I hope this issue of Dormie finds you all well and that you will enjoy the issue. Spring is here and the golf season is approaching.

The Society is delighted to congratulate Jim Fraser on his upcoming induction into the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame. The induction will take place at a ceremony on May 3, 2017 at Wooden Sticks Golf Club in Uxbridge, Ontario. Jim has had a tremendous career in the world of golf and is a previous recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Golf Association of Ontario, the RCGR Distin-guished Service Award and the International Association of Golf Administra-tors Distinguished Service Award. The Society is fortunate to be able to benefit from Jim’s ongoing contributions to the Board.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. It is widely viewed as a pivotal event in Canada’s achievement of true nationhood. What may be lesser known is that two very prominent Canadian golf course architects, Stanley Thompson and Arthur Vernon Macan, fought in the battle. I hope you enjoy stories by Jamie Harris, who is working on a new book on Thompson, and Michael Riste who has written a book on Macan. Jamie and Michael are both members of the Stanley Thompson Society and we thank them for their contribution to this Dormie.

A number of members of the Society have been successful in arranging a last-tening tribute to Bill Newton. In addition to being a Society co-founder and driving force, Bill was a longtime member of the Dundas Valley Golf and Curling Club. While Bill loved the golf course, his pet peeve was that a number of fairway bunkers included in the original design had been removed by members over time. The individual members decided to fund the building of a fairway bunker complex on the fairway of the first hole. The Newton Bunker will be in play when the course opens. David Moote generously donated his architectural expertise. The Society thanks the donors, David and Course Superintendent Jamie Cutting for their exemplary work.

We are delighted that Ian Andrew has agreed to be our guest speaker at this year’s tournament. He has written a history of Brantford and will share it with us. I am also excited that the Canadian Golf Historical Society will be joining us for the day. They will be providing us with hickory sticks for one of the par 3s and will be displaying some interesting artifacts for our enjoyment.

The 2017 Passports are going to print soon. We believe we have the best roster of participating clubs ever. All 26 clubs from last year will participate again this year. In addition, we are delighted to welcome Bridgewater CC, Niakwa CC, Saugeen GC, Sault Ste. Marie GC and Sunningdale G&CC. I hope you will take full advantage of the program to round out your golf season.

Grant Forrest
Introduction

Every schoolchild learns that Canada became a country on July 1, 1867. There is a school of thought, however, that Canada really came of age as a nation over four days in April 1917. It was the First World War and the Allies were attempting to dislodge the Germans who held the high ground on an escarpment in France called Vimy Ridge.

The French suffered 150,000 casualties in their failed attempts from May 1914 to Sept, 1915. The British relieved the French but also failed and the job was turned over to the Canadians in October 1916. It marked the first time that all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in a battle together.

The nearly 100,000 Canadian soldiers were joined by approximately 73,000 British troops. After months of meticulous planning the attack began on April 9. The Canadian Corps captured most of the ridge on the first day. The plan’s objectives were completed on April 12. While the plan and its execution where a great success for the Canadian Corp, it came with a heavy cost. The Canadians suffered 10,602 casualties including 3,598 killed.

In 1922 the French government donated a 100-hectare portion of the battlefield to Canada for a memorial. The striking monument was opened by King Edward VIII in 1936 and remains a moving memorial that is visited annually by thousands of tourists. Among the Canadians who fought at Vimy Ridge were two soldiers who went on to glory as two of this country’s great golf course architects: Stanley Thompson and AV Macan. In fact, Macan lost part of a leg in the fighting.

On this, the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge, Dormie would like to honour and remember Thompson and Macan and all of the soldiers who represented Canada so bravely. Two of our Stanley Thompson Society members have kindly contributed stories. Jamie Harris has written on Thompson and Michael Riste has penned a piece on Macan.

Trajectory

Stanley was a signaller for his artillery battery during the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Signallers were placed in dangerous forward positions very close to enemy lines. Stanley’s assignment throughout World War I, and in particular, at Vimy Ridge, was to follow the trajectory of shells fired at high velocity and observe where they landed. He would then have to calculate adjustments based on any numbers of the combined effects of launch angle, muzzle speed, temperature, elevation change, intervening land forms, and wind speed. Then a signal would be sent back so that the next shells to be fired would land on the desired target area. Before the assault on Vimy Ridge more than a million shells rained down during what the Germans called the ‘Week of Suffering.’

The results were unprecedented. Allied artillery destroyed most of the German guns before the battle started. The seemingly never ending creeping barrage of artillery fire must have been all at once monotonous, mind deadening, and terrifying. However, without putting too fine a point on it, the flight of an artillery shell fired from a howitzer behaves in much the same way as the flight of a well struck golf ball leaving a golf club.

Golf Course Architects, put this skill of Thompson’s very simply and succinctly: “Well, he saw the shot - that was his genius.”

Plasticine

Plasticine was a substance first developed in England in 1897 and an improved formulation was patented in 1915. Before the battle of Vimy Ridge, General Sir Arthur Currie used the new plasticine to construct detailed models of the landscape depicting the German trenches and defensive positions. Each Canadian soldier studied these plasticine models and was repeatedly briefed so that each knew exactly what they were expected to do. Stanley observed this innovative technique used by Currie and later he often modelled his golf courses in plasticine before they were built. According to one of his associates Robert Moote: “He was probably the first to do it; he was a real originator of that type of work. It made it so much easier for the contractor and the builder, to see it all in real life rather than just on a sketch.”

Aerial Photography and Survey Mapping

General Sir Arthur Currie made extensive use of the new technology of aerial photography and survey mapping in assessing the German positions before the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Again, Stanley learned the advantages of aerial photography and he used it extensively when designing golf courses once it became widely available in civilian life after the war.
In February 1915, Macan lost his cousin Reginald Macan Jr. in the Battle of the Somme. Later, on August 15, 1915, his brother-in-law Captain William Reeves Richards, of the 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, died in action at the Dardanelles. These two losses, and his strong Anglo-Irish roots, prompted Macan to volunteer even though he had exempt status due to age, employment, and a family.

After passing his Lieutenant’s exams in December 1915, Mac joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force and the 88th Victoria Fusiliers on January 2, 1916. Over the next five months, Mac studied for his Captaincy examinations. In May, the 88th reached its full complement of five hundred recruits. Departure appeared imminent. As fate would have it, Macan led his company to the waiting ship in the Victoria Harbour on his birthday May 23, 1916.

On October 13, 1916, Macan proceeded to the front in France as part of the 29th Battalion. Their objective was to conquer Vimy Ridge. Here Mac began preparations for the “night that changed my life forever.”

“Currie, the Canadian General who led the Canadian forces, was not a military genius. Nevertheless, he was a good tactician with a high sense of the practical and a strong capacity for administration. His grasp of detail was awesome, and with his memory for names and faces seemed infallible.”

At Army headquarters, Canadian officers familiarized themselves with the task by studying a detailed plasticine model of the Vimy sector that showed the German trench system and all the topographical features – every contour and fold in the ground – together with every strong point and pill-box. As a serving Lieutenant, Macan observed this detailed model. Perhaps these observations gave Mac the necessary input to incorporate the plasticine models into his architectural business.

Some time between the setting of the sun on Easter Sunday and the call to battle, Easter Monday, a shell exploded in the trench next to Vernon Macan’s left foot while he waited to lead his group over the top. The explosion destroyed his left heel. Because of the severity of his wound, the medics evacuated him to the local field hospital and then to the SS Cambria for transportation back to London. Gangrene set in. On April 14, 1917 surgeons amputated his left leg about six inches below his knee. From July 1917 until February 1918, he recuperated at the family home at 53 Merion Square, Dublin. Newspaper reports indicate he utilized his time adapting his golf game on his old stomping grounds: Portmarnock, Royal Dublin, and Greystones.

Because of the severity of his wound, Macan had the option to return to Victoria in February 1918. Why did he choose to remain in England until April 1919? Did he plan to pursue golf architecture for his next vocation? Many of his activities during the next year certainly led him in this direction.

“When studying golf course architecture I believe one must have an insight into the great golf courses of Britain.” By remaining in Britain Macan certainly had the opportunity to play the great courses in southern England such as Walton Heath, Sunnysdale, Stoke Poges, and Sandwich.

Before his final departure to Canada, Macan returned to Dublin to participate in the Irish Native Championship. Because of his prolonged absence in Canada, he was refused entry to this event. When he boarded the ferry from the Dublin Harbour for Liverpool, did he realize he would never return to Dublin? Had he decided Victoria, BC would now be his home?

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**Did You Know**

That the image on the back of Canada’s $20 bill is of the memorial at Vimy Ridge?
Stanley Thompson cited for gallant services at Vimy Ridge

By Jamie Harris

Stanley earned the Bronze Star for service in WWI for 1914 and 1915. Further, he was cited for gallant and distinguished services in the field at Vimy Ridge in April, 1917. Both items can be viewed at Canada's Golf Hall of Fame.

New items in our online Stanley Thompson store

If you haven’t already visited our online store, you are in for a real treat. The Society is providing members with high quality apparel at prices that are generally 50% below comparable products at major retailers. We are able to offer these prices because all items are made to order, so our delivery times are longer than conventional retailers. You will receive your order within four weeks. Non-members may also purchase items, but at prices much closer to those offered by major retailers. Here are the items and prices (CDN) for Members.
You’re invited to an evening with Stanley Thompson

AN EVENING WITH STANLEY THOMPSON
MONDAY JUNE 5, 2017
7 PM
ISLINGTON GOLF CLUB

The Stanley Thompson Society is pleased to announce that it will be hosting An Evening With Stanley Thompson at the Islington Golf Club at 7 pm on Monday June 5, 2017.

Four distinguished speakers have agreed to share thoughts on different aspects of Stanley Thompson, his life, work and career. Our thanks go out to:

Ian Andrew, Golf Course Architect and Historian
Jeff Mingay, Golf Course Architect and Historian
Lorne Rubenstein, Acclaimed Golf Writer and Member of the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame
Robert Thompson, Acclaimed Golf Writer and Course Design Critic

To reserve your seat please email Grant Forrest at grantforrest55@gmail.com. A $20 contribution toward the cost of the event will be collected at the door. We look forward to seeing you at Islington.

“Oftentimes, the natural beauty of many a golf course, which the average player assumes was always present, has been created by the skill of the engineer who can see opportunities for beauty in the rough woods, swamps or fields that mean nothing to the unskilled eye.”

- Stanley Thompson