

# ***RCL Branch 100 – WWI Story***

## ***“The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge”***

RCL Brighton Branch 100 is honoured to possess a valuable oil painting known as ‘**The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge**’. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a **World War I** military engagement fought primarily as part of the Battle of Arras, in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France, during the First World War. The main combatants were the Canadian Corps, of four divisions, against three divisions of the German Sixth Army.

This beautiful oil painting was painted by George Gaunt, a Brighton resident and Branch 100 member. George’s master is an oil painting copy of *The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge* which holds a place as one of the more prominent paintings within the House of Commons in Ottawa.



The original work was painted by Australian artist William Longstaff (c. 1929), it portrays the spirits of servicemen of the Canadian Corps. The memorial on Vimy Ridge stands dramatically on the summit beneath which the shimmering spirits of Canadian soldiers gather in the silvery moonlight. It is one of a number of highly popular and emotive paintings created by the artist that feature ghostly apparitions marching or walking near the First World War memorials in France.

In 1971 George Gaunt was the oldest veteran member of Branch 100. He had served with the Royal Horse Artillery in the Boer War and in the Durham Regiment in WWI. The famous painting was a gift to Branch 100 by George, a man of unusual talent. Another one of his paintings, that of Baden Powell is hanging in the Boy Scout Headquarters in Ottawa.

The photo at the right shows George reading the last issue of the Brighton Ensign Newspaper in 1971. The Ensign was born in 1871 with Peter Begg as editor and publisher. The Lapp family became owners in 1886 and it continued in their family until its demise in 1957. The subscription list was sold to the Trentonian. Thus ended the 86 years of the Ensign. The Ensign had become an institution in Brighton and it was a great loss to the community when it ceased to exist.

George was born in England in 1884 and died in Brighton, Ontario in 1973. He is buried with his wife Lily in Woods Cemetery in Colborne, Ontario.

