

Mementos of a Marksman

Private Orvill Stanton
of Stanbridge East, Quebec
60th Battalion Militia, Missisquoi

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Foreword

I have written this paper specifically for the Missisquoi Historical Society, since I wish to put on record some precious items of local Stanbridge East history that are in my possession, and their story. I do not want their memory to be lost. The items are two silver medals won for marksmanship by Private Orvill S. Stanton of the 60th Battalion, Missisquoi in 1887. Along with the medals there are two official letters relating to Orvill Stanton's 1885-86 marksmanship accomplishments. The story is that of the remarkable achievements of a long-forgotten local marksman. This was an era when membership in the Militia was a much admired and appreciated public service. Proficiency with a rifle was seen as a great public asset, needed to protect Canada from invasions, rather than a danger to society.

I carried out research on the man and the medals in 1989, having by then possessed the medals for some 30 years. I was motivated to do this research at that time because I wished to enter the medals, and their story, in a local numismatic club display competition in Ottawa. I won first prize. I have since won first prizes for displays of the medals at an Ontario Numismatic Association Convention (Ottawa, 1998) and at the Royal Canadian Numismatic Association Convention (Ottawa, 2008).

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I have also provided a printed copy of this paper to the National Library of Canada.

Provenance of the Historical Items

The medals and official letters, of course, went originally to Private Orvill S. Stanton of Stanbridge East, as described below. Private Stanton having no children, the items all passed to his relatives upon his death in 1938. They were the Heney family of Montreal and Stanbridge East. (I believe the relationship was through Mrs. Heney, who was born in the area.) Mrs. Heney (nee Horskin) was the mother of several daughters, including Marion and Brenda, who, in the early 1950s, came to live in the Ed Skedgell house (now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Brian Young). I always understood that Ed Skedgell was an uncle to the Heney daughters. So too was Orvill Stanton. None of the Heney daughters ever married. Brenda was the last of the line. As far as I know, at the time of her death in 1984, she had no living close relatives.

Brenda Heney was a close family friend from the time she moved to Stanbridge East until her death. Knowing of my keen interest in coins and medals, she kindly gave me the medals and related documents in about 1958, when I was 14 or 15 years of age. At the time of writing this, therefore (December, 2008) I have possessed the medals for nearly as long as Orvill Stanton did, and far longer than the 20 years the Heney family owned them. That is curious to contemplate.

List of Photographic Scans Appended

- A Two photographs of Orvill Stanton (also in this text) one circa 1890s (with gun and dog) the other perhaps early 1900s
- B Official letter, dated 24th March 1886 to O.S. Stanton from Lt. Col Thomas Bacon, Secretary D.C.R.A. informing Private Stanton of his selection to the 1886 Wimbledon Team
- C Official letter, dated 27th May 1886 (including envelope) to O.S. Stanton from Lt. Col Thomas Bacon, Secretary D.C.R.A. informing Private Stanton of his orders to report for duty on 23rd June 1886 for the Wimbledon team competition
- D Copy of pages 26-27 of *Report of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1885* listing the members and scores of the 60 men who qualified for the Wimbledon Team
- E Full report of the 1886 Canadian Wimbledon Team's activities by its Commanding Officer, Lt-Col R. Tyrwhitt (excerpt from the *Report of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1886*, Ref. 5)
- F Excerpt from the *Report of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1887* listing all past winners of the D.C.R.A. Affiliation Medal and the Governor-General's Medals
- G Excerpt from 1887 and earlier P.Q.R.A. Annual Reports detailing local Missisquoi matches and the Montreal match where Orvill Stanton's D.C.R.A. Affiliation Medal and the Governor-General's Medal were won
- H Various digital photographs of the two medals, both in and out of their original boxes

**The Marksman: Private Orvill S. Stanton of Stanbridge East, QC
(Dec 28, 1848 – Sept 9, 1938)**

Of Orvill Stanton, I know very little. I am not even certain how his first name was spelled. I have several personal letters written to his family in which he appears to sign his name “Orvill”, without an e, so I have used that spelling. Cemetery records spell his name “Orville”. There is no official document in my possession using anything but his initials.

Mr. Stanton was a bachelor almost all of his long life. I quote from a letter from the late Paige Knight of Stanbridge East in answer to my enquiries in 1989:

“... I remember only that he always lived with his sister Louisa until he finally married his boyhood sweetheart not long before his death. (She was Edna Gardner, married to Arthur Reynolds; she only married Orville after the death of her first husband. In the cemetery [St. James, Stanbridge East] there is no indication that she was ever married to Arthur Reynolds!)



Circa 1890s



Circa early 1900s

Orvill S. Stanton

The few recollections that I have of Brenda Heney's stories of "Uncle Orvill" indicate he lived a respectable Victorian bachelor's life, worked as a craftsman and carpenter, and was a great sportsman (hunting and shooting competitions). Brenda and her sisters seemed to have held him in some esteem and they remembered him fondly. The two photos of Mr. Stanton on Page 1 show him, on the left, with his dog and a shotgun, evidently just before or after hunting. The other shows him posing in front of a house that is possibly familiar. These same scans are in Appendix A.

Orvill Stanton's personal letters indicate that he lived in Ostego, Michigan for some years, where he had relatives. Letters to his family indicate he was working there in 1874-75 (when he would have been about 26 or 27) and he returned to Ostego in 1881, perhaps for a visit. He mentions having worked on the railway and also as a carpenter. He also worked on a farm, shipping apples to Grand Rapids. I believe he worked as a carpenter or cabinet-maker around Stanbridge East, but perhaps the Missisquoi Historical Society has better information.

He was also in the 60th Battalion Militia of Missisquoi and a crack shot. He made the 1886 Dominion of Canada Rifle Association (D.C.R.A.) national team, competing in Wimbledon, England that summer. He would have been about 38 years old then. The following year, 1887, he won the Province of Quebec Rifle Association (P.Q.R.A.) Governor-General's Silver Medal at a match in Montreal. This was the top prize for certain match aggregate scores. At the same event, he won a second prize (Dominion of Canada Rifle Association Silver Medal) for his aggregate score in a different set of matches. I will go into this in more detail later.

D.C.R.A. records I have seen indicate that Private Stanton was still successfully competing at least into 1889.

Some Information About the Firearms, the Militia and the Shooting Competitions of the Time

Prior to the development of the breech-loading rifle, muzzle-loading guns were used. These were thought to be very efficient and it was some time before the British military establishment changed over to the use of breech-loading rifles. Although the development of breech-loading firearms was under way from the early years of the nineteenth century, and they were used effectively in the 1848 Prusso-Danish War, it was the development and production of Sharps carbines and rifles (and the demonstration of their murderous effects) during the American Civil War that finally convinced the British military the days of the muzzle-loader were over. Design competitions were held through 1864-65 to convert the then standard issue .577 calibre British Army Enfield muzzle-loaders into breech-loaders.

“In 1865, the examining committee recommended the adoption of the design submitted by Jacob Snider, a Dutch-American wine merchant from Philadelphia. The cartridge[s] which he used in the original trials were unsatisfactory and it remained for Col. Edward Boxer, Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory to design one which would work. This he did, and in September 1866, conversion of the Enfield rifles with the Snider breech, in conjunction with the cartridge designed by Col. Boxer, was approved.

“It was realized at the time that this could only be considered as a stop gap weapon, to be used until an improved breech-loading system could be developed. Nevertheless, the Snider-Enfield was a simple, sturdy and accurate weapon. It filled all of the requirements of the competition and conversion costs were only twelve shillings per rifle.

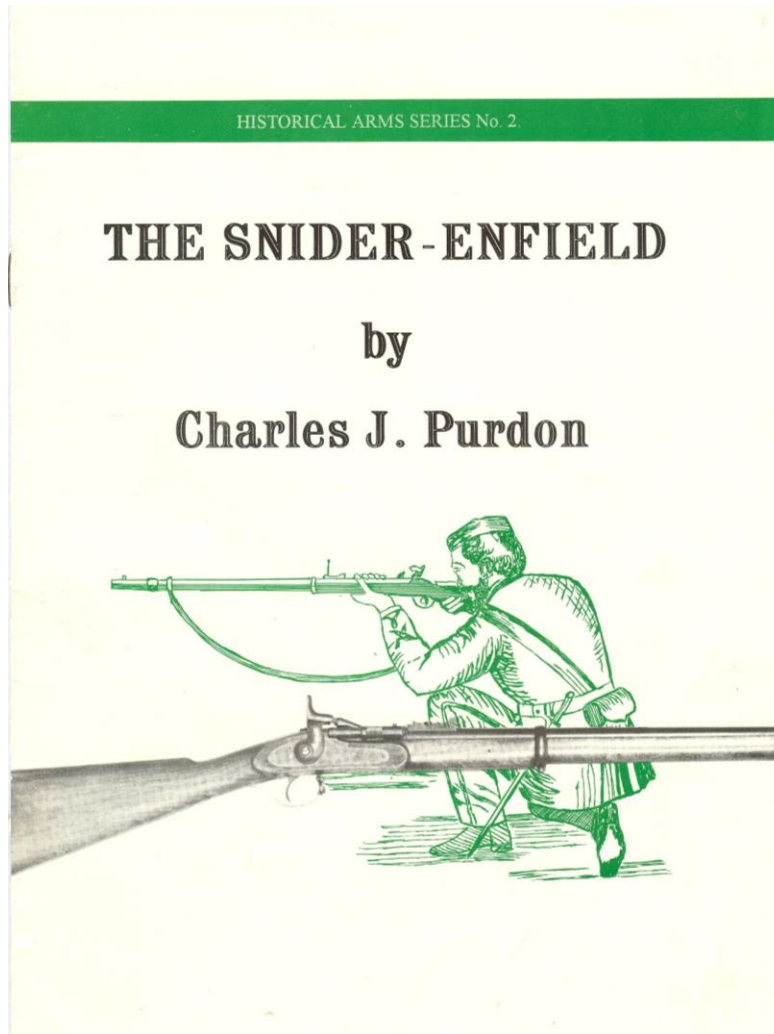
“The principle of the Snider conversion was not new. A steel breech block, through which passed a firing pin, was hinged from the right side of the barrel. To load, the breech block was opened, a cartridge was placed in the trough and pushed forward into the chamber and the breech block was closed. The fired case was extracted by opening the breech, pulling the opened block to the rear, which activated an extractor, and by turning the musket over, the case would drop clear.” ... The design was not drastically altered after 1866 (1)

At about the same time as the Snider-Enfield conversions were under way in Britain, the Militia was being organized in Canada in response to indications of threats from below the border. This was just at the end of the American Civil War and before Confederation. The threats of invasion were, in fact, one of the forces that brought about the eventual unification of the British North American provinces into Canada.

“In the fall of 1865, there were indications that serious troubles might be caused by The Fenian Brotherhood attacking Canada in the name of the Irish Republican Army. In March, 1866, 10,000 militia men were placed under arms and an urgent request was sent to England for breech-loading arms.” (2)

There was, in fact, a serious Fenian raid on Ridgeway, in what was then Canada West (now Ontario) in 1866. And people who know anything of the history of Missisquoi County are well aware of the May 24-25, 1870 Fenian Raid and the Battle of Eccles Hill. Volunteers from the Home Guard, the 60th Battalion Militia, and the Army repulsed this attack. An armed and well-trained local Militia was indeed needed. The threat from the Fenians remained for some time. [Note 1]

Below is a (reduced) reproduction of the cover of References 1, 2 and 3, an informative little booklet of eight pages that details the development and use of the Snider-Enfield. It illustrates both the firearm and a Militiaman in the uniform of the era. (This and other similar booklets are often available for sale at militaria shows, and from booksellers specializing in military history.)



In 1868, the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association (D.C.R.A.) was established. Its aim (pardon the pun) was to encourage and develop firearm proficiency and expert marksmanship by hosting competitions. This national association also supported the establishment of provincial and territorial rifle associations, including the Province of Quebec Rifle Association (P.Q.R.A.).

After the supply of British Army muskets had been used up in the conversion process, new, improved models of the Snider-Enfield were produced. There were a number of models with various modifications. It is likely that those used in Canada in shooting competitions by the 1880s had new steel barrels with rifling grooves.

“The .577 calibre Snider-Enfield was a very popular weapon. It was used in all parts of the British Empire over a period of more than 50 years. In 1875 there were more than 60,000 in Canada alone...” (3)

Below is a photo of Snider-Enfield bullets, with a modern 25-cent piece for scale.



**Later C.I.L. .577 Calibre Snider-Enfield Bullets
(probably circa 1920-1930, since the Snider-Enfields were still commonly around
Missisquoi County then, and were used for hunting.)**

And thus we come to the time when Orvill Stanton would likely have become interested in marksmanship and would have joined the 60th Battalion Militia. My investigations only covered the years from 1884 through 1889 (years in which Orvill Stanton’s name is listed in D.C.R.A. and P.Q.R.A. records that I studied, referenced later). As he was already a serious competitor in 1884, it is likely he had been shooting for some time before then. I can only speculate that he began competitive shooting in the late 1870s or early in the 1880s.

Matches were shot on rifle ranges at distances varying from 200 to 600 yards, in various shooting positions. The 200-yard bull's eye was eight inches in diameter. The 600-yard shooting distance would have been a real challenge; the bull's eye was three feet in diameter. This may seem large, but at 600 yards it is not much to look at. Consider the necessary trajectory of a very heavy lead bullet, more than a half-inch in diameter and nearly an inch long, to hit a target at such a distance. Wind also had to be considered. I have read somewhere in the history of Snider-Enfield shooting competitions that, at the maximum range, a man could stand atop a two-storey house, halfway between the shooter and the target, directly in line, and be perfectly confident the bullet would pass over his head! I cannot find the source, though, and this may be a slight exaggeration.

Earlier Competitions In Orvill Stanton's Career

I visited the D.C.R.A. Headquarters at the Connaught Ranges in Ottawa to review its library and files. The D.C.R.A. maintains excellent records in the form of annual reports, and I quickly came upon listings showing Private Orvill Stanton's medal achievements. There were also details of national competitions in Ottawa in which Private Stanton's name appears, and reports on the 1886 Wimbledon competition in England, which I describe below. But as to the medals, there was no further information except to say they were both won in 1887 at a P.Q.R.A. match. It was suggested that I try to locate the P.Q.R.A. annual reports for details.

I was delighted to learn that old P.Q.R.A. annual reports are held at the National Library in Ottawa, and that they are accessible to the public for review. Furthermore, pages of interest can be photocopied. I quickly found what I needed - the details of how Private Stanton's two medals were won. This topic is covered in a later section.

Since the Dominion and provincial rifle associations have kept such meticulous records over the years we can learn a great deal of details. These records even include affiliated club and militia reports, which cover local competitions. Thus, we can discover when and where the competitions were held, who the participants were, and their scores, target by target. Some reports give the weather and other information. Reports of local Missisquoi competitions in Stanbridge East, Bedford and Clarenceville reveal surnames still familiar in the area today, which serves to "bring to life" these dusty records of the past.

My medals research did not lead me to look into Orvill Stanton's entire career as a marksman. As stated earlier, it is assumed he had become a serious competitor some years earlier than 1884, which is the year of the first records that I studied. By then, he was an expert with both of the military rifles of the time, the .577 calibre Enfield-Snider and the newer Martini-Henry.

Orvill Stanton's competitive shooting career likely coincided with his service in the 60th Battalion Militia of Missisquoi. Militia membership was a prerequisite for many competitions. I have not seen his Militia records, but perhaps they are in the archives of the Missisquoi Historical Society or the Government of Quebec Library or Archives.

The Proceedings of the P.Q.R.A. (4) list 60th Battalion and Missisquoi County matches in Bedford on Sept 29 and 30, 1884 in which Private Stanton did quite well with both the Snider-Enfield and Martini-Henry rifles. He again competed and did well in Montreal on Aug 15, 1885 in a Battalion Match. On October 16 and 17, 1885 in Stanbridge, Private Stanton's name is prominent, placing in the top five shooters out of 25 or 26 competitors, and winning the Aggregate Prize (a badge and a whopping cash prize of \$2.00!). [Note 2] In Bedford, on Oct 9, 1886 Private Stanton's name is prominent in the list of winners, placing 5th and 1st in successive matches and 3rd in the Aggregate.

But it is Orvill Stanton's performance in the 1885 national competitions in Ottawa [Note 4] that set up his distinguished summer of 1886. The 1885 D.C.R.A Annual Report indicates he placed well in a number of individual matches and qualified in 10th position of the 60 men qualifying for Canadian Wimbledon Team that was to compete in England in the summer of 1886. The Report (p. 26-27; scan of pages appended) lists the qualifying team members and their scores, with the rules stated in the introduction:

“The Wimbledon Team for 1886 will be selected from the winners of the Grand Aggregate Match, provided they are members of the Active Militia, and their places on the list shall be determined by the total of their score in the Grand Aggregate Match, and their score in the match for the Prizes presented by His Excellency the Governor General.” (5)

The 1st placed man had a score of 349. Orvill Stanton's 10th place score was 336. The 60th placed man scored 296.

Marching Orders for Wimbledon

I have two official letters that Private Stanton received (and kept over his lifetime) from the D.C.R.A. The first informed him of his selection for the 1886 Wimbledon Team representing Canada. The other informed him of when, where, and to whom he was to report for duty. Scans of the letters are in Appendices B and C. They make interesting reading, particularly the part informing Private Stanton that he would have to appear in full dress uniform on the occasion of the inspection of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, and reminding him to assure that his uniform was complete and in good order. This was a no-nonsense approach.

The following is a quote from the second letter:

“In the event of your uniform not being in such condition as to be creditable to your Corps and the Militia force of the Dominion, it is suggested that you make immediate application to your Commanding Officer for the issue of such articles as you may require.

“This is especially advisable, as one of the conditions under which you proceed to England is that in the event of your not being properly equipped in any respect, the Officer commanding the Team is authorized to provide all that you require, and to deduct the cost of same from your share of money arising from prize winnings at Wimbledon.”

The team, under the command of Lt.-Colonel R. Tyrwhitt, 36th Battalion, sailed from Quebec aboard the *Polynesian*, on June 24, 1886. It must have been an exciting and proud moment for 37 year-old Private Stanton of Stanbridge East.

The 1886 Wimbledon Competition

The 1886 D.C.R.A. Report (5,) opens with a full account of the Wimbledon Team’s activities and the matches in July 1886. The report, by Lt.-Col. R. Tyrwhitt, is in Appendix E. It is a wonderful example of formal military writing of the Victorian period, and provides many details. It is well worth the read.

A practice competition was held in Cambridge some days before the official matches at Wimbledon. The Canadian Team won this competition against the University team.

The Team then camped in tents at Wimbledon. This was in the days before there was a “Canadian Pavilion”, such as there now is at Bisley (where the competitions are presently held). Lt.-Col. Tyrwhitt’s comments about the large quantity of flowers that were purchased to decorate the Canadian camp, which were admired by tens of thousands of visitors, is especially interesting. It provides some idea of the magnitude and festiveness of the event. There were several very distinguished visitors. [Note 3]

The Canadian Team did very well in many matches. Private Stanton’s name is prominent in the winners’ lists. But he did not quite make the select team of eight men who competed for the prestigious Kolapore Cup, placing 10th in the qualifying round. He missed by two places. The “Home Team” (the British) went on to win the Cup. The Canadians placed second.

Winning the P.Q.R.A. and Governor-General's Silver Medals in 1887

As earlier noted, listings showing Private Orvill Stanton's medal achievements are in the 1887 D.C.R.A. report. (6). Scans of the relevant pages of this report are in Appendix F. The listings are under the headings: "In the Province of Quebec" for the D.C.R.A. medal and "Governor-General's Medals", for the medal of that name.

The 1887 P.Q.R.A. Annual Report (4) provided the details I was looking for regarding winning the medals. Scans of relevant pages of this report are in Appendix G. Unfortunately, one pair of pages, with results of one match, has gone missing.

The medals were both won at the 1887 Annual Matches of the P.Q.R.A., held at "the old ranges at Pointe St. Charles", during August 9 -11. [Note 5] Rifles used were generally the Snider-Enfield, at various distances and in various shooting positions. Other matches required that competitors shoot with the Martini-Henry. In one match, the type of rifle was optional. There were 2,029 individual competitors and 43 teams entered. This was no small event!

Private Stanton competed as a member of the Militia and had the following scores:

2nd match – Association: First place with a score of 52 points (145 competitors)
prize: Album and \$25.00

4th Match - Active Militia and Battalion: Seventh place with a score of 77 points
(133 competitors) prize: \$8.00

5th Match – details missing, unfortunately, but score inferred to be 18 points

6th Match – Merchants: Twelfth place with a score of 27 points (140 competitors)
prize: \$5.00

8th Match - Optional: Twentieth place with a score of 31 points (454 competitors)
prize: \$4.00

10th Match – Aggregate, 1st Series – Militia . For the aggregate scores in matches 2, 4, 5 and 6: **Second place with a score of 174 points . Prizes – D.C.R.A. Medal and \$10.00.** "Also tickets to those of the first ten who attend the D.C.R.A. matches and are eligible to shoot for the Provincial Cup." (Private Stanton just missed first place by three points.)

10th Match – Aggregate, 4th Series – The Governor-General’s Medals. For the best aggregate in matches 2, 4 and 6, at 600 yards: **First place with a score of 76 points. Prize: Governor-General’s Silver Medal**

This was quite a Match for Private Stanton. He walked away having won both the coveted Governor-General’s Silver Medal, for his shooting at the maximum range of 600 yards, and a second prize aggregate silver D.C.R.A. medal. These achievements covered his performance over the entire competition, in a field of over 2,000 men. The medals were not won with a few lucky shots on one day. The Governor-General’s Silver Medal was the top prize of the entire event; it was the best prize the P.Q.R.A. awarded in 1887.

The medals and other prizes were presented by The Honourable Sir Adolphe P. Caron, K.C.M.G., in the hall of the Victoria Rifles new armory “and went off very satisfactorily, reflecting great credit on the committee having the arrangements in charge.”

We can only imagine how proud Private Orvill Stanton must have been.

Numismatic Aspects of the Medals

Private Stanton’s medals are, of course, the main inspiration for this paper. Photographs of the two sides of the D.C.R.A and Governor General’s medals are shown in this section. (These same photos are in Appendix H, as well as photos of the medals in their original boxes.) Both medals are wonderful examples of the medallic art of the period. Each is unique because of its engraved edge inscription, which leads easily to available records of how and when they were won.

The P.Q.R.A. commenced competitions in 1871 and awarded a National Medal, the N.R.A. medal, as first prize. The British National Rifle Association presumably provided this medal to affiliated associations. Quebec is the first province to have awarded such a medal. (5) (The N.R.A. medal was not the type that Orvill Stanton won)

The first **D.C.R.A. medals** (the type Orvill Stanton did win) were awarded in 1877, as second prizes. I learned from D.C.R.A. staff that the D.C.R.A. medal, which, incidentally, is still being awarded, has always been known as the D.C.R.A. “Affiliation Medal”. It is not competed for at the annual national competitions in Ottawa but is, rather, a medal that is given out by the D.C.R.A to affiliated associations in the provinces.

Orvill Stanton’s D.C.R.A. silver medal has an attractive design, struck in high relief on one side, depicting two military marksmen congratulating one another with a handshake. This design was the D.C.R.A. crest, which is still in use today, slightly altered. [Note 6]. The opposite side carries the somewhat misleading wording: “*Presented by the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1868*”. The year 1868 was, of course, the year the D.C.R.A. was founded, not when this medal was presented.

Close examination of the date side of the medal (right photo below) reveals that, in the process of multiple striking to produce the high relief, there was a misalignment of the die for one strike, resulting in a “shadow” impression of the wording out of position. I have seen this effect on at least one other medal of this type. This “error effect” requires a detailed study that is beyond our scope here.



The two sides of the D.C.R.A. Silver Affiliation medal (enlarged)

Edge engraved: “*Pvte. O. Stanton 60th Battn.*”

Sterling silver; weight: 40.7 grams, actual diameter: 44.4 millimetres
(Note that neither the year nor the association is mentioned in the engraving.)

The D.C.R.A. ordered small quantities (50 or so) of these medals each year for distribution. Elkington & Co, Regent St., London produced this particular medal, at a cost of £56-5s-0d for the batch. (7) The medal manufacturer’s name is in tiny letters around the rim, below “1868”.

Governor-General’s Medals for marksmanship have been awarded since 1873 (the Earl of Dufferin). Gold, silver and bronze medals were then awarded for first, second and third prizes. After Dufferin, only silver and bronze medals were awarded for marksmanship, the silver then becoming first prize. Each Governor-General, of course, had his/her own distinctive medal obverse and reverse designs.

There is an excellent, privately- printed book by Freeman Clowrey, printed in 1981, with a wealth of information on Governor General’s Medals that I consulted regarding Private Stanton’s medal. (8)

11.

The Marquess of Lansdowne awarded 301 silver medals over his term as our third Governor-General (1883-1888). Most would have been for academic achievement. From the D.C.R.A. records, I deduce that 35 or fewer were provided as gifts from the Governor-General for marksmanship (seven provincial associations, one per year per association, for five years = 35). Thus, Private Stanton's Governor-General's silver medal is not only beautiful but it is one of very few. It is also distinctive and identifiable because of its edge engraving.



The two sides of the Governor-General's Silver Medal (enlarged)

Edge engraved: "P.Q.R.A., 1887 PVTe. Stanton 60th BATTn."

Sterling silver; weight: 74.4 grams, actual diameter: 51 millimetres
(Note that both the year and the association are mentioned in the engraving.)

The Lansdowne medal, struck in 1884, was designed and minted by the famed medallist house, Wyon, of 287 Regent Street, London, England. [Note 7] In my opinion, the Lansdowne medal is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Governor-General's medals. The reverse bears Lansdowne's personal coat of arms surrounded by the legend:

"Presented • by • His • Excellency • The • Governor • General".

The obverse design is the beautifully executed dual portraits of the Vice-regal couple with the legend:

“Marquess of Lansdowne C.C.M.G. Gov: Gen: of Canada • Marchioness of Lansdowne • 1884 • “.

12.

Conclusion

Private Stanton went to England on the Wimbledon Team more than 122 years ago, as of the time of this writing. He won his medals more than 121 years ago. This was at a time when Canada was a very young nation, hardly 20 years old, and the Militia was an important part of our defense. Expert marksmanship was a highly valued skill. I imagine, and I hope, that Orvill Stanton’s honours were admired and applauded by his friends and neighbours in Missisquoi County and in his 60th Battalion. This paper is intended to record his achievements for history, so we do not forget this little bit of the obscure past.

Being a member of the D.C.R.A. myself, I observed some years ago that rifle marksmanship was generally becoming an older person’s activity, although there were notable exceptions. It seems that many leading members had military backgrounds. The association with, and support of, the Canadian military establishment were not as strong as they formerly were as these older, ex-military members of the D.C.R.A. died off. But this has now changed and there are many younger members competing. National Matches are still held at the Connaught Ranges in Ottawa and we still send an enthusiastic and skilled team each year to Bilsey, England. Also on the bright side, some of the top competitors are women.

The Missisquoi area has produced many marksmen following in the footsteps of Private Stanton. Two, in particular, come to mind from my youth: Edward (Ted) Wright of rural Dunham and Bob Robinson of Bedford. Both were on the Bisley Team, I believe more than once. They taught me about gun safety and tried to make me into a marksman. In the former, they succeeded. But I am afraid that owning Orvill Stanton’s medals as heirlooms is the closest I’ll get to a marksmanship medal.

13.

Notes:

1. From all accounts I have read of the Battle of Eccles Hill and the role of the 60th Battalion, I have not seen any indication of Private Stanton having been involved. He would have been 23 at the time. Had he fought in the battle, I am sure Brenda Heney would have told me about it. In fact, Private Stanton may even have been in the United States at the time. It is highly likely he joined the 60th Battalion later.
2. The Stanbridge matches were perhaps held in the long field across the river from “Gordon Hill” and the Anglican Church, facing west, away from Pike River. My mother, the late Margaret Cheek, remembered shooting competitions there when she was very young (1920s). One shooting position may have been on the high ground east of the river (perhaps just west of the Anglican cemetery, shooting across the river.)
3. I am indebted to Ross Jones of Sutton, QC for his vetting of the section entitled: **Some Information About the Firearms, the Militia and the Shooting Competitions of the Time**. Mr. Jones also provided me with a very informative paper entitled *Wimbledon and the Volunteers* by David Marshall © 2005, which can be found on-line at <http://www.researchpress.co.uk/wimbledon/wimbledon.htm> . This paper contains many contemporary newspaper and other quotes that, while written in the flowery language of the age, provide very different impressions than the official military reports. Shooting was no doubt taken very seriously. However, the after-hours periods were filled with great bouts of drinking and friendly rivalry, and many mock ceremonies, practical jokes and the like. From what I understand, these off-hours antics continue today (but are not in any official reports!).
4. The match was shot at a long-forgotten rifle range that would today be right in the midst of downtown Ottawa. The Rideau Ranges were situated beside the Rideau River, along Range Road. Range Road is now a lovely tree-lined “embassy row” type street, with a long park on one side. This area is located between Rideau Hall and Parliament Hill. Few Ottawans today would realize why the street is called Range Road.
5. The 1887 P.Q.R.A. Annual Report writer despaired that this meet was the last that could be held at these ranges, in a location that is now in the heart of Montreal. City of Montreal works carried out soon after (a dyke to prevent flooding) destroyed the range for use at longer distances and, it is presumed, the old range lands were later used for other purposes. The P.Q.R.A. held its Annual Match for 1888 in Ottawa, at the Rideau Ranges. The 1889 Annual Match was held at a new range in Cote St. Luc.

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6. The original D.C.R.A. crest was as shown on the medal. However, in more modern times, D.C.R.A. staff told me, someone thought that the left militia man's rifle was pointed in a rather rude, not to say dangerous, point on the other man's person. The modern D.C.R.A. crest therefore, has the left man holding no rifle. We have become a sensitive people! Or perhaps it is all about safety, and the old design was seen to ignore the proper handling of firearms. However, despite the change in the crest, the D.C.R.A. Affiliation Medals still have both men with rifles. And the left man's rifle is still pointing at the right man's most vulnerable area. Modern medals are, however, no longer made of sterling silver.

7. A careful examination of the medal with a magnifying glass will reveal the names "J.S. & A.B. Wyon" on each side. These names are located below Lansdowne's bust on the obverse and on the inside of the circle just opposite "His" on the reverse. "J.S." was Joseph Shepherd Wyon and "A.B." was his brother, Alfred Benjamin Wyon. J.S. actually died in 1873, well before this medal design was even contemplated, but nonetheless, the names of both famous Wyon brothers are on the medal.

References:

1. Purdon, Charles J. *The Snider-Enfield* (Bloomfield, ON: Museum Restoration Service, 1963) p. 1-2
2. *Ibid* p. 6
3. *Ibid* p. 8
4. *Proceedings of the Province of Quebec Rifle Association for 1887* (Montreal: McQueen & Corneil, 1888) and similar for earlier years.
5. *Report of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1886* (Ottawa: A.S. Woodburn, 1887)
6. *Report of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association 1887* (Ottawa: Mason & Reynolds, 1888) p. 53 and 61.
- (7) *Ibid* p. xlii and xliii
- (8) Clowrey, Freeman *Medals of Governors General of Canada* (Sherbrooke: Freeman Clowrey, 1981)

15.