

MARKED COPY  
extras on  
STONE 14.  
KEEP

PRIVATE CEMETERY

CHELSEA, QUE.

OFF ROUTE 105

OWNED BY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE  
GATINEAU

RECORDED AUGUST, 1982

WHERE PRIVATE RICHARD ROWLAND THOMPSON IS BURIED  
THE ONLY CANADIAN SOLDIER TO BE AWARDED THE QUEEN'S SCARF  
(OF QUEEN VICTORIA)

*read the remarkable story of Private Thompson in last pages*

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1982  
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BRANCH, ONTARIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY No. 82-13

PRIVATE CEMETERY  
CHELSEA - QUÉBEC

owned by

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU

recorded by

Patrick J. Horan

Thurs., Aug. 26, 1982

Patrick M.O. Evans

STONE 1. (Front)

JARED CHURCH  
 died 17 July, 1852  
 AE 89 yrs

[Jared b. Jan 1, 1763]

HANNAH BARTLETT  
 wife of  
 JARED CHURCH  
 died 17 Nov. 1864  
 AE 94 yrs

[Hannah b. Feb 14, 1771]

GARDNER CHURCH SR.  
 died 14 Nov. 1882  
 AE 83 yrs

MARTHA CONE  
 wife of  
 GARDNER CHURCH  
 died Apr 25, 1876  
 AE 74 yrs

[Gardner Sr. was Born Aug 29, 1799  
 Martha was Born June 13, 1802]

STONE 1. (Back)

WM. H. H.  
 son of  
 G. & M. CHURCH  
 died 14 Dec., 1851  
 AE 9 yrs & 4 ms.

HANNAH B.  
 daught. of  
 G. & M. CHURCH  
 died 1st Sept., 1854  
 AE 27 yrs 9 mos.

GARDNER CHURCH JR.  
 died 19 Apr., 1904  
 AE 71 yrs, 5 ms

STONE 2.

JOHN CHAMBERLIN  
 died June 6, 1837  
 Aged 42 yrs.  
 and his wife

MARY BLOSS  
 died  
 Mar. 3, 1889  
 Aged 99 yrs  
 & 7 mos.

CHAMBERLIN

[John b. Apr 21, 1793 Mary b. Aug 4, 1789]

STONE 3.

In Loving Memory Of  
 MINNIE  
 daughter of  
 GARDNER CHURCH  
 and beloved wife of  
 JOHN K. MEREDITH

Born May 14, 1865 - Died Jan 24, 1899  
 also their daughter

Little MAY

Born May 26, 1893 - Died June 2, 1895

MEREDITH

STONE 4.

merely a grey stone base, with small broken footstone on top of it.

STONE 5.

In Memory Of  
 JOHN D. MEECH  
 died Dec 26, 1901  
 Aged 76 yrs & 1 mo.  
 sons

STEVEN H. A 26 yrs  
 SILAS A. A 24 yrs  
 drowned  
 Sept. 16, 1886

WILFORD A  
 died Mar 4, 1875 A 2 yrs

**MEECH**

STONE 8.

A plot, of about 1/3 the area of the Cameron plot (Stone 6) The squared area is bounded by a low pipe railing supported at the corners by four stone domes. The memorial stone is separate from its base, but leans against it, both situated in the S.W. corner of the plot. The inscriptions on two of the stone's faces appear to the right

STONE 9.

STONE 6.

**CAMERON**

Centered in a plot, surrounded by an iron fence four stones piled one on top of the other - at the bottom two grey stones, surmounted by two of pink granite. In a corner of the plot is the apparent centre piece (also of pink granite) the latter inscribed:

JOHN A. CAMERON  
 died

June 24, 1890  
 A 33 yrs 2 Ms  
 (and on other face)

DUNCAN CAMERON  
 died  
 May 22, 1857  
 A 76 yrs.

((rectified May 1986))

John Cameron

m. Catharine Dunlap Brooks & Aug 18  
 d/o John Brooks & Sarah Dunlap

STONE 7.

**TROWSSE**

LEIGH  
 son of  
 ARTHUR & JANET  
 TROWSSE  
 Died Feb. 18, 1905  
 A 5 mos.

Top right hand corner of stone broken off, but discovered lodged in fork of nearby tree.

has since been reattached

**STOTHERS**

JAMES LESLIE  
 son of  
 JAMES & HARRIET  
 STOTHERS

died  
 Sept. 28, 1892  
 Aged 21 yrs.

HATTIE STOTHERS  
 beloved wife of  
 A.A. McLATCHIE  
 died

Dec. 16, 1894  
 Aged 31 yrs.

(note: Hattie is a nickname for Harriet)

**DUNN**

MARGARET WILLIAMS  
 wife of  
 WILLIAM MONTGOMERY

died  
 Aug. 14, 1893

STONE 10.

RICHARD R. THOMPSON

Queen's Scarf

Private

R.C.R. (S. Africa)

6. Apr., 1908

Age 31

STONE 11.ALEXANDER

JAMES

1845 - 1903

his wife

MARY GRAHAM

1850 - 1906

BERTHA ALEXANDER

wife of

R.R. THOMPSON

and

R. KRAMER

1876 - 1962

STONE 12.DAVIESIn  
Loving Memory Of

SARAH MOORE

wife of

THOMAS J. DAVIES

died

29 June, 1903

Aged 60 yrs

Stones 10 & 11, both in one plot of rectangular shape, surrounded by a low pipe railing.

Stone 10 is one of the kind supplied by the Dept. of National Defence.

Sister of  
Dr Thomas  
B Davie  
(Bernard)

STONE 13.

JAMES HUDSON

died

May 14, 1891

Aged 21 yrs.

Christopher Wright b. Sept 17,  
1834STONE 14.WRIGHT

CHRISTOPHER C. WRIGHT

died

17th. June, 1906

Aged 73 yrs

beloved husband of  
HANNAH LATIMER  
1844 - 1911

BESSIE LILIAN

1911 - 1912

daughter of

ALONZO &amp; BESSIE WRIGHT

STONE 15.

THOMAS EVANS

born

EAST HAWKESBURY

18 Apr., 1850

died at

CHELSEA

16 May, 1908

Aged 58 yrs.

Manager of Charles  
A Dewar's Store

STONE 16.

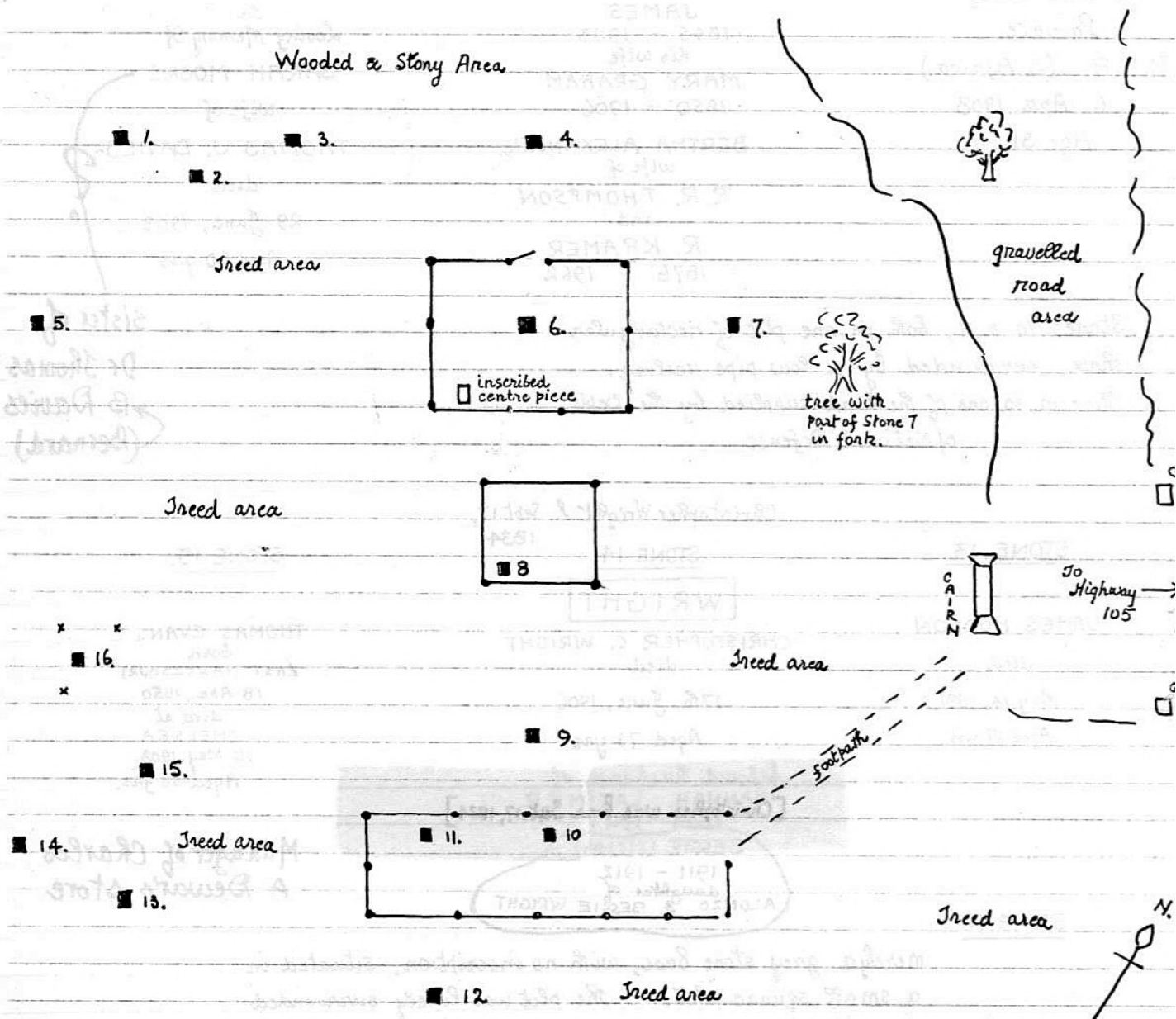
merely a grey stone base, with no inscription, situated in a small square plot. The plot was likely surrounded by a fence of iron, as evidenced by the three remaining wrought iron corner supports.

It would seem that the memorials formerly mounted on the bases at Stones 4 and 16 have been removed, probably for installation elsewhere

Note: Where I have record, I have entered certain birth dates on the above recording of this cemetery. Observe the discrepancy between the dates shown and the age given on the stone (No. 2) of John Chamberlin. The maiden name of John Chamberlin's wife may have derived from Dublois.

Patrick M.O. Evans





This small cemetery was donated to the Historical Society of the Gatineau by Mr. Cecil Meredith. It has not been used for burials since early in the Twentieth Century, and was in likelihood a farm cemetery established for the use of a farmer's immediate family, relatives, and, in some cases, neighbours. Although Stone No 11. shows a 1962 date it was likely erected at the time when preparations were being made to mark the gravesite of Private Richard Rowland Thompson.

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| BLOSS, Mary                | 2            |
| CAMERON, Duncan            | 6            |
| " John A.                  | 6            |
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| " Mary (Bloss)             | 2            |
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| " Gardner Jr.              | 1            |
| " Hannah B.                | 1            |
| " Hannah (Bartlett)        | 1            |
| " Jared                    | 1            |
| " Martha (Cone)            | 1            |
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Note: Names in brackets ( )  
are maiden names. Such  
persons are also shown  
under their married names

*The following unique story is reproduced through the courtesy of both the author, Lillian Walton, and the President of the Historical Society of the Gatineau, Mr. Arthur Davidson*

## HERO BURIED AT CHELSEA, QUEBEC

Lillian Walton

This story of a Canadian's receipt of one of the more unusual military decorations has its beginning in the Boer War of 1899-1902 and ends in September 1968 at Chelsea, Quebec. This is the story of Private Richard Thompson and his award of what is known as the Queen's Scarf of Honour.

Queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 to 1901, had crocheted 7 scarves in the last year of her life with the intention of presenting each as one of the highest military awards for bravery. They were made of khaki coloured Berlin wool with the Royal Cipher "VR" embroidered in silk on one of the little knots of wool above the fringed end. They were to be worn over the right shoulder to the left side in the same manner as a colour-sergeant's red sash.

There were many conditions of the highest order in which this award was granted. Soldiers must have entered the war as "rankers" and had first to be recommended for the Victoria Cross, followed by subsequent field recommendations. Another requirement was that the award could only be sanctioned after a vote by a nominee's comrades in the field. Indeed, Private Thompson must have qualified without a dissenting vote because he was recommended for the Victoria Cross twice, the highest wartime military decoration. Given these complicated conditions it was unfortunate that Queen Victoria was to die before she could present any of these scarves personally.

Queen Victoria's death and the end of the Boer War resulted in the Queen's Scarf being generally forgotten by the public, until 1956 when the Victoria Cross centennial ceremonies in London, England, brought out references to this unique gallantry award. There was the greatest competition among soldiers to become the fortunate possessor of one of these scarves and it took a very long time to get the required information which would enable selection of those eligible.

In 1960 the Department of National Defence in Ottawa received a letter from R.S. Malone, a Brigadier in World War II, who was publisher of the Winnipeg Free Press. He had read an article in the Manchester Guardian about this award, believed to be valued higher than the Victoria Cross, which had been presented to soldiers fighting in the Boer War. Among the names mentioned was one, Private Richard Rowland Thompson, the only Canadian to receive the "Scarf of Honour". Brigadier Malone's query was: where was he buried? and where was his covered scarf?

The job of research couldn't have fallen to a more dedicated and competent person than Bombardier Ken Richardson who was an information specialist employed by the Department of National Defence's information services. Mr. Richardson had a personal love for military lore and the challenge to bring a really worthwhile story to light could not be resisted.

It took Mr. Richardson more than eight months to track down the world's rarest award for bravery. He spent his evenings and long week-ends, putting 4,000 miles on his car, combing the Ottawa area for Thompson's grave site and trying to locate Boer War veterans who might shed some light that would lead to the scarf.

In his research he found that Private Thompson had emigrated to Buffalo, New York, from Cork, Ireland, and had moved to Ottawa in 1899 where he enlisted in the 43rd, Ottawa and Carleton Rifles, one of the predecessors of the present

After serving some time in the Boer War, Pte. Thompson was invalided home to Canada in October, 1900, but subsequently returned to South Africa to become a lieutenant in the South African Constabulary. He later worked for the Debeers Mining Corporation in Kimberly where, in 1904, he married Bertha Alexander, a member of a prominent Gatineau family of Meach Lake. She had also served in the Boer War — as a nurse. Not long afterwards they returned to Canada and then moved to Buffalo.

Richard Thompson died on April 6, 1908 of appendicitis. His widow brought his body back to Ottawa and he was taken, with full military honours, from the Drill Hall in Ottawa to a private cemetery in the Gatineau Hills, the burial place of his choosing.

At the National Defence Medical Centre, Mr. Richardson struck it lucky. A patient, Arthur Bennett, then aged 88 (who has since died) was with Thompson when he performed his acts of bravery. Armed with this information, Mr. Richardson wrote a story about the hero which appeared in several Canadian newspapers.

Douglas Cowden of Ottawa read the story and called Mr. Richardson. He said he was Mrs. Thompson's nephew. Mr. Cowden also informed him that his uncle was buried in an abandoned cemetery in Chelsea, Quebec, just 8 miles from Ottawa, and he was able to give him names and addresses of several relatives. Now the story was getting interesting for our researcher, with a combination of unusual circumstances taking place. He sent letters off to persons in Canada, England, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The answers he received helped him to positively identify the location of Thompson's unmarked grave but didn't help him to find the scarf.

Later his research uncovered the account of Pte. Thompson's funeral in an Ottawa newspaper. Here he discovered that the hero was a son of a prominent confectionery manufacturer in Ireland. Mr. Richardson then went to the Irish Embassy and obtained the names of all Irish citizens who were in the confectionery business. He wrote to each of them. This action paid off.

On August 4, 1964, he received a letter from Samuel Thompson of Cork, Ireland, who said that he was a nephew of Richard Thompson and that he had in his possession the Queen's Scarf! It was safe and on display in a glass showcase in the head office of his confectionery firm. In a truly generous gesture he also indicated that he would lend it to Canada on a permanent basis.

The wheels turned quickly from here on. After a great deal of correspondence between Canada and the newly found relative in Ireland, the Canadian Government arranged for Mr. and Mrs. Thompson and a sister Dorcas Thompson to come to Canada with the scarf.

On May 24, 1965, the 146th anniversary of Queen Victoria's birth, 10 seasoned veterans of the Boer War joined an audience of 5,000 on Parliament Hill to recall the devotion and active participation of Queen Victoria in British military history. It was Victoria Day with a difference for the presentation ceremony in a sun-splashed affair. The magnificent troops of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (which evolved from Pte. Thompson's old unit) and the Royal Canadian Regiment (now stationed in London, Ontario) paraded onto Parliament Hill. The Honourable Roger Teillet, Minister of Veterans Affairs, read the speech to honour the memory of a man who, by his courage on the field of battle, brought honour to himself, to his regiment and to his adopted country.

After his speech relating to Pte. Thompson's heroism the Minister of Veterans Affairs introduced the official guest, Mr. Samuel Thompson, who then presented the Queen's Scarf to Governor-General Georges Vanier. Mr. Thompson agreed to add whatever he could to their knowledge of Pte. Thompson and the unique decoration he received. Among the objects in Samuel Thompson's possession was a gold locket, with the Union Jack embossed upon it, with a photograph of



was seen to be trying to make for our trenches under a heavy fire, but was at last observed to fall. Now and then between the volleys he was seen to wave his hands as if for assistance. Suddenly from the left of the trenches a form was seen to climb the earthworks in front of our trenches, jumping down to make straight for the place where the wounded man lay, about 90 yards from the Boer trenches. Utterly regardless of the scathing fire that hissed around him, he ran on and at last reached the wounded man, and tried to lift him, but it was too late, for the poor fellow had breathed his last. Seeing it was of no avail his would-be rescuer walked back over the ground he had covered, and although bullets whistled around him and tore up the ground in every direction, he coolly regained his trenches with a pipe stuck between his teeth. I have since ascertained that his name was Private Thompson of the Royal Canadians, and although I do not know whether his case is one recommended for bravery or not, still I have never, during the campaign, seen a case of such coolness and pluck as that displayed by Private Thompson."

After these daring feats of conspicuous bravery, Private Thompson's Company Commander complimented him on what he called his pluck. But Pte. Thompson wrote that he thought it was just pure foolhardiness.

Foolhardy or not the man, whose life Pte. Thompson saved on February 18, personally thanked Thompson in a letter which Samuel Thompson had also brought with him. The letter reads as follows:

"Dear Dicky—  
I am just off for Wynberg and England. I've had a devil of a time, and my recovery has been a complete surprise to everyone here, myself included. An operation, which would have taken place had I been fit, will have to be performed in the future. My heart's all gone wrong and also my eyesight. Had it not been for you and Bull, I would have been a beautiful corpse long ere this. I really don't know how to thank you sufficiently. Words seem so cold and barren, and I hope when you visit Canada, you will give me a chance of proving to you my gratitude. You can always hear of me by writing to the Standard Bank of Canada, Picton, Ontario. I hope you will never be placed in the same position as I am at present, and with best wishes for your safe conduct through what I am afraid is going to be a long, long, war.  
Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,  
James L.H. Bradshaw

In the meantime the Chelsea cemetery had also been made ready for a commemorative ceremony, thanks to the then President of the Historical Society of the Gatineau, Mrs. David Wright, and members of the Society who worked diligently getting the plot in readiness for the afternoon memorial service.

On the afternoon of May 24th, 1965, the unveiling of a memorial marker took place. The Minister of Veterans Affairs officiated and Lt. Col. the Reverend James Barnett of St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Ottawa, conducted the service for members of the Thompson family, army officials and Chelsea residents who came to the service.

The Honourable Roger Teillet's short speech follows:

"I welcome you to this memorial service for Richard Rowland Thompson, O.S., who, 57 years ago, was brought to his final resting place here in the Gatineau Hills that he had learned to love.

During his short life he had travelled to far-away places. He had immigrated to a new and burgeoning country. He had taken up

arms in the cause of his adopted country. He had received the most unique decoration for gallantry ever awarded to a serviceman of that country. We know, from our limited knowledge of him, that his untimely death cut short a promising career.

During the half century and more since his death, Canada has progressed from colony to nation. We have earned the right to speak freely in the councils of the world. We have come to seek, in the annals of the past and in the memoirs of our great men, guidance for the future.

This morning we recalled the life and times of this unusual Canadian. The symbol of his gallantry was added, with appropriate ceremony, to our heritage. This afternoon we honour the memory of the man.

In doing so it is my privilege, and duty, to extend, on behalf of the people and the Government of Canada, a sincere "thank you" to all those who have refurbished this plot and the cemetery in which it lies.

When the plans now in progress are completed it will be a congruous environment for the tomb of a Canadian hero and for those who keep him company in his final resting place.

It is a mark of national maturity for a country to decorate the tombs of its illustrious dead. Canada marks appropriately the graves of those who, in the service of our country, have given their lives for our ideals and institutions. If their final resting-places are known but to God, their names are inscribed on monuments erected for that purpose.

It is meet that it should be so. The grave of Richard Rowland Thompson, before which we stand in solemn tribute, has been so marked."

"I now ask his nearest relative, Mr. S.F. Thompson, to assist me in the unveiling of this marker."

Wreaths were laid on the new "shrine" by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Teillet; Mr. Samuel Thompson; General Charles Foulkes of the Royal Canadian Regiment and Colonel Lorne Barclay, Commanding Officer, Cameron Highlanders.

The card on the wreath from the Thompson relatives read:

In loving admiration  
of Uncle Dick  
Dorcas, Sam, Noreen  
and Family

Three years later, on September 29, 1968, the unveiling of a white stone cairn, expertly built by Mr. Albert Kuen of Wakefield, Quebec, took place at the Chelsea cemetery. With funds raised in a campaign, donations of money, materials, equipment and manpower by local residents and organizations, the cemetery was transformed into a more fitting resting place, not only for this celebrated soldier, but for others buried there also.

The Department of Veterans Affairs was in charge of this memorial service to a brave and courageous soldier. Military personnel participating in the ceremony were members of the Royal Canadian Regiment and the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa. The Honourable Roger Teillet, P.C., addressed the gathering and unveiled the Memorial Cairn. Dedication of the Cairn was performed by Major the Reverend J.A.O. McKennitt, C.D., Protestant Chaplain and Major the Reverend A. Fortin, C.D., the Roman Catholic Chaplain.

Mr. Arthur Davison, President of the Historical Society of the Gatineau, as part of his address said: "These burial grounds were generously donated to the Society by Mr. Cecil Meredith. The cemetery contains the remains of many well-



known early families in this area including the Churchs, Merediths, Chamberlins, Meechs, Hudsons and Camerons. Christopher Wright, a grandson of Philemon Wright, the founder of Hull, was buried here in 1906." Mr. Davison paid special tribute to Fred Audin of Chelsea who, single-handedly, installed the fence and performed most of the work on recent improvements to the entrance way. He also mentioned Albert Kuen's excellent masonry work.

The solemn music of the Last Post was played by a bugler of the Royal Canadian Regiment which was followed by a one minute silence and the playing of Reveille. This impressive ceremony was then brought to a close with the laying of wreaths by Honourable Roger Teillet, P.C. on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Douglas Cowden, representing the Thompson family in Ireland; Mr. W.A. Hare, who represented the veterans of the South African War; Major-General Daniel C. Spry, C.B.E., D.S.O., for the Royal Canadian Regiment and Major-General Roger Rowley, D.S.O., E.D., C.D., for the Cameron Highlanders. The Lament was played by a piper of the Cameron Highlanders during the wreath-laying. Prayers were offered by Major the Reverend A. Fortin and the blessing by Major the Reverend J.A.O. McKennitt.

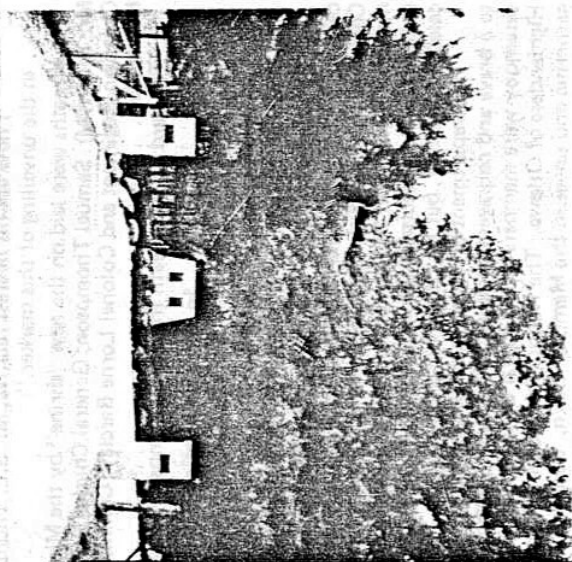
As you leave the village of New Chelsea, driving north, you will come to a road on the left leading to the small cemetery. Two stone pillars mark the entrance, with the following inscription on their bronze plaques, one in English and the other in French:

THE ENTRANCE TO THIS CEMETERY  
IS THE GIFT OF  
SAMUEL F. THOMPSON  
AND MISS DORCAS THOMPSON  
NEPHEW AND NIECE OF  
PRIVATE R.R. THOMPSON  
QUEEN'S SCARF  
1967

The white stone Cairn stands majestically within the entrance with its inscription, in both official languages, which reads as follows:

PRIVATE  
RICHARD ROWLAND  
THOMPSON  
THE ONLY CANADIAN SOLDIER  
TO BE AWARDED  
THE QUEEN'S SCARF  
OF HONOUR  
FOR BRAVERY  
AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
IN THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR  
1899-1902  
IS BURIED  
IN THIS CEMETERY

With this re-dedication, sixty years after his death, to the memory of Pte. Richard Rowland Thompson, in the calm and peaceful beauty of the Gatineau Hills, a hero has been rightfully honoured. His Queen's Scarf is on public display in the National War Museum at Ottawa.



The stone cairn and pillars marking the cemetery at Chelsea, Que., in which is buried Pte. Richard R. Thompson, the only Canadian to have won the Queen's Scarf of Honour

Photo by  
Arthur Davison

Credits to:  
The National War Museum  
The Public Archives of Canada  
Mr. Douglas Cowden, nephew of Pte. Thompson's wife, who kindly loaned me his personal file  
Mr. Ken Richardson whose whereabouts is unknown at this time. Without his research and determination to find the Queen's Scarf, this story could not have been told  
My sincere thanks to all concerned.

Lillian Walton

This article by Lillian Walton of Ottawa was awarded Second Prize in the eighth annual Essay Contest sponsored by The Historical Society of the Gatineau — 1979.