

# THE BEECHWOOD WAY

BEECHWOOD, THE NATIONAL CEMETERY OF CANADA

## Full cemetery and funeral services now at Beechwood

By David Bagnell  
Director of Funeral Services

**O**n July 1, 2012, new legislation governing Cemeteries, Crematoriums and Funeral Homes, effectively known as “The Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act,” became law. One of the major changes within this new Act was that funeral homes were allowed to operate and provide the full range of funeral, memorial and celebration of life services – all while being located on a licensed cemetery property. Beechwood saw this as an opportunity to address what were longstanding questions raised by its client families: why they couldn’t have their funeral services at Beechwood all on the one property that already was a cemetery and had a fully equipped crematorium? And why they couldn’t pre-arrange and pre-pay their funeral arrangements at Beechwood? The “one-stop-shop” ideology that the public was embracing in all other areas was now being asked of Beechwood.

After some thought and consideration, it was an easy decision for the Board of Directors of The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, the not-for-profit parent organization of The Beechwood Cemetery Company. They decided it was time to proceed with the necessary work, and take the next logical step to becoming a “one-stop-shop” for the families of Beechwood.

In keeping with Beechwood’s well-earned reputation of being one of the finest cemeteries in Canada, and as a multi-faith, multi-cultural cemetery, the home of the National Military Cemetery and the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery, careful consideration was given to the creation and design of a new, multi-faith, multi-purpose facility. In 2006 the construction of this facility began, and in keeping with the legislation at the time, it was built as a reception centre to allow families to make use of the facilities for



The funeral staff in the Beechwood National Memorial Centre’s Hall of Colours. From left: Benoit Bazinet, Isabelle Gallen, Robert Richard, Adèle Vachon, Tammy St-Onge and David Bagnell, Director of Funeral Services.

memorial services, celebration of life services, receptions and special cultural and charitable events. In 2008 the construction was completed on what is now known as The Beechwood National Memorial Centre, one of the finest facilities of its kind in Canada, and home to the unique Sacred Space, a non-denominational room for funeral or memorial services. Also included in the Beechwood National Memorial Centre are comfortable and well-appointed visitation suites where families can meet friends, neighbours and colleagues to share stories and memories of their loved ones. Just a short walk down the corridor from the visitation suites are reception suites for post-service receptions, a casual place for families to spend time with their friends enjoying light refreshments in a comfortable atmosphere, saying good-bye and offering thanks for the support given them during a difficult time. Once of the

unique features of these suites is their direct access to an open-air courtyard, just one more design feature of Beechwood’s ‘National Memorial Centre’ enhancing its image as one of the finest facilities in Canada.

On September 7, 2012, the Ontario Board of Funeral Services awarded Beechwood the Funeral Establishment licence that is now on display in the main foyer. This has allowed The Beechwood Cemetery Company to meet the wishes of its client families and become a self-sufficient, stand alone, full service funeral home, now known as Beechwood, Cemetery and Funeral Services.

Today, with a full complement of Funeral Directors and support staff, Beechwood, Cemetery and Funeral Services is providing all aspects of funeral, memorial, celebration of life and cremation services, as well as the full range of pre-arrangement services.

**If you’d like more information about funeral services at Beechwood, please contact us at 613-741-9530 and ask to speak to one of our Funeral Directors.**

# Honouring Canada's Military

By Bob Beaudoin  
Wreaths Across Canada

**D**uring this holiday season we all remember those who have been near and dear to us. On Sunday, December 2, 2012 Canadians gathered once again at the National Military Cemetery at Beechwood to remember and honor those deceased veterans of the Canadian Forces as part of the annual Wreaths Across Canada ceremony.

Six years ago, a retired Canadian Air Force Warrant Officer, Craig McPhee, visited Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C. at Christmas where he saw row upon row of military gravestones covered with beautiful balsam wreaths. Returning home, he dreamt of a day when the graves of our veterans interred in military cemeteries across Canada would be adorned with a wreath to remember them and their service to their country. Even though few service-men and - women buried in Canada died in battle, this gesture would help keep alive the memory of these people who proudly served their country, and over the years helped preserve our freedoms and ensure our country's safety and protection. This is the genesis of Wreaths Across Canada, a non-profit organization to recognize and remember Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen and airwomen.

**On my honour, we will stand  
at the place where you rest  
and remember you.**

'Honour' by Kathleen Mills

It is impossible for us to adequately thank the management and staff of Beechwood Cemetery for being so generous with their time and resources in helping make the ceremony an incredible success. This year, some 3,000 wreaths were purchased and laid at all headstones in the National Military Cemetery. A further 900 were laid at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through his dedication and hard work for this important cause, and with the generous help of many volunteers, Mr. McPhee has succeeded in taking the first steps in spreading this wonderful program across the country. As he says, "Our hope



Photo: Chris Mikalu, Ottawa Citizen

**Top:** Grete Hale, Chair of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and Honorary Colonel of the Governor General Foot Guards, with (ret'd) CAF Warrant Officer Craig McPhee.

**Bottom:** Jordan Hynes, Ottawa Fire Service recruit, carrying wreaths at the gravesites of our Canadian fallen.

is that the people attending the ceremony, whether because they had a friend or relative who was in the service and is buried in a military cemetery in Canada, will gain a new sense of understanding of, and gratitude for, the many sacrifices that were made for them over the years by the thousands of men and women who served in Canada's military. Many Canadians focus their remembrance efforts on Veterans' Week or Remembrance Day. But remembrance is not just a one day event - it is important that we continue to remember

throughout the entire year, and especially during the Christmas season. This year, Canadians again laid wreaths to remember all soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen who served Canada, honor their sacrifices, and teach our youth about the real cost of freedom."

If you would like to sponsor a wreath, or would like more information about the Wreaths Across Canada, please contact Craig McPhee at 613-435-4294 or email him at [wac2008@rogers.com](mailto:wac2008@rogers.com) for more information.

# Sir Galahad's statue and the tragic death of Miss Elizabeth Blair

By Thomas Ritchie  
Friends of Beechwood

Ottawa's Sir Galahad's statue, depicting the noblest knight of King Arthur's Round Table, was placed more than a century ago on the north side of Wellington Street where it joins with Metcalfe. A plaque states that the statue was "Erected by the public to commemorate the heroism of Henry Albert Harper MA who, in an effort to save the life of Miss Bessie Blair, was drowned with her in the Ottawa River on the sixth of December, 1901 in his twenty-eighth year."

Their deaths were the result of skating on the Ottawa river, on ice that was too thin in places to support them. Harper and Miss Blair were two of many skaters who took advantage of an early Ottawa winter to start another season of ice-skating, one of Ottawa's favourite winter sports. A colder than normal December produced what appeared to be a solid sheet of ice on the Ottawa River. That, in addition to little snowfall, added to the enjoyment of skating.

Ottawa residents keen to start another skating season included the Governor-General and his wife, Lord and Lady Minto, who, along with twelve other skaters (among them Bessie's sister May) set out from Rideau Hall's boathouse in the early afternoon, skating downstream. After a few hours they started back, but soon were on thin ice which collapsed under six of the group. Those on the ice were able to get the others out of the water, and all returned to the boathouse.

Another group of skaters, made up of Henry Harper, Bessie Blair, Alex Creelman and Jeannie Snowball, set out later from the boathouse. They reached an area opposite Gatineau Point, where they decided to turn and begin their return. Unfortunately, they were soon on thin ice and Bessie and Creelman were in the water. Jeannie left the scene for shore to get help while Harper tried to get Bessie from the water, at first by laying on the ice and extending his walking stick for her to hold and be drawn to him. When this didn't work he dove into the water to assist her, but both went under. Creelman was able to get back on the ice, and by then others had come to the scene. However, because of the encroaching darkness a search for



**Top:** Sir Galahad's statue was unveiled by Lord Grey, Governor-General, on November 18, 1905. Mackenzie King, second figure from the left with a bowler hat, was a close friend of Henry Harper.  
**Bottom right:** Henry A. Harper, journalist and civil servant, worked for Mackenzie King.  
**Bottom left:** Elizabeth Blair, daughter of Andrew G. Blair, (MP from Fredericton, NB), and Annie Blair.

Harper and Bessie was postponed until morning, by which time they were found under the sheet of ice. The tragedy was deeply felt in the community, along with the realization that the day's skating could have resulted in many more drownings.

Henry Harper's government position was that of assistant to William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Labour. King was Harper's close friend, sharing with him interests in cycling, literature and Ottawa's social life. Harper's death affected King greatly and he played a large part in fundraising for the creation of a memorial to Harper, which took the form of the statue

of Sir Galahad. Another tribute to Harper's heroism came from poet Wilfred Campbell. His poem, titled simply "Henry A. Harper," describes Harper's actions as "noble, godlike and splendid."

Harper's body was returned to his hometown for burial, while Miss Blair, described by King as "a girl of rare and beautiful character," was buried at Beechwood Cemetery. She was the daughter of Andrew George Blair (1844-1907) who served at the time of her death as Canada's Minister of Railways and Canals. On the monument over the Blair family burial plot in Section 41, Bessie's name was inscribed "Elizabeth Blair, 1879-1901."

## Edwin Peter Dey, key figure in early ice hockey in Ottawa

**B**orn in Hull, Canada East on April 21, 1864, Dey followed in his father's footsteps by operating one of the country's leading boat works. His plant at the Rideau Canal basin specialized in racing canoes, which were used in many championship regattas.

Dey was best known as an arena and hockey team owner. In his youth, Dey, with brothers William and Frank, played hockey on a team called the Dey's Rink Pirates. Later, he and his brother William managed the first Dey's Skating Rink on the premises of their boat business. Then, in 1896, they built the city's first rink meant specifically for hockey at the corner of Bay Street and Gladstone Avenue. It was the site of Ottawa's first Stanley Cup victory in 1903. Known by various names, such as Dey's Arena, the Dey Brothers Rink, Dey's Skating Rink and simple the Arena, it holds importance in the early development of the organized sport of ice hockey in Canada.

By 1907 the brothers had built their third and final arena on Theodore Street (now Laurier Avenue West), where the Ottawa Senators played for 15 years. Dey and his business partner Tommy Gorman bought the Senators in 1918 and ran the club for five years, culminating in a Stanley Cup championship in 1923.



E. P. Dey, builder of Ottawa's first hockey rink

With his clipped moustache, dour expression and trademark white spats, Dey was a familiar figure around the arena. Fans were shocked when he abruptly sold his interest in the team and moved to New York City. Eventually, Dey and his wife relocated to British Columbia, where he passed away on April 15, 1943. His ashes were later moved from New Westminster, BC to be interred in the family plot at Beechwood's Section 25, Lot 6 SW.

(Source: "Historical Portraits" published by Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada)



The Dey's Arena played an important role in the early development of organized ice hockey in Canada, and was the site of Ottawa's first Stanley Cup victory in 1903.

## A report from the Friends' Chair

By Ian Guthrie  
Chair of the Friends' Committee

**A**n event becomes a tradition – after how many years? Early in December several hundred citizens gathered at Beechwood for the second Wreaths Across Canada ceremony, where memorial wreaths are laid at the headstones of veterans buried in the National Military Cemetery. The weather that day was somewhat untraditional for early December: about 2°C, and threatening rain clouds eventually fulfilled their promise. After a welcome and a few short speeches the gathered crowd were invited to lay the wreaths, pausing to read off the name on each stone. It was a poignant experience, collectively and individually. Looking back, the rows upon rows of the green and red of the wreaths in front of the grey of the stones made an aesthetically pleasing combination of colours. I pay tribute to the company of cadets who stood in the rain with fortitude for many minutes before and during the ceremony. This was the second such occasion at Beechwood, and plans are set for the third on Sunday, December 1 this year. Perhaps, decades from now we will look back on 2011 and 2012 as years when a valued tradition was established.

As 2013 begins, in place of the annual membership renewal notice, you should have received mail informing you of changes happening at Beechwood and how they pertain to the Friends. Later this year, The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation will begin an annual fundraising campaign, and members of the Friends are being given an opportunity to make a contribution first. The Friends will no longer be a membership program; instead, all contributions are now considered donations, and all donors are now Friends. Existing Friends lose nothing through this change – all donors will receive our free quarterly newsletter, *The Beechwood Way*, and invitations to our annual events. The only change is that Friends will now receive an income tax receipt, acknowledging their support of cultural and educational activities at Beechwood. Your support, and your Friendship, are both greatly appreciated.

Plans are underway for a Friends event at Beechwood on Sunday May 5: watch this space for details! Best Wishes to You, Your Families and Friends for 2013.



Some young women from the Ottawa Ladies College and the YWCA became those who skated for the first Ottawa Alerts hockey team, founded in 1915.

## Eva Catherine Ault, Queen of the Ice

**B**orn on October 11, 1891 in Aultville, Ontario Eva Catherine Ault was raised in nearby Finch before her parents moved their large family of five daughters and three sons to Ottawa where they would lay down strong community roots.

Ault was born at the right time - the first recorded organized women's ice hockey match took place at the Rideau Skating Rink on March 8, 1889, only a few years before she was born. The game was played on an indoor skating and curling rink located on Theodore Street (now Laurier Avenue) at the present location of the Arts Hall of the University of Ottawa. Its construction had been sponsored by Lord Stanley, the Governor-General, who had taken shares in the project. In 1916, the rink was taken over by the federal government for World War I purposes and was later demolished to build the Fine Arts Building of the University of Ottawa.

Ault was among the young women who skated for the first Ottawa Alerts hockey team, which was founded in 1915 with girls from the Ottawa Ladies College and the Young Women's Christian Association. She became one of the game's first female stars and a fan favourite, earning the nickname "Queen of the Ice." Prior to 1915, teams were formed at the Ottawa Ladies' College and the Young Women's

Christian Association, but they did not play competitively with outside players. The first members of the Alerts were the best women players in Ottawa, and the team had immediate success. In 1916, they defeated the Pittsburgh Ladies Club three times in one day, then defeated Toronto the day after. Based at Dey's Arena, the Alerts were not in a particular league, but rather played exhibitions in a circuit from Montreal to Renfrew. In 1922-23, the Alerts won the Canadian championship, after which the club was sponsored by the Ottawa Rowing Club.

In March of 1922, Ault's play was singled out in a Toronto newspaper article in which she was called "a real star", noting that she scored at least one goal in practically every game she had played. Sharing in her success was her young sister Bessie, who was also on the team.

Thanks in part to Ault's brilliance, women's hockey soared in popularity around the time of the First World War. Despite its success though, women's hockey still had its opponents, including a Montreal newspaper that determined the exhibition series in which Ault starred to be degrading to the fairer sex.

The Alerts were one of the most successful ladies teams in Canada, winning the Championship in the first season and earning the Eastern Canadian Championship in 1922 and the Ontario Ladies title as well as the Dominion Championship in 1923. The team would win one more Canadian championship before it was folded in 1929.



Eva Ault was one of hockey's first female stars and a fan favourite.

Ault married another well-known Ottawa athlete: James Buels, who played for the Rough Riders Football Club. The couple did not have any children, and Eva did not work outside of the home, but she kept busy as an active volunteer with the Minto Skating Club. She died in 1984 at the age of 93 and is buried with her husband in Beechwood Cemetery's Section 29, Lot 43E.

(Source: "Historical Portraits" published by Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada)

## Our readers' letters

The Beechwood Way is certainly one of the best publications of its kind which I have seen. I congratulate you on its clean,

readable format, the great old photographs, and the well-written short histories and biographies. I enjoyed reading them all. Well done.

*T. Grier, Toronto, Ontario*

## By the 'Way'...Facts from the Company Minutes

By Mark Sunderland

Friend of Beechwood

**F**oord - a familiar name in this column over the past several issues must now depart - but not before we summarize his performance and address a little matter that relates to his remuneration. We have read his report and, as best we could, we have followed him from his Cemetery Landscaping Office at Toronto's Mount Pleasant to Beechwood. What he actually did at Beechwood and how long it took him is unclear and much of what we've attributed to him has been conjecture. We've caught a glimpse of his credentials, we have read his opinions, but of the man himself we know nothing. Whether, at departure, the people of Beechwood were ready to embrace him as a friend or seize him by the throat is a something that we will never know. The little evidence we have could lead the story either way.

On the one hand we've seen him as an ally to our own Cecil Bethune and a well respected cemetery architect. He seems to have had a romantic flair for rhapsodizing over the pretty flowers, the lovely walks and the beautiful trees - but that is something that cemetery architects probably learn in school. On the other hand we note that he rose early to lurk "unseen" in the bushes and observe the workers. He said that the super's home on cemetery ground was inappropriate and confining and, as we noted in the last installment, Bethune himself corroborated the story at an August 24 board meeting by stating that his sink was blocked and the pipes were leaking and that he'd sent for the plumber. So was it that neither Bethune nor Foord were "hands on" types or was it a ploy to elevate the super's quality of life and install him in better quarters?

There is generally an omission of human interest in company minutes so we yearn to know more about the personalities or those involved. Wouldn't it be marvelous to discover that Foord and Bethune had rolled up their sleeves and tried to unblock the super's sink? What did they talk about in 1924 as they sat with tobacco and

brandy in Bethune's parlour. Surely they both had war stories, and even if not with physical scars, the emotional wounds would have been present. They both loved animals - we know that Bethune did - and both men were probably a little eccentric.

Foord's expenses, remuneration and terms of contract are too murky for explanation. Expenses and fees appear to be interchangeable terms in the company minutes so we must be satisfied only in the knowledge that Foord asked for \$30.45 and was sent a cheque for \$100. The minutes also tell us only that he was grateful. If readers want to imagine a mystery story involving the unexplained dismissal of the Beechwood bookkeeper and the interference of the City Collector, along with all the other unaccountables, there is plenty of scope. But as for Foord and all the rest of them, we can only now say that they left us a legacy of beauty which perhaps Foord, in his rhapsodizing over Beechwood, had the prescience to know. And as for the bookkeeping, so what!

Finally, and for some reason, I've imagined Mr. Foord with a stable of black stallions that he tended at the back end of Mount Pleasant - it's a thought that revived a little residue from my own past. In my youth I worked briefly for Nathaniel Wheatley, a prominent undertaker in the Midlands of England. Mr. Wheatley was a keen horseman and in addition to a fleet of Rolls Royce cars, he kept a stable of black stallions that he would engage for the especially up-market funerals. Following internment he would saddle his favorite and gallop home. My job consisted mostly of body handling and wreath carrying but once, on the way to a funeral, while I was preoccupied with the novelty of wearing a top hat and leading a procession from the front seat of a Rolls Royce, I remember the chauffeur telling me that if I wanted a career in the funeral business (which I didn't) I must develop a sense of humor and learn to look sad when told to do so, or else look at the floor. Interesting! Since disobedience and opposition are the immutable characteristics of teenage behavior, the struggle to make them pull sad faces is guaranteed to make them laugh.

## 2013 upcoming special events

### Dutch Remembrance Day

National Military Cemetery  
Saturday, May 4, 1:45 pm

### Friends' Event

Beechwood National Memorial Centre  
Sunday, May 5, 1:30pm

### Bereaved Families of Ottawa Memorial Butterfly Release

Beechwood National Memorial Centre  
Sunday, May 26, 1:15pm

Register by April 15: 613-567-4278

### National Memorial Ride

National Military Cemetery  
Sunday, June 2, 2013

## THE BEECHWOOD WAY

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[www.beechwoodcemetery.com](http://www.beechwoodcemetery.com)

**We want your feedback on how we are doing!**

Contact Jacques Faille at  
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We welcome readers to submit letters to [foundation@beechwoodcemetery.com](mailto:foundation@beechwoodcemetery.com) or to "THE BEECHWOOD WAY," c/o The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, PO Box 7025, 280 Beechwood Ave, Ottawa ON K1L 8E2.

Please supply your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters should be less than 300 words, and may be edited for space, style and clarity.