History



MYNO VAN DYKE

Clarington remembers: Lance Corporal Percy Cecil Gomme

Killed in action

Nov. 1, 1917 near Passchendaele, Belgium

Percy was the youngest son of Charles and Hannah Gomme of Newcastle. They were married in Bradford, York in 1874. Charles came over first and later that year Hannah arrived with their five children. The other five children were born in Newcastle.



Percy Gomme

The Gomme family first lived at the north end of Beaver Street and later outside of the village in the home once owned by Isaac Selby. Later they lived on the north side of Edward Street between Mill and Beaver streets.

Percy Cecil Gomme was born in Newcastle on March 5, 1896 and records indicate he was with the 46th Regiment of Durham in Petawawa in 1914. He began as a private but was promoted to lieutenant with 136th before resigning his commission to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was short, five foot six inches, had a fair complexion and light brown hair.

The Second Battle of Passchendaele took place from Oct. 26 to Nov. 10, 1917. The Canadians were sent there to relieve the battered ANZAC forces and take part in the push to capture Passchendaele. This was a difficult battlefield with muddy flat terrain and the Canadian commander, Lt. General Arthur Currie, was reluctant to send his troops into battle but they began the offensive on Oct. 26. Advancing was very slow through the mud and they experienced heavy losses. Despite the problems the Canadians reached the outskirts of their target on Oct. 30 in a driving rainstorm. The Canadians and British finally captured the village of Passchendaele on Nov. 6, but it was without Percy Gomme. On Nov. 1, 1917, Percy, age 21, was killed in action near Passchendaele. His name is inscribed on the Ypres Memorial at the Menin Gate in Belgium. There is a gravestone honouring his life at the Bond Head Cemetery.

More than 4,000 Canadians died in the Battle of Passchendaele and almost 12,000 were wounded. Percy Gomme was among 650,000 Canadian soldiers who fought for our freedom during the First World War. We shall never forget.

-- Newcastle resident Myno Van Dyke, of the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society, loves to share local stories from the past.