

London's links to 1812 commemorated during Doors Open

Gerard Creces
Special to Londoner

This past weekend, September 27-28, Doors Open London and London Culture Days opened up the city to two days of history, heritage and cultural exploration. While the event was Doors Open, a piece of local history was under a clear, blue sky.

There are 16 veterans of the War of 1812, 11 males and five females, buried in the Brick Street Cemetery and on Sunday, September 28, members of the Upper Canada Military Re-enactment Society were in full uniform, paying homage to those who experienced or played a role in the war between the newly-formed United States and Great Britain.

One of the faded tombstones belongs to William Bryant. Seven generations separate William from re-enactor Jeff Bryant. William was fighting with the British against Napoleon off the Iberian Peninsula prior to coming to Canada to help with the war effort in May of 1814 - just six months before the war's end.

At Brick Street Cemetery, Redcoat re-enactors planted the Union Jack at each of the veterans' stones, marking a piece of Canada's past with a ceremony in the present. The location of the cemetery on Commissioner's Road is no coincidence. During the war, the road connected Montreal to Amherstburg and many refugees and reinforcements made the long trek on foot.

Fifty historic and heritage sites were opened up to the public over the Doors Open weekend, offering glimpses into the evolution of London's cultural past.



Soldiers stand at attention as the Upper Canada Military Re-enactment Society perform a ceremony at Brick Street Cemetery commemorating those who fought in 1812.