

WW1 Service in Presqu'ile Park



This article was written in 2015 by Bernice Beal (O'Conor-Fenton) to share with the Presqu'ile Property Owners Association the story of soldiers camping and training in the park at the time before shipping out to fight in WWI.

“To begin my story, please come with me to my Grandparents cottage home on the south shore of Presqu'ile in Jobes' former home. It is a summer day like any beautiful summer day on Presqu'ile. But it is completely different from any present summer day.

There is a knock on the door. My Grandfather answers to the uniformed officers who are in charge of the soldiers who have been in training for the past period of time on the south shore property next door. We are back in time – World War 1. The men had not officially been told they were being shipped out soon, but they were apparently getting uptight and the officers wanted to arrange a day of ceremony and family picnic farewell.

The officers knowing that my Grandfather, T.J. O'Conor-Fenton, was a minister are inquiring if he would conduct a church service for the men on a coming Sunday morning.

Grandfather said of course he would be honored and was in complete understanding because his eldest son was stationed overseas in England. This was Colonel Charles O'Conor-Fenton who had been wounded in action, recovered and and return to action. At the end of the war in 1918, he joined the Royal Flying Corps remaining longer in England. Grandfather had five children. Charles was the eldest son, 22 years older than his youngest son, Osie, who became a Lieutenant Colonel. Osie was also wounded in action in WW2 in Italy. He received five medals and ended the war as instructor at Camp Borden.



*During the Service, the soldiers were in full dress uniform after their summer in training clothes and living in tents. The **Union Jack** flag was in full display. After the service and picnic at Presqu'ile, the officers returned to our house on the shore for afternoon tea. It was a happy day for the soldiers, and we prayed they would all be able to return after the war.”*

