



William "Tiger" Dunlop
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William "Tiger" Dunlop: Surgeon War of 1812

DR. WILLIAM DUNLOP, a man of surpassing talent, knowledge, and benevolence, was born in Scotland in 1792. He served in the army in Canada and in India and thereafter distinguished himself as an author and man of letters. He settled in Canada permanently in 1825 and for more than

20 years was actively engaged in public and philanthropic affairs. Succeeding his brother, Capt. Dunlop, as Member of the Provincial Parliament and taking successful interest in the welfare of Canada, he died lamented by many friends 1848.

From Recollections of the American War, 1908

William Dunlop had fiery red hair and a great sense of humour. His humour was well demonstrated in his will where he bequeathed, "Parson Chevasse ... the snuff-box I got from the Sarnia Militia, as a small token of my gratitude for the service he has done the family in taking a sister that no man of taste would have taken." Dunlop himself had a taste for tall tales and whisky. He was appointed assistant surgeon to the 89th Foot Regiment in 1813 and according to a 1931 article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Early in the August following, he sailed for Canada, in an ill-found, crowded transport, and spent over three months on the ocean, en route to the scenes of his future labours and adventures."

He arrived in time to participate in the battles of *Crysler's Farm* and *Lundy's Lane*. In Dunlop's own *Recollections of the American War*, he described his hospital after the *Battle of Chippawa*: "I was shown a ruinous fabric, built of logs, called Butler's Barracks Nothing could be worse constructed for an hospital for wounded men ... there was a great want of room, so that many had to be laid on straw on the floor, and these had the best of it, for their comrades were put into berths one above another as in a trans-

port or packet, where it was impossible to get around to dress their wound, and their removal gave them excruciating pain." Dunlop worked alone on 220 men from both armies because no other surgeons were available. Dunlop continued, "I never underwent such fatigue as I did for the first week at Butler's Barracks. The weather was intensely hot, the flies were myriads, and lighting on the wounds, deposited their eggs, so that maggots were bred in a few hours, producing dreadful irritation ... for two days and two nights, I never sat down." In his 1931 article Ford described Dunlop during the assault on Fort Erie, "It was here too, that he merited, by his gallantry, the Victoria Cross, had such a decoration existed; for he carried out of the firing line, on his back, "like sacks of potatoes," 10 or a dozen wounded men, the last of whom received, en route, a bullet in the back, which else had ended the doctor's career, as it did that of the recipient. He also brought, slung over his shoulders, six wooden canteens of wine, with which he refreshed his patients. The young giant of twenty-two, was medical officer, stretcher-bearer, and orderly, all in one." After Dunlop's engagements on the Niagara peninsula he was dispatched to York to take charge of 30 men in the general hospital in the Toronto garrison. "Toronto was then a dirty straggling village, containing about 60 houses. The church – the only one – was converted into a general hospital, and I formed my lodge in the wing of the Parliament buildings, which had escaped, when the Americans had burnt the rest of that fabric." In the spring of 1815 he served with a road-cutting party near Penetanguishene describing the work in wonderful detail in his recollections. The humorous Dunlop once gave three reasons for not going to church: first, a man was sure to find his wife there; second, he could not bear to be at a meeting where one man dominated the conversation; and, third, he never liked singing without drinking. Dunlop kept his beloved supply of liquor in a cabinet on wheels called "The Twelve Apostles". One bottle in the cabinet he named "Judas" as it held only water. Various described as doctor, businessman, founder of Goderich, Canada Company man, author, justice of the peace and more, this humorous surgeon is a Canadian well worth investigating.