

# THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

## British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association April 2017 Spring Newsletter

### VIMY RIDGE - "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" AND THE BHC Cecil Bennett - KIA 9 April 1917

*"In those few minutes," said Canadian Brigadier-General A.E. Ross of the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge, "I witnessed the birth of a nation."*

"Among Canada's defining events, the Battle of Vimy Ridge in the First World War ranks high. It was a triumph — a major victory for the Allied side after a long, bloody stalemate — and a tragedy. In the four-day battle, 3,598 Canadians died and another 7,004 were wounded. In the century since it ended, on 12 April 1917, it has become something else: an event bordering on myth."

The attack started at 5:30 am on on 9 April, Easter Monday, a bitterly cold and snowy day. The log of the 2nd Division's 6th Brigade described the battle's first day: "Wounded men sprawled everywhere in the slime, in the shell holes, in the mine craters, some screaming to the skies, some lying silently, some begging for help, some struggling to keep from drowning in craters."

[Canadian Encyclopedia](#)



*"A young private soldier from Sussex, New Brunswick, George Frederick Murray, had as good a vantage point as any, for he was waiting in reserve with the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles almost at the very centre of the Canadian line and had time to absorb the spectacle unfolding before him. He looked up at the ridge and saw, through the wan light of breaking day, that the entire slope had become a shambles. Every foot of ground was churned and dug up, thousands of gaping shell holes were slowly filling with bloody water, arms, legs, pieces of dismembered bodies; and equipment of both sides was strewn about like garbage - abandoned rifles, steel helmets, bits of flesh, all bound together with a mucilage of mud over which long lines of haggard prisoners and the walking wounded stumbled and groped their way back to the Canadian lines. And still the guns roared over the carnage." From Pierre Berton's book "Vimy" - Read George's story on page 9*

Cecil Bennett was born on 3 April 1895. At ten years of age Cecil was brought to Canada by the Dr. Barnardo Homes. He arrived in Canada on 11 April 1905. Twelve years less two days later, he died in France, on the first day of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, 9 April 1917. We have not discovered who his family was or exactly where he came from, what we do know is that Cecil came into Barnardo's care alone. The only mention of siblings was of brothers, but they had never been in care of Barnardo's therefore there is very little information available.

In his second placement, Cecil was indentured to Mr. Ben Johnston of Cavan, Ontario on 4 September 1907. He was indentured until

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Cecil's bible, trunk and  
Memorial Plaque

1 April 1913 for a total of one hundred and twenty dollars. Mr. Johnston was good to Cecil, treating him as a son. He never expected Cecil to work any harder than his own children and ensured he was educated.

Cecil enlisted 20 October 1915 in Peterborough, Ontario. His NOK was listed as Ben Johnston. He claimed he was twenty years and five months old. Aside from a bout of influenza in early 1917, Cecil had remained uninjured in the war until 9 April 1917, when he was reported as killed in action in the field. His personal records from the war are sparse and unremarkable. However, his burial location tells more of his story.

Cecil was buried in the Lichfield Crater Cemetery. Lichfield Crater was one of two mine craters (the other being Zivy Crater) which were used by the Canadian Corps Burial Officer in 1917 for the burial of bodies found on the Vimy battlefield. The crater is essentially a mass grave and contains 57 First World War burials, 15 of them unidentified. All of the men buried here died on 9 or 10 April 1917 with one exception, a soldier who died almost a year earlier, in April 1916, whose grave was found on the edge of the crater after the Armistice. His is the only grave marked by a headstone. There are 40 Canadians buried there from the Battle of Vimy Ridge, including one recipient of the Victoria Cross. Lichfield and Zivy Crater are the only Commonwealth War Cemeteries on the Western front to be circular in shape.



In 1925 Mr. Johnston received a letter from the Department of National Defence stating that the individual graves of the soldiers buried in the Lichfield Crater could not be identified. It was decided to commemorate the soldiers buried there in stone panels in the walls of the cemetery.

In 1919 Mr. Johnston was presented with a memorial certificate in Cecil's honour from the Peterborough Board of Trade. In 2014 this certificate was used as the foundation for the BHCARA's First World War Commemoration Plaque unveiled on 23 July 2014, an event attended by BHC descendant Don Cherry.

Mr. Johnston lovingly kept all the documentation pertaining to his indenture of Cecil as a young child through his enlistment and death in the war. The documentation was turned over to the BHCARA by Mr. Johnston's granddaughter Wilda Hay. The documents date from a 1907 letter from Barnardo's acknowledging they had received, Mr. Johnston's \$3 application fee for a child, right through to Cecil's death in the war. At this same time, CEO Lori Oschefski acquired another document package relating to BHC Winnifred Payne. Among the items in her documents is an original "after sailing notice"; the only one BHCARA is aware of in existence. In 2014 the BHCARA relinquished both sets of information to the Canadian Museum of History (formally the Civilization Museum) in Gatineau, Quebec where they have become the foundation for an exciting new exhibit which now includes the British Home Children in their soon to be opened Canadian History Hall! Some documents from this collection can be viewed here: [www.canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com](http://www.canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com)

## Canadian Museum of History – Canadian History Hall

We are thrilled to announce that on 1 July 2017, for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec will be opening their new Canadian History Hall. This new hall occupies about 40,000 square feet, and traces Canada's history from the dawn of human habitation to the present day. Included in this exciting new hall is an exhibit on the British Home Children. The exhibit is focused on two British Home Children, Cecil Bennett, our BHC of the Month, and Winnifred Payne.

Cecil Bennett's items were donated to the BHCARA by the Granddaughter of Ben Johnston, Wilda Hay. Wilda had approached BHCARA CEO after a presentation in Peterborough and generously donated the artifacts which date back to her Grandfather's application to acquire a child from Barnardo's, through to his military documents and awards! Winnifred Payne's documents were purchased from an online auction.



BHC descendant of William Cheesman, Logan O, helps his Grandmother Lori O bring Cecil and Winnifred's items into the museum 2014.

These two collections together represent a complete trail of the progress of the children from the start, when the need for care arose, through to their immigration and indenture.

With Vimy's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary comes the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cecil's death. This being represented in an exhibit opening on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's confederation is somehow, very fitting. The BHCARA is thrilled to have been the primary source of information and artifacts for this exhibit, but we also gratefully acknowledge that it was Judy Neville who initially contacted the museum with the suggestion that they include the BHC. Without this seed she planted, we might have been, once again, overlooked. Judy will be accompanying Lori Oschefski to the official opening of the Canadian History Hall on 1 July 2017.



2014 CEO Lori Oschefski tuning the artifacts over to James Trepanier Curator - Post-Confederation Canada



## A special student commemoration for our BHC in France

This month, on behalf of the BHCARA members, the Grade 10 students from Nantyr Shores School, Innisfil, Ontario will be laying a remembrance wreath in France commemorating all the BHC who fought and those who lost their lives in the war. The students are hoping the wreath will be placed at the Vimy Monument, but tighter security with dignitaries such as Prime Minister Trudeau, Prince Charles, Prince William and Prince Harry in attendance, might make this impossible. Over 220 BHC are commemorated on the Vimy Monument. If not Vimy, the students are looking towards the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres where 122 engraved names of BHC names have been identified. The ribbon on the wreath is simply embroidered with the words "British Home Children Canada".



The students have been working hard this past year to prepare for their trip to France. Under the careful guidance of their teacher Mr. C. Froese, they have prepared by not only

fundraising, but also identifying all the soldiers from Innisfil, Ontario who perished in the war. They discovered that, of the 63 soldiers from Innisfil who died in World War 1, 16 were born in Britain and 7 of these were British Home Children. When the BHC connection was discovered, Mr. Froese, wanting to know more about the programs which brought these children to Canada, attended a BHCARA presentation in Innisfil last fall. He returned to his school, sharing our film "[Born of Good Intentions](#)" and the story of the BHC, not only to his students, but to the entire history department at Nantyr Shores!

This month, 49 staff and students from Nantyr Shores who are travelling to France and will be part of 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. We extend our congratulations on a job well done and our best wishes for a successful trip. We look forward to seeing the photos of the students commemorating our British Home Children.

## Barrie, Ontario Legion's commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Battle at Vimy Ridge - BHCARA to honour our BHC Soldiers

Date: Sunday April 9, 2017

Time: 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Location: 410 St. Vincent St., Barrie, Ontario

**Outdoor Parade and Wreath Laying Ceremony at 1pm**

(Parade Marshal, Fern Taillefer);

**Indoor WWI Militaria Display and BHCARA Display**

(opens at 12:30pm)

Speakers Presentations beginning at 2pm

*Opening Remarks* – Start at 2PM

*1st Speaker* – Start 2:10PM – Darcy Murray, Simcoe County Men who fought at Vimy Ridge (30 Minutes);

**2nd Speaker – Start 2:40PM – Lori Oschefski – The British Home Children Fighting at Vimy (30 Minutes);**

*3rd Speaker* – Start 3:20PM MGen Glynne Hines – The Royal Cdn.

Legion and the OSI Special Section (20 to 30 Minutes)

*4th Speaker* – Start 3:50PM (KeyNote) – University of Western Ontario Prof. Andrew Iaroci – Canada Remembers Vimy (50 to 60 Minutes)



# BRITISH HOME CHILDREN VIMY FACTS



*The War Diaries of Ernest John Jackson killed in action at Vimy Ridge in 1917, aged 24. His brother served also in the same region and was given these diaries, which he continued to make daily entries. Photo from his nephew Alan Jackson*

Over 220 BHC names have been identified on the Vimy Memorial. The listing can be viewed on our [Find-A-Grave page](#).

The most common death dates for British Home Children are the dates of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The last surviving infantry man of Vimy Ridge was Quarrier British Home Child, Charles Reaper. Charles, at the young age of 17 was among the 20,000 Canadian soldiers who formed the "creeping artillery barrage" that took Vimy Ridge. Decades later, when Charles was interviewed about his Vimy Ridge experience,

tears filled his eyes as he recalled the battle that took the lives of hundreds of his fellow soldiers. As his comrades fell around him, there was nothing to do, he said, but to keep moving forward with his unit, over the Douai Plain. Charles was hit by shrapnel. He counted himself fortunate; 3600 died during that hard-won battle. Charles spent time in a hospital in England. He was 103, when he died in Winnipeg, on March 1, 2003.

Forty five BHC have been identified amongst those who died on the first day of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Cecil Bennett, a Barnardo boy who died on 9 April 1917 at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, will be featured in an exhibit opening July of 2017 at the Canadian Museum of History in Quebec

BHC Richard Palamount served in the First World War, he contracted Trench Nephritis and was removed from the field on the day before the start of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. He would die a few years later of this disease. His Grandson is Canadian hockey icon Don Cherry.

Cyril William George Kinsella's image was used on the Bell Memorial in Brantford, Ontario erected to commemorate the invention of the telephone. He was a BHC and a First World War soldier who was wounded and returned to Canada. While recovering, he posed for the monument and by the time it was unveiled, he had enlisted again and was serving in France. Cyril would not see the monument until the 1940's. Read Cyril's story in our [February 2015 Newsletter](#)

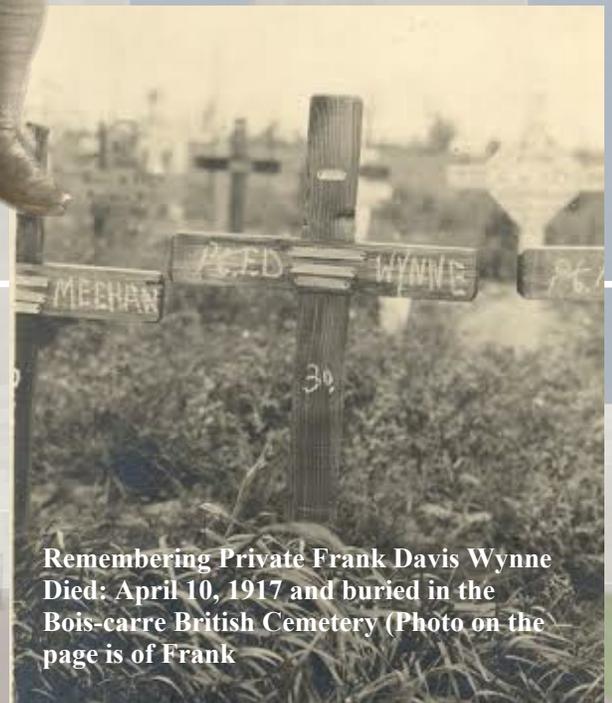
Toronto sculptor Walter S. Allward, who created the Bell Monument with BHC Cyril Kinsella on it, also created the Vimy Monument in France.

Construction of the Vimy monument



## Flesherton Advance 1915-1917 HEROISM OF BARNARDO BOY

Fell Succoring the Wounded, Writes Canadian Chaplain. At 5.30 on Easter Monday morning the barrage on Vimy Ridge started, and immediately thereafter the boys went over the parapet. Five minutes later a Canadian doctor and a chaplain followed them. With the doctor was a young lance-corporal; "pure gold," says the chaplain. With the chaplain was a sergeant; "as fine a man as ever served his King," is the chaplain's description of him. The doctor took the right section, the chaplain and the sergeant went to the left, searching the shell holes for the wounded, doing some rough and ready first aid, and administering such help and comfort as were possible. While engaged in this work the young sergeant was killed. The chaplain had turned aside a few feet to ask for direction from some men, when one of them said, "Your sergeant is hit." I ran to him," said the chaplain, describing what happened, "but one glance told me he was gone. The great artery was shot through, and in a moment the bravest, most unselfish man I ever knew had gone home." The concluding sentences of the letter are as follows: "I cannot close without telling of my intense admiration for the men and officers who gained this great victory. The battalion came out utterly exhausted, but with the spirit of conquerors. For our dead we mourn, but, at the same time, shall always remember with pride and joy their measureless faithfulness. What they died for we must live for. Never shall I forget the boy I left behind, his wonderful unselfishness, his sublime courage. Some day I shall see him again, and tell him how I love him for what he was in himself, and what he did for others. If only he had lived, he and I would have been one in the friendship begotten of a great experience. He was a Barnardo boy, homeless, but a friend and lover of his Master." "Go make thy garden fair as thou canst, Thou workest never alone. Perchance he whose plot is next to thine Will see it, and mend his own." —Robert Collyer



Remembering Private Frank Davis Wynne Died: April 10, 1917 and buried in the Bois-carre British Cemetery (Photo on the page is of Frank)

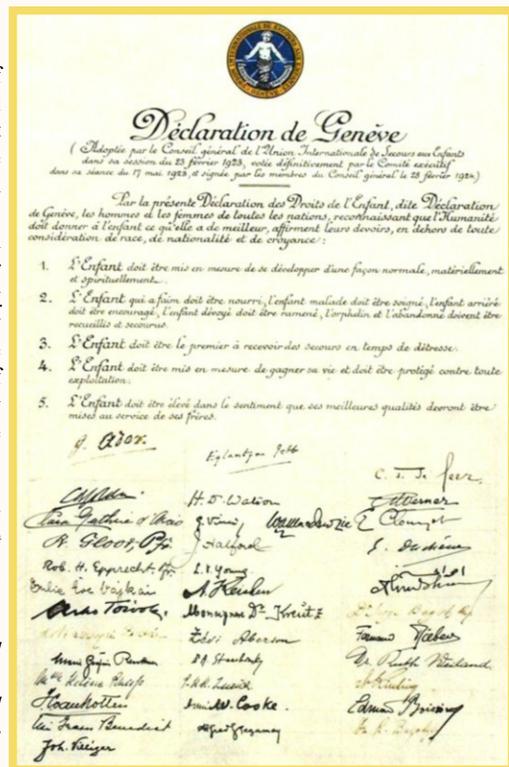
# GENEVA DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD - 1924

Recognizing “that mankind owes to the Child the best that it has to give”

The 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (GDRC) was a document adapted by the members of the League of Nations (including the British Empire and Canada) recognizing that children had fundamental rights. The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organization founded on 10 January 1920 as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War. The Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child was derived from the work of Eglantyne Jebb, who founded the Save the Children Fund in England in 1919, raising money for emergency aid to children suffering from the consequences of the First World War. Until this time, children were perceived as objects and not the subject of international law. This declaration was unprecedented in that it established the concept of the rights of the child and laid the foundations for future international standards in children's rights. The declaration called upon parents, voluntary organizations, and national governments to recognize the rights of the child and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures. Organizations sending children to Canada were considered “Voluntary Care Organizations” and therefore were supposedly bound by this declaration. On 24 Sept 1924, the League of Nations adopted the declaration and titled it the “Geneva Declaration”. This document was not legally binding, but none the less, for the first time in history, a Human Rights document specifically addressed the rights of children.

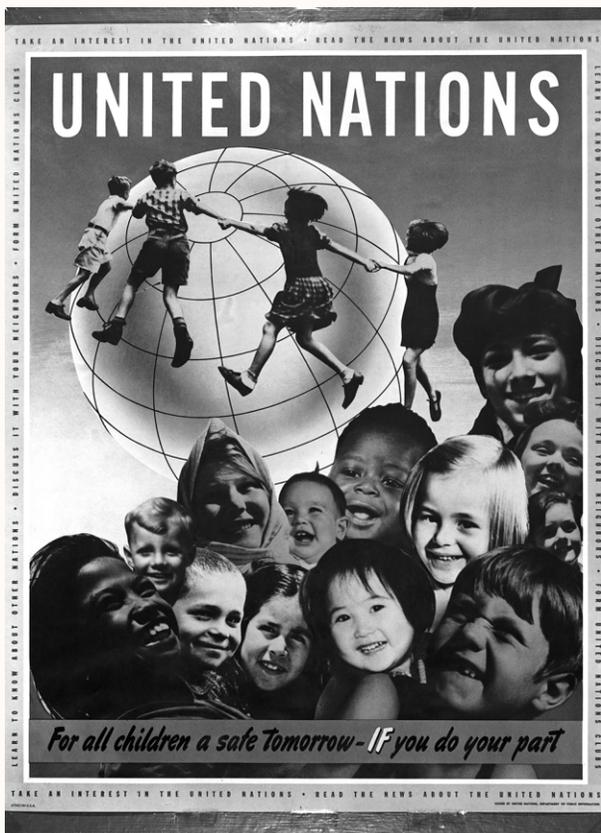
The Declaration reads: “By the present Declaration of the Rights of the Child, commonly known as “Declaration of Geneva,” men and women of all nations, recognizing that mankind owes to the Child the best that it has to give, declare and accept it as their duty that, beyond and above all considerations of race, nationality or creed:

1. The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually;
2. The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succored;
3. The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress;
4. The child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation;
5. The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men.”



The Declaration placed the duties directly on the "men and women of all nations" and not on the countries involved. It never intended to place binding obligations upon the countries and was not legally enforceable. The phrase used “the delinquent child must be reclaimed” resembles a form of child salvation and held the door open for child migration under the guise of protection to continue.

This declaration, addressed a lot of the basic human rights many of our British Home Children were denied. The part "must be protected against every form of exploitation" refers to slavery, forced labour, forced displacement and sexual exploitation, risks all British Home Children were exposed to, far too many subjected to. The GDRC was reaffirmed by the League in 1934, however the exploitation of BHC, continued in Canada until the very end of the immigration schemes in 1948 and beyond as children continued to work in servitude in Canada. In fact, millions of children across the world were left unprotected.



The atrocities of the Second World War were the catalyst to setting up a way of internationally regulating human rights. In 1945 the United Nations (founded after the Second World War) adopted the GDRC. In 1948 the UN, with the help of many governments, released the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). This declaration seldom mentions children. Although their rights were covered under the basic human rights in the declaration, the [Declaration of the Rights of the Child](#) was introduced in 1959 outlining rights specifically for children. On 20 November 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted unanimously by all 78 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 1386 (XIV). In this declaration, children had ten fundamental principles:

1. The right to equality, without distinction on account of race, religion or national origin.
2. The right to special protection for the child's physical, mental and social development.
3. The right to a name and a nationality.
4. The right to adequate nutrition, housing and medical services.
5. The right to special education and treatment when a child is physically or mentally handicapped.
6. The right to understanding and love by parents and society.
7. The right to recreational activities and free education.
8. The right to be among the first to receive relief in all circumstances.
9. The right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
10. The right to be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, and universal brotherhood.

Specifically, when you consider the suffering of the BHC, this declaration address all the basic human rights these children were denied - the right to be protected against abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, the right to a name and a nationality, adequate nutrition, housing, medical services, and education. Most of all this declaration covers the one fundamental thing ALL

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BHC were denied, **the right to understanding and love by parents and society!** What these declarations failed to do, is to define the age of what would be considered a child.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission drafted the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC). It was not until 30 years, to the day, after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted, that work on the CRC was completed and opened for signatures on 20 November 1989. It came into force on 2 September 1990, supported by 196 Countries including all members of the UN except the United States. This declaration set the age of a child as being any person under the age of eighteen, adopted by most countries, except those with a different age of majority. This declaration is bound by international law. All jurisdictions implementing the Convention requires compliance with child custody and guardianship laws as that every child has basic rights, including the right to life, his or her own name and identity, to be raised by his or her parents within a family or cultural grouping, and to have a relationship with both parents, even if they are separated.

In today's world children are enormously better protected than those children of a century ago. I think it is fair to say that one of the greatest legacies of the BHC, is their contribution to the evolution of children rights which protects many children in today's world against the abuses and exploitation they suffered. However, in spite of all the developments in children's rights, for a lot of children in this world these basic human rights, set out in the 1924 Geneva Declaration, are still not being met.

*"What does it mean to secretly get on a train?" asked Insulza, citing the Mexican writer Elena Poniatowska, "Why do you have to leave your land and go to the other side? Some children who don't even know how to read go by themselves, with just an address, a telephone number they don't know how to dial, or a landmark that they can't find. They travel filled with illusions to a country where everything marginalizes them. At the moment that the young migrants jump on to the train car, they leave their childhood on the platform." Caribbean News Now! April 25, 2012*

[OAS inaugurates child migration forum with first ladies of Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala](#)

We have come a long way with children's rights, but it is clear, the work is far from done.

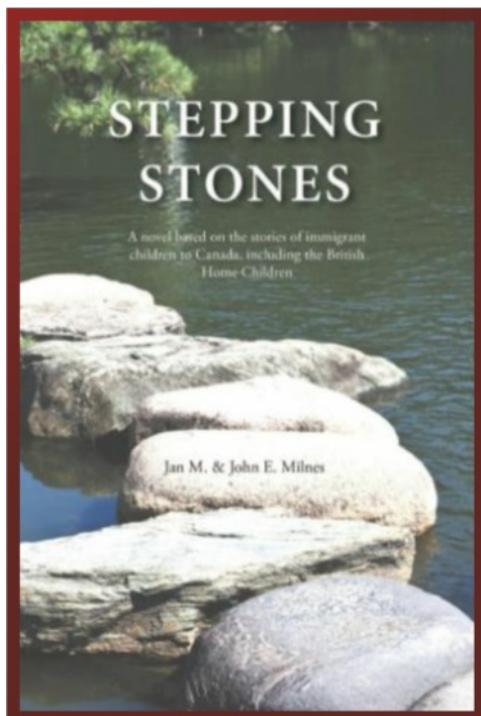
# Brockville Public Library

23 Buell St., Box 100 Brockville, ON K6V 5T7

## Meet the Author



**Wednesday, May 10th, 2017 2.00 pm**



Meet Jan and John Milnes  
local authors of

### "STEPPING STONES"

A NOVEL BASED ON THE STORIES OF  
BRITISH HOME CHILDREN - INCLUDING  
ONE, JOHN BUCHAN, WHO SETTLED IN  
GLENGARRY, EASTERN ONTARIO

\*\*\*\*\*

*Jim Brownell, former MPP, SD&SG:-  
"I could hardly put the book down. An outstanding job, your descriptive detail is awesome! I like the way you have woven into the story historical facts of towns and cities. I felt I had walked in the shoes of that young Scottish lad, John Buchan. Some parts certainly tug at the heart-strings. Congratulations!"*



**Soldier Demography**  
 Soldier Name: Arthur Barnard  
 Identification: Private 805010  
 Division: 87th Infantry Battalion  
 Country: Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)  
 When: First World War  
 Died: 9 April 1917 - Battle of Vimy Ridge

# Student Essay

**Soldier File Project: Arthur Barnard**  
**By Saoirse Greythorn**  
**History 11**  
**Mr. Peters**  
**Fredericton High School**  
**January, 2017**

## Personal Information

Arthur Barnard was born in London England on the 13th of April, 1894. Arthur was a British Home Child who was emigrated to Canada in 1906, when he was only 12 years old. During those 12 years Arthur Barnard grew up on 117 Windsor road, Bexhill-on-sea, Sussex England.

In Arthur's personal records from the British Home Children, it is noted that Arthur was, "small of stature, but large of heart, and cheerful under all circumstances. He was a young man respected by all who became acquainted with him." Unfortunately, this information cannot be used to gain an understanding of Arthurs's basic personality and characteristics, due to the fact that most British Home children were abused and neglected, and the reports purposely misleading. Therefore, this report on his personality is not reliable. At the time of his enlistment on October 11th, 1915, Arthur was 21 years old, 5'2" in height and weighed only 128 pounds.

On his attestation papers Arthur had initially placed Ethel Barnard as his next of kin, but she was later replaced by his Uncle George Simmons. Ethel was not a blood-relative to Arthur, therefore, it is most likely that Simmons was a biological family relative that Barnard found after he enlisted in the Army, which he then naturally used to replace Ethel Barnard.

## Military Movements

Following his enlistment in the Army in Port Hope, Ontario, Private Barnard was posted to the 136th overseas battalion where he remained in Halifax until the 25th of October. Private Arthur Barnard then moved to Liverpool where he remained for only 12 days. Private Barnard's Active Service Papers do not state why he was in either of these places, or why he was posted there for such short periods of time.

On November 5th 1915, Private Barnard was transferred to the 39th battalion where he remained for just over a year. On December 14th, 1916 he was drafted to the 87th battalion where he remained until his death at Vimy Ridge.

During his time in the military Private Barnard joined the Lewis Gun Course. He was given leave from regular duty to attend this course on December 19, 1916, returning to active duty on the January 20, 1917.

## The Final Days

As a part of the 87th battalion, Private Barnard was under the command of Major HeLeRoy Shaw. This battalion underwent training until April 3rd, 1917 when they moved from Billets, Chateau la Haie, to the front lines in preparation for the battle of Vimy Ridge.

In the following two days, a group of 13 other companies arrived and were taken into the 87th battalion in order to strengthen it. Company 'C' was assigned to dig assembly trenches between Tottenham to Old Boot Sap, during which four Lieutenants and Majors experienced non-lethal injuries. Meanwhile, companies 'A', 'B', and 'D' moved into battle position around Tottenham.

On April 9th, 1917, the battle of Vimy Ridge began with all 520 members of the 87th battalion going "over the top", they were supported by heavy artillery barges. Within five minutes of zero hour when the battalion went "over the top", Caption Law, Lieutenant Planche, and Lieutenant Simmons were wounded, they had not yet even reached the enemies front line.

Once the primary objective was gained, the third wave of soldiers pulled back due to their small number of remaining soldiers. This was a confusing time for these soldiers, who soon came to believe that a number of men from the battalion were still in the assembly trenches and had not withdrawn. Lieutenant Colonel Inns was attached to the battalion and with those soldiers who had withdrawn. He made a trip back up though the trenches under heavy machine gun and rifle fire in order to retrieve those men who he thought had remained there. Once he finally arrived, he discovered that there were no men in the assembly trenches! Instead of withdrawing with the others, or being stuck in the assembly trenches as was believed, this handful of men had moved forward!

Later on in the day, while the 87th battalion was holding enemy lines, the 75th and 102nd Canadian battalions bombed the enemy lines clearing them. Gaining these machine guns made a very big difference, and gave an advantage to the Canadian troops.

Although the 87th battalion made impressive advances during the battle at Vimy Ridge on the day of April 9th 1917, there were also enormous losses to all of the battalions who fought. The 87th battalion began this battle with 520 strong men, and ended the day with only 217 still standing. A whopping 58% of the men were lost, with a total of 161 men wounded, and 142 being killed in action. Army Private Barnard was one of the many soldiers who died in action that day.

## Medical Records

Upon enlistment to the Army Private Barnard was deemed healthy and fit for duty, and had received all standard vaccinations and check-ups. He remained healthy until his death. His field medical card indicates that he was missing, found, and then finally pronounced as having died in action on April 9th, 1917, at the battle of Vimy Ridge. Arthur Barnard was 22 years of age when he died, being only four days shy of his 23rd birthday.

## Lest We Forget

Arthur Barnard's military service lasted only 1 year, 10 months, and 24 days (excluding the end date). Private Barnard received \$20.00 per month, with a total of \$480.00 having been sent to Mrs. Luna Carr. Payments ended and his file was closed when he died.

On his personal effects sheet, Private Barnard listed Mrs. Caroline M. Bray as his biological mother from England. His medals, decorations, P & S, and memorial cross was sent to her after his death. Additionally, one Miss Luna Carr was also to be notified of his death, however Luna's relation to Private Barnard remains unclear.

Unfortunately, Barnard does not have a grave reference, and his only known cemetery is at Vimy Memorial. Like all those who have died in service, his name is commemorated in the first world war book of remembrance, with his commemoration being listed on page 196.

## Bibliography

[Common Wealth War Graves Commission. /Government of Canada. \(n.d.\). Library and archives Canada: Arthur Barnard. /Government of Canada. \(n.d.\). Library and archives Canada. /BHC who died in the first world war. /Library and Archives of Canada: Government of Canada. A living past. /British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association. /Canada remembers the battle of Vimy Ridge](#)

## A little bit of Canada in Manchester stories of British Home Children of the Great War

By Author and Historian  
Andrew Simpson



This is the gravestone of Arthur Wisdom Ervine and he is one of the thirty-one men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force buried in Southern Cemetery in the south of Manchester.

All of the men died of wounds they sustained on the Western Front during the Great War.

Of those thirty-one men two were British Home Children and both were Barnardo's Boys.

I had uncovered the story of Thomas John Loveland who had enlisted in 1915 and was killed in 1918 by sheer chance having chosen him simply because someone had left a small Canadian flag by his gravestone.

It took an afternoon to complete the basic database of the thirty-one which also revealed Private Arthur Wisdom Ervine of the 2nd Battalion of the Canadian Infantry who had been born in Dorset in 1898.

The evidence trail for his life here in the UK is sparse and there may more be information on the BHC databases.

His Attestation Papers show that he gave his next of kin as the Barnardo's Home on Peter Street in Toronto.

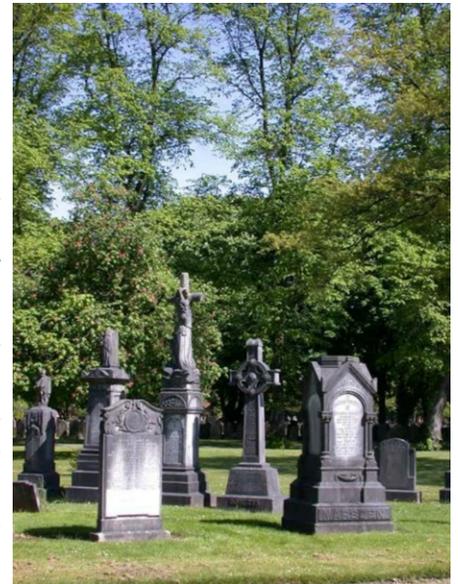
I know also that he left Halifax for Liverpool in the June of 1917 and arrived in France the following January.

He was wounded on October 17th, evacuated to Britain five days later and died on November 15.

Unlike many of the Canadians buried in Southern Cemetery he had died in Salford Royal a hospital which is seven miles away.

It was one of the receiving hospitals for the 2nd General Western Hospital which was responsible for all the military and Red Cross hospitals around Greater Manchester.

Most of our Canadians had been in the Nell Lane Hospital which was beside Southern Cemetery and was part of the Withington Workhouse which was administered by the Chorlton Union.



*Southern Cemetery*



Like many public buildings it had been taken over during the war and with the end of the workhouse system in the 1930s continued as a hospital, becoming part of the National Health Service in 1948 and closing in the 1990s.

By one of those little coincidences two of our children were born there and were regular visitors to its causality unit during their "football years."

And there is an irony in the origins of the hospital given that some British Home Children will have passed through the doors of workhouses across the country at some point in their early years.

Read more from Andrew Simpson at:  
[www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.com](http://www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.com)

*Picture; gravestone of Private Ervine and postcard of "ration party at Nell Lane Hospital, 1917, from courtesy of David Harrop and Southern Cemetery today from the collection of Andrew Simpson*

# British Home Children and the Battle of Vimy Ridge

## A story of the Murray Family

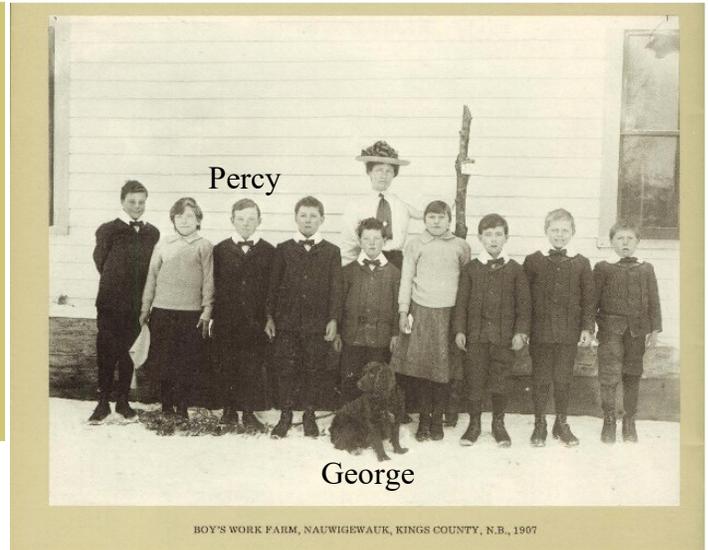
By: Jaqueline Murdoch

This is a story of eight brothers and their impoverished family living in East London in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Three of these brothers were candidates for the British Home Children plan in 1906 and 1908.

The boys were born to Alice Caroline Murray (nee Jones) and William Murray, in the following order: William John (b: 1885), Albert (b: 1886), Charles (b: 1889), Percy (b: 1894), George (b: 1896), Sidney (b: 1898), Ernest (b:1900), and Edward (b: 1904). William John was my grandfather on my mother's side.



*Percy arrived in Canada in 1906 with Ellinor Close. He was taken to their farm in Nauwigewauk, New Brunswick*



*Ellinor Close "after" immigration photo. The "before" photo and information on Ellinor Close was published in our [Dec 2016 Newsletter](#)*

In 1904, William (Sr.) was 43 and belonged to the GPO teamsters. The teamsters were required to turn up at the barns twice on Sunday, their only day off, to feed, "water and groom their horses. William and his group were pressing for extra pay for this duty, and put their demands to the GPO management. They resolved to strike if they did not get satisfaction.

The East End of London has (and still has) a chronic labour surplus; and in 1904, this situation would have been exacerbated by the recession, which predictably followed the end of the Boer War (the Anglo-Boer War 1899 - 1902). In the best of times it would have been difficult for these men of little education and few skills to get a job. If one did have a sought-after steady job, like one with the GPO, the wages still would provide little more than a subsistence living. In William's case, he supported a wife and their eight boys; thus, his wages would have been spread very thin. And he liked his pint. Although the family size was not extraordinarily large for that time, they were of the working poor. They had wretched conditions in their tenement block, and seldom enough to eat to satisfy them. These are not the sorts of people who have much prospect of enforcing their economic points; they are not able to hold out long enough in a strike. The GPO management would have been well aware of their workers' circumstances. Accordingly, they said "no".

On the day appointed for the strike, only William and one other actually stayed out. Both men were sacked. So much for solidarity. Having lost his job and not being able to find another (until years later), the Murray's already miserable circumstances were degraded to desperate.

There were no public social programs such as the dole to give them relief. Consequently, the family encountered an emergency of long duration and had to resort to the workhouse on occasion. The five youngest boys especially were chronically undernourished - slowly starving. In adulthood, the results of malnutrition were more noticeable in these boys. When George enlisted in the war in 1915, at the age of 19, he was 5'3" and 125 pounds with short bandy legs, which showed the effects of rickets. His brother Percy, at time of enlisting was 21 years old, and 5'4". Surprisingly, this short stature had an advantage when the brothers were in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The vicar at the local C of E advised Alice, concerning the home children program. In 1906, Percy was 12 and George was 10. The older boys were unable to help the family as they were apprenticing (Will Jr) or in the armed forces in India (Albert and Charles). It was decided that Percy and George would go to Canada to learn farming. It would be another two years before Sidney would be 10, and at a better age to "join" his brothers in Canada. Alas, George and Percy were sent to New Brunswick with the Ellinor Close program; whereas, Sidney would go to Stratford, Ontario to the Annie MacPherson home.

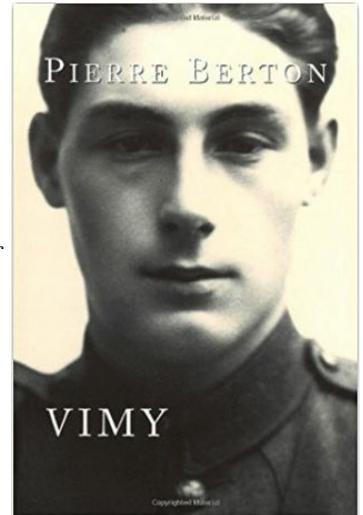
When war broke out in Europe, the three Canadian boys decided to enlist in the Canadian armed forces. This was the first and only time that the boys were briefly reunited with



*Percy in uniform*

their parents in England. Percy was happy to see the family, but George, throughout his life, never forgave them for sending him away.

Both Percy and George were part of the Canadian forces that were assigned to go to Vimy Ridge. In Pierre Berton's book "Vimy", George's subsequent journal was transcribed. *".... a young private soldier, from Sussex, NB, George Frederick Murray, had as good vantage point as any, for he was waiting in reserve with the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles almost at the very centre of the Canadian line and had time to absorb the spectacle unfolding before him. He looked up at the ridge and saw, through the wan light of breaking day, that the entire slope had become a shambles. Every foot of ground was churned and dug up; thousands of gaping shell holes were slowly filling with bloody water, arms, legs, pieces of dismembered bodies; and equipment of both sides was strewn about like garbage - abandoned rifles, steel helmets, bits of flesh, all bound together with a mucilage of mud over which long lines of haggard prisoners and the walking wounded stumbled and groped their way back to the Canadian lines. .... and still the guns roared over the carnage".*



Both George and Percy wrote about their experiences in the battle of Vimy Ridge. As mentioned, George supplied his notes to Pierre Berton for his book published in 1986. Percy wrote his notes later in life, "As I saw it, World War I", signed Sig. P. A. Murray, "C" Company 1st Battalion C.E.F. During the battle for Vimy Ridge, Percy recorded ".....Lt. Holland said: "Boys, it looks like we are in a trap, unless we get help from the artillery, we are about out of ammunition. I want two volunteers to take a message to Headquarters, you will have to run through that barrage that FRITZ has put up behind us". "While not brave," says Percy, "I felt like running someplace, anyplace out of that shell hole." So, he and another fellow named Miller volunteered. Here's where Percy's small stature of 5'4" may have saved his life. ...."I couldn't see anything for smoke and dust. I could feel the heat from the shells. It cleared suddenly and I looked for Miller but he was nowhere to be seen, must not have made it. There is an advantage in being small, at a time like that, one is a smaller target."



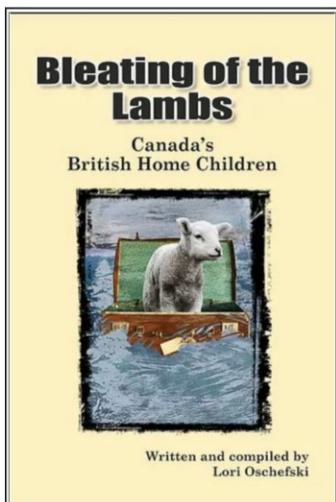
The four younger boys in Stratford - Ernest (Ernie), George, Sidney, Edward (Ted)

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Pierre Berton acknowledged the work of George Murray in his book called "Vimy". He wrote: *"One thing that impressed me in the unpublished material is the eloquence of the writing. A good many Great War veterans obviously felt the need to record their experiences. Some did it to get it off their chests, others for the more important purpose of leaving a memoir for their sons and daughters. One of the latter was George Frederick Murray of the 5th CMRs, a man who never got past grade 6 but who, at the request of his son Ernie, proceeded to*

*fill in handwriting fifty quarter-inch-ruled loose-leaf sheets, every one of which is a pleasure to read".*

Thankfully all three brothers returned home safely, to Canada, after the war. However, they lost one brother, Albert, who died at the beginning of the war in the Battle of Mons in 1914. The remaining brothers, Charles, Ernest (Ernie), and Edward (Ted) emigrated to Canada a few years after the end of the war. Only my grandfather, William John, the oldest son, remained in England. After the 2nd Great War, my parents emigrated to Stratford, Ontario, Canada as this is where most of the Murray brothers finally settled.



The third printing of Bleating of the Lambs written and compiled by Lori Oschefski is now available for purchase. Proceeds from this book goes toward the BHCARA's work.

Visit [www.BritishHomeChildren.com](http://www.BritishHomeChildren.com) for purchase details

Perry Snow has released a 2017 version of his book "Neither Waif Nor Stray" and has made the book available for FREE as a PDF download.

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