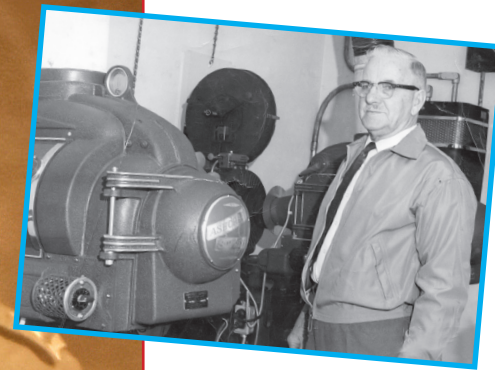




Above: Both holding cigarettes, Bill (left) and brother Harold May, in his fur jacket, stand beside a comrade for another postcard portrait done in France, and mailed home back to Manitoba. Below: Bill May takes a sip of water at Vimy.



Above: Bill May stands beside one of his projectors he operated at the Ubique Theatre (now L25) prior to his retirement in 1961. Below: He had seven children, with his son Harold (second right) dying in the Second World War.



Before leaving for France to face the Germans in the Battle of Vimy Ridge a century ago, brothers Harold (sitting) and Bill May trained for their Great War experience at Camp Hughes in 1916. Assigned to the 61st Battalion with the Winnipeg Rifles, Bill May was wounded by shrapnel to the leg during the Battle of Vimy Ridge. His older brother was left for dead on the battlefield after a shell exploded nearby and his cheek, chin and shoulder sustained horrific wounds. Three days later, he was found in the mud alive when fellow soldiers were out picking up corpses on the battlefield. Harold May was of the first recipients of reconstructive surgery. Bill would return from the war and take a job at Camp Shilo in 1942, where he worked until retiring in 1961.

*Photos courtesy grandchildren Kathleen Mowbray/Kelvin Schrot*

# Scrapbooks tell story of Bill May's life

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After moving to Camp Shilo, his remaining sons worked the farm, while daughters Margaret, Joyce and Dorothy joined their parents in the new PMQs being built for military families after 1947. In charge of the YMCA, May helped the soldiers training for the Second World War with movies, library, sports equipment, canteen service and the Legion. During this time, Camp Shilo also housed German POWs — they were tasked with cleaning on the army training base.

May's children attended the first Shilo school, with dad a member of the school committee. Enrolment that first day was 16. By 1948, enrolment was up to 130. Daughter Margaret was among the first Grade 12 graduates.

After the war, according to Mowbray, Maple Leaf Services hired her grandfather to manage the Ubique Theatre — now L25 — in 1946. Besides the projectionist, he was also the Base's Justice of the Peace starting in 1952.

Retiring on Oct. 12, 1961, and moving to Binscarth, May never slowed down. Mowbray said her grandfather was thrifty, and never owned a car. On the Base he would walk or ride his bicycle. If he needed a car, he had friends who would

lend one.

During Canada's centennial in 1967, May received the Order of the Crocus "in grateful recognition of this contribution to the welfare and development of Canada."

"It's a wonderful acknowledgement of what my grandfather did for his country, serving in the [Great War] and helping soldiers at Camp Shilo who were going off to fight another war," said Mowbray.

"He walked to church every Sunday, where he took up the offering. At the theatre, he often ran Rosie the Rivitor and Bless Them All reels. He enjoying singing old war time tunes, and simulating the bugle with his mouth. He was a strict disciplinarian and greatly admired. He had a fine sense of humour."

May's grandkids Kelvin and Kathleen said May was not one to share stories of the carnage from the Great War battlefields where he fought, but on occasion if he was sharing war stories with old comrades, if they listened intently they might hear something he did not readily share with the family.

Instead, his scrapbooks was something he would share thanks to the photos, postcards he collected.