

Ottawa's Beechwood Cemetery honours many of the famous Canadians interred there with a plaque. But, there was none for General A.G.L. McNaughton ...

Photos by Kris Hatashita

McNaughton Plaque Dedication Ceremony

Procession to plaque site led by piper, Dave Kemp and Andrew Leslie

A stroll through Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa three years ago by IEEE Canadian Foundation (ICF) President David Whyte led to a destination finally reached on October 16, at 1:00 p.m.

Designated as the National Cemetery of Canada, Beechwood's Famous Burials include such notables as scientist Sir Sandford Fleming, poet Archibald Lampman, and politician Tommy Douglas, the latter widely credited with being the father of

medicare in Canada. General A.G.L. McNaughton is also interred there.

But what Mr. Whyte discovered is that while some of the Famous Burials, such as the aforementioned three, are honoured with a Great Canadian Profiles plaque, General McNaughton was not. A call to Dave Kemp, IEEE Canada History Committee Chair and ICF V.P. Grants quickly followed. The path to a plaque was there, but it would take time and effort. History committee

volunteers were contacted. Plans were made.

By late October 2015, Mr. Kemp was able to report the plaque was installed, and began building a team for a dedication ceremony. Ottawa Section volunteers joined the effort.

The morning of October 16, 2016 was clear and sunny. The afternoon was not. Inside the Reception Centre at Beechwood Cemetery though, the atmosphere was celebratory. The facility's decor gives a sense of both dignity and warmth—some of the character traits of the General those connected to him were to speak of. For an overview of his career, please see the sidebar at top-right of the next page.

A kite caught in a tree does not usually call for the expertise of a general. But if you are the grandson of A.G.L. McNaughton, you might be so lucky. After an engaging introduction by Master of Ceremonies Kemp, this was

the story told by guest speaker Honourable Andrew Leslie, MP for Orléans, former Canadian Forces Lieutenant-General. Apparently the very young Andrew's kite was rescued by the General with the aid of a cross-bow fashioned from an old bed spring, a car strut and a length of piano wire. Left in the youngster's hands, the "weapon of mass destruction" was leveled at numerous targets in the neighbourhood—without success—until "duly confiscated."

The Honourable Leslie paid tribute to his grandfather's "extraordinarily active mind" as a scientist, engineer and inventor, and his "fantastic" interpersonal skills. He noted how they both were Canadian Army Commanders, but observed that his challenges with respect to the war in Afghanistan paled in comparison to those of A.G.L. McNaughton during WWII.

A message from the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of



Witold Kinsner, IEEE Canada President 2016-17, addresses the gathering.



L to R: Brigadier General Peter Holt (Retired); Honourable Andrew Leslie, MP for Orléans, Cdn Forces Lieutenant-General (Retired); Helen Leslie



Honourable Andrew Leslie reads aloud the inscription on the plaque.

Defence was read out by MC Kemp, which says, in part, “As someone who has served in uniform and now serves as Minister of National Defence, I have a profound respect and appreciation for all of his [McNaughton’s] professional accomplishments and achievements ... His accomplishments are truly remarkable and an inspiration to those around him including his grandson, Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie.”

Another guest speaker at the event was Jon Jennekens, who served as President of the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) from 1978 until 1987. He joined the organization in 1961, the same year that Chalmers J. MacKenzie retired as AECB President. Mr. MacKenzie succeeded McNaughton, who was the organization’s first president. The two were close friends, with MacKenzie later sharing many memories of McNaughton with Mr. Jennekens.

McNaughton’s appointment as Canada’s representative to the short-lived United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) was noted by Jennekens. Founded in 1946, the UNAEC was unable to get all the permanent members of the Security Council to come to a common position on nuclear disarmament. McNaughton was later appointed permanent delegate of Canada to the United Nations and a representative of Canada on the Security Council in 1948.

In introducing guest speaker John Hendrik Swettenham, MC Kemp explained the special role John Swettenham Senior’s three-volume biography of General McNaughton has played within IEEE Canada. It has been the tradition to provide a copy to McNaughton Resource Centres on Canadian campuses when they are first established. Incoming IEEE Canada Presidents are also furnished with a copy of the set.

A.G.L. McNaughton (1887-1966): engineer, soldier and statesman



Major-General Andrew George Latta McNaughton. Credit: Vandyk Ltd./ Library and Archives Canada/PA-034110

Born in 1887, McNaughton studied at McGill University, in 1912 completing his Master’s of Science degree with Honours in Electrical Engineering. Working as a consultant before the start of WWI, he published six papers on high voltage electrical phenomenon. In 1914 he enlisted as a militia officer, commanding gun batteries. Employing his engineering mind, he optimized triangulation data from the sound and flash of enemy artillery in accurate survey schemes. His results were extraordinary. Using the techniques he pioneered, Canadian counter-battery destroyed more than 70 percent of the opposing artillery in the week prior to the Battle

of Vimy Ridge. By the end of the war, he was in charge of all heavy artillery and counter-battery forces of the Canadian Corp.

Joining the regular army in 1920, McNaughton was rapidly promoted, becoming Chief of the General Staff in 1929, holding that position until 1935 when he was appointed President of the National Research Council. It was during the early to mid-1920s he developed a working model of a cathode ray detection finder—the direct forerunner of radar.

McNaughton had various commands in WWII, then was appointed Minister of Defence in 1944. Following the war, he was appointed Canadian Chairman of the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board on Defence, and in 1946 became Canadian representative to the United Nations Energy Commission and head of the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada. In 1948, McNaughton was appointed permanent delegate of Canada to the United Nations and Canada’s security council representative. He became a Commissioner of the International Joint Commission in 1950, and shortly after, named its Canadian Chairman, evaluating amongst other projects development of the St. Lawrence River for navigation and power.

A more full account of Andrew McNaughton’s remarkable contributions can be found on-line in Issues 9 and 10 of the *IEEE Canadian Review*, in a two-part piece by Ted Glass. Mr. Glass skillfully condensed John Alexander Swettenham’s three-volume biography *McNaughton*.

Out of print for quite some time, it has been a challenge to source them. Print-on-demand publishing will make it possible to maintain this honoured tradition.

Contacted last spring by IEEE Canada immediate Past President Dr. Amir Aghdam, who is leading the *McNaughton* reprint initiative, John Swettenham Jr. has offered to write a new foreword to the three volumes. Mr. Swettenham recounted his experience meeting A.G.L. McNaughton as a three-year-old, and then offered his views on how the General would appraise Canada’s performance and priorities in a number of areas, were he alive today. Swet-

tenham currently is Chief Marketing Officer for the Canadian Museum of Nature. He previously led marketing at Canada Post.

In introducing University of Ottawa Student Branch Chair Danielle Marchand, MC Kemp conveyed the excitement within the ICF on the expected 40th McNaughton Learning Centre to open soon. The ICF supports creation and maintenance of the McNaughton Centres by way of approval of grant applications.

The benefits of a McNaughton Centre to a Student Branch were articulated by Ms. Marchand with a rich array of examples.



L to R: Scott Melvin, IEEE Canada Secretary; Xavier Fernando, IEEE Canada Central Area Chair; Amir Aghdam, Immediate Past President, IEEE Canada; Janet Davis, IEEE Ottawa Section Chair



L to R: Luc Matteau, Treasurer, IEEE Canadian Foundation; Kash Husain, IEEE Canada Administrator; Rana Husain, IEEE Canada Administrative Assistant; Raed Abdulla, IEEE Ottawa Section Chair 2009-2010.

“They harbour many academic events and workshops,” Marchand explained, “broadening students’ familiarity and competency with different technologies.” Marchand cited Arduino workshops, raspberry pi workshops and programming workshops as examples of events hosted at the University of Ottawa Centre. Students use the resources there both for academic projects and some just for pure interest’s sake, she says.



Danielle Marchand, University of Ottawa, IEEE Student Branch Chair

Marchand offered some insights on the role of the Learning Centres in inspiring students to take on roles beyond those their formal education prepares them for. “They are a place where teamwork and leadership grow, where students learn the basic soft skills that are needed to become, hopefully, one of the many great things General McNaughton was: an engineer, cabinet minister and diplomat — just to name a few. As the Centres grow, his legacy also grows.”

IEEE Canada President Dr. Witold Kinsner then offered a unique perspective on the establishment in 1979 of the first McNaughton Centre by then Region 7 Director Ted Glass at the University of Winnipeg, where Dr. Kinsner has taught since 1970. Picking up on Marchand’s remarks, he noted how McNaughton and his contemporaries fought real wars, but also fought for the hearts and minds of others. For him, McNaughton has never departed, “but is still with us in the hearts and minds of young people.”

In concluding the proceedings in the reception area, MC Dave Kemp thanked his co-planners in organizing the day’s activities: IEEE Canada Administrator Kash Husain; Janet Davis, IEEE Ottawa Section Chair; Raed Abdulla, IEEE Ottawa Section Chair 2009-2010.

With the addresses complete — and the rain abated — the gathering wound its way led by piper through Beechwood’s picturesque lanes to the site of the plaque, where MC Dave Kemp unveiled it, and read aloud its inscription in English. The Honourable Leslie read aloud the French version, both keeping an eye on the clouds. Then, all were piped back to the Reception Centre, making the last leg of this most successful journey in duly honouring the legacy of A.G.L. McNaughton at the National Cemetery of Canada. ■

John Swettenham Jr. and McNaughton



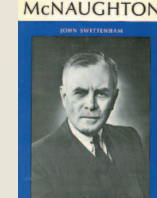
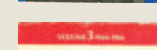
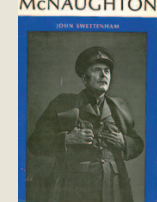
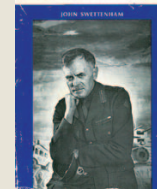
It’s not every three-year-old that gets to shake the hand of a famous general. Or an eminent scientist. Or an esteemed statesman. But when

John Swettenham Jr. was introduced by his father to Andrew George Latta McNaughton, the young lad accomplished them all.

“You’re going to meet a great man,” the tot was told by John Swettenham Senior, author and biographer. “I want you to remember this.” Fifty years later, the now-adult John Swettenham Jr. fondly recalls the occasion with ease. And to historians — and to members of IEEE Canada — those words of respect ring as true today as they did back then.

John (Jr.) Hendrik Swettenham shared this delightful story both at the Great Canadian Profiles plaque unveiling in Beechwood Cemetery on

John Hendrik Swettenham will be writing the foreword for the on-demand reprint of his father’s three-volume biography of General McNaughton.

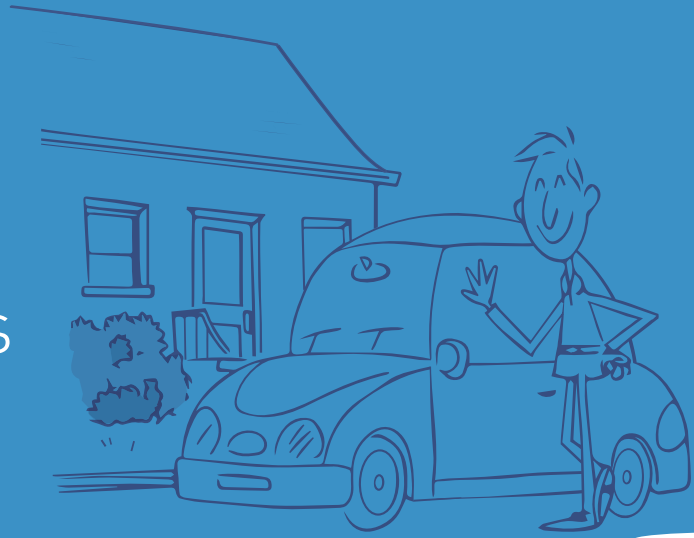


October 16, and also with members of the IEEE Canada Board earlier that day. In presenting to the Board, Mr. Swettenham kindly passed around his personal copies of John Alexander Swettenham’s *McNaughton Volumes*.

He also offered an interesting analysis of how McNaughton would react to three engineering-related areas: the high-tech revolution, infrastructure investment and climate change. His assessment of what McNaughton would prescribe for Canada’s challenges today?

- Think positive and BIG
- Take an engineering approach
- Have confidence in being Canadian. ■

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