

TOWNSHIP OF MELANCTHON MILITARY VETERANS

The following reflects an attempt to “put a face and story” to each who served with the hope that present day Melancthon residents might gain a connection and insight with those who “walked” Melancthon over the years and served Canada on an international military platform.

For those who wish to know more about a particular soldier you are encouraged to use the resources at the Museum of Dufferin, the various resources at Library & Archives Canada and any of the numerous online resources pertaining to Canada’s role and involvement in the wars/conflicts that have involved persons from Melancthon since World War 1. Footnotes have not been set out under each of the named soldiers but the following sites have been referenced throughout:

Museum of Dufferin, www.dufferinmuseum.com

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial, www.veterans.gc.on.ca

Ancestry.ca, www.ancestry.ca

Library and Archives Canada- Personnel Records of the First World War, www.bac-lac.gc.ca

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, www.cwgc.org

Canadian Great War Project, www.canadiangreatwarproject.com

Canadian Warplanes Heritage Museum, www.caspir.warplane.com

Find a Grave, www.findagrave.com

The following listing of men who served Canada in the Wars of the Twentieth Century will address those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the various conflicts. The listing first addresses the Thirty (30) men who paid the ultimate sacrifice in WW1 before sharing the stories of the Sixteen (16) during WW2. There were no residents of Melancthon who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Korean War or any other military conflict in which Canada participated.

It is the hope of the Heritage Committee that the names and stories of those who served Canada in the military but were fortunate to be able to return to their homes will be shared in the near future.

**INDEX (and order of stories) OF THOSE WHO PAID ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN
WORLD WAR 1**

Norman Richard Birge

Thomas Cribbes

Ernest Lyon Ferris

James Robinson Ferris

James Wellington Fleming

Joseph Clark Wood

William John Knox Graham

Robert James Gallagher

James Wildred Hunter

Thomas John Rooney Johnston

Earlby Oswald Power

Roy Victor Polley

William Sherman

Henry Stephen Priddle

Arthur Edgar Hamilton

George Wesley Bailey

John Robert Heaps

Rev Thomas Allen McComb

Herbert Arthur Patton

Robert Bruce Ferguson

Ernest Wilfred Sallins

Joseph King

James Fletcher Sloane

Charles Edward Sanford

John Alfred Jordan

James Daniel Stanley James

William Thomas Russell

Geoffrey Robinson Abbot

Clarence Eldon Tisdale

George Cameron Cornwith

Norman Richard Birge

Norman was born April 15, 1894 in Hornings Mills. His parents were Charles Birge (1839- 1912) and Mary Jane Beckett Birge (1854-1953). His father Charles died in 1912 and his mother would remarry in 1913 and relocate to Owen Sound. He had two sisters, one who had died at the age of one in 1887 and the other, Ethel, who would marry John Patterson in 1912 but die in 1922. Norman was unmarried.

Prior to Norman's enlistment to serve in the Great War on July 7, 1915 he would work as a sailor on the ships that plied the Great Lakes.

On July 7, 1915 Norman would enlist with the 35th Battalion, Eastern Ontario Regiment at Niagara Falls, Ontario. He would embark for England on August 17, 1915 and train until he was transferred to the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division, 12th Battalion on May 15, 1916. He would join his Battalion in France in early June, 1916.

Norman would serve as a Private with the 12th Battalion through various battles through 1916 and 1917 including Vimy Ridge in early April, 1917. His Battalion would, with the 1st Canadian Division, move east into France in late April, 1917 where the Battalion would engage with three other Canadian battalions in the Battle of Arleux Loop on April 28 and 29th, 1917. The Arleux Loop was a stretch of intricate defence trenches built by the German Army.

On March 25, 1917 Norman had signed his Last Will naming his mother as his beneficiary.

On April 28, 1917 the battle was undertaken at 4:25 am with the soldiers leaving their defensive position to attack the German army. It would be the last battle fought by Norman as he would pay the ultimate sacrifice on April 28, 1917.

Norman would be one of almost one thousand Canadians who were either killed or wounded at the Battle of Arleux Loop, which while successful in scope was done at a very high cost.

Norman was buried at the Bois-Carre British Cemetery, Thelus, France. His name is engraved on the Hornings Mills Cenotaph.



Bois-Carre British Cemetery- Norman Birge

Thomas Cribbes



Thomas was born June 26, 1897 in Berwickshire, Scotland, a son for David and Jane Cribbes. The family surname was spelt Cribbs on various documents but Thomas's military records name him as Cribbes while the Melancthon census records from 1921 and 1931 use the surname Cribbs.

Thomas would immigrate from Scotland with his family to Canada in 1907, his father having arrived in 1906. The family would live initially, at least according to the 1911 Canada Census, in Toronto before relocating to Hornings Mills, Melancthon.

Thomas's father David and mother Jane would also have two other children, Jessie, born 1904 and Molly, born 1910. David was a labourer employed at I.C.A. Strothers in Hornings Mills in 1917 and later, according to both the 1921 and 1931 Canada census, he was then working as the Caretaker of the public school in Hornings Mills. No doubt Thomas's two sisters would have attended the school in Hornings Mills.

In 1916, prior to Thomas enlisting, he was working as a caretaker at a school in Toronto.

On February 17, 1916 Thomas would enlist in Toronto. He would embark to England with his Battalion in November, 1916 being attached to the 3rd reserve Battalion before being transferred on March 26, 1917 to the 7th Battalion, British Columbia Regiment, being an infantry unit serving in the 1st Canadian Division. Thomas would arrive in France on April 11, 1917, after the Battle of Vimy Ridge to join his unit on April 21st.

Prior to joining his unit Thomas signed his Last Will on April 8, 1917, naming his mother as his beneficiary in the event of his death.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Vimy Ridge the 7th Battalion would continue to serve in various battles in France through the summer of 1917, including the Battle of Hill 70 at/near Lens, France.

The War Diary of the 7th Battalion details the movements and circumstances of the Battalion throughout the War but specifically in the month of August, 1917. The Canadian forces were positioned along the front lines east of Vimy Ridge and near the City of Lens. The Canadian forces had been tasked with attacking in the Lens/Loos area in an effort to dislodge the German army and to provide another battle front while the French army was engaging the Germans to the south and the British were in Belgium, near Ypres.

The Diary refers to the various attacks in August, including the use by the German army of gas shells throughout August, 1917. The trench conditions were far from ideal given the rain and mud.

On August 15, 1917 the Germans attacked the Canadian forces. The Diary notes that the Canadians sustained heavy casualties. One of the casualties was Thomas Cribbes, he would pay the ultimate sacrifice. Thomas held the rank of Lance Corporal at the time.

Thomas would be but one of many who were either killed, injured or missing as there were 429 casualties from the 7th Battalion, including over eighty killed from a Battalion with an original strength of 22 officers and 639 other ranks.

On August 31, 1917 the Canadian forces would hold a memorial service in honour of the many who had paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Thomas would be buried at the Loos British Cemetery, France, just north of Lens.

In September, 1917 the news of Thomas's death would be published in the Shelburne Economist and Orangeville Banner. His name would be engraved on the Cenotaph monument in Horning's Mills.

Thomas's parents would sometime after 1931 relocate back to Toronto.

Ernest Lyon Ferris



(1883-1916)

Ernest was the son of Edward and Sarah Brett Ferris who had been married in Melancthon in 1866. He was according to his birth registration born August 21, 1882 although other records use 1883 as his birth year. He was born in Melancthon, Ontario, being one of ten children. He had seven brothers and two sisters.

The 1891 Canada census indicates the family as living in Melancthon but by 1901 the family, at least his mother and some siblings, had relocated to Owen Sound based on the Canada census data. Ernest's father Edward Ferris had died in 1895 at the age of sixty one, being buried in the Shelburne Cemetery. Ernest was, according to the 1901 census, attending high school in Owen Sound.

Ernest and his mother, together with some of his siblings, would again relocate, this time to Edmonton, Alberta in 1904. This information is confirmed by the 1916 Canada census indicating that Ernest and his mother were living together.

Edward was working, prior to his enlistment in the War in 1916, as a real estate broker in Edmonton. He was also a Captain in an Edmonton militia unit. He had previously worked as a clerk in the Superior Court.

On June 29, 1915 Ernest enlisted as a Captain of the 66th Overseas Battalion, Edmonton. His Battalion would not embark from Halifax for England until April 28, 1916. On June 20th, 1916 he was posted with the 49th Battalion Infantry, Alberta

Regiment. Two days later he would have his rank reduced from Captain to Lieutenant to allow for and expedite his travel to the front line. The Battalion would travel to France shortly thereafter attached to the 7th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division.

The Canadian division, including the 49th, were to see action as part of the Battle of the Somme, a battle that would in entirety run for four months from July 1, 1916 through to October, 1916 at a great cost to both the Allies and the Germans but without any material change in geography.

As part of the Battle of the Somme there were a series of smaller battles, including the Battle of Fler-Courcelette which occurred on September 15th-16th, 1916. Ernest had by then regained his officer rank of Captain.

On September 15th, 1916 Captain Ernest Lyon Ferris would be ordered with his Battalion into the front line for the purpose of attacking the German trenches. It would be Ernest's last battle as he died on September 16, 1916.

Ernest would be one of five officers from the 49th to be killed there being another twelve officers wounded together with thirty eight non-officers killed and 179 wounded soldiers. The two day total of killed, wounded and missing was 256 soldiers from the 49th Battalion.

News of his death would be shared with two of his brothers who were also serving. The two brothers would then cable the news to their mother in Edmonton. The news would make it to the Edmonton newspaper as the family was actively involved in the community and in particular the war effort.

Captain Ernest Lyon Ferris was buried near Courcelette but his grave was not identified. He would have his name, together with approximately 11,000 other Canadian soldiers, engraved on the Vimy Memorial that was ultimately erected in 1934. It would only be on March 19, 2015, almost one hundred years later, that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Canada, would locate and determine that Captain Ferris had been laid to rest in the Adanac Cemetery, just north of Courcelette, in an unmarked grave and his headstone would be re-identified.

In tribute to Ernest he would also have his name engraved on the Hornings Mills cenotaph and on the plaque at the Owen Sound Collegiate honouring World War 1 veterans who had paid the ultimate sacrifice.

James Robinson Ferris

James Robinson Ferris was born on December 7, 1879 in Melancthon. He was an older brother of Ernest Lyon Ferris.

James had relocated with the Ferris family to Edmonton, Alberta in 1904. He would marry his bride Helen Cawthorpe. He was employed in Edmonton as a building contractor prior to the war.

On July 16, 1915, some two weeks after his brother Ernest, he would enlist with the 63rd Overseas Battalion, Edmonton. His personnel records indicate that he attained the rank of Lieutenant as of September, 1915. He would ship out with Ernest and the Battalion in April, 1916 and be taken on strength with the 49th Battalion in June, 1916. He would be promoted to Captain in April, 1917.

His military records indicate that he was engaged for periods of his service time overseas as an Instructor for Officer training in England and France. This may explain, in part, why his spouse relocated from Edmonton to London, England in July, 1916, although it was not uncommon during the War for some spouses of Canadian soldiers to relocate through until the end of the War. As of September, 1918 his duties as an Instructor ceased and he was returned to the field with the 49th Battalion in France. He rejoined his Battalion on October 6, 1918.

James military file indicates that he took ill in October, 1918. While en route from the front in France by hospital train he died on October 11, 1918. The records indicate he died from "acute dilatation of the heart"(now known as Dilated Cardiomyopathy), a disease that can and did lead to heart failure at the age of thirty eight.

James Robinson Ferris was buried at the Terlincthon British Cemetery, Boulogne, France.

He is remembered on the Horning's Mills cenotaph although under the name Robert Ferris.



on right

James Wellington Fleming

James Wellington Fleming was born March 6, 1896 in Hornings Mills. He was the son of Elijah and Elizabeth Anne (Wallwork) Fleming, the Fleming family having been long time residents of Melancthon. James was one of six children in the family, having three brothers and two sisters.

On April 3, 1916 James Fleming enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force to serve with the 2nd Field Ambulance Depot. His attestation papers describe himself as a Student and unmarried. He would over the following months be in training for his duties at the University of Toronto.

His military file with the CEF is thin for as of October, 1916 he had applied for and been accepted into the Royal Flying Corps.

The Corps was something very new given the very early stages of aviation, particularly in Canada. The Royal Flying Corps in Britain was seeking places to train the pilots and crews to fly the still evolving planes engaged in the War through 1916. The British and Canadian governments agreed that Canada, specifically in southern Ontario, would provide training bases. Canadian Forces Base Borden would be one of the bases for the Corps. Training would not commence until January, 1917 with the first graduating cadets being in May, 1917. Base Borden would receive its official accreditation as #42 Wing on May 2, 1917. Over the course of the last two years of the War, the RFC (Canada) would train over three thousand pilots. The RFC would become known as the Royal Air Force in April, 1918, the Canadian Air Force as of 1920 and then the Royal Canadian Air Force as of April, 1924. Women would be permitted to enlist as of 1942.

As for James there are no records related to his training although one can assume he was part of the first class. His military service records and information that is available shares that he was a member of the 29th Squadron, holding the rank as 2nd Lieutenant while serving in France, in July, 1917.

The records indicate that on July 12, 1917, that he and another pilot Hugh Holtsman Whytehead, an Englishman, were killed over France while on an "offensive" patrol. He was flying a Nieuport B1658.

James and the other pilots from the Royal Flying Corps would be remembered on the Arras Memorial Flying Services located in the Fauberg-d'Amiens Cemetery, west of the Town of Arras, France. The Memorial honours almost one thousand airmen from Commonwealth countries with no known grave.

Back home in Melancthon, James would be remembered by his community with his name being engraved on the Hornings Mills cenotaph while his parent's headstone at the Shelburne cemetery would include his name.



Arras Flying Services Memorial, Fauberge d'Amiens Cemetery, France

Joseph Clark Wood

Another young man from Melancthon would follow in the footsteps of James Fleming in the person of Joseph Clark Wood. Joseph was born October 26, 1897 in Melancthon. His parents were Richard and Bella Wood who lived on Lot 9, Concession 2, Melancthon according to the 1901 and 1911 Canada census data. Joseph had two brothers and two sisters. Joseph's father Richard was a farmer.

After attending the high school in Shelburne Joseph worked for Harper Book Publishers, New York.

On September 22, 1917 Joseph enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps and received his original flight training at Camp Borden. He would embark to England in late, 1917 to attend the Training Squadron operated by the Royal Flying Corps in East Bolduc, Hampshire.

On January 13, 1918 while on a training flight Joseph would pay the ultimate sacrifice as the wing on his Camel B4639 1TS would break off sending Joseph to his death.

Joseph Clark Wood would be laid to rest in the St Paul's Churchyard cemetery in East Bolduc, Hampshire, England. His name is engraved on the Hornings Mills cenotaph.



William John Knox Graham

While not a Melancthon man, Knox Graham is remembered for his name is on the Hornings Mills cenotaph and his extended family had connections to Melancthon including his maternal grandfather residing in Hornings Mills for the first decade of the 1900s.

Knox was born on May 9, 1894 in Mulmur to his parents Henry and Esther Ettie Fergusson Graham. The family lived near Terra Nova, Mulmur Township. The Graham family faced adversity as Knox's mother died in 1901 and she and both his sisters, one having died at the age of six months in 1889, are buried at Primrose Presbyterian Cemetery. Knox and his father would relocate to the Winnipeg area to farm in the early 1900s. The 1916 Canada census declared Knox as residing on the Winnipeg farm even though he had already gone overseas to serve in the War.

Knox Graham would enlist on December 6, 1915 in Winnipeg with the Fort Garry Horse Regiment, an infantry regiment. He would not serve overseas in the infantry as the opportunity came for him to transfer to the Royal Air Force.

Knox Graham on his transfer would serve with the 6th Training Squadron in Montrose, Angus, Scotland. Unfortunately on May 17, 1918, during a training flight, the plane would plummet from the sky from approximately one thousand feet to Knox's immediate death.

The local Daily Telegraph newspaper shared the story of the Aviator's death in the paper on May 18, 1918 concluding with the sentence "He belonged to Canada." A fair statement for a young man who had been raised for his early years in the County of Dufferin, Ontario but then spent his teen years in Manitoba before he went off to serve Canada.

William John Knox Graham is buried in the Sleepyhill Cemetery, Montrose, Scotland but he was and is remembered on the plaque on the wall of Westminster Presbyterian church in Winnipeg, Manitoba and on a cenotaph in Hornings Mills, Melancthon, Dufferin, Ontario.

Robert James Gallagher

Robert James Gallagher, sometimes spelt Gallaugher, was another Mulmur young man who would find his name engraved on the Melancthon cenotaph in Hornings Mills but indeed Robert is different as he is in fact buried in the Hornings Mills cemetery not in the lands of Europe or Britain.

Robert was born December 11, 1889 to parents Joseph and Nilias Gallagher who lived in Terra Nova, Mulmur Township. He grew up being known as Bert.

Prior to the War Robert would be employed with the Union Bank working in Montreal and St John, New Brunswick.

Robert enlisted with the 26th Battalion, New Brunswick Regiment on November 10, 1914. He would serve primarily in the Quartermaster (supplies) section of the Battalion with the Battalion in France from September 19, 1915 onward until he was hospitalized in England in January, 1917 suffering from bronchitis.

His military personnel file is very light on the details of his service while overseas and serving in France but the 26th Battalion had a very illustrious record of service, bravery and gallantry throughout World War 1 as part of the Canadian 1st Division having fought in almost every engagement. Records online indicate that the bronchial infection was a result of being exposed to enemy gassing.

Unfortunately for Robert he would not recover from his illness resulting in him being discharged home to Canada in April, 1917. He was hospitalized in the Hamilton Military Sanatorium until his death on November 16, 1917, the cause of death being pulmonary tuberculosis.

He was buried in the Hornings Mills cemetery. His grave is marked by the family headstone as well as a military headstone.



Hornings Mills Cemetery

James Wilfred Hunter



James Wilfred Hunter was born in Melancthon on April 12, 1899. His parents were James and Jessie (Davidson) Hunter. The family resided on Lot 17, Concession 2 East (OS), Melancthon. He had two brothers and two sisters. His father James Hunter died in March, 1916 and his mother would die in 1921.

Prior to his enlisting in the War in 1917 he was residing in Brampton, Ontario where he worked as a Tinsmith at the Brampton Steamfitters Company.

On July 14, 1917 he enlisted with the 48th Highlanders Regiment in Brampton. He would be transferred to the 1st Central Ontario Regiment, 1st Depot Battalion. His military record indicates that he was extended a furlough to work on the family farm between August 10 and 24th before undertaking his military training at Camp Borden.

His Regiment would embark for England on November 20, 1917, arriving December 7th but not before signing his Last Will on October 22, 1917 in which he named his mother as his beneficiary and also made arrangements to assign a portion of his ongoing military pay to his mother.

On February 15, 1918 he was transferred from the Depot Battalion to the Canadian Infantry 3rd Battalion. He would then embark to France where he joined his Battalion on June 15, 1918.

With the passing of summer in Europe it would be in August, 1918 that the Allies would launch what was to become known as the Last 100 Days Offensive as the Allies sought to break the German lines and push through. The Canadian forces were centered near Amiens, France but through August, as the offensive was undertaken, the Canadian troops were being shuttled around often in the middle of the night in an attempt to cause the German forces confusion for the Canadians had earned the reputation of being the Shock Troops, the point of any battle. The 3rd Battalion of the Central Ontario Regiment, including James, was part of the shuffle.

Finally in late August, according to the Battalion War Diary, the Battalion was put in place to attack at Upton Wood. On August 30, 1918 James, with his fellow soldiers would mass at 4:30 am to launch the attack. The Battalion diary notes that through August 30th and 31st tha the Battalion sustained heavy casualties as the Canadian soldiers engaged in hand to hand combat and using bayonets. The Diary notes that in the two day battle that the Battalion suffered 238 soldiers killed, injured or missing.

James Wilfred Hunter , at just over 19 years of age, was one of the soldiers killed on August 31, 1918. He would be buried in the Upton Wood Cemetery, Pas-de Calais, France.

James would be and is remembered on the family headstone in the Hornings Mills Cemetery, on the Honour Roll hung in the Hornings Mills Presbyterian Curch and by his name being engraved on the Hornings Mills cenotaph.



Headstone, Upton Wood Cemetery, France

Thomas John Rooney Johnston

Thomas Johnston was born in Melancthon on May 14, 1896. His parents were John and Ellen Elizabeth (Mills) Johnston. His father was a carpenter. He had one sister, Ethel, born in 1891. Unfortunately Thomas's mother died in 1903. By the 1911 Census Thomas was living with his father with relatives on Lot 16, Concession 3, Melancthon.

According to information posted online Thomas was attending Business College in Owen Sound prior to December, 1915. He enlisted with the 147th Grey County Battalion in Owen Sound in December 8, 1915.

His Battalion would embark for England on November 11, 1916. Prior to leaving Thomas had signed his Last Will on September 25, 1916 naming his father as his beneficiary.

Following his arrival in England he would be posted in various reserve battalions through August, 1917. He would successfully attend training as a Signaller in August, 1917 before being posted to the 24th Battalion, Quebec Regiment. He would not join his Unit in France until November 23, 1917.

The 24th Battalion served as part of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division.

Through 1918 until August, 1918 Thomas would serve in the 24th Battalion in France. In August, 1918 the Allied Offensive was launched.

The Diary notes of the 24th Battalion indicate that the Battalion was in and out of the front line through August but it was in late, August that the Canadian forces were engaged in heavy attacks against the Germans pushing the German army back. By late August the Battalion was on the front lines near Wailly.

The Diary notes indicate that at approximately 3:30 am the Battalion received orders that the attack would launch. The jump-off in the assault was at 10 am but it would be under heavy fire from German machine gun positions. The battle was hot and heavy and the Battalion would sustain heavy losses on the 27th and again on the 28th. On the 27th the Battalion sustained casualties including 20 killed, 199 injured and 23 missing soldiers. Thomas John Rooney Johnston was one of the soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice on August 27th, 1918.

The records disclose that not only did Thomas's father receive official notification through the War Department but he also received a letter from one of Thomas's fellow soldiers and friend. The letter

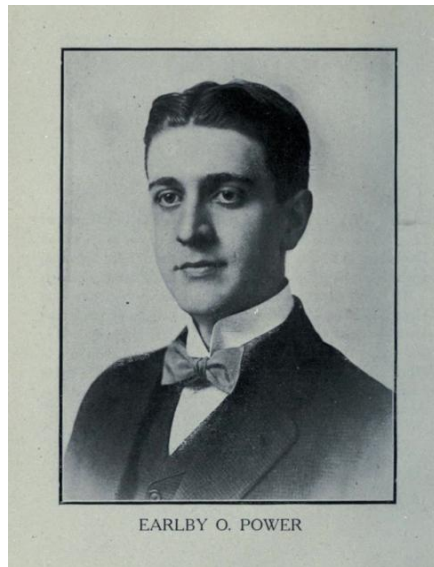
was dated August 31, 1918. The letter provided a brief report on Thomas's last minutes as he was fatally injured by machine gun fire minutes after the assault had commenced on the 27th and he died within minutes thereafter. The letter would have been of some consolation to Thomas's father as it assured him that Thomas would not have long suffered but more importantly there were words of comfort. Thomas apparently had been referred to as Tommy and was a great friend, bright, cheery and kind hearted who was missed terribly by the author of the letter.

Thomas John Rooney Johnston was buried at the Wancourt British Cemetery, France. He is remembered on the Hornings Mills cenotaph and on the family headstone in the Shelburne Cemetery.



Pte. Thomas John Rooney Johnston, Wancourt British Cemetery

Earlby Oswald Power



Earlby Oswald Power was born November 12, 1896 at Victoria, Kawartha lakes, Ontario. His parents were Reverend John and Evangeline Power. Reverend Power was a Wesleyean/Methodist minister who was posted to various churches and circuits across Ontario. The family would relocate to Melancthon in the early 1900s as Reverend Power became the minister in Hornings Mills and surrounding area. The 1911 Canada census indicates that the family resided at Lot 14 Concession 1, Melancthon.

The family would relocate to Toronto by approximately 1913. Earlby had completed high school in Orangeville before commencing employment with the Imperial Bank. In the course of that employment he decided to enlist with the Canadian forces in Kingston, Ontario on October 29, 1915.

Earlby would embark with his Unit from England on September 26, 1916, arriving in early October. He was attached to the Paymaster's Office in London, England on October 10, 1916 and hold the rank of Sergeant. Secure and safe, far from the front lines of conflict.

The need however for troops at the front was becoming critical by early 1917. According to Earlby's military file he transferred from his position in London, England, surrendering his

Sergeant rank in return for holding the rank of Private as of early February, 1917. He would find himself being taken on strength by the 20th Infantry Battalion as of May, 1917. He would join his Battalion on June 9, 1917 in France.

The War Diaries of the 20th Battalion indicate that the Battalion was out of the front line for much of June and July, 1917 conducting training as the Canadian Divisions had been tasked with leading the assault on the German army at Hill 70 (Lens), France in late July and August, 1917.

The Battalion was posted as part of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division just north of Lens, France. The Battalion Diary indicates that through early August there was ongoing shelling and bombing ongoing. It was then ordered that two platoons from the Battalion conduct a raid on the German trenches, some 200 yards from the Canadian trenches, in advance of the main attack that would ultimately follow on August 15th. The raid was scheduled for early on August 9th, the raiding party included seventy two officers and soldiers. In the course of the raid the Battalion sustained 49 casualties, including 11 killed, 30 wounded and 8 missing, a sixty eight percent casualty rate.

Earlby Oswald Power had formed part of the raiding attack. He was, according to his file, dangerously wounded on August 9th, 1917. His parents were advised. By August 20th Earlby's condition had improved and it was reported he was out of danger. His parents were advised. On September 1, 1917 Earlby died from his wounds. His parents received the telegram.

Earlby Power would be buried at the Barlin British Cemetery, France. He would be remembered with his name on the Honour Roll at the Hornings Mills Presbyterian Church and the Hornings Mills cenotaph. His name was also included on the family headstone in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto, his father having died in 1920, his mother some years later.

Roy Victor Polley



1898-1917

For a War that was fought thousands of miles from home the story of Roy Victor Polley is a story of a very small village represented in a world war by a group of young men, all about the same age, some living mere doors apart in rural Ontario, in this case the village of Hornings Mills, Melancthon. The reality and cruelty of the War must so have shaken villages and towns across Canada.

For the reader it must strike home that each of Roy Victor Polley, Earlby Oswald Power and James Fleming were neighbours living doors apart from each other in Hornings Mills and yet all three would die in a very ugly war, miles from home. The smallness of the War was that Earlby and Roy would ultimately serve in the same Battalion even though they enlisted at different times and their circumstances were different, yet they would no doubt have shared a drink, a meal, perhaps even a hug as they sat in the same trench in the summer of 1917 not knowing that Earlby's life was to end weeks later on September 1, 1917 and that Roy's life would end a few months later on November 21, 1917. One might wonder if the two had received the news of the death of their child time neighbour James Fleming who had died on July 12, 1917 or were aware of the death of Roy's friend William Sherman with whom he had travelled to war in August, 1916, William having died in battle in late April, 1917.

Roy Victor Polley was born on August 16, 1897 in Toronto. His later military records would declare he had been born August 16, 1898. His parents were William and Dinah (Bell)

Polley. Roy's parents had each been born in Melancthon, married in Melancthon and had children born in Melancthon before and after Roy's birth but we do not know the circumstances that had them in Toronto for Roy's birth. Roy would be baptized in January, 1899 in the Wesleyan/Methodist Church in Hornings Mills and the family, according to the 1901 and 1911 Canada census had them living in Hornings Mills. There were at least six children in the family. Roy's father's occupation is listed as a labourer.

Roy would enlist to serve in the War on February 28, 1916 in Toronto with the 123rd Battalion (Royal Grenadiers). This followed the enlistment of two other Hornings Mills men, William Sherman and Roy's brother William Herbert Polley on December 7, 1915 with the same Battalion. Roy listed his occupation as a farmer.

The 123rd Battalion would sail for England on August 8, 1916 arriving in England a week later. Each of Roy, William and Herb would go their own way as they were attached to different battalions. Roy would prepare and sign his Last Will in September, 1916 naming his mother as his beneficiary.

On October 1, 1916 Roy was taken on with the 20th Battalion (Central Ontario) but an injury in November postponed his joining with the Battalion in France until March 5, 1917.

Roy would serve with the Battalion at Vimy and Hill 70 between March and the fall, 1917 before the 20th Battalion, together with the other Canadian Divisions, moved from the battlefields of France to the battlefields of Belgium in late October/early November, 1917 in preparation for the Battle at Passendaele.

The War Diary for the 20th Battalion shares a grim picture of the battlefields of Ypres/Passendaele as it had rained endlessly, the grounds were mud and the war had ripped the fields apart creating massive sinkholes. The soldiers were required to navigate the battlefield on duckboard walkways and to live in trenches full of water, mud and broken, dead soldiers who reappeared from the mud with any attempt to shovel the trenches. The soldiers were each required to carry 120 rounds of ammunition, two sand bags, their personal rations and their guns across the mud.

On November 11, 1917 the Battalion went forward in battle. The Battle casualties sustained by the Battalion and the Canadian forces in general were astronomical. Roy Victor Polley's war came to an end on that day.

Roy was badly wounded with gunshot wounds to his head and upper leg. He was shipped back to a field hospital in Boulogne, France where his leg would be amputated. On November 21, 1917 Roy Victor Polley died from the wounds he had suffered.

Roy was buried at the Boulogne East Cemetery, France. His headstone is engraved with the words **"Soldier Rest Thy Warfare Over, Dream of Battlefields no More"**. These words would have been requested by his family as was the policy in the years following the War. He is buried with 5576 other Commonwealth soldiers from WW1 and a further 224 from WW2. Boulogne, France was one of the main hospital areas on the coast of France that served the Allied forces.

Back at home Roy would be remembered with his name on the Hornings Mills cenotaph and also on the headstone that would mark the graves of his parents in the Prospect Cemetery, Toronto as his father died in March, 1920 and his mother in 1926. Even then the connection of Hornings Mills joined the families for it was Earlby's father who presided over the funeral of Roy's father and it would then be a short time later that Earlby's father would die.

William Sherman

William Sherman is somewhat of a mystery for his connection to Melancthon is largely unknown. The only connection identified is that on his enlistment documents dated December 7, 1915 he has declared Hornings Mills as his place of residence but then it has been stroked out a Toronto address inserted but it is known that he enlisted on the same day as Roy Polley's brother and as of 1917/1918 his sister, Mary Elizabeth Fewster was living in Hornings Mills.

William was born in Miami, Manitoba on October 31, 1894. He had at least two siblings, a sister and a brother, Harry, but there is no information on his parents who were, at the time of the War both deceased. His Last Will dated September 18, 1916 named his sister as his beneficiary.

On December 7, 1915 William enlisted with the 123rd Royal Grenadiers, 20th Battalion. His enlistment attestation document describes his occupation as a farmer.

He together with the Polley men and the 123rd Battalion would depart for England on August 8, 1916. In October, 1916 he was taken on with the 20th Battalion but remained in England into January, 1917. He would then transfer to the 2nd Division, 14th Machine Gun Company on January 16, 1917.

The Canadian Expeditionary Forces had, as had the forces of other countries, evolved with each day of the War. This meant recognizing the limits of some traditional means of fighting wars, such as the Calvary, the introduction of armoured tanks, wearing helmets, defending against weapons such as poison gas, airplanes and it meant being able to respond to organizational and command structure issues. Machine guns had been used from the outset of the war but how the equipment was managed was evolving. In early, 1917 it had been determined to specialize the company/units responsible for placing the machine guns, to the transfer and even use of the guns.

For William Sherman he was to be part of the 14th Machine Gun Company. Over the next few months he and his Company were involved in training and preparing for the looming Battle of Vimy Ridge. Vimy was a battle lead and largely planned by the Canadian Corps and it was to incorporate some newer tactics of attack with how the soldiers moved forward under the creeping barrage of the artillery.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was launched on April 9, 1917 and would last for some days and then involve counterattacks by the German army after the initial success of the Canadian Corps.

On April 14, 1917 the War Diary of the 14th Machine Company indicate that the Company was charged

with the responsibility of relocating some Vicker Machine Guns. The notes provide little detail except to note that three soldiers were wounded. One of the soldiers wounded was William Sherman.

William's military personnel records indicate that he was taken to a Casualty Aid Station for medical assistance but that he had died by the time he arrived at the Station.

William Sherman was buried at the Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France.



What is known is that at the time of his death that his sister was living in Hornings Mills and that with the decision to place the monument to the soldiers from Hornings Mills who had paid the ultimate sacrifice William's name was one of those engraved and remembered. His sister would subsequently marry and move to Hamilton, Ontario.

William's death on April 14, 1917 would be the first in 1917 for the Hornings Mills community to address but it would not be the last as reflected in the stories shared for over the remainder of 1917 there would be at least seven more young men pay the ultimate sacrifice and the community, no doubt, was shaken with each telegram delivered or news paper article printed.

Henry Stephen “Harry” Priddle (Priddell)

Harry Priddle was born on July 3, 1887 in Osprey Township. His parents were Harry Stephen Priddle (1833-1909) and Harriet “Hattie” Roe Priddle. Harry had three sisters. They lived on a farm in Osprey until after Harry’s father passed in 1909. The 1911 Canada census indicates that Harry, his mother and one sister were living in Hornings Mills as of 1911 (Concession 1, Lot 16) with Harry and his mother working as farm labourers.

By July, 1915 Harry and his mother had relocated to Toronto apparently as a Toronto address is indicated on his military attestation application dated July 26, 1915. His military personnel records indicate he was residing on “North Line” which be logical translation is “Melancthon” for anyone who does not know where or wehat Melancthon was/is.

Harry enlisted with the 74th Overseas Battalion. He would embark for England with the Battalion on March 29, 1916. On his arrival in England he was transferred to the 1st Canadian Command Depot, essentially a holding and training camp until a soldier was specifically transferred to a specific Battalion in France.

For Harry his transfer was held up by a series of health issues until November 29th, 1916 when he was taken on by the 44th Battalion. He would join his Unit on December 16, 1916. He had prepared his Last Will on September 20, 1916 naming his mother as beneficiary of his Estate.

The 44th Battalion, originally a Battalion from Manitoba, had been involved in serving on the front line since August, 1916 fighting at the Battle of the Somme and then Ancre Heights thus creating the need for the additional draft of soldiers from England. The 44th served as part of the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4th Canadian Division.

Harry would serve with the 44th at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April, 1917 before serving at the Battle of La Coulotte in June, 1917. The War Diary of the 44th Battalion for June, 1917 notes that the Battalion moved into the front line in preparation and on the next day that the Battalion was involved in a brutal battle sustainign heavy casualties including 31 killed, 145 wounded and 77 missing. The initial reports were that some of the Battalion had been the subject of a bombing attack, thus the initial determination that they were “missing”. In fact many of the “misisng” were dead, Harry Priddle being one of the dead. His body was never located for burial.

Harry, as with many other Canadian soldiers whose bodies were never recovered, would have his name engraved on the Vimy Memorial erected in the 1930s in remembrance of those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice.

He would also have his name on the Honour Roll at the Hornings Mills Presbyterian Church and engraved on the Hornings Mills cenotaph.



Vimy War Memorial, Vimy Ridge, France

Arthur Edgar Hamilton



1896-1918

Arthur Edgar Hamilton was born in Shelburne on February 18, 1896 according to Ontario birth records although his later military file indicates a birth date of December 7, 1895. His parents were Elijah Hamilton and Mary Jane (Carter) Hamilton. His parents died early leaving Arthur an orphan when he was only nine years old. Both parents are buried in the Hornings Mills Cemetery, Mary Jane dying in 1908 and Elijah in 1914. The 1901 Canada Census indicates that Arthur had four brothers and three sisters although at least two predeceased the parents. The 1911 Canada Census has the family living at Lot 8, Concession 1, Melancthon, the family being engaged in farming. It is unclear as to where Arthur went to reside after his father died in 1914.

On March 11, 1916 Arthur enlisted with the 198th Canadian Buffs Battalion in Toronto. He was then living with his brother William and sister Grace. His Attestation document indicates he was born in "Sheldon, Ontario". He was then employed as a Motorman with the Toronto Railway/Streetcar Company.

Arthur would embark from Halifax for England with the Battalion on March 25, 1917. His military service record indicates that he was transferred from his Battalion to the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, 8th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division in January, 1918. He would join his Unit in France on March 5, 1918.

Arthur's service record indicates that he was wounded on September 22, 1918 but that injury would not interfere with his ability to serve on September 29, 1918. The Battalion was on the front lines near Cambrai, France as part of the ongoing Allied offensive that would soon close the War.

On September 29th, 1918 the War Diary for the Battalion indicates that it received an Order at 2 a.m. to move forward into position. The Diary then describes, almost hour by hour, from 5:30 am what occurred as the Battalion came under heavy attack by the German army with machine gun attacks and shelling. The Battalion was sustaining heavy casualties. The Battalion notes that it sustained 281 soldiers killed/injured and missing, including forty-five "ordinary rank" (non-officers) soldiers being killed.

Arthur unfortunately was one of the soldiers killed. He was killed by a sniper while trying to clear away an area near the trench. He would be buried at the Drummond Cemetery at Raillencourt, France. Arthur's name would be added to the headstone marking his parents grave in Hornings Mills. His name would also be listed on a plaque hung on the Old Toronto City Hall in honour of those from the Toronto Railway Company who had made the ultimate sacrifice. He was not yet twenty three years of age.

George Wesley Bailey



1892-1917

George "Wesley" Bailey was born on October 13, 1892 in Shrigley, Melancthon. His parents were George E and Jessie Bailey. He had three brothers and one sister. The 1901 Canadian census reflects the family living on the farm but the 1911 Census indicates that Wesley was living in Mulmur Township with his brother John and his family. As of 1911 Wesley was working as a butcher.

On January 21, 1916 Wesley enlisted with the 166th Battalion, (Queen's Own Rifles). The Battalion would embark for England on October 13, 1916 but not before Wesley had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant on April 13, 1916. Before he left Canada he signed his Last Will on September 14, 1916 naming his father as his beneficiary.

On January 20th, 1917 he was taken on strength with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (Eastern Ontario Regiment), 7th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division. Wesley would hold the rank of Lance Corporal. He joined his unit in France by January 26th, 1917. His military file indicates that on February 12th, 1917 he made the request to revert his rank back to Private.

The Battalion was preparing for the looming attack at Vimy Ridge. The Battalion Diary reflects the action and training of the Battalion through until April 9th, 1917, the launch date of the attack. On April 9th the Battalion was in position in the trenches by 4:30 am and at 5:30 the attack was launched. The Battalion Diary entry of April 14th indicates that between

April 9th and 11th the Battalion 215 casualties, including sixty three Ordinary Rank soldiers being killed.

George Wesley Bailey was one of those killed. He died on April 10, 1917. He would be buried at the Bois Carre British Cemetery near Vimy, France. Interestingly his military file continued to refer to him holding the rank of Lance Corporal even for entries post his death.

It would further appear that Wesley's cousin Gordon Roy Bailey, also from Shrigley, had enlisted with the same Battalion as Wesley and they served together with the PPCLI through until Wesley's death. Gordon Roy Bailey would survive the War but was badly wounded later in the War leading to his ultimately being discharged.

He is remembered on the family headstone in the Shelburne Cemetery. He is also on the Honour Roll of the those from Dufferin County (Melancthon) who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Tragically the family was still mourning Wesley when Wesley's sister Lena died on June 21, 1917.



Bois Carre Cemetery, France

John Robert Heaps

John Robert Heaps was born on November 8, 1887 in Upsall, Norfolk, England. His parents were Joseph and Sarah Elizabeth Heaps. John and his brother George would immigrate to Canada arriving in Quebec City on May 10, 1914, just months before the War commenced in August, 1914.

John lived in Corbetton, Melancthon working on a farm. His brother George was employed in Dundalk. With the outbreak of the War it would be a matter of time as to when the brothers returned to England.

On March 14, 1916 John and George enlisted with the 147th Grey Battalion in Owen Sound. The Battalion would train at Camp Borden. The Battalion embarked for England on November 14, 1916. The 147th Battalion would on arriving in England form part of the 8th Reserve Battalion. On April 21, 1917 the brothers would be taken on strength with the 4th Canadian Mounted Regiment serving with the 1st Canadian Division. John and George would join the Unit on May 11, 1917 at Avion, France.

Through May and into July, 1917 the Battalion was in an out of the front line, largely being a reserve battalion. In early July, 1917 near Lens, France, the Battalion while still in reserve moved forward. Unfortunatley the Battalion was too close for it was subjected to ongoing shelling. On July 13, 1917 the Battalion sustained eighteen casualties including some dead.

John Robert Heaps was one of thise killed on July 13, 1917. He would be buried at La Chaudiere Cemetery, near Lens, France.

John Robert Heaps is remembered on the Dufferin County cenotaph in Orangeville.

John's brother George would continue to serve through the remainder of the War.



Rev. Thomas Allen McComb



Thomas Allen McComb was born in Dufferin County on April 10, 1881. His father was James McComb, his mother Eliza Jane McComb. Thomas had seven siblings, two brothers and five sisters. His father died in 1902. The 1901 and 1911 Canada Census data confirms the residence of the McCombs in Melancthon Township. The family grave/headstone is at the Shelburne Cemetery.

Prior to enlisting on October 20, 1916 Thomas had been working as a farmer but was also a student studying to become a minister with the Methodist Church. He had given up his hope to be a minister in 1902 with the death of his father, turning to work as a farmer, before finally having the opportunity to return to school to study for the ministry. He continued the studies after his enlistment. Following his enlistment the Battalion trained at Camp Borden.

He enlisted with the 201st Toronto Light Infantry, 170th Mississauga Battalion. Following his embarking to England he would be attached to the 58th Battalion, 3rd Canadian Division. He would leave for France on November 26th, 1916, joining his Unit on December 6, 1916. Prior to leaving he had signed his last Will on October 10th, 1916.

The Battalion served at Vimy Ridge. The Diary noting that “the men are getting rather played out and in no condition to carry on” this being on April 17th after nine days in the front lines fighting.

On July 23, 1917 Thomas would, with the sound of artillery and fighting going on in the background, be ordained as a Methodist minister, surrounded by a number of supporters.

The Dufferin Museum holds a copy of a letter Thomas wrote his mother dated July 24, 1917 describing the experience.

On July 31st, 1917 he was promoted to hold the rank of Lance Corporal.

Through much of August, 1917 the Battalion had been out of the front lines. On August 27th the Battalion returned. The War Diary describes that the Battalion faced heavy enemy fire and faced heavy casualties. On August 30th, 1917 the Diary notes, as a result of shelling, there was one soldier killed and four wounded.

Thomas Allen McComb was the soldier who died on August 30th, 1917. He would be buried at the Aix-Noulette Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Thomas is remembered on the family headstone in the Shelburne Cemetery. He was honoured at a church service in Toronto and in Melancthon. He is remembered on a Roll of Honour at the University of Toronto and is recognized on the Dufferin cenotaph in Orangeville and the Shelburne Cenotaph..

Herbert Arthur Patton

Herbert Arthur Patton was born on April 11, 1883 in Dundalk. His parents were James and Mary Patton. Herbert was one of six children, having three brothers and two sisters. The 1901 and 1911 Canada census data indicates that the Patton family farmed in Melancthon Township. The family would migrate, as did many other families from Dufferin Grey counties, to Canada's west. The Pattons moved to Birtle, Manitoba in 1907.

Herbert enlisted on December 14, 1914 in Winnipeg, Manitoba with the 23rd Battalion. He would travel to England in April, 1915. He would then be transferred to the 10th Battalion serving with the Battalion until he was wounded on June 3, 1916. He would then transfer to serve in the Canadian Army Medical Corps in September, 1917.

On March 4, 1918 he was taken on as staff on the Hospital Ship, Llandovery Castle. The ship was one of five Canadian hospital ships tasked with transporting returning wounded/disabled Canadian soldiers from England to Canada. The Llandovery Castle was equipped with 622 hospital beds. Hospital ships were clearly marked and identified with Red Crosses. International law prohibited attacking hospital ships.

On June 27, 1918 the Llandovery Castle on a return trip from Halifax to Liverpool, England with a staff and crew of 234 personnel was attacked by a German submarine just south of Ireland. The submarine first used torpedoes before surfacing and ramming lifeboats with survivors. There were only twenty four survivors picked from the waters of the Atlantic ocean by a passing ship. News of the attack shocked the world and it would become the rallying cry of Canadian soldiers in the Last 100 Day Offensive against the German army in France.

Following the War the Halifax Memorial was erected to honour those who had died aboard the Llandovery Castle. It is on a wall plaque that Herbert Arthur Patton is remembered by Canadians.

Herbert Arthur Patton's family would remember him in Birtle, Manitoba as his name is on a community War Memorial.

**WAS ON STAFF OF
LLANDOVERY CASTLE**



PTE HERBERT PATTON

It was with the deepest regret that it was learned at Birtle, Man., that Pte. Herbert Patton, who belonged to the staff of the ill-fated Llandovery Castle, lost his life when the hospital ship was torpedoed. Pte. Patton left with the 23rd battalion in April of 1915, and was later transferred to the 10th battalion. He was wounded in June 1916, and was in hospital for nearly a year, after which he joined the Field Ambulance corps. Prior to sailing he had made application for leave of absence, but, recognizing the need for men, was returning to England when the catastrophe occurred. Two brothers are on active service in France, Major J. A. Patton, of the 208th Irish Canadian battalion, and Sergt. A. Patton, of the 5th Canadian battalion, both of whom left Canada in 1914.

Robert Bruce Ferguson

Robert Bruce Ferguson was born in Hornings Mills on December 11, 1889. His parents were Robert John Ferguson and Ann Jane McGhee. Both parents had family connections throughout the greater Hornings Mills area of Melancthon. According to the 1891 Canada census the family was farming in Melancthon. It is unclear as to when the family left Melancthon but they relocated to north of Port Hope, Ontario.

Robert Bruce Ferguson enlisted on September 12, 1916 with the 136th Overseas Battalion in Port Hope. He would embark for England on October 6, 1916. He would be taken on strength with the 87th Battalion, joining his Unit on November 22, 1916 in France. The 87th served with the Canadian 4th Division.

Robert's first battle encounter would be at the Battle of Vimy Ridge which launched on April 9, 1917. The 4th Canadian Division with its supporting Battalions was given the task of taking Hill 145, the highest point on the ridge. The 87th Battalion formed as part of the point of the attack in the first wave out of the trenches. The War Diary and stories of the Battle paint a terrible picture as the casualties were numerous as the Battalion faced heavy machine gun fire. On April 9, 1917 the 87th Battalion suffered over three hundred casualties, including one hundred fifty three killed, equating to a battalion casualty loss of over thirty per cent in one day.

Unfortunately, Robert Bruce Ferguson was killed on day one of his war. He would be buried in the Canada Cemetery #2, Pas de Calais, France being approximately one kilometer south of the Vimy Memorial.



Canada Cemetery #2, Pas de Calais, France

Ernest Wilfred Sallins



Ernest Wilfred Sallins was born April 17, 1892 in Hornings Mills. His parents were John and Margaret (Gallaughier) Sallans, both with Melancthon and Mulmur roots. Unfortunately Ernest's mother died in 1899, she is buried in the Perm Methodist Cemetery, Mulmur Township. Ernest had three siblings. His father was a farmer and Methodist minister. The family would move west to Huronville, Saskatchewan in 1904.

On April 18, 1916 Ernest enlisted in Regina, Saskatchewan with the 195th Battalion. He would leave for England from Halifax on November 1, 1916 having left his Last Will signed September 28, 1916 naming his father as beneficiary. He would be taken on strength with the 102nd Battalion Canadian Infantry, Central Ontario Regiment on November 27th, 1916. Ernest joined his Unit in France on December 4, 1916.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge would be the next battle for the Battalion. The Battalion War Diary reflects that it was next to the 87th Battalion as it formed for the attack from the trenches. Zero hour was 5:30 am April 9, 1917. The Battalion sustained heavy casualties with 320 casualties, including 113 killed and 6 who would die later of their wounds.

Ernest Wilfred Sallins was one of those from the 102nd Battalion killed on April 9, 1917. He, as with Robert Bruce Ferguson, was buried at Canada Cemetery #2, Pas de Calais, France.

Ernest is remembered on the Dufferin Honour Roll, Orangeville cenotaph.



Canada Cemetery #2, Pas de Calais, France

Joseph King

Joseph King was a British Home Child, a program that based in England provided for children from homes in England to be sent to countries such as Canada. The children who formed the basis for the programs were either orphans or from families who just did not have the resources to provide for the child. England in the late 1800s and early 1900s facing major economic and social challenges. The British Home Child program had approximately one hundred thousand children come to Canada between 1869 and 1939, many finding their way to work on farms in rural Ontario.

Joseph was born on November 27, 1894 in Strensall, North Yorkshire, England. His parents were Thomas and Alice King. Joseph had eleven siblings. He came to Canada at the age of eighteen, arriving on December 15, 1912 in Halifax. He would ultimately end up in Melancthon working on a farm owned by Samuel Dolson, near Redickville, Melancthon on Lot 28, Concession 4. He would become a member of the Redickville Methodist Church.

On September 8, 1915 in Toronto. He would be in France by March 8, 1916 serving with the 2nd Battalion Canadian Pioneers, 2nd Canadian Division. The Pioneer Battalions were soldiers who had military training but were generally equipped with various trade qualifications. The Pioneers would work with the Engineer Battalions on infrastructure requirements for the War effort and to provide for the military what was needed, be it bridges, trenches or the like and often under enemy fire.

On October 1, 1916 the Battalion was near Courcellette, France. The War Diary notes that the Battalion was working under shell fire when a shell wounded soldiers, including Joseph King. Joseph would die of his injuries on October 2, 1916.

Joseph was buried at the Contay British Cemetery, Albert, France. His family in England and his employer in Melancthon were advised of this death.

He is remembered on the Dufferin Memorial, Orangeville cenotaph.



Contay British Cemetery, Albert, France

James Fletcher Sloane

James Fletcher Sloane was born in Melancthon on October 26, 1890. His parents were James (1844-1921) and Mary (Kennedy)(1852-1925) Sloane. He had one brother and two sisters. His father was a farmer and saw mill operator. His parents were buried in the Melancthon United Church Cemetery, sometimes referred to as the Gravel Road Cemetery, Melancthon.

James Fletcher Sloane enlisted on December 10th, 1915 at Toronto with the 123 Canadian Battalion. While the records and information make no mention one might speculate that he followed William Sherman and William Polley as they had enlisted on December 7th, 1915 with the same Battalion and would later be joined by Roy Polley.

The Battalion travelled to England in August, 1916. The Battalion was formed on a strength of thirty two officers and nine hundred sixty "other rank" soldiers. The Battalion, while originally an Infantry battalion had been redesignated a Pioneer Battalion, was off to France. James would join his Unit on March, 1917. The Battalion served as part of the 3rd Canadian Division.

The War Diary for the Battalion references on March 25, 1918 that four soldiers were wounded. James was one of the wounded. He would die of his wounds on March 26, 1918.

James was buried at the Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France, being the same cemetery that his friend William Sherman was buried in, although not having served together or on the same date.

He is remembered on the Shelburne cenotaph and the Dufferin Memorial, Orangeville cenotaph.



Charles Edward Sanford

Charles Edward Sanford was born in Melancthon on August 3, 1877. His parents were Matthew Sanford (d 1895) and Ann Moor (d 1907), both of whom are buried in the Shelburne Cemetery. The 1891 Canada census informs that the Sanford family was living in Melancthon in the business of farming.

Charles would marry a Shelburne woman, Hester Caroline Colley, on August 24, 1908. Hester's family according to the 1901 Canada census was living in Melancthon. They had two children, Josephine and Leslie. They had relocated to Toronto where Charles was employed as a teamster.

Charles enlisted with the 126th Battalion on January 28, 1916. Prior to December, 1915 married men required the consent of their spouse on enlistment but that requirement was removed to try increase enlistments. One does not know if that was a factor in Charles decision to enlist.

His military file reflects two Wills but each named his spouse as beneficiary.

The 126th Battalion embarked for England on August 14, 1916, arriving in England on August 24, 1916. Ultimately Charles would transist Battalions until taken on strength by the 38th Infantry Battalion on December 4, 1916. Charles would join his Unit early in 1917 but an illness prevented his rejoining until March 16, 1917.

A review of the War Diary for the 38th Battalion reveals considerable detail of the activity in June, 1917 which brought the Battalion back into the front line on June 13, 1917 but very little details on the impact of the fighting on the Battalion. The only reference is to there being "several direct hits by the enemy on our trenches".

For Charles and his family, one of the direct hits referred to killed Charles. Charles body would not be found for burial. He is memorialized by having his name on the Vimy Memorial.

He is further remembered with his name being engraved on the family headstone in the Shelburne Cemetery.

John Alfred Jordan

John Alfred Jordan was born in Riverview, Melancthon on January 28th, 1890. His parents were Hugh and Mary Ann (Stewart) Jordan. John had nine siblings. The 1891 Census reflects the Jordan family farming in north Melancthon. The 1901 Census shows the family being in Manitoba although two oldest living siblings had stayed behind in Melancthon. The 1906 Saskatchewan census reveals tha the Jordan family had taken up residence in sothern Saskatchewan to farm.

John Alfred Jordan enlisted to serve in the War on February 25, 1915 in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The Battalion would ultimately embark for England in the fall, 1916. John Alfred would be taken on strength by the 5th Infantry Battalion (Saskatchewan Regiment) on November 26, 1916 but not ultimately join his Unit in France until April 13, 1917 in the immeidate aftermath of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The War Diary for the 5th Battalion inidcates that John Alfred and the other soldiers of the 5th would not have long to wait before engaging once again. They would form part of the four Canadian Battalions who would join in the Battle of Arleux Loop, which included the 12th Battalion in which Norman Birge, also from Melancthon, served.

The 5ht Battlion moved back into the front line trenches on April 26th. The Battle orders were received on April 27th. The Battalion was in the jumping off trenches at 4:30 am on the 28th of April, 1917. While the Battalion Diary notes that over the course of the two day battle that the objective was attained it came at a great cost to the Battalion as it sustained casualties of two hundred forty men.

John Alfred Jordan was one of the casualties as he sustained serious multiple gun shot wounds. He was transferred back to a Casualty Clearing Station for aid but would die from his injuries on May 9, 1917.

John Alfred would be buried at the Etaples Military Cemetery, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France.

John's older brother Issac, back in Riverview, Melancthon, would receive the news of his brother's death. The local Shelburne newspaper reported on John Alfred's death.



James Daniel “Stanley” James

James Daniel Stanley James was born in Hornings Mills, Melancthon on February 12, 1892. He was the son of Lewis and Elizabeth (Inglis) James. He had five siblings. The family relocated west to Manitoba sometime in the 1890s.

Apart from his place of birth being Hornings Mills there was no apparent connection to Melancthon. His name, following his death on December 1, 1916 in the War, found its way to the Dufferin Honour Roll for the Orangeville Cenotaph under Melancthon.

Stanley enlisted with the 79th Overseas Battalion in Brandon, Manitoba on August 6, 1915 and on August 21, 1916 he was on his way to England. He would remain in England in the reserve/depot battalions until he was taken on strength by the 13th Canadian Infantry Battalion (Royal Highlanders) on July 14, 1916. He would join his Unit in France on August 4, 1916 but thereafter would have some health issues that kept him from being with the Battalion until October 17, 1916.

Through until November 30, 1916 the Battalion was in and out of the front line trenches just west of Vimy Ridge. The Canadian forces were essentially in a deadlock position with the German army that were entrenched along the Ridge. The two forces were exchanging shell and gunfire from the trenches. The Battalion when in the backline was doing training and assisting other battalions in trench readiness. On November 30, 1916 the Battalion moved back into the front line trenches. On December 1, 1916 the War Diary for the Battalion indicates that there were trench mortars and shelling from the Germans. The Diary daily notes are silent on casualties but the end of month recordings detail the names of the soldiers who became casualties. Stanley is referenced as having gone missing on December 1, 1916, together with many other casualties of the 1st of December. The Diary makes no note, although his Personnel record does, that he was determined to have been killed on December 1, 1916, his body never recovered.

James Daniel Stanley James would have his name engraved on the wall of the Vimy Memorial that was unveiled on July 26, 1936 to recognize the more than eleven thousand other Canadians who had no known grave.

James Daniel Stanley James is remembered on the Dufferin Honour Roll, Orangeville Cenotaph.

William Thomas Russell

William Thomas Russell was born September 18, 1890 in Sutton, Surrey, England. His parents were William John Russell and Emma Rapley. He had two brothers and one sister according to the 1911 England census data.

The exact immigration status of William Thomas Russell's travel to Canada is unclear although there is record of a William Russell arriving in Canada from England in June, 1913 but with little other information. The information that exist relating to his connection to Melancthon Township is that the Shelburne Economist newspaper on November 29, 1917, post William's death, references his being employed by James Lonway on Gravel Road, Melancthon. He is also remembered on the Dufferin Honour Roll, Orangeville Cenotaph under Melancthon.

The records available identify that William Thomas Russell enlisted on December 4, 1915 with the 147th Grey Overseas Battalion in Owen Sound. The Attestation form list Thomas's then address as being in Owen Sound. The form named his mother back in England as his next of kin but the Form is later changed to name his spouse. Thomas William had married on March 30, 1916 a young lady named Elizabeth Smith, a lady who was then living in Owen Sound but who indeed was from Newfoundland.

The 147th Battalion would embark for England on November 14, 1916. Thomas had prepared his Last Will dated September 4, 1916 naming his spouse as beneficiary of his estate. On Thomas's arrival in England he would be transferred to a Reserve Battalion until he was taken on by the 4th Battalion Canadian Mounted Rifles in April, 1917. He would join his Unit on May 14, 1917 and serve thereafter through October, 1917.

The War Diary for the 4th Battalion addresses the transition from serving in France through the various battles of 1916 and 1917 to being transferred by train to Ypres, Belgium on October 23rd. The Notes identify the terrible conditions of Ypres/Passendaele, including the mud, the rain, the destroyed buildings and barren landscape and to seeing the Passendaele Ridge (a Ridge that really did not exist as one might expect as it is largely flat land). The Diary identifies the mud and impassable roads, walkways and trenches.

On October 26 1917 at 5:30 am the Diary entries describe the onset of a battle and severe suffering. The statisctcs indicate 291 soldiers killed, wounded or missing. There were sixty six killed. Thomas Weilliam Russell was one of those killed, his body never recovered.

Thomas William Russell is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. The Memorial contains approximately thirty five thousand names of Allied soldiers who were killed, their bodies never recovered for individual burial. The Menin Gate is one of the main thoroughfares into Ypres, Belgium and each day in honour of those who sacrificed so much there is a remembrance service where sometimes hundreds and thousands pay honour.

Thomas William Russell's spouse and mother would have each received notice of his death in 1917. The news was shared with a source in Shelburne for the news was printed in the paper on November 29, 1917.

William Thomas Russell is remembered on the Dufferin Honour Roll, Orangeville cenotaph.



Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium

Geoffrey Robinson Abbott

Geoffrey Robinson Abbott came to Canada on March 22, 1912 as part of the British Home Children program. He was not yet fourteen years of age, having been born April 27, 1898 in Paddington, London, England, the son of Robert and Isabel (Ownes) Abbott.

Geoffrey had been orphaned by the age of three and would live with extended family through until 1912. The British Home Children program provided for the transport of children, be they orphans or children no longer having support in England, to Canada to be placed in rural settings to provide labour. The records indicate that Geoffrey landed in St John New Brunswick on March 22, 1912, the records noting that he was headed to Dundalk.

He would in fact reside with William and Emma Hendry on Gravel Road, Melancthon. He would live with the Hendry's until December, 1914 when he returned to England.

Geoffrey would enlist at the age of seventeen with the British Army on May 11, 1915. He would be attached to the King's Royal Rifle Corps, British Expeditionary Force, 18th Battalion.

On July 31st, 1917 Geoffrey Robinson Abbott would be killed at the Battle of Passendaele, Belgium. This was known as the Third Battle of Ypres, the first having occurred in the fall, 1914, the second in April, 1915. It was also known as the battle of Passendaele, a battle that started in July, 1917 with the British forces before being handed off to other commonwealth countries and then to the Canadians in October-November, 1917.

Geoffrey's body was not recovered for burial. He is remembered on the wall of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. He was also remembered in Melancthon in November, 1917 as news of his death was published in the Shelburne Economist.

Clarence Eldon Tisdale

Clarence Eldon Tisdale was born in Corbetton, Melancthon on June 8, 1896. His parents were Hamilton Tisdale and Elizabeth Jane Corbett. Hamilton Tisdale was apparently a Machine Agent. The family had left Melancthon before 1901 as the 1901 Canada census indicates the family was residing in Wentworth Township and by the time Clarence enlisted in 1915 the family was residing in Leamington, Ontario.

What connects Clarence Eldon Tisdale to Melancthon, apart from his place of birth, is that his maternal grandparents were James Corbett (1832-1902) and Jane Corbett (1840-1915), parents of Clarence's mother. James Corbett had built and established the first business in Corbetton, a tavern on Gravel Road (Highway 10) and the village is named for him. Elizabeth Jane Corbett Tisdale was one of two daughters of the Corbetts.

Clarence enlisted on December 6, 1915, listing his residence as Leamington and his occupation as Machine Agent. His Battalion would embark from Halifax on May 31, 1916, arriving in England on June 8, 1916. Clarence as of September 10, 1916 was taken on by the 19th Battalion, an infantry unit forming part of the 4th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division. He joined his Unit on October 6, 1916 as the Battalion was re-establishing after its involvement at the Battle of the Somme. Clarence would continue to serve through until early August, 1917.

Through July, 1917 the Battalion, as with the other Canadian forces, was preparing for the looming battle at Hill 70, nears Lens, France. The Battalion War Diary reflects the preparation and training before it moved into the front line on August 5, 1917. On August 6, 1917 the Battalion Diary has lengthy reporting of the events of the attack and the enemy counterattacks.

Clarence Eldon Tisdale unfortunately was one of the ordinary rank soldiers killed in action on August 6, 1917.

He is buried in the Fosse #10 Communal Cemetery, Saint-En-Gohelle, France.



George Cameron Cornwith



George Cameron Cornwith was born on July 3, 1889. The birth registration information indicates that the family was living in Riverview but all records relating to George's military service indicate that he was born in Corbetton, Melancthon.

George's parents were John Cornwith and Mary Ann ("Minnie") Howatt. The family record information, namely the Canada Census of 1901 indicates the family was in Toronto and the 1891 and 1911 census records are not available for the family. However Mary Ann Howatt's family had a lengthy history in the Corbetton area, both before and after George Cameron Cornwith.

George Cameron Cornwith was working as a "foreman" at the time of his enlistment on August 18, 1915 in Toronto at the Barriefield Camp. He enlisted with the 34th Battery of the Canadian Field Artillery. He would embark for England on November 10, 1915 and immediately following his arrival he was taken on strength by the 1st Heavy Artillery with the rank of Gunner. He joined his Battery on January 18, 1917. His military personnel file indicates that he would be transferred back to England in June, 1918 for the purpose of his obtaining his Officer commission as a Lieutenant. He would be granted his officer commission and return to France to serve in late September, 1918 with the 2nd Brigade Canadian Field Artillery.

On November 5, 1918, less than a week before the end of the War, the War Diary references that the guns were all in action, this as the Germans retreated and the Canadians advanced down the Mons Road. The Diary notes that Lieutenant Cornwith received wounds to his head. The War Diary fails to mention that the Lieutenant died of his wounds. He would be the last man from the Brigade that died in the Great War.

George Cameron Cornwith is buried at the Auberchicourt British Cemetery, France. His parents would receive notice of the death of their only child essentially as the War ended.



Not only was George Cameron Cornwith the last man killed from his Brigade, he was the last man with roots in the Township of Melancthon who paid the ultimate sacrifice during what became known as the Great War.