

THE GASPÉ WAR MEMORIAL

Unveiled July 7th, 1921 the Gaspé War Memorial recalls and honours the names of all those of the Gaspé District who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars.

A MEMORIAL TO GASPE'S HEROES

Monument Unveiled by Gen. Watson
5000 People Witnessed Patriotic Ceremony
GASPE. P.Q. JULY 7, 1921,
SPECIAL TO "CHRONICLE"
(From the Spec newspaper, October 26, 1997)

The picturesque little town of Gaspé was the scene of a brilliant patriotic event today when a monument was unveiled to the memory of forty-one soldiers of Gaspé District who were killed in the Great War.

More than five thousand people attended the ceremony and the monument which was erected hard by Baker's Hotel is a fitting tribute to the memory of the honoured dead. The shaft is an imposing one and is surmounted by the figure of a soldier while the inscription, "IN FLANDERS FIELDS" is an expressive tribute to the glorious sacrifice of the fallen patriots.

The thousands who gathered from the District for the ceremony participated in the event with enthusiasm. The celebrations opened with Church Services which were followed by a March Past of the officials accompanied by a Guard of Honour and the R.C.G.A Band which came from Quebec for the occasion.

Major General Sir David Watson then reviewed the Guard who presented a fine soldierly appearance and were cheered by the assembled people.

An address of Welcome was delivered by Mayor A.D. Valpy which was followed by an Address by Mrs. Calhoun, President of the committee of six ladies who carried out the full organization and all the details of the function.

In her address Mrs. Calhoun spoke as follows:

"I confess to a little embarrassment this afternoon in being called upon to address such a large and distinguished gathering. When I received the compliment of an invitation to become the President of the LADIES WAR MEMORIAL COMMITTEE I did not know that the duties of that office would involve the task of making a speech in public. I am glad, however, to have this opportunity, on behalf of the Ladies Committee, to welcome the distinguished gentlemen who have honoured us with their presence on this occasion, as well as expressing my thanks to the members of the Committee for their loyal co-operation and to the public generally for the support they have given us in carrying out our undertaking.

It is a cause for great thankfulness that we are able to see our monument completed and to have it unveiled in the presence and with the assistance of so large and influential an assembly. The success of our enterprise has been greater than even we had hoped for and this more than repays us for the time and effort spent in carrying it out.

We have had our difficulties and discouragements, as was inevitable, but the loyalty of the members of the Committee together with the generous support accorded to us by the public has made it possible for us to overcome these and to bring our work to a successful conclusion.

Today is one of the great days of our District. We are proud of the part that Gaspe played in the Great War. We are proud of our soldiers who went from this District, especially of those who made the great sacrifice and whose names this monument will forever keep in loving remembrance. And we are proud to have with us today to unveil our monument one whose brilliant military career is part of the history of Canada and under whose command the majority of those to whom this monument is erected fought and died."

Major General Sir David Watson then proceeded to unveil the monument and in an eloquent speech he likewise paid a touching tribute to the bravery of the men who gave their lives in the cause of civilization.

Children and young ladies, gowned in white, then deposited wreaths at the foot of the monument.

Eloquent speeches were also delivered by the Hon. Frank Carrell, M.L.C., M. Auguste Sirois, M. Pinault, Mr. J. Leonard Apedaile, Rev. Canon Wayman and others.

Great credit is due to the Rev. Canon Wayman, formerly Chaplain of the 87th Battalion (Grenadier Guards) for the part he took in the day's events.

When the monument had been presented to the Town by the President of the WAR MEMORIAL COMMITTEE the LAST POST was sounded and the R.C.G.A. Band rendered a number of selections which were enthusiastically applauded.

THE WAR MEMORIAL

The Gaspe District War Memorial has a commanding position above the main street (Queen Street or rue de la Reine) overlooking the scenic Basin or South West Arm of Gaspe Bay. When it was unveiled in 1921, the main business of the town, located on the Point, lay directly below it at the edge of the Basin. Then, a busy Robin's Hill gave access to the Point from the Main Street. Then, too, the monument overlooked the busy harbour of Gaspe Basin with its easy access to the outer Bay unimpeded by a bridge, as now. A run of steps was provided to mount the rather steep slope from the street to the monument's base.

The solid, four-sided base of the monument is surmounted by the life-sized figure of a Canadian soldier whose hands rest on a Cross inscribed, "IN FLANDERS FIELDS". This inscription recalls the lines of John McCrae poem - one of the finest of all war poems.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row.
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

The figure of the young soldier is bareheaded but his steel helmet lies over his shoulder. He gazes downwards in contemplative mood, in remembrance of his fallen comrades.

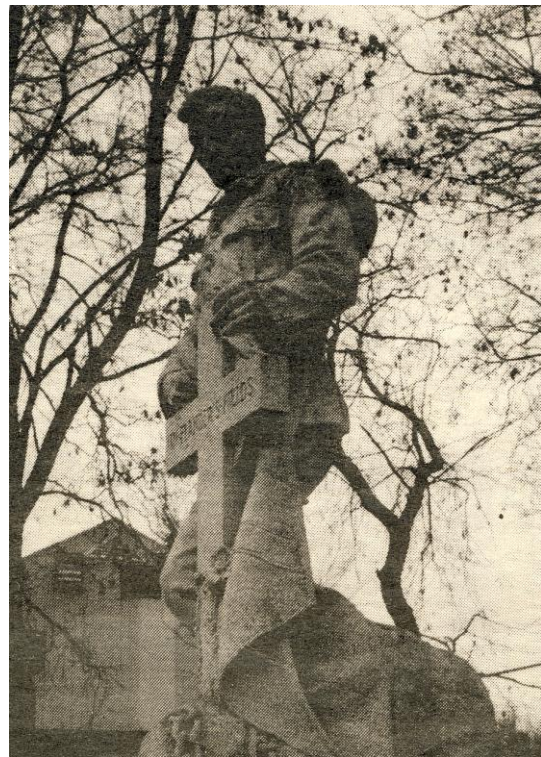
The inscription at the top of the front side of the base reads-
IN PROUD AND GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF THE MEN OF GASPE
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
FOR JUSTICE AND RIGHT
IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

Also on the front of the monument's base, below the above inscription are the following lines from a sonnet of the poet Rupert Brooke, who gave his life as a young soldier during World War I -

THESE LAID THE WORLD AWAY
POURED OUT THE RED SWEET
WINE OF YOUTH
GAVE UP THE YEARS TO BE OF WORK AND JOY
AND THAT UNHOPED SERENE THAT MEN
CALL AGE."

The West side of the base bears the following names of Gaspé men who laid down their lives -
ALEXANDER BEAULT, ALEXANDER PATTERSON, ROBERT WEST, JOHN GUIGNON, ERSKINE J. LINDSAY, ALVAH J. COFFIN, HAROLD C. COFFIN, ARTHUR LE LACHEUR, WILLIAM J. PALMER, RALPH FITZPATRICK, WILLIAM RABEY, CHARLES H. PHILLIPS, ROLAND MORAN, GEORGE A. GARRETT, ARNOLD SIMPSON, ERIC B. EDEN, LEO LE BOUTILLIER, JOSEPH H. MARIN, HERBERT GUIGNON

The East side of the base of the monument bears the following names of the World War I dead -
ARCHIBALD BRIEN, DANIEL G. MILLER, FRANCOIS FOURNIER, VICTOR ADAMS, LESLIE K. COFFIN, NORMAN H. BOYLE, RALPH H. GARRETT, ARTHUR LE GRAND, LEONARD BERTRAM, SIDNEY J. CARTER, M.M., GORDON S. ROSE, ALLAN E. ASCAH, JOHN S. MCAFEE, HAROLD R. CLARK, THOMAS HARDING, JAMES H. PALMER, MAYNARD L. EDEN, WILLIAM FITZPATRICK, RODOLPHE LEMIEUX.



Little did the 5000 or more Gaspesians that gathered for the unveiling of their War Memorial in July, 1921 realize that World War II (1939-1945) would require even greater sacrifice of the Gaspé District people. This sacrifice is commemorated by a metal plaque on the North side of the monument's base. The extent of the loss it reflects is staggering, as the copy that follows will show.

KILLED IN ACTION (1939-1945)

ADAMS JOHN, ALEXANDER LEWIS, ANNETT WILSON, BANNIER WILLIAM, BEAUDOIN ELUCIPPE, BERNIER ARMAND, BERNATCHEZ WILFRED, BLANCHETTE ANGELO, BRIAND RENL, COFFIN HERMAN, CLARK JOHN, CHICOINE VINCENT, CHICOINE GASTON, COMEAU OVILA, CURADEAU VENERENT, DUFRESNE ABRAHAM, FORTIN FIDOLIN, FOURNIER ALEXIS, GRANT ALBERT, GUIGNON LEEMAN, HOWELL VICTOR, HARBOUR WILLIAM, JACQUES DANIEL, KENNEDY WILLIAM, LACOUVEE ERIC, LENFESTY FRANCIS, MILLER TREVOR, MILLER MORTIMER, MORAN DAVID, MORAN RALPH, MALONEY EDGAR, MULLIN ELMER, O'CONNOR SAMUEL, PATTERSON HIBBERT, PERREAULT ARTHUR, ROBERT'S MILTON, ROBERTS ROBERT F., ROONEY LEONARD, REHEL LEO M.M., ROUSSEL LEO M.M., SYVRET DAVID, SYVRET HEBERT, STE. CROIX W. ULLIN, SUDDARD ERNEST, TAPP NORBERT J., TAPP HARRY, TAPP ROLAND, THOMPSON WILLIAM, URQUHART LEONARD.

THE MONUMENT'S SCULPTOR

The sculptor of the figure of a young Canadian soldier that surmounts the Gaspé War Memorial was Emmanuel Hahn.

He arrived in Canada as a child immigrant in 1888 at the age of seven years. His father was a geologist and began to travel extensively in the North. From his youth and throughout his life, Mani, as he was called, had the same love for the Canadian wilderness that his father had acquired during his expeditions.

Hahn studied sculpture under the direction of Walter Allward in Toronto and completed his education in the years before the First World War at the Stuttgart Kunstakademie.

Through his work for the Thompson Monument Company, which was probably the leading producer of monuments in Canada, Hahn may have designed more memorials than any other individual in the country. About twenty statues and several other cenotaphs are known, or thought to be, his work ... each is a technically accomplished piece and each had an appeal to the people who chose it. Hahn must have lost friends in the war, the faces of his statues ... are those of mourning and loss.

Emmanuel Hahn taught at the Ontario College of Art for many years and among his students were some who eventually went on to sculpt memorials on their own. One of them, Elizabeth Wyn Wood became his wife.

Emmanuel Hahn died in 1957 at the age of 76 years.