

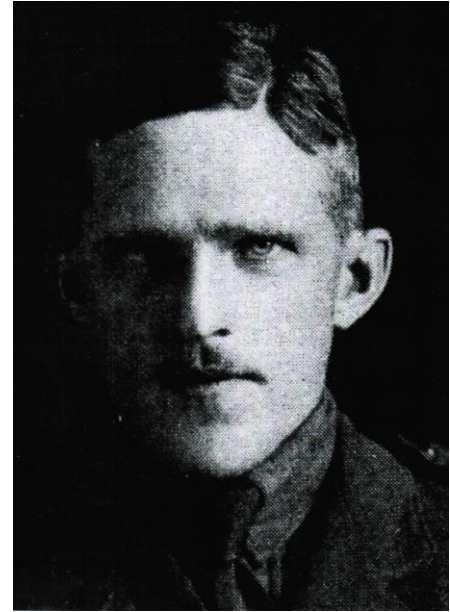
Major JOHN H. SILLS, DSO

Inducted 2010

John H. SILLS (1882-1930) has been a neglected hero for eighty years. Finally, thanks to recognition by Bay of Quinte Branch UBLAC and Last Post, that is changing. I first encountered John H. SILL's name in the records of Franck Lodge 127, A.F.& A.M., Frankford, while I was researching a book to commemorate the Lodge's 150th anniversary. He was Master of this Masonic Lodge in 1912.

It really began with something small. I couldn't determine what John's middle name was. Some sources suggested Ham whereas others stated Hamilton. For what it's worth the maiden name of his grandmother was HAM. SILLS descendant Linda SMITH UE and I pondered the issue without any clear conclusions.

While this was going on, I learned that John H. SILLS had a distinguished career in the First World War, rising to the rank of Major, and being awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1918. I also found a photograph of him on the website for his battalion, the 21st Battn. C.E.F. He died suddenly during a business trip to Michigan on September 26, 1930. A Masonic Service was held in Trenton with interment in Belleville Cemetery. He was held in such high esteem at the time, that his passing was front page news in The Belleville Intelligencer.



Major Sills was married to Constance Irwin WELLER, and there were no children, so no descendants. He was the son of Ephraim SILLS and Sarah Chrichton MUIR of Frankford. Major SILLS' Loyalist ancestors included Johann Conrad SILLS UE of Butler's Rangers, his son George SILLS UE of the 2nd Battn, King's Royal Reg't of NY, and William BELL Sr. UE. His wife also had a Loyalist background which included William MARSH UE.

A request from the 21st Battn website's Al Lloyd for a photograph of SILLS' grave marker at Belleville Cemetery led to the surprising discovery that he had no marker. His parents' substantial granite monument was near his plot, but he wasn't mentioned on it. The folks at Belleville Cemetery suggested I contact Last Post who provide such markers for worthy veterans. I thank Last Post and others who have been involved in this project. I'm happy to report that as of July 2010 Major John H. SILLS UE, D.S.O. finally has his very own marker at Belleville Cemetery.

(by Peter W. Johnston UE)