

Bancroft woman discovers historical image in attic



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By Nate Smelle

While cleaning out her attic last year Bancroft resident Angie Rail came across a small treasure tucked away in the corner. Dusting off the antique frame, she soon found herself staring at a rare piece of local history ? a photo of the officers in the 155th Battalion of the Hastings/Quinte Regiment. The image features 41 officers posing for an official group photograph before they were shipped overseas to fight in the First World War. Having recently donated the photograph to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 181 in Bancroft, Rail hopes that people in the community will drop by to help put names to the faces. Acknowledging that many of the soldiers in the photo would have lived and/or worked in North Hastings, she said families that have resided in the area for multiple generations might be able to identify loved ones.

?Given that it has been 100 years since the end of the First World War, these were the folks who fought, and these were the folks who were there,? said Rail.

?It's a nice way to pay tribute to them even though we don't know their names. My dad fought in the Second World War, so it is my way of honouring him too.?

Rail also hopes that by sharing the photo with the community it will help inspire others to take a moment to remember those who have fought and died to protect the democratic rights and freedoms we enjoy in Canada. Pointing out how people's rights and freedoms, and democracy itself is still under attack today, she said it is incredibly important for people to celebrate peace by honouring these individuals, so we can continue to protect what they fought for.

?It's not ancient history and it's very important to remember why people made that commitment and why people were prepared to do this,? said Rail.

?It was because they believed in having freedom, they believed in people being able to have some control over their lives. Lives have been impacted and history been shaped by war. It is still an important factor because it is about what the Allied forces stood for, what they actually went to fight for and what they believed in. It's important to remember the impact it had, not just on our families, but the impact it had worldwide.?

Aside from the fact the photo was taken by Blake Moore, an official military photographer based out of Toronto, Rail said she has been unable to uncover very much information behind the image. Recognizing that the photo obviously has a much deeper story to tell, she is looking forward to finding out more from people in the community once the public has had a chance to view it. The photo is currently on display at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 181 at 16 Station St in Bancroft.