 17, 1917. He died of chronic nephritis (kidney disease) on March 18, 1917 while in Milton.</p> <p>W. J. Allan did not serve in combat.</p>
<p><i>Died Overseas in Non-Combat Situation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Kerns • Russell Turrell 	<p>Private Turrell was the son of John and Catherine Turrell of Milton, Ontario and like many other local boys, he attested to the 164th Infantry Battalion. He joined the unit on January 24, 1916. While in England he was transferred to the 2nd Canadian Reserve Battalion. He was then taken on strength with the C.M.G.D. (Canadian Machine Gun Corps Depot) on May 12, 1917 then sent back to the 164th on June 11, 1917.</p> <p>He was a teamster by trade and died as a result of his work to support the CEF while on service in England. He was cutting wood with his axe, when a piece of stone struck him in the jaw, resulting in a fracture of the mandible and severe bleeding.</p> <p>Private Turrell's records show he died at 1:33 pm on Monday January 28, 1918 after many days of a high fever. The doctors were making an incision under light aesthetic on his infected wound at the time, as he was experiencing excessive swelling over his upper body. He had suffered a major contusion to his face while cutting wood, leading to a Leoffler Bacillus infection (diphtheria) after surgery to drain the inflamed area.</p> <p>It was initially reported he died of "Gas Gangrene" however after the autopsy the report of death was changed to "Erysipelas" (cellulites caused by a streptococci infection).</p>

<p><i>Wounded in Combat, Died in Canada:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harold Dent • Alfred Evans • William Maddocks 	<p>Harold James Dent, son of James and Elinor Dent (formerly of Milton) and husband of Nellie Czarina, Dent (Saskatchewan), was born in Gagetown Michigan on June 27, 1891.</p> <p>Harold joined the Fort Garry Horse of the CEF on October 28, 1915. Private Dent was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during a raid by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade on the enemy lines in the Devise area (Somme) of France. His team was placing bangalore torpedoes to cut the German wire so that the rest of the raiding party could advance to gain intelligence. He was one of 25 wounded, 3 seriously. The exploits are detailed in the Fort Gary Horse war diary for that period of July 1917.</p> <p>As noted on Harold's gravestone, he died in Halifax Nova Scotia on April 18, 1918 as a result wounds to the chest received on July 8, 1917. A piece of shrapnel had not been removed – it killed him 9 months later!</p>
<p><i>Died in Active Combat and Buried:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Archer • Ernest Baverstock • James Belt • Melville Bonus • William Cartwright • John Crowe • Alexander Denyes • Edward Donnelly • Albert Eden • Albert Edwards • Charles Fay • Richard Fay • Charles Gowing • William Graham • James Hamilton • Cedric Harrop • William Harwood • Stanley Lancaster • Frank Manley • Joscelyn March • Duncan Paterson • Charles Robertson • James Robertson • Howard Robinson • Edward Stevens • Elmer Tuck • Victor Tuxford • Albert Tuxworth • Frederick Walsh • Sydney Williams 	<p>Private Cartwright was living with widowed grandmother (Mrs. Candace Henderson is shown as his "Foster Mother") in Milton when he enlisted in the 164th Battalion in April 1916. His mother is shown as Mary Armstrong of Highland Creek, Ontario.</p> <p>In May 1917 he was taken on strength as an Acting Lance Corporal with the 2nd Reserve Battalion, apparently during the period during the conceptualization of the 5th Canadian Division. He then moved back to the 164th, at his own request, as a Private. Eventually he joined the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on March 29, 1918.</p> <p>Private Cartwright was killed in action on August 26, 1918 while serving with the PPCLI in the final days as the CEF moved from Arras to Amiens. They were to open up the Arras to Albert Railway.</p> <p>Cartwright received the Military Medal for bravery, in addition to his service medals.</p> <p>Private Gowing reports his next of kin as his son, under the care of the Children's Aid Society in Acton (Halton), Ontario. He attested at age 34 to the 37th Battalion on May 26, 1915, but quickly moved to the 17th Battalion, prior to being numbered. The 17th was subsequently broken up in England to provide for reserves. He had served with the 20th Regiment Halton Rifles, but was discharged as medically unfit in January 1915 (perhaps "bad feet", as noted in medical records).</p> <p>The service records indicated that Private Gowing was taken on strength to the 15th Battalion (1st Division, 3rd Infantry Brigade). At Festubert, France he received serious gun shot wounds to the head on August 21, 1915, was admitted to the #3 Canadian Field Ambulance, where he died. Two casualties were reported that day in the war diary by sniping, suggesting that Private Gowing stuck his head a little too high above the parapet. Otherwise, the enemy on the front were reported as "quiet".</p> <p>Private Harrop was the son of Edwin Harrop of Milton West, Ontario. Prior to attestation on November 1, 1915 he had served in the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. Serving as a "Gunner", he was killed in action in France while serving with the 3rd Brigade of the Canadian Horse</p>

	<p>Artillery on October 28, 1917.</p> <p>As a member of the RCHA it is more difficult to track his service record, although we do know that at that time the Canadian's were in a fierce fire-fight in Passchendaele, Belgium historically known as the "Slaughter in the Mud". In late October the 3rd CFA was at Frezenburg, Belgium. The main CFA records show that the Canadian's were attacking the Bellevue spur at this time and as Nicholson reports (page 320) the Canadians suffered 2,481 casualties, including 585 killed, 965 wounded and 8 taken prisoner. The 3rd CFA was attacking Passchendaele and reports show their location was shelled heavily all day. Private Cedric Harrop is reported that day as one of the four (4) regulars killed in action.</p> <p>Lieutenant Robertson was one of the few Milton Soldiers to have been born in the community. James had graduated from the University of Toronto with degrees in Political Science and Law. He was practicing law with the Winnipeg Supply & Fuel Company when he attested to the 90th Infantry Battalion (Winnipeg Rifles) on July 20, 1915. He took the draft to England, where the unit was broken up and he was transferred to the 11th Battalion. He was subsequently taken on strength by the 27th Battalion (2nd Division, 6th Infantry Brigade) on December 21, 1915.</p> <p>Lieutenant Robertson was killed instantly by a bullet to the head, by a sniper, on March 9, 1916. That year was the first winter for the Canadian's in the trenches of Flanders, serving 6 day rotational tours on the front line. The Canadians lost 546 killed and 1543 wounded in the first 3 months, Robertson being one of the casualties.</p> <p>The war diary of the 27th Battalion March 8 & 9, 1916 is critical to Lieutenant Robertson's demise as it reports the movement from the rest billets to replace the 49th Battalion in Divisional Reserve at Loche and then the 29th in the trenches. Because the trenches were in a poor state of repair, the men had to see to the repairs themselves (rather than one of the Reserve Battalions). Lieutenant Robertson was directing parapet repairs in the E3 cut-off trench when he was struck by a bullet in the head. He died instantly but unnecessarily.</p>
<p><i>Died in Active Combat, No Known Grave:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfred Bastedo • Archie Beard • Clarence Carton • William Croft • Joseph Dockray • Arnold Dunning • George Hill • John Jarvie • William Lees • Roland Merrett • William Pollock • Hugh Sinclair • William Slack 	<p>Captain Bastedo was one of the first men to enlist from the Milton area, on September 22, 1914. He was taken on strength in the CEF 1st Battalion on April 11, 1915, and killed in action on April 23, 1915.</p> <p>On that April day in 1915 the 1st Battalion received orders to move over the Yser Canal to attack Pilckem Village (see details) where it was subjected to heavy artillery, machine gun and rifle fire. Officer casualties were 7 wounded and 3 killed. This was the period of the Great War known as the "Ypres Gas Attack" and Captain Bastedo was one of many casualties.</p> <p>The University of Toronto Roll of Honour (page 10) reports that Captain Bastedo was killed near St. Julien, during the CEF counter attack on the morning of April 23, 1915. He was one of the 1st UoT students to fall in the Great War and his degree was conferred after his death.</p>

One name on the Milton Victoria Park Cenotaph remains a mystery. It is not for a soldier but a member of the women's auxiliary corps, not in the Canadian Expeditionary Force but rather the British Expeditionary Force. Problem is, the woman does not exist, at least not yet or in that form, but she does closely resemble a British subject who never came to Canada but has historical links that appear to confirm her identity. By Remembrance Day 2008 we hope to have identified this "mysterious lady" on the Victoria Park Cenotaph.

The project to date has not covered the soldiers that are listed on the "Haltonville Cenotaph, nor has it covered the men and women of Milton that gallantly served Milton in the Great War and survived. Their service, whether in a combat or support position, is as important as those that died in the war. Our project is dedicated to all of Canada's soldiers, servicemen and servicewomen, regardless of their position, regardless of the war or action in which they served.

A web based version of this article is available for download on Internet, so as to provide active links: (Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF formats)

<http://www.miltonhistoricalsociety.ca/download/remember2007.htm>

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Richard Laughton has been a resident of Milton, Ontario since 1976. He and his wife Olga raised their eldest daughter Melissa and Milton's first "Triplets" (Jennifer, Tessa and Edwyna) in Milton. Richard is a member of the Milton Historical Society, the Royal Canadian Legion – Milton Branch 136, the Central Ontario Branch of the Western Front Association, and the Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group. As well, Richard contributes his work to the "Maple Leaf Legacy Project" in Ypres, Belgium and runs the [CEFSG Matrix Project](#).

Both Richard's grandfathers served in the Great War. [George Laughton](#) (photo left) joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and then accepted a commission in the British Army. As a young Lieutenant with the 26th Northumberland Fusiliers, he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in the "1st Battle of the Scarpe" (Vimy Ridge, April 1917). [Grandfather Kennedy](#), enlisted as a Private with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and was gassed at the Battle of Ypres in May 1915. He too rejoined the battle with the British Army, attaining the rank of Captain with the Royal Irish Rifles. He spent the last year of the war as a Prisoner of War.

Notes: (updated January 2013)

1. A copy of all the "Laughton Articles & Essays" are now available of the Laughton web site at: <http://laughton.ca/index.php/publications/ww1/>
2. For a web based (hyperlinked) version of this particular article, please go to <http://laughton.ca/publications/ww1/pub1.pdf> . That version provides links to the maps, war diaries and other Internet Resources that are used in the article.
3. Additional information, such as larger scale maps and war diary extracts, that was compiled for the Laughton publications are stored on the MediaFire site at this location: <http://tinyurl.com/laughton-publications>
4. Flip-view copies of the Laughton publications are published in electronic PDF format on the ISSUU self-publishing web site.
All articles: <http://issuu.com/cefmatrix/docs>
This publication: http://issuu.com/cefmatrix/docs/milton_soldiers_in_the_great_war
5. An archive of the publication is held by Archive.org at:
<http://archive.org/details/MiltonSoldiersInTheGreatWar19141919>
6. This article was first published electronically in October 2007.
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