

# BALMY BEACH CLUB



**HISTORY SERIES**



**LEST WE FORGET**

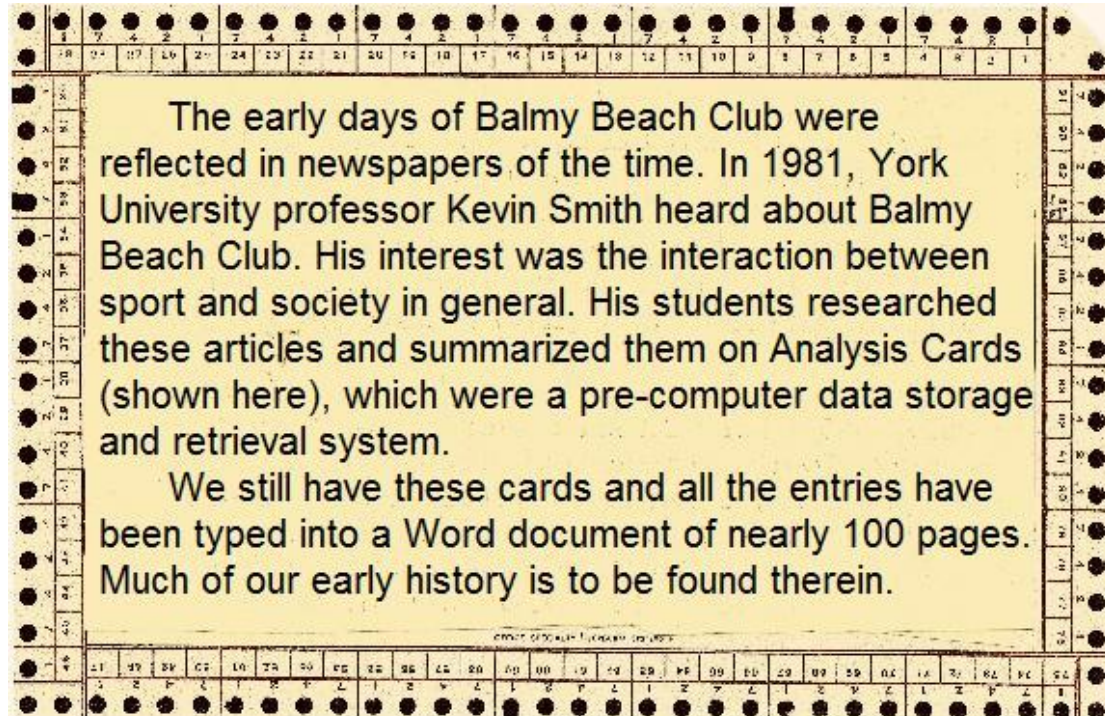
**KEVIN McCONNELL**

**A complimentary PDF to share and/or print**

Ken Bingham is the quintessential Club member (Hall of Fame, Sillers Award, Lifetime Member) and former historian. Without Ken's decades of collecting and storing material (newsletters, regatta & football programmes, press clippings, trophies, plaques, crests and medallions), this effort would have been nearly impossible.



Special thanks to Chris Commins' family.





The Harriers were a West End YMCA group, which rented a summer cottage east of the Club. They were some of the Club's 1<sup>st</sup> members.



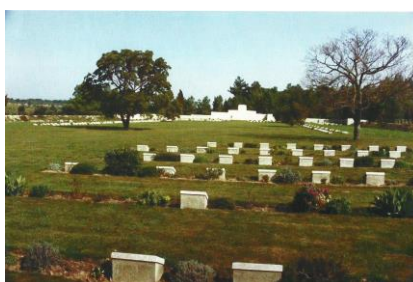
**Harriers' photos: Cadets on beach**

**1914 August 26:** Toronto World - A large dance is being given by the Balmy Beach Club in aid of the hospital ship. Everything has been given, the club contributing their hall and rooms and club dance night, and the decorations and refreshments have been given by some of the leading merchants in town, and also the music, so this will be one of the most enjoyable and successful events held for this great cause. Lady Whitney, Mrs. H. C. Hocken, Mrs. D. A. Dunlap and the York Chapter of the Daughters of the Empire are personally helping and selling tickets.

**1914 Monday December 14:** The dance in honour of BBC soldier members held in the clubhouse on Saturday evening was most successful. There was very much a military tone, with rifles hanging. Many photographs were taken to be put on a scroll and taken to England, also to be seen at the Club's motion picture night.

**1915 Wednesday March 24:** Balmy branch of Women's Patriotic League is holding an open house for all interested ladies, Thursday from 2 to 5 P.M.

**1915 December 20:** The author's uncle, George Blake, was killed in action in the Helles, Turkey at the age of 19 and is buried there in Reboubt Cemetary.



**George Henry Blake: Drummer, 4<sup>th</sup> Bn., London Regt (Royal Fusiliers)**

**1916 Friday, January 14:** Balmy Beach's Honour Roll: The entire football team of the Balmy Beach Canoe Club, together with 6 spare men, have enlisted. Eighteen of the players, who made an enviable reputation in the City League, have donned the uniform of the 34<sup>th</sup> Battery, Canadian Field Artillery of Kingston and two others have joined the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Berlin. The Balmy Beach Club has 98 (?) men in khaki. Of the last season's war canoe crew 13 of the 15 men have also enlisted while 11 of the 15 men who wore the orange and blue in 1914 are also in the King's service. The Balmy Beachers have had a contribution in men for the new Sportsmen's Battalion, which was authorized by the Militia Dept. last night.





**January 24, 1916: Pte. Garland Schusto, Helen Bond, Tom MacSweeney, Lce. Corp. Roy Douglas Forrest, Marjorie Bond, Pte. Charles Hebert, Ida Elleanor, Karl Fox, Gladys Thompson, Rollet Taylor**

**1916 Saturday February 19:** BBC held their annual at-home dance in the form of a military night. The dance was one of their most successful ever. The military aspect came to life because of most of the members in their uniform. A buffet dinner was served in the main lounge.

**1916 May 10:** Ottawa Citizen - Western Assn. To Suspend .Toronto. Clubs will not have regatta Will...and Allister MacKonzle and Balmy Beach George McDonald McDonald Cecil Maile (3<sup>rd</sup> BBC Commodore 1909-1910) has been reported wounded

**1916 Tuesday July 4:** Bantam lawn bowling tournament rendered B company (216<sup>th</sup> Battalion) by Kew Beach and Balmy – primary competition was won by Kew after a very close game – officers of B Company were very proud of the players who took part and those who donated the prizes

**1916 Thursday, July 6:** Annually the Beaches branch of the Patriotic League hold a day to replenish their funds for Red Cross work. Last Friday & Saturday, they held a summer sale at Balmy Beach, at which they raised about \$1000 which will go to the Red Cross Fund of the branch



### **3RD PLATOON CYCLISTS (1916c)**

It was decided that bicycles had an advantage over horses. The horses had to be fed, groomed, tethered (they often wandered off) and treated as they were occasionally wounded.

The cyclists had combat duties, but often fulfilled secondary roles: directing convoys, guarding prisoners, holding ground gained.

Five divisions of Canadian cyclist companies were soon reduced to the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion (1916, May 16) due to high casualties.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Cyclists consisted of many from east end Toronto, particularly the Beaches.

See YouTube



**Lce-Corp. Towers, 4 Munro Park Ave.**

**Lt. Snow, G. A., 216 Balmoral**

**Pte. ..By**

**Pte. Crabbe, H. B., 199 Kingswood Rd.**

**Pte. Derrick, R. G., 23 Bellefair Ave.**

**Pte. Dies, C., 116 Kennilworth Ave.**



**Pte. Fox, R. B., 37 Fernwood Park**

**Pte. J. R., 70 Balsam Ave.**

**Pte. McSweeney, 19 Victoria Park (in earlier dining room photo)**

**Pte. Nelson, W. G., 23 Spruce Hill Rd.**

**Pte. Scott, P. W., Pearson Ave.**

**Pte. Sinclair, A. R., Sherbourne Ave.**



BBC member Chris Commins had 2 uncles in WW1, both notable Club members: Chester Commins received the Military Cross and bar, William Commins received the MC and the Distinguished Service Order. Both became captains and both died towards the end of the war, within weeks of each other. The Commins family received many letters from Chester and Bill (Chris has a binder full). Below are excerpts from some of Bill's letters.

For clarification / identification, Bill's entries have the dates centred.

### **1916, April 1 First Day At Sea On Board SS Empress of Britain**

Above were millions of stars, below the turbulent sea, and I was uplifted with a great zeal for our cause, when I thought of the thousands of souls on these three great ships (three troop ships and naval Escort HM Canarvan) all making the great sacrifice for the one cause, it was great to be here

### **1916, April 7 Seventh Day At Sea – Damn Rough**

We are told that we reach the danger zone at daylight tomorrow, the ship's Officers are rather worried about a wireless we received from the St. Paul which passed us this afternoon. It purported to be from Col. Hughes wishing us a safe voyage. They claim that it gives our position to every German sub near the Irish coast. If it was from friend Sam, I'm afraid his judgment was rather rotten and he may get us into trouble. I wouldn't say anything about this outside the house.

### **1916, June 9, Friday Evening Bramshott Camp**

Well Howard Crabbe and Doug Towers just left our hut. Howard is wearing the crossed guns of a marksman, the envy of all others, no doubt. He is looking fine, brown, a little taller and mighty husky. Doug is a full corporal and is looking much sturdier. They are coming over again in a day or two with Rollie Taylor and Carl Fox. They have all been drafted to the Seventy-Fourth tonight and of course they are rather fed up.

### **1916, June 26 Bramshott Camp**

I never realized before how much I thought of Chas until he landed here.....Everyone who I introduced the big boy to took a fancy to him and if he comes with us he will be very popular, I'm sure. I have not been able to get.....the other Beach boys with me yet, however I have Trevor Clarke. I'm afraid I won't be able to get the others as their company commanders won't let them go.



**Officer's Wallet (William Commins, Lieutenant)**  
**Several scratched dates by battalion members of various battles.**

### **1916, June 29, Monday**

That last show out there on the Salient sure gave the Canadians a smash for a few hours. Over here no one knew whether anyone would be left to make up our Fourth Division, they've certainly postponed our leaving as a Division materially. Trevor Clarke, the chap who was a Fire Ranger on the Muskoka the year that we were up is one of my corporals now. I'm trying to arrange to get Howard Crabbe, Rollic Taylor, Carl Fox and Towers with me but the Seventy-Fourth are making a fearful howl about it and I cannot say whether I can get them or not.

### **1916, July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

We've had some excitement here for a change and I must say it has been a welcome relief. We spent all last week getting in shape for the review on Saturday before the King and Queen.....We were able to turn out a full Battalion.....and were formed up in a high square, and the march past was a corking fine sight. The King had a staff around him that would have made Sam Hughes look like a Mexican Army General.

Saturday we had the first anniversary of the authorization of the 75<sup>th</sup> OS CEF and it was a very enjoyable party. I add with some conceit that I was the first of three subalterns to speak.

We are all looking forward to a real push out there now (to France) and hoping that when we get out that they will have them on the run. A year from now I venture to say that the whole show will be over. I hope not before we get a chance to see a bit of it.

### **1916, August 7, Monday Morning**

I now have my kit ready for France. We wear a pack similar to the men but are permitted an extra 36 pounds on the transport, my sleeping bag, mattress and all weighs but eight pounds so I can get quite a bunch of stuff. I'm taking an extra pair of breeches, tunic, pair of slacks, one extra boots, trench boots, two suits of underwear, three shirts, three towels, trench coat (waterproof with a camel's hair detachable lining), extra pair of puttees and Toilet articles....

Well I'm sending my trunk to the Savoy Tailors, Strand, London as it should be rather handy there should I get back soon on leave.

Keep Maurice [younger brother] out of it, Ches and I regard him as a real man and too much of a hero to go now.

### **1916 September 18 > Dispatch 75<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion:**

#### **Lieut. Commins Wm. Kennedy**

For conspicuous gallantry at St. Eloi, on 17-9-16, when as leader of the Assault Party he participated in a raid on the German trenches. Throughout the whole operation he showed great coolness and judgement and encouraged his men by word and example, and, after our raiders had attained their objective, capturing two Germans and killing 12 others he collected the whole party and brought them back without any serious casualties. He remained behind, himself, until the last moment, and until it was assured that the rest of the party had returned safely.

### **1916, September 24**

Two weeks ago today I was asked to take charge of one of the biggest raids that has been directed against the Germans in many moons. I was to have three officers and seventy men. I picked Bill Poupore, Cec Snellgrove and Lou Neelon, and the men were all volunteers.

At just twelve-fifteen one gun went off, immediately every gun in the world seemed to start and the machine guns played a falsetto accompaniment which

resembled a million type writers being pounded at once. Machine Guns alone fired twelve thousand rounds and most of this was put over in an intense barrage which lasted but three minutes, and just remember that all this stuff was hitting the German Front Line Trench just in front of our little party....I actually had my balaclava blown off and....another piece of shrapnel struck the automobile horn which was strapped to my side and put a neat little dent in it.

Well after three minutes the barrage lifted and we rushed Fritz's trench and the next fifteen minutes were the busiest of my young life. We captured six Boshes [sic] and had to kill four who would not come with us. It was cold-blooded work but we had to work fast....Well I finally retired the whole party which had a perfect path back, as we had brought a white tape with us. O'Han [??] and I were the last in, we even brought the tape back with us.

They have recommended me for the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) and the other officers have been recommended for the Military Cross – twenty of the men were also recommended. I'm afraid there are too many of us....but still, one never knows. I have told the General that I was keeping the horn to send home, and he had quite a laugh.

### **1916, Sept. 24, Sunday Billets – LaBelle France**

I think I shall get my promotion soon....absolutely everyone in the Corps is quite sure of that....five chaps are dead. I cannot understand why they reported them only missing. I suppose it's another case of mistaken kindness.....I am still quite alright and trusting in God's goodness. I am confident that I shall have a safe return.

### **1916, October 7, Sat., Rest Camp – Billets-France Beautiful Rainy Afternoon**

My Dear Maurice,

Your big brother has the distinction of being the first officer in the Fourth Division to be decorated. I can now write MC after my name....I had do something before meeting Ches out here or that gentleman with C on his shoulder would have me out cold. Now Maurice, down to the real serious feature of this letter. You ask me what your chums will do if you do not enlist. When they do, ask yourself how many of your chums have two brothers at the Front now, how many of them have two brothers shouldering the tremendous responsibilities of a Commissioned officer. Tell them that you have one brother right down in the midst of the greatest battle in the greatest war that the world has ever known and that brother is with the First Battalion of Canadians. Tell them that your other brother is with the crack battalion of the Fourth Division and that he led the only really successful raid on the divisional frontage and that he led it with just the same spirit as he has many times led the old Beach Rugby teams and that he won the first Military Cross the first decoration given to an officer of the Fourth Division.

Now I ask you old chap, do you have to take your hat off to any man in Toronto?....let me tell you old man that it takes real guts for a man to know where his duty lies and then follow it rather than his inclinations. Your duty is plain – you should stay at home. Our Father and Mother are making sacrifices now which they could easily have avoided by saying no.

### **1916, December 5, Tuesday, Rest Billets – France**

I'm awfully glad that Mother has interested herself in Red Cross work for it the dear ladies only realized the good they do they would be well repaid also it will help dear Mother to bear up under the strain and I'll bet she'll look younger when we get back next year.



### **1917 Jan. 20: Arena Gardens Weekly**

De La Salle students pleased their former hockey and rugby captain, Lieutenant William Commins of the 75<sup>th</sup> Battalion has received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for bravery at the Somme. Also, his brother, Lieutenant Chester Commins is with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

### **1917, February 19, France (On A Training Course)**

I received word early last week that my captaincy has gone through so I am now a three pip one. It was a cause for much rejoicing at the school and the chaps insisted that I go into a store on Saturday and get the three pips and that I had to take my tunic and overcoat off and put them up.

### **In The Field – Easter Sunday**

Tomorrow I have the great honour of taking my beloved 'D' Co'y over the top in the first battle of the spring offensive....It is very hard for me to write this letter for so much may happen and I don't want you to take it too hard should I be called upon to make the great sacrifice for it far better to die now, if it is God's will, than to live through life and perhaps be of little use to the world in the end.

I received the Sacraments on Good Friday and I am not afraid. It is only for the pain which my death now, would give you all that I care and I know that it will be a great consolation to you to know that my death will be a glorious one and that I have not died in vain.

This morning on my way up to the line I met Punk Ryan who is looking very fit and is now a Corporal, he wished to be remembered to you all. I also met Bum Thompson who Maurice and Frank [younger brother] will remember, he is a sergeant.

### **1917, August 6, France And From March 1 To April 9**

Sharp at 5:30 a.m. Easter Monday morning all hell broke loose on that portion of Germany located on Vimy Ridge....About two minutes later I thought my arm had been knocked off and reaching over felt to see if my hand was there, the men were dropping all around me, my runner had been hit in the foot when I got mine and I remember I thought it was remarkable that neither of us seemed a bit excited.

My arm began to bother me and my big gauntlet got full of blood and finally I decided to drop out and get bandaged. We were then about one hundred yards from where we had to halt for the heavies to finish up. After we got into a big shell hole, I fainted and dropped into the water in the hole. The runners pulled me out of the water and when I came to one of them had been killed and Goodlife [?] and I decided to get back....It was now almost nine o'clock....I managed the rest of the way in....and landed in on Major Wilson about ten o'clock.

My wound was dressed and I was sent to Mont St Eloy by wagon.....at 11 o'clock on the ninth we were started for Blighty....And were placed on the boat....and landed at Reading at about ten o'clock on the evening of the eleventh. By that time with splints and bandages my arm was as large as a piano leg....After a hearty supper we were put to bed and the Vimy Ridge was over for us.

### **1917 Nov. 20, Monday, France**

[On The Somme] When going up to supper I got a bad shock, we were passing through that town which is most historic for our people in connection with the fighting of this war when I spotted a couple of wounded men from Ches' Brigade and found that his Battalion were doing a fight that morning.

Well I turned my company over to another officer and hurried over to the hospital train which I had seen on a siding. I found a number of men and one officer from Ches' lot. One man had seen him as he came back and said the boy was doing

fine....[about two days later] in walked the boy looking like a million dollars! I went down to his entraining point where I met his C.O.....[who] told me he would most assuredly get a decoration (however I should not mention it until it is confirmed).

I expect I shall go on leave about the time we go in the line again, and Ches and I have arranged to go together, we're both due about the same time and both of us have pretty good drag with our respective C.O.'s. (Chris says that they got together at the Savoy Hotel in London)

### **1917, Nov. 15**

We are now out of the show here and expect to move immediately, probably shall start tomorrow, November 26. At present we are billeted in the town. We have possession of a dingy little brick house. We have two masterpieces hanging on the wall. The one depicts the French soldiery in all the glory of their dress uniforms, while the other shows how the Marseillaise is being sung in a vigorous manner by a redheaded chap uin green velvet. When we get tired of looking at the pictures we can look down on the closely grouped houses of the Rue de Becourt, most of which are one-storied affairs with great gashes in the walls and, and the roofs and windows knocked in.

### **1917, Dec. 27, France**

The day itself was a perfect one for Christmas – clear and cold, ground covered with about one inch and a half of snow, and not a shot being fired or a plane over. And better still, we had the old (Vimy) Ridge behind us instead of in front – I guess we're winning alright, aye what? The day before when I went back for provender and went through that once terrible wood on the side of the Ridge one would think that it was all a dream and it was High Park or Victoria Park on an early morning, although I make no claims of wandering through either of these parks on the early morning.

### **1918 Feb. 5: Globe & Mail, Standard-Post**

A few weeks ago, William Commins received promotion to Captain and a Military Cross for bravery under fire. Chester Commins just received the same honours at Paschendale Ridge after an engagement there.



### **1918 Feb. 18: Dispatch re: Cpt. Chester Francis Commins, M.C.**

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He displayed great skill and courage in handling not only his own platoon, but men of other units who had become attached, regulating the pace of the advance behind the barrage by encouraging his men forward and yet checking them as circumstances warranted. Whilst holding the

line he was most active and assiduous in his duties, keeping his men in good spirits and visiting posts during heavy bombardments.

### **1918, March 10, Saturday**

The other personage strangely enough in this army of men is also a lady [the first lady he referred to was a horse] – but a very very young lady who has only recently joined us. Her name is “Chiclets” and she is a little fox terrier, three months old, who was given to me by the family at Charlie Chaplin [Cariblain Chatelain] where we had our mess. The people all cried when we left and insisted we take the dog with us to remember them by.

### **1918, March 10, Saturday**

I just found out today that Ches is out of the line and is a very short distance from here and I am going to ride (horseback) over tonight and see the boy. If I can I shall arrange to stay all night – providing Ches has room. Tomorrow afternoon we shall be moving.

However one thing more – about Ches’ decoration. We out here ever know what a man gets them for unless he is in our own lot. All I know is that Ches went over the top at the head of his bunch in a sector where the fighting was particularly hard owing to the weather.....He led his men well, he kept his men and did his job.....But I may say.....that anyone who goes over once and looks death in the face that way can never be downed.

### **1918 March 25, Monday, France**

At present we are living in huts and having a fairly jake time of it for a few days having left our cellars a short time ago. Young Bill Smith was over to see me this afternoon....and is very keen to get back into the paddling game.

He told me that the [Balmy Beach] Club were again after that cup so I wrote him a letter to the effect that as he would have won it had he been there for the third year and as he was now in France taking part in this game, that I considered it more rightly his than if he had paddled over the course. So I guess he will now hang on to it and he certainly has more right to it than anyone who may turn up later on. When I get back I’ll put up another one.

### **1918, April 2, Tuesday, France**

Now as for Maurice [now 20 years old] I cannot understand the situation at all, surely he owes it to Ches and I to confide in us if he is going into the Army....and at all times he must bear in mind the one salient fact that his first duty is to his home and parents.

### **1918, April 9, Tuesday, France**

From Ches:

I have advised Maurice to get in the Forestry section or if not in that branch to try the train. I certainly would strongly disapprove of his joining the infantry – two from one family is quite sufficient.

### **1918, April 26, Thursday, France**

My dear Maurice,

Both Ches and I have heard of your intention with mingled feelings – we both realize what an added strain your entrance into this damned business is going to put on our beloved dear little Mother and dear old Dad.

However you have said you were thinking of the RFC [Royal Flying Corps]. Well if you have gone ahead with it or made up your mind I can only say this – the Flying Corps is a good bet – excellent pay, lots of leave, good mess and good quarters every night, contrary to general opinion, it is safer than the infantry – except when



training. The great feature at the RFC is to get confidence in the air, but be careful, most good pilots crash because they have the former and forget the latter.

### 1918, July 3

Scarboro [Golf Club] must be quite wonderful this year with its cinder paths, its bridges, lights and all other improvements. I'm sorry about the club dances and I do wish that our old crowd were back to look after things, however, one never knows how soon, and we may all be back sooner than we know.

Unfortunately due to the distance I didn't get over to the Corps Sports, and later found that Ches was there, and of course was awfully disappointed.

My big mare has been laid up and somehow I can't get any pleasure from riding the others, so I decided not to go and now I'm sorry. However, I shall manage to see him in a few days I trust and have a good chat.

### 1918, July 7

Tonight we had a photo of the "originals" taken minus one Whittle (leave) and one Baynes-Reed (not to be found).



**75<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Mississauga Horse, Cambain-Chatelain, France: Cpt. William Commins: back R2 (Military Cross & Distinguished Service Order)**

### 1918, July 13, France

Here we are in the line again and I've had my usual luck in just missing Ches.... Well just as we were pulling out a couple of my men came along said they had just met Ches and he would expect me to dinner at his place – about a quarter of a mile down the road – and of course I had to come in again without seeing the boy.

The sensation of going in again has been rather hard to define this time after two months of rest, when the warning order came everyone took it quite philosophically.... For my own part I was rather glad of the move because each day was making it harder to think of getting back into harness.

All tales to the contrary, we are not asking for trouble nor are we champing at the bit to get into a fight – we simply know how good we are and how well we can acquit ourselves in a fight – but we are at the same time satisfied to take the easy end of it should it come our way – we know that we are sure to get our share before it's over. The cheap newspaper stuff about "Canadians keen to be in the fight" and "Canadians hoping that the Hun will attack so that they can get their own back" is the damndest kind of rot.

**1918 July 26:** “Champion Canoeist Now In France” – six members of the Balmy Beach Canoe Club who won the championship war canoe in 1914 are now connected with **53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in France** (Wm. Russell, Gordon Croft, Norm Atterell, Leonard MacDougall, & Charles Collins)

**1918 August 16, France**

*I cannot fully express my sorrow when I inform you that your son Bill was instantly killed by a shell in the great attack on the ninth. The Battalion was detailed to capture a good sized village and a system of trenches beyond it. We had just taken the village and were pushing on to the line of trenches and Bill was coming to Battalion headquarters to report. His company had done fine work in the attack. He was instantly killed by a shell a few yards from Battalion headquarters. The attack was a great success but the whole battalion is sad owing to the deaths of your son and Major Bull. They were very dear to all of us. We brought the remains back and Bill is buried beside Major Bull. The Brigade Chaplain, Father Fallon said the funeral service.*

*I cannot express my sorrow, Bill and I had been fast friends ever since the Battalion was organized. He was a true Christian and a man you were proud to own as a friend. He attended confession on the evening of the seventh before we went forward into the attack. You must be consoled by the fact that he died a true soldier doing his part nobly to the end.*

*Sincerely, (Major) Albert G. Poupore*

**1918 October 10:** Cpt. Chester F. Cummins M.C. is reported killed in action on Oct. 1, 1918 (24 years old). Maurice Commins, brother of William & Chester, is training for the Royal Air Force at Deseronto.

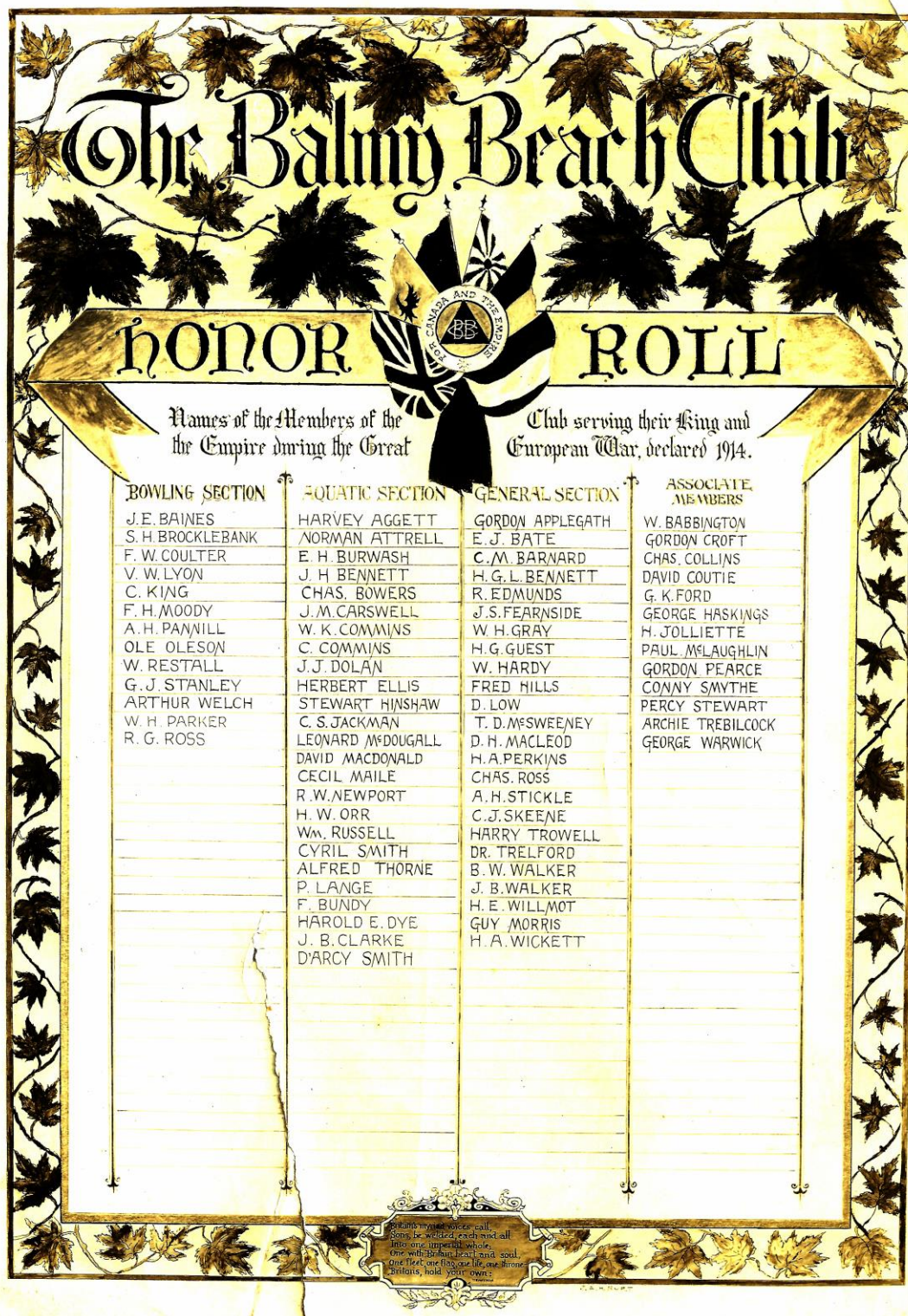
Bill was buried at Beaucourt British Cemetery (B) in Somme, France. His brother Chester died on October 1, just three months after Bill and is buried at Sancourt British Cemetery (I C 8), Nord, France.



UNKNOWN

**1919c Aug Press clipping:** At the Exhibition, the Prince of Wales presented honours for veterans, some posthumously. Mrs. Margaret Commins accepted the Military Cross for her son Chester. Some veterans were not present because notices had not been received, some attended but their medals had not arrived in time. Private W. C. Dies (50<sup>th</sup> Battalion – see platoon cyclists page 5), now blind, was helped by his sister.





**Lower inscription:**

Britain's myriad voices call,  
Sons, be welded, each and all  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain heart and soul,  
One fleet, one flag, one life, on throne  
Britons, hold your own.



### 1926 March (Balmy Breezes: Volume 5, Number 8)

Dave Coutie and Norm Attrell started to paddle the summer that the war broke out, coming down with Shorty Ellis, the Hinshaws, Curly Thorne and the rest of the old “gang”. They were both members of the Balmy Beach junior Rugby champions too, and then they “joined up” with the rest and headed for France. A broken leg received in camp kept Norm from getting overseas, and the same break, it might be said, spoiled the makings of a mighty fine hockey player. Dave served in France and was wounded, but was still able to wield a wicked paddle when he returned.

### 1926 Balmy Breezes (March, V5, N8):

You are probably aware that after returning from overseas young Mr. Ponton stepped out and won the championship of Canada in the 100-yard and 200-yard events and represented this country in the Olympic games in Belgium in 1920. If Alec had been built just a little less on the lines of the Rock of Gibraltar he might have gained even greater fame as a sprinter, but as it was he was good enough to collect a roomful of silverware for his running and all-round athletic prowess.

### 1941c:

During the London blitz of WW11, England sent many local children to other countries in the Empire. Five of these youngsters were housed in a temporary dormitory on the second floor at 61 Pine Crescent in the Beaches by the original owner, Harold Lush. Upon arrival, one of the children likened the large, red-brick house to the one described in *Whiteoaks of Jalna* (Canadian author Mazo de la Roche). The home was thus dubbed White Oaks and that name still appears over the front door. This seems fitting due to its white oak flooring and the white oak trees outside.

When carpets were removed decades later during a renovation, marked floorboards were revealed, showing the location of the children’s closets.

More recently, the property was owned by BBC member John Phyper. (Globe and Mail: A shelter from London's Blitz, 2009, August 13, Deirdre Kelly)

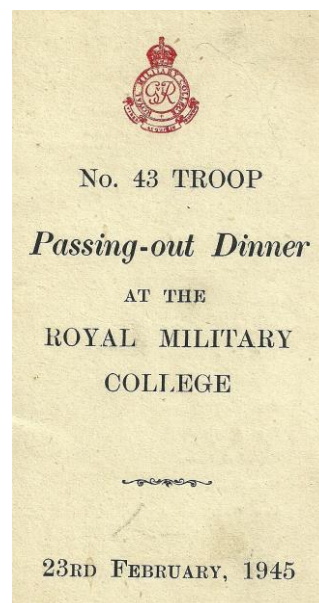


**1941 June 4:** “Short Waves from Balmy Beach”: On Thursday evening at 8 o’clock, the east end club will hold an open house with dancing, bingo, bridge and a lucky draw – proceeds are being donated to a worthy fund and to help supply a few extras for the two dozen Balmy Beach lads now on active service – in the army are: H. Hawlette, M. Demill, J. Spence, J. McNulty, H. Sampey, W. McEwan, W. Boyd, B. Sinclair and W. Oakes – in the air force: H. Beady, R. Bassit, E. McLelland, J. Binden, J. Baker, H. Ellis, S. Scroggs, W. Bolton, W. Knight, W. Johnston, W. Strype, J. Sharples, and E. Downer – in the navy: G. Willis, and G. Sampey – a large crowd is expected to be on hand.

**1941 July 4:** Balmy Beach Regatta Saturday afternoon – Toronto S.C.C. will strive to stretch string of War Canoe Wins – tomorrow afternoon, starting at 2:00 p.m., the Balmy Beach Canoe Club will be hosts to the other clubs in the western division at their annual regatta. This will be the third of the Toronto Regattas this season and from all appearances the youngsters from the Island Canoe Club are going to be hard to stop. The Beachers have been hard hit by enlistments, more than 25 members now being in active service. It is rumoured that a senior 4 is coming out of retirement to compete. They include Nurse, Porter, Evans and Charters.

**1942 May 19:** Hugh Cuddie (great at football & good enough at baseball) scouted by Rochester Red Wings but joined navy instead

**1945, February 23:** Author's Canadian father graduated from officer training at Sandhurst Military College, England. Later, in 2018, Kevin donated material to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

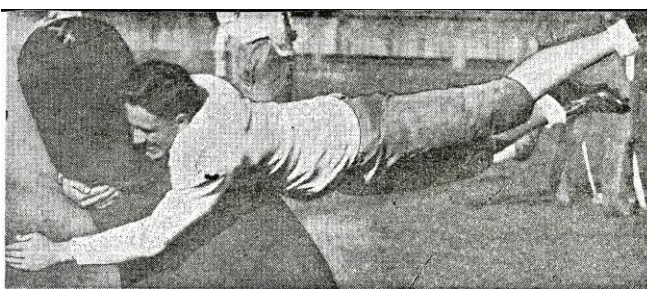


**1945 Aug 18:** Balmy football trainer, Harry Williams, home from the war and will resume his duties as before

**1946: Returning servicemen are back on the gridiron.**



RIVAL CAPTAINS, Steve Levantis of the Argos, left, and Bob Porter, Balmy Beach shake hands before today's grid meeting—the first for the teams in five years. Forty-two ex-servicemen made up about 80 per cent. of the teams.



**KEY MAN IN BEACHES' DEFENSE**—Here we see hard-hitting Doug Turner, centre for Balmy Beach and regarded as the finest centre secondary player in Canadian football. Doug, who gained fame with Varsity and Hamilton Tigers, will be aiming his devastating tackles at Argonaut ball carriers at Oakwood Stadium this afternoon, when Beaches and Argonauts play an exhibition game. Turner, like a good many of the players on both teams this afternoon, is making a football comeback after years in the services.

**1: Bobby Porter (R) ready to play in first game against the Argos in 5 years.**

**Forty-two players in the game are ex servicemen.**

**2: Doug Turner returns to play after years in the services.**

**2006c:** Major Dan Eustace (Canadian Armed Forces 29 years, retired 2016) gives talk and slide presentation at BBC



**Major Dan receiving his C.D. (Cdn. Forces Decoration) from Veterans' Affairs**

**NATO:** Afghanistan (led training to defuse I.E.D.s ), Turkey, Guatemala, Germany, Serbia & Kenya

Canadian Forces College & Royal Military College: security & defence community

**Royal Canadian Legion:** assisted Veterans at Sunnybrook Hospital, supporting their families, organizing interactions with staff & students at Canadian Forces College, published press material in support of veterans, assisted in aspects of the Highway of Heroes, involved with 2017 Invictus Games Toronto & Remembrance Day services in Toronto.

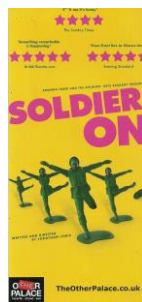
Canada Operations: ice storm of 1999.

Sydenham Legion branch: identify, catalogue & display historical material.

**2012 Sept.:** (abridged) On behalf of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Ville De Quebec, I would like to thank you for the great support you provided us from the 29<sup>th</sup> of August to the 3rd of September 2012. This visit was one of thirteen port visits that the Ship's company undertook as part of the War of 1812 commemoration. Your hosting of the entire Ship's company at the Balmy Beach Club has been a highlight of the deployment.

*S. M. Thorton, Commander*

**2018 October:** Tommy Craig (Coronation Street, Murdoch Mysteries, The Navigators) leads in Soldier On, a stage production about psychologically and physically damaged UK Afghanistan war veterans. Kevin & Claire saw it in London. The following winter, the play came to Toronto and many BBC members attended.





# APPENDIX 1

## MILITARY CAMP WITLEY

From 1914 - 18, many Canadian troops joined their British counterparts for basic training at Witley Military Camp (aka Witley Camp) in Surrey England. Among those were the 185, 193 and 219 (Highland) Battalions from Nova Scotia.

Our archival collection had 2 donated photograph albums containing pictures from Witley Camp.

Some of the glued photos had captions on the back (*italics here*). Since the albums are local, we might assume that some Beaches men are included.



The 1<sup>st</sup> album of Witley Camp also had some pictures from the Balmy Beach area including: 1916 dining room photo, 1918c Welcome Home photo and a few paddling pictures. So, all pictures are likely of local boys.

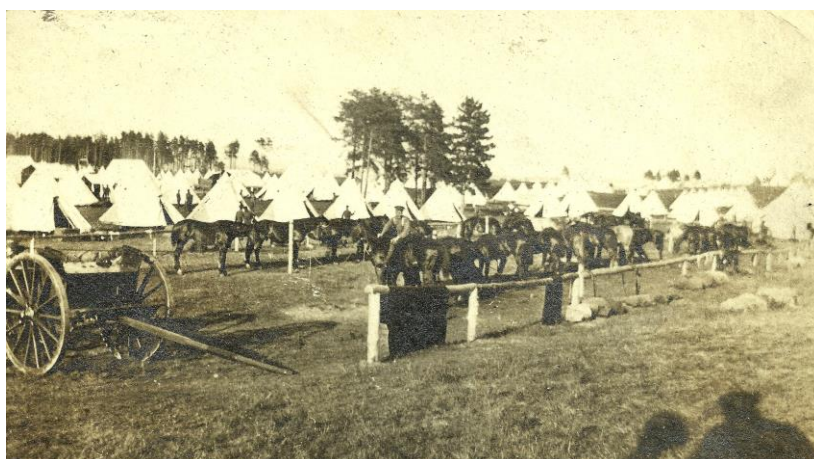


*1917 Nov 22 Interior of tent the boys sitting around reading.*

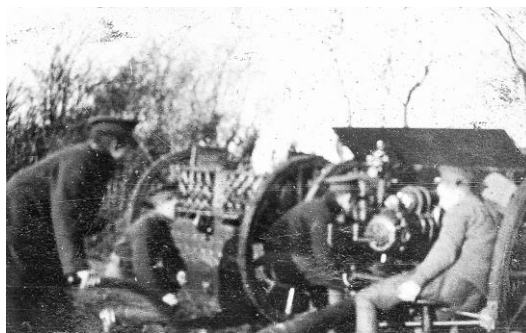




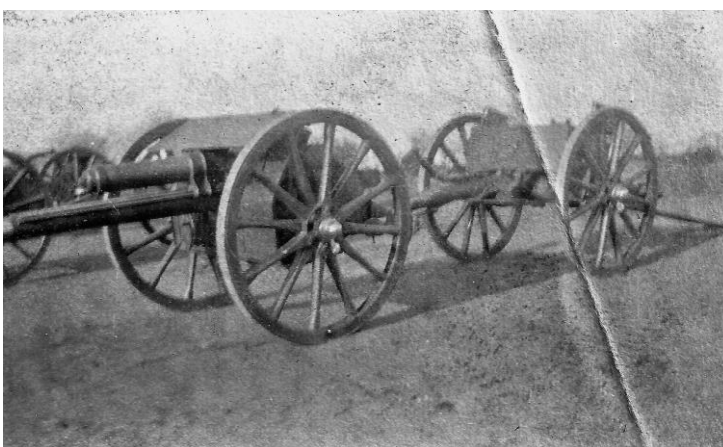
**Photo 1: Me, P.C.H Ried ,Torch Rawlston, Gord Amellie**  
**Photo 2: Reading STAR SPORTING EXTRA**







*Photo 1: Captain Powell O.C., 53<sup>rd</sup> - Photo 2: A-Sub Under Gunner*



*Photo 1: Corporal Kirby & Lieutenant Bill Boyd*

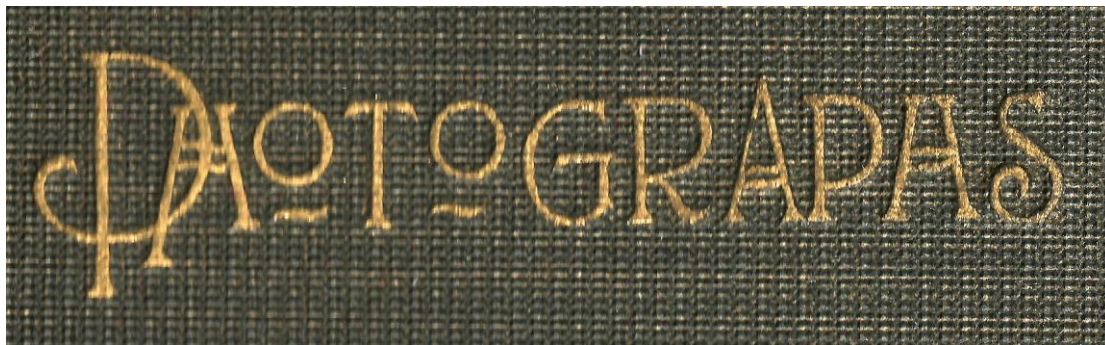




*1917 04 Apr Witley Tug of War 53rd Battery*







***Photo 1: Ross Barracks, Shorncliffe, 1916 07 July 3, England - Gnr Geades - Signallers Thompson, Christie - Gnr Hawke***

***Photo 2: Witley Camp 1917 Jan 31***



***Photos 1 & 2: 1917 Feb B Sub-Drivers 53 Battery***



***Photo 1: Witley Camp measles group @ Guard B Sub***

***Photo 2: Newspaper headline, IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE***





***Photo 1: 1917 2Feb Gun Team B-Sub***

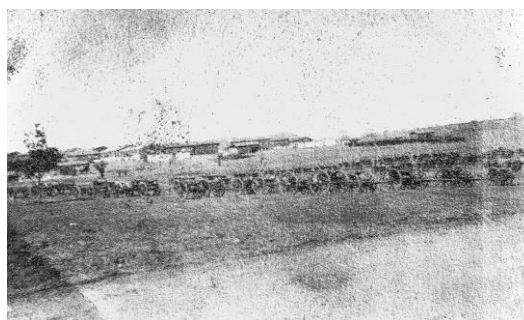


***Photo 1: 1917 Feb. Gun laying***



***Photo 1: 1917 June Ed Belfry dinner on bivouac near Puttenham***

***Photo 2: 1917 June Wash up in stream Puttenham left section men one from N Bay***







*Photo 1: 1917 Jan Lunch time while on the march Witley Camp*



## APPENDIX 2

