

Peel Biography: MATHEWS, Cuthbert King  
Great War veteran Cuthbert King Mathews

# 21-gun salute sounds farewell to old soldier

By MARK HOLMES  
Staff

Last Saturday, a volley of gunshots rang out to salute a Port Credit man who witnessed all the great events of the 20th century.

Cuthbert King Mathews was past 102 years old when he died Oct. 13. Until his final day he was writing his own cheques, quipping witticisms and reading library books, according to his daughter, Elizabeth Mathews.

"He is the old soldier who wouldn't die, he just faded away," Mathews said of her father, a First World War veteran honored by the

20th Battalion of the Museum of Applied Military History at Port Credit's Trinity United Church.

The traditional 21-gun salute — by the group that honored Canada earlier

this year at the First World War's 75th anniversary in Mons France — was a farewell to the veteran whose quiet altruism earned him



MATHEWS

wide respect.

Born in 1892 in England, Mathews enjoyed a childhood with parents dedicated to giving their two children an upbringing rich in experience and appreciation of the arts.

Mathews was the nephew of Charles Elkin Mathews, a well-known British publisher of poetry by the likes of James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Yates. His firm, the Bodley Head Publishing Co., still exists today, although under different ownership. Through his uncle and his parents Mathews learned an appreciation of the arts, and nature.

Mathews could claim to have seen the first ever production of *The Merry Widow* in 1905 and he often recounted a story of peeking through drawn drapes at streets hung in black crepe following the death of Queen Victoria.

At age 19 he aspired to discover the New World and in 1911 Mathews arrived in Canada. After working a year on a Saskatchewan homestead he set up his own home, enduring cold so bitter he had to heat his nails before hammering them. He hunted wolves on horseback and drove regularly the 10 miles to the nearest town.

When war was declared, Mathews and several friends rode to Winnipeg to sign up with the Fort Garry Horse Regiment. He fought in the trenches of France and he is said to have risked his life to save a wounded enemy soldier walking disoriented through lines of fire.

In 1918, suffering a serious leg wound, Mathews was sent to Norfolk Hospital where, during his recovery, he met his wife Eleanor.

A year later he returned to Saskatchewan with his new bride and farmed for 13 hard years but his war injury continued to haunt him and when offered a job as post-master he seized the opportunity.

The man's heroics continued on Canadian soil. Mathews also recounts the story of her father who upon learning of a friend's absence rode 15 miles out of town to find the man and then rode another 12 hours where his friend could receive surgery.

"He always thought more about others than himself," said his daughter.

After 12 years as post master Mathews brought his family to Toronto and for another 12 years served as post master in Port Credit.

PEEL BIOGRAPHY MATHEWS, Cuthbert King

The Miss News Oct 30/94



Members of the 20th Battalion of the Museum of Applied Military History (top) were dressed in First World War uniforms at a recent memorial service for Cuthbert King Mathews, who is pictured at left as a member of the Fort Garry Horse Regiment in 1915. Mathews, who served for 12 years as Port Credit's post master, died on October 13 at age 102.

"As a post master his reputation remained sterling. At his 100th birthday an old friend described dad as a post master who did not make mistakes," said his daughter.

Aside from being a respected post master, Mathews was also

known for his work as a church elder, school trustee, treasurer of the wheat pool and more.

Mathews, predeceased by his wife in 1989, leaves behind two daughters, three grandchildren and six great grandchildren.