

A Soldier's Story for the Holidays

By Coralina Lemos, Corktown Historian and Author / corktownhistory.com

If you ever found yourself walking by Little Trinity Church, you've likely past a stone cenotaph that faces King Street. By now darkened, its surface progressively invaded by a sponge-like pattern of green patina, its presence can be easily overlooked.

The engraved dedication reads: "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of 70 men from this parish who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-19 and in grateful remembrance of those who shared its dangers. Erected A.D. 1921. Major Canon H.C. Dixon, Rector."

A second memorial made of bronze, lies against the façade of St. Paul's Basilica and reads, "In memory of the men of St. Paul's Parish who gave their lives in the war in Europe, 1914-1918." Also dedicated in 1921, the memorial list 81 parishioners that served during the First World War.

Such a farewell would have been shared by local River Street resident and widow, Catherine Hurley. Her husband, Joseph, had been employed at Gooderham & Worts since they were married and at the time of his death, she was left to care for twelve children.

While spending time researching and writing my book on the history of Corktown, it was Mr. Hurley's obituary that provided the key to how Corktown got its name. Consequently, I felt indebted to tell the story of his son who, like many other servicemen and women during this war, never returned home in time for the holidays.

While he lived in Corktown, Patrick M. Hurley worked as a general labourer. In November of 1917, he entered the army and within six months later was sent overseas to England onboard the HMT Valacia. Initially he served under the 1st Battalion, but after some regimental transfers he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion (Toronto Regiment), Canadian Expeditionary Force stationed in France.

By October 5, 1918, the regiment was successful at crossing the canal south of Cambrai, completing the second phase of its mission for the month. Unfortunately, on Monday, October 14, 1918, while lying on the canal bank at Ferin keeping watch for the enemy,

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Private Patrick M. Hurley was killed instantly when machine gun fire swept the bank. His passing occurred almost a month away from Armistice Day.

Buried at Chapel Corner Cemetery, France, his name along with other neighbourhood heroes is forever inscribed in the Soldiers' Memorial Plaque at St. Paul's Basilica.



STONE CENOTAPH



BRONZE MEMORIAL

Then & Now

QUEEN AND RIVER

By Coralina Lemos



1922



2019