

Langley Heritage Society

{Summer 2020}

Langley Heritage Society
PO Box 982 Stn Fort Langley
Langley, BC V1M 2S3

"Providing the window into the past to preserve Langley's heritage for today and tomorrow"

President's Message

The Langley Heritage Society Directors wish to thank everyone for participating in the year end requirements of the Societies Act. It is very important that we support our community partners who are struggling to adapt to this unexpected situation.

Although the Fort Langley CNR Station facilities are not open, the public is still able to enjoy a seat on a bench and our site with its historic garden. I wish to thank Helen, the directors, volunteers, and our caretaker who have maintained the site for the enjoyment of everyone.

Unfortunately, our history is not respected by everyone. Township of Langley engineering has shut off the flow of water from the artesian well in the pumphouse at Murrayville. The water had flowed continually for over 92 years and had served the local school and Municipal Hall, and was an important part of our community history. The lack of consultation is very concerning.

The directors wish everyone continuing good health as we prepare our homes and gardens for the changing season.

Fred Pepin
LHS President

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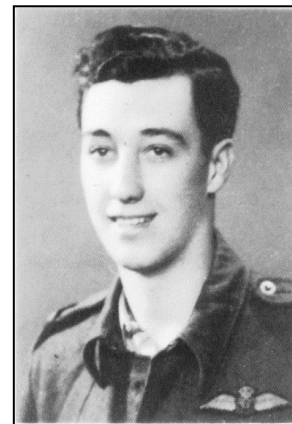
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Langley Remembers

Seventy-five years after the end of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific, Langley historian and author Warren Sommer reflects on Langley's participation in and commemoration of the two world wars.

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 100th anniversary of the dedication of Langley's twin war memorials. As Remembrance Day approaches it seems appropriate to have a closer look at Langley's sacrifices during the two world wars.



Pictured left to right:

Earl George Jaynes, RCN. Killed in Action (North Atlantic) 19 September 1941. Age: 20

Jessie (Lee) Middleton, Canadian Army Nurse.

Jack Sendall, RCAF. Killed in Action (Sudan) 30 June 1943. Age: 23

When the First World War broke out in August 1914 the combined population of what are now the City and Township of Langley was little more than 3,500. An additional few dozen people lived on the adjacent Kwantlen and Katzie Indian reserves. Langley residents joined in the war effort with considerable and sustained enthusiasm, with up to one-half of the community's adult male population serving in uniform at some time during the following four years. Their wives, mothers, and children assisted in their own way: raising funds through a seemingly endless series of bake sales, dances, and concerts; knitting thousands of pairs of socks; sending parcels of tobacco and baked goods to soldiers and sailors serving overseas; and scavenging bits of metal for recycling as armaments and ammunition.

Amid all the patriotic activity there was also anxiety and grief. Picking up the family's mail at the local post office gave cause for trepidation, a letter postmarked "Ottawa" potentially announcing a loved one declared missing, wounded, or killed in action. Although bad news

might be received at any time, the majority of ominous letters arrived a few weeks after Canada's major engagements with the enemy at Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, and Cambrai. Sadly, by the time the war had ended one out of every ten young men who had enlisted from Langley lay buried in France, Flanders, or England.

Despite these losses, the declaration of the armistice that effectively ended the war on 11 November 1918 was a day of celebration. Community members gathered at Murrayville's Five Corners where, as fifteen-year-old Florence Cassidy recorded, returned soldier Quint Gosling crafted a stuffed Kaiser, "dressed him all up and strung him up on the telephone wires." Fort Langley residents celebrated twice, having received news that the armistice would take place on 10 November. Undeterred, they gathered at the old fort site for the second night in a row, their ranks swelled by a parade of cars from Milner and Murrayville whose passengers arrived waving flags, hooting their horns, and singing patriotic songs. The celebrations rose to a fever pitch as the entire assembly joined in burning the Kaiser in effigy.

Elated by all the celebratory activity, Florence Cassidy related that people throughout Langley "really did have a bear of a time . . . I guess we will always be having a big time on the 11th of November every year." Despite Florence's prediction, the anniversary of the armistice did not become a day of annual celebration. Too much blood had been shed to warrant any form of merriment. Commemoration, not partying, became the order of the day, not just in Langley, but throughout the nation.

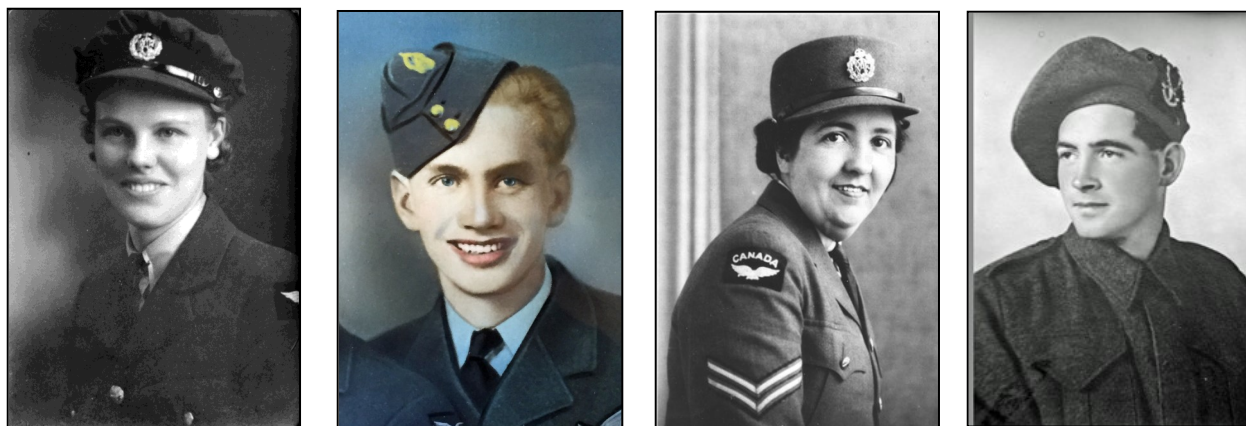
Langley was quick to honour its fallen: commissioning plaques, renaming streets, constructing community halls, and planting memorial trees. Perhaps most importantly, two stone war memorials, each in the form of a Celtic cross, were funded by public subscription and erected in the municipally-owned cemeteries in Fort Langley and Murrayville. Both became the sites of annual services of remembrance, though initially, not on the anniversary of the Armistice.

The two memorials were dedicated in the autumn of 1920. The ceremonies were sombre events as residents sang hymns, joined in prayer, and paused to remember the three-dozen young men who had died in uniform and whose names were inscribed on the monuments. Subsequent services were held in the spring, though apparently not in every year. It was not until 1931 that federal legislation established 11 November as a day of national remembrance.

In September 1939 Canada was at war again. Over 650 young men and women enlisted from the still sparsely-populated community, not just in the nation's army and navy, but also in the more recently formed Royal Canadian Air Force. During the previous war, women had only been able to serve as nurses. By 1942, their opportunities in the military had increased, each

branch of the service having developed a female arm incorporating activities ranging from drafting and driving to cooking and code-breaking. Many young women served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps, where they were popularly known as CWACs. Some enlisted in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service as "Wrens"; others joined the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (CWAAF).

Men who had served in the First World War, now middle-aged, often enlisted for home service, some in the armed forces, others in the Air Raid Precaution (ARP), an organization charged with enforcing the nation's blackout regulations. Still others enlisted in the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, a unit entrusted with protecting the province in the event of a Japanese invasion. People in uniform became commonplace on Langley's streets, with dozens based at the recently-created Naval Radio Station Aldergrove. Members of "C" Company of the Royal Westminster Regiment drilled at Langley Prairie's Athletic Association Hall. Airmen training at Ladner occasionally



Pictured left to right:

Dora (Cripps) Datwiler, RCAF cook

Joseph Trevor Yeomans, RCAF. Killed in Action (England) 14 July 1944. Age: 22

Jean (Monahan) May, RCAF cook

Robert Samuel Monahan, Seaforth Highlanders. Killed in Action (Italy) 21 July 1943.

landed their aircraft on the primitive runway at what later became the Langley Regional Airport. As in the previous war, civilians also did their bit, not the least of which included preparing packages for those serving overseas and operating a canteen in the Langley Amateur Dramatic Society's hall.

Langley residents were able to follow the progress of the war as they listened to newscasts on CKNW and CBC Radio or picked up copies of the *Vancouver Province* or *New Westminster Columbian*, while the *Langley Advance* kept readers abreast of activities on the home front. The *Advance* also had the grim duty of reporting the community's losses, whether in the waters

of the North Atlantic, in the skies over Germany, in the hills of Italy, or on the beaches of Normandy. By the time the war ended in the summer of 1945, some forty men from Langley had made the supreme sacrifice, their names later being added to the existing war memorials. Seventy-five years later Langley's two original war memorials and newer ones in Aldergrove and Douglas Park continue to be the focus of Remembrance Day services. Held to remember the fallen, the services also honour those who served in uniform, while offering hope that war and sacrifice will become things of the past.

(Warren Sommer is the author of several books about Langley including *Canucks in Khaki: Langley, the Lower Mainland, and the Great War of 1914 to 1918*, available by contacting warren_sommer@telus.net or by calling 604-888-0017).

Down By The Station

In July, the Fort Langley CNR Station roof was replaced with an upcycled version of shakes made from recycled tires. The dogwood blooms by the passenger car were magnificent, and the new heritage plantings in Mrs. Simpson's garden are well-rooted for fall.

Starting in August, our station volunteers are enjoying monthly speakers (with Covid protocols in place) to continue learning and to stay in touch. Sadly, one of our wonderful volunteers has moved away from Langley.



We thank Regina for her many hours staffing the station and help creating the railway station garden tour. We miss you and Arnie bringing Penny to visit. Photos: Helen Williams

They Came For Love

First World War Brides to Langley

By Annette Fulford

Thousands of young women came to Canada after the First World War as war brides. Yet we rarely hear stories about these pioneering war brides.

Many young women signed up with one of the newly formed organizations to support the war effort or worked in jobs that were traditionally held by men in Britain. They met Canadian soldiers who were sightseeing, at dances, visiting with their family, or when the soldiers were recovering in hospital from wounds. By war's end, the Canadian soldiers were marrying at a rate of 1,000 marriages per month.

The voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to Canada took seven to ten days on average. Most ships left from Liverpool. War brides and their children were given berths in the overcrowded steerage section of the ship which was below deck lacked proper amenities for women travelling with small children.

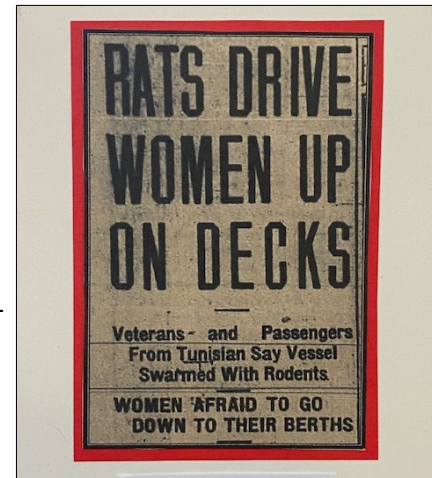


R.M.S. Metagama. Photo: Annette Fulford

It was difficult to travel to Canada in 1919. The year was fraught with complications including a shortage of ships, dockyard strikes, unrest at demobilization camps in England, a coal shortage, and a worldwide flu pandemic which caused delays in travel.

Once they arrived in Canada at an eastern port, many war brides had up to an additional five-day journey to travel across our vast country to their destination. They travelled by colonist train cars which were considered basic transportation used by the railways.

The railway cars were devoid of luxury and contained hard wooden benches that could be folded down to make a lower berth for sleeping on at night. A utilitarian upper berth folded down from the roof. At one end of the car was a stove used for cooking meals and provided heating during the winter.



Article: Calgary Herald,
January 9, 1919

Source: Annette Fulford

For new immigrants travelling across Canada bedding was not provided; they had to supply for their own needs. For the soldiers' dependents, however, the immigration authorities provided them with free mattresses, blankets, and pillows from the military stores.

Doris Ellis (known as Dorice) was 18 years old when she joined the war effort with the Women's Legion in 1915. She was posted to Rouen, France as a secretary for almost two years. She was interviewed in 1962 and gave details about her work during the war:

"She received three weeks training at St. George's Club and was then posted to Rouen in France. She was secretary to General Vivian at Palace Archeveche, it being the 3rd Echelon and served there from the early part of 1915 until 1917."

In July 1917, she joined the newly formed Women's Auxiliary Army Corp (WAAC) and served with them until April 1918. After leaving the forces she was employed at the Demobilization Centre in London, which was most likely where she met her pilot.

Thomas Fox Naylor joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in June 1915 and went overseas to France with the 53rd Battalion as a private. In October 1916, he was in hospital suffering from a gunshot wound to his wrist. By 1918, he was awarded a commission as a flight cadet in the Royal Air Force.



Doris Ellis. Photo provided by: Kathleen Honey

In 1920, Doris travelled to Canada on the ship *Metagama* to be married in Langley. The *Province* published a notice about the wedding, which took place at the groom's family home on October 4, 1920:

"A very quiet wedding was solemnized at the home of Mr. C. Naylor, Langley Prairie, on Monday, when Mr. Thomas Naylor of Princeton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Naylor of Langley Prairie, and Miss Dorice May Ellis, also of Langley Prairie, recently of London, England, were united in marriage. Rev. H. E. Horton of Cloverdale performed the ceremony. The bridegroom served with the C.E.F. and the R.A.F. in France and was with the British Mission at Archangel."

Tragically, he died eight months later of tuberculosis in Vancouver. Doris went to England for a short time in 1922 to visit family then returned to British Columbia to marry Ernest Dann of Cloverdale. Together they started Dann's Electronics, a business she was involved in until her death.

Doris was active in her community. She joined the Canadian Legion, Cloverdale Branch Women's Auxiliary in 1931 and served in many different roles including the president. She was given a lifetime membership in 1971 for 40 years of service. She was also active with the Red Cross for many years and served as president and treasurer with the organization. She was given a service award for her work in 1950. Doris died in 1976, living in Canada for a total of 56 years.

(If you would like to add your war bride to a register of WWI War Brides, please send Annette an email at wwiwarbrides@shaw.ca.)

C.A.R.E.S. Walk & Tour of Historic Milner

C.A.R.E.S. 17th Annual Walk became a Covid-friendly walk and tour through historic Milner raising funds to feed, clean, care for, and find homes for their no-kill cat shelter.

After a tour of the shelter, in the historic Moir House outbuildings, each small group was taken on a walk through the area's heritage sites learning interesting facts on how Milner developed in 1877.

The thriving community had a bank, general store, blacksmith shop, two churches, community hall, livery, BC Telephone Exchange, cheese factories, and numerous farms.



LHS director Carol Briner stopped outside Maxwell Barn located on a land parcel that was once the Hudson's Bay Company Farm. Dairy farmer John Maxwell and his 10 children farmed here and shipped their milk via the BC Electric Railway from Milner Station.

Photo: Helen Williams

C.A.R.E.S. Adoption Center at
Langley PetSmart is OPEN

LHS AGM

August 24, 2020, all members in good standing were mailed a package containing a letter instructing them of the AGM mailed -in ballot process, ballot, and self-addressed stamped envelope.

A total of 84 ballots were received by the post-marked date of September 18, 2020. LHS director Ellie Bosh, past LHS director Sharon Johnson, and Helen Williams conducted the ballot count.

The mailed-in ballot results for the people put forth by the Nominating Committee were: 82 voted "Yes", 1 voted "No", and 1 ballot was spoiled.

Members wishing to receive a digital copy of the LHS Annual Report 2020 can request a copy by emailing, info@langleyheritage.ca.

LHS Speaker Schedule & Events

With gathering restrictions during Covid-19, regularly scheduled members' meetings are temporarily suspended. Please consult our website, Facebook page, and watch for emails called **Updates from the Langley Heritage Society** for announcements. Thank you for your understanding.

Supporters & Suppliers

Langley Heritage Society wishes to express our gratitude to all our volunteers and supporters who contribute to our projects.

David Hockin @ **DJ Hockin Painting & Decorating**
604-850-8520

Ken Wong @ **Genesis Alarms**
604-588-1313

Barbara Bryson @ **Wisteria Guest House in the Fort**
604-888-4912

Bob McPherson, electrician
604-530-8715

Nufloors
604-533-4231

Robertson Plastics
604-533-4055