

'Doc's' descendants visit Vimy to honour decorated war hero

Continued from pg. 1

spotted us and peppered around the window sending pieces of brick flying around us. We took down the gun and placed it in another opening in the wall. This apparently was not quite so visible to the enemy. We all covered behind the wall. The gunner was told to keep under cover until the attack started. When it did start he put the gun in action, and he was again spotted, and pieces of brick flew all around him. It was almost suicidal, but we had no choice. I later recommended him for a Military Medal, which he received. I was awarded the Military Cross..."

The infantry then attacked, while Williams and his men covered them with supporting machine gun fire.

Whether they were successful, he never knew—but he would be recognized for his bravery, commanding his men in the midst of extreme danger.

Later he would receive a telegraph from Buckingham Palace, October 11, 1917 stating: "Your attendance is required at Buckingham Palace on Friday the nineteenth inst. at ten o'clock a.m. service dress regret that no one except those to be invested can be admitted to the Palace please telegraph acknowledgement. Lord Chamberlain, London"

Williams received his Military Cross that day—pinned on his uniform by King George—and a royal handshake as well. Williams later admitted to his mother in a letter that he was nervous, and was glad his name ended in 'W' as he was at the bottom of the list.

Before the war was over, Williams would be promoted to the rank of Captain. He returned to his medical studies, later setting up a longtime medical practice in Georgetown. He died in 1985.

His Vimy experiences would be life-changing. Famous Canadian author Pierre Berton interviewed Williams for his book entitled *Vimy*, and his many letters are quoted in the book 23 times. Unfortunately, he never lived long enough to see the book in print.



Longtime Georgetown doctor Claude Williams celebrates his 50th wedding anniversary with his wife Audrey. Williams received the Military Cross from King George in 1917 for his heroics at Vimy Ridge.

With the ceremonies at Vimy Ridge Monday, Dave and Gerald agreed they have a new appreciation of their father/grandfather's struggle on the Ridge during that pivotal battle.

"It's overwhelming to see all the goings-on here," said Dave, "The shell-holes, the trenches and the monument—my dad was here, and right now I'm standing on land that he walked on. I'm overwhelmed by it all."

Gerald agreed, saying, "I'm very excited to be here—it's almost surreal—he was here and walked on this land, fought for this land. Today, I'm so glad I came on this trip, and today, I'm so very proud of my grandfather."

Both Williams took part in a wreath-laying ceremony following the official ceremony attended by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Queen

Elizabeth.

The wreaths were placed in memory of Captain Claude Williams, as well as in honour of Branch 120 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Georgetown.

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9:00 AM
Gellert Community Centre

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www.onlineregistrations.ca

Funds raised will support the *Halton Women's Place*.
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