

Thomas Mawdsley Memorabilia Returned to Family

Several members from the Mawdsley family in River Hebert represented Canada in World War I and World War II. Clair Peers, Clair's Classic Antiques, Great Village discovered an assortment of Tom Mawdsley's World War I memorabilia and following social media postings donated the items back to the family, who were unaware the items existed.

family history, supplied by great-granddaughter, Stephanie, when she corresponded with Peers in response to his social media message searching for Tom Mawdsley's descendants. My Great-Grandfather Thomas Mawdsley enlisted in the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion on October 25th 1915 (he would've been 43). I'm not sure what his rank was at the end of the war

(judging by the photo of him with Great Grandma I'm guessing he was either Sergeant or Company Sergeant Major) but he was a Corporal in 1917 and was awarded the Military Medal.

He married Great Grandma Beatrice (his second wife) in October 1919 in River Hebert so he would've been back from England by then. His second son Joseph enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force less than a month after him on Nov. 9th 1915.

Great Grandpa Thomas had eight children with his first wife Elizabeth (she passed away sometime between 1911 and 1915) and then five with Great Grandma. My grandfather, Cyril was the third of the five children and signed up in River Hebert on June 9th 1941 as a Gunner with the 87th Field Battery R.C.A.

(He may have lied about his age- his army records have that he was born in 1922 and his headstone 1923). When he was discharged on January 18th 1946 he had the rank of Lance Bombardier.

Great Uncle Dan (the oldest of the five) apparently signed up but had to come back to look after things on the farm at home since Great Grandpa (Tom Mawdsley) passed away in 1940. James (Jimmy) Great Grandpa's fifth child from his first wife also signed up during WW2 with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders.

Local Antique Dealer Uncovers WWI Documents

By Maurice Rees

Antique dealer, Clair Peers always says, when you get a call about some household items or artifacts "you never know what that call may unveil". A call to River Hebert last February seemed like there wouldn't be a lot of interesting items but there was mention of a photo and pay book from a WW 1 soldier, said Peers.

The local antique dealer uncovered important World War One ephemera documents including hat, pay book, citation and photos all in the name of Tom Mawdsley. Within a week of posting photos and data on social media, he received a few responses, then one that really brought on some serious discussion.

On February 27th, now communicating with Peers was Stephanie Mawdsley. In her original communication, she identified herself as "Great Grand-Daughter of the soldier (Tom Mawdsley) in the pictures and who the documents and pay book belonged to. The family was unaware the World War I items existed. I am hoping to keep them in the family if possible and was wondering how much you are selling them for?"

More correspondence and telephone calls resulted in a meeting at Babbling Brook Antiques in Truro. Meeting with Peers in Truro were Stephanie Mawdsley, great-granddaughter, her dad, Stephen and Mom,

Cheryl and Gramma, "Eleanor", who was married to Cyril the third child in Tom's second marriage is daughter-in-law of Tom Mawdsley.

With Peers' social media posting still circulating, he received an offer to purchase the items, but the antique dealer turned it down, because he had already decided to donate the items to the family. "Even though I am an antique dealer and enjoy finding wartime memorabilia, I have always believed historical

pieces of this nature should go back to the family if they descendants can be found", Peers said.

He added, "It was pretty gratifying to see how excited this family, especially Stephanie, a History teacher, was to get these pieces of family history that they didn't even realized were in existence. Now everyone is happy, the family have items, they did not know existed, and I am happy I was able to help return items to their rightful home".



The room was full of smiles at Babbling Brook Antiques, Truro when Clair Peers donated Tom Mawdsley World War I items to family descendants. Shown above are: (L-R): Clair Peers, Clair's Classic Antiques, Great Village; Stephanie, great grand-daughter; Gramma, "Eleanor", Tom Mawdsley's, daughter-in-law and Stephanie's father, Stephen. (Submitted)



Shown above is an assortment of Tom Mawdsley's World War I memorabilia, he discovered in a lot purchased in River Hebert. (Peers Photo)



It was a very emotional time for Gramma "Eleanor" to be able to hold a photo of her father-in-law, Tom Mawdsley, taken during World War I. Clair Peers, discovered the items in a lot he purchased in River Hebert, and donated the items back to the Mawdsley family, who were unaware the items existed. (Peers Photo)

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