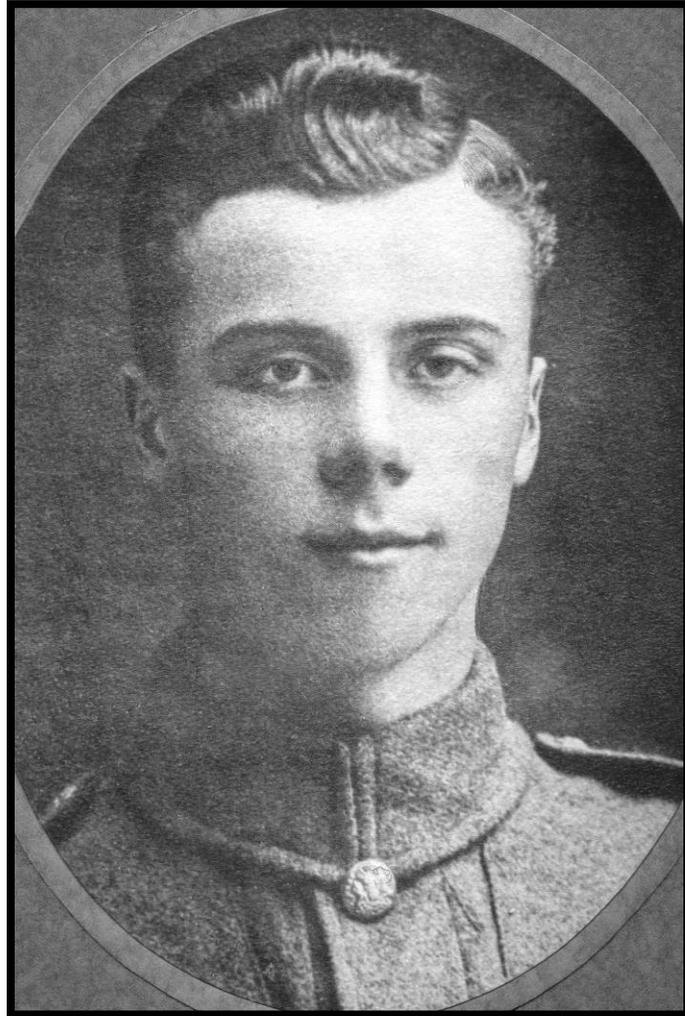


GOWER REMEMBERS

Lance-Corporal Ewart Gladstone Horwood
(1898-1917)



The many friends of Mr. E. J. and Mrs. Horwood will be sorry to learn of the death of their son, Lance-Corporal Ewart Gladstone Horwood, whose demise took place at the home of his parents at 2:15 p.m. yesterday. (The Evening Telegram, January 23, 1917)

Ewart Gladstone Horwood was born in St. John's on May 24, 1898, the fourth child and only son of Jessie Green and Ephraim James Horwood. His father was originally from Carbonear, but married and lived in Brigus, his wife's home town, for a number of years before moving his family to St. John's in the early 1890s. The two older daughters in the family were born in Brigus: Agnes Green in 1888 and Effie May in 1890; the third, Jessie Irene, was born in St. John's in 1894, making the relocation sometime between 1890 and 1894.

Ephraim Horwood operated a provisions and grocery business at 133 Water Street, which was located near the southeast corner of Water and Prescott Streets. The family lived just over the hill at 17 Prescott Street. Ewart attended school a little further up town and to the west at the Methodist College on Long's Hill. There he proved to be a very good student. One newspaper report from June 1909 has him placing first in Mathematics in Miss Badcock's class, which would have been the equivalent of grade five or six.

He was also a fine athlete, particularly in football (soccer) and hockey. He was a member of the hockey team that represented the Methodist College in the championship matches against St. Bonaventure's and Bishop Feild colleges for the years 1914, 1915 and 1916. His team mates in those years included Harry Mews, Grant Trapnell, Jack Watts and Edward Stick. The team won the 1915 championship trophy but lost to St. Bon's in the final match in 1916.

Horwood did not graduate from the Methodist College. Instead, he left early in order to become part of the war effort. On May 02,

1916, he enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment. He was still 22 days shy of his 18th birthday, 18 being the age at which young men could legally join the Regiment. He was assigned Regimental number 2671. His Regimental File records that he was 5 feet, 8½ inches tall, and weighed 131 pounds.

Despite his age, Horwood's commanding officers were obviously impressed with his abilities, for just five weeks after his enlistment, on June 09, 1916, he was made a Lance Corporal, and placed in command of a group of men, most, if not all of whom were older than he was. Regrettably, his service to the Regiment did not last long. On September 18, 1916, without ever having gone overseas or faced the enemy, he was discharged at St. John's as medically unfit. The cause of this twist of fate can be put down to marching in the rain. According to *The Evening Telegram* for January 23, 1917, "*While on parade he became wet and chilled, which resulted in rheumatic fever, which later turned into pleurisy that terminated the young soldier's career.*" He was granted leave upon the initial diagnosis of his illness but his subsequent appearance before Dr. Thomas Anderson and Dr. F. W. Burden of the Medical Board in September 1916 led to the conclusion that he was no longer fit for service. He died at his parents' home four months later, on January 22, 1917, at age 18.

Death notices lamenting his sudden passing in the very prime of his life appeared all the local St. John's papers. *The St. John's Daily Star* (January 23, 1917) attributed his death to a succession of ailments: "*Getting wet and chilled on parade, he contracted rheumatic fever, which was later followed by pleurisy. ... His constitution, weakened by severe illness, broke down and he fell*

victim to the dreaded White Plague.” That White Plague was consumption, also known as tuberculosis. His cause of death in Newfoundland’s Vital Statistics Records is listed as pulmonary tuberculosis.

He was also eulogized in these papers: *The Star* went on to describe him as “a quiet gentle manly, unassuming boy.” *The Evening Telegram* remarked that “He will be greatly missed by his associates at the Methodist College where he was held in highest esteem by teachers and pupils alike. As a member of the College football and hockey teams he was counted one of their best players and on more than one occasion saved his team from defeat at the hands of the opposing team. Although not long connected with the Regiment he was thought highly of, and was loved by officers and privates alike.”

The Collegian, the Methodist College magazine, for March 1917, dedicated its front cover to Horwood with these words: “By the death of Ewart Gladstone Horwood, we lost one of our most popular students, one who, in the numerous activities of the student body, was always prominent. For several years he played on our football and hockey teams and showed himself to be a real sportsman. About a year ago he gave up his studies to become a soldier of the King, and was soon after made a Lance-Corporal.

His sad death was deeply mourned by a large circle of friends among his fellow students, with whom his cheerful, jovial disposition and unassuming manner had made him a prime favorite.”

Despite serving in the Newfoundland Regiment for only a short time, he was buried with full military honors. *The Evening Telegram*

for January 25, 1917, informed its readers that *“The funeral of the deceased young soldier was attended by a concourse of citizens*

The cortege was headed by a firing party from the Regiment and on either side of the hearse there were guards of honor from the Regiment and the Masonic fraternity. In the sad procession also was No. 14 platoon of volunteers to which the young lance-corporal had been attached.

The casket which was draped with the Union Jack contained many floral wreaths. The service at the graveside was taken by Revs. D. B. Hememon and T. B. Darby and as the casket was lowered into the grave the firing party under Sergt. Newman discharged three volleys; Bugler Tilley sounded the Last Post.”

The above reference to the Masonic fraternity indicates that despite his age, Horwood had been inducted into the Freemasons, specifically St. John’s Lodge No. 579, one of the oldest Masonic lodges in Newfoundland. His initiation took place on July 07, 1916. He was approximately three years below the normal threshold for admission, which was 21, but given that his father was a member and he was soon, so it was believed, to sail for Great Britain and the war, an exception was obviously made. He did not complete the second and third degrees (Passing and Raising) before his death.

Horwood was one of at least 14 members of St. John’s Lodge who joined the war effort. One other member that lodge, Sergeant Gordon Valentine Boone, died in the field, at Flanders on April 27, 1915. He was working in Canada when the war broke out and had joined up there. Both were honoured at a ceremony held at the Masonic Lodge in St. John’s on June 25, 1917, at which the names of the other members of the fraternity who had lost their life in the service of their country were read out. They included, in addition to Horwood and Boone, 2nd Lt. Samuel Joseph Ebsary of Avalon Lodge (St. John’s); L/Cpl. Randolph Milligan Winter of Hiram

Lodge (Burin); Pte. Harvey Lionel Hodge of Twillingate Lodge; Capt. Eric Stanley Ayre, Lt. Cecil Bayly Clift, Pte. Herbert Hunt Goodridge, Lt. Frederick Courtney Mellor, Captain James Mould and 2nd Lt. James Elliott Thomson, all members of Whiteway Lodge (St. John's); Sgt. Albert George Duffett and 2nd Lt. Gilbert Thomas Gordon of Tasker Lodge (St. John's); 2nd Lt. John Roy Ferguson, Pte. Robert Lewis Maidment and CSM Robert Bramfitt Porter of Northcliffe Lodge (Grand Falls). Missing from the list was CQMS Edward Nicholle of Fidelity Lodge in Grand Bank.

Undoubtedly Horwood's death was a great loss to his family. The family suffered another loss in the following year when their youngest daughter, Jessie Irene, died on October 14, 1918, another victim of tuberculosis. Before her death she had been a secretary in Richard A. Squires' law office. His mother died June 8, 1936; his father in 1943. The middle daughter, Effie May, never married. She was a teacher, first at the Methodist College and later at Prince of Wales College, for almost 50 years before her death in 1956.

Agnes Green Horwood, the oldest daughter, was an accomplished musician, having studied music at the University of Toronto. She served as organist at Gower Street Methodist Church for a short period during 1916 before relinquishing the post to marry Calvert C. Pratt (1888-1963). They had two sons: Ewart Arthur Pratt (1919-2000) and Calvert C. Pratt, Junior (1921-2000). She is the person for whom the Agnes Pratt Home was named. She died in 1952.



The Methodist College Guards hockey team, St. John's collegiate champions for 1915. Back row (l-r): Ewart Horwood, Ernest Butler, Jack Watts; Front row (l-r): H.G.R. Mews, E.M. Stick, Grant Trapnell, unidentified.

The Bermudas or Somers Islands

“Where the Remote Bermootha’s Lie”

(Note: This essay, written by Ewart Horwood when he was fifteen years old, appeared in *The Collegian*, Vol. 20(1), 1914, pp. 15-17.)

The islands of Bermuda form a group about twenty-five miles long and five miles wide. They are divided into several small parishes, any one of these being so small that it can be traversed on foot within an afternoon.

Hamilton, the capital, is in Pembroke parish, and has a population of about five thousand, which is about a quarter of that of the whole colony. It is considered very picturesque and is the delight of the tourists who frequent these charming islands from October till April. As the islands are all of coral formation, the streets are very white stone and in the summer, with the southern sun pouring down on the little white town, the effect is one of dazzling brightness interspersed with vivid colours. It is this which constitutes the chief beauty of the place.

St. George’s, next in importance to Hamilton, is the old capital founded about three hundred years ago, when Sir George Somers was shipwrecked in 1609. This is a quaint old town, much more interesting than Hamilton, on account of its ancient history. Its streets are scarcely wide enough to allow two carriages to pass each other, and connecting these streets are still narrower alleys, known by such names as “Uncle ‘Rastus’ Alley,” “Aunt Peggy’s Lane.” Joining St. George’s Island and the main island is a causeway about a mile long, which has just been completed, so that now it is possible to drive or cycle from the new capital to the old.

Next to its floral beauties, the caves of Bermuda are the greatest attraction to visitors. The Crystal Caves are generally acknowledged to be the most beautiful. You descend about one hundred and fifty feet into the depths of the earth and on reaching bottom, come out on a pontoon bridge, crossing a small clear lake. The place is lighted with electricity and the effect of the light glancing on the crystal stalactites and stalagmites is wonderful. Another pretty grotto is "Prospero's Cave," so called from the belief that Shakespeare laid the scene of "The Tempest" in Bermuda.

Of course, the chief beauty of these little islands lies in their marvellous flora. Among these the most noteworthy are the red and white oleanders, or South Sea Rose-trees, roses of many kinds, hibiscus in all colors and lilies, especially Easter Lilies, which are chiefly raised for exportation of the United States.

The trees are even more striking. Among these scarlet ponciana, the climbing purple bougainvillaea, and the fragrant pink frangiponi, from which an aromatic perfume is made, are most generally admired.

The prosperity of Bermuda depends almost entirely on the tourist traffic. Not much importance is attached to exportation, the principal articles raised for this purpose being potatoes, "Bermuda onions" and arrowroot.

The small farmers who raise these crops are very often negroes, who deserve some attention on their own account, since they form two-thirds of the population. They are much superior to the negroes of North America. They have many good schools of their own and send up more candidates for the Cambridge Examinations than do the white people, and these candidates usually pass very creditably.

The only mode of transportation in the colony, unless one hires a carriage or a bicycle is the stage-coach, a lumbering vehicle drawn

by two worn-out horses and travelling about eight miles an hour. These coaches travel all over the island, but are not much used by the white inhabitants.

The scenery of the islands is said to be much like that of Italy with its intense blue seas and skies and its bright landscapes. The sea around Bermuda is certainly bluer than it is farther north. There is a story told of an American lady visiting there who, on leaving, sent her attendant to get her a bottle of the “lovely blue water,” and was much disappointed on discovering that it was perfectly colourless.

On this and on many another characteristic of “sunny Bermuda” I might dilate the greater length, but time, space and consideration for my readers forbid my enlarging further.

On Sunday, November 16, 2014, Gower Street United Church initiated a program of commemoration that will last for approximately the next four years. On roughly every second Sunday through to the end of 2018, a brief write-up on one of the members of Gower Street Methodist Church who took part in World War I will appear as an insert in the Bulletin and there will be a reference to that person in the service. In this way we hope to recognize their contribution to the war effort, the many sacrifices they made, some with their very lives, and the debt of gratitude we owe to each of them.

We also hope to learn more about them from their descendants or other relatives, thereby fostering a link between our past and our present as we begin our 202nd year as a faith community. If you know of any relatives of these servicemen and women please contact Bert Riggs at briggs@mun.ca or at 726-6169.

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