

KNOWN VETERANS

This list of Belle Vue Veterans' Home Residents was compiled based on information extracted from the Amherstburg Echo Newspaper.

Bebbington, N.P.
Bromley, Herbert
Coley, Chas. (Charles)
Crocker, Alfred (Alfred James)
Clark, R.
Coleman, Frederick
Donovan, Patrick Joseph
Galbraith, Andrew
Grace, E.J. (Edwin Joseph)
Hamilton, Geo. C.
Hawson, Jack (Harry?)
Hill, Bruce
Hurst, C.
Kirkpatrick, "Jock"
Langlois, William
McPhee, John N.
McLaughlin, Alfred J.
Motby, John R.
Mulligan, Pete
Mullin, W.
Jack, Myles
Newell, G. (George)
Pinkham, William (Wm. Charles Henry)
Potter, A.E. (Albert E.)
Sim, R.K. (Robert Kyle)
Williams, Frederick
Wright, Ernest T.

CONTACT

Research on the history of Amherstburg's Veterans' Home is on-going. To contribute information or learn more, please contact:

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Above images: Les Hudson Negatives
Marsh Historical Collection

Amherstburg's Veterans' Home

BELLE VUE



1946-1954

For information about the Belle Vue
Conservancy, please visit:

www.bellevueconservancy.com
Email: info@bellevueconservancy.com
(519)736-6947



From 1946 to 1954, Belle Vue served as a veterans' convalescent home for senior veterans who served in active service for Canada during the Great War, 1914-1918.

As the momentum of World War II shifted towards the Allies after 1943, the Canadian government started thinking about a post-war world, and about new improved services for veterans through the "Veterans Charter". The past patchwork support for veterans of the Great War was to be remedied. New military hospitals were built with extended physical and emotional rehab support programming to serve returning vets from World War II. As wounded World War II veterans began to overload London's Westminster hospital services, Belle Vue Veterans' Home became a new Ontario destination of care for senior veterans of World War I. As stated publically by an official, "this home will care for veterans who need a home more than active medical care...It will be something of a home for wornout veterans...."

What is the veterans' home story at Belle Vue? On January 24, 1944, Amherstburg town council passed a resolution supporting the acquisition of the John G. Mullen family Belle Vue property for a convalescent home. On June 12, 1946 the purchase of the property by the Canadian government concluded for the price of \$50,000.

Major Gavin A. Greig was appointed the administrator, moved to Amherstburg, and began to ready the site for occupation by veterans, including the hiring of local personnel. He and his wife had a separate residence on site, a white two-storey frame house which still exists. Greig contributed to the public life of the town during his tenure, serving on a civil defence committee, a war memorial site committee, and legion liaison. Both were members of a local service club.

The home accepted the transfer of eleven veterans on July 29 1947. A formal opening ceremony followed on August 9, 1947. The residents annually selected their own home committee to offer opinions and recommendations to the administration. Local legion branches in Amherstburg and Essex County provided support through entertainment, and Christmas cheer. Summer time events included musical concerts.

The spike in Canada's post-war veterans' services declined dramatically by the mid-1950s. Consolidation and downsizing became the order of the day for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This included Belle Vue. With little advance public notice, the home was formally closed by October, 1954. All remaining veteran residents were relocated to the Westminster hospital site in London. The property was then declared surplus and sold.

Who were "the old sweats", the veterans who made Belle Vue their home? The Belle Vue Conservancy supports historical research into the veterans' home years to fill a gap in the history of the heritage site. On-going research for family records, photos, and stories is now occurring. This knowledge adds Canadian military and institutional provenance to the building, the site, and regional history.

One research strand includes the names and final resting places of these veterans. Amherstburg's Rose Hill Cemetery and Windsor Grove Cemetery are the final resting place for some "old sweats".

On Remembrance Day, the "old sweats" of Belle Vue should be included in our thoughts. They will be remembered in the plans of the Belle Vue Conservancy as the revitalization, restoration and repurposing of Belle Vue occurs by the Town of Amherstburg.

*By Paul Hertel
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