

The Barrie Examiner
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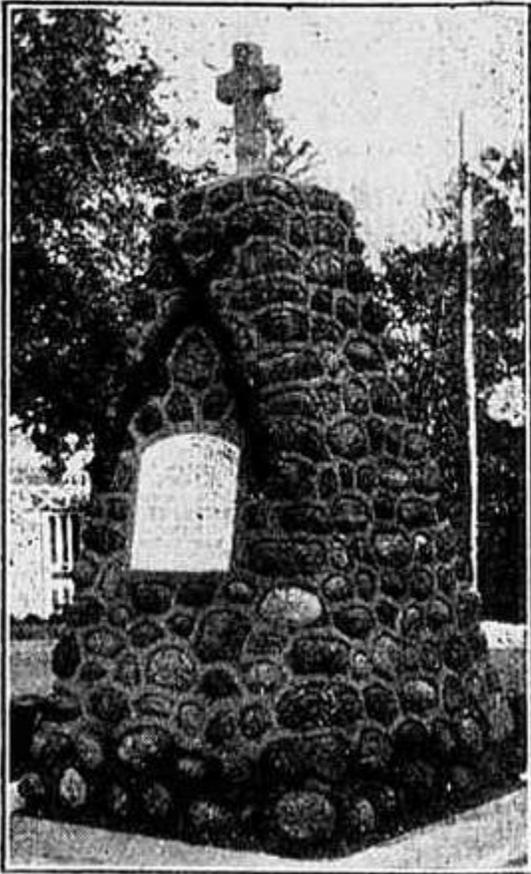
Vespra War Memorial Unveiled at Midhurst at 5th Legion Reunion

Ceremony Performed by Maj.-Gen. Cartwright of Toronto

LEGION FIELD DAY

Programme Carried Out Under Auspices of Vespra Post

VESPRA WAR MEMORIAL



Following is the list of Vespra men who fell in the Great War, and to whose memory the memorial now stands in Springwater Park, Midhurst.

Frederick Benson
Ernest Cloughley
Ernest A. Finlay
Frederick Higgins
H. Roy Hodgson
George Hodgson
James Miller Johnston
Arthur Jacobs
William Lang
Harry Lyfyt
Sidney Lennox
Harry Leggott
Robert Morgan
John Muir
Garnet Maw
M. Francis McAvoy
George Pringle
James Henry Priest
Roy Pratt
William Parko
Edwin Ruffett
Darcy Reynolds
William Ward

—Photo by Jackson.

In the presence of representative of the Canadian Legion from various parts of the county and of many citizens of the township, a war memorial for Vespra's sons who gave their lives in the Great War was unveiled at Springwater Park, Midhurst, on Monday afternoon, August 8. It had been expected that Gen. D. C. Draper of Toronto would do the unveiling, but he was unable to attend and Maj.-Gen. Geo. S. Cartwright, P.B., C.M.G., Toronto, came in his stead. The ceremony was one of the features of the annual re-union of the Simcoe County War Veterans, sponsored this year by the Vespra Post of the Canadian Legion.

The Memorial

The memorial cairn, which was erected on the suggestion of the Vespra Post, is composed of field stone gathered from the neighborhood. Douglas Ronald of Minesing designed it and the construction was done by Harvey Spence and Robert Mills, Midhurst. On the north face is a tablet, surmounted by crossed rifles, with the following inscription:

Lest We Forget
1914-1918
In Memory of the Vespra Boys
who died in the
Great War
Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori

In the south side a drinking fountain has been placed and above it are the very fitting words:
"Through sacrifice we drink of life."

The Latin inscription on the memorial, translated, is: "It is sweet and becoming to die for one's country."

The memorial has a charming location. It faces a pretty lily pool; on either side are beautiful white birches, while behind are glimpses of the springwater and the rock garden, with evergreens in the background. Money for the monument was raised by private subscription, supplemented by a small grant from Vespra township council.

The Unveiling

A sharp shower sent the people scurrying to cover about the time set for the ceremony but a few minutes later, the sun shone brightly when the veterans, led by Collingwood Kiltie Band, marched down the road and took their places on either side of the monument.

The brief dedicatory services were conducted by Rev. George Pogson of Minesing, chaplain of Vespra Post, and were followed with reverential attention by the large gathering present. "O Canada" by the band and the hymn, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." Rev. F. G. Stotesbury of Minesing read the Scripture lesson and Rev. Wm. Newman of Craighurst led in prayer.

Mr. Pogson in a short address, said that it was impossible to help those who had fallen in the war. They had sacrificed all that was dear to them but they asked nothing except that their memory might be respected. "This little memorial," he said, "is the least we can do to show our appreciation for what they did for us and it will be little indeed if we do not strive so to live that their dreams for the land they loved so well may be realized."

Maj.-Gen. Cartwright, after drawing the Union Jack which veiled the memorial, said "We unveil this monument to show honor and respect for those from Vespra who fell in the Great War. A cairn built of stone from nearby fields and constructed by local men seems especially suitable. Those who served in the war need no monuments to preserve its history and lessons, but it is very necessary to have monuments to remind the younger generation of what has happened."

Favors Military Training

The speaker said he was proud of being a Canadian and a Britisher and had served 35 years in the British Army. He did not agree with those who said military training should be abolished. "Disarmament will come eventually but until all nations disarm equally and until the present disturbed atmosphere

passes," he declared, "no nation can afford to go unprepared, even though we all hope there will be no more war."

He said that one of the main objects of military training was to produce good citizens and there was no better citizen than the British soldier. Military training teaches young men to be smart, punctual and respectful to others.

In conclusion, he said, "While we remember the past, we must do all we can to help those not in the best of luck and give a helping hand. Let us remember the living while we respect the dead."

After wreaths had been laid on the memorial by representatives of Penetang, Midland, Collingwood, Orillia and Vespra branches. Bugler Bob Peacock of Midhurst sounded The Last Post, and the service concluded with the National Anthem.

Veterans of 1885

Two veterans of the North West Rebellion were present in the persons of George H. Munro of Thornton and James Caston of Craighurst. The former belonged to No. 3 Co. of the Simcoe Foresters and the latter to No. 1 Co. They left Barrie on April 2, 1885, under Col. W. E. O'Brien and prior to Monday had met only once since 1885. On their trip west they went on the C.P.R. but had to march the incompleting gaps on this road, running from 20 to 40 miles. They recalled that they were nearly frozen on one of these marches, when the mercury dropped to 40 below zero. Mr. Caston says there is only one other member of his company living, Sergt. John McMullen of Midland. Mr. Munro could think of only three of his company now living, Joe Lang, Frank Perkins and Peter Curtiss, all of Barrie.

Among the visitors was Maurice Child of New York City, Past President of the British War Veterans of the U.S.A., and editor of their official paper. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Black Watch and on the last visit of the Prince of Wales to the U.S.A. was detailed as his personal escort. He and Mrs. Child motored over to Canada to visit Rev. Wm. and Mrs. Newman, Craighurst. Another guest at the Craighurst rectory, present on Monday, was Rev. J. O. Ralston of Winnipeg, former chaplain of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. These visitors spoke very highly of the appropriateness of the memorial and the beauty of its setting.

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