

WW1: Honouring Those Who Volunteered in May, 1917

In May, 1917, the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte had one community member volunteer to serve: Joab Walter Powles.

JOAB WALTER POWLES (name is as it appears on his Attestation Paper)
Regimental Number: 2250975

According to his death record, Joab was born on the 11th of March, 1869. But, his date of birth on his attestation paper is the 11th of March, 1872.

He was the son of Isaac & Julia Powless.

Joab volunteered on the 29th of May, 1917, in Toronto for the #2 Forestry Draft.

According to his military personnel file he worked as a bushman or lumberman before the war. He had two years of military experience with the 24th Simcoe Foresters. The file also states that he had tried to volunteer before but was turned down for being "Too Old".

He left Canada from Halifax on the 22nd of June, 1917, and arrived in Liverpool, England on the 4th of July, 1917.

Joab was transferred to the #58 Company later in July and sent to France. He was sent to hospital at Havre, France, with bronchitis on the 7th of August, 1917. He was sent back to England on the 22nd of August, 1917. He remained hospitalized until he was sent home to Canada in November, 1917. Joab was in a convalescent home in Toronto in November, 1917.

Joab Walter Powles was discharged due to chronic bronchitis (a pre-existing condition), age and emphysema on the 30th of January, 1918. His discharge papers state he was "no longer fit for war service" and that his military character was "Good". He had served only 14 days in France.

The medical report states that he was 48 years old, he had "moderate emphysema with rigid chest. winter cough without sputum. moderate arterio-sclerosis." It also reports he had chronic bronchitis which started in August, 1917, in France. The doctors recommended rest and moderate exercise for the emphysema. However; the Medical Board did not agree and stated that the "chronic bronchitis pre-existed enlistment, was aggravated by service in France; but the aggravation has now ceased." They recommended a medical discharge due to "disability which pre-existed enlistment not due to or aggravated by service."

Joab Walter Powles died in Midland, Ontario on the 1st of July, 1929 [*Archives of Ontario Death Registration*]. He was a fireman at the time of his death which was due to a cerebral haemorrhage. He was buried at Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory on the 2nd of July, 1929.

Most of the information here is from his military personnel file [LAC RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 7950 - 29]. This file has been digitized and can be found at <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>. Other information has been taken from MBQ Records.

*****Due to April's special section on Vimy Ridge, we could not include information on the community member who volunteered in April, 1917: Orval Johns. We would like to feature him this month.*****

ORVAL JOHNS (name is as it appears on his Attestation Paper)

Regimental Number: 273404

According to his baptismal record and his attestation papers, he was born on the 6th of June, 1894.

Orval was the son of Charles & Sarah Catherine (Smart) John.

His military personnel file states he was a sawyer before the war and had no previous military experience.

Orval first volunteered on the 10th of April, 1916, in Toronto for the 216th Battalion. He was found to be flat footed and it was noted that he "has gone barefooted most of his life". He was discharged as medically unfit in June, 1916.

But, in April, 1917, he joined the Forestry Draft.

Orval left Halifax on the 1st of May, 1917, and arrived in Liverpool, England on the 14th of May, 1917. In June, 1917, he was posted to the No. 26 Company, France.

In June, 1918, he was granted 10 days leave in Paris and rejoined his unit on the 13th of July, 1918. He was back in England in February, 1919. He returned to Canada in March, 1919.

Orval was discharged on the 1st of April, 1919, in Toronto.

We do not know if he married or when he died. Orval Johns enfranchised in 1932.

Most of this information is from his military personnel file [LAC RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 4844 - 50]. This file has been digitized and can be found at <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>. Other information has been taken from MBQ Records.