

Status Report: The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte & World War One

Our goal is to provide our community with information regarding our World War One (WW1) volunteers and also what was happening on the home front during the war years. We are collecting many different sources of information and plan to make them available to the community and beyond.

Our list of WW1 volunteers includes anyone who signed an attestation paper, regardless of the outcome of their experience.

The education of our community and the general public is a tool that will help generate more awareness of such a historically significant event and respectfully acknowledge our veterans, both then and now.

Below are some pieces of information about our ideas, what we are working on, and how you could help!

WW1 Military Personnel Files:

In January 2010, MBQ Research started a project to acquire Military Personnel Files for MBQ volunteers from the Library and Archives Canada. We had acquired about 80% of the available files when the Library and Archives Canada announced a digitization project for all WW1 Military Personnel Files.

As digitized files have become available, we have obtained them. We now have about 80% in a digital format.

In some cases the digital files contain items that were not available in hard copy form. Documents in the digitized files are a much better quality.

Karen at the library, or Amy in the Research Office can help you access either the hard copies or digital copy (if available at this time).

Keep in mind, Library and Archives Canada will not complete their digitization project until 2015.

MBQ Volunteers and Draftees:

Before the Military Service Act of 1917, men, including those from the community, had to volunteer to serve in WW1. Not every man who volunteered actually served overseas. There are various reasons why some may not have made it overseas to serve. They could have been declared medically unfit during their examination, others may have fallen ill or contracted disease while in training and in some instances individuals may have left the service without the authority to do so.

After the Military Service Act of 1917, there are some men from the community who were drafted. So far, most of these men were released from the draft as “erroneously ordered to report”. At that time, status men were exempt from being drafted.

We are still identifying MBQ volunteers. Our list currently has 103 confirmed names. We have 1 name that perhaps should be added but we need more information to confirm whether or not he was a member of our community.

Joseph Amos Green is our mystery man. His file tells us that his next of kin is Margaret Green and he may have been living in Toronto at the time of his attestation. It also tells us that he was born in Deseronto. If anyone can help us confirm his connections to MBQ please let us know.

We also know that some men connected to the community registered for service in the United States. We will be working to find those names and perhaps military service files.

If you have an ancestor who served in the American forces during WW1, please let us know.

Book of Remembrance:

It is our hope, with your help, to create a Book of Remembrance. It could contain a biography of each volunteer, photographs if available, details of service if available, etc.

We hope to provide information regarding burial places, for those who died overseas and those that returned.

The Book of Remembrance will include the names of all the MBQ volunteers and draftees that we can confirm.

Our goal is to have this completed for the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended WW1 on the 11th November 2018.

Photographs & Letters:

Karen, at the library, has a collection of photographs of our volunteers and a few letters associated with service.

We are very interested in others that might be held in family collections.

If you have photographs of any of our WW1 volunteers, letters, or any other items from the WW1 time period, please consider sharing these items with the community through the library or research department.

For photographs, we would only need to scan and keep an electronic copy of the picture. The original would be returned to you immediately. For any other physical

items, options are to place it on loan at the library or authorize its use for special events or presentations.

If you have items that you would like to share or donate to the library collection, please contact Karen.

Newsletter Articles:

It has been our goal to provide some details of service for every man who volunteered. We have already highlighted "The Fallen", those men who did not return. We have also highlighted the men who served and returned, but whose deaths were directly related to their service in the military in WW1.

We will continue with the articles honouring all those of MBQ who volunteered.

We hope to provide special articles on specific battles where MBQ men were involved. To do this, we have to wait until we have all the Military Personnel files. For example, we hope to have an articles dedicated to the Battle for Vimy Ridge and Battle for Hill 70 in 1917, coordinating with the time of their centennial.

If you know of other battles where community members served, please let us know.

We also want to explore the community's role in WW1 and hope to have more articles on this. These could include stories from community members who remember being told about WW1, or other excerpts talking about the community during that time.

We Need Your Feedback:

Have you found the information already provided to be useful and interesting?

Are you related to a MBQ volunteer? Would you like to learn more about him?

Would you like to see other kinds of information in the planned Book of Remembrance?

We would love to hear what you want to know about the role of MBQ in WW1.

Please contact us and let us know.

Amy Cowie, Research Assistant – 613.396.3424 or amyc@mbq-tmt.org
Karen Lewis, Librarian – 613.967.6264 or kanhiote@gmail.com