

Bringing the “Boys” Names home to their Community

Rawdon District School Nova Scotia Canada



“How the Rawdon District Remembrance Committee Project Began”

My name is Christine (McKeen) MacAskill. I would love to share with you an educational project that my spouse, Wayne, and I were privileged to have been part of. Hope is defined as looking to the future with trust and faith. This project left us as Legionnaires, feeling hope that all those who served their country in world peace efforts would be shown gratitude for their service. Especially to be acknowledged are all those that gave the supreme sacrifice, that we may live in a free democratic society. “WE WILL REMEMBER THEM, are words not to ever be forgotten. The ‘seed’ that began the suggestion of this project was planted in our minds, after my doing a virtual Remembrance presentation to a small school in rural Hants County, N.S.

I joined the Royal Canadian Legion just about 40 years ago at the request of my WWII Veteran Father, Alex McKeen. Over the past 40 years, I have personally seen how our Poppy/Remembrance Committees at Montgomery Branch #133, have diligently worked to find ways to acknowledge those that gave the supreme sacrifice for world peace efforts. I had the opportunity to represent Nova Scotia on the Legion’s 1992 Pilgrimage of Remembrance. Through this 14-day educational training, in 1992 lead by WWII veterans, I was trained to do Remembrance presentations for schools and community groups.

At the request of a teacher, Heather Bruce, to our Legion Br#133 in Enfield, for a Remembrance presentation at Rawdon District school, started the ball rolling. Our Remembrance committee scheduled a visit to Rawdon District school in our November 2020 Poppy Campaign. Due to Covid restrictions in our province, no in-person presentations were permitted in our schools. Our Legion’s Remembrance committee were only able to do virtual Remembrance

presentation. As a legion Remembrance presenter, with the permission of Br166, whose's area this school fell in, it was me that gave the virtual presentations for the Elementary students of Rawdon District school.

The communities of the Rawdon area lay amid the rolling hills of Hants County, in central Nova Scotia. Traditionally a farming area, it is a beautiful area to even pass through. The catchment area of this school includes not one community by numerous villages, but one centrally located, shared school. Students come from the communities of South Rawdon, Centre Rawdon, Rawdon Gold Mines, Upper Rawdon, West Gore, East Gore, and Upper Nine Mile River. The enrolment of this school may fluctuate slightly each year but in the 2020-2021 school year, it stood at 143. Classes are from Pre-Primary to Grade 6.

When we present to elementary schools, we try to take the Remembrance theme down to their level of understanding. Through Power point presentations, we share as much local information we can gather that pertains to the service and sacrifice of the people from their community. In preparation for the school visit, I had found information on 8 young men that gave the supreme sacrifice in the two world wars from the Rawdon/West Gore area. At the time of the presentations, I had no idea of the vastness of the catchment area of the school. From our team's research of Enfield's cenotaph, I was aware of two men lost from Enfield's cenotaph that had 8 great great nieces and nephews attending school at Rawdon District School. Making these personal connections to the Fallen comrades helps the student body understand they were not men from far off places that were part of the world peace efforts Remembrance Day is all about. Having a virtual presentation limits the interaction between students and a presenter but still I found the students of Rawdon school, like so many other schools, had excellent attention to the material presented. Families and teachers are instilling the importance of Remembrance Day to our youth. We as legion presenters try to compliment and share local points of interest that connect us all together on this important topic.

In the Primary to grade two level we begin with a few important works like Poppy- Veteran- our special day of remembrance of those that did special things for us.

As we go up through the grade levels, we add more to catch their interest and see their ability to comprehend further important points, Peace and our part; ways the Veterans leads in their to helpfulness, their service in peacekeeping, what is sacrifice, volunteers distributing Poppies. Local Cenotaph etc. We touch on how these points relate to all of us, even school aged children. We gently try to give age-appropriate simple explanation of these points Especially to help the students know how we all can work together to be part of world peace. We present how we all can do different things to help unity and peacefulness grow by our own actions. Interested teacher who work daily with our countries students hopefully see the Remembrance presentations as s reinforcement of the same virtues they are instilling in all their work done in their classrooms and schools.

During the Rawdon District Grade 5/6 presentation, in our Q&A session, a student asked through their teacher; “Where is Rawdon’s cenotaph?” Sadly, I had to tell the students that there was not a cenotaph in their area. I noted I have learned, in my experience with the Legion, there were other communities of Hants County, that had lost young men in the service of world peace efforts, but all did not have their names on a cenotaph in their community of origin. We all agreed local cenotaphs, would be an amazing way for us to all know and remember these names and the sacrifice that they made for all of us.

I shared with the students that I was aware that there was a small Stone of Remembrance in West Gore that was placed on a roadside piece of the Harvey homestead by Austin Harvey’s family.



This photo is the monument in the grove of the Harvey’s Property.

Pte Austin Harvey is the son of Margaret A. and John C Harvey of West Gore. In my preparing family members told me, that Margaret Harvey asked the DeWolfe family also of West Gore, if they wished to have their son Clyde’s name on this monument of remembrance, when it was first placed there after WWI.



I showed this photo of where Austin Harvey is buried in Rosieres Communal Cemetery extension in France. Austin was 26 years old when he died August 9th, 1918, while serving with 31st BN Canadian Infantry (Albert Regt.).

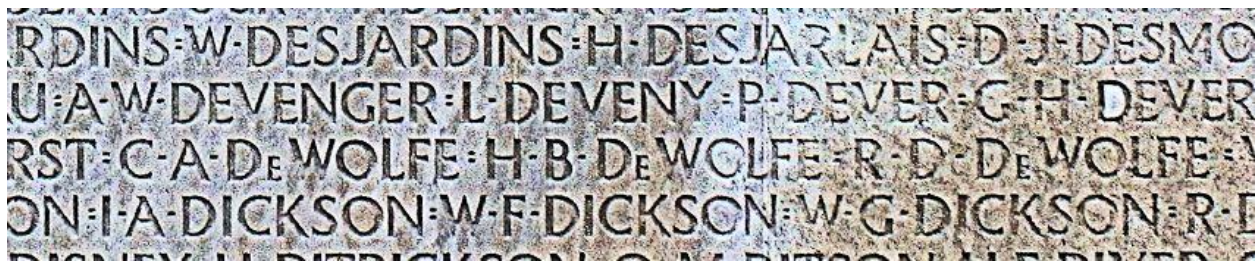
We include important points like all the lost were given the same headstones when the war was over. We always note, to students, that the Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance are in each of the Canadian War Graves cemeteries.

The following photo shows both the Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance at Bergen-Op-Zoom CWGC in Holland. It is located north of the Scheldt River, near the Belgium Border. 968 Canadian soldiers are buried herein. Four RCAF airmen are buried here as well. The Stone of Remembrance says, "Their Names Liveth For Ever More" The cenotaph is about those names being remembered each time we pass it.





Clyde Abnor DeWolfe, lost his life in the long battle for control of Vimy Ridge, in France. At age 21, Clyde died September 16th, 1916. Clyde is one of the 11 thousand Canadians lost Europe during WWI, with no know grave. The muddy, wet and horrific conditions of the WWI battles cost many lives beyond just the conflicts. themselves. PTE Clyde's name is inscribed in this section of the photo below.



I know we have many school requests but fewer and fewer Legion presenters. I was glad to be able to respond positively to the invitation to visit Rawdon District School asap after their request.

I was so moved by the sincere interest of the 2020 Rawdon students. I took away from the presentation, a "why not try to help these students bring the names of their war losses back to their community" attitude. With Covid we were limited with ways to raise funds in 2021. One idea after the other was not successful to the degree, we needed to accomplish even a small cenotaph. In August 2020 our Branch secretary read a piece of correspondence from the National Wall of Remembrance Association. This financial offer to help projects aimed at what these students were talking about seemed to be exactly what these students needed.

Wayne and I quickly sought to invite other like-minded persons to join the Rawdon Remembrance Committee. We found the interest we sought and enlarged the committee from two to nine.

We looked into the community to find mix of ages and experiences. We welcomed Alice Bond, from Rawdon Gold Mines, who responded positively to join our efforts. Alice is a sister of George Arnold Shaw. Alice 's brother "Barney "was buried Dec 10 th 1944 in Raveena War Cemetery in Italy. Photo of the Ravenna cemetery below) Barney Shaw, was from the small

village of Cogmagun, near Walton, in North/West Hants County.



Elsie Bond who is Sister-in-law, to Carl Bond from Rawdon, was glad to be asked to take part. Carl Bond is brother to Elsie's deceased husband. Carl is buried in Holton Canadian War Cemetery in Holland.



Carl Rufus Bond

Shirly Nicol, Former school teacher / Retired Principal of Rawdon District School was another asset add to our committee.

As well as committee resources were Debbie MacPhee, Michelle Page-Winters, Norman Page all of Rawdon area. Elizabeth Myers, as well as my helpful sisters, Eleanor Clarke and Michelle White were great searchers of info for our committee. Our thanks to Alex MacAskill for his tech support. These volunteers answered the call for specific needs of the committee. The committee brought the success of working together to do something that none of us could have done alone. Hmmm that sounds like how the Veterans worked together in their projects I told the students as they gathered around their new Cenotaph for their November 10th service in 2021.

Once our committee was formed, we made an application for a grant in response to the N.W.O.R.A.'s email received. The application was completed and emailed with all requirements by their August 30th, 2021, deadline. We waited patiently and in late September we received an email saying we had been awarded our full budget of just under \$3000.00. Our committee was ecstatic and set to work, immediately. Within a week we had a goal of having the cenotaph installed at the Rawdon District, for their Service of Remembrance on November 10th, 2021.

The lowest bid of our three quotes was from a local company called **Living Stone** located at 15 Martha Ave, Mount Uniacke, NS, the company did an excellent job. The diligent efforts of the very talented designer Mohammad, assigned to our project, brought our idealistic idea to a beautiful conclusion. Their laser equipment and its operator made for excellent results. Living Stone met the deadline and had the stone ready for the November 8th delivery. There was a slight glitch in the installation. Unexpectedly when we were arranging the delivery, we found there was a misunderstanding as to who was responsible to create the pad for the Rawdon cenotaph to be stabilized on. The folks at Living Stone don't do the cement pads for a foundation. They thought we knew that the installation pads are subcontracted. In my enthusiasm to "get it done", I missed that point. In the amount we paid for the stone, it included the engraving on both sides, delivery, and installation onto the cement pad. With our great gratitude, we acknowledge that N.W.O.R.A. saved the day and project's installation for the November 8th's installation. N.W.O.R.A. had approved us a small amount more than our quote. Thanks to fellow committee member (and my spouse) Wayne, was able to get a friend to fit our "small" project into his busywork schedule. The cenotaph base was ready to go when the cenotaph arrived November 8th. That man's kindness and a little on-site help from Wayne was a very "big" part of our committee reaching our goal to be ready for Rawdon District school's first Remembrance Service around their Cenotaph, on November 10th, 2021.

Our committee's researchers, as well as N.W.O.R.A.'s researchers worked away and found personal information for a total of 15 young men from Rawdon District catchment area. Our Rawdon Remembrance committee reached its idealistic goal. With the help of many, but especially N.W.O.R.A.'s funding and support, we indeed did bring home, the names of the area's 15 local men, who had paid the supreme sacrifice. My spouse and I, at the time of the conclusion of the committee's work, commented that this was one of the most rewarding service projects we had ever worked on.

Carter Winters, the student that asked the question in our Q&A after his class presentation. Nov. 2020 is pictured below



We would later find out that Carter is related to two of the men died in WWII' Carter's maternal Grandfather Norman Page was the closest living relative of the Page brothers from Centre Rawdon. Laurie Douglas Page is buried on Holland at Canada's latest European War cemetery Groesbeek in Nymegen. Norman died with Wendall Parker from Nine Mile River on March 25th, 1945.



Murray Benjamin Page is buried in Brookwood Military cemetery in United Kingdom/ England



In 2021, Norman Page was able to give us his personal knowledge of these two cousins of his that went to WWII but neither returned. Laurie and Murray were sons of William Harry Page and his wife Florence Viola Page. They had a brother that served and return to Canada but never returned to Rawdon area to live. When we saw the photo of these two Page men, my spouse and I thought they looked like one of our nieces. Norman Page was able to tell us there was a relation to our two nieces as well. These two brothers were also first cousins to our niece's grandfather, Claude Page. Their mother Sandy (Page) MacAskill would be a second cousin to Murray and Laurie Page Sadly. Sandy and her sisters never knew this connection.

So many times, it feels like we are putting a very important puzzle together when we search to find those who gave so much for our peaceful lives.

A student's meaningful question spurred many to be part of collecting this information. Our small committee took on the challenge, but it was together we created something none of us could have done on our own. One by one N.W.O.R.A is doing very important work to ensure we know who our community heroes are. Heroes that gave so much for our peace. When we know our country's history, we certain know that there was a high cost to many families to ensure the peace. A Peace we so often take for granted. Let's know better and do better to ensure their memory stays prominent in their home communities.

Our committee's hope is that for many years the students involved will remember and tell others proudly, "we were part of that cenotaph being put here" A lasting reminder in their community, on their school property.

Our committee knew its purpose would be concluded at the end of November 2021, so we tried to be proactive in clarifying the safe keeping of this precious reminder of the loss of the area surrounding Rawdon District school.

The 'Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education in Truro, committed to allowing us to install the cenotaph on the school property. They committed to looking after the cenotaph as long as the Rawdon school was in use. During the conclusion of the Nov 10th service, a copy of this written commitment was received by the acting principal Allison read. Allison committed to seeing that this document was delivered to the School Board in Truro.

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch # 166 in Noel being the closest Legion Branch, committed to taking on the care of the Rawdon cenotaph if ever the school closed. The Poppy Committee members from Branch # 166 Joanie McDonald and Maxine Manly received a copy of that commitment, framed to be posted in Branch #166, in Noel, Hants County, NS. as a sign of their commitment. We hoped to have clear guidance of responsibility through these framed copies preserved on the walls of each building. May we all be reminded of our personal commitment to and the importance of, keeping the "BOYS – our heroes' "names known in our communities.

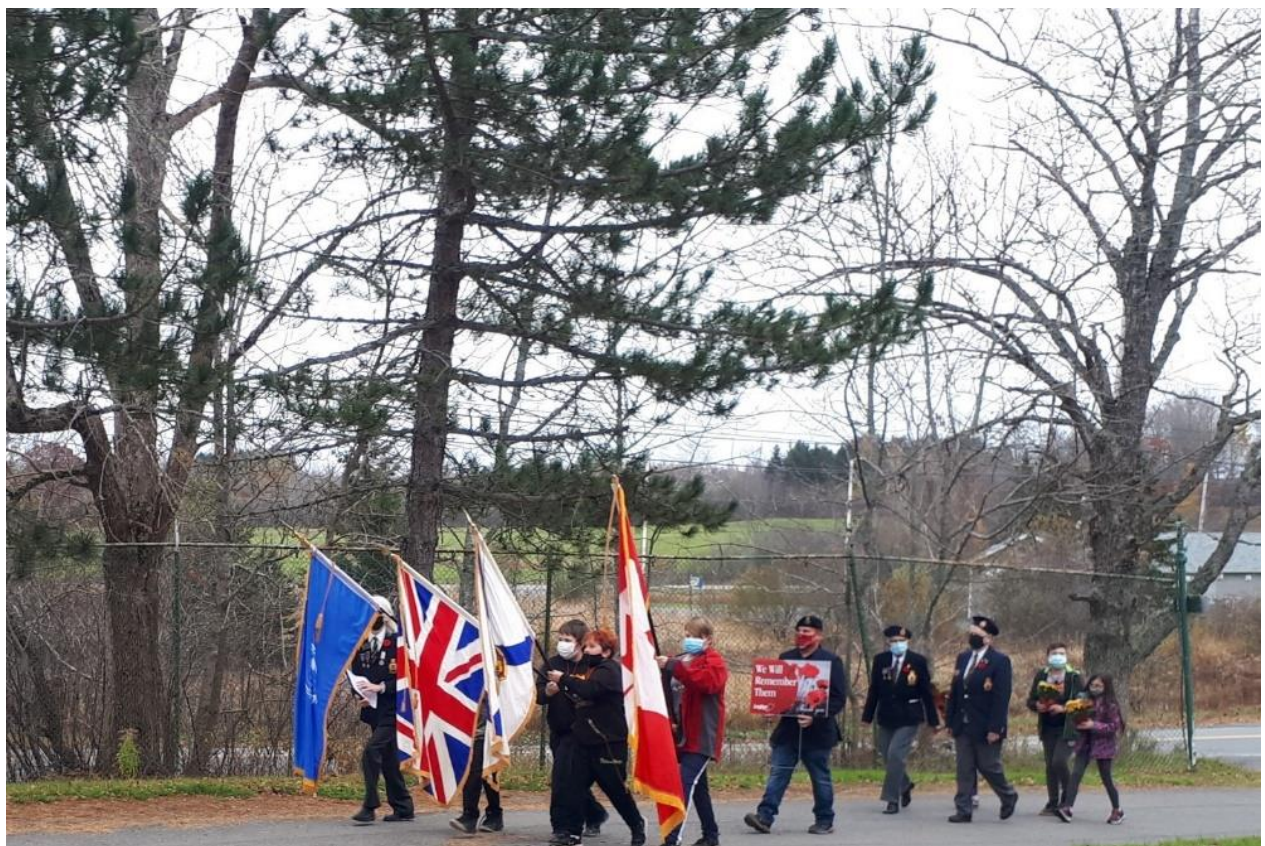
With hearts full of gratitude, November 10th, 2021, we were eager to lead the children through a type of service of remembrance that they could duplicate each year on the last school day

before November 11th. Some local members of our committee, thought Rawdon as a community might begin to visit their school cenotaph on Remembrance Day to pause respectfully and acknowledge these local 15 men.

As a committee we hoped the students would have a lot of pride in their school's part in this project of remembrance. Covid restrictions limited the public/ media, as well as our committee as a whole to all be in attendance., On Nov 10th, 2021, the school staff were open to our guiding them through what "traditionally" happens at the Legion's service of Remembrance around a cenotaph on November 11th. The students eagerly wanted to be an active part of the program.

Students shown in their eagerness to be part of what they were learning, what happens at a traditional service of remembrance around a cenotaph on November 11th. Many offered and teachers selected those that carried the flags for a simple colour party. Those students marched on those colours as proudly as probably any decorated service personnel assigned this honour at a special event.





Mike Dauphinee, a school bus driver, as the only Veteran able to be in attendance, proudly, represented all the local veterans, carried the lawn sign to be displayed at the cenotaph.

It states, "We will Remember them."

Our two legionnaires fell in to follow the colour party. Humbly, I acted as Sgt at Arms / Parade Marshall. Even outside we all wore masks, following the covid restrictions.





A lawn sign made for Sub-Lt. Matthew Pyke was placed by staff member and family friend, Ruth Power. Matthew was from their community of West Gore. Matt died in the April 29th, 2020, helicopter crash, into the Ionian Sea. The death of the six crew members is the biggest single day loss of life for the Canadian Armed Forces since Afghan war.



A student acts as the MC



The principal Allison Read, supports the students as they read the names of their community's fallen.



The younger students so respectfully placed their Canadian flag for the men they represent, as the names are called out.







These young Canadians are our hope. They want to know who these men and women were who did so much for all of us. They want to know where they lived, all the while hoping it was near their home. They want to know who they were related to, again hoping; could it be me? It hits home when they found connections to some of their school chums. The researchers from N.R.O.R.A. assisted our Legion to know more about these 15 locals of the Rawdon District catchment. At the Elementary level, of course we were not able to be fully utilize "All" this info. The exciting thing is our committee can share that information with teachers and students in Kennetcook's Hants North Rural High where students from grade 7- 12 attend. The next step that will benefit more students, some of whom we students of Rawdon District in 2021

This small project brought much interest from the Community of Rawdon. Adults began to share thoughts as well. like why has there been no movement to bring this information of these men before this?

It was children's interest that spurred our committee on. It was your N.W.O.R.A. organization that gave us the hope these children could indeed bring "their community's heroes names

home". I felt the pride of families that had personal losses, when we shared this good news story with them. Community members showed regrets it had not been done sooner. Our committee sensed that the fact maybe, that many of our world war veterans protected their families as best they could, from their horrid memories after coming home all those years ago. Not talking much about their experiences, their losses, was a way to hide the pain many thought.



Respectful listening, attentiveness to being part of the ceremony, was so evident in the students' behaviour. The students as a whole showed their honour, their gratitude.

It was impressive, to watch and I was honoured to acknowledge their efforts.



In preparation for the school's service of Remembrance, the school had a very special foyer display. The display helped to show the connection to several families from their school population that had lost great uncles in WWII. The Teachers showing ways for their students to show their own gratitude and respect, were carried forward by their students. All present observed their respectful participation during the Remembrance service. The students welcomed their Bus driver Mr. Dauphinee. Mike proudly wore his medals as he represented the local ex-service personnel.





Andrew McDowell is picture here on this annual banners, one of 12, that hang publicly in his home community of Enfield, Hants Co., NS, each November.

Andy lost his life in the battle of the Atlantic. He has no known grave, but his name is on the Naval Cenotaph in Point Pleasant Park in Halifax N.S.

The school was able to learn that Andrew has relatives (shown below) that are connected to the student population of Rawdon District School.



The above photos show Keith Adams, the nephew of Andy McDowell and his Great Grandsons Brayden Adams and Austin Angevine, are from Rawdon District school area.

The next photos show Raymond Benere 's photo on his Remembrance banner. Legionnaire Elizabeth Myers is shown with four of her Grandchildren, in front of the Rawdon Cenotaph in 2021. These children that are relatives of the Fallen, help their peers to realize that the fallen on their cenotaph were young men, from their own communities. Not men from far off places but from the same villages as their own. Sadly, these relatives, gave the supreme sacrifice in the efforts for world peace; for all of us!

**RCL Montgomery BR.133
REMEMBERS
THOSE WHO GAVE THE
SUPREME SACRIFICE**



**RAYMOND BENERE
1925 – 1944
World War II
LEST WE FORGET**

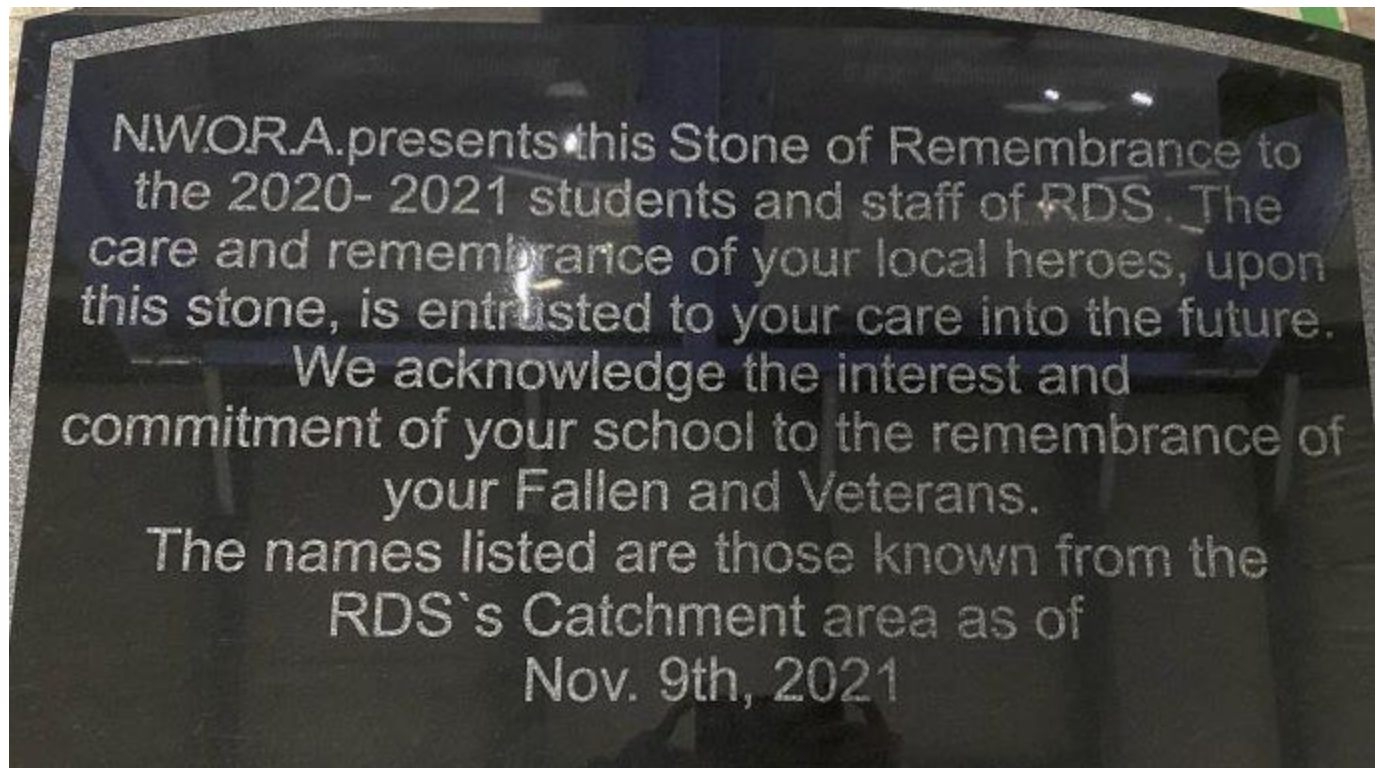
Seeing students from their own school who were related to some of the fallen Comrades reinforces the message these are not people from far off places that gave their lives. They are locals related to some of their classmates.



Committee member, Legionnaire Elizabeth White-Myers pictured here, is the niece of Raymond Benere. She stands with four of her grandchildren that were students of Rawdon District school in 2021 Two nieces also relatives of Raymond were absent for the photo.



In this photo Mike proudly allowed us a photo, with his son a student at Rawdon District School.



The words on the back of the cenotaph, called the staff and students to their responsibility to care well for this cenotaph and all it represents. It was evident that they had good intentions, to care for this gift given to their school. It was wonderful to see the creative ways they responded from November 8th when the monument arrived at the service, to November 10th. The garden plot was all newly raked, with fresh soil refreshing the area, rocks were painted and placed under the flagpole in the centre of the garden to show the respect for those whose names they will care for.

Students in the procession that followed the colour party, carried flowers to plant. One carried a school wreath, starting a new school tradition. Their pride was clearly being seen.



With great pride in their participation, younger students took turns as they carried their small Canadian flags to lay one for each name, as it was read off the cenotaph by an older student. This cenotaph's location will give teachers the opportunity to use it as a teaching tool over the years to come. The community will now have its own place to come to see the names of their area's true heroes immortalized in a public way within their community. Our committee hopes these students will invite their parents, and other relatives to come and see what they were part of. Even the youngest students, seemed to naturally see the importance of this school project. Our committee hopes the students will continue to feel pride as they come and go in their community, glancing at this cenotaph, telling others they were part of that finally being done.

Once again, our children are our country's hope. This group of elementary-aged students are a prime example of that hope. We are also grateful to report, that some community members had shown an interest in being part of the work of the Legion's Poppy Campaign In 2022. Always good news to welcome interested volunteers.

Our committee looks forward to assisting the grade six student from Rawdon elementary, to share their good news story in the fall of 2024 if they are able to have a public service. Due to Covid restrictions there could be no media coverage at the time. We hope to have a visit to share the success of the interest in the students from the Rawdon District 2021-2022 school year. The students of Grade s 4-5-6 from 2021 would now be in their new school at Hants North Rural High, in Kennetcook. Maybe these students' interests will bloom more as they begin to take their Canadian War history in their grade 8 curriculum at their next school. There

are still many Hants County men that gave their lives in the world peace efforts but still do not have their names not marked anywhere in their local villages. **There is still work to be done.** We certainly appreciate N.W.O.R. A. working with our committee on this remembrance project. There were many proud moments for me, the students, and the Rawdon Remembrance Committee as a whole!

We look forward to sending along later personalized sheets for each of the men whose names are on the Rawdon cenotaph. We are hoping to include some of the students that are now at Hants North Rural High, in finishing them up, as a project.

We hope Rawdon 's School District will coordinate in their community, an annual Remembrance service on November 11th around their cenotaph. Pausing to remind their community, of these 15 men from the Hants North area, is hopefully going to become a tradition. Hearing the names of their fallen read, within their annual service, will remind the students, there a relative of many of these men in their neighbourhoods. Indeed, they were not from far off places, but from their own school District.

The Nova Scotia, Br #166 Legion, in Noel, is the Branch responsible for this Hants North County school district. Poppy Committee members Maxine Manley and Joanie McDonald, who represented the Legion at the first Remembrance Service November 10th, 2021; carried back to the Legion, the branch commitment to take responsibility to ensure the cenotaph is looked after if anything should cause the closure of Rawdon District School. We will approach the Hants County Heritage society as well to preserve this information gathered on the 15 men to be stored in their files. We do hope, that our committee's hope is contagious and that other schools will be interested in being part of Remembrance in their own areas. I love the title we picked- Bringing the names of the fallen home to their community. If ever a group would like to have more details, on any of this, we would be pleased to share as per below the contact info.

Respectfully submitted, with gratitude,

Christine MacAskill

Past Chair Volunteer of Rawdon Remembrance Committee

Note - Readers wishing more information or can share information with us please use Christine's home Branch info below and put to attention: Christine MacAskill an email message/ you will get a reply asap.

Email: enfieldlegionbr133@gmail.com

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