WILLIAM ALLAN DEMPSEY
Inducted - 2011

William Allan Dempsey was born August 17, 1906 and died March 13, 1993. To Allan and his first wife, Muriel Bentham, two daughters, Ruth and Elizabeth, were born, and from his second marriage to Dr. Ethel Noble, two sons, Albert and Lawrence completed his family of four. The Dempsey lineage is interesting, as Allan was a fifth generation from the second permanent settler in Ameliasburgh Township, and was born on the family homestead on Lot 67 Concession 1. He has co-lineal descent to US presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams. He is descendant of the following loyalists: Thomas Dempsey UE, Jacobus Peck Jr. UE, Godlove Mikel UE, and John Lott Sr. UE. These names appear through his great-grandparents, Major William Dempsey who married Sarah Ann Mikel, and George Boulter who married Sarah Peck. Allan’s grandparents were Emily Boulter, who became the wife of Captain William Ryerson Dempsey. An impressive lineage, which combined Irish and British ancestry.
Cadet Allan Dempsey was one of the key players in the successful celebration for the United Empire Loyalists held in Belleville in 1924, where the UEL monument was to be unveiled in June of that year. The occasion was the 140th Anniversary of the settlement of the Loyalists in Upper Canada. June 16th, 1924 was determined to be the date when a week of celebrations would commence. There was a concern by the organizers how they would spread the news of this important event with limited resources, since most newspapers published only weekly. Some of you will know that they succeeded in bringing hundreds of visitors to the Belleville area making the Loyalist Celebration an outstanding success. Allan Dempsey contributed as a 17 year old cadet, acting in the roll of courier travelling on foot from Belleville to Toronto, after the manner of our pioneer’s mode of travel. A daunting task taken in stride by Allan, as he carried invitations to the Mayors of the cities and towns, as well as Reeves of villages and all the council members of the municipalities through which he was to pass en route to the provincial capital. The invitations from Belleville Mayor W.C. Mikel would spread the news of the event, with the final stop in Toronto with invitations to its Mayor and Council, and the Premier of the Province and his Cabinet. Chief Justice Sir William Mulock was also delivered an invitation.

His historic trek began on Monday April 21, 1924. Wherever Cadet Dempsey went, the young courier was warmly welcomed, receiving splendid treatment. Local newspapers carried his story and publicized the upcoming celebrations. An account written by a Whitby reporter read:

> Having all the appearance of a clean living Canadian youth, clear of eye, and the picture of health, Cadet Dempsey appealed to one, as a worthy descendant of that noble band of hardy pioneers who settled in Canada following the American War of Independence. And he comes of real UEL stock, and it is fitting that he should be chosen to carry the credentials he does in the old time manner of courier.

It was Saturday evening April 26th when he arrived in Toronto. On Sunday he was received by the Premier of Ontario, and on Monday by Mayor W.W. Hiltz of Toronto. The Mayor, being of Loyalist stock, expressed his pleasure at the invitation and hoped to attend with a number of the council members. Allan’s obligations as UEL courier was completed and he returned to Belleville by train. He was met by Mayor Mikel of Belleville and Mayor Blakely of Trenton, along with several aldermen and other city officials. Cadet Dempsey was praised by Mayor Hiltz of Toronto in a letter to Mayor Mikel which read in part as follows:
If Cadet Dempsey is a sample of the boys you have in Belleville and Belleville High School, your city has reason to be proud of your young men.

This was the foundation of a young man`s future. Pride in his accomplishments and the results of a successful celebration would endure for his life. After he graduated in Belleville, he attended the University of Toronto, graduating in 1930, the attending University of Guelph where he specialized in Horticulture. Here he became actively involved in wrestling and track and field, all of which his excellence set him apart as an outstanding athlete. At the outbreak of World War 2, he signed up as a Physical Training Instructor with the RAFVR, serving in England for five years, and two years in India, from 1939 to 1946.

Following that, he had a career of 23 years as Greenhouse Technician with the Canada Department of Agriculture in Belleville. This is where I first met Allan. For me, this placement as a high school student was an adventure. My boss and I would accompany Allan on field trips to collect larvae specimens for study in the lab. Years later when I was a new member of the Bay of Quinte Branch UEL, our paths crossed again.

The most memorable of Branch meetings for me was when the Chief Herald of Canada was our guest speaker. It was held in the upstairs meeting room over the new fire station in Picton, and Allan received his O`Dempsey Coat of Arms from the Chief Herald, who personally contributed to the creation of this special piece. The symbols related to Allan`s life involvement. An example is the shamrock, which signifies the Emerald Isles, the O`Dempsey ancestral home. Look carefully, and you will see asparagus bundles, apples, a cow and hen, and various crests and emblems which combine all of his interests through his life.

Allan was an active member of Branch 88 Canadian Legion for over 35 years, a life member of the United Empire Loyalist Association, serving in the positions of genealogist and research historian, a life member in all four areas of York Rite of Masonry, holding 35 degrees as Life Member of the Scottish Rite Masonry, an armiger authority and numismatist. In the area of horticulture, Allan was an authority and grower of commercial asparagus and apples, and active exhibitor at major Ontario Fairs, and a breeder of both Holstein and Fresian cattle as well as Chantecler poultry.

It has been my pleasure to induct William Allan Dempsey UE, BSA into our Loyalist Hall of Honour, a man who willingly gave of himself in many ways for the betterment of community and country and as a loyalist descendant encouraged others to investigate their heritage.

(Written By June Dafoe UE)