

ALDERVILLE FIRST NATION

TWO SNAPSHOTS *and* TWO STORIES *from* A PROUD MILITARY HISTORY

The Alderville First Nation is located less than a half hour's drive north of Cobourg. To the bottom right is a picture of the Monument – a towering concrete memorial to Alderville's veterans. On the Monument is a list, a very long list for such a small population, of the men who served in the military from World War I through the Vietnam War. The history of Alderville's warriors is too extensive for this display and the earliest parts are lost in the mists of pre-history. But here are two brief stories from that past.

Our earliest written records are of **Shawundais** (John Sunday). Shawundais should also be remembered as a long serving chief and eloquent Methodist minister and missionary who represented his people directly to Queen Victoria. But, for this display, we are interested in the young warrior who, with his fellow Mississauga and Mohawk warriors, slowed, disrupted and decimated the Americans as they attempted to flank the British regulars at the Battle of Crysler's Farm in 1813.

When the remaining American soldiers emerged from the woods, their disorder made them vulnerable to the well ordered British lines who were expecting them—thanks to the steady fire of their native allies. British volleys of fire quickly shattered these troops who were now hotly pursued through the woods by Shawundais and the other native allies. It was a key part of the Canadian victory at Crysler's Farm.

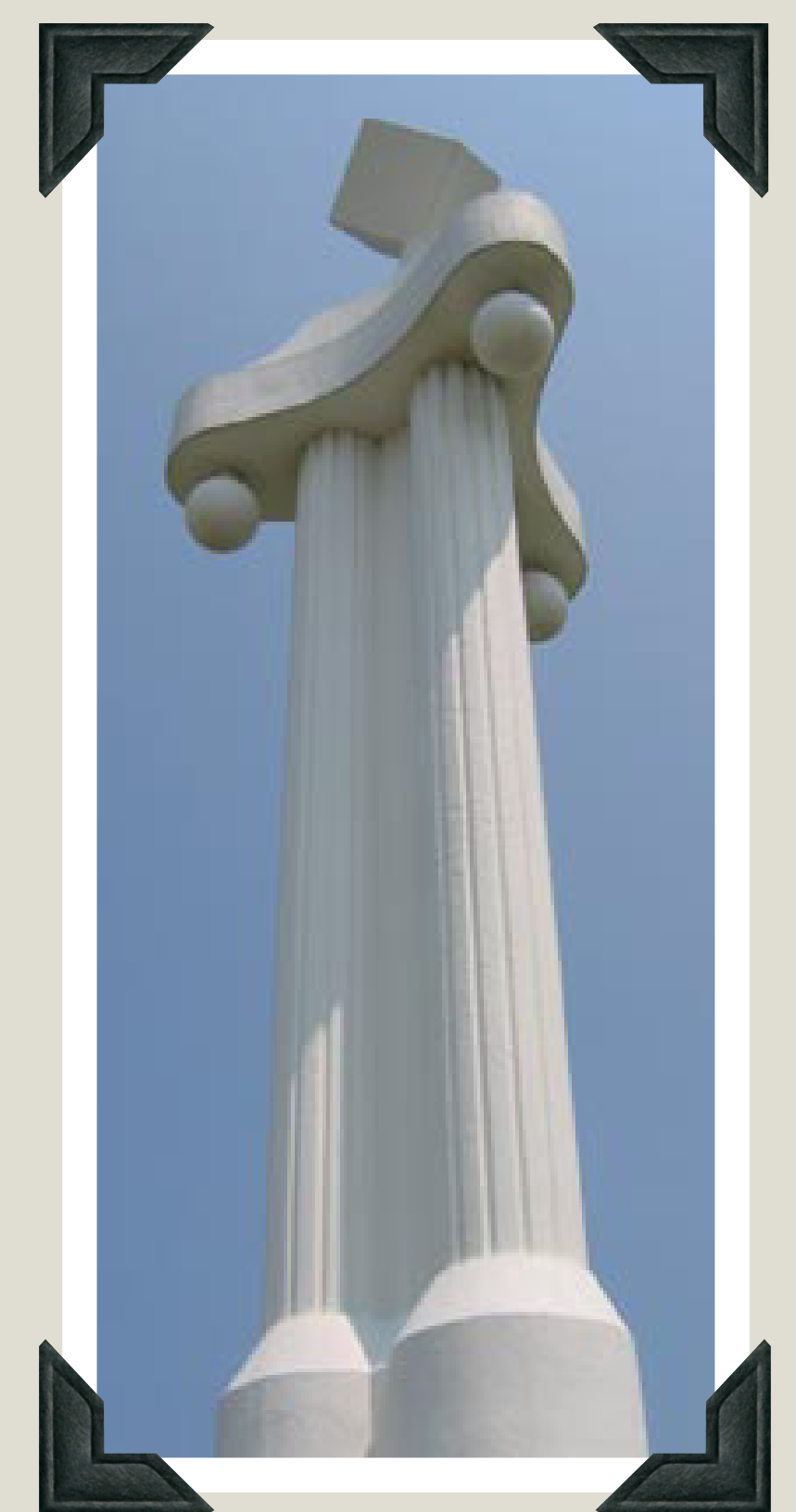


Skipping ahead to World War I, we meet **Peter Comego** (pictured left, top row, second from right) and his more famous brother, **Sampson (Sam) Comego**, both noted World War I snipers. Peter's photograph is clearer but he seemed to prefer his deeds and military service to remain unknown. His mastery as a sniper and his popularity due to his character come from other eyewitnesses.

His brother, Sam, was larger than life in many ways. He was also very popular and an accomplished sniper. Sam made a science of hunting down German snipers – whose elimination must have made him very popular with his fellow soldiers.

Sam accomplished his missions with a certain 'style'. Needing German prisoners for interrogation, his Brigade offered 110 francs to the first soldier who captured a live German. Sam not only captured the first prisoner, but was overjoyed to find he was a young boy. The German was promptly scooped under Sam's arm and dubbed "Beaucoup francs!" as Sam scurried back to his own lines to claim his reward.

Unfortunately, Sam Comego was killed by a rifle grenade and is buried in Belgium – a country he fought to liberate. The Comego name, like all the others, just hints at the stories memorialized on the towering Alderville monument.



The Monument

For more details check the History section of the Alderville First Nation's website:

www.aldervillefirstnation.ca