

VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENTS OF THE NIAGARA PENINSULA

By Gene M. Labiuk



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Graphics and Layout By Art Tilley

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Photo of the Victoria Cross on the cover and on this page is that of Filip Konowal
CWM 19730015-001 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum

PREFACE

The purpose of the Niagara Military Museum is to preserve and share the military heritage of the Niagara Peninsula, from pre-War of 1812 to the present. Our aim is to keep our military history in the Niagara Peninsula alive for our generation and for future generations.

This, our first publication, tells the story of three soldiers who had connections to the Niagara Peninsula and who were awarded the Victoria Cross for their gallant service to their military units and their fellow soldiers. It also outlines the awarding of the Victoria Cross to other Canadians.

Corporal Fred Fisher was born in St. Catharines; when his father was transferred to Montreal the family followed. At the outbreak of WWI, Fisher enlisted with the 13th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (currently perpetuated by the Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, the Black Watch). He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in providing machine gun cover during the first Western Front gas attack, enabling the men of the 10th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery from St. Catharines, to remove and reposition their 18-pounder field guns, thus preventing their capture by advancing German forces.

Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall immigrated into the Niagara Peninsula from Great Britain in 1912. With the outbreak of WWI in 1914, Lyall enlisted in the local militia, the 19th Battalion (Lincoln Regiment aka the St. Catharines Regiment). Lyall wanted to go overseas so he attested with the 81st Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. When the 81st Battalion arrived overseas in England, it was designated as a reinforcement battalion with the soldiers going to various front-line battalions. Lyall was attached to the 102nd Battalion and was awarded his Victoria Cross for his gallantry at the Battle of Bourlon Woods in France in 1918.

The Reverend Captain John Weir Foote was a chaplain assigned to the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI) and was awarded his Victoria Cross for his bravery on the beaches of Dieppe. He was constantly bringing wounded soldiers back to the evacuation point and when it was time for him to be evacuated, Padre Foote refused and served the balance of the war in a POW camp with the other members of the RHLI.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication would not be possible without the assistance of the many resources who have given access to their records and information.

Toronto Public Reference Library, St. Catharines Public Library Special Collections, Niagara Falls (Ontario) Public Library, St. Jax Anglican Church Montreal, Westmount High School Library Montreal, St. Catharines Museum and Archives, Library and Archives Canada, Black Watch Museum, Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Museum, BC Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) Museum, Atlantic Maritime Museum, McGill University Archives,

We would especially like to thank Gray Scrimgeour for his time in editing this publication. Also, to Art Tilley for the graphics, layout and production of this publication.

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Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military award of the British Commonwealth. It is awarded for gallantry “in the face of the enemy” to members of the British armed forces as well as members of the British Commonwealth armed forces. It was previously awarded to Commonwealth countries, most of which have since established their own military honour award for bravery. The VC may be awarded to a military person of any rank in any of the services and to civilians under military command although no civilian has received the award since 1879.

The VC was introduced on January 29, 1856 by Queen Victoria in honour of acts of valour during the Crimean War. Since then, the medal has been awarded to over 1300 individual recipients. The first awards were presented by Queen Victoria in 1857, and two thirds of all awards have been personally presented by the British monarch.

Before the Crimean War, there was no official system for recognition of an individual’s gallantry within the British armed forces. The “Order of Bath” did exist for officers in the military and this was awarded for lesser acts of gallantry. Queen Victoria instructed the War Office to strike a new medal that had no recognition to birth, class or military rank. This medal was meant to be a simple decoration that would be highly prized, treasured and eagerly sought after by those in the military services. Queen Victoria, under the guidance of Prince Albert, vetoed the suggestion that the award be called “The Military Order of Victoria” and instead suggested the name “Victoria Cross”. The original warrant stated “that the Victoria Cross would only be awarded to soldiers who have served in the presence of the enemy and had performed some signal act of valour or devotion.” On June 26, 1857, Queen Victoria presented the Victoria Cross to 62 of the 111 Crimean recipients in a ceremony in Hyde Park, London.

The jewelers, Hancocks of London, have produced every VC awarded since its inception. The metal used for the Victoria Cross is from a cannon captured from the Russians during the Crimean War. Modern-day analysis reveals that the metal is of Chinese origin and is believed to come from a Chinese weapon captured by the Russians in an earlier conflict and subsequently captured by the British in the Crimean War.

The decoration is a bronze cross pattée, 41 mm high, 36 mm wide, bearing the crown of Saint Edward surmounted by a lion, and depicts the inscription “FOR VALOUR”. This was originally to have been “FOR THE BRAVE”, until it was changed on the recommendation of Queen Victoria. The decoration, suspension bar and link weigh about 0.87 troy ounces (27 grams). The cross is suspended by a ring from a serifed “V” to a bar ornamented with laurel leaves, through which the ribbon passes. The reverse of the suspension bar is engraved with the recipient’s name, rank, number and unit. On the reverse of the medal is a circular panel on which the date of the act for which it was awarded is engraved in the centre. The ribbon is crimson, 38 mm wide. The original 1856 specification stated that the ribbon should be red for army recipients and dark blue for naval recipients. The blue ribbon was abolished soon after the formation of the Royal Air Force on April 1, 1918. On May 22, 1920, King George V signed a warrant that stated all recipients would now receive a red ribbon and the living recipients of the naval version were required to exchange their ribbons for the new colour. The colour is often referred to as crimson or wine-red. The front and back of the Victoria Cross is shown in figure 1 and 1A. This example belonged to Filip Konowal, VC and is in the Canadian War Museum collection of Victoria Crosses.



Painting of Filip Konowal VC, by artist Arthur Ambrose McEvoy, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, CWM 19710261-0410, Canada War Museum

Filip Knowal was born on March 25, 1887 at Kutkivtsi, Podolsky, Russia (now part of the Ukraine). Filip fought in the Battle of the Somme in late 1916 and the following year served with distinction at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, leading a squad of Japanese Canadian soldiers to help capture the strategic position known as “the Pimple”. Only months later, in August 1917, he fought with exceptional bravery at the Battle for Hill 70, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. On October 15, 1917, King George V presented Filip Konowal with his Victoria Cross. He died on June 3, 1959 and is buried at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa. Filip Konowal, VC is the only Ukrainian-Canadian to be awarded the Victoria Cross.



Figure 1.

A photo of the Victoria Cross which belonged to Filip Konowal.
– CWM 19730015-001
George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum

Other medals that Filip Konowal, VC received were the British War Medal, Victory Medal, George VI Coronation Medal, and Elizabeth II Coronation Medal and he was also entitled to the Cross of St. George, 4th Class from Russia.



A photo of William Hall with this Victoria Cross at the top of his medals. – Atlantic Maritime Museum, Halifax¹

William Hall was the first black person, the first Nova Scotian and one of the early Canadians to receive a Victoria Cross (with a blue ribbon; fig. 2). His medal is on display at the Atlantic Maritime Museum, Halifax.¹ Hall was a member of the Royal Navy and served as Captain of the Foretop on the *HMS Shannon*. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in the Sepoy Mutiny in India at Lucknow on November 16, 1857. He was awarded his Victoria Cross aboard the *HMS Donegal* in Queenstown Harbour, Ireland on October 28, 1859.¹

[Ed note: ¹ Queenstown is now known as Cove, and Cobh in Gaelic.]



Figure 2.

A photo of the Victoria Cross with the blue ribbon that belonged to William Hall, which is in the Atlantic Maritime Museum.
– Atlantic Maritime Museum, Halifax¹

For a VC to be considered for an individual, a recommendation by an officer at regimental level or equivalent must be issued, and shall be supported by three witnesses; this requirement can be waived on occasion. This recommendation is passed up the military hierarchy until it reaches the Minister of Defence. From here, the recommendation is presented before the monarch, who approves the award with his or her signature. Victoria Cross awards are always promulgated in the London Gazette with the single exception of the award to the American Unknown Soldier in 1921. There is no specific provision about who should present the award to the recipients.

Queen Victoria stated that she would like to present the medals in person and she presented 185 medals out of the 472 awarded during her reign. The 185 medals included the first 62 medals that were presented at Hyde Park by Queen Victoria in 1857. Nearly 900 awards have been personally presented by the reigning British monarch. Nearly 300 other VC awards have been presented by a member of the royal family or by a civil or military dignitary. About 150 VC awards were forwarded to the recipient or next of kin by registered post.

The Victoria Cross was available to colonial troops in 1867. The medal was made possible following a recommendation for gallantry regarding colonial soldier Major Charles Heaphy for action in the New Zealand land wars in 1864, when he was operating under British command.

The first Canadian to receive the Victoria Cross was Lieutenant Alexander Roberts Dunn in 1854 for his actions in the Crimean War.

The first Canadian to receive the VC during World War I was Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher. During WWI, 64 Canadian soldiers and airmen were awarded the VC. Throughout the history of the British VC there were fewer than 100 Canadians who were awarded the VC. Twenty nine of these were awarded posthumously: no awards were made in the Korean War conflict.²



Painting of Billy Bishop VC, by artist Mr. James Peter Quinn, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, CWM 19710261-0549 Canada War Museum

The most notable Canadian to be awarded the Victoria Cross and considered as a war hero would be William A. "Billy" Bishop. Bishop was born in Owen Sound in 1894 and was enrolled at the Royal Military College Canada in Kingston when World War I broke out. Originally, enlisted with the 9th Mississauga Horse Regiment in 1914, then in the following year, enlisted with the 7th Canadian Mounted Rifles of March 30, 1915 in London, Ontario. In June of 1915 he left Canada for overseas duty. He spent a short time in the trenches before being transferred to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), initially as an officer observer and then as a pilot in November 1916, when he received his wings.³

During the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April of 1917, Bishop was credited with shooting down 12 German planes for which he was awarded the Military Cross and promoted to Captain. With his successes in April, the Germans began referring to him as "Hell's Handmaiden". On June 2, 1917, Bishop flew solo behind enemy lines and attacked a German aerodrome. It was reported that he shot down 3 planes and damaged several others. For this action he was awarded the Victoria Cross. In all, Bishop was credited with 72 enemy planes shot down. At the end of the war Bishop held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. After the outbreak of WWII, Bishop was promoted to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Billy Bishop passed away in his sleep in Palm Beach Florida on September 11, 1956. Billy Bishop's Victoria Cross and his other medals (fig. 3), are in the possession of the Canada War Museum in Ottawa.



Figure 3.

Victoria Cross and other medals which was awarded to Billy Bishop. – CWM 19760521-001 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum

Medals awarded to Bishop were the Victoria Cross, Companion of the Order of the Bath, Distinguished Service Order with Bar, Military Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal with Mentioned in Dispatches Emblem, Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur, Croix d Guerre avec Palmes, George V Jubilee Medal, George VI Coronation Medal, 1939-1945 War Medal, Elizabeth II Coronation Medal, Canadian Efficiency Decoration and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, as shown in the photo figure 3.

Canadian Victorian Cross Recipients⁴

Prior to the South African War

DE MONTMORENCY, Raymond Harvey Lodge Joseph Lieutenant, Lincolnshire Regiment, Omdurman, Sudan 1898

DOUGLAS, Campbell Mellis Doctor, 24th Regiment of Foot, Little Andaman, India 1867

DUNN, Alexander Roberts Lieutenant, 33rd Regiment of Foot, Balaklava, Crimea 1854

HALL, William Able-Seaman, Lucknow, India 1857

READE, Herbert Taylor Surgeon, Gloucestershire Regiment, Delhi, India 1857

The South African (Boer) War

COCKBURN, Hampden Zane Churchill Lieutenant, The Royal Canadian Dragoons 7 November 1900

HOLLAND, Edward James Gibson Sergeant, The Royal Canadian Dragoons 7 November 1900

NICKERSON, William Henry Snyder Lieutenant, Royal Army Medical Corps 20 April, 1900

TURNER, Richard Ernest William Lieutenant, The Royal Canadian Dragoons 7 November 1900

First World War

ALGIE, Wallace Lloyd Lieutenant, 20th Battalion, CEF 11 October 1918

BARKER, William George Major, 201 Squadron, RAF (seconded from CEF) 27 October 1918

BARRON, Colin Fraser Corporal, 3rd Battalion, CEF 6 November 1917

BELLEW, Edward Donald Lieutenant, 7th Battalion, CEF 24 April 1915

BENT, Philip Eric Bent Lieutenant Colonel, Leicestershire Regiment, 1 October 1917

BISHOP, William Avery Captain, 60 Squadron, RFC (seconded from CEF) 2 June 1917

BOURKE, Rowland Bourke Lieutenant, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, 9-10 May 1918

BRERETON, Alexander Picton Corporal, 8th Battalion, CEF 9 August 1918

BRILLANT, Jean Lieutenant, 22nd Battalion, CEF 8-9 August 1918

BROWN, Harry Private, 10th Battalion, CEF 16 August 1917

CAIRNS, Hugh Sergeant 46th Battalion, CEF 1 November 1918

CAMPBELL, Frederick William Lieutenant, 1st Battalion, CEF 15 June 1918

CLARKE, Leo Corporal, 2nd Battalion, CEF 9 September 1916

CLARK-KENNEDY, William Hew Lieutenant-Colonel, 24th Battalion, CEF 27-28 August 1918

COMBE, Robert Grierson Lieutenant, 27th Battalion, CEF 3 May 1917

COPPINS, Frederick G. Corporal, 8th Battalion, CEF 9 August 1918

CROAK, John Bernard Private, 13th Battalion, CEF 8 August 1918

CRUICKSHANK, Robert Edward Private, London Scottish Regiment, 1 May 1918

De WIND, Edmund Second Lieutenant, Royal Irish Rifles 21 March 1918

DINESEN, Thomas Private, 42nd Battalion, CEF 12 August 1918

FISHER, Frederick Lance-Corporal, 13th Battalion, CEF 23 April 1915

FLOWERDEW, Gordon Muriel Lieutenant, The Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), CEF 30 March 1918

GOOD, Herman James Corporal, 13th Battalion, CEF 8 August 1918
 GREGG, Milton Fowler Lieutenant, The Royal Canadian Regiment 27 Sep-1 Oct 1918
 HALL, Frederick William Company Sgt-Major, 8th Battalion, CEF 24 April 1915
 HANNA, Robert Company Sgt-Major, 29th Battalion, CEF 21 August 1917
 HARVEY, Frederick Maurice Watson Lieutenant, The Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), CEF 27 March 1917
 HOBSON, Frederick Sergeant, 20th Battalion, CEF 18 August 1917
 HOLLAND, Edward James Gibson Sergeant, The Royal Canadian Dragoons 7 November 1900
 HOLMES, Thomas William Private, 4th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, CEF 26 October 1917
 HONEY, Samuel Lewis Lieutenant, 78th Battalion, CEF 27-30 September 1918
 HUTCHESON, Bellenden Seymour Captain, Canadian Army Medical Corps 2 September 1918
 KAEBLE, Joseph Thomas Corporal, 22nd Battalion, CEF 8-9 June 1918
 KERR, George Fraser Lieutenant, 3rd Battalion, CEF 27 September 1918
 KERR, John Chipman Private, 49th Battalion, CEF 16 September 1916
 KINROSS, Cecil John Private, 49th Battalion, CEF 30 October 1917
 KNIGHT, Arthur George Sergeant, 10th Battalion, CEF 2 September 1918
 KONOWAL, Filip Corporal, 47th Battalion, CEF 22-24 August 1917
 LEARMONTH, Okill Massey Major, 2nd Battalion, CEF 18 August 1917
 LYALL, Graham Thomson Lieutenant, 102nd Battalion, CEF 27 September 1918
 MacDOWELL, Thain Wendell Captain, 38th Battalion, CEF 9 April 1917
 MacGREGOR, John Captain, 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, CEF 29 Sep-3 Oct 1918
 McKEAN, George Burdon Lieutenant, 14th Battalion, CEF 27-28 April 1918
 McKENZIE, Hugh Lieutenant, 7th Canadian Machine Gun Company, CEF 30 October 1917
 McLEOD, Alan Arnett Lieutenant, Royal Air Force, 1918
 MERRIFIELD, William Sergeant, 4th Battalion, CEF 1 October 1918
 METCALF, William Henry Lance-Corporal, 16th Battalion, CEF 2 September 1918
 MILNE, William Johnstone Private, 16th Battalion, CEF 9 April 1917
 MINER, Harry Garnet Bedford Corporal, 58th Battalion, CEF 8 August 1918
 MITCHELL, Coulson Norman Captain, 4th Battalion, Canadian Engineers 8-9 October 1918
 MULLIN, George Harry Sergeant, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 30 October 1917
 NUNNEY, Claude Joseph Patrick Private, 38th Battalion, CEF 1-2 September 1918
 O'KELLY, Christopher Patrick John Captain, 52nd Battalion, CEF 26 October 1917
 O'ROURKE, Michael James Private, 7th Battalion, CEF 15-18 August 1917
 PATTISON, John George Private, 50th Battalion, CEF 10 April 1917
 PEARKE, George Randolph Major, 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, CEF 30-31 October 1917
 PECK, Cyrus Wesley Lieutenant-Colonel, 16th Battalion, CEF 2 September 1918
 RAYFIELD, Walter Leigh Private, 7th Battalion, CEF 2-4 September 1918
 RICHARDSON, Arthur Herbert Lindsay Piper, 16th Battalion, CEF 8 October 1916
 RICHARDSON, James Cleland Piper, 16th Battalion, CEF 8 October 1916
 RICKETTS, Thomas Private, The Royal Newfoundland Regiment 14 October 1918
 ROBERTSON, James Peter Private, 27th Battalion, CEF 6 November 1917
 RUTHERFORD, Charles Smith Lieutenant, 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, CEF 26 August 1918
 SCRIMGER, Francis Alexander Caron Captain, Canadian Army Medical Corps 25 April 1915
 SHANKLAND, Robert Lieutenant, 43rd Battalion, CEF 26 October 1917
 SIFTON, Ellis Wellwood Lance-Sergeant, 18th Battalion CEF 9 April 1917

SINTON, John Alexander Captain, Indian Medical Service January 21, 1916
SPALL, Robert Sergeant, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 12-13 August 1918
STRACHAN, Marcus Lieutenant, The Fort Garry Horse CEF 20 November 1917
TAIT, James Edward Lieutenant, 78th Battalion, CEF 8-11 August 1918
WILKINSON, Thomas Orde Lawder Wilkinson Lieutenant, The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, 1916
YOUNG, Francis Private, 87th Battalion, CEF 2-4 September 1918
ZENGEL, Raphael Louis Sergeant, 5th Battalion, CEF 9 August 1918

Second World War

COSENS, Aubrey Sergeant, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, 25-26 February 1945
CURRIE, David Vivian Major, 29th Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment (The South Alberta Regiment), 18-20 August 1944
FOOTE, John Weir Honorary Captain, Canadian Chaplain Service, 19 August 1942
GRAY, Robert Hampton Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, 9 August 1945
HORNELL, David Ernest Flight Lieutenant, No.162 (Bomber Reconnaissance) Squadron, RCAF 24-25 June 1944
MAHONY, John Keefer Major, The Westminster Regiment (Motor), 24 May 1944
MERRITT, Charles Cecil Ingersoll Lieutenant-Colonel, The South Saskatchewan Regiment, 19 August 1942
MYNARSKI, Andrew Charles Pilot Officer, 419 (Bomber) Squadron, RCAF, 12-13 June 1944
OSBORN, John Robert Company Sgt-Major, The Winnipeg Grenadiers, 19 December 1941
SMITH, Ernest Alvia Private, The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada 21-22, October 1944
TILSTON, Frederick Albert Major, The Essex Scottish Regiment, 1 March 1945
TOPHAM, Frederick George Corporal, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, 24 March 1945
TRIQUET, Paul Captain, Royal 22e Régiment, 14 December 1943

Currently the Canada War Museum, in Ottawa, has 39 Victoria Cross medals in their collection.

Chapter Footnotes

1. Atlantic Maritime Museum, Atlantic Maritime Museum, Halifax 1675 Lower Water St., Halifax, NS B3J 1S3
2. "Pro Valore, Canada's Victoria Cross", a publication of the Governor General of Canada and the Department of National Defence, available on line in PDF – www.gg.ca/honours/pdf/Victoria_Cross_e.pdf
3. William Avery "Billy" Bishop – Library and Archives Canada
4. Veterans Affairs Canada, Orders and Decorations – Canadian Victorian Cross Recipients, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/medals-decorations/canadian-victoria-cross-recipients>

Canadian Victoria Cross

In 1967, with the establishment of the Order of Canada, the creation of the Medal of Courage became part of this Order. This medal was for both military and civilian acts of courage. Since British military and civilian awards were no longer available to Canadians, it became apparent that some type of medal for bravery by a member of the military was necessary. Civilian awards were created in 1972: namely the Cross of Valour, the Star of Courage and the Medal of Bravery. Military acts of bravery were also recognized by these awards. With no medals specifically for the use of the military, the Victoria Cross, The Star of Military Valour and the Medal of Military Valour were created and accepted by the Government of Canada and were approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on December 31, 1992.²

The Canadian Victoria Cross is very similar to the British version. The main difference is the wording, the British having “FOR VALOUR” while the Canadian version has the Latin “PRO VALORE”, as shown in figure 4. To date, no Canadian Victorian Crosses have been awarded.



Figure 4.

Photo of the Canadian Victorian Cross.
– Photo David Ashe, Natural Resources Canada²

Chapter Footnotes

². “*Pro Valore*, Canada's Victoria Cross”, a publication of the Governor General of Canada and the Department of National Defence, available on line in PDF – www.gg.ca/honours/pdf/Victoria_Cross_e.pdf

LANCE-CORPORAL FRED FISHER, VC



Painting of Fred Fisher VC, by artist Mr. George James Coates, Beaverbrook Collection War Art, CWM 19710261-0122, Canada War Museum

Fisher was born on August 3, 1894 in St. Catharines, Ontario. Fred grew up there with his parents and two brothers at 197 Church Street. In 1904, the Fisher family was living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where Fred attended public school. In 1905, Fred's father was transferred to Montreal, where Fred completed his schooling at Westmount High School and enrolled at McGill University to study Engineering. With the declaration of war, Fred left McGill and enlisted with the 5th Royal Highlanders of Canada, the 13th Battalion on August 16, 1914. On September 23, he signed his attestation papers and took the Oath of Allegiance and was given his regimental number 24066. Fred Fisher's attestation papers (figures 5 and 6) show his place of birth as being St. Catharines, Ont.

Duplicate Regt. No. 24066

ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. *332*

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

1. What is your name? *Fred Fisher*
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what County were you born? *St. Catharines Ont.*
3. What is your next-of-kin? *Mr. Wm. Fisher*
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? *676 Lansdowne Ave. Westmount*
5. What is the date of your birth? *Aug 3rd 1894*
6. What is your Trade or Calling? *Student*
7. Are you married? *No*
8. Are you going to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? *No*
9. Do you belong to the Active Militia? *No*
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? *No*
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? *Yes*
12. Do you wish to be attested to serve in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force? *Yes*

(Signature of Man) *Fred Fisher*
(Signature of Witness) *Wm. Fisher*

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Fred Fisher*, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Date *Sept 23* 1914. (Signature of Recruit) *Fred Fisher*
(Signature of Witness) *Wm. Fisher*

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Fred Fisher*, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound loyally and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. *So help me God.*

Date *Sept 23* 1914. (Signature of Recruit) *Fred Fisher*
(Signature of Witness) *W. L. Carrick*

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was questioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at *St. Catharines Ont.* this *23rd* day of *Sept* 1914.

(Signature of Justice) *Wm. Fisher*
(Approving Officer) *Wm. Fisher*

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

FORM-514
HQ. 1914.

Description of *Fred Fisher* on Enlistment.

Apparent Age *20* years *1* months.
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.
*Struck his forearm
Large mole left side*

Height *5 ft. 9 1/2 in.*
Girth when fully expanded *36 in.*
Range of expansion *36 in.*
Complexion *Fair*
Eyes *Hazel*
Hair *Light Brown*
Church of England ☒
Presbyterian ☐
Wesleyan ☐
Baptist or Congregationalist ☐
Other Protestants ☐
Roman Catholic ☐
Jewish ☐

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him *Fit* for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force.

Date *August 29* 1914. (Signature of Medical Officer) *W. P. Bureau*
Place *St. Catharines* (Signature of Medical Officer) *W. P. Bureau*

NOTE—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the reason of unfitness.

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Private Fred Fisher having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the fitness of this Attestation.

(Signature of Officer) *Wm. Fisher*
Date *Sept 23* 1914.

Figure 5 and 6.

Front and back of Fisher's attestation papers. – Library and Archives Canada

On September 25, 1914 with only one month of training, the battalion moved to Quebec City to embark for the United Kingdom. The battalion numbered 45 officers and 1,112 men, who on October 3, 1914 embarked on the *SS Alanuia*. They arrived at Plymouth, England on October 14, and later moved to the Salisbury Plain.

On December 22, 1914, Fisher was appointed to Lance-Corporal, and was posted to a machine gun detachment of the battalion. It was here where he learned about the machine gun and its operation. He was in command of a machine gun crew of four men. They took a three-week course to train on the Colt machine gun. At the end of their training, the men were deemed “specialists” in their field. The Colt machine gun was gas-operated, belt-fed, air-cooled, mounted on a three-leg tripod and it could fire 400 rounds per minute.

On February 11, 1915, the 1st Canadian Division, of which the 13th Battalion was a part, sailed for France and arrived at St. Nazaire three days later. The Canadians were assigned to the British Second Army and on March 3, 1915 relieved the 7th British Division near Fleurbaix. The Canadians first experience in fighting occurred on March 10 when a British attack took place at Neuve-Chapelle; disappointingly the 1st Division did very little other than provide artillery support.

In mid-April, the division moved north into a salient near Ypres, Belgium which, at the time, was manned by British, French Colonials and Belgium troops.

Fisher was admitted to No. 2 Canadian Field Ambulance Rest Hospital on April 9 and was discharged on April 13 when he returned to his unit.

On April 22, the Division was deployed just east of Ypres, with the 3rd Brigade on the left, 2nd Brigade on the right, 1st Brigade in reserve, and the 45th Algerian Division of the French Army on the left flank of the Division.

On the morning of April 22, the Germans began an artillery barrage on Ypres and the nearby towns; by early afternoon all was quiet. At 1500 hours, the Germans commenced a heavy bombardment on the French positions which were just north of the 13th Battalion. The Battalion reported that there were “pipes of sort” projecting through the German lines, with no knowledge of what they were or what was going to come from them. 1700 hours saw the beginning of the German assault on the French, which began with the release of the greenish-yellow cloud of chlorine gas. The Canadians were unaware of what was to come. The French and Algerians retreated, gasping, choking and dying in their footsteps as this chlorine gas spread into their lungs. The gas started to catch up to the Canadians and a member of the 9th Battery, who was a chemist, knew what it was by the smell and told them “to urinate on our field dressings and place them over our noses.” It is thought the action of this chemist and others by spreading the word saved thousands of lives.

Guns of the German artillery increased their range until their targets included the Canadian trenches in nearby villages and Ypres itself. The Allied line broke to the left of the Canadian Division and shortly after the Germans were pouring through the hole. The road to St. Julien was wide open with the exception of the 10th Field Battery, CFA, which was located just south of Keerselaere.

The 13th Battalion was in a difficult and dangerous position, in which the French battalion on its left had been virtually destroyed leaving the 13th exposed to the Germans. At 1830 hrs, the Commander of the 3rd Brigade reported that the 13th Battalion was falling back and was asking for assistance from the 2nd Brigade. Battalion Headquarters in St. Julien had reported the withdrawal of the French on the left,

but stated that although his companies were holding fast he needed immediate assistance.

By 1900 hrs, the 10th Battery, commanded by Major William B. King, found itself in close contact with the Germans and was in imminent danger of being overrun. The battery consisted of four 18-pounders and was deployed in an orchard just south of the village of Keerselare, and had been firing almost continuously in support of the 13th Battalion since 1745 hrs. A French sergeant, who had attached himself to the battery, suddenly pointed to a hedge row and shouted “Allemands!” King now discovered that German infantry were on his left flank and within 300 yards of his gun position; they were forced to reverse two of his guns and fire over open sights in an attempt to break up the German attack on his battery.

Major King requested help from brigade because heavy small arms fire was coming in all directions from the Germans, and at 2000 hrs a half-company, about 60 men, from the 14th and 15th Battalions and a machine gun detachment from the 13th Battalion were sent forward from St. Julien. Lance Corporal Fred Fisher was in command of this detachment.

The arrival of Fisher and his men couldn’t have come at a better time. He worked his way forward into an isolated building and brought his machine gun into action, driving off the German infantry closest to the guns of the 10th, and then repulsing any attempt by the Germans to bring reinforcements forward. During this action, four of the machine gun crews were killed and Fisher made his way to the rear to find replacements. When Fisher made his way to the 14th Battalion and asked for volunteers, eight stepped forward and they set up his gun in front of the graveyard of St. Julien.

Meanwhile, the 10th Battery was experiencing difficulty in supplying the guns with ammunition as two of its ammunition wagons had their teams killed and the wagons were ditched near St. Julien. Men from the 7th and 15th Battalions carried rounds weighing 18½ pounds forward by hand over some 600 yards. Near this time, two isolated platoons of No. 3 Company situated at the Lekkerboterbeek were overrun and now there were virtually no allied soldiers between the 10th Battery and the Germans. When the orders came to withdraw at about 2100 hrs, King ordered the battery to get away “any way you can”, but it was under such heavy small-arms fire it could not bring horses forward to pull the guns out of action. In an almost superhuman effort, the artillery men began man handling the guns to the rear. Once the guns of the 10th had been withdrawn safely, Fisher’s machine gun detachment and his half company of men withdrew to St. Julien.

Fisher’s determination, skill and daring contributed immensely to the safe withdrawal of the 10th Battery. The 10th Battery was from St. Catharines, the place of birth of Fred Fisher. It is unknown whether Fisher was aware of the origin of the 10th or anyone of the 10th knew of Fisher. Fisher’s older brother Donald served two years with the Battery before the war. Donald was a now Lieutenant in the 60th Battalion, CEF.

Fighting continued during the night of April 22 and 23, and the 13th continued to come under intense small-arms fire and was forced to redeploy its platoons to maintain control of the Keerselaere-St. Julien road. At dawn, a small reinforcement made its way forward, but the Battalion was in for a long day and heavy casualties. By 2100 hrs on the 23rd, the situation along the left flank became so serious that platoons from both No. 2 and 3 companies were added to the force along the Kaaselaere-St. Julien Road. Lieutenant James G. Ross, the Battalion Machine Gun Officer, in an attempt to drive back the Germans who were causing the high casualties by small arms fire, added to the defences by taking forward two of his machine gun detachments. In a valiant effort, Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher:

“crawled out of a shallow trench and, setting up a gun, was about to open fire when Fisher was shot dead. A moment later Sgt. McLeod, who had taken Fisher’s place, was killed in the same way. Leaving this particular gun, Lieut. Ross crawled to a spot where he ordered Lance-Corporal Parkes and Private Glad to set up another gun and open fire. From this location he ‘got the drop’ on the most bothersome of the opposing trenches and maintained the superiority for the rest of the day.”

Lieutenant Edward Ward of the 13th Battalion wrote:⁵

“Fred Fisher and many other poor chaps of our Battalion are lying dead near St. Julien. “Bud” (Fisher) made a glorious name for himself. He was in charge of a gun team in Reserve in the village of St. Julien. When word of the attack on our line came back he took his team and gun and started for the front trenches. No one knew the way, but he came upon some artillery trying to get some big guns out under heavy fire.

He set up his machine gun and covered their retirement. Proceeding forward again he cleared a bit of wood of Germans, becoming separated from most of his team. He also took charge of a French machine gun that had been abandoned and got it working again.

He finally found our battalion and reported to Lieut. Ross, the M.G. officer. He was mounting his gun on the parapet when he was hit in the chest, dying instantly. Lieut. Ross and some of the other officers buried him in the trench.”

VOL. CLXIV. NO. 118

SEVEN KILLED, TWO WOUNDED IN 13TH AND 14TH

Casualty List Also Contains
Names of Two Hundred Miss-
ing From B.C. Battalion

THEIR COLONEL KILLED

List of Seven Highlanders
Slain in Action Includes
Two Previously
Reported

Ottawa, May 17.—The casualty list issued tonight from the Militia Department gives the names of more than two hundred men as missing from the Seventh, a British Columbia battalion, whose commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. Hag McHarg, the champion rifle shot, was killed in action in the first day’s fighting by the Canadian division near Langemark.

The list also gives the names of seven non-coms and men of the Thirteenth Battalion, Fifth Royal Montreal Highlanders, who were killed in action, and two wounded from the Fourteenth Battalion (Royal Montrealers). They are:

THIRTEENTH BATTALION.

Killed in action—Lance-Corp. Fred Fisher, 576 Lansdowne avenue, west, Toronto; Sergt. William Graham Scott, 14 Seymour avenue, Montreal; D. M. Russell, Carsonby Post Office, Ont.; A. Cunningham, 139 Chatham street, Montreal; B. Randolph Piche, St. Canut, Que.; Sergt. William Stewart Stewart Caryer, 35 McCullough avenue, Outremont, Que.; Desmond Johnstone, 49 Bardman street, Milltown, Maine.

FOURTEENTH BATTALION.

Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher died on April 24, 1915. His parents were informed of his death by telegram on May 15, 1915.

First notice of the death of Fred Fisher, along with other members of the 13th Battalion, was reported in the *Montreal Gazette*, June 6, 1915, as shown in figure 7.

For his gallantry on April 23, 1915, Fisher was awarded the Victoria Cross, the first Canadian to receive the VC during WWI and the first Canadian ever to receive it while serving in a Canadian unit. *The London Gazette*, June 23, 1915 carried his posthumous declaration, figure 8.

The *Montreal Gazette* (June 24, 1915) printed a story “DEEDS THAT WON V.C. NOT HIS BEST WORK”, which was about two Montreal soldiers, one of whom was Fred Fisher. Figure 9 shows the start of the story with the portion pertaining to Fred Fisher enlarged.

Figure 7.

First notice of the death of Fred Fisher. — *Montreal Gazette*, June 6, 1915 — *Toronto Reference Library*

War Office,

23rd June, 1915.

His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the grant of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty:—

No. 24066 Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher, 13th Canadian Battalion.

On 23rd April, 1915, in the neighbourhood of St. Julien, he went forward with the machine gun, of which he was in charge, under heavy fire, and most gallantly assisted in covering the retreat of a battery, losing four men of his gun team.

Later, after obtaining four more men, he went forward again to the firing line and was himself killed while bringing his machine gun into action under very heavy fire, in order to cover the advance of supports.

Figure 8.

Gazetted notice of Fred Fisher to receive the Victoria Cross. — *Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday, the 22nd of JUNE, 1915.*

Fisher's Victoria Cross was sent to his parents by the War Office accompanied by a letter from His Royal Highness.

I am directed to enclose the Victoria Cross awarded to the late No 24066, Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher, 13th Battalion, and to express to you the Secretary of State's regret that this very gallant soldier did not survive to receive his great reward from the hands of His Majesty the King.⁶

The Black Watch Museum in Montreal has the Victoria Cross medal of Fred Fisher, shown in figure 10. They also have the letter that King George V had sent to the family, this is shown as figure 11. These two items were presented to the museum by Fred's sister Alice after their mother's passing.



Figure 9.

Story from the Montreal Gazette in regards to two soldiers to be awarded the Victoria Cross.
– Montreal Gazette, June 24, 1915



Figure 10.

Victoria Cross medal of Fred Fisher, which was presented to his family.

– Courtesy, The Black Watch Museum, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

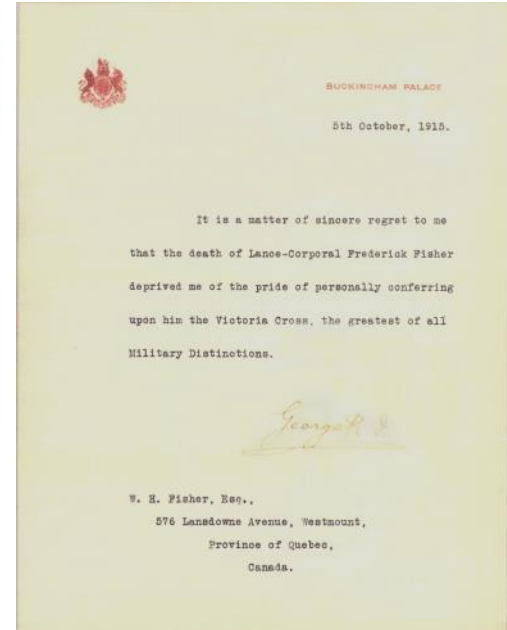


Figure 11.

Letter from King George V to the family of Fred Fisher. – Courtesy, The Black Watch Museum, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Menin Gate Memorial

Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher lies in an unmarked grave in Belgium, one of the thousands of Canada's unknown soldiers in Flanders. His name is on the Menin Gate Memorial, on the eastern edge of the old town. After the war this 17th century gate in the eastern ramparts of Ypres was chosen as the site of a Memorial Arch that would commemorate by name nearly 55,000 dead of the armies of the British Empire who fell in Belgium, most of them in the Ypres Salient, but whose final resting places were known only to God. Of these, 6,994 are Canadians. Figure 12 shows the entrance to the Menin Gate Memorial containing nearly 55,000 dead whose bodies were never recovered but their names are etched within.



Figure 12.

Photo of the Menin Gate.⁷

Carved in stone above the central arch, figure 13, through which Menin Road emerges from the town to cross the moat by a causeway, are the words:

**TO THE ARMIES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE WHO STOOD HERE FROM 1914 TO
1918 AND TO THOSE OF THEIR DEAD WHO HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVE.**

Over the two staircases leading from the Main Hall, figure 14 is the inscription:

**IN MAIOREM DEI GLORIAM
HERE ARE RECORDED NAMES OF OFFICERS AND MEN WHO FELL IN YPRES
SALIENT BUT TO WHOM THE FORTUNE OF WAR DENIED THE KNOWN AND
HONOURED BURIAL GIVEN TO THEIR COMRADES IN DEATH.
THEY SHALL RECEIVE A CROWN OF GLORY THAT FADEETH NOT AWAY.**

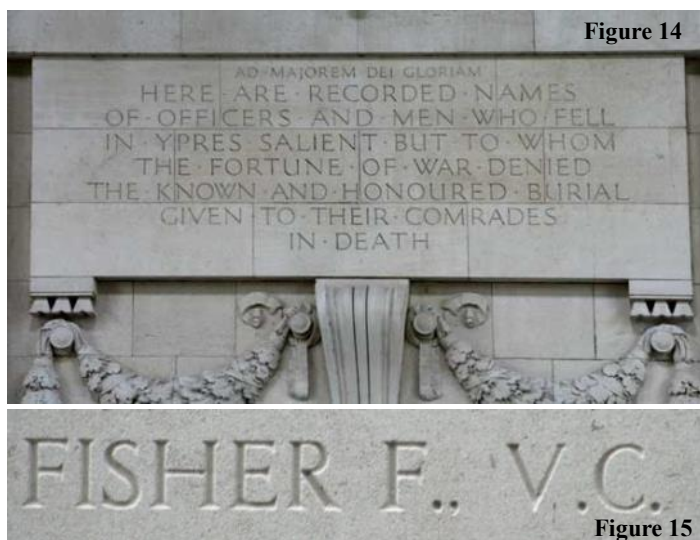


Figure 13 and 14.

Inscriptions on the Menin Gate Memorial. – *Courtesy, The Great War 1914-1918*⁸

Figure 15.

Inscription of Fred Fisher's name on the Menin Gate.⁹

Although Fred Fisher's body was never recovered, his name is inscribed on the Menin Gate as shown in figure 15.

Every evening at sunset, with the exception of the occupation years during World War Two, the dead are remembered with the playing of the Last Post. All traffic through the gateway in either direction is halted, and two buglers (on special occasions four) move to the centre of the Hall and sound the Last Post. This is a volunteer operation, which is neither arranged nor supported financially by any government. Figure 16 shows a troop of buglers playing the last post.



Figure 16.

Buglers playing the last post. – *Courtesy, The Great War 1914-1918*⁸

Two silver trumpets that are used in the ceremonies were presented to the Ypres Last Post Association on May 2, 1961, by Lieutenant Colonel Keiller MacKay, PC, DSO, VD, QC, who had served in the Canadian Field Artillery. On April 24, 2001, the bugles sounded a remembrance for Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC.

Commemorations

The Black Watch Museum

The Black Watch Museum, located in Montreal has a plaque in their museum honouring Lance Corporal Frederick Fisher, VC as shown in figure 17.

Church of St. James the Apostle

On June 11, 1915 a service was held in the Chapel of the Church of St. James the Apostle, Montreal, by the relatives of Fred Fisher. This was noted in the “Churchwardens’ Report – Easter 1916” which is shown in figure 18.

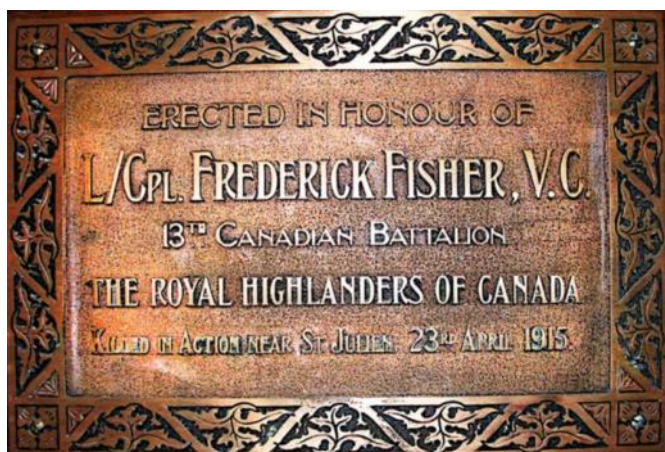


Figure 17.

Plaque Honouring Fred Fisher in the Black Watch Museum.
– Courtesy, The Black Watch Museum



Church of St. James the Apostle Montreal

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT—EASTER 1916

To the Parishioners
Church of St. James the Apostle.

The Wardens beg to submit the 52nd Annual Report of the Church-year ending March 31st, 1916. The receipts from pew rents have maintained the high level set in 1915, but the offertories for current expenses show a very decided falling off from those of the previous year.

At a time like the present when the war over-shadows everything we should not allow a mere temporary monetary question to affect us or cause any depression.

The Church has great cause for thankfulness in many ways. The work goes on steadily, being faithfully and zealously carried on by Rev'd. F. Elliott Baker.

The Wardens desire to put on record their high appreciation of his work in the parish. He has been a very great assistance to them—It is also a matter of great satisfaction to know how much the Rector appreciates what Mr. Baker is doing to fill the gap caused by his absence on duty at the front.

The services of Rev. Canon Kittson as special preacher since the departure of the Rector have been much appreciated. He leaves the parish at the end of April to take up work in the Diocese of Ottawa. During the year the installation of the new organ, authorized at the last Vestry meeting, was accomplished, and in accordance with the accepted plans. The builders, Messrs. Casavant Bros. of St. Hyacinthe have provided the Church with a very satisfactory instrument, the cost being \$8583. The organ was dedicated by the Lord Bishop on Sunday, 31st October.

The contributions to Missions for 1915 show a falling off from those of 1914; notwithstanding this the important funds, viz. M. S. C. C. and Diocesan, have not been allowed to suffer. The report will be presented to the Vestry.

The rumours as to the state of the Rector's health for some time past have created a certain amount of uneasiness in the congregation. We are pleased, therefore, to report, that while he has been temporarily relieved from duty with his regiment, he hopes to be able ere long to rejoin it. We know that we are voicing the feelings of our people in hoping for his speedy return to health and trust that it will not be long before he is able with a clear conscience to return to his people who sadly miss his ministrations.

The Wardens take great pleasure in announcing that the Rector has insisted upon defraying the expense of Canon Kittson's services. This very generous act on his part will we feel sure be much commended.

The Rev'd. G. O. T. Bruce continues his faithful work in conjunction with the Rector of St. Jude's Church in caring for the families connected with the St. Antoine Mission. It is hoped that he will be able to send a report of the work for the Vestry meeting.

During the year the Chapel has been enriched by seven Electric Candle Lights, the generous gift of Miss Amy Judah, in memory of her brother, Ernest Woodward Judah.

Following the Church accounts will be found reports of the various societies connected with the Church, which give evidence of the devoted work done by the ladies.

Before concluding their report the Wardens wish to express their profound sympathy with the families of those brave men, members of this Church, who have fallen in the war, viz.:

MAJOR J. N. WARMINTON	CAPT. C. HUTTON CROWDY
LIEUT. R. H. B. BUCHANAN	LIEUT. OWEN HAGUE
LIEUT. N. A. EDWARDS	LANCE-CORP'L F. FISHER, V. C.
CORP'L. F. B. CAMERON	GUNNER ALAN RICHARDSON

PTM. F. ARUNDEL

“They have fought the good fight; they have kept the faith.”

On 10th May a special afternoon service in memory of the late Lieut. Owen Hague was held in the Church, the Lord Bishop being present, as well as representatives from the Artillery and other regiments, and friends of Lieut. Hague's family.

On 11th June a private memorial service was held in the Chapel by the relatives of the late Lance-Corp'l. F. Fisher, V. C. Rev'd. F. E. Baker conducted this service.

On 31st October a private memorial service was held in the Chapel by the relatives of the late Capt. C. Hutton Crowdy. Rev'd. Mr. Baker and Canon Kittson officiated.

At the morning service on Sunday, 31st October, the Lord Bishop dedicated two handsome tablets; one to the memory of Major J. N. Warminton, erected by his widow, the other to the memory of Gunner Alan Richardson, erected by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Richardson. The former tablet was unveiled by Brig. Gen'l. Meighen, the latter by Gen'l. Wilson.

On Sunday, 30th January, 1916, at a special afternoon service the Lord Bishop dedicated a handsome tablet erected to the memory of Capt. C. Hutton Crowdy by his parents Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Crowdy. The tablet was unveiled by Lt.-Col. C. N. Mousarrat. Major Rev'd. Dr. R. Bruce Taylor was present and read the lesson.

In August, 1915, there was called to his rest, full of years and honors, Mr. George Hague. Mr. Hague had been an honored member of St. James for many years. He was a generous supporter of the Church and its Missions and he will be greatly missed.

In conclusion, the Wardens wish to express their very deep appreciation of the loyalty and consideration of the congregation during the year just closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Montreal, 31st March, 1916.

D. B. MACPHERSON, } Wardens.
JAMES MATTINSON, }

Figure 18.

Churchwardens Report for Easter 1916 that mentions
a service held for Fred Fisher on June 11, 1915.
– Courtesy, St. Jax Anglican Church Montreal

The *Montreal Gazette*, December 18, 1916 printed a story of a ceremony that had taken place the previous day at the Church of St. James the Apostle in honour of Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC. Figure 19 shows a portion of this story. During the ceremony, a tablet/plaque was unveiled in honour of Fred Fisher, VC, it is shown as figure 20. This story was also reprinted in the *St. Catharines Standard*, December 28, 1916 for their readers, with the heading as shown in figure 21. This story was also reprinted in the *St. Catharines Standard*, December 28, 1916 with the heading as shown in figure 21.

DECEMBER 18, 1916

**UNVEILED TABLET
TO CORP. FISHER, V.C.**

Impressive Memorial to Montreal Soldier Who Won Army's Proudest Honor

MOTHER WORE HIS CROSS

Tablet Unveiled by Officer Who Was With Him When He Fell—King Sent His Regrets

With impressive ceremonial, a memorial tablet to the late Lance-Corp. Frederick Fisher, of the 13th Royal Highlanders of Canada, who lost his life, and won the Victoria Cross, the proudest honor of the British Army, at Ypres, was unveiled yesterday morning at the Church of St. James the Apostle. While Corp. Fisher lost his life winning the Cross, it was granted after his death, and sent to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Fisher, of 576 Lansdowne avenue, with a personal letter of regret from the King that he had been deprived of the pride of pinning the decoration on their son. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher both attended the service, Mrs. Fisher wearing the Victoria Cross, which her son had given his life to win. They were accompanied by Mr. D. Lorne McGibbon, uncle of the gallant young soldier, who presented the memorial tablet, and Mrs. McGibbon, while Capt. Ross, of the 13th, who was with Corp. Fisher when he was killed, and was himself seriously wounded, unveiled the memorial.

There was a crowded congregation for the service, which was conducted by Capt. the Rev. Canon Shatford. The memorial tablet had not yet been placed on the wall, and was at the chancel rails, wrapped in the Union Jack.

At the proper part of the morning



Figure 20.

Plaque for Fred Fisher, VC that was unveiled at the Church of St. James the Apostle, Montreal on December 17, 1916.
— Courtesy, St. Jax Anglican Church Montreal

**MEMORIAL TABLET TO NATIVE
ST. CATHARINES V.C. WINNER
UNVEILED IN MONTREAL**

Memory of Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher, Son of W. H. Fisher, Formerly Accountant at the St. Catharines Branch of the Bank of Commerce Who Heroically Gave His Life in a Successful Undertaking at Ypres in 1915 Fittingly Honored—Letter of Regret From His Majesty.

Figure 21.

A reprinted story in the *St. Catharines Standard* for their native born son. — *St. Catharines Standard*, December 28, 1916

Figure 19.

Story of the ceremony honoring Fred Fisher, VC in which a plaque is to be placed in the Church of St. James the Apostle. — *The Montreal Gazette*, December 18, 1916

Government of Canada

In the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower of the Canadian Parliament Buildings in Ottawa is the Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM). This memorial is a registry to honour and remember the sacrifices of the more than 118,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who, since Confederation, have given their lives while serving in uniform. The names of fallen soldiers found in the CVWM are also inscribed in the seven "Books of Remembrance". The RCMP's Honour Roll remembers those who lost their lives while on operational police duty. The names of fallen RCMP members found in the CVWM are also inscribed in the RCMP Honour Roll Book.¹⁰ Page 14 of the CVWM (fig. 22) has Fred Fisher's name which is the second from the bottom on the left side of the page. This page 14 was last displayed in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower in Ottawa on January 20, 2017.

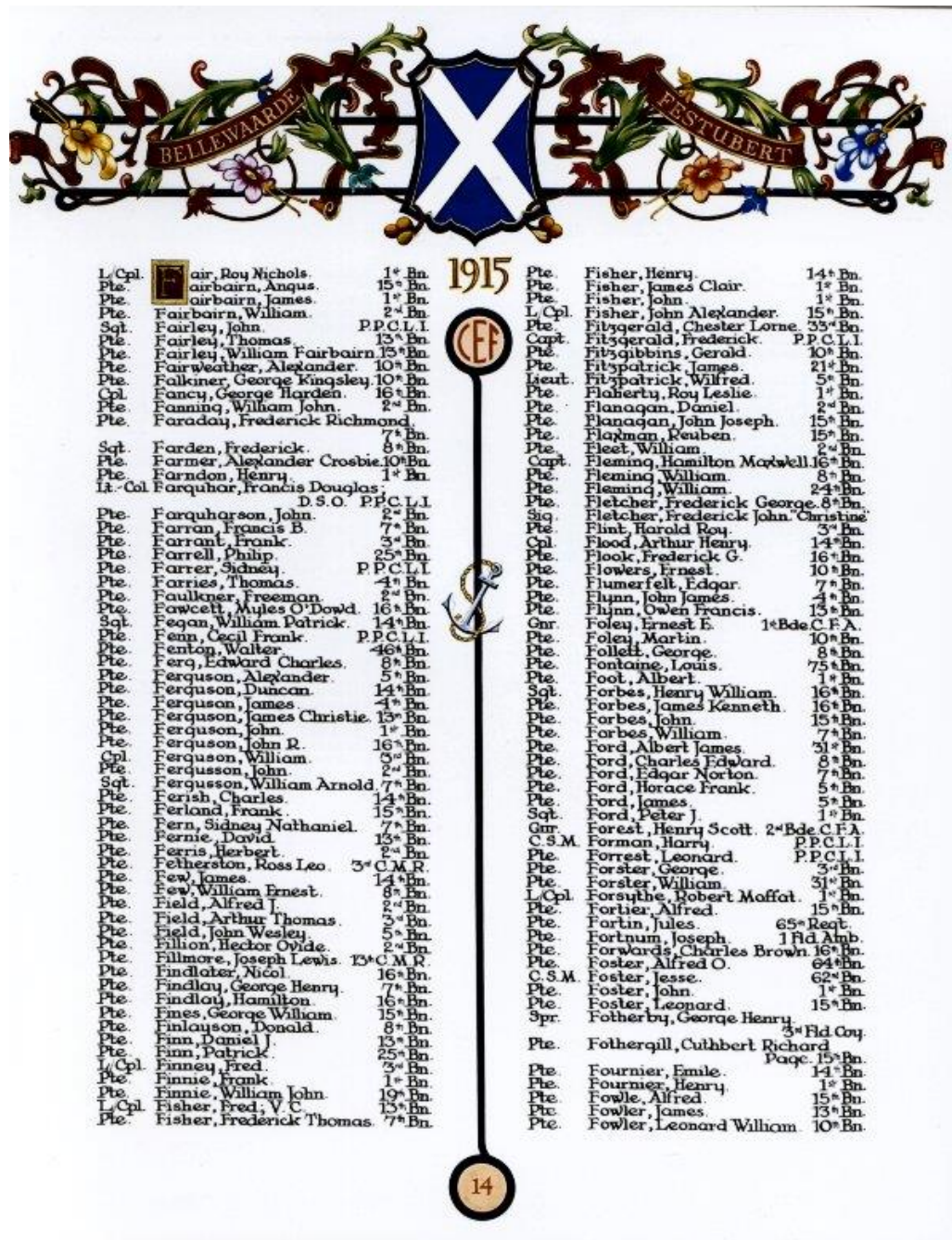


Figure 22.
Page 14 from the Canadian Virtual War Memorial.¹⁰

City of St. Catharines

On November 5, 2006, the City of St. Catharines unveiled a plaque on the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Victoria Cross 1856–2006, figure 23. The two honorees on this plaque were Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, 1894-1915 and Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, 1892-1941. Both had connections to St. Catharines with Fred Fisher being born here and Graham Lyall originally enlisting with the 19th Battalion, the Lincoln Regiment and then re-enlisting into the 81st Battalion to go overseas. This plaque is on the outside wall at the entrance to the St. Catharines City Hall.

On Sunday June 28, 1970, an unveiling and dedication of an historical plaque commemorating Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC took place at Memorial Park in St. Catharines. Figure 24 shows the program of this event, which was sponsored by The Royal Canadian Legion, H.T. Church Branch No. 24.

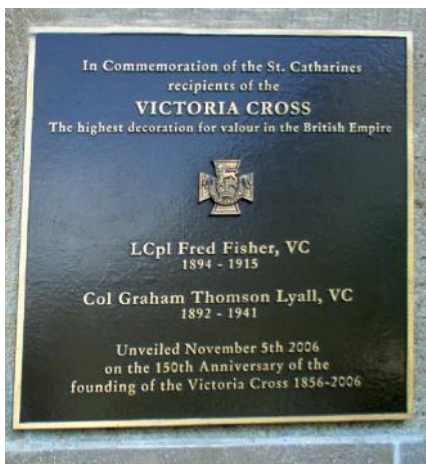


Figure 23.

Plaque honouring Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC and Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, both who had connections to the City of St. Catharines.

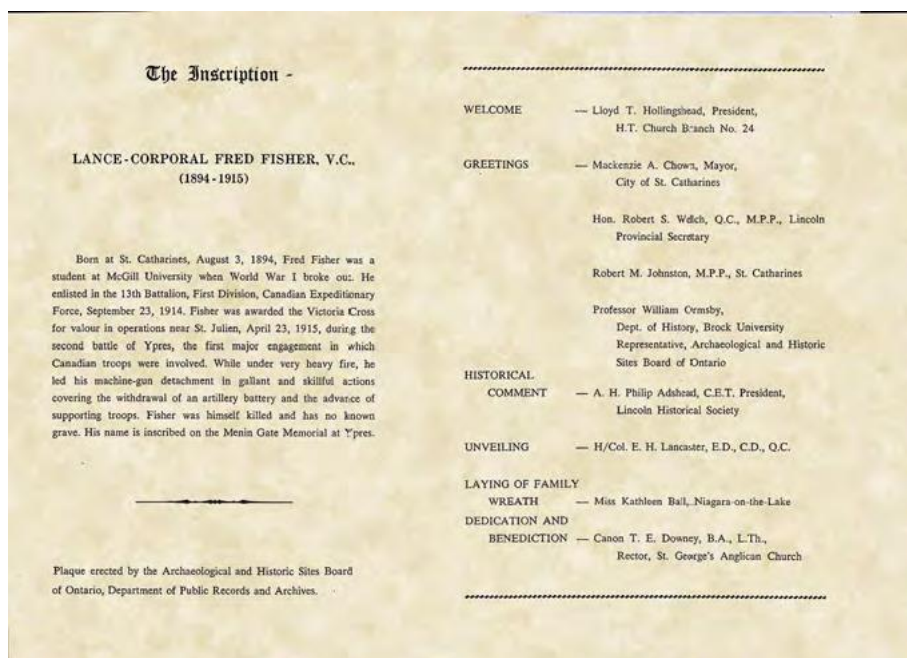
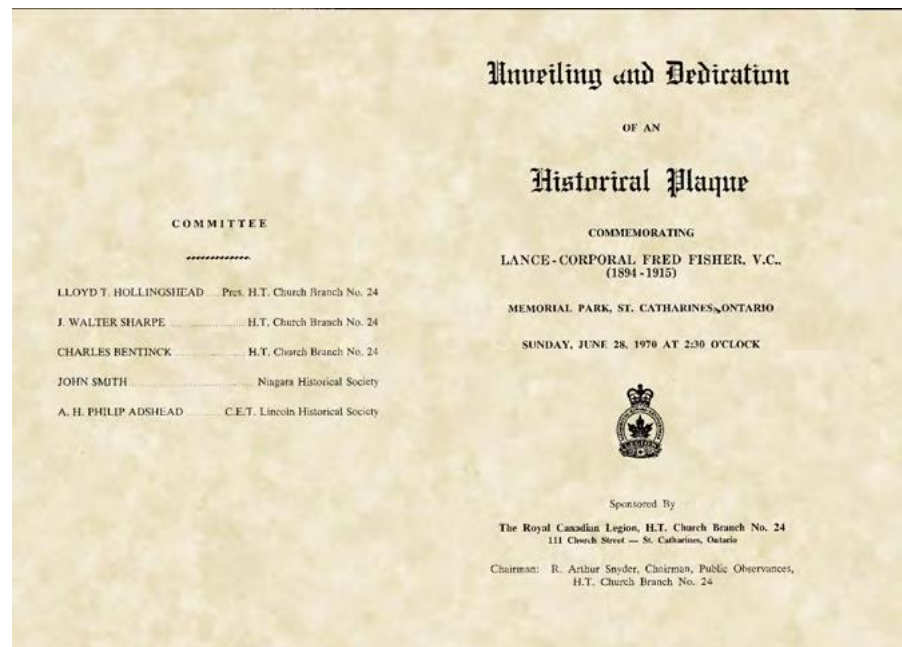


Figure 24.

Programme of the ceremony for the unveiling and dedicating of the plaque in honour of Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC. – *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

At Memorial Park, a plaque was erected by the Ontario Heritage Foundation (an agency of the Government of Ontario) for Fred Fisher; see figure 25, and the following:

Born in St. Catharines, Fred Fisher abandoned his studies at McGill University when World War I broke out and served with the 13th Battalion, First Division, Canadian Expeditionary Force. Fisher was awarded the Victoria Cross for his exceptional courage in action near St. Julien, Belgium, on April 23rd 1915, during the second battle of Ypres. Under very heavy fire he led a machine-gun detachment covering the withdrawal of an artillery battery. Though his crew fell to enemy attack, Fisher held their position. He then returned to the garrison for more men and advanced again to the firing line. Killed in action the next day, Fisher has no known grave.

In 2008, the City of St. Catharines honoured both Fred Fisher and Graham Lyall with streets named after them along with a street named “Valour Way” for the inscription on the Victoria Cross medal “For Valour”. Figure 26 shows the street sign “Fred Fisher Cr.”

The St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections section has a folder for Fred Fisher and in that folder is a newspaper article making reference to the First Canadian Division Headquarters being named the “Fred Fisher Building”. Figure 27 shows the article; the source and date of the newspaper is unknown.



Figure 25.

Plaque honouring Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, at Memorial Park in St. Catharines.



Figure 26.

Fred Fisher Crescent street sign in honour of Fred Fisher.

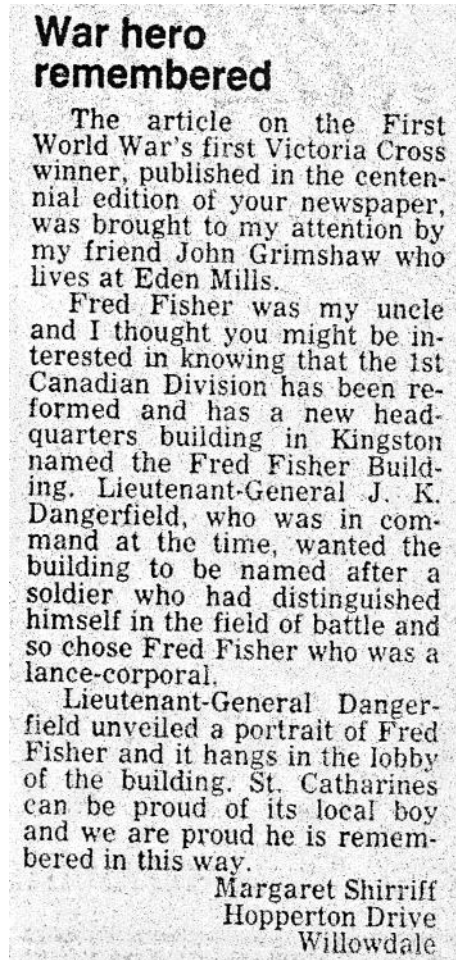


Figure 27.

Newspaper article making mention of the First Canadian Division Headquarters being named Fred Fisher Building.
 – Name and date of newspaper unknown
 – St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections

As mentioned in figure 27, the 1st Canadian Division Headquarters named their building the Fred Fisher Building as shown in figure 28.

EDIFICE FISHER BUILDING

THIS BUILDING WAS
OFFICIALLY OPENED
CET EDIFICE FUT
INAUGURÉ OFFICIELLEMENT
BY/ PAR

LGEN K. R. FOSTER CMM, CD
COMMANDER / COMMANDANT
FORCE MOBILE COMMAND

28 FEBRUARY 1990
LE 28 FÉVRIER 1990

GENERAL CONTRACTOR / ENTREPRENEUR GÉNÉRAL
EMMONS AND MITCHELL CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

English and French dedication plaques were placed in the building, Figure 30 shows the plaques for whom the building is named and tells why.



A memorial that has a painting of Fisher along with a photo of his Victoria Cross was placed in the building (fig. 31) and the gazetted description of his receiving the Victoria Cross, from the *London Gazette*.



19

Westmount High School, Westmount, Quebec

Fred Fisher attended Westmount High School in Montreal in his teenage years. A painting of Fred Fisher was hanging in the school library, and a replica of this painting now hangs in the school lobby (figure 32).

The original portrait was loaned to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment of Canada) when they celebrated their 150th anniversary. Later that year, it was formally donated to them by the Protestant School Board Cultural Heritage Foundation. It now hangs in honour in their Regimental Headquarters on Bleury Street in Montreal.¹¹ Figure 33 shows the original name plaque on the painting, which is hanging in the Black Watch Regimental Headquarters.

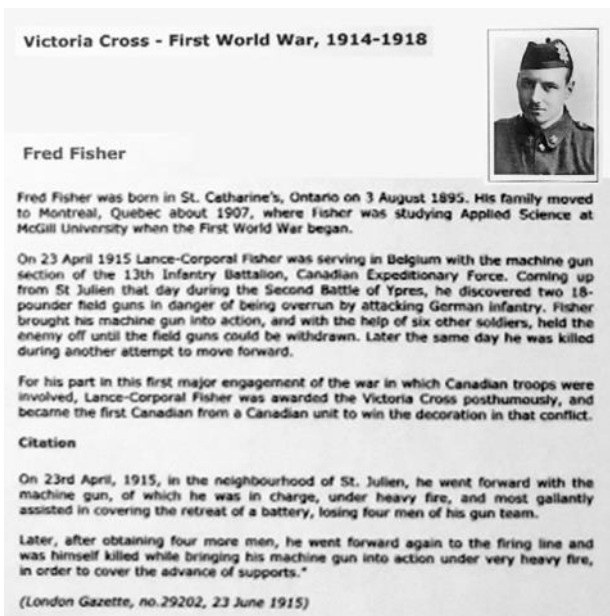


Figure 32.

Photo of the replica of the painting that was on display at the Westmount High School Library.
– Courtesy of Westmount High School, Westmount, Quebec¹¹



Figure 33.

Photo of the name plaque, which is hanging in the Black Watch Regimental Headquarters.

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

When World War I began, Fred Fisher was attending McGill University. He went on to enlist in the 13th Battalion and went overseas with them. In 1926, McGill University published a commemorative volume entitled “McGill Honour Roll 1914-1918” in honour of the nearly 400 staff, students and faculty who lost their lives in the Great War. Figure 34 shows the cover of this publication, while figure 35 shows the page with Fred Fisher, VC.

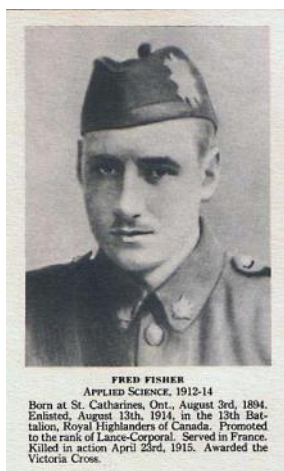
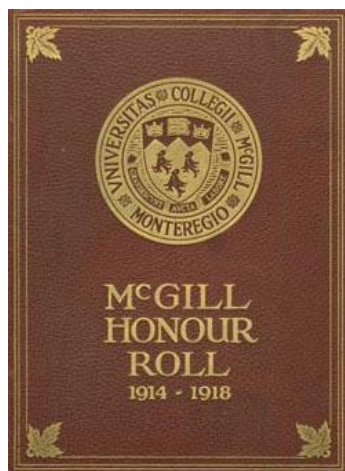


Figure 34 and 35.

Cover and page of “McGill Honour Roll 1914-1918” and the page with photo of Fred Fisher.¹²

Nearly 25 years later, McGill produced their second Book of Remembrance. It records nearly 700 names of McGill staff, students and faculty who died while serving in uniform during and after World War I and World War II, and the nearly 9,000 students, graduates, staff and faculty who served in these World Wars, figure 36 shows the cover of the second publication “Book of Remembrance” and figure 37 shows page 40 with the name of Fred Fisher.¹²



Figure 36 and 37.
Cover and page of McGill’s “Book of Remembrance” and the page with the name of Fred Fisher.¹²

Winnipeg Tribune

During the months of November and December 1918, the Saturday edition of the *Winnipeg Tribune* featured a Victoria Cross recipient in “The Tribune Junior” section. The November 30, 1918 issue featured the story of Fred Fisher on page 43 and is shown as figure 38.

Canada in Khaki

The 1917 magazine *Canada in Khaki* featured the story of Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC. This magazine was published for the Canadian War Records Office by the Montreal Star Publishing Co. Ltd., with the net profits going to the Canadian War Memorials Fund. The image of the fallen soldier is by artist Bram Shaw. The pages for Fred Fisher are shown as figure 39.



Figure 38.

Page 43 of the *Winnipeg Tribune*, “The Tribune Junior” section which featured the story of Fred Fisher, VC.
– *Winnipeg Tribune*, Saturday, November 30, 1918¹³

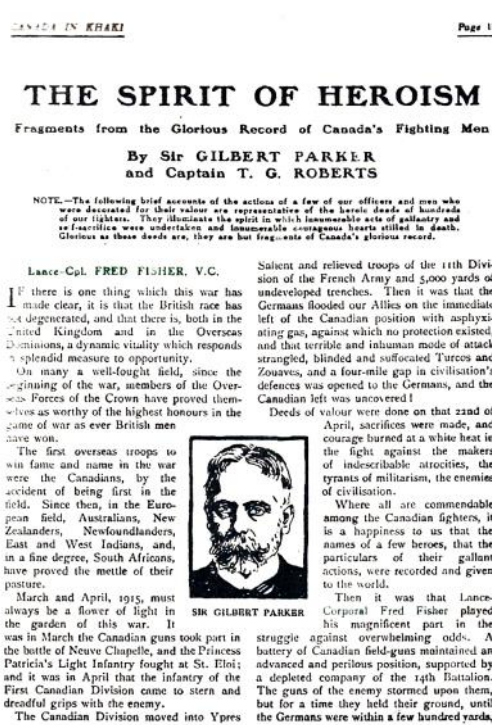


Figure 39.

Magazine pages from *Canada in Khaki*, 1917 issue which featured Fred Fisher, VC. – *Canada in Khaki*, 1917

Chapter Footnotes

5. For Valour, Lance Corporal Fred Fisher, VC by Lieutenant Colonel William A. Smy Omm, CD, UE, 2010
6. Library and Archives Canada, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III, D1, Vol. 4745, Fodler 173, File 17, Fred Fisher.
7. Veterans Affairs Canada, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/belgium/Menin>
8. The Great War 1914-1918, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk>
9. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/1592163>
10. <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial>
11. Westmount High School, 4350 rue Ste-Catherine O., Westmount, QC Canada H3Z 1R1
12. McGill University Archives

COLONEL GRAHAM THOMSON LYALL, VC



Painting of Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, by artist Howard Somerville, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, CWM 19710261-0665, Canada War Museum

Graham Thomson Lyall was born on March 8, 1892 in Chorlton, north of Manchester, England. At the age of 20, Lyall left England and immigrated to Canada, arriving at Quebec City on June 9, 1912.

Upon arrival he proceeded to Welland, Ontario, where he was employed at the Canadian Steels Foundries. With a downturn in the employment at Canadian Steels Foundries, Lyall was hired as a mechanical engineer with the Canadian Niagara Power Company in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

On August 6, 1914, two days after war being declared, the Governor General called out units of the militia and placed them on active duty. The 19th Battalion, the Lincoln Regiment of St. Catharines and the 44th Battalion, the Lincoln and Welland Regiment of Lincoln & Welland Counties were called out to supply the man power of the Welland Canal Force, whose purpose was to guard the Welland Canal, close the border and guard the railroad bridges that crossed the Niagara River.

Upon resigning his employment at the Canadian Niagara Power Company, he enlisted with the 19th Battalion on October 23, 1914 in St. Catharines. Disenchanted with the monotonous routine of the Welland Canal Force, Lyall enlisted with the 81st Battalion, CEF, figure 40 shows his attestation papers enlisting with the 81st Battalion.

ATTESTATION PAPER
81st Battalion, C. E. F.
CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

TRIPLICATE
No. 12345
Folio 1234

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

1. What is your name? *Graham Thomson Lyall*
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what County were you born? *Manchester, England*
3. What is the name of your mother? *Mrs. R. H. Lyall (Mother)*
4. What is the name of your father? *James R. Lyall (Father)*
5. What is the date of your birth? *March 8th 1892*
6. What is your Trade or Calling? *Mechanical Engineer*
7. Are you married? *no*
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? *yes*
9. Do you ever belong to the Active Militia? *yes*
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? *yes 1st Regt 1 year*
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? *yes*
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? *yes*

Graham Thomson Lyall (Signature of Man)
E. M. W. [illegible] (Signature of Witness)

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *G. T. Lyall*, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me are true and correct, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement for me made, and I hereby engage to serve in the Canadian Over-Sea Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any unit of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for one month after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until lawfully discharged.

G. T. Lyall (Signature of Recruit)
E. M. W. [illegible] (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *G. T. Lyall*, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as far as I am lawfully bound, defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers and crew and, His help me God.

G. T. Lyall (Signature of Recruit)
E. M. W. [illegible] (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above named was examined by me and if he has answered to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to this Recruit in his presence, and he has answered as required, and the said Recruit has made and given the declaration and oath before me, as required by the Act.

E. M. W. [illegible] (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

E. M. W. [illegible] (Approving Officer)

Description of Graham Thomson Lyall on Enlistment

Appearance Age 22 years 10 months
Height 5 ft. 11 in.
Weight 127 lbs.
Complexion Fair
Eyes Blue
Hair Black
Build Slender
Religion Presbyterian
Other Particulars None
Remarks Catholic

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He was seen as his required glasses with either eye, his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his limbs and spine, and he declares that he is not subject to fit of any description.

I consider him *fit* for the Canadian Over-Sea Expeditionary Force.

Date *1st Sept 1915*
Place *St. Catharines Ont.*
D. J. [illegible] (Medical Officer)

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Graham Thomson Lyall, having been fully approved and reported by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular: having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

A. C. [illegible] (Officer Commanding Unit)

Date *DEC 1 1915*
81st Battalion, C. E. F.

Figure 40.

Copy of Lyall's attestation papers for the 81st Battalion, CEF. – Library and Archives Canada

While at the St. Catharines Recruiting Depot in the armoury on Lake Street, Lyall was appointed acting corporal on October 1, 1915. Figure 41 shows a photo of Corporal Lyall with an unidentified sergeant.

On the evening of April 25, 1916, the “Kitty’s Own” (a nickname for the 81st due to the large make up men from St. Catharines) entrained at the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto for Halifax. And on April 28, 1916, the 81st embarked on the *S.S. Olympic* at Halifax. Figure 42 shows a photo of the *S.S. Olympic* in her dazzled camouflage.

Figure 43 shows a page from the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 81st Battalion, Nominal Roll of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, which lists Lyall’s name.



Figure 41.

Photo of Private Lyall with an unidentified sergeant.– *Photo courtesy Sandy Ferguson*¹⁴

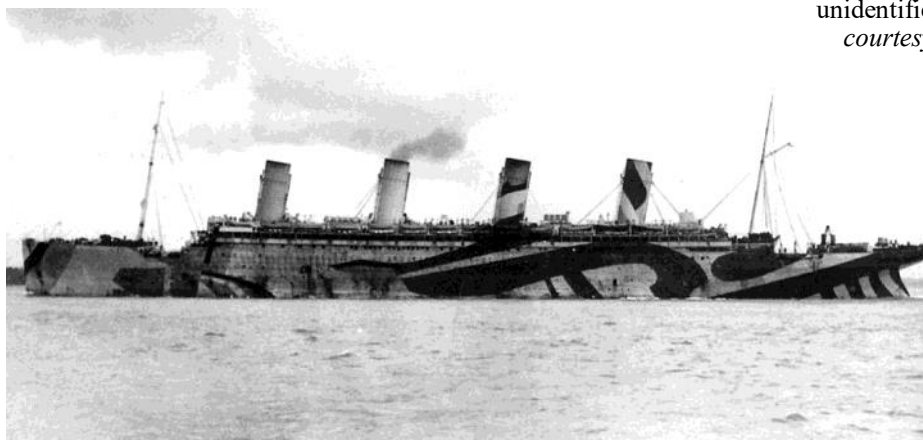


Figure 42.

Photo of the *S.S. Olympic* in her dazzle camouflage.¹⁵

157061 Private.....	Landon, Carl Joseph.....	NIL.....	McElroy, Mrs. Eliza.....	c/o Standard Bank, Bathurst St., opposite Arthur St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 30, 1915.
157062 Private.....	Lang, William.....	NIL.....	Lang, Mrs. Evelyn.....	45 Gerrard St. E., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 27, 1915.
157063 Private.....	Lawless, Joseph William.....	G.O.B.G.....	Lawless, J. H.....	15 Trafalgar St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 4, 1915.
157064 Private.....	Lawrence, Charles.....	G.O.B.G.....	Lawrence, Henry.....	Merritt, Ont.....	England.....	St. Catharines.....	Feb. 23, 1916.
157065 Private.....	Lawrence, Frederick Broughton.....	10th Regt.....	Lawrence, Mrs. Ellen.....	24 Redwood St., Folkestone, Kent, Eng.....	England.....	St. Catharines.....	Oct. 7, 1915.
157066 Private.....	Lawrence, Henry.....	G.O.B.G.....	Lawrence, Mrs. Ellen.....	44 Duff St., Edinburgh, Scot.....	England.....	St. Catharines.....	Feb. 28, 1916.
157067 Private.....	Lawrie, David.....	NIL.....	Lawrie, Mrs. Agnes Ruby.....	25 Enkine Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	W. Sandling C/P.....	June 14, 1916.
157068 Private.....	Lawson, Albert Ross.....	NIL.....	Lawson, Albert Simpson.....	25 Enkine Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 17, 1915.
157069 Private.....	Lawson, Andrew Leizer.....	NIL.....	Lawson, George.....	Hastings, Ont.....	Scotland.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 1, 1915.
157070 Private.....	Lawton, Alfred Thomas.....	NIL.....	Lawson, Mrs. Jane.....	3 Church Rd., St. Thomas, Exeter, Devon, Eng.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 13, 1915.
157071 Private.....	Leach, Fred.....	Territorial.....	Leach, Mrs. Jane Jackson.....	20 Nairn Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 10, 1915.
157072 Private.....	Leatham, Edmund James.....	Territorial.....	Leatham, Mrs. Evelyn.....	40 Wright Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 2, 1915.
157073 Private.....	Le Bas, Edward.....	NIL.....	Le Bas, Samuel.....	27 Freshfield Rd., Brighton, Sussex, Eng.....	Canada.....	St. Catharines.....	Aug. 7, 1915.
157074 Private.....	Lee, Walter Sidney.....	NIL.....	Lee, Charles Herbert.....	64 Charlotte Rd., Blackheath, London S.E., Eng.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Nov. 17, 1915.
157075 Private.....	Lee, William Henry.....	NIL.....	Lee, William Henry.....	11 Langford Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 23, 1915.
157076 Private.....	Lee, John Young.....	2nd Regt.....	Lee, Mrs. Frances.....	25 Hamilton St., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	St. Catharines.....	Jan. 27, 1916.
157077 Private.....	Leitch, James.....	G.O.B.G.....	Leitch, Mrs. Janet.....	Merritt, Ont.....	Scotland.....	Toronto.....	Aug. 25, 1915.
157078 Private.....	Lennox, Robert.....	NIL.....	Lennox, Mrs. Catherine.....	54 Portland St., Worcester, Eng.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 27, 1915.
157079 Private.....	Lerry, Walter Henry.....	NIL.....	Lerry, William Henry.....	P.O. Mossymore, Londonderry, Ire.....	Ireland.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 27, 1915.
157080 Private.....	Lesall, Edwin James Ronborough.....	2nd Regt.....	Lesall, Mrs. Flora Myrtle.....	38 Padgeway Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Jan. 24, 1916.
157081 Private.....	Leister, Harry.....	G.O.B.G.....	Leister, Mrs. Minnie.....	111 Filbert St., London, Eng.....	Wales.....	Toronto.....	Oct. 14, 1915.
157082 Private.....	Lewis, John.....	NIL.....	Lewis, Manuch.....	33 Earlsfort Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 20, 1915.
157083 Private.....	Lightfoot, Arthur Fisher.....	NIL.....	Lightfoot, Mrs. Phyllis Louisa.....	25 Rowland Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Ireland.....	Welland.....	Oct. 6, 1915.
157084 Private.....	Linton, James Rowan.....	4th Regt.....	Linton, Mrs. Hannah.....	4 Park St., Ballymena, Antrim, Ire.....	Ireland.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 9, 1915.
157085 Private.....	Linton, William Cass.....	2nd Regt.....	Linton, James.....	Cleghaghille, Co. Antrim, Ire.....	Canada.....	Niagara.....	June 30, 1915.
157086 Private.....	Little, Arthur.....	NIL.....	Little, William.....	250 Crawford St., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Mar. 1, 1916.
157087 Private.....	Lloyd, Arthur.....	G.O.B.G.....	Lloyd, Walter.....	25 Chesham Rd., Silver St., Upper Edmonton, London, Eng.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 24, 1915.
157088 Private.....	Lockyer, Frederick John.....	Can. Mil.....	Lockyer, Alfred.....	15 Diver St., Little York, Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 4, 1915.
157089 Private.....	Lofthouse, Peter.....	C.A.S.C.....	Lofthouse, Mrs. Mary.....	35 Salter St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	St. Catharines.....	Nov. 22, 1915.
157090 Private.....	Longley, Howard Cecil.....	10th Regt.....	Longley, Mrs. Charlotte.....	156 Geneva St., St. Catharines, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 20, 1915.
157091 Private.....	Love, John.....	NIL.....	Love, John.....	P.O. Box 227, Newmarket, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 17, 1915.
157092 Private.....	Love, George Henry.....	G.O.B.G.....	Love, Mrs. Alice.....	69 Bellair St., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Mar. 13, 1916.
157093 Private.....	Lovett, Percival John.....	Can. Mil.....	Lovett, Mrs. Emily.....	Eng.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 17, 1915.
157094 Private.....	Luke, Ernest.....	NIL.....	Lowe, Mrs. Mary.....	124 Morse St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 14, 1915.
157095 Private.....	Land, George Roland.....	NIL.....	Lyle, Mrs. E.....	31 Church St., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	St. Catharines.....	Sept. 12, 1915.
157096 Private.....	Lyle, Albert Edward.....	G.O.B.G.....	Lyle, Mrs. Ethel Lucy.....	150 Vaughan Rd., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 16, 1915.
157097 Private.....	Lyle, Walter Frederick.....	NIL.....	Lynn, Mrs. Emma.....	90 Caroline Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 7, 1915.
157098 Private.....	Lynn, Thomas Edward.....	NIL.....	Lyns, Mrs. Nellie.....	41 MacDonell Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	St. Catharines.....	Jan. 15, 1916.
157099 Private.....	Lyons, Peter.....	G.O.B.G.....	MacDonald, John A.....	Levis, P.Q.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Dec. 16, 1915.
157100 Private.....	MacDonald, Andrew Rae.....	NIL.....	MacFarlane, Thomas.....	220 Dovecourt Rd., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 22, 1915.
157101 Private.....	MacFarlane, Philip Gibbs.....	NIL.....	MacFarlane, Mrs. Doris.....	188 Bleeker St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Mar. 6, 1916.
157102 Private.....	MacFarlane, Victor Earl.....	G.O.B.G.....	MacGregor, Mrs. Caroline.....	Reale Gardens, Keele St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 14, 1915.
157103 Private.....	MacGregor, Maxwell Murdoch.....	NIL.....	MacKinnon, Mrs. Emma Jane.....	25 Morse St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 10, 1915.
157104 Private.....	MacKinnon, Ronald.....	4th Regt.....	MacKinnon, Mrs. Gertrude.....	127 Pearson Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Nov. 24, 1915.
157105 Private.....	MacNaughton, Neil.....	NIL.....	MacKie, Mrs. Ellen.....	52 Berryman St., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 9, 1915.
157106 Private.....	MacNee, Henry.....	Territorial.....	MacKie, Mrs. Susan.....	32 McFarlane St., Toronto, Ont.....	Canada.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 20, 1915.
157107 Private.....	MacNee, Victor.....	NIL.....	MacKie, Mrs. Susan.....	700 Page Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 7, 1915.
157108 Private.....	MacNee, Robert Michael.....	NIL.....	MacKie, Mrs. Susan.....	26 Dr. Bernard's Home, Peterborough, Ont.....	Canada.....	St. Catharines.....	Aug. 17, 1915.
157109 Private.....	MacNee, Edward.....	NIL.....	MacNee, Mrs. Amelia.....	150 Hemford Ave., Toronto, Ont.....	England.....	Toronto.....	Sept. 27, 1915.
157110 Private.....	Mann, James Bennett.....	NIL.....	Mann, Mrs. Amelia.....				
157111 Private.....	Mann, Robert Felix.....	NIL.....					

Figure 43.

Page from the CEF 81st Battalion Nominal Roll which shows Lyall’s name (see asterisk).

– *Library and Archives Canada*

In the *St. Catharines Standard*, October 19, 1918, issue there is a story “**GLORIOUS DEEDS OF CANADIANS AT CAMBRAI**” which told the story of the Battle of Cambrai. It went on as shown in figure 45. At the time of the story, it was not known who this Lieutenant was.

When hostilities ended on November 11, 1918, peace to Europe and the world became a reality. Figure 46 shows an undated photo of Lt. Lyall and an unidentified major of the 102nd Battalion.

In *The London Gazette*, December 13, 1918 issue, notice appeared in which the King gave his approval to a group of Victoria Cross recipients, one of which was Lt. Graham Thomson Lyall, as shown in figure 47.

The lieutenant’s name in the article shown in figure 45 was never mentioned. This was corrected in the issue of December 18, 1918, which has a lengthy article about Lt. Lyall (a small excerpt is shown as figure 48).

While leading his platoon against Bourlon wood a Lieutenant of a British Columbia battalion found himself held up by machine gun fire from a sunken road. He took his men around the enemy's flank and captured the stronghold killing the crew and capturing one officer and ten other ranks, with one field gun and four machine guns. Later, on having passed through our front wave, his party was checked by a strong enemy post south of Bourlon wood. Many of his own company by this time were casualties. So, gathering together a detail from another company, he led them in. He rushed the post at once, killing the officer and capturing 49 prisoners, with machine guns. Pushing on to their final objective, the party captured two officers and 45 other ranks. His right flank being in the air, he took up a defensive position, forming a flank for the adjoining troops. On October 1 at Blacourt this intrepid officer found himself in command of a company now reduced to 56 of all ranks, and with this little band he captured 89 prisoners and 17 machine guns. In two days' fighting his record was three officers, 189 of other ranks, one field gun and 26 machine guns captured, exclusive of enemy killed and wounded.

Figure 45.

Article from the *St. Catharines*, October 19, 1918, issue which tells the story of a brave Lieutenant. – *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

War Office,

14th December, 1918.

His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned Officers, Warrant Officer, Non-commissioned Officers and Men:—

Lt. Graham Thomson Lyall, 102nd Bn., 2nd Central Ontario R.

For most conspicuous bravery and skilful leading during the operations north of Cambrai.

On September 27th, 1918, whilst leading his platoon against Bourlon Wood, he rendered invaluable support to the leading company, which was held up by a strong point, which he captured, by a flank movement, together with thirteen prisoners, one field gun and four machine guns.

Later, his platoon, now much weakened by casualties, was held up by machine guns at the southern end of Bourlon Wood. Collecting any men available, he led them towards the strong point, and springing forward alone, rushed the position single-handed and killed the officer in charge, subsequently capturing at this point forty-five prisoners and five machine guns. Having made good his final objective, with a further capture of forty-seven prisoners, he consolidated his position and thus protected the remainder of the company.

On October 1st, in the neighbourhood of Blecourt, when in command of a weak company, by skilful dispositions he captured a strongly defended position, which yielded eighty prisoners and seventeen machine guns.

During two days of operations Lt. Lyall captured in all 3 officers, 182 other ranks, 26 machine guns and one field gun, exclusive of heavy casualties inflicted. He showed throughout the utmost valour and high powers of command.

Figure 47.

Copy of the King’s approval of the Victoria Cross to Lt. Graham Thomson Lyall. – *The London Gazette*, December 13, 1918



Figure 46.

A post war photo of Lt. Lyall and an unidentified major of the 102nd Battalion. — *Dept. of National Defence, Library and Archives Canada, PA-003990*

LIEUT. LYALL, V.C., ALIVE AND WELL IN FRANCE

Account of Achievements Was Nameless in Standard

EXPECTS AN EARLY RETURN

Letter From Hero Arrives on Same Days as Announcement

Something akin to a coincidence came to hand on Tuesday evening, when Ex-Major Burgoyne received a letter from Lieut. Graham T. Lyall, V.C., of the 102nd Canadians, dated from St. Symphorien, near Mons, Belgium. The letter arrived on the same day as the news that Lieut. Lyall had been awarded the Victoria Cross.

The letter asks for copies of *The Standard*, though with the modesty of all heroes, he says very little about the deed that won him such great recognition, and has embossed his name on the Empire's scroll of fame.

Lieut. Lyall says in part: "I guess you will probably not remember me as well as I do you, but I used to live with Her. de la Rive at Chippawa, and enlisted at the outbreak of the war with the 19th Lincoln, going overseas with the 1st Battalion when you gave us a splendid farewell speech." This has reference to the occasion of the presentation of the colors to the 1st Battalion by Major Burgoyne at Toronto.

KING CUT LOOSE FOR ONE EVENING

LONDON, Dec. 18.—Until armistice week King George had not been inside a theatre since the outbreak of the war, and not partaken of intoxicants since 1915. On the night of the signing of the armistice he had champagne with his dinner, and, after perusing a long list of theatrical attractions, he selected something lively—one of the most popular "girl" shows—which he seemed to enjoy.

time were casualties. So, gathering together a detail from another company, he led them in. He rushed the post at once, killing the officer and capturing 49 prisoners, with machine guns. Pushing on to their final objective, the party captured two officers and 45 other ranks. His right flank being in the air, he took up a defensive position, forming a flank for the adjoining troops. On October 1 at Blacourt his intrepid officer found himself in command of a company now reduced to 56 of all ranks, and with this little band he captured 89 prisoners and 17 machine guns. In two days' fighting his record was three officers, 189 of other ranks, one field gun and 26 machine guns captured, exclusive of enemy killed and wounded.

LOCAL ITEMS

Flight Lieut. Carey has returned to Toronto after spending a few days in St. Catharines.

Mr. Peter Muldoon is able to be about again after injuries received on Monday afternoon when he was pulled.

Figure 48.

Article from the *St. Catharines*, December 18, 1918 issue, which introduces Lt. Lyall to the public. – *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

A lengthy story of Lt. Lyall ran in the *St. Catharines Standard* on January 10, 1919 (fig. 49).

This article had a letter from Lt. Lyall to the O.C. 19th Regiment, St. Catharines, from the O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, as well as a letter from the O.C. 19th Lincoln Regiment to the *Standard*. The letter from Lt. Lyall to the O.C. 19th Lincolns is shown as figure 50. In it he states that he is having a gun captured at Bourlon Wood on September 27, 1918 sent to the 19th Lincoln Regiment. Figure 51 shows a letter from the O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion to the O.C. 19th Lincoln Regiment, which states "that arrangements have been made to send a war trophy in the way of a 77mm gun which was one of the guns taken in the area of Marchipont on November 6, 1918." The 77mm gun which was to be shipped had a registered number of 5190. Apparently, this gun never left Europe; it was melted down.¹⁴



Figure 49.

Heading from a lengthy article in the *St. Catharines Standard*, January 19, 1919. — *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

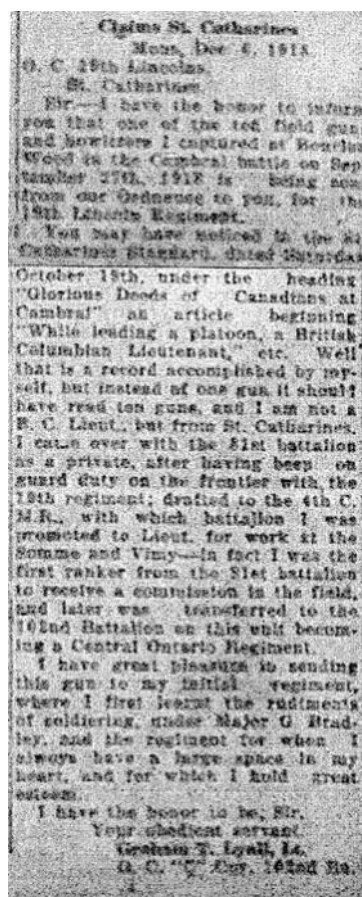


Figure 50.

Letter from Lyall to the O.C. 19th Lincolns. — *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

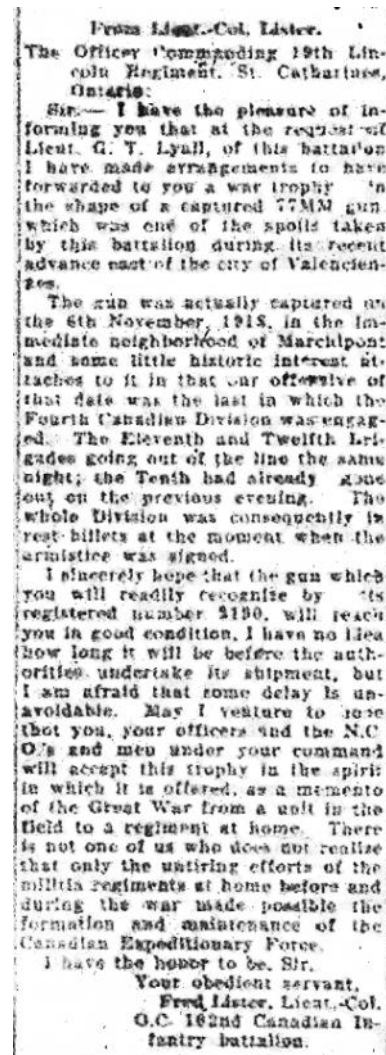


Figure 51.

Letter from the O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion to the O.C. 19th Lincolns. — *St. Catharines Public Library, Special Collections*

On February 15, 1919, the *St. Catharines Standard* carried a letter from a member of the Niagara Rangers that made mention of the St. Catharines Boys with Lt. Lyall:

ST. CATHARINES BOYS WERE WITH LIEUT. LYALL, V.C.

The following letter dated January 25th, at Brussels in Belgium, received by Ex-Mayor Burgoyne, shows that in the ranks of the men who aided Lieut. G. T. Lyall win his Victoria Cross were several Boys from St. Catharines.

Dear sir: - In looking over the Standard of December 18th and reading about Mr. Lyall and his V.C. I think, Sir, that you and the good people of St. Kitts should know that Mr. Lyall was in command of a company made up mostly of St. Catharines boys, and especially with the good old "Niagara Rangers" represented, Joe Hart of Port Dalhousie, good old Bill Bradshaw of the "Rangers," and Roy Boyle (Killed) and many others from St. Kitts helped Mr. Lyall get his V.C. Hats off to the boys of St. Kitts.

*Thanking you for the space, I remain, Sir.
"An Old Ranger," A. Co.
"C. CO. 102nd"*

The *St. Catharines Standard* March 8, 1919 issue featured a photo of Lt. Lyall along with the following:

LIEUT. GRAHAM T. LYALL, V.C. Who is expected to arrive in the city about May 1st. He is at present in Petrograd Hotel Hospital, London, under special treatment for trench mouth. Before coming to St. Catharines, he will take to himself during Easter week a bride, who will come with him to Canada. On arrival in the city they will be the guests of Judge and Mrs. Campbell.

On March 15, 1919, King George V presented about 320 recipients of various honours at Buckingham Palace, one of whom was Lt. Lyall as outlined in figure 52 from the *London Sunday Times*.

Figure 53 shows a photo of Lt. Lyall wearing his ribbon of the Victoria Cross outside Buckingham Place on the day of the presentation.

ABSENT V.C.
DECORATION BY KING DEFERRED.

About 320 recipients of various honours were personally decorated by the King at an Investiture yesterday. His Majesty was attended by members of his personal suite and by representatives of the Lord Chamberlain's Department.

Major A. Waters, R.E., was decorated with the Victoria Cross, the D.S.O., and the M.C. From a record read by the King's Equerry, Major Reginald Seymour, it appeared that this officer displayed conspicuous bravery and devotion during the bridging of the Oise-Sambre Canal in November last. When all other officers had been killed or wounded, he went forward and personally supervised the operations under a fire which was so intense that it seemed impossible for him to escape.

Lieut. G. Lyall, Cent. Ontario Regt., also received the V.C. During two days of operations his captures included three officers, 182 of other ranks, and twenty-six machine guns, with one field gun.

Pte. N. Harvey, Royal Inniskillings, was on the list for decoration with the V.C., but was prevented from attending, and his investiture had to be deferred.

NEW KNIGHTS.

Vice-Admiral Arthur Leveson and Maj.-Gen. Charles Harington were made Knights Commanders of the Bath and received the accolade of knighthood. Mr. Robert Elliott-Cooper also was knighted and received the insignia of a K.C.B. (Civil Division).

Maj.-Gen. J. Davidson, M.P., and Maj.-Gen. A. Montgomery were knighted and invested as Knights Commanders of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. Maj.-Gen. Montgomery also received the Military C.B.

Other recipients of honours included four officers who received Companionship of the Bath and of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, half a dozen C.B.'s (Military Division), thirty-two C.M.G.'s, three C.I.E.'s, three bars to Distinguished Service Orders, a D.S.O. with bar, a D.S.O. with D.S.O., three D.S.O.'s, accompanied by Military Cross and two bars, a D.S.O. with bar to a M.C., two D.S.O.'s with the M.C. and bar, eight D.S.O.'s with the M.C., a very long list of D.S.O.'s.



Figure 52.

Newspaper story of the Investiture at Buckingham Palace.
— *London Sunday Times*, March 16, 1919

Figure 53.

Newspaper story of the Investiture at Buckingham Palace. — *London Sunday Times*, March 16, 1919

The medals that were awarded to Colonel Lyall—with his Victoria Cross being the first shown are illustrated in figure 54.

Figure 55 shows Lt. Lyall and his family outside of Buckingham Palace on the day of the presentation of his VC.

Lyall was released from the Canadian Army on August 5, 1919. With the outbreak of World War II, Lyall enlisted in the British Army and was promoted to Major on April 26, 1939. He was promoted to Commanding Officer of the 87th Lines of Communication Sub Area on October 15, 1941 when he was at Almaza, Egypt. On November 28, 1941, Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall passed away in his sleep and is buried at the Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery a British Military Cemetery in Egypt. Figure 56 shows the tombstone marker for Lyall at the cemetery, and figure 57 shows the entrance to the cemetery.



Figure 54.

Medals awarded to Colonel Lyall during his career.¹⁴



Figure 55.

Photo of Lt. Lyall and his family outside Buckingham Palace. - Canada Dept. of National Defence, Library and Archives Canada, PA-006708



Figure 56.

Colonel Lyall Graham Thomson tombstone marker at the Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery in Egypt. – Photo by Peter Leggo¹⁶



Figure 57.

Entrance to the Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery in Egypt. – Photo by Peter Leggo¹⁶

Commemorations

City of St. Catharines

In 2008, the City of St. Catharines honoured both Graham Lyall and Fred Fisher with streets named after them, along with a street named “Valour Way” for the inscription on the Victoria Cross medal “For Valour”. The street sign for “Colonel Lyall St.” is shown in figure 58.

The Ontario Heritage Foundation placed a memorial plaque for Colonel Lyall at the Lincoln and Welland Armouries in St. Catharines (fig. 59). Its inscription reads:

Graham Thomson Lyall emigrated from Britain in 1911, eventually settling in Niagara Falls where he worked for the Canadian Niagara Power Company. In 1914, at the start of the First World War, Lyall enlisted in the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment at St Catharines. Later, he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and fought at the Somme in 1916, Arras and Ypres in 1917, and Amiens in 1918. On September 27 and October 1, 1918, Lyall led his platoon against the enemy at Bourlon Wood and Blecourt, displaying exceptional valour and leadership, inflicting heavy casualties, and capturing 182 prisoners, 26 machine guns, and one field gun. “For most Conspicuous and skilful leading during the operations north of Cambrai”, King George V invested Lyall with the Victoria Cross, the British Empire’s highest decoration for valour.”



Figure 58.

Colonel Lyall St. sign in honour of Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall.



Figure 59.

Memorial plaque at the Lake Street Armouries produced by the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

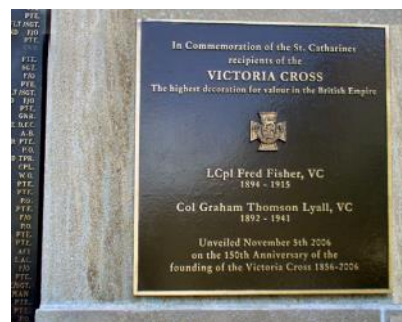


Figure 60.

Plaque honouring Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC and Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, both who had connections to the City of St. Catharines.

On November 5, 2006, the City of St. Catharines unveiled a plaque on the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Victoria Cross 1856-2006, (figure 60). The two honorees on this plaque were Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, 1892-1941 and Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, 1894-1915. This plaque is on the outside wall at the entrance to the St. Catharines City Hall.

Colonel Lyall's name appears on the Honour Roll at St. Barnabas Church in St. Catharines.

British Columbia Regiment (DCO) (Duke of Connaught's Own)

On November 11, 2007, the British Columbia Regiment dedicated five benches in its park to the VC recipients, one of whom is Colonel Lyall. Figure 61 shows the plaque on his bench.



Figure 61.

Plaque honouring Colonel Lyall on one of the benches in the park beside the Beatty Street Armoury. – *British Columbia Regiment (DCO)*

Bourlon Wood Memorial

The BCR (DCO) presented a plaque on September 6, 2008 at Bourlon Wood Memorial for Col. Lyall, VC. Figure 62 shows a memorial to Colonel Lyall at Bourlon Wood.

A memorial of the Battle of Bourlon Wood commemorating the battle is shown as figure 63.



Figure 62.

The memorial at Bourlon Wood with the plaque honouring Colonel Lyall.¹⁷



Figure 63.

Memorial at Bourlon Wood commemorating the battle that took place there.

Chapter Footnotes

¹⁴. For Valour, Colonel Graham Thompson, VC by Lieutenant Colonel William A. Smy Omm, CD, UE, with Alexander F. D. Ferguson, 2009

¹⁵. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Olympic

¹⁶. Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1966591/halfaya-sollum-war-cemetery>

¹⁷. <http://www.webmatters.net/txtpat/index.php?id=677>

THE REVEREND CAPTAIN JOHN WEIR FOOTE, VC



Photo of Reverend John Weir Foote, VC¹⁸

John Weir Foote was born on May 5, 1904 in Madoc, Ontario. Foote was educated at the University of Western in London, Ontario, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. In 1934 he entered the Presbyterian ministry and served congregations in Fort-Coulonge, Quebec and Port Hope, Ontario.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 he enlisted in the Canadian Army, Canadian Chaplain Services and was posted to the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI) as the Regimental Chaplain with a rank of Honorary Captain.

He went overseas with the RHLI and they took part in the raid on the French port of Dieppe on August 19, 1942 that proved to be a disaster. Over 5,000 Canadian troops took part in Operation Jubilee where over 900 men were killed in 3 hours and over 2000 were captured and taken as POWs to

serve out the war in a prison camp. With the carnage taking place upon landing on the beach, he attached himself to the Regimental Aid Post. In the eight hours to follow he assisted the Regimental Medical Officer in tending to the wounded. Many times he put his life at risk while he went forward to bring the wounded back to the safety of a stranded landing craft that was used as a Regimental Aid Post. When landing crafts appeared to begin the evacuation, he again moved the wounded from the cover of shelter to the landing craft with no consideration for his welfare. When the time came for him to be evacuated, he refused and stayed with the wounded men. He was taken as a POW and while imprisoned he served and ministered his men for three years until liberated with the surrender of Nazi Germany on May 5, 1945.

Page 1 of *The London Gazette*, February 14, 1946 (fig. 64) provides the details of the King's approval of the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to Honorary Captain John Weir Foote, Canadian Chaplain Services.

The citizens of Hamilton were informed of the awarding of the Victoria Cross to Chaplain Foote in February 12, 1946 issue of the *Hamilton Spectator*; (fig. 65). The same issue ran many stories and photos of Chaplain Foote. Two photos are shown in figures 66 and 67.

In 1948, after his military career was over, John Weir Foote was elected in the provincial election for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and served as the Progressive Conservative member of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Durham. He was first appointed as Deputy Commissioner for the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and after the 1951 election served as the Ontario Minister of Reform Institute. After several heart attacks, he resigned from the provincial legislature in 1959.

He returned to the RHLI in 1964, serving as Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel until 1973. On May 2, 1988, Foote passed away at his home in Cobourg, Ontario.



SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 12th of FEBRUARY, 1946

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

THURSDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, 1946

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE,
OTTAWA.

14th February, 1946.

THE CANADIAN ARMY.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

Honorary Captain John Weir FOOTE, Canadian Chaplain Services.

At Dieppe, on 19th August, 1942, Honorary Captain Foote, Canadian Chaplain Services, was Regimental Chaplain with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.

Upon landing on the beach under heavy fire he attached himself to the Regimental Aid Post which had been set up in a slight depression on the beach, but which was only sufficient to give cover to men lying down. During the subsequent period of approximately eight hours, while the action continued, this officer not only assisted the Regimental Medical Officer in ministering to the wounded in the Regimental Aid Post, but time and again left this shelter to inject morphine, give first-aid and carry wounded personnel from the open beach to the Regimental Aid Post. On these occasions, with utter disregard for his personal safety, Honorary Captain Foote exposed himself to an inferno of fire and saved many lives by his gallant efforts. During the action, as the tide went out, the Regimental Aid Post was moved to the shelter of a stranded landing craft. Honorary Captain Foote continued tirelessly and courageously to carry wounded men from the exposed beach to the cover of the landing craft. He also removed wounded from inside the landing craft when ammunition had been set on fire by enemy shells. When landing craft appeared he carried wounded from the Regimental Aid Post to the landing craft through very heavy fire.

On several occasions this officer had the opportunity to embark but returned to the

beach as his chief concern was the care and evacuation of the wounded. He refused a final opportunity to leave the shore, choosing to suffer the fate of the men he had ministered to for over three years.

Honorary Captain Foote personally saved many lives by his efforts and his example inspired all around him. Those who observed him state that the calmness of this heroic officer, as he walked about, collecting the wounded on the fire-swept beach will never be forgotten.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
14th February, 1946.

The KING has been graciously pleased, on the advice of His Majesty's Australian Ministers, to give orders for the following appointments to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the South West Pacific:—

To be Additional Members of the Military Division of the Third Class, or Companions, of the said Most Honourable Order:—

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

Major-General (temporary) Alan Hollick RAMSAY, C.B.E., D.S.O., E.D. (VX.27).
Major-General (temporary) Jack Edwin Stawell STEVENS, D.S.O., E.D. (VX.17).

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
14th February, 1946.

The KING has been graciously pleased, on the advice of His Majesty's Australian Ministers, to give orders for the following promotions in, and appointments to, the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the South West Pacific:—

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

To be Additional Commanders of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order:—

Brigadier (temporary) Rudolph BIERWIRTH, O.B.E. (VX.289).
Brigadier (temporary) John FIELD, D.S.O., E.D. (TX.2002).

Figure 64.

The London Gazette, February 14, 1946, which shows the proclamation of the awarding the Victoria Cross to Honorary Captain John Weir Foote. — *The London Gazette*, February 14, 1946



Figure 65.

Newspaper heading informing the citizens of Hamilton of the awarding of the Victoria Cross to Chaplain Foote. – *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 12, 1946



Figure 66.

Photo of Chaplain Foote with the description as to why he was awarded the Victoria Cross. – *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 12, 1946



Figure 67.

Photo of Chaplain Foote with his family. – *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 12, 1946

Commemorations

Royal Canadian Legion

The Royal Canadian Legion branch in Grafton, Ontario was renamed the Lt.-Col. John W. Foote V.C. C.D. Branch 580 in 1982 (see figure 68).

James Street Armoury

The James Street Armoury in Hamilton, Ontario was renamed the John W. Foote VC Armoury. It is home to the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, as well as The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's) and the 11th Field Regiment, RCA. A photo of the James St. Armoury is shown as figure 69. Other notices on the James St. Armoury pertaining to the name of John Weir Foote are shown in figure 70.

The RHLI Museum is located at the James St. Armoury and has Chaplain Foote's medals on display. They include his VC (fig. 71).



Figure 68.

Photo of Grafton Royal Canadian Legion Branch 580.¹⁹



Figure 69.

Photo of James Street Armoury in Hamilton, which was renamed the John W. Foote VC Armoury in his honour.
– www.historicplaces.ca



Figure 70.

Plaque and the name of the armoury. – www.cscomps.ca

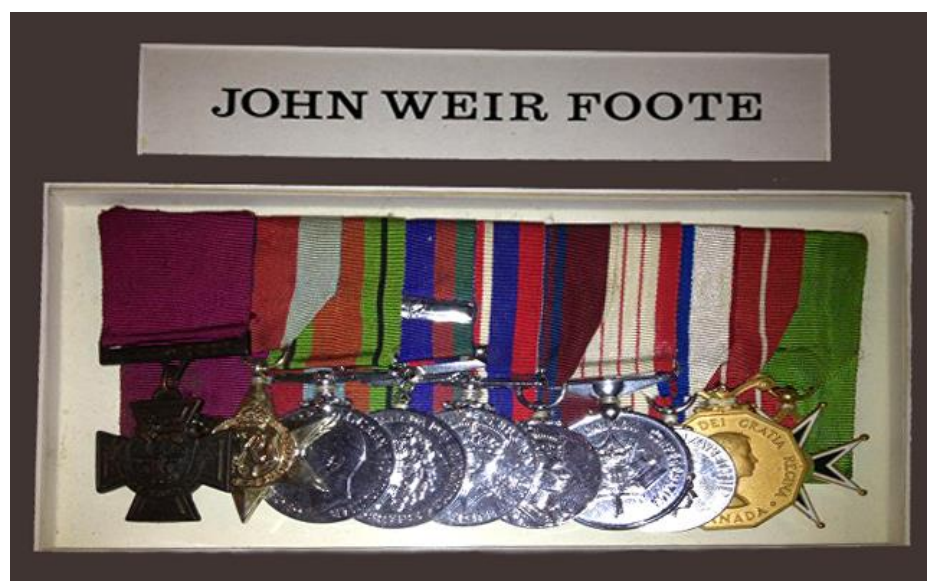


Figure 71.

Photo of Foote's medals and his Victoria Cross. – *Courtesy Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Museum*

Dieppe Veteran's Memorial Park, Hamilton, Ontario²⁰

On August 19, 2003, the 61st Anniversary of the Dieppe raid, the City of Hamilton dedicated the Dieppe Veteran's Memorial Park to The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. Figure 72 shows a photo of the front view of this memorial and figure 73 shows a plaque at the Dieppe Memorial honouring two Victorian Cross recipients: "Captain John Weir Foote, VC, Regimental Chaplain, The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry" and "Lt. Col. Charles Cecil Merritt, VC, Commanding Officer, The South Saskatchewan Regiment".



Figure 72.

Photo showing the Dieppe memorial at Hamilton, Ontario.

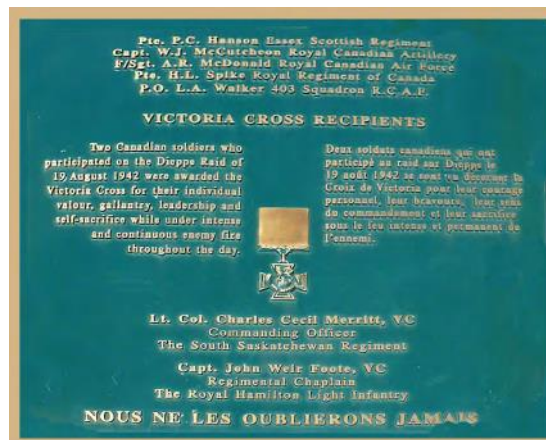


Figure 73.

Plaque honouring two recipients of the Victoria Cross for their actions on the beach at Dieppe.

Victoria Cross Commemorative Park, Currie Barracks in Calgary

A commemorative plaque honouring Captain John Weir Foote is placed at the Victoria Cross Commemorative Park in Calgary (fig. 74).

McGill University¹²

John Weir Foote was educated at the University of Western Ontario and Queen's University, and then attended the Montreal Presbyterian College at McGill University, graduating from their Theology program. The McGill Archives – McGill University War Records section has a folder containing Foote's war records and related newspaper articles and a photo. Figure 75 shows some of the Foote material in the archives.

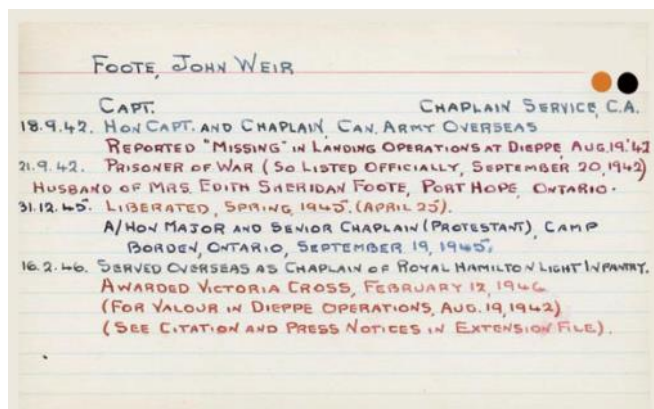


Figure 75.

Several items consisting of newspaper clippings, photos and records from the John Weir Foote folder at the McGill University archives.



Figure 74.

Plaque honouring Captain John Weir Foote at the Victoria Cross Commemorative Park in Calgary.

V.C. for Canadian Padre 512

Empire's Highest Award Won By Maj. J. Foote at Dieppe

OTTAWA, Feb. 12—(C.P.)—A big Presbyterian padre who refused evacuation from shell-torn Dieppe beaches to stay behind and save the lives of wounded men has become Canada's 14th Victoria Cross winner of the Second Great War and first chaplain of the Canadian armed forces ever to get the coveted medal.

Defence Headquarters early today announced the award to Maj. John Weir Foote, 41, native of Madoc, Ont., chaplain of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the

McGILL UNIVERSITY WAR RECORDS

John Weir Foote

Empire's 173rd V.C. of the war.

He is also the ninth member of the Canadian Army to win the V.C. and second Dieppe hero to be so honored. Lieut.-Col. Cecil Merritt of Vancouver is the other.

The thick-set, pipe-smoking padre with greying brown hair, left St. Paul's Church at Port Hope, Ont., to join the army. He landed with the Hamiltons on the big Canadian raid Aug. 19, 1942, and dressed the wounded. Then he refused evacuation and remained behind to continue his work and be taken prisoner—the same fate that overtook Col. Merritt.

The survivors of Dieppe told of the brave deeds of a "Padre X" who slung the wounded over his broad shoulder and walked the deathly beach from hell hole to shelter, saving lives and comforting the dying. It was nearly a year later that his identity became known.

Release Advanced

Announcement of his award had been set for Thursday when it will traditionally appear in the London Gazette, but a Toronto report led Defence Headquarters to make an immediate release.

Quiet, almost shy, Maj. Foote would not confirm the earlier unofficial announcement. A Canadian Press reporter found him preparing for bed at the home of friends in nearby Rockcliffe.

When the official announcement came — announcement that spoke eloquently of his deeds — a reporter telephoned the Major and told him the news. Well, if it finally was official, he would say something. He just wanted to say that the award was "a tribute to the chaplain services."

"I simply did my job as I saw it," he added.

The citation told how he became a first aid worker, operating from a post established in a slight depression only deep enough to give cover to men lying down.

He left the post time and again to hurry to the side of men in pain and give them morphine. Others he put on his shoulder and carried across the terrible beach.

"On these occasions," said his citation, "Foote exposed himself to an inferno of fire and saved many lives by his gallant efforts."

Aid Post Moved

The aid post was moved to a stranded landing craft and again the Major defied death in acting as a human ambulance in shifting the wounded. A fire broke out in the landing craft and once more the courageous padre shifted his wounded charges "through heavy fire, and with no consideration for his own safety."

When the evacuation started an attempt was made to get him to leave the beach but his only concern was the care of the wounded and "he refused a final opportunity to leave the shore, choosing to suffer the fate of the men he had ministered to for more than three years."

The citation concluded:

"Those who observed him state that the calmness of this heroic man as he walked about, collecting the wounded on the fire-swept beach, will never be forgotten."

Son of Mrs. Gordon Foote, now of Lakefield, Ont., and graduate of the University of Western Ontario, London, Maj. Foote was tending his wounded when the first wave of Germans swarmed over the beach in the wake of retreating Canadians.

Carrying men to the landing craft through the surf with his Army boots sodden and waterlogged was slow business. So, Maj. Foote took off his boots to speed up operations. That was why when the Germans rounded him up with others left on beaches the R.H.L.I. padre was barefoot. And barefoot he tramped for two solid days over broken stone, along the cinders bed of railway tracks and over rough country in a march which was taxing the endurance of well-shod men.

He continued to aid the wounded as the enemy organized the pris-

oners into groups for transportation inland. His long period of imprisonment saw him shifted to many camps but always able to carry out his chaplain work. He finally was permitted, through Red Cross intervention, to visit several camps and has been described among other things as a "walking newspaper" — passing items of information back and forth and keeping friends informed of each other's whereabouts, conveying the latest news on the progress of the war and generally doing much to bolster morale.

Freedom Comes

When the Russian steam-roller began its last drive last February, the panicky Germans started evacuating prisoners of war camps and Maj. Foote and his companions were started in forced marches toward Bremen. They were on the road 37 days, marching for 30 days and travelling in railway box cars for the remaining seven. They had only arrived at their destination a short time when British Grenadiers released them.

Evacuated to Britain, Maj. Foote went immediately to work teaching a course in Christian citizenship at Cranleigh, Surrey. He returned to Canada last August.

He is senior chaplain at Camp Borden and lives at Barrie, Ont., with Mrs. Foote, the former Edith Sheridan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Sheridan of Brockville, Ont. They have no children.

Maj. Foote, who plans to remain in the permanent force, entered the Presbyterian College, McGill University, Montreal, Fort Coulongue, Que., was his first parish.

His first Army appointment was with a unit of the engineers at Toronto. He transferred to the Hamiltons in March, 1940.

Mrs. Foote had heard of her husband's Dieppe exploits from survivors who had written to her to pay tribute to the hero. But her husband "never mentioned what he did, nor what happened on the beaches," she once said.

Maj. Foote's exploits remained in obscurity so long because many of those who knew what he did were in German prison camps. Among the prisoners was his Colonel, R. H. Labatt.

"No one will ever know and I can't tell you what John Foote meant to men and the regiment," said Col. Labatt.

Montreal Star,
February 12, 1946

Major John Foote of Camp Borden 'Padre X' of Dieppe is Given V.C.

Ottawa, February 12.—(Tuesday) — ⑦ — Defence Headquarters announced early today that Maj. John Weir Foote, 41, tall, rugged padre of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, who stayed behind at Dieppe, has become the 14th Canadian to win the Victoria Cross of the Second Great War and the first chaplain of the Canadian armed forces ever to win the Empire's highest award.

Announcement of the award originally had been set for Thursday, when it will be announced in the London Gazette, but a report from Toronto last night led Defence Headquarters to make an immediate release.

But quiet, almost shy, Major Foote, a native of Madoc, Ont., and Presbyterian minister at several places in Canada, had not been officially advised the announcement was official. A reporter found the second Canadian Dieppe V.C. hero preparing for bed at the home of friends in nearby Rockcliffe.

On leave from his present chaplaincy post at Camp Borden, 100 miles northwest of here, Major Foote had spent a quiet evening with his friends.

He smiled broadly and told his questioner he hadn't heard anything about a decoration. "I'm sorry," he said, "but I just can't say

anything about anything like that." But the citation which Defence Headquarters released a few minutes later spoke eloquently. It told how the tall padre went ashore with his regiment on the famous "reconnaissance in force" August 19, 1942—the expedition which had already marked Lt.-Col. Cecil Merritt of Victoria for a V.C.

For eight hours after the landing Major Foote assisted the medical officer in looking after the wounded, but time and again left the pitifully inadequate shelter to give morphine to the wounded and carry them to safety.

The citation added: "On these occasions Foote with utter disregard for his personal safety exposed himself to an inferno of fire and saved many lives by his gallant efforts."

Later he refused the opportunity to be evacuated preferring to stay with the wounded. He continued to save lives and those who watched him say the calmness of this heroic man as he walked about, collecting wounded on the fire-swept beach, will never be forgotten.

He was taken prisoner and remained in a prisoner-of-war camp as a hard-working chaplain until liberated by the British Grenadier Guards, April 25, 1945.

For weeks after the Dieppe raid, the story of Maj. Foote — known then only as Padre X — was told by Canadian survivors of the big raid who marvelled at his courage. "Padre X" became a Canadian legend, and it was not until April, 1943, that his wife, at Hamilton, Ont., disclosed his identity.

Mrs. Foote had heard the story of the famous padre from relatives of men at Dieppe. But her husband himself "has never mentioned what he did, nor what happened on the beaches at Dieppe," she told a gathering of relatives of servicemen at Hamilton on April 2, 1943. Other Dieppe heroes told her they saw Major Foote, then holding captain's rank, jumping from one of the last boats to leave Dieppe and struggling ashore again to join his men.

There was no list of prisoners announced immediately after the Dieppe raid, and the men who straggled back to England were able to tell only of the padre "who chose to stay behind."

Decoration of Maj. Foote would be the first V.C. to be conferred on the Chaplain Service of Can-

ada's armed forces, though other Empire units have had padres who won it.

A native of Madoc, Ontario, Maj. Foote was educated at Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario. He was a graduate of the Presbyterian Theological College, Montreal, in the class of 1934. He held charges at Bristol and Fort Coulonge, Quebec, and Port Hope, Ontario, before becoming a chaplain.

McGILL UNIVERSITY
WAR RECORDS

John Weir Foote
Montreal Star,
February 12, 1946

Figure 75.

Several items consisting of newspaper clippings, photos and records from the John Weir Foote folder at the McGill University archives.

McGILL UNIVERSITY WAR RECORDS

"Duty", Says V.C. Winner

Padre Modest on Bravery at Dieppe

OTTAWA, Feb. 12 — (C.P.) —

The Victoria Cross winner drew deep on his short-stemmed briar, blew out a thick curl of smoke and then replied in a quiet, slightly hesitant voice that his exploit at Dieppe was "a very ordinary piece of work."

It was Maj. John Weir Foote, Canada's most recent and 14th V.C. winner of the Second Great War, fidgeting under the grilling of 25 reporters in the parliamentary press gallery lounge.

With nervous modesty he repeatedly tried to keep the questions away from the blood and death of the Dieppe raid where he had refused evacuation to remain behind and carry men to safety on his broad shoulders.

Strictly As Duty

"I don't think a man should be a padre of a regiment and not go where they go," he explained with his black brows knitting in deep furrows. "Our regiment went to Dieppe and I went along strictly in the line of duty."

He thought newspaper reports of the raid gave a better picture of it than he could give and he said he thought he was indebted to the press for his honor, because the stories on Padre X, later identified as himself, had possibly brought attention to him.

Ross Munro, Canadian Press war correspondent, wrote the best story of Dieppe.

"In fact that correspondent is a marvellous reporter. He seems to get the real perspective of every action. His accounts are so well done that they are accepted and welcomed by men who fought in the actions."

Too Busy to Think

Pressed to give some of his impressions of the battle, he said it now was pretty hazy in his mind. He recalled the first spatter of enemy fire "seemed

a bit alarming but after that I didn't have much time to think."

He remembered the reassuringly cool exchanges between Royal Navy officers picking out limping craft. . . . He heard an officer tell the skipper of one landing craft "You shouldn't hang about too long there, you know."

There was no confusion. But when he stepped out of his disabled craft into shoulder-deep water he stepped on a mortar man who had gone under. "This chap came up damning me because he'd lost hold of his mortar."

They clambered ashore and the padre said he had helped Capt. Wesley Clare of Port Credit, Ont., and now a doctor at the Kingston, Ont., hospital, tend to the wounded.

Men of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry were falling on all sides and most of them already had given up their field dressings and had none for themselves.

"These were the brave ones who all did as much and more than I did," he said.

Moving about the beach "I wonder why I wasn't hit and I have never ceased to wonder why I am alive today."

Treatment Brutal

The front line Germans at Dieppe had been correct in their treatment when the Canadians were taken prisoner but as the Canadians moved inland treatment became brutal.

He disclosed for the first time that during the period when the Canadian prisoners were shackled, British prisoners slipped in past the guards and took over the shackles to relieve the manacled Canadians. The prisoners found they could undo the old-type shackles with sardine tin keys.

Describing his 30-day forced march from the eastern front before the Russian onslaught, Maj. Foote told of the work of Spr. Maurice Gauthier, a Quebec native who had worked in the mines at Timmins, Ont.

Kept From Starving

"This French-Canadian practically kept us from starving. He somehow managed to scrounge a pocket full of grain. Walking past a hen house he would lay a trail of grain to a spot where the guards weren't watching. Then he'd kill the unsuspecting chicken and that night we would all be given a leg or a wing or a piece of breast. How he managed it we never knew. His greatest feat was the theft of a pig."

Maj. Foote said that at one stage of the journey a group of Canadians broke into a bake shop and stole the entire night's production. But on the last seven days of their journey 50 of them were crowded in standing positions into one box car and were allowed only one loaf of bread. At one point the train stopped beside a station pump but the guards refused to let them get water, even though Canadians inside the car were dying from dysentery.

Army authorities were discussing the possibility of delaying the special investiture for Maj. Foote until after the arrival of the new Governor-General, Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander.

It is felt it would be appropriate that one of the first official functions of the famous war commander, who directed the Canadian Army Corps in Italy, would be a Victoria Cross investiture.

John Weir Foote

PADRE FOOTE, V.C.

Of all the stories of heroism which were told in abbreviated form in the days immediately after the abortive Canadian landing at Dieppe, there were few which played more upon the heart strings of the nation than that of the then unidentified padre who refused to leave the beaches, voluntarily remaining behind with the wounded.

"I simply did my job as I saw it," he explained in Ottawa last night, when it was announced that Major John Weir Foote had been awarded the Empire's highest symbol of gallantry — the Victoria Cross. He practically forced his regimental commander to take him along on the cross-Channel venture. On the bloodied beach he refused shelter, giving first aid and carrying wounded personnel from exposed positions to medical stations and then to landing craft. Repeatedly he refused to leave himself, saving no one knows how many lives, placing their value far beyond his own.

The full details of his day on the French coast are to be found elsewhere in this edition. There are stories, too, of the untiring effort he made through the following years of dreary imprisonment on behalf of the men whose lot he had willingly shared. It is a story of inspiration for men of all faiths everywhere.

This is the first time the Victoria Cross has been awarded to a padre of the Canadian Army, but there are a good many precedents for the distinction. The general impression is that the decoration can go solely to combat soldiers, but that is not the case. All ranks, and civilians, too, are eligible for the award, but to qualify recipients must have performed some conspicuous act of gallantry in the presence of the enemy. By that standard, Padre Foote certainly earned the addition of his name to the ranks of the Empire's military immortals.

Montreal Star,

February 12, 1946

McGILL UNIVERSITY
WAR RECORDS

Identity Revealed

SS16

**Chaplain Hero of Dieppe Raid
Took Theological Course Here**

**Capt. Rev. John Weir Foote Gave Up
Freedom to Care for Canadian Prisoners**

SOMEWHERE off the beaches of Dieppe a young chaplain plunged from the boat which was taking him to safety and struck out for shore, calling back to his mates, "These lads need me more than the boys in England." The chaplain who thus chose voluntary imprisonment in order to cheer other imprisoned Canadians was revealed in Montreal today as Capt. Rev. John Weir Foote, a graduate of the local Presbyterian Theological College.

Representative local Presbyterian clergymen today expressed concern for his well being, and pride in his action.

"I don't suppose we have any minister in the Church more likeable or human. This is just something that he would do. That man had a heart as big as a house," was the way Rev. Dr. Frank Morley, a close friend of the chaplain, put it.

Local Records Checked

News dispatches telling of the big raid on Dieppe mentioned the heroism of the padre, but he remained unidentified until today. Checking their records Church authorities locally noted that they had no record of any other Presbyterian chaplain reported missing overseas and were convinced that the man referred to in dispatches was Captain Foote.

He graduated from the Presbyterian College in 1934 and had previously attended Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario. His first ministry after graduation was at Fort Coulonge, Que., and he subsequently served at Port Hope, Ont., where he joined the chaplaincy service.

Authorities at the Presbyterian College also revealed today that George Porteous, a former student, and former secretary of the North Branch Y.M.C.A. was listed among the prisoners at Hong Kong, and that Capt. Rev. John Hall Patterson, of Montreal, serving as chaplain with a Scottish regiment, had been mentioned in despatches at Dunkirk.



—Photo by Rice.

Capt. Rev. J. W. Foote

Foote, John Weir

Montreal Star

September 16, 1942

OFFICIAL LIST

PREVIOUSLY MISSING, NOW PRISONERS OF WAR—

Canadian Armored Corps:

Dunlap, Jack Hunt, Lt., Mrs. Carmon Frances Dunlap (wife), Toronto.

Royal Canadian Artillery:

Saunders, Tait MacDonald, Lt., Allan James Saunders (father), Ottawa.

Central Ontario Regiment:

Foote, John Weir, Hon. Capt., Mrs. Edith Sheridan Foote (wife), Port Hope, Ont.

SEPT 20, 1942.

Montreal Gazette,
September 21, 1942

Figure 75.

Several items consisting of newspaper clippings, photos and records from the John Weir Foote folder at the McGill University archives.

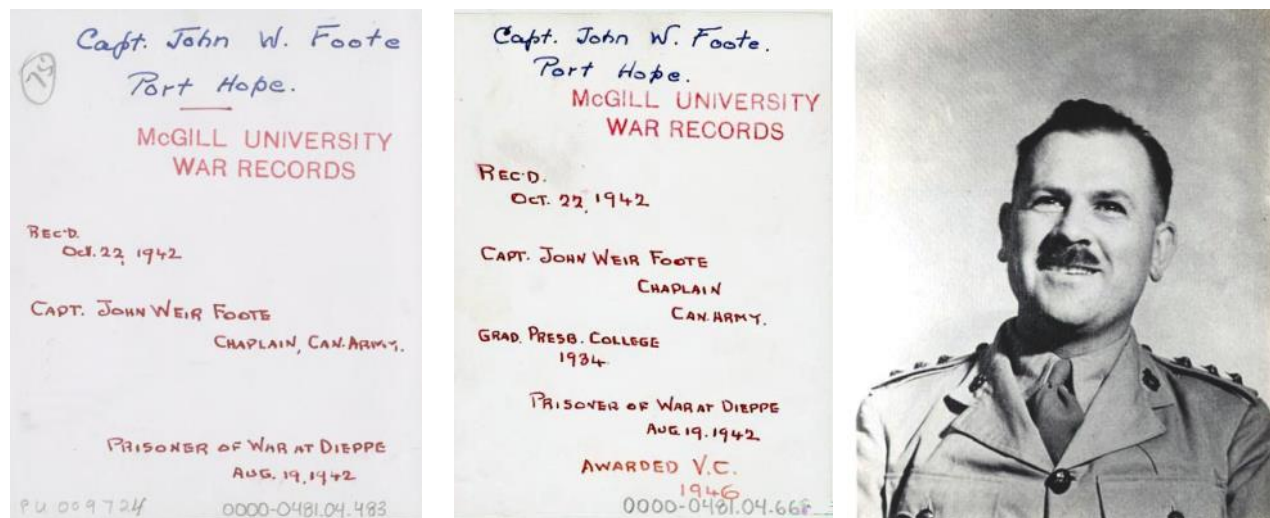


Figure 75.

Several items consisting of newspaper clippings, photos and records from the John Weir Foote folder at the McGill University archives.

Ontario Historic Plaques

The Ontario Historic Foundation, Ministry of Culture and Communications placed a commemorative plaque in Hastings County in honour of Chaplain John Weir Foote (see figure 76).

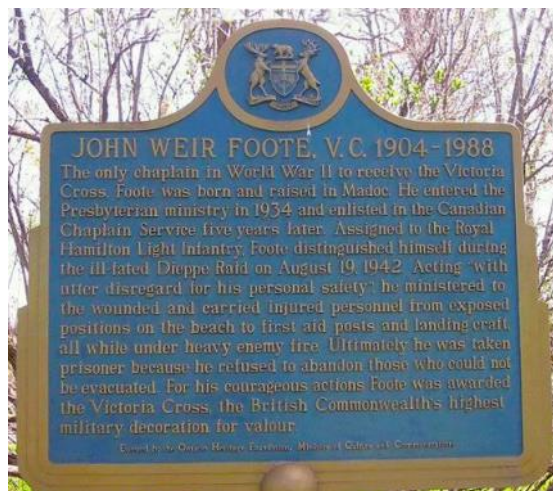


Figure 76.

An Ontario historic plaque commemorated in honour of Chaplain John Weir Foote VC. – Photo by L. Brown, www.ontariohistoricplaques.com

Chapter Footnotes

¹² McGill University Archives

¹⁸ McGill Reporter, McGill Publications, <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2017/08/reverend-john-weir-foote-the-hero-of-dieppe/>

¹⁹ Grafton Royal Canadian Legion branch 580, 10240 County Road 2, RR5, Cobourg, Ontario K9A 4J8. www.facebook.com/rc1580/

²⁰ Dieppe, War Memorial Hamilton, <http://ontariowarmemorials.blogspot.ca/2012/08/hamilton-dieppe-memorial.html>

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3. William Avery “Billy” Bishop – Library and Archives Canada
4. Veterans Affairs Canada, Orders and Decorations – Canadian Victorian Cross Recipients, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/medals-decorations/canadian-victoria-cross-recipients>
5. For Valour, Lance Corporal Fred Fisher, VC by Lieutenant Colonel William A. Smy Omm, CD, UE, 2010
6. Library and Archives Canada, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III, D1, Vol. 4745, Fodler 173, File 17, Fred Fisher.
7. Veterans Affairs Canada, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/belgium/Menin>
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12. McGill University Archives
13. University of Manitoba Libraries, Digital Collections
14. For Valour, Colonel Graham Thompson, VC by Lieutenant Colonel William A. Smy Omm, CD, UE, with Alexander F. D. Ferguson, 2009
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19. Grafton Royal Canadian Legion branch 580, 10240 County Road 2, RR5, Cobourg, Ontario K9A 4J8. www.facebook.com/rc1580/
20. Dieppe, War Memorial Hamilton, <http://ontariowarmemorials.blogspot.ca/2012/08/hamilton-dieppe-memorial.html>