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# "A Very Fine Plan in the Memory of Our Boys"

Commemorating the Owen Sound Collegiate and  
Vocational Institute Second World War Dead

DAVID ROSS ALEXANDER

*Abstract: The memorial plaques dedicated to the First and Second World War dead of many of Canada's secondary schools including the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute may have borne close resemblance but the experience of those whose names appeared on the walls was very different. The adolescent experience of students who attended these schools during the interwar years contrasted with that of their mothers and fathers. They enlisted, fought and died in a much more technologically advanced and globalised war than the previous generation. They were shaping their own distinct identity in youth and war and how would the collective memory of them reflect these realities? Although many of the same ceremonial rituals and ways were adopted once again, there were new emerging forms to commemorate Canada's Second World War dead.*

AT THE END of the Second World War, a member of the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute's (OSCVI) staff went through the OSCVI Casualty List, reordering the fatal casualties chronologically from one to sixty with light red circled numbers. Since he died in 1939, Doctor Norman Bethune was first on the list while Sergeant Jack Campbell was last, killed in a motorcycle accident in the Netherlands on 4 July 1945.<sup>1</sup> Another former student

<sup>1</sup> "O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List, 1939 – 1945," 1946, Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute Heritage Room, The OSCVI Alumni Association, Owen Sound, Ontario.

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died in 1940, four in 1941, ten in 1942, ten in 1943, twenty-three in 1944 and eleven in 1945.

Flying Officer (FO) Bill Middlebro’ was number two on the OSCVI’s Casualty List for the Second World War. He was “killed in England during co-operative maneuvers with the army” on 17 July 1940.<sup>2</sup> Middlebro’ was flying a Lysander aircraft “during a dive bombing exercise... [and] did not see a tree which he struck with his left wing causing him to crash in the woods.” After completing his senior matriculation at the OSCVI in 1933, Middlebro’ attended the Royal Military College of Canada.<sup>3</sup> He had been a busy student at the OSCVI as the “5A Form Notes” in the school’s yearbook, the *Auditorium*, indicated: “Bill Middlebro’ – Plays, Sun Times reporter, track, work – and Norah.”<sup>4</sup>

Private (Pte.) Clarence Lapierre, who “died of wounds received in France” on 7 June 1944, was number thirty-four on the OSCVI Casualty List.<sup>5</sup> The twenty-year-old parachuted into Normandy with the First Canadian Parachute Battalion in support of D-Day, 6 June 1944. He was one of a few black students who attended the school. Lapierre had finished the third year of a Technical Certificate course when he left the OSCVI for a job as a moulder at the Empire Stove Company in Owen Sound.<sup>6</sup> Clarence, who had been adopted at birth by the Lapierre family, played rugby at the OSCVI and “was known to almost everyone as ‘Dude.’”<sup>7</sup>

Lieutenant-Colonel (Lt.-Col.) Don Mackenzie, who was “killed in action overseas” on 12 April 1945, was number fifty-seven on the OSCVI Casualty List.<sup>8</sup> While serving as commanding officer of the 48th Highlanders of Canada, Mackenzie was killed by a shell blast near the Dutch village of Wilp, as the battalion crossed the Ijssel River on its approach to Apeldoorn. He had gone forward to determine the whereabouts of Able and Baker companies and

<sup>2</sup> “O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List, 1939 - 1945,” The OSCVI Alumni Association.

<sup>3</sup> “WILLIAM GEORGE MIDDLEBRO,” R112 30691, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947, Library and Archives Canada [LAC].

<sup>4</sup> Mary Elmslie, ed., *Auditorium 1932-1933* (Owen Sound: Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, 1933), 39.

<sup>5</sup> “O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List, 1939 – 1945,” The OSCVI Alumni Association.

<sup>6</sup> “CLARENCE DAVID LAPIERRE,” RG24 26310, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947, LAC.

<sup>7</sup> “C. LAPIERRE, PARATOOPER, FATALLY HURT,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 28 June 1944, 1.

<sup>8</sup> “O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List, 1939 – 1945,” The OSCVI Alumni Association.

establish a new location for his Tactical Headquarters.<sup>9</sup> During his early high school years, Mackenzie had attended Ridley College in St. Catharines, Ontario, but transferred to the OSCVI to complete his senior matriculation. His goal was to gain entry to the Royal Military College of Canada, but this was not to be as he did not meet the admission requirements.<sup>10</sup> Mackenzie did leave his mark on the OSCVI as he composed a school song for the educational institution.<sup>11</sup>

Although no specific individuals have been identified as the compilers of OSCVI Casualty List, presumably both staff and students at the school had taken an interest in former students of the OSCVI who served in Canada's armed forces. This initial research led to some bigger questions regarding commemoration of Second World War dead by secondary schools: How did Canadian educational institutions commemorate Mackenzie, Lapierre and Middlebro' and their generation of war dead? Did this commemoration reflect the identity that Canadian youth had shaped through their adolescent and war experiences? A healthy debate ensued in the school community as to how they should be commemorated to reflect who they were and what they did. The First and Second World War memorial plaques on the walls of secondary schools may have borne a close resemblance but the experience of those whose names appeared on the walls was quite different.

Would the Second World War dead stand apart in collective memory? This article will address a little explored area in the historiography: the forms of commemoration secondary schools used for their Second World War dead. It argues that even though secondary schools relied on many of the traditional forms of the First World War, there were new emerging forms of commemoration for this next generation of war dead.

<sup>9</sup> Kim Beattie, *Dileas: History of the 48th Highlanders of Canada, 1929-1956* (Toronto: The 48th Highlanders of Canada, 1957), 746-47.

<sup>10</sup> "DONALD ALEXANDER MacKENZIE," R112 30561, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947, LAC.

<sup>11</sup> J. Earl C. Smith, ed., *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium* (Owen Sound: Stan Brown Printers, 1980), 65.

(1)

## O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List

Name	Rank and Service	Left School	Date of Accident	M. K.D. P.O.W.	Details
Dr. Vernon Bithune	Baldwin Pioneer	1908	Nov. 22, 1939	D	Died in the course of his medical duties as
Bill Middleboe	F.O.	R.C.A.F. 1933	July 17, 1940	K	Killed in England during co-operative m.
George Lee	L.A.C.	R.C.A.F. 1931	Feb. 21, 1941	K	Killed in a flying accident near Ottawa
Jack Morris	L.A.C.	R.C.A.F. 1935	May 6, 1941	K	Killed in a flying accident near Ottawa
George Fleming	P.O.	R.C.A.F. 1934	Aug. 15, 1941 M-P.D.		Lost over the North Sea, after a bombing
James Moon	S.E.R.	U.S.M.M. 1932	Nov. 26, 1941	K	Lost in the North Atlantic
Jack Gipe	SGT.	R.C.A.F. 1940	Jan. 25, 1942	K	Killed in a flying accident near
David Lee	F.SGT.	R.C.A.F. 1938	Mar. 1, 1942	K	Killed in action at Cyprus
Sid Gordon	SGT.P.	R.C.A.F. 1940	Apr. 29, 1942	K	Killed in action over Germany
Frank Schwab	Bom.P.	R.C.A.F. 1937	June 19, 1942	K	Killed in a flying accident during a de
John Matches	SGT.P.	R.C.A.F. 1939	Aug. 8, 1942 M-P.D.		Missing after operations over North Sea.
Jack McFarrell	SGT.P.	R.C.A.F. 1939	July 24, 1942	K	Killed in North Africa
Jack Donaldson	SGT.O.	R.C.A.F. 1939	Sept. 15, 1942 M-P.D.		Missing after operations over Germ
Art Springfield	SGT.WAG.	R.C.A.F. 1936	Nov. 1, 1942 M-P.D.		Missing after operations overseas. P.D.
Art McCabe	SGT.	R.C.A.F. 1937	Jan. 9, 1943	K	Killed in a flying accident near
Clarence Long	P.O.	R.C.A.F. 1935	Feb. 19, 1943 M-P.D.		Missing after operations over Germa
Ken Buck	F.SGT.	R.C.A.F. 1938	May 1, 1943 M-P.D.		Missing after operations overseas.
George Menges	L.A.C.	R.C.A.F. 1939	May 10, 1943 M-P.D.		Missing after operations overseas. P.D.
John MacIntyre	F.O.	R.C.A.F. 1939	June 23, 1943 M-P.D.		Missing after operations overseas. P.D. &
Bill Gordon DFC	P.O.	R.C.A.F. 1929	Sept. 3, 1943 K		Killed in action overseas. Farmer's A
Ken Shewell	F.O.	R.C.A.F. 1936	Oct. 1, 1943 K		Killed in action over England
Carl Heath	A.S.	R.C.N.V.R. 1932	Sept. 14, 1943 M		Missing when destroyed Ottawa con trooper

The first page of the OSCVI Casualty List. [The OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

**FIRST WORLD WAR COMMEMORATION: "SWEET WINE OF YOUTH GAVE UP THE YEARS TO BE"<sup>12</sup>**

By the time an armistice for the First World War was reached in November 1918, Canada had sent hundreds of thousands of military personnel overseas for service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force while millions of Canadians supported the war effort at home. Over sixty thousand lost their lives.<sup>13</sup> Canadians had never experienced death on this scale before as the result of a singular event, not to mention the thousands who died from the 1918 Influenza Pandemic. Jonathan Vance in his seminal work *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* provides perspectives on how Canadians commemorated their First World War dead. He notes: "There was tremendous variety in the responses to the challenge of memorialising the dead of the war. Communities of all sizes erected monuments of every conceivable design, including some that defy description and logic."<sup>14</sup> Vance also explores how numerous secondary schools across Canada commemorated their war dead.

In their research, Anne Millar and Jeff Keshen conduct a comparative study of the impact of the world wars on anglophone public school students in Toronto and Montreal.<sup>15</sup> Millar and Keshen provided insights as to how these "schools undertook their own commemorative projects" after the First World War in which "students expressed both personal and popular sentiments about the necessity of the war."<sup>16</sup> Students "looked to the future and discussed what these 'noble sacrifices' should inspire in new generations of students, positing in them the meaning of what it was to be a Canadian in the British Empire."<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Tamara Myers and Mary Anne Poutanen find that "[s]chool authorities employed a rhetoric that emphasised love of country, the glory in fighting evil, and the necessity of making

<sup>12</sup> Rupert Brooke, "The Dead," Representative Poetry Online, last modified 1999, accessed 6 September 2022, <https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/content/1914-iii-dead>.

<sup>13</sup> Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1917-1918* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), 612.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 202.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Millar and Jeff Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause: Anglophone School Children in Montreal and Toronto during the Two World Wars," *History of Intellectual Culture* 9, 1 (2010): 1.

<sup>16</sup> Millar and Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause," 8.

<sup>17</sup> Millar and Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause," 8.

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the supreme sacrifice” and the majority of Protestant schools in Montreal erected a memorial to pay homage to Canada’s First World War dead.<sup>18</sup> Such forms of memorialisation would reinforce a patriotic justification for the Great War for the generation of students of the interwar years.<sup>19</sup> This research provides a useful backdrop for the commemorative initiatives pursued by the schools profiled in this article after the First World War. In the immediate aftermath of war, the Owen Sound Collegiate Institute (OSCI), Jarvis Collegiate Institute (JCI) and Malvern Collegiate Institute (MCI) pursued ways to commemorate their former students who had served. Special recognition would be made for those who died.

James McLauchlan and James Packham were put in charge of the unveiling ceremony of the Owen Sound Collegiate Institute Memorial Tablet on 15 October 1920. McLauchlan was a former mayor of Owen Sound and long serving member of the Board of Education while Packham had taught at the school for decades. The pair had been present for the unveiling of the school’s Boer War Memorial Tablet that commemorated its war dead eighteen years earlier. The unveiling of the Great War Memorial Tablet was “a most impressive and solemn ceremony” where “a large number of friends and relatives were in attendance besides the students of the school.”<sup>20</sup>

The Invocation, led by Reverend Doctor Thurlow Fraser, was followed by a male quartet who sang “Crossing the Bar.” The Memorial Tablet was flanked by two Canadian Ensigns and covered by a large Union Jack. “An invisible cord held the flag in place and when the moment came for unveiling a string only had to be pulled. The flag dropped easily into place leaving the Memorial to view” by the audience.<sup>21</sup> Packham followed with the keynote address:

As a school we today perform the last act of a tragic drama of the past six years... On this Tablet are three lists. The right hand [*sic*] bottom column bears the names of the 18 girls who as women and nurses

<sup>18</sup> Tamara Myers and Mary Anne Poutanen, “Cadets, Curfews, and Compulsory Schooling: Mobilizing Anglophone Children in WWII Montreal,” *Histoire sociale / Social History* 38, 76 (2005): 385.

<sup>19</sup> Myers and Poutanen, “Cadets, Curfews, and Compulsory Schooling,” 385.

<sup>20</sup> “Memorial Tablet Unveiled At Collegiate Institute,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 16 October 1920, 1. The Owen Sound Collegiate Institute was renamed the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute in 1924.

<sup>21</sup> “Memorial Tablet Unveiled At Collegiate Institute,” 1.



The Owen Sound Collegiate Institute First World War Memorial Tablet. [The OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

went. 'Where ever [sic] strength and skill; Surcease to human suffering... Under the Red Cross sign.' The centre panel records the names of the 56 who came not back. 'They laid the world away poured out the red; Sweet wine of youth gave up the years to be... To every stricken heart and home.' On the side panels are the 333 names of those who enlisted most of whom saw service and came back.<sup>22</sup>

Given the solemnity and reverence of this occasion, Packham chose lines from two contemporary poems of the First World War, John Finley's "The Red Cross Spirit Speaks" in praise of the women of the OSCI who had volunteered as nursing sisters and Rupert Brooke's "The Dead" to memorialise the school's war dead. Paul Fussell notes the "staying power" of the use of high diction even late in the First World War and cites the line "red/Sweet wine of youth" from Brooke's "The Dead" as a classic example of it.<sup>23</sup> Evidently, high diction was still in vogue after the First World War. Vance states it "was retained as an interpretive framework not only because it was the only framework available, but also because of its

<sup>22</sup> "Memorial Tablet Unveiled At Collegiate Institute," 7.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory: The Illustrated Edition* (New York: Sterling, 2009), 24.

emotional appeal."<sup>24</sup> The OSCI Tablet unveiling ceremony was not unlike others in the province.

One of Canada's oldest secondary schools, Jarvis Collegiate Institute, unveiled a memorial tablet on 2 June 1921 for the seventy-three war dead of the school, including "Miss Mary Agnes Mackenzie who was drowned when the *Llandovery Castle* was torpedoed in June, 1918."<sup>25</sup> The ceremony took place in front of students and parents as Helen Bryans, the sister of one of the school's war dead, unveiled the tablet: "The Last Post was sounded, followed by a minute of silent prayer, Dr. John Neil concluding with an Invocation."<sup>26</sup> JCI added to its First World War memorial when a series of murals were unveiled on 9 November 1928.<sup>27</sup> Artist George Reid, aided by former student Lorna Claire, painted eleven murals for JCI that were "based on themes in Canadian history," with panels ten and eleven specifically relating to war, so named "Patriotism" and "Sacrifice."<sup>28</sup> The murals depicted young cadets in uniform holding flags and laying a wreath at a memorial that resembled Toronto's Cenotaph.

Malvern Collegiate Institute in Toronto unveiled its First World War memorial on 20 April 1922. It was called "Fetters Sundered," a statue that represented the "Spirit of Warrior Canada [which] forever looks heavenward" and was erected in front of the school.<sup>29</sup> With the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Colonel (Col.) Henry Cockshutt, in attendance, the Principal of MCI

described the symbolism which the memorial represented. 'It expresses,' he declared, 'the spirit of Canadians in the war... Freedom has been won after a tremendous effort, which has left its trace on the boy's countenance. The attitude is not that of boastful triumph, but of grateful victory; reverently his face is raised to Heaven in thankfulness. Firmly planted on the rock this virile figure well exhibits the confident,

<sup>24</sup> Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*, 91.

<sup>25</sup> "Jarvis Street Honors Heroes: More Than Seventy Names of Ex-pupils Figure on Tablet," *The Globe*, 3 June 1921, 6.

<sup>26</sup> "Jarvis Street Honors Heroes," 6.

<sup>27</sup> Harvey Medland, *Minerva's Diary: A History of Jarvis Collegiate Institute* (Belleville: Mika Publishing Company, 1979), 125.

<sup>28</sup> Medland, *Minerva's Diary*, 129.

<sup>29</sup> "Spirit of Warrior Canada Forever Looks Heavenward from Malvern's War Statue," *The Globe*, 20 May 1922, 17.

determined spirit of young Canadian manhood eager not to spare itself in resisting the attempt to impose the shackles of militarism.<sup>30</sup>

Once again, a senior member of the school staff led the unveiling duties as the students bore witness to the occasion. Millar and Keshen point out: "While undeniably initiated and managed by school administrators, principals, and teachers, students helped to fundraise for memorials, communicated their support for the various efforts, at times helped facilitate their form, and almost always were front and centre at their unveiling."<sup>31</sup>

Like Canadian society in general, secondary schools commemorated their war dead. Large numbers of their students and previous students enlisted to fight in a war from which many did not return. Honour rolls, tablets, statues and even murals were created and erected to commemorate them. Inevitably the current generation of students would be present at their unveiling. As Vance observes, "[f]ew schools failed to erect a memorial to the students and staff who had given their lives, and those memorials were avowedly didactic."<sup>32</sup> Perhaps future students could learn from the service and sacrifice made by the previous generation.

#### **"STAND AND SING TO THE OSCVI:"<sup>33</sup> THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS**

As an alumnus of the school, Isabel Cockshutt, the spouse of Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, was invited to lay the ceremonial cornerstone for a new building for Jarvis Collegiate Institute on 29 September 1922.<sup>34</sup> Nineteen months later a "grand exodus" of eight hundred pupils paraded their way from their old school to the new one.<sup>35</sup> Riverdale Technical School opened its doors for the first time in the fall of 1923, with "a registration of 600 day students and

<sup>30</sup> "Spirit of Warrior Canada Forever Looks Heavenward from Malvern's War Statue," 17.

<sup>31</sup> Millar and Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause," 8.

<sup>32</sup> Vance, *Death So Noble*, 239.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 145.

<sup>34</sup> Medland, *Minerva's Diary*, 108.

<sup>35</sup> Medland, *Minerva's Diary*, 117.

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The 1924 addition to the OSCVI. The older structure behind was destroyed by fire in 1952. [OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

1700 night students.”<sup>36</sup> During the opening ceremonies, Toronto’s “Mayor Maguire emphasized the transformation that had come over educational systems of the country during recent years. A technical education, he considered, should be placed within the reach of every boy and girl in the city and in the Province of Ontario, and no one who desired such an education should be refused.”<sup>37</sup> In interwar Ontario, more and larger secondary schools were needed as there was a twenty-three per cent increase in enrollments in 1921 alone.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the Owen Sound Collegiate Institute added a new wing in 1924 that included dedicated spaces for household science, technological and commercial studies and physical education. September enrolment at the OSCI had grown from 369 pupils in 1920

<sup>36</sup> “Technical Tuition Present Necessity, His Worship Avers,” *The Globe*, 31 October 1923, 11. In 1932, Riverdale Technical School was renamed Danforth Technical School.

<sup>37</sup> “Technical Tuition Present Necessity,” 11.

<sup>38</sup> Robert M. Stamp, “Canadian High Schools in the 1920’s and 1930’s: The Social Challenge to the Academic Tradition,” *Historical Papers / Communications historiques* 13, 1 (1978): 77.

to 539 in 1924.<sup>39</sup> The word “Vocational” was added to the school’s name as these new facilities included “a real, honest-to-goodness gymnasium with proper change rooms for athletes and balconies for spectators, [a] well-equipped machine shop and wood working shop, a motor mechanics shop, drafting facilities [and] adjoining rooms for food preparation and dressmaking in the Household Science Department.”<sup>40</sup> This change in physical makeup and evolving curriculum was celebrated by the school and city when the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Col. Harry Cockshutt, was invited to officially open the new addition of the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute on 3 December 1924.<sup>41</sup>

Ontario’s secondary schools grew dramatically during the interwar years, realising a threefold increase in student enrolments between 1918 to 1938.<sup>42</sup> September enrolments for the OSCVI doubled from 381 pupils in 1919 to 731 in 1939.<sup>43</sup> There were several reasons to explain this remarkable growth. Except for Quebec, every province had introduced “compulsory school attendance laws” in the early twentieth century.<sup>44</sup> Ontario raised its school leaving age to sixteen in 1921.<sup>45</sup> As further explanation for the dramatic educational growth, some historians cite the abolition of tuition fees and a pent-up demand for high school spaces that was experienced after the First World War.<sup>46</sup> Robert Stamp also reminds us that “more satisfactory explanations of the growth in attendance are to be found in the economic and social climes of the post war period. Technological advances in business and industry were rapidly reducing the need for unskilled labour.”<sup>47</sup> A high school education was beneficial in this modern economy.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 143.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 47.

<sup>42</sup> Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 101.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 143.

<sup>44</sup> Millar and Keshen, “Rallying Young Canada to the Cause,” 3.

<sup>45</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 101.

<sup>46</sup> Stamp, “Canadian High Schools in the 1920’s and 1930’s,” 78.

<sup>47</sup> Stamp, “Canadian High Schools in the 1920’s and 1930’s,” 78.

Cynthia Comacchio has researched the historical roots of the modern Canadian “teen-ager” in the twentieth century and the generational markers they had laid down in the interwar years of the 1920s and the Great Depression in Canada.<sup>48</sup> Contrary to a widely held myth that the modern-day teenager evolved in the 1950s, Comacchio argues that this phenomenon can be traced back three decades earlier to the late 1920s. The generation of adolescent Canadians of the 1920s and 1930s set themselves apart from their mothers and fathers creating their own distinctive generational markers “imprint[ing] generational consciousness.”<sup>49</sup> Essentially, these young Canadians became a product of their times as they entered their teenage years attending high school in greater numbers than previous generations during the worst global depression known to humankind and were subsequently confronted by a catastrophic global conflict that lasted for another six years. Fifty-five of the OSCVI war dead attended the school during the interwar years, forty-two of them during the Great Depression.<sup>50</sup> Their ‘coming of age’ would forever be associated with economic deprivation and war and as Comacchio laments “just as Depression youth had paid a steep generational price in deferred ambitions for a ‘normal’ life, so would those who came of age during wartime, some of whom might pay in life itself.”<sup>51</sup>

A significant agent in the formative development of teenagers during the interwar years were high schools like the OSCVI whose “primary function was to ‘sort and develop’ those on the verge of adulthood – ‘the most valuable raw material of which the country is possessed’ – to ensure that young Canadians would attain their ‘maximum usefulness in building up and enriching’ society.<sup>52</sup> The social dynamics of secondary schools such as the OSCVI were also changing as they accommodated these growing numbers of diverse students. They were “idealized as ‘the school of the common people’ where the ‘rich and poor, the high and low, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic mingle together and work together in the spirit of

<sup>48</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 11.

<sup>50</sup> David Alexander, “Dum Vivimus Vivamus: The Lost Identity of the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute Second World War Dead” (Master’s Thesis, University of Waterloo, 2019), 70.

<sup>51</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 40.

<sup>52</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 99.

amity, and equality, regardless of distinctions of class or creed."<sup>53</sup> In Owen Sound and its surrounding environs, the OSCVI was the only option for a secondary school education regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or class.

The expanded building and modernised curriculum symbolised new ways to define the next generation of students. A survey of the service files of the OSCVI Second World War dead uncovers their individual educational achievements recorded on their attestation forms. Of the sixty war dead students, forty-one opted for matriculation studies at the OSCVI, nine chose technical studies, four selected commercial courses while six were undeclared. Ivor F. Goodson and C.J. Anstead interviewed twenty-four former students and two former teachers of London Technical and Commercial High School to provide "glimpses of everyday life" at the school during the interwar years.<sup>54</sup> They noted "one central theme in the recounting of the tales of everyday life is the importance of structures in the school. Students spent their day segregated by gender, year and course. Their experience in academic and commercial classrooms was bound by tight rules of discipline and formal modes of pedagogy."<sup>55</sup> In some cases, a student may have completed their junior matriculation studies and subsequently enrolled in technical or commercial courses thereafter. For example, John Munro completed his junior matriculation in four years followed by three more years of technical drafting, spending a total of seven years as a student at the OSCVI during the job-starved years of the Great Depression.<sup>56</sup> "These employment focused courses, it was argued," Comacchio notes of the time, "would capture the interest and ensure the practical training of young men and women heading for the workforce as soon as possible after the age of school leaving."<sup>57</sup> Others like John Gibbons, a local farm boy, spent only six months at the OSCVI before leaving in 1933 at the height of the

<sup>53</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 102.

<sup>54</sup> Ivor F. Goodson and Christopher J. Anstead, "Structure and Mediation: Glimpses of Everyday Life at London Technical and Commercial High School, 1920–1940," in *Through the Schoolhouse Door*, ed. Ivor F. Goodson and Christopher J. Anstead (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2010), 115.

<sup>55</sup> Goodson and Anstead, "Structure and Mediation: Glimpses of Everyday Life at London Technical and Commercial High School, 1920–1940," 130.

<sup>56</sup> "JOHN WELLESLEY MUNRO," RG24 28305, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939–1947, LAC.

<sup>57</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 107.

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Target shooting at the OSCVI in 1943. [OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

Great Depression.<sup>58</sup> In this case, Gibbons was needed to help on the family farm. Matriculation studies provided students a pathway to post-secondary university studies.

Eighteen of the OSCVI Second World War dead cohort reported that they had completed their senior matriculation studies with five of them having accessed post-secondary university studies. Dr. Norman Bethune, William Gordon and Robert Garvie attended the University of Toronto while Bill Middlebro' pursued studies at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston. James Cameron, who returned as a mature student to the OSCVI in the 1930s to complete his senior matriculation, attended Queen's University taking a mining engineering course for three years before enlisting for military service.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> “JOHN OWEN GIBBONS,” RG24 25952, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947, LAC.

<sup>59</sup> “JAMES EWING CAMERON,” RG24 25523, Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947, LAC.

There was a tendency for the higher achieving students to enlist with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). In his study of the selection of Canadian aircrew during the Second World War, Allan English finds that, in this exciting new age of airpower, “[i]ntelligence was deemed to be ‘the essential characteristic’ of good aircrew material, and education was considered the best indicator of a candidate’s intelligence.”<sup>60</sup> Fifteen academically-inclined OSCVI students enlisted in the RCAF, satisfying this RCAF criterion and they also hailed from the hometown of Canada’s famed First World War flying ace, William Avery ‘Billy’ Bishop, himself an alumnus of the OSCI. Bishop had been appointed Honorary Air Vice Marshal to the RCAF in 1936 by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. A period *Globe and Mail* story noted: “Owen Sound takes a particular interest in the activities of Air Marshal Bishop, for he was born there in 1894.”<sup>61</sup> Surely many of the Owen Sound students and other young Canadians had read about Bishop’s First World War flying exploits. Perhaps they could be this war’s Billy Bishop. Of the other three OSCVI students who completed senior matriculation, Dr. Bethune volunteered his medical expertise with the Eight Route Army in China while Douglas Anderson and Donald Mackenzie performed duties with units of First Canadian Army.

Like numerous secondary schools across Canada before and during the Second World War, the OSCVI offered extracurricular activities that inculcated masculinity and were ultimately geared towards the war effort. Historian Mark Moss notes that “manliness and militarism [had] wove[n] their way into the fabric of Ontario society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade and half of the twentieth.”<sup>62</sup> It was an era of growth for extracurricular activities such as clubs, assemblies, musical and theatrical productions and organised sports for both genders. A significant proportion of male students participated in the high school’s cadet corps in the late 1930s: “The [Cadet] Corps, [had] a battalion of 230 boys [who participated in]... route marches, rifle, ceremonial and company drill [that] were

<sup>60</sup> Allan D. English, *The Cream of the Crop: Canadian Aircrew, 1939-1945* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>61</sup> “Bishop Named Director of Air Recruiting: Canada Ace Taking Over R.C.A.F. Post,” *Globe and Mail*, 24 January 1940, 2.

<sup>62</sup> Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press Canada, 2001), 28.



Former students of the OSCVI, William Middlebro' Donald Mackenzie and Clarence Lapierre. [OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

all part of the action."<sup>63</sup> Given that the September enrolments for males from 1929 to 1943 averaged 298, there was evidently a high participation rate in the school's cadet corps, especially during the early war years.<sup>64</sup> Numerous female students also became involved in target shooting.<sup>65</sup>

As Stamp argues, taking part in extra-curricular activities "came to be regarded as more than mere adjuncts to the academic program; they could furnish teenagers with actual laboratory training in many of the important experiences they would have later in life."<sup>66</sup> An individual's affinity for their school would have varied among former students, but some inevitably felt a stronger bond to their alma mater and were determined to improve the educational experience for future students. For example, Donald Mackenzie noticed a "lack of school spirit" and sought to remedy this problem by composing a school song.<sup>67</sup> His lyrics called upon the student body to "Stand and sing to the OSCVI" as they raised their "voices upwards to the skies" while reflecting on how they had "learned to work and play" at the OSCVI.<sup>68</sup> The editor of the *Auditorium* was very pleased with Mackenzie's effort, stating: "We are extremely grateful to Donald Mackenzie, composer of both the words and music of our new school song. We think the song is very fine and feel that Donald has given the school something it very much needed and a song that will live long after we have gone. May it always be sung with true school spirit."<sup>69</sup> The fervent participation in extracurricular activities and adoption of school songs was not unique to OSCVI; as Comacchio argues, these pursuits fostered a sense of identity among students:

<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 75.

<sup>64</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 143.

<sup>65</sup> A Girls' Precision Squad and Rifle Team from the OSCVI were dubbed the "Owen Sound Annie Oakleys" after qualifying for the Dominion Marksmanship competition in 1946. See Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 75.

<sup>66</sup> Stamp, "Canadian High Schools in the 1920's and 1930's," 83.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 65.

<sup>68</sup> Peg Fleming, ed., *1933-4 Auditorium* (Owen Sound, Ontario: Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, 1934), 33.

<sup>69</sup> Fleming, *1933-4 Auditorium*, 33. "Stand and Sing to the OSCVI" remained as the school song until the OSCVI closed its doors in 2016.

With sufficient numbers to support a network of peer societies, the cultural system of the modern high school took more definite form in such mixed-sex activities as student government, clubs, journalism and the newly important (though certainly not new) expressions of identity signified by traditional school colours, school songs and cheers, and gendered-segregated athletic teams.<sup>70</sup>

Bill Middlebro’ realised the value of these activities and sought to ensure their continued existence into the future during the cash strapped years of the Great Depression. In his first year at RMC, Middlebro’ wrote a Valedictory letter to the *Auditorium 1933-4*, in which he lamented the lack of funding of athletics and drama at the OSCVI. There was a certain defiance in his remarks:

If the superfluous funds of our Athletic and Literary Societies were forever overflowing ... I wouldn’t have much of an argument ... It’s the same old worn and tattered, ‘I send my child to school for an education.’ If parents, and those others who have no children, could only be convinced that education is an extremely broad term, that allowances could and would be made for those taking part, I am sure their representatives in charge would have no hesitation in loosening the ‘ties that bind.’<sup>71</sup>

Middlebro’ had participated in numerous sporting activities and theatre productions at the school and wanted the public to understand the intrinsic educational value of funding these programs. Others such as Clarence Lapierre had limited exposure to the school’s extracurricular offerings, Clarence having only played rugby before leaving the OSCVI for the world of work. He enlisted with the infantry in January 1943.<sup>72</sup>

Stamp concludes that “[t]he Canadian high school of 1939 was quantitatively and qualitatively different from its 1919 counterpart. Student enrolments had increased faster than the nation’s population during these two inter-war decades, thus bringing a higher proportion

<sup>70</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 112.

<sup>71</sup> Fleming, *Auditorium 1933-4*, 29.

<sup>72</sup> “CLARENCE DAVID LAPIERRE,” Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, LAC.

of Canadian teenagers under the jurisdiction of the school.”<sup>73</sup> Evidently, the secondary school experience of OSCVI students during the interwar years had made its mark on these individuals by fostering, to borrow Comacchio’s words, a “generational consciousness” as they had “demarcate[d] their [own] territory in terms of distinctive generational cultures.”<sup>74</sup> The shared experience of attending high school in the late 1920s and 1930s exposed them to more diverse curriculum and extracurricular offerings than their pre-First World War counterparts. This, in turn, fostered a distinctive youth culture apart from the previous generation. This was the genesis of the “distinct identity” that developed around much of Canada’s interwar generation of teenagers, including the OSCVI’s Second World War dead.<sup>75</sup>

#### **THEIR WAR EXPERIENCE: “ANOTHER OWEN SOUND HOME AND THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY WERE GRIEF STRICKEN”<sup>76</sup>**

The Second World War had a profound impact on Canadian society including on the lives and everyday experience of secondary school students. For example, Christine Hamelin examines the contributions of students to support the war effort at two Ottawa area schools, Lisgar and Glebe Collegiates. Students participated in large numbers in the cadet corps, raised money for war bonds, sent care packages overseas to servicemen and followed the events of the war as it unfolded.<sup>77</sup>

Models of aircraft, warships and rifles used for military training were constructed by OSCVI woodworking students.<sup>78</sup> John Allison

<sup>73</sup> Stamp, “Canadian High Schools in the 1920’s and 1930’s,” 92.

<sup>74</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 2.

<sup>75</sup> Phraseology used by Vance in the discussion of Canada’s Second World War dead, see Jonathan F. Vance, “An Open Door to a Better Future: The Memory of Canada’s Second World War,” in *Canada and the Second World War: Essays in Honour of Terry Copp*, ed. Geoffrey Hayes, Mike Bechthold and Matt Symes (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 468.

<sup>76</sup> “REPORT LT.-COL. MACKENZIE IS KILLED APR.12,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 16 April 1945, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Christine Hamelin, “A Sense of Purpose: Ottawa Students and the Second World War,” *Canadian Military History* 6, 1 (1997): 41.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 71.

examines the influence of the Second World War on Toronto’s Central Technical School. Technical education had become a popular alternative for many students during the war as it offered a pathway to a position in Canada’s armed forces and “to work with some of the most technologically advanced machinery of the day, ... the lure of advanced fighter aircraft like the Hawker Hurricane and the Spitfire pushed aside all other considerations for some boys.”<sup>79</sup>

During the early years of the Second World War, a War Work Committee was established at the OSCVI to raise funds in the school and community for numerous causes such as ditty bags for sailors, donations to the Aid to Russia Fund and care packages for former students who were deployed overseas. In November 1944, the War Work Committee sent “packages of 300 cigarettes to 326 ex-students or parents of the present students, now serving overseas, and to eight Prisoners of War in Germany.”<sup>80</sup>

Other Ontario schools, such as the students of Ottawa’s Lisgar Collegiate Institute, followed the fate of former students who were deployed in Canada’s military overseas.<sup>81</sup> Football players from Glebe Collegiate Institute formed a knitting club that fashioned Afghan blankets that would be sent overseas. They flouted traditional gender norms as “‘the boys shouldn’t be sittin’ without knittin’ when they are not flittin’ up and down the gridiron.’”<sup>82</sup> As part of Toronto’s Jarvis Collegiate Institute’s War Service Council, the Records and Correspondence Committee performed “the all-important but unspectacular job of keeping the enlistment files... [including] over eight hundred changing addresses.”<sup>83</sup> Many secondary schools in Ontario, including the OSCVI, were actively tracking the whereabouts of former students and sending them care packages overseas, including those who were prisoners of war.

Whenever a local man went missing or was killed overseas, it was front page news in Owen Sound. This brought an immediacy to the shock of fatal casualties to the community of Owen Sound and of the OSCVI. In most cases, their ties as former students to the OSCVI

<sup>79</sup> John Allison, “Technical School in Toronto: Growing up in the Trades during the Second World War,” *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d’histoire de l’éducation* 28, 1 (Spring 2016): 66.

<sup>80</sup> “O.S.C.V.I. Notes,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 11 November 1944.

<sup>81</sup> Hamelin, “A Sense of Purpose,” 38.

<sup>82</sup> Hamelin, “A Sense of Purpose,” 40.

<sup>83</sup> Peggy Russell, ed., *The Magnet* (Toronto: Jarvis Collegiate Institute, 1945), 59.

were acknowledged as similarly structured stories were filed for the vast majority of the OSCVI war dead in the *Sun Times*.<sup>84</sup>

This began on the night of 18 July 1940, when the grim realities of the war finally hit home. When Owen Sounders turned to the front page of the evening edition of the *Sun Times*, two news stories discussed the ongoing Battle of Britain: "NO VITAL LOSS AS NAZI PLANES RENEW ATTACK"<sup>85</sup> and "Evacuation of Children Unwarranted, Declares Churchill in the House."<sup>86</sup> A third and even more distressing report revealed "W.G. Middlebro, R.C.A.F. Officer Killed in England, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Middlebro Accident Victim, POPULAR HERE, Young Man First Owen Sound Fatality."<sup>87</sup> The news of the city's first war-related death "came as a great shock, not only to his parents and relatives, who are just about heart broken, but to the people of Owen Sound... [who] sent sympathetic messages by the score... to the stricken father and mother."<sup>88</sup> The story mentioned that FO Middlebro' had been attached to No. 110 Army Co-Operative Squadron and attended the OSCVI for his "secondary school training."<sup>89</sup>

"C. LAPIERRE, PARATROOPER, FATALLY HURT, 'Dude' Lapierre Fatally Wounded in Opening Action in France, DIES NEXT DAY," declared a headline on the front page of the 28 June 1944 edition of the *Sun Times*.<sup>90</sup> The article mentioned that Clarence was a former student of the OSCVI and "[t]he news of Paratrooper Lapierre's death in action will be a heavy jolt to not only the older members of the community, but also the younger ones who knew him well and with whom he was always extremely popular."<sup>91</sup> He was the only child of the Lapierre family.

<sup>84</sup> An analysis of period *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times* editions revealed that only two of the sixty Second World War OSCVI War dead fatalities were not reported in the newspaper.

<sup>85</sup> "NO VITAL LOSS AS NAZI PLANES RENEW ATTACK," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 18 July 1940, 1.

<sup>86</sup> "Evacuation of Children Unwarranted, Declares Churchill in the House," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 18 July 1940, 1.

<sup>87</sup> "W.G. Middlebro, R.C.A.F. Officer Killed in England," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 18 July 1940, 1.

<sup>88</sup> "W.G. Middlebro," 1.

<sup>89</sup> "W.G. Middlebro," 1, 14.

<sup>90</sup> "C. LAPIERRE, PARATOOPER, FATALLY HURT," 1.

<sup>91</sup> "C. LAPIERRE, PARATOOPER, FATALLY HURT," 1.

Confirmation reached Owen Sound in March 1945 that Lt.-Col. Don Mackenzie had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order for “gallantry in action” in Italy.<sup>92</sup> It was a piece of good news for the city in the sixth year of a long, weary war. Tragically, just three weeks later Mackenzie was reported as a fatal casualty: “Another Owen Sound home and the entire community were grief stricken on Sunday when news was received that Lieut.-Colonel Donald A. MacKenzie, D.S.O., officer commanding one of Canada’s most famous fighting regiments had been killed in action on April 12th.”<sup>93</sup> It “came as a blow to his mother, who has not been well for some time, and to his hundreds of friends in the city.”<sup>94</sup> Names of students that had been previously reported in the *Sun Times* for academic, musical, theatrical or athletic accomplishments were now appearing in stories related to war and death.

Contrary to the OSC First World War dead whose service had been predominantly confined to Canada, the United Kingdom, Belgium and France, Second World War casualties operated in a multitude of locations around the globe.<sup>95</sup> They sailed on naval patrols in the northern Atlantic Ocean in search of German U-boats, attempted an amphibious landing in France at Dieppe, fought to crack the Gothic Line in northern Italy and flew covert missions against the Japanese in southeast Asia at the end of the Second World War. It was truly a conflict of global proportions exemplified in part by the location of the OSCVI fatalities. They fought and died in twelve different countries spanning four continents.<sup>96</sup> Each name was added to the OSCVI Casualty List including the location of the fatality once this information was ascertained. Tragically in death, like their comrades in arms, the OSCVI Second World War dead were forging a distinct identity in war.

<sup>92</sup> “Col. D. MacKenzie Of Owen Sound is Awarded The D.S.O.,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 23 March 1945, 1.

<sup>93</sup> “REPORT LT.-COL. MACKENZIE IS KILLED APR.12,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 16 April 1945, 1.

<sup>94</sup> “REPORT LT.-COL. MACKENZIE IS KILLED,” 1.

<sup>95</sup> Alexander, “Dum Vivimus Vivamus,” 91.

<sup>96</sup> Alexander, “Dum Vivimus Vivamus,” 93.

**"IN GLIMPING THOSE MOMENTS IN MEMORY."<sup>97</sup> COMMEMORATING THEM**

Both Jonathan Vance and Tim Cook provide insights into how Canadians commemorated their Second World War dead. Vance argues that the language proffered in the memory of the Second World War in many cases was derived from that of First World War, obscuring the memory of the former and

can be found in many different contexts throughout the memory of the Second World War. In glimpsing those moments in memory, even in a random and entirely unscientific way, one can only be struck by the degree to which the Second World War was passed over in favour of language and symbols from the First.<sup>98</sup>

Ostensibly Vance argues that Canada's Second World War dead have never been able to properly develop their own identity and "it was not only in commemoration where the dead of the Second World War were denied their own distinct identity."<sup>99</sup> Even to the poets and writers of the post Second World War years, "the dead of the First World War became an interpretative lens through which the dead of the Second could be understood."<sup>100</sup>

Tim Cook's analysis of the post Second World War construction of memory in Canada captures an important theme related to this research, that there was a purposeful intention by Canadians to commemorate this generation of war dead but they struggled to do so and differentiate them from those who had died during the First World War.<sup>101</sup> At war's end as Canada's Second World War dead were being interred and memorialised in and on Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries and memorials, a concurrent effort was being made in school communities to commemorate their Second World War dead. Secondary schools would pursue a mix of traditional and new ways to commemorate the former students who performed duties during the Second World War with special emphasis on those who died. Danforth Technical School

<sup>97</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 471.

<sup>98</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 471.

<sup>99</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 468.

<sup>100</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 468.

<sup>101</sup> Tim Cook, *Fight to the Finish: Canadians in the Second World War 1944 - 1945* (Toronto: Allen Lane, 2015), 438-39.

and MCI offer perspectives on how other Ontario secondary schools commemorated this new generation of war dead. After considerable debate within the school community, the OSCVI would unveil a Second World War memorial in 1948.

Over 2,300 students and teachers from Danforth Technical School (DTS) enlisted for military service, of which 255 were listed as the school’s war dead including one former female student, Maud Steane.<sup>102</sup> Steane, who had been rejected by both the Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy for active naval service, became a wireless operator aboard a Norwegian merchant ship and was killed in Naples.<sup>103</sup> Her name was included along with her fellow male students on the panels honouring the school’s war dead. In the immediate postwar era, a War Memorial Committee was struck to raise funds and construct a memorial to DTS’s war dead and the students who had been members of the military.<sup>104</sup>

His Excellency, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, the Viscount of Tunis and Governor General of Canada was an honoured guest at DTS’s unveiling and dedication of its Second World War memorial on Sunday, 30 May 1948.<sup>105</sup> The memorial included four Active Service Rolls, two plaques for the Honoured Dead and a series of Memorial Windows contained within the Memorial Library of the school.<sup>106</sup> His Excellency spoke these words on this occasion: “I am prouder still as commander-in-chief to have the privilege of unveiling this memorial to many who were comrades-in-arms. They were true patriots and great Canadians. No praise we can give is high enough.”<sup>107</sup> Many of the school’s alumni would have served under Alexander’s command in the Mediterranean theatre of war. Victoria Cross recipient, the

<sup>102</sup> Survey, “Danforth Technical School,” June 2017, Survey of Ontario Secondary School War Memorials, Toronto. I approached a grade 12 history class at Owen Sound District Secondary School to aid me in this process. I developed a questionnaire that was administered by the class. Twenty-five surveys were sent out to schools across Ontario in 2016, with only one response coming from Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute.

<sup>103</sup> “Girl Wireless Operator From Toronto Is Killed,” *The Globe and Mail*, 1 September 1944, 4.

<sup>104</sup> “Danforth Technical School War Memorial,” May 1948, Danforth Technical School Archives, Toronto, 31.

<sup>105</sup> “Danforth Technical School War Memorial,” 35.

<sup>106</sup> “Danforth Technical School War Memorial,” 31-32.

<sup>107</sup> “Alexander Honours Comrades at School Window Unveiling,” *The Globe and Mail*, 31 May 1948, 12.

Honourable Major John W. Foote, read the Prayer of Dedication.<sup>108</sup> Reverend Foote's participation also added to the occasion given the widespread acclaim of his life-saving heroism during the Dieppe raid.

The Memorial Windows were constructed of stained glass portraying President Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms—"Freedom from Want," "Freedom from Fear," "Freedom of Speech," "Freedom of Religion,"—as well as the concepts of "The Student as a Mature Citizen" and "The Student as a Soldier in Arms."<sup>109</sup> It was hoped that students who visited the Memorial Library and viewed the spectacle of the Memorial Windows would "be... challenge[d] to live lives unselfishly dedicated to service in a free society."<sup>110</sup> These were laudable goals to inculcate in any group of youth although one cannot escape the underlying message that 'the student as a mature citizen' may be called upon to be 'a soldier in arms' if these freedoms were violated in the future.

To commemorate its Second World War dead Malvern Collegiate Institute dedicated a Book of Remembrance and a Hammond organ on 11 November 1948.<sup>111</sup> Enid McGregor, who filed the story regarding the ceremony for *The Globe and Mail*, chose to first write about the school's First World War memorial, "one of the most beautiful of all Canadian monuments, [which] was unveiled in honour of the twenty-five Malvern students who fell in the First World War."<sup>112</sup> McGregor followed up with details of the Book of Remembrance put together by two former female students of the school stating, "It is the record of the great and noble sacrifice of a great school."<sup>113</sup>

Evidently, even before the Second World War ended, Principal William M. Prudham began to collect photographs of alumni who had lost their lives in the earlier years of the conflict.<sup>114</sup> In February 1944, the first batch of letters was mailed to the grieving parents of the OSCVI war dead in which Prudham opened: "The OSCVI has for some time felt that due recognition should be made of the service rendered by its graduates and former students in the Active

<sup>108</sup> "Alexander Honours Comrades at School Window Unveiling," 12.

<sup>109</sup> "Danforth Technical School War Memorial," 7-25.

<sup>110</sup> "Danforth Technical School War Memorial," 33.

<sup>111</sup> Enid McGregor, "Malvern's War Service," *The Globe and Mail*, 18 November 1948, 6.

<sup>112</sup> McGregor, "Malvern's War Service," 6.

<sup>113</sup> McGregor, "Malvern's War Service," 6.

<sup>114</sup> "O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List, 1939-1945," The OSCVI Alumni Association.

Forces [...] An Honour Roll is being prepared as a permanent tribute to these young men and women.”<sup>115</sup> Requesting a picture of their deceased sons preferably in dress uniform, Prudham advised these photographs would be returned after “8 x 10’ picture[s] ... [had been] reproduced.”<sup>116</sup> A sheet entitled “Casualty Pictures” tracked the progress of borrowing, copying and returning the images.<sup>117</sup>

With the war’s end and the final casualties tallied, formal proceedings were commenced to establish the OSCVI War Memorial Fund Committee. A committee of five members was struck including Nora Merritt of the Owen Sound Board of Education, Mary Miller, Bill Dane, Charles Christopher (C. C.) Middlebro’ and OSCVI teacher John M. Hinchley acting as its chairman.<sup>118</sup> C. C. Middlebro’ was the uncle of Bill Middlebro’. Bill Dane was one of the younger members and an alumnus of the school and a Second World War veteran. He explained in a 2012 interview why he volunteered to work on the Committee: “I knew many of them, [the war dead, and] I was back from the war working at the local newspaper.”<sup>119</sup>

One of the first actions of the committee was to register the memorial fund through the Department of National War Services’ War Charities Act for the “the erection, construction, acquisition, development or maintenance of a war memorial.”<sup>120</sup> Under the direction of C. C. Middlebro’, who was a local practising lawyer and the Memorial Committee’s Secretary-Treasurer, charitable status was requested for the OSCVI War Memorial Fund. Individuals who made contributions would receive income tax receipts for their donations to the fund. Confirmation was received from the Department of National War Services in April 1946 that the OSCVI War Memorial Fund was authorised as a War Charity Fund.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>115</sup> William M. Prudham to Mrs. L. Lee, 15 February 1944, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection, Owen Sound.

<sup>116</sup> Prudham to Lee, 15 February 1944, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>117</sup> “Casualty Pictures,” OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>118</sup> “Plan Memorial at Collegiate Fallen Students,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 23 March 1946, 5.

<sup>119</sup> Bill Dane, interview by David Alexander, Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, 22 June 2012.

<sup>120</sup> Letter by C. H. Payne, “Office of the Deputy Minister: Department of National War Services,” 22 December 1945, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>121</sup> Leon Trebert to C. C. Middlebro’, “Department of National War Services,” 23 April 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

Chairman Hinchley did not sit on his hands while they awaited official approval of charitable status for the fund. In February 1946, Hinchley sent out over 1,300 forms to former OSCVI students throughout Canada and the United States, soliciting donations for a "permanent memorial" in which they hoped to raise \$4,000.<sup>122</sup> He made a direct appeal to "the generosity of former students," hoping that they "will undoubtedly welcome the opportunity of making a contribution to this fund."<sup>123</sup> It was a well-crafted letter that reminded the recipient of the wartime service of the over one thousand former OSCVI students who had performed duties in Canada's armed forces during the Second World War. The *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times* published an editorial in its 25 March 1946 edition endorsing the Memorial Committee's fund-raising campaign: "The Sun Times has no hesitation in giving its support to this most worthy project. It is proper and fitting that these young men who responded to the call of duty and then gave their lives in the performance of that duty should not be permitted to be forgotten. They proved themselves a credit to their school and their names should live for evermore."<sup>124</sup>

In the beginning, response to the letter was mixed as summed up in a 16 April 1946 article published in the *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*: "The most pleasing feature of the campaign to date has been the number of replies from outside Owen Sound. Ex-students from across Canada and parts of the United States have sent contributions to the fund, but in Owen Sound itself, the response has been slow."<sup>125</sup> Even though donations of up to \$50 and from as far away as Florida had been received, Hinchley felt that the tardy local response may well have been due to "the wording of the letter" since "many people believe the committee has decided definitely on the idea of a memorial room, a plan which has not been too well received in some quarters."<sup>126</sup> Hinchley clarified that "the Committee feels that a plaque of some sort should be erected, a sequel to the plaque in the memory of those who died and served in the First Great War. This

<sup>122</sup> Letter by John M. Hinchley, "O.S.C.V.I. War Memorial," 1 February 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>123</sup> Letter by Hinchley, 1 February 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>124</sup> "Student's Memorial Worthy of Support," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 25 March 1946, 4.

<sup>125</sup> "Response is Slow for O.S.C.V.I. War Memorial Fund," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 16 April 1946, 14.

<sup>126</sup> "Response is Slow for O.S.C.V.I. War Memorial Fund," 14.

plaque is on the wall of the entrance leading to the older part of the OSCVI building.”<sup>127</sup> The news article also noted that the OSCVI students had previously raised over \$700 “through their various war work committees” and many local veterans had been quick to offer their financial support for the project.<sup>128</sup>

The OSCVI Memorial Committee continued to seek out every possible avenue for donations as they approached businesses, former teachers of the school and local politicians. Popular Member of Parliament for Grey North, Garfield Case—who had earned the nickname the ‘Mighty Atom’ a year earlier by defeating General Andrew McNaughton in a pivotal federal by-election in February 1945—donated ten dollars.<sup>129</sup> Owen Sound Mayor Eddie Sargent and Member of Provincial Parliament Dr. MacKinnon Phillips also enclosed cheques with their letters of support for the campaign. Smaller donations of \$1 or \$2 continued to flow in from many alumni while larger contributions were received from local businesses and industry.<sup>130</sup> The fund’s balance at the local branch of the Bank of Montreal had grown to \$1,300 by December 1946.<sup>131</sup>

John Hinchley’s letter of solicitation for donations for the OSCVI War Memorial Fund stimulated a vigorous debate as to what form the Second World War memorial should take even though he identified a preference for a memorial room:

Just what form such a memorial should take has not yet been decided by the committee, but a survey of opinion shows that the idea of a room dedicated to those who served is very popular. Such a room would contain a bronze plaque on which would be inscribed the names of the dead, a book with the names of all those who served and the photographs mentioned above would hang upon its walls.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>127</sup> “Response is Slow for O.S.C.V.I. War Memorial Fund,” 14.

<sup>128</sup> “Response is Slow for O.S.C.V.I. War Memorial Fund,” 14.

<sup>129</sup> W. Garfield Case to J. M. Hinchley, “House of Commons Canada,” 4 April 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>130</sup> Fifty-three letters and other documents related to the work of the OSCVI War Memorial Committee were collected by the school’s Alumni Association. These letters were organised and preserved in a binder by the custodians of the OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>131</sup> “Bank of Montreal Savings Department Account V133,” 23 December 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>132</sup> Letter by Hinchley, 1 February 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

Many letters and brief notes arrived in the mail supporting the OSCVI War Memorial Committee, lauding them for their efforts. Former student Margaret Brown enclosed two dollars and declared: "A very fine plan in memory of our boys who did not return from over there."<sup>133</sup> Eleanor Boddy also supported the concept of a memorial room, saying "I favour the idea of a room in the school being set aside for this purpose."<sup>134</sup> She donated one dollar.

Others argued that an alternative approach to remembrance should be pursued. These included Arthur Harron who lamented in his letter to Hinchley:

For my own part, I do not like the idea of a room 'set apart'... I would ask your committee to consider something that would always be used actively by young people to build up happiness and sound bodies[,] for example a swimming pool ... [something] that would have always the sound of gay and happy voices and not the silence that the room implies as its feature.<sup>135</sup>

Harron, who served in the Canadian Army during the war, would unequivocally support the project whatever shape it took, but closed his letter with this thought: "it seems more natural to hear, 'come on in the water's fine' than – 'come on in and look at the dead.'"<sup>136</sup> His suggestion was beyond the financial means of the OSCVI War Memorial Committee.

Ex-student Kenneth Saunders, working for the American Cyanamid Company in Stamford, Connecticut, wrote in "that the proposed memorial room should not be just a room with pictures... not just a room to walk into and stand in reverence momentarily and walk out. No, not that. That is not enough for those fifty-nine."<sup>137</sup> Saunders foresaw a more utilitarian purpose for the proposed memorial room and submitted five possible ideas for its potential use, including a meeting room, an anteroom to the library or perhaps "a room where

<sup>133</sup> Margaret Brown to J. M. Hinchley, 23 March 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

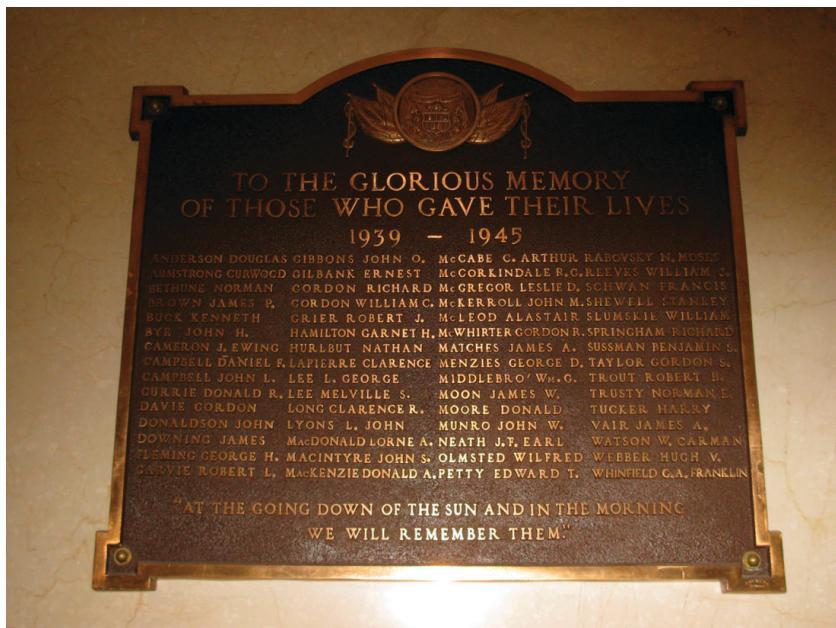
<sup>134</sup> Eleanor Boddy to J. M. Hinchley, 27 March 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>135</sup> Arthur Harron to John Hinchley, n.d., OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>136</sup> Harron to Hinchley.

<sup>137</sup> Kenneth W. Saunders to John Hinchley, "American Cyanamid Company," 2 April 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

30 :: "A Very Fine Plan in Memory of Our Boys"



The Second World War Plaque for the OSCVI war dead. [OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection]

small musicals could be heard. Equipping this room with a piano and a recording machine would be most desirable."<sup>138</sup> Saunders' concept of remembrance was very similar to the "functional memorials" that Tim Cook identifies in his analysis of the memory of the Second World War.<sup>139</sup> Similar debates were going on across Canada. Many community officials decided that a cenotaph was already in place and that a more utilitarian memorial be created to remember this generation of war dead. In the years after 1945, many communities across the province raised money to build community centres and hockey arenas.

One of the more intriguing ideas of remembrance was submitted by Jessie M. Trout, the Executive Secretary of the United Christian Missionary Society headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Trout suggested that "there might be some sort of lectureship set up that would help future generations of students at the Collegiate realize their responsibilities and opportunities to make a world where war

<sup>138</sup> Saunders to Hinchley, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>139</sup> Cook, *Fight to the Finish*, 438.

cannot be."<sup>140</sup> She realised that her letter of response was rather late but hoped some consideration would be given to her idea and enclosed a cheque for ten dollars.<sup>141</sup> What Trout envisioned was not to be.

Given the constraints of their financial resources, the Memorial Committee chose a more traditional form of remembrance in early 1947. Pictures of the deceased students would be hung in the main hall of the school and a Book of Remembrance listing those who participated in the war was to be placed in a memorial cabinet constructed by students.<sup>142</sup> The Memorial Committee also sought to purchase a bronze plaque that would list the names of Laprierre, Mackenzie, Middlebro' and the fifty-seven other names of the Second World War dead.

Although the criteria for whom should be listed on the Memorial Plaque was never clearly identified in the school records, a legendary alumnus of the school, Dr. Norman Bethune, was included on the Memorial Plaque even though he had not been an active serving member of Canada's armed forces during the Second World War.<sup>143</sup> A rationale for Bethune's inclusion was provided by Memorial Committee member Bill Dane: "He did some pretty great things helping the Chinese... this was a pretty good job he did!"<sup>144</sup> Evidently if you were a celebrated former student of the school and died a war-related death, you were included on the plaque. At the time it did not matter he was a Communist. Would Bethune have been included had the committee delayed its deliberations until after Mao Zedong seized power in China in 1949?

The Committee contracted the firm of Chadwick-Carroll Brass and Fixtures Limited of Hamilton, Ontario to cast the memorial plaque based upon a design from the Memorial Committee.<sup>145</sup> The OSCVI's school crest is featured at the top of the plaque. "Dum Vivimus Vivamus," the motto of the school, is enclosed in a banner at the top of the crest with an image of a beaver located just below. Two

<sup>140</sup> Jessie M. Trout to J. M. Hinchley, "The United Christian Missionary Society," 7 June 1946, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>141</sup> Trout to Hinchley, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>142</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

<sup>143</sup> "O.S.C.V.I. Casualty List," OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

<sup>144</sup> Dane, interview by Alexander.

<sup>145</sup> H. W. Smith to J. M. Hinchley, "Chadwick-Carroll Brass and Fixtures Limited," 5 August 1947, OSCVI Alumni Heritage Collection.

branches of maple leaves surround an inner shield containing a map of the world, an open book and a hand with a gavel in it. These items were meant to represent the fairness of the school and the scholarly pursuits of its students. OSCVI is emblazoned on the lower portion of the crest.<sup>146</sup> The OSCVI crest is surrounded by a pair of stylised Union Jack flags on either side.

There is evidence of the “high diction” that had been used on many of First World War memorials in Canada being used once again for this Second World War memorial.<sup>147</sup> The words, “TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES 1939 – 1945” are inscribed below the school’s crest. Four columns of fifteen names are listed alphabetically underneath the opening tribute. Surnames are listed first, followed by given names with all this lettering being capitalised. The closing sentiment on the plaque was taken from Laurence Binyon’s “The Fallen”: “AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.”<sup>148</sup> It was a more simplistic design compared to the classical style lines of the much larger OSCI Great War Memorial Tablet. The Memorial Committee chose to mount the Second World War Memorial Plaque in a stairwell across from the Memorial Tablet in the upper hall of the 1924 wing of the school<sup>149</sup>.

The Book of Remembrance was compiled and created under the direction of art teacher William Parrott and over one thousand names were painstakingly hand printed onto the individual pieces of parchment. Symbols identified the service arm in which they served and those who had made the “Supreme Sacrifice.”<sup>150</sup> It was enclosed in a cabinet built by woodworking students and lit by a brass light fixture also purchased from Chadwick-Carroll Brass and Fixtures Limited. A page of the Book of Remembrance would be turned every day in honour of the war dead.<sup>151</sup> This ritual was similar to the one used for the Books of Remembrance located in the Memorial

<sup>146</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

<sup>147</sup> Vance, *Death So Noble*, 89.

<sup>148</sup> Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 63.

<sup>149</sup> “New Memorial Plaque Over O.S.C.V.I. Entrance,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 26 April 1948, 6.

<sup>150</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

<sup>151</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

Chamber of the Peace Tower in Ottawa. Another commemorative space was allocated in an older section of the school to host the Memorial Cabinet and feature the pictures of the Second World War dead.

A "Service of Unveiling and Dedication" took place on Sunday, 25 April 1948 in the main school corridor during which Principal William Prudham and a delegation of students welcomed over 200 supporters and local dignitaries including Reverend H. W. Vaughan who conducted the service and gave the "Prayer of Invocation."<sup>152</sup> A *Sun Times* reporter paraphrased Reverend Vaughan's remarks on the occasion,

declaring it was beyond the power of mere human thought and words to pay a fitting tribute to those who had given their lives, did not speak of war. His remarks rather were directed at the present. He spoke of what such unselfish sacrifice should mean to those on whose behalf it was made. The tendency to despise the present – to view with misgivings all those things that seemed to go wrong in the world – was all too easy to accept. It was not difficult to convince oneself that events had followed a much smoother pattern in days long past and to despair of the present.<sup>153</sup>

The ceremony concluded with a reading of the names of the war dead by the co-presidents of the Students' Council and a recitation of "In Flanders Fields" by a trio of female students.<sup>154</sup>

The following day a picture of Vaughan, Prudham and the chief organiser of the program, teacher J. C. Stephenson, appeared on the front page of the *Sun Times* under the heading: "War Memorial Plaque is Unveiled at O.S.C.V.I. Sunday."<sup>155</sup> A follow up news story on the proceedings of the ceremony maintained:

Sunday's service was one of the most impressive of its kind ever held in Owen Sound. Conducted by Dr. H.W. Vaughan of Brantford, who was school chaplain throughout the war, it was deeply moving and

<sup>152</sup> "Collegiate's Memorial To Its War Dead Unveiled at Ceremony on Sunday," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 26 April 1948, 5.

<sup>153</sup> "Collegiate's Memorial To Its War Dead Unveiled at Ceremony on Sunday," 5.

<sup>154</sup> "Collegiate's Memorial To Its War Dead Unveiled at Ceremony on Sunday," 5.

<sup>155</sup> "War Memorial Plaque is Unveiled at O.S.C.V.I. Sunday," *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 26 April 1948, 1.

completely fitting. As the flag was raised, the names of those listed on it were read out by George Moore and Shirley Lyons, co-presidents of the School Council.<sup>156</sup>

CFOS, Owen Sound’s local radio station, was on hand to record the ceremony which was broadcast on Sunday night. The recording was rebroadcast the following Tuesday night “because of the great number of requests.”<sup>157</sup> The local community had displayed much interest and enthusiasm for the unveiling of the new memorial for the OSCVI Second World War dead but the commemorative forms and rituals adopted by the school community resembled very closely those chosen a generation earlier.

### **CONCLUSIONS: “IT IS OUR GENERATION THAT MUST LEAD”<sup>158</sup>**

Unfortunately tragedy struck the OSCVI in 1952 when fire engulfed the older wing of the school, destroying both the Memorial Cabinet and the Book of Remembrance.<sup>159</sup> When a new circular addition to the school was constructed in 1954, a marble memorial was included with a revamped Book of Remembrance.<sup>160</sup> The Memorial Plaque that paid tribute to the OSCVI Second World War dead was removed from its original location in the 1924 wing and remounted on the upper edifice of the marble column below a Sword of Sacrifice. With the remaining reserve of the OSCVI War Memorial Fund and additional funds from the student council, a “new War Memorial, the electric organ, was formally presented to the school by Mr. Bill Dane on behalf of those who had contributed towards its purchase.”<sup>161</sup> *The New Auditorium* acknowledged the practical utility of this musical instrument: “Apart from being a tribute to the war dead, the organ

<sup>156</sup> “Collegiate’s Memorial To Its War Dead Unveiled at Ceremony on Sunday,” 5.

<sup>157</sup> “Local Listening: OSCVI Dedication Program Re-broadcast,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, 27 April 1948, 5.

<sup>158</sup> Helen Jefferson, “Literary,” in *Hi Times*, ed. Jean Laird (Owen Sound: Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, 1946), 3.

<sup>159</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

<sup>160</sup> Smith, *Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute 125th Anniversary Auditorium*, 67.

<sup>161</sup> Norma Pettit, ed., *The New OSCVI 1954-1955 Auditorium* (Owen Sound: OSCVI, 1955), 118.

is also beneficial since it is being used for school assemblies, and at all school functions whenever it is needed."<sup>162</sup>

The school struggled to differentiate this next generation of war dead from those who had died during the First World War. Even though the Second World War dead had forged their own distinct identities in youth and war, many secondary schools including the OSCVI mostly relied upon the ingrained ways of the past to memorialise them. Myers and Poutanen note that "[m]any home-front school children came to see World War II as the 'Good War' and were strongly imbued with a sense of patriotism as well as a conservatism characterized by a belief in authority and in conventional institutions such as marriage, family, and traditional gender relations."<sup>163</sup> The ceremonial rituals, language and forms of remembrance reflected this conservatism and were not unlike those used for the First World War dead. New plaques and memorial rolls were usually erected close to existing First World War memorials. As Jonathan Vance argues, their memory was "overshadowed"<sup>164</sup> by the First World War dead and they have been "denied their own distinct identity."<sup>165</sup> Were they destined to be conflated with Canada's First World War dead? Or would they stand apart in collective memory with forms of commemoration distinctive to them? Millar and Keshen observe that, "[a]lthough youth were shielded from grisly details — and though Canada's participation in the world wars continued to be presented as a righteous cause — a greater tendency was to admit battlefield setbacks and suffering, and to depict an image of war that was not so glamorous."<sup>166</sup> As Tim Cook notes, commemoration of the Second World War dead evolved as Canadians sought new ways to remember them:

Yet Canadians wanted to somehow mark this new war, even if there was little appetite for building several thousand new stone monoliths. Canadians instead embraced functional memorials that would enrich the living and provide contemplative spaces where they could reflect upon those who gave their lives in the war. Gardens, libraries, and

<sup>162</sup> Pettit, *The New Auditorium*, 118.

<sup>163</sup> Myers and Poutanen, "Cadets, Curfews, and Compulsory Schooling," 398.

<sup>164</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 461.

<sup>165</sup> Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 468.

<sup>166</sup> Millar and Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause," 16-17.

wooded areas were created, but also extended to the less sacred, such as hockey arenas, symphonies, and beaches-and then crept towards the absurd including tennis courts and movie theatres.<sup>167</sup>

The commemoration of the war dead was morphing into more utilitarian forms that could be beneficial to society.<sup>168</sup> School communities followed suit, debating the value of ‘functional memorials,’ such as swimming pools, lectureships, contemplative spaces and musical recital areas, to memorialise their war dead. DTS created a memorial library while MCI and the OSCVI purchased electric organs to be used at school gatherings. Even artist George Reid pursued a more realistic portrayal of war when he offered to paint a new set of murals for JCI’s Second World War memorial themed on “convoy duty in the North Sea.”<sup>169</sup> Like Reverend Vaughan, others thought that perhaps the best memorial to Second World War dead was to focus on the present and the future. Laudable goals such as the pursuit of global peace among nations could be a way to commemorate them.

OSCVI Grade 13 student Helen Jefferson wrote an editorial in the mid-winter 1946 publication of the student magazine *Hi Times* in which she contemplated the meaning of the OSCVI war dead: “Their loss and the loss of the millions who died with them is a tragedy not only to those who knew them and loved them best, but to all mankind. Those who would have been our writers, our statesmen, our composers, our poets, our nation’s leaders have been taken from us.”<sup>170</sup> After ten years of global depression and six more of war, Jefferson envisaged a brighter future in which her post-war generation had a responsibility of building a better world:

But the world moves on, in glaring need of thinking, capable men and women. It is our generation that must lead the way towards a new world. Following generations will build on our foundations, but it is we who must lay the cornerstone for a brave new world, either fulfilling our

<sup>167</sup> Cook, *Fight to the Finish*, 438-39.

<sup>168</sup> Vance, “An Open Door to a Better Future,” 475.

<sup>169</sup> Medland, *Minerva’s Diary*, 149.

<sup>170</sup> Jefferson, “Literary,” 3.

ideals or determining a course of endless wars which will lead to the eventual destruction of mankind.<sup>171</sup>

She finished her editorial with the noblest of intentions: "The greatest memorial we can ever hope to erect to their memory is a world with friendship among nations and an age of peace."<sup>172</sup> As Millar and Keshen note, "[y]oung people were rallied by the sense that they needed to defend and strengthen democratic institutions, both to defeat Nazism and to build a postwar order premised on the ideals of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations."<sup>173</sup> These emerging forms of commemoration better acknowledged the collective memory of the OSCVI Second World War dead.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**David Ross Alexander** is an independent researcher who taught history and geography at the Owen Sound and Collegiate and Vocational Institute for thirty-two years. He subsequently completed a MA in history at the University of Waterloo. This article is related to his MA research on the commemoration of the Second World War dead of the OSCVI.

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<sup>171</sup> Jefferson, "Literary," 3.

<sup>172</sup> Jefferson, "Literary," 3. Vance identified this phenomenon in his work about "an open door to a better future" ... Social memory is all about the creation of a usable past, but in the two decades after 1945, Canadians did not have much need for the past. The present seemed all too good, and the future too promising, for people to want to take refuge in a war that had just ended." See Vance, "An Open Door to a Better Future," 475.

<sup>173</sup> Millar and Keshen, "Rallying Young Canada to the Cause," 16.