

World War I file

A Remembrance Day salute



A Magnificent Sacrifice

Percy L. Climo

The cover of Percy Climo's new book.

As the years roll by and veterans of the First World War depart this earth to join their fallen comrades, the memory of soldiers' sacrifices in that conflagration grows dim.

With that in mind, on this Remembrance Day the Cobourg Daily Star is running a special salute to the men and women of the First World War.

We print an excerpt about Vimy Ridge from Percy Climo's book, a review of the book, and photographs from the book.

As well, you will find a story about the six surviving Victoria Cross winners from the two world wars, including the last of the First World War VC heroes, Charlie Rutherford of Colborne.

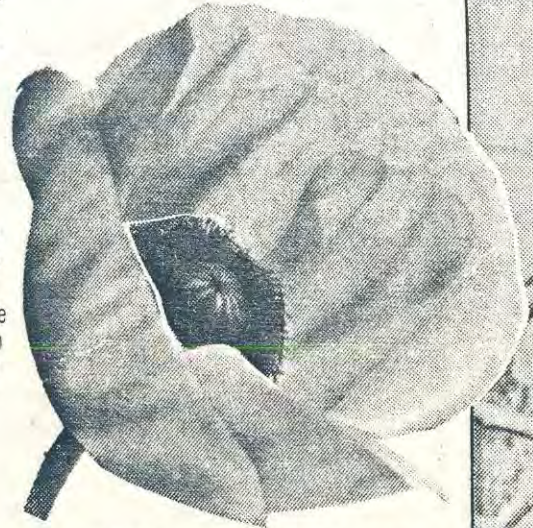
Vimy Ridge

The winter months of the year 1917 were cold and severe. Week by week the snow piled up and before Spring there was quite an accumulation. To add to the difficulty, fuel was in short supply and local dealers were hard pressed to keep up with the demand. Private homes, public buildings, and other places were just getting by with deliveries of fuel in small quantities. Many other places in Ontario fared much worse than Cobourg. It was a difficult winter season.

With the exception of the office of Deputy Reeve, the 1917 Cobourg town council was placed in office by acclamation. Mr. George Greer, a King Street businessman, was the Mayor.

The people kept up their war effort. The Canadian Army needed more and more soldiers. Recruiting for volunteers never ceased. The Sixth Draft of the Cobourg Heavy Battery was up to full strength, and the January 12th issue of the

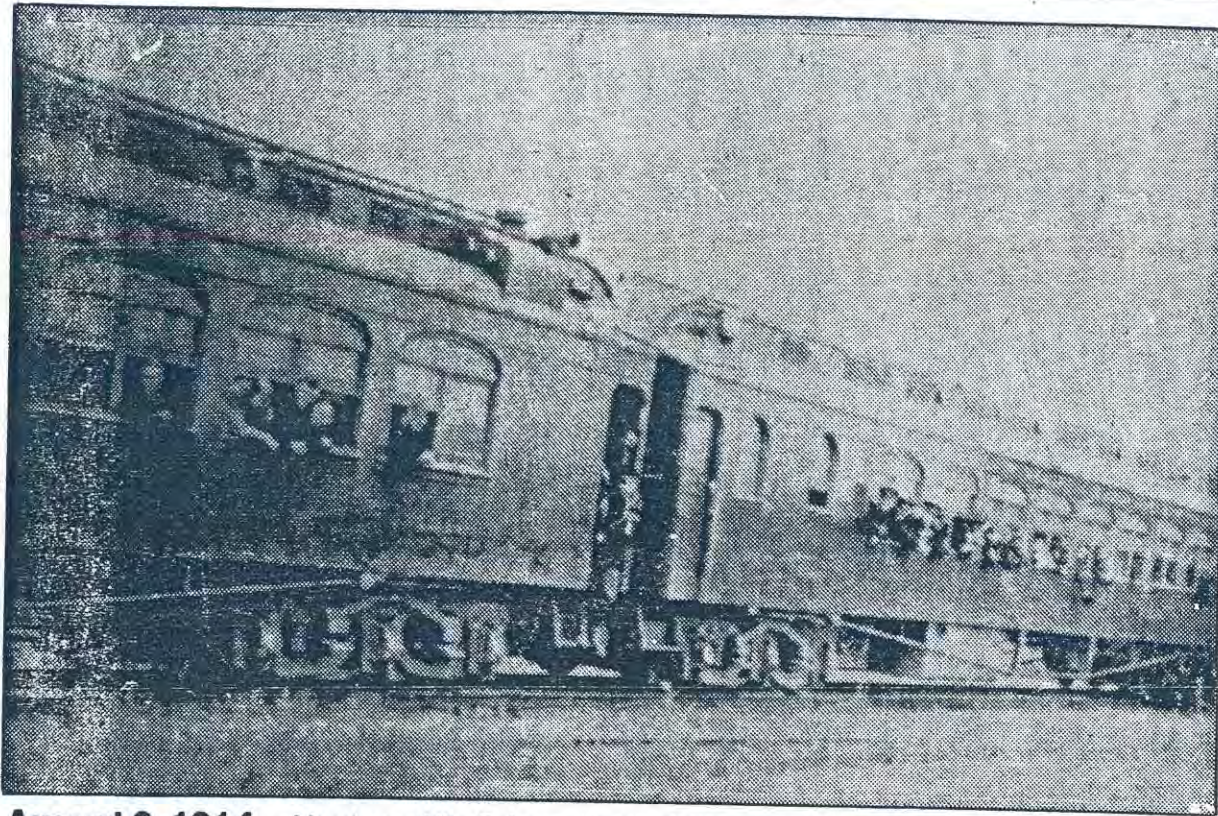
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Private Samuel W. Angove, Cobourg, who died Sept. 3, 1916.
Photo: The Climo Collection.

Cobourg Star - Nov 11, 1986

Community life



August 6, 1914 — Members of the Cobourg Heavy Battery march to the station down King Street in Cobourg. The men were on home defence service.

Photo by the Cobourg Public Library Collection.



Soldiers on board — The train leaves from Cobourg heading for the War. Photo by the Charles Romano Collection.

Climo relates our military history

By Lawrence F. Jones

When Percy L. Climo published his book *Early Cobourg* in early summer 1935, the Cobourg Daily Star described his work in these words: "Cobourg's greatest

Book review

lents and money to make life more comfortable for the soldiers, who had been their friends and neighbors

Vimy Ridge

Cobourg World reports Major James McKinnon receiving volunteers for the Seventh draft. By February, Major E.A. Mac-Nachton, was at the armoury recruiting for the 256th Railway Battalion. To qualify for this group, a man must be strong and able to do a hard day's work, in addition to passing the regular physical standard, and age limit was set at forty-eight years.

Captain A.S. Morrison, who

The ladies of Cobourg never missed an opportunity to extend hospitality to the men in uniform. Early in February, the I.O.D.E. tendered an oyster supper to the Sixth and Seventh drafts of the Cobourg Heavy Battery. The meal was served in the school room of the Congregational Church and was followed by a musical entertainment in the sanctuary making for a most enjoyable evening.

short time before, and this gave those from out of town an opportunity to visit their homes and say good-bye. The Women's Patriotic Corps provided lunch for the draft en route to their next stopping place (Halifax).

"When the train pulled in, it was noticed that an Army Service Corps from a western point occupied one of the cars. Again good-byes were said and the draft speedily entrained. The Band played "O Canada" and

er, Cobourg; A.M. Baldwin, Coaticooke, Que.; C.R.D. Bottomly, Oshawa; F.M. Butler, Rochester, N.Y.; H.J. Cavanaugh, Cobourg; J.A. Detlor, Bancroft; F. Dimler, Cobourg; C.W. Erskine, Cobourg; A.L. Edgar, Bowmanville; A.G. Greer, Canton; H. Gorman, Cobourg; G. Gains, Newcastle; F.C. Hall, Coaticooke, Que.; L.T. Holmes, Picton; R.M. Houghtailing, Cobourg; A. Hugg,

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described his work in these words: "Cobourg's greatest historian is at it again."

Now, 15 months later, Percy Climo is still "at it" and has just released the result of years of painstaking work — *Cobourg 1914-1919: A Magnificent Sacrifice*, the story of this community during the First World War.

Climo relates the military history of Cobourg from the establishment of the first Northumberland militia regiment after the War of 1812 to the recruiting of combat units — infantry and artillery for the most part — during the 1914-1918 war until their return home after the armistice of November 11, 1918.

The first unit to be mobilized in Cobourg on the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Germany was the Cobourg Heavy Battery.

But Canada was ill-prepared for mobilization for war and the Battery fell victim to confusion and costly errors, which the author describes.

However, as the country as quickly as possible put itself on a war footing, the recruiting and movement of troops became more efficient and Climo reports no further instances of bad military management.

During the four wartime years, recruiting continued for the Cobourg Heavy Battery (12 reinforcement drafts were dispatched overseas for this unit alone), the 40th Northumberland Regiment, the 14th Field Battery, and the 139th Battalion. Climo lists the names of just about every Cobourg soldier sent overseas in four years, except of the 139th, whose names were not available.

The people of Cobourg gave freely of their time, ta-

soldiers, who had been their friends and neighbors.

Bands led the march to the railway station as each newly recruited formation left town, scores of townspeople lined the streets and flocked to the station to say farewell.

Percy Climo, a young boy then, was present at some of these parades, remembers them, and describes them well. He has given a good picture of the times, as he knew them, and as they were presented in the newspapers of those years.

Of four Climo brothers, Percy and Sidney were too young for the army, but Victor and Cecil saw active service overseas. Percy, a native of Cobourg, graduated in engineering from Queen's University, and practised his profession widely.

He has long had an interest in local history and is a life member of the Cobourg and District Historical Society.

He has written widely on Cobourg and Northumberland county historical subjects, and now is the author of two published books and the co-author of another.

Percy is grateful that his two brothers returned safely from the battlefield (although Cecil was wounded), because so many laid down their lives for King and country — 56 of them from Cobourg.

It is fitting that Climo concludes his latest book with these words of Laurence Binyon:

At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.

Cobourg 1914-1919: A Magnificent Sacrifice. By Percy L. Climo. Published by Percy L. Climo. \$9.50. Available at book stores.

Captain A.S. Morrison, who had been returned to Cobourg in early December, was called upon and gave a most descriptive lecture to a capacity audience in the Cobourg Congregational Church. His stories of the fighting in France and Flanders was listened to with great interest particularly the engagements with the enemy by our Canadian troops. He had been involved in some of the major battles on the western front and was home on furlough.

The 235th Battalion of Northumberland and Durham had been in winter quarters in Belleville. It was being transferred to Ottawa in Early March.

Sixth Draft Departs for Overseas

Very suddenly, the call came for the Sixth Cobourg Heavy Battery draft to entrain for an eastern point. With only about twenty-four hour's notice, the men hurriedly made ready to depart. Lieut. R.E. Davidson was the officer of this group.

As the boys marched through the main streets, en route to the depot, with the Cobourg Citizens' Band playing military selections, they were given a suitable ovation by the citizens who lined the streets on either side.

At the Depot, the platform was as usual packed with people. The boys had had their last leave a

Canada, and the National Anthem and as the train pulled out, hearty and prolonged cheers were given for Lieut. Davidson and the men of the Sixth Heavy Battery draft."

Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men of the Sixth Draft

Lieut. R.E. Davidson, O.C., Cobourg; Sergt. R.G. Hamblyn, Bowmanville; Sergt. E. Turner, Guelph; Corp. R.N. Bucknell, Cobourg; Corp. R.O. Smith, Ottawa; Corp. J. Martin, Syracuse, N.Y.; Gunners: W.H. Adams, Cobourg; G.C. Auld, Warkworth; G.F. Ash, Cobourg; F.J. Burge, Cobourg; C.G. Bonnycastle, Campbellford; C. Bak-

Ottawa; H.G. Hamblyn, Cambridge; H.L. Hartman, Bob's Lake; J. Kemp, Peterborough; E.J. Leishman, Toronto; J.H. Lithgow, Toronto; E.J. Lane, Guelph; L.J. Lafferty, Peterborough; J. McDonnell, Cobourg; N.S. McGrimmon, Oshawa; R. McGlynn, Cobourg; D.R. McMannis, Grafton; E.A. Peters, Canton; J.W. Smale, Cobourg; R. Storks, Newmarket; G.A. Sheppard, Cobourg; W.J. Seguire, Warkworth; J.W. Scott, Cobourg; W.R. Spear, Cobourg; G.N. Thomas, Coaticooke, Que.; S.G. Thomas, Cobourg; W.C. Thornton, Peterborough; and Gunner Wilkinson, Coaticooke, Que.



Third overseas draft — Men of the Cobourg Heavy Battery positioned in front of the Cobourg armory. These men departed for overseas March 28, 1916.

Photo, Mrs. Sybil Hicks, Cobourg.

Only six Victoria Cross winners still alive in Canada

By Bruce Levett
The Canadian Press

In the blaze of noon on Oct. 25, 1854, Lieut. Alexander Robert Dunn of the 11th (Prince Albert's Own) Hussars, drew his sabre and then — from the walk to the canter to the gallop — charged headlong into history.

Dunn was the first Canadian — out of 93 Canadians or men serving with Canadian units — to win the Victoria Cross down through the years. He won it for gallantry in the charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimea, nearly two years before there was a Victoria Cross.

Today, only six VC winners remain alive in this country. They likely will be the last because Canada now discourages the awarding of foreign decorations to its citizens — and that includes Britain's highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy.

The six survivors are:

Lt.-Col. Charles Rutherford, 94, of Colborne, Ont., the only VC left from the First World War.



Each year, on Remembrance Day, there are fewer who recall those heroes and what they did.

Dunn was born in York (now Toronto) in 1833 and studied at Upper Canada College, later going to Harrow in England. There, at 19, he joined the 11th.

The young Canadian was described as "six feet three inches in stature, a most powerful and skilful swordsman," when he was shipped to the Crimea with his unit.

At one time, every schoolboy had to learn the poem concerning how the Light Brigade — "cannon to the right of them, cannon to the left of them, cannon in front of them, volleyed and thundered" — charged toward the Russian artillery as the consequence of somebody's monumental blunder.

Dunn made that ride and — the citation records — was pounding back at a hammering gallop when he noticed a Sgt. Bentley, his horse played out, fighting off three Russians. Dunn turned back and killed all three.

metal of the same Russian guns Dunn and his men had charged that bloody noon.

Originally, the medals came with a blue ribbon, a color later changed to dull crimson.

The medal itself is a Maltese cross, with the words For Valor below a rampant lion surmounted by a crown. On the back is inscribed the name of the recipient and the date of presentation.

Col. Rutherford might well have qualified for an acting award at the time of his exploit in the First World War.

As a young lieutenant with the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, he became separated from his company in the region of Monchy-le-Preux, France. Alone, he wandered into a crowd of Germans, convinced them they were surrounded, and took 35 prisoners without firing a shot.

Col. Mahony, then a major, was wounded twice in 1944 defending the Malmeidi River bridge.

He was captured, escaped, and was captured again.

Col. Foote, a Presbyterian minister, was a captain during the Dieppe action and he wasn't even supposed to be there, going in with the men of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry against orders.

He carried Canadian wounded, one after another, through the surf to the departing boats and shook off hands that attempted to drag him aboard the last departing craft.

Foote went back to that fire-swept beach to comfort those wounded who had to be left behind. He went into prison camp with them.

Col. Tilston, then a major, was shot in the back during training and blown up when his Jeep hit a land mine in France — and all that was before the exploit which won him his Victoria Cross.

The VC action cost him both legs. He was hit three times while leading a company of Essex Scottish across 500

— Victoria Cross —

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enemy with an anti-tank gun and a Thompson submachine-gun.

Few Canadians today recall how it was that Pine Street, in a quiet residential neighborhood in Winnipeg, came to be renamed Valor Road.

From one short block on this street three young men left for the First World War.

Only Lieut. Robert Shankland came back to display the VC he won at Passchendaele. Sgt. Frederick William Hall, VC, is buried in an unknown grave at Ypres in Belgium; Lance Sgt. Leo Clarke, VC, is buried in a churchyard near Le Havre in France.

A world war later, a similar coincidence occurred when Col. Mahony and Sgt. Smith left the same thoroughfare in New West-

minster, B.C. — 5th Street — to win the ultimate medal in Italy.

Canada's six surviving VC winners today are private men.

Some continue to show up at their local Royal Canadian Legion halls from time to time, where their privacy is closely guarded by staff and the old companions around them.

When approached for interviews, none wanted to have anything to do with raking over the past — not even such an illustrious past as theirs.

Hi- Tech

Fast
Mobile
Service

HOT Pressure-
wash &
blown
Cellulose
Insulation



**LOCAL & AREA
WIDE PAGING**

Another Feature