

Lance Corporal James Ernest Muth

133 Battalion, Royal Regiment of Canada, Canadian Engineers



When the Cathedral put out its call for information on the altar frontal soldiers, there was interest from local press, especially in Canada.

It was not long before an email was received from Anna Muth of Port Dover, Ontario; granddaughter of Lance Corporal James Ernest Muth.

Muth was a Canadian recovering in Sheffield having been wounded in his forearm, thighs, legs and foot. Anna said the family remembers her grandfather saying that he had embroidered one of the intricate yellow tulips on the altar frontal.

And soon more of the Muth family got in touch, including Mimey, a great-granddaughter, and most notably, Malcolm, Lance Corporal Muth's son.

Through email, Malcolm Muth, now 83, said: "I am a minister of the Presbyterian Church and the son of James Ernest Muth, one of the men who worked the altar frontal for St Paul's.

"My father often spoke of the kindness of the doctors, nurses, and others during his convalescence. He was wounded twice and gassed, and so spent a long time in hospitals in England and after he came home. He did more embroidery here. He died at age 83 after a useful life in the community: the father of seven children, carpenter, church elder, village councillor, and so much more.

"He worked a tulip in the piece for St Paul's, but when he heard that the altar was destroyed in the War he assumed that the frontal was lost as well. We are all delighted to learn of its restoration and the service in the summer.

"The 133 Battalion to which my father belonged - often called *Norfolk's Own* - [was] part of the Royal Regiment of Canada, Canadian Engineers. He merely said 'some women taught the embroidery skill' and his work was to be part of the altar cloth at St Paul's."

And Malcolm went on to note his family's continuing association with the Canadian military: "I have a son, also James Muth, who is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Canadian Regiment and an instructor at the staff college, Fort Frontenac, Kingston."

Lt Col Muth will read a lesson at the special service on Sunday 3 August to mark the eve of the centenary of WWI.

