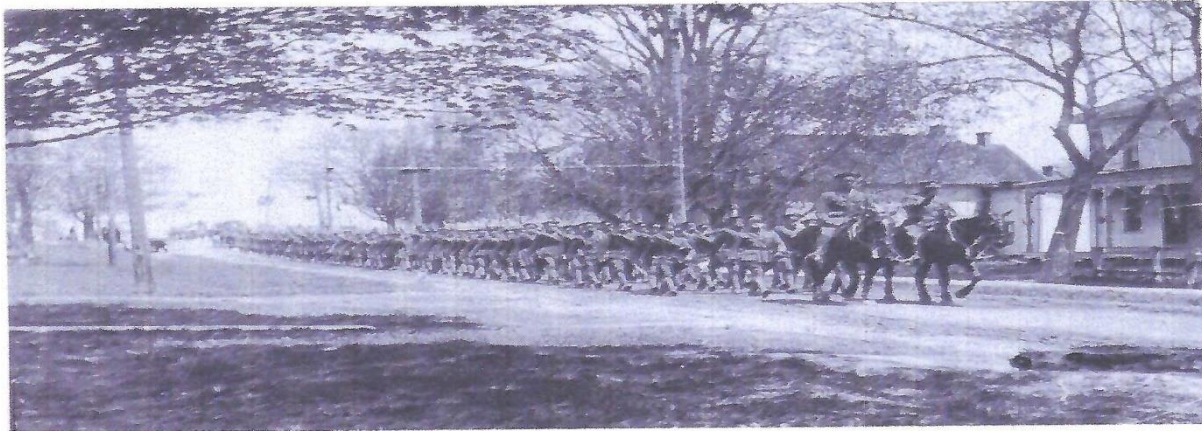

Elgin and Area Heritage Society FIRST WORLD WAR

The One Hundredth Anniversary Remembrance Presentation



Volunteers of the 156th Leeds and Grenville Battalion Parade in Elgin in 1916

In 1915, with headquarter in Brockville, the newly established 156th Battalion began to recruit across the county. A sub-recruiting and training centre was developed in Elgin using the large grounds at the Elgin Red Brick School for training and 2 doors away the old Orange Hall for accommodations. H. A. (Gus) Coon already commissioned as a Lieutenant was given command and Sargent Herbert Richardson was brought from Brockville as the Drill Sargent. The first person to sign up for the 156th was Augustine Patrick Quinn of North Crosby. The number of volunteers began to grow and in the first month 16 men had joined.

There had been earlier volunteers who had left the area to sign up in Ottawa or Barriefield. Still others signed with specific regiments like Peter Martin who joined the 8th C.M.R. and Martin Beadle who joined the 104th Regiment and left with the first contingent of Overseas Troops. The units that were already in France and Belgium soon needed replacements and the Leeds and Grenville Battalion provide these men almost as soon as they arrived at the Canadian Camp in Whitley, England.

By early winter of 1916, the Elgin Training Centre had 44 men clothed and equipped for their regular Thursday drills. As the Battalion grew, training facilities were developed in Westport and Delta. The 156th was initially classed as a militia unit and was trained under the program established for county battalions. The training was something new for these mainly farm boys and dinner provided at the Empire Hotel became a flag waving patriotic event

(Continued on the back page)



Men from the 156th Battalion list here as seen drilling in Elgin

Coon, Gus, Lieutenant
 Richardson, Herb, Sargent
 Soper, Clinton, Corporal
 Perrin, Munson
 King, Thomas
 Howe, Nelson
 Warren, Gordon
 Oxbro, Joseph
 Brown, Roy
 George, Edward
 Dawson, George
 Cain, Keneth
 Cain, James
 Quinn, Augustine Patrick
 Cooper, Arthur

Long, George
 Randall, Jack
 Randall, Moses
 Emmons, James Edward
 Mattice, William
 Harrington, Alfred
 Elliott, Robert
 Warren, Raymond
 Raison, Frederick Clarence
 George, Albert
 Burt, Gordon William
 Moroughan, Edward Roy
 Coon, Gerald
 Kelsey, Thomas
 Wood, Arthur J.

Brown, Gerald Wallace
 Knapp, Squire
 Adrain, George Barry
 Flynn, Martin James
 Perrin, James
 Halladay, Cecil Winford
 Halladay, Royal
 Halladay, Wesley John
 Young, John Francis
 Baker, William Smith
 Mattice, James Henry
 Morris, Herman L.
 Dowset, Reginald Ernest
 Young, Harold George
 McFadden, Thomas Isaac

Those from North Leeds Who Did Not Return

Board, Charles,	Newboyne	Judge, Leonard James,	Delta
Board, Frederick	Delta	Joynt, William J.,	Portland
Bryden, Charles John,	Crosby	Kane, Robert Andrew,	Westport
Cannon, Charles Myers,	Portland	O'Meara, Albert,	Portland
Cain, Keneth Hobart,	Elgin	Raisin, Frederick Clarence,	Harlem
Carl, William,	Delta	Rathwell, James Wesley,	Chantry
Clinton, Gilbert Montaque,	Westport	Scott, Lloyd James, Lieut.	Westport
Cross, Everett,	Newborn	Tett, Arthur Hopkins	Newborn
Edgers, James William,	Elgin	Truelove, William	Westport
Green, Samuel Benjamin,	Lyndhurst	Wing, George Earl,	Westport
Flynn, Martin James,	Morton	Woods, Lyndon Delorma	Chantry



Canada Goes To War

W W 1 the war to end all wars. Because of a treaty of protection with Belgium, Britain gave Germany a declaration of intent. When the German Army entered Belgium, the British Prime Minister gave them until August 4, 1914 to get out. With the German Army still in Belgium, at one minute past midnight on August 5th War was declared. The legalities of Dominion meant that Canada was automatically at war with Germany. However, Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden, following a vote in the House of Commons, signed Canada's declaration of war on August 5, 1914.

At that time, Canada had a small permanent standing army of 3110 men. An order was issued, as a result of the declaration, that an army was to be recruited for overseas service. A mass mobilization was to develop a completely new land force, the Canadian Expeditionary Force. This new army was to be based on numbered battalions raised through Cities and Municipalities. Thus was created, the 156th Leeds and Grenville Battalion. Companies were raised and trained in specific locations across the County as volunteers came forward in large numbers.

The volunteers had to fill-out and sign what was called an attestation paper listing details about each recruit. One specific question asked if they were married. If the answer was yes more details were required, the main point; was the letter of permission signed by their wife which had to be included. Complete copies of the attestation papers for North Leeds Volunteers and Draftees are available for viewing during this presentation. The Canadian War Pensions dated from 1885 and had not really changed from those in effect in 1814. This provided very little for casualty soldiers wives or those with complete disability. The Government made sure that wives knew this before their husbands went overseas. In 1919 the Government brought in new regulations with allowances for wives and children based on an objective assessment. Only the completely disabled (about 5% of the total force) could claim them.

The 156th Leeds and Grenville Battalion raised a unit of 28 Officers and 778 other ranks and in early July of 1916, the entire force was brought together in Barriefield to train together. They were then shipped to Halifax where they boarded the S. S. Northland for England on October 16th 1916.

After arriving in England, the 156th Battalion was broken up to provide replacements for the already battered 2nd, 21st and 38th Battalions. The nucleoli of the 38th was the Ottawa Overseas Battalion, the 21st had been raised primarily in Kingston at Barriefield and the 2nd was the Eastern Ontario Regiment which was made up with over 1000 men from the Brockville Rifles. The majority of the men from the 156th went to the 2nd which saw action at: Ypres, St. Julien, Festubert, Pozieres, Vimy, Flanders, Arleux, Hill 70, Passchendaele, Amiens and Canal Nord.

The 156th Leeds Grenville Battalion ceased to exist on February 15, 1918.

The volunteers that joined the 156th and all of the other men that signed up with already existing Regiments were boys and men who were first and second generation emigrants from the British Isles. Their families thought that it was their responsibility to come to the aid of the Mother Country. They were loyal to the Crown and loyal to the Dominion. In the first 2 years, 300,000 volunteers signed up to go overseas and were being killed or wounded by the thousands in the trenches of France and Belgium. Replacements were needed and in the late summer of 1917, the Borden Government passed the Conscription Act. Everett Cross, a volunteer from Newborn was killed in action soon after he arrived on the line in France and he is identified with a cross at Vimy Memorial near Pas de Calais as his remains have never been located. The Conscription Act was hated by Canadians, but another 100,000 men were signed up, not all of whom went overseas.

There were over 400,000 men and women sent overseas; and of that number, 60,000 were killed in action and another 100,000 were wounded. The British Generals used Canadian and Australian troops as their lead elements on most of their major attacks which lead to a high number of casualties. In South Crosby, North Crosby and Bastard Townships; there were just under 200 volunteers and draftees. From this number there were over 20 casualties and almost 100 who would bare the scares of battle for life. Men like Martin Beadle who had his body severely burned with mustard gas or Herman Warren of Newborn who was never able to hear without an electronic implant. A hospital was opened at Chaffey's Lock where hundreds of shell shocked victims were treated. WW 1 was a very traumatic war that altered the lives of most Canadians and much has been forgotten because those that came home never talked about it. The Conscription Act changed the views of many voters and altered political allegiance for generations.

World War 1 had more than 35 million civilian and military casualties: 15 million dead; 20 million wounded. Thousands disfigured and disabled; millions suffered shell shock; 1,200,000 soldiers on both sides were gased, of whom 91,198 died. The Greatest single loss of life in the British army: the Battle of Somme had over 60,000 casualties in one day. In 1918, the population of North Crosby, South Crosby and Bastard was a tight knit community where almost everyone had a relative that went overseas in the Great War, however stories of their involvement are almost none existent.

The material in this brochure was produced for the November 8th and 9th Remembrance Tribute to the Men and Women who served in the First World War from the North Leeds Area. The research, copy and brochure were produced by Neil Patterson for the Elgin and Area Heritage Society.



Elgin and Area Heritage Society

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