



ARSENAL LANDS

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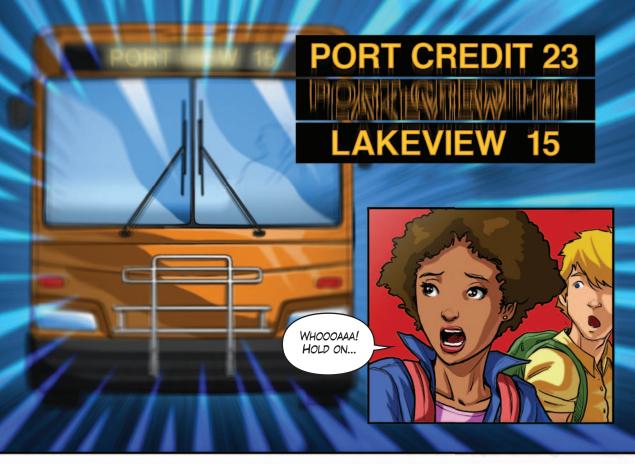






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LEGEND OF THE by Emily and Carter ARSENAL LANDS

A large tract of land in the Lakeview area of southeast Mississauga has been used over time for various military purposes, including a rifle range and aerodrome. Facilities included military barracks, parade square, an airfield and hangars.



In 1891 the Ontario Rifle Association relocated their rifle range to Lakeview, naming it the Long Branch Rifle Ranges. The ranges were used as training grounds for cadets, local militia, and the Department of Militia and Defence. The ranges were home to rifle competitions, and during the First World War were used for weapons and armaments training for new recruits into the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the local 36th Peel militia battalion, and training for the Home Guard and the Women's Home Guard. Corporal Reuben Crawford of Cooksville would have trained here as part of the 36th Peel militia. He was killed in action on October 30th, 1917 at the Battle of Passchendaele, and was one of almost 100 residents from historic Mississauga who lost their lives during the First World War. The rifle ranges closed in 1957.



Adjacent to and immediately east of the rifle range was Canada's first aerodrome, which operated here between 1915 and 1919. In May of 1915, Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors, Ltd. established a flying school in Lakeview. The school, and the nearby Curtiss aircraft factory, were managed by J.A.D. McCurdy, Canada's first aviator. Students at the school piloted Curtiss Model F "Flying Boats" and the Curtiss JN-3

"Jenny" biplane.



Students at the school initially had to pay their own way: \$400 for 400 minutes of flying time. After graduation, pilots went to England for further training and would join either the Royal Flying Corps or the Royal Naval Air Service. The Curtiss Aviation School produced 129 graduates between the spring of 1915 and the end of 1916. Of these pilots 34 lost their lives in training accidents or combat overseas. One of these pilots was Flight Lieutenant Cyril Roaf Barber of Port Credit, who lost his life in an accident in France on January 7th, 1918 at the age of 23. The Curtiss Aviation School closed on December 15th, 1916.



In January of 1917 the Long Branch Aerodrome became home to two squadrons, X and Y, of the Long Branch Cadet Wing with the newly formed Royal Flying Corps Canada. Cadets were trained in clerical work, mechanical transport, aerial gunnery, wireless communication, photography and other military responsibilities. New barracks building were added in the spring of 1918. At its height the aerodrome could accommodate 1200 cadets. The aerodrome closed in 1919.

- ¹ Long Branch Aerodrome Field, c1916, courtesy of the Archives of Ontario
- ² Long Branch Rifle Range, ⁴ Curtiss "Jenny" Biplane, Long Branch Aerodrome c1916, images courtesy of the Cha.tie Hare Collection, Mississauga South Historical Society
- 3 Curtiss Flying School, Class of July 1916, courtesy of the Toronto Public Library



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