



The Bromley Sheaf

Bromley Historical Society Newsletter

Issue 4, 2023

President's Remarks

November 11, 1918, was a Monday, and in a railway carriage 60 kilometres north of Paris, France, the Armistice that would end World War I was signed.

The terms were agreed upon six hours earlier. The first article of the terms was that fighting would stop at 11 a.m. That has always seemed especially chilling to me - the agreement that it would be acceptable to continue killing each other for another six hours. Of course, there were practical reasons for the delay. Word had to get out: six hours and then stop fighting.

And back home? When did word reach them? 11 a.m. in Paris, France is 5 a.m. in Renfrew County and we can imagine families, just beginning their day or perhaps even roused from bed with the news. **The war is over! Thank God!**

But surely word had got out before that. Sometime during that wonderful ... horrible ... six-hour gap, the telegraph lines must have been humming. I've never heard any stories about it, but I imagine that communities gathered to wait and to hope and to celebrate. I don't think there was a lot of sleeping that night.

10 p.m. on November 10th until 5 a.m. on November 11th. I imagine the people came together, probably to the churches, because that's what people did in times of crisis. Telephones were rare but just about every church had bells and they rang them so that people would know that something important had happened. And hard on the heels of the sound came the news, passed from person to person. **The war is over ... or it soon will be. Count the hours. Count down the minutes. Breathe. Hope. Pray.**

In 2023, we are far removed from those events. We forget, all too frequently, that the history of war is the history of individuals and families and communities. And then the daily news reminds us. The war to end all wars ... wasn't.

Patricia Van Gelder

One Family: The Tradition of Freedom

In his 2003 book, *It All Began at the Upper Place*, Douglas native James F. Gallagher writes about his great-grandparents, Thomas and Elizabeth (McCourt) Gallagher. They left Ireland after the Famine (or the Great Hunger as the Irish termed it) and eventually settled near Douglas, Bromley Township. He poses the question: “Was this better than Ireland? In many ways, probably not, but surely the freedom offered by the forested new land and the prospect of good health and sufficient food was.”

Through genealogical research, the author found these early Bromley settlers were born in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland – Thomas in 1821 and Elizabeth in 1826. They were married in the parish of Enniskillen on November 22, 1851. The following year, the couple set sail for the new world possibly from Londonderry. However, their port of arrival was in the United States, either New York or Philadelphia. From there, they made their way to Rochester, NY, a robust industrial town.



Elizabeth (McCourt) Gallagher

Elizabeth’s mother and brother were already homesteading in Wilberforce Township near what is now known as Bulgers Corners. Their names appear in the 1851 Census. Although there are conflicting dates, it appears Thomas and Elizabeth and their first child born in the US came to the Third Chute in 1857. They settled on 163 acres, three miles south of present day Douglas. In family lore, this became known as the Upper Place.

Thomas and Elizabeth had seven daughters and a son: Elizabeth (Eliza) Jane (1853–1912), Isabella (1856–1940), Sarah Jane (1858–1948), Ellen (1862–1941), Teresa (1864–1924), Bridget Caroline (1866–1954), Rose Anne (1868–1952) and Thomas

(1870–1924). Thomas Sr. died on June 11, 1875. Elizabeth kept the farm and family together over the decades and passed away on January 11, 1922.

In James F. Gallagher's exhaustive look at his family history, it is clear that subsequent generations of Thomas and Elizabeth also valued freedom. Their second daughter, Isabella, married Patrick Conway in Douglas on September 18, 1882. The first of three sons, Timothy (Tim) Patrick was born in 1884. After his schooling, he headed north to Cobalt, where he worked as a miner, the profession given on his attestation papers, when he joined up to fight in World War I (WWI). After a brief period in England, Tim arrived in France on April 3, 1917 as a member of the 228th Battalion. He also served for a period of time in Belgium.

In his official discharge papers, Tim's duty was listed as a sapper, which comes from the French term for digging trenches. The tasks that sappers undertook as part of the war effort included building roads, bridges, railways, airfields, and anti-tank and other obstacles, laying and removing demolition charges and mines, and spearheading amphibious assaults by preparing invasion beaches for subsequent landings.

Given his profession as a miner, it is not surprising he was assigned this dangerous duty. Armistice Day found Tim alive and uninjured. Following the war, he was assigned to the Nova Scotia Regiment Depot in Hants, England. He sailed for home on March 3, 1919 and returned to his work as a miner. He returned home frequently to visit his grandmother Elizabeth and his extended family, never married, and died in Toronto on December 15, 1954.

The Gallagher's fifth daughter, Teresa, married Michael Neville on November 20, 1883. Among their 10 children was their second, Michael John (known as Mac), born in 1886. An electrician by trade, Mac took an oath of attestation for the army on March 26, 1915. Shortly after, he married Margaret Walsh. On July 23, he set sail for England. Mac arrived in France for active duty the following year on June 17.

July 1, 1916 was the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, the bloodiest offensive in human history. On the very first day roughly 60,000 Allied troops lay dead or seriously wounded. The month of September brought relentless rain that turned the battlefield into a quagmire that ensnared both men and horses. Over the course of the battle, approximately 1.2 million men were killed or wounded.

Among the dead was Michael John. Army records indicate that he died of wounds in the No.3 Canadian Field Ambulance on September 26. He was buried in Albert Communal Cemetery Extension, about 20 km from Amiens.



Michael John (Mac) Neville's gravestone

Thomas and Elizabeth's sixth daughter, Bridget Caroline, married Peter Dooling of Admaston on June 28, 1891. The couple's third child and second son, Timothy Leo, was born February 13, 1897. Working for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), he enlisted on May 21, 1918, signing up with the 1st Central Ontario Regiment, 1st Depot Battalion. Aged 21, Tim arrived in England on June 21 after a three-week voyage. In October, he was transferred to the 75th Battalion, Canadian Infantry to serve in France. The Armistice was signed on November 11, so Tim's active duty was brief. He was discharged from the army on June 8, 1919.

Returning to Canada he resumed working with the CPR, married Catherine (Katie) Gracie in 1924, and settled in North Bay where together they raised four children. He was active in the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and loved chatting about politics and unions as well as his sons' hockey achievements.



Timothy Leo Dooling

The tradition of duty to family and country continued into World War II (WWII) and the newer generation. Thomas and Elizabeth's only son, Thomas Junior, had married Margaret Dourley on January 20, 1903 in Fallowfield, near Ottawa. They settled on the original Gallagher farm near Douglas. Their third son, Leonard James, was born July 14, 1914. A bright student, he studied at the Kemptville Agricultural School from 1931 to 1933, and then returned to his hometown to work for the Douglas Creamery. There he mastered skills in butter making, which were well-known: in fact, he won first prize at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. In the late 1930s, he went to Ottawa to take a position with Clark Dairy.

On July 1, 1942, Leonard enlisted and joined the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. He was at Juno Beach in the Battle of Normandy when the men were able to secure safe landing zones for reinforcements that were being sent. Nonetheless, in this battle about 5,000 Canadians were killed and one of Leonard's tasks was to bury the fallen. Promoted to sergeant, he also saw duty in Belgium and the Netherlands.

For his work, Leonard was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the France and German Star, the Defence Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, and the War Medal.



Leonard James Gallagher

He returned to Douglas in March 1946. The following year, on November 15, he married Margaret Ann (Marge) Lynch of Douglas. They eventually settled on an Admaston farm and had four children.

It is clear that across generations, Ottawa Valley folk are made of solid stock. The first settlers came hoping for freedom and a better life. Their descendants followed in their footsteps ensuring the world remained free by fighting tyranny and liberating occupied countries.



Just a Month Before

Jim and Theresa (Bertridge) Kenney were neighbours of the Gallaghers. Originally from Arnprior, they purchased the farm next to the Gallagher property, known as the Upper Place. They were related through marriage as one of their sons, Bill, married Minnie Dourley, a sister of Margaret (Dourley) Gallagher, the wife of Thomas Jr. Another son, Michael (Mick) J., who was born on March 25, 1890, enlisted in the army at Toronto on January 21, 1918. He gave his profession as a miner.

Mick left Canada on February 4, 1918 and arrived in France on May 11, where he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, Canadian Engineers. He entered battle on August 8. On September 28, Private Kenney, aged 28, was dangerously wounded in the abdomen and taken to the No.7 Canadian Field Hospital. He died from his injuries on October 12, almost a month before Armistice was declared. He was buried in Etaples Military Cemetery in Pas de Calais, France.



Etaples Military Cemetery





MARK YOUR CALENDAR: UPCOMING 2023 TALKS

Note: The October 28 talk is postponed and will be rescheduled for next year.

Saturday, October 28

Yesterday & Today: The Tradition Continues
Wendy Jocko
2:00pm, Barr Line Community Centre
1766 Barr Line, Douglas,
Co-sponsor: Algonquins of Pikwakanagan

Saturday, November 4

For Those Who Fought For Freedom
Fay Bennett
2:00pm, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 550
43A Main St, Cobden
Co-sponsor: RCLB 500

For Those Who Fought For Freedom

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In partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion (Cobden Branch 550), the Bromley Historical Society is pleased to present well-known local archivist and historical researcher Fay Bennett who has been documenting the stories of the veterans from Whitewater Region who served in World War I (WWI) and World War II (WWII). The event, which is free to the public, will take place on Saturday, November 4, at 2pm in the Legion hall, 43A Main St, Cobden.

Fay has been gathering the names of these Whitewater Region's men and women, as well as others in Renfrew County, from a number of sources including the Royal Canadian Legion, War Memorial Monuments. Honor Rolls located in churches in Whitewater Region, local Women's Institute lists and old newspaper articles. Under this project, she has identified a total of 245 WWI veterans including 42 casualties, and 558 WWII, veterans, including 52 who lost their lives in the defence of freedom.

Those included in this project include individuals born in Whitewater Region, lived here at time of enlistment, or had parents from Whitewater Region who had moved to another location by the time the enlistee was born. The project's scope also includes some men and women from Bromley Township. In this project, profiles have been

completed for all of the WWI casualties. Where possible, the profile includes a brief immediate family history, a military photograph and service summary, circumstances of death, war grave information, newspaper clippings and memorials where the individual is remembered.

The legal age of enlistment was 18; however, many younger boys provided a false date of birth. Many of these young men listed their occupation as farmer; however, several were students at Renfrew Collegiate Institute while one was at Queen's University. A few were employed in industrial or construction work, but there was also a druggist, Royal North West Mounted Police officer, barber, tailor, and railroad worker. Geographically, there were nine casualties from Cobden, three casualties from Bromley Township, 10 from Ross Township, one from Admaston Township, and 19 from Westmeath Township area. Four of the young boys who died in WWI were British Home Children placed or living in the region.

It is heartening to know that there are a number of projects underway to document the service of those who gave the supreme sacrifice – Lest We Forget. These include:

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial, hosted by Veterans Affairs Canada www.veterans.gc.ca/eng, and The Commonwealth War Graves Commission <https://www.cwgc.org/>.



There are a variety of sites dedicated to the history of specific regiments and some dedicated to specific locales, honouring their own war dead. Several research teams have sprung up including the foundation Faces to Graves in the Netherlands <https://facestograves.nl/>. Members of this foundation are writing life stories to pay tribute to the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives fighting for their freedom during WWII in the Netherlands, so they will never be forgotten.

If any members have information to contribute regarding any of the 803+ individuals that this project is focused on, or you would like to help out with this project in any way, please contact Fay Bennett by emailing her at faygen@nrtco.net.

Faye's presentation to our Society will include: a description of the scope of the project; a summary of the results to date; an introduction to some of our Region's WW1 and WW11 casualties; examples of how these young men were honored in our Region; and a summary of how to go about researching your family member who was killed in WW1 or WW11.



PLEASE JOIN US

Renew your annual membership – Individual \$10.00 or Family \$15.00.

- **Send your cheque along with your name, street address and e-mail coordinates to: Bromley Historical Society, c/o Box 1, Douglas, ON, K0J 1S0.**
- **Charitable donations receive a tax receipt.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ **E-mail Address:** _____

I wish to join: Individual \$10.00 _____ Family \$15.00 _____ I wish to donate: \$_____.

Yes, I would like to volunteer. My interests are:

And join us on Facebook!

Our Society can now be found on Facebook. Under the able hands of Connie Matthews-Cull, we will post old photographs and stories about our township's history. Please join the page and feel free to add your own photos and memories of days gone by.