

THE BEECHWOOD WAY

MAGAZINE

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By Nicolas McCarthy



Letter from the editor

Beechwood Cemetery truly was a place of celebration and commemoration during Canada's 150th - each event representing and honouring a part of Beechwood and the shared history of our communities. From the Annual Chinese Memorial Service, at which loved ones honoured their ancestors, to the Annual Historical Tour that brought to life the people of 1867. Five hundred people gathered at Beechwood to listen to actors tell the tales of both those who actively participated in Canada's creation, and also the lives of real individuals who held traditional roles in society. Attendees even had the chance to learn the traditional dances of 1867, such as the waltz and other ballroom dances.

Beechwood Cemetery paid tribute to the 10th Anniversary of the amalgamation of the four sections that became the National Military Cemetery. This event brought together a group of partners for speeches, a concert and a tour of each of the four sections. This event honoured those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

On what seemed to be the hottest day of the year, we honoured the RCMP with a three-part event starting with a torch lighting at the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill, followed by a torch run that culminated with the lighting of the RCMP Memorial Flame at the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery. Each speaker provided their own unique way to honour the RCMP and Canada, but it was Retired Senior Citizenship Judge, George Springate, who had all the people in attendance recite the Oath of Citizenship in both languages. It provided a most special moment for all those involved.

We ended the eventful summer with the Barrack's Hill Reinternment. The City of Ottawa during LRT construction discovered a long since closed cemetery and provided a proper burial for those individuals. Retired RCMP Deputy Commissioner and Chair of Beechwood Cemetery Foundation Tim Killam captured it best when he said:

"The City could not have chosen a more fitting place to reinter the individuals originally laid to rest at Barrack Hill Cemetery, those who helped build our city, who possibly worked on the Rideau Canal and eventually lay down roots in the newly created Capital of a newly formed country. For a cemetery that has long since been closed and forgotten, Barrack Hill and those unnamed people will now rest in a gathering place, a focal point for all those who come and visit their national cemetery. Though we may not know who they were, these seventy-nine individuals will be remembered as the people whose own hands helped to build our city and our country."

And what a fitting place Beechwood Cemetery has been to celebrate Canada's 150th. We must honour all our 82,000 individuals who make Beechwood their final resting place.

Nick McCarthy

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Major-General Sir Edward Morrison - Grave Unveiling and WWI Memoir Launch - Beechwood National Memorial Centre - Sunday, November 5th 2017 at 1:00 PM

Remembrance Day - National Military Cemetery - Saturday, November 11, 2017 at 10:30 AM

Wreaths Across Canada - National Military Cemetery - Sunday, December 3, 2017 at 1:30 PM

Tree of Life Ceremony - Beechwood National Memorial Centre - Sunday, December 3rd 2017 at 4:00 PM

Christmas Candlelight Service - Beechwood National Memorial Centre - Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 6:00 PM



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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada and read back issues of at: www.beechwoodottawa.ca.

We want your feedback on how we are doing! Contact Erika Wagner at foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca

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NMC 10TH ANNIVERSARY

by Mark Sunderland

On Wednesday, September 13th, 2017, sun and warmth brightened Beechwood as it celebrated the tenth anniversary of Canada's National Military Cemetery.

The event was hosted in Beechwood's National Memorial Centre and was attended by all branches of The Canadian Armed Forces.

The guests were welcomed by Brigadier General (Retired) Gerald Peddle, followed by remarks from Commander, Military Personnel Command Lieutenant-General Charles Lamarre, CMM, MSC, CD.

Mona Fortier spoke as Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier (the constituency in which Beechwood Cemetery is located) followed by Brigadier General (Retired) David C. Kettle, CMM, CD, DD, Secretary General, Commonwealth War Graves Commission Canadian Agency.

Dedicated on September 13th, 2007, Canada's National Military Cemetery is a partnership between The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada.

Although the focus of the occasion was a tenth anniversary, there was reason enough for gratitude and to celebrate more than 150 years of Canada's armed forces - and the role that our heroes and heroines have played in shaping Canada's destiny.

Following the speeches, there was a concert of music commensurate with the war years and performed by Andrew Ager, pianist and composer with vocal soloists Joan Fearnley, soprano, and Iain MacPherson, tenor.

The guests then strolled through Beechwood for a tour of the military cemeteries and afterwards returned to the memorial centre for a light lunch.

The ease with which the day unfolded and the sense of occasion were in no small measure due to the presence of Beechwood's staff that unfailingly delivers style, efficiency and dignity to every event.





A kopjafa is a carved pole with a series of geometric shapes. A kopjafa represents the virtues of generosity, honour, peace, friendship and recognition.

INTRIGUE AT THE HUNGARIAN MEMORIAL *by László Farkas and József Polgár*

Did you know that the tranquil paths of Beechwood Cemetery had once provided the backdrop to a story of ultimate bravery, theft, and even a car chase? This story is how a brave night watchman saved the first ever memorial to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution!

In the fall of 1956, thousands of Hungarian refugees arrived in Canada, fleeing from the oppression of communism. In October 1957, the Ottawa Hungarian community wanted to commemorate the first anniversary of the revolution. Beechwood Cemetery generously donated a plot to the Hungarians, inviting them to erect a memorial in honour of the fallen freedom fighters.

One week before the commemoration ceremony, the Hungarians erected a simple wooden cross on the donated plot. Three days later, doing his usual rounds, the night watchman of the cemetery heard suspicious noises - a shovel at work, along with the hushed voices of at least two men. There was also a car idling by the new wooden cross. It had a red plate, meaning the owners were diplomats. As the guard stepped closer to investigate, he watched in astonishment as the men yanked the cross out of the ground, shoved it into the car and took off.

Pushing his fears aside, the night watchman ran to his car and got in. He drove after the thieves and quickly caught up to their car, recognizing it by its red diplomatic plates. After driving to a more secluded area, the car stopped. One of the men got out, pulled the cross from the car and threw it into the ditch beside the road. Then the car disappeared into the night. The watchman memorized the area where the cross lay and drove back to the cemetery.

It was shortly after midnight, but the guard decided that the erectors of the cross needed to know what happened without delay. He called them on the phone, and told them about the night's events. The erectors acted at once: They drove to the road described by the watchman, found the cross, and with the guard's help, reinstalled it in its proper place. From that night on, a member of the Hungarian community held watch by the cross all day and night until the commemoration ceremony. Nobody ever tried to harm the cross again.

In 1960, the wooden cross was replaced by a more permanent stone structure. Later on, a traditional "kopjafa" was added to the memorial. But the Ottawa Hungarian community never forgot the adventurous story of the wooden cross. To commemorate the construction of the first ever memorial to the 1956 Revolution, two freedom fighters, László Farkas and József Polgár decided to erect a stone replica of the wooden cross, as a memento of the bravery and dedication of the original erectors, as well as the night watchman. The replica was sponsored by donations given from Canadian Hungarians and the Embassy of Hungary.

The memorial of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution honours the Hungarian Freedom Fighters who sacrificed their lives for freedom.



BEECHWOOD'S BEES – INTRODUCING BEECHWOOD'S BIOTIC POLLINATION PROGRAMME

by Benoit Bazinet

Since the late 1990s, beekeepers around the world have observed the mysterious and sudden disappearance of bees. While such disappearances have occurred throughout the history of apiculture, and were known by various names, the syndrome was renamed colony collapse disorder in late 2006.

Bees make more than honey – they are extremely important to food production because they pollinate crops. Bumblebees, other wild bees, and insects like butterflies, wasps, and flies all provide valuable pollination services. A third of the food that we eat depends on pollinating insects.

Beechwood and Ontario cemeteries have been pesticide free environments since 2008. Our vast landscape of 160 acres makes Beechwood an ideal location for urban beekeeping. Studies have found that honeybees are healthier and produce more honey in urban settings, where fewer pesticides are sprayed and greater floral diversity exists. As such, there is a growing movement across North America to consciously include apiaries (also known as bee yards) within city boundaries.

In spring 2017, Beechwood implemented an environmentally friendly/green initiative known as the Biotic Pollination Programme, which consisted of the acquisition and installation of honeybee hives on Beechwood cemetery property. On May 28th, two hives were installed on the rooftop of the Beechwood National Memorial Centre. The rooftop location was chosen for closed restricted access, discreet location, and general public safety. By the end of summer of 2017, the rooftop apiary had grown to 3 strong, relatively healthy and very successful hives.

Funeral Directors and now volunteer apiarists Benoit Bazinet and Bryan Brown, acted as tour guides and accommodated visitors to the apiary. Up to 24 Beechwood staff members visited throughout rotating hive inspections. All zealously suited up to eagerly learn all about our indispensable friend the honeybee, and all left stingless!

An estimated population of 120,000 to 200,000 bees produced approximately 30kg (66.15lbs) of liquid honey, and another 10kg (22lbs) of comb honey. The bountiful harvest collected by Bazinet and Brown in their spare time was distributed amongst Beechwood staff, board members, visiting associates such as National Defence personnel, caterers, florists and clergy.

Hives located on Beechwood grounds are registered with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), and are subject to be inspected by the Provincial Apiary inspectors. Furthermore, Beechwood's apiary is voluntarily enrolled in a provincial monitoring project to address bee health stressors at randomly selected bee yards across Ontario.

Since honeybees may travel up to 5 km from their home base to collect nectar and gather pollen, promoting vegetative reproduction and biodiversity, Beechwood's abundant and lush flowers and vegetation has, without a doubt, profited by their pollination services. Close-by neighbouring private and community garden such as the Vanier Community Gardens likely have unknowingly but equally benefited from this fascinating and overwhelmingly successful environmental initiative. Long Live the Queens!

Photos taken by B.Bazinet



Beechwood has three hives with an estimated population of 120,000 to 200,000 bees.



BRIEF HISTORY ON THE REPAINTING OF THE MEMORIAL GUNS AT THE NATIONAL MILITARY

by *Normand Roberge*

In the fall and early spring of 2016-2017, veterans commented that during their many visits to the National Military Cemetery, they had noticed that the memorial artillery guns looked weathered, with the paint finish looking rough and some of the gun carriage tires had gone flat or been damaged. At roughly the same time those comments were made, WO Julie Archambault (liaison officer to the National Military Cemetery), sent out a request for volunteers to come and help clean the military headstones for the upcoming Remembrance Day ceremonies.

A team of “volunteers” from the Bytown Gunners Firepower Museum (CWO (ret’d) Normand Roberge, team leader, LCol (ret’d) Terry Honour, Max Toms and WO Jack Moloughney), visited the memorial cemetery site to review and establish a plan that WO Moloughney had raised. It concerned an important initiative deserving a high priority for their volunteers - to fix the memorial guns at Beechwood and return them to a glorious state.

Shortly thereafter, CWO (ret’d) Roberge had a business plan prepared and got in contact with WO Archambault, who analyzed it and subsequently got it authorized by the Beechwood Cemetery Board of Directors. The deal was that the team would supply the necessary labour and expertise to clean-up the artillery guns and Beechwood would supply the funds to cover expenses for materials. Once the team received the go ahead, CWO (ret’d) Roberge and WO Moloughney each brought an equipment trailer complete with a generator, a compressor, a pressure washer and other miscellaneous equipment. This way the team could work on two memorial artillery guns at the same time.

The very next day at 0730 hours, the volunteer team arrived at the cemetery and immediately started working on the first memorial gun, a 155mm C1, as it was the gun “in sunshine” more than any other gun, and therefore it could dry more quickly after the pressure washing. The team took considerable time jacking-up the 155 mm C1 gun so that it could be levelled out and then placed on two wood beams under each side of the axles (one on top of the other). The team attempted unsuccessfully to put air into the gun carriage tires, (due to a leak in the tire valve). Next the team “pressure washed” the gun parts and then sanded down the gun using power metal grinders, (where possible), then used forced air jets and an air compressor to clean out the dirt (and a gas powered leaf blower). Finally we used two paint guns and started to paint the newly spruced up 155 mm C1 towed gun.

The Foreman of the grounds at Beechwood Cemetery stopped by at the end of the day and remarked how excellent the gun looked and that he didn’t believe that we could get it all completed in one day! When one has a great and dedicated volunteer team that doesn’t stop working until the job is completed, anything is possible!

The next day the team worked diligently on the next two L5 guns and brought them up to near perfect standards. Standing beside the freshly painted guns we were reminded of the impact these guns once had on the world and as a team we were filled with pride having restored them to their former glory.



DID YOU KNOW:

Beechwood has four memorial guns and one tank on its grounds.

KAIROS BLANKET EXERCISE AT BEECHWOOD CEMETERY

by Michael Garneau



As part of the ongoing initiatives related to the Truth and Reconciliation Report, Beechwood Cemetery hosted about forty public servants for a KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

The exercise was first developed in 1997, as an interactive experience, to educate and share with its participants (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike), the true history of Canada's dismal and abhorrent treatment of our country's First Nations Peoples, at the hands of early European settlers. Most of the public servants that day, are, or have been involved in different areas of Aboriginal issues through their work with INAC and/or Health Canada.

Specifically, this exercise teaches participants about Indigenous rights history that unfortunately, is rarely or very minimally, taught in Canadian schools. It was developed in direct response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as one of the key steps to reconciliation.

Through the narration assistance of KAIROS representatives, along with the reading of scrolls by many of the participants themselves, our guests experienced through this workshop, some 500 years of Aboriginal history in Canada.

Initially, participants assumed the roles of Canada's Indigenous peoples by standing on many blankets representing the land of First Nations Peoples. They were then walked through the pre-contact, various treaty-making, colonization and resistance periods throughout history – all of which were designed to reflect the eventual breakdown in European (and later Canadian) relationships with First Nations Peoples.

Following the exercise, guests engaged in a discussion which proved both highly emotional as well as empathetic. Each participant had an opportunity to share openly his or her own stories and words of wisdom. The session ultimately ended with a tour of the Cemetery grounds, where Historian Dr. John Milloy explained the historical significance of several Government Officials, involved both positively and negatively with the establishment of Residential Schools, who have long been laid to rest at Beechwood.

MONTHLY STROLLS

Discover Beechwood!

Join us on our monthly tours of Beechwood, held at 1:00PM on the fourth Sunday of each month.

We are also pleased to offer guided tours for small or large groups as requested. To RSVP for our monthly tours or to book a private tour for your group, contact us at 613-741-9530 or at foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca.

LAST STROLL TAKES PLACE ON:

Sunday November 26th at 1pm



82 000 STORIES TO BE TOLD – MAJOR HAROLD V. BLACKMAN, THE FIRST COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE GGFG CADET CORPS

By Nicolas McCarthy

The battle of Vimy Ridge – April 9th, 1917 – is considered one of the major defining moments in our national history. The Canadian troops emerged from under the shadow of Britain and earned a reputation as formidable, effective troops because of the stunning success on the unconquerable hill. Though a great victory for Canada, it came at a terrible cost, killing or wounding over 10,000.

As part of the centennial anniversary of that battle, the Vimy Oaks Legacy Corporation is working with Vimy Ridge Foundation to replant English Oaks at Vimy Ridge. These “Vimy Oaks” are saplings that are descendants of acorns gathered after the battle of Vimy Ridge and planted in Canada by a Canadian soldier, Lieutenant Leslie Miller. Beechwood as the National Military Cemetery quickly requested six Vimy Oaks to plant on the grounds. Forty-five minutes after submitting the application, Monty McDonald of Vimy Oaks approved the planting.

Shortly after our own Vimy Oaks were planted, they received an additional order for another Vimy Oak at Beechwood. And that’s how we learned about Major Blackman and his contribution to the Governor Generals Foot Guards. His daughter Joanne Miller shared his incredible story.

Harold V. Blackman served with the Canadian Grenadier Guards from 1927 – 1946. The regiment was mobilized on 24 May 1940. It was then redesignated as the 1st Battalion, The Canadian Grenadier Guards, CASF, on 7 November 1940. It was converted to armour and redesignated as the 22nd Armoured Regiment (The Canadian Grenadier Guards), CAC, CASF, on 26 January 1942. It embarked for Britain on 25 September 1942. Less than two years later, the regiment sailed with the D-Day landings in June 1944. On 26 July 1944, it landed in France as part of the 4th Armoured Brigade, 4th Canadian Armoured Division, and it continued to fight in North West Europe until the end of the war.

After the war, Blackman returned to Canada, transferred to the Governor General Foot Guard in 1946 and was RSM of the GGFG from 1952 to 1957. He became a Major, was instrumental in setting up the GGFG Cadet Corps in 1965, and became their first Commanding Officer.

Major Blackman’s legacy lives on in the Governor General Foot Guards Cadet Corps, which is part of the largest youth group in Canada, the Canadian Cadet Organization. Its members are young men and women aged 12-18 interested in leading an active lifestyle, learning more about being engaged citizens, and developing an interest in the Canadian Forces.

Major Blackman is very much a Beechwood story, as it only takes a chance meeting, or trying to purchase a Vimy Oak to share it. Sadly, we were not able to accommodate the planting of the Vimy Oak to honour Major Blackman due to the regulation of the NMC. However, we are working to honour him for his role with the Governor Generals Foot Guard and his service to our country in a different way. At Beechwood, the story never really ends; most of the time it is just the beginning.

Lest we forget.

