



COLDWATER REMEMBERS GUNNER THOMAS WYLEY

Thomas Wyley was born on June 4, 1897, the son of Edith (Durnford) and Thomas Wyley of Gray Street in Coldwater, Ontario. Young Thomas had a twin sister, Edith, and three older siblings. Thomas enlisted in Toronto with the 12th Brigade Ammunition Column, Canadian Expeditionary Force, on April 20, 1916. He was 18 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 5 inches tall, with grey eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Methodist, and his trade as farmer. He declared having previously served for a short time in the Canadian Militia with the 76th Battalion.



Gunner Thomas Wyley, regimental number 346967, sailed to England on the S.S. Cameronia, arriving on September 22, 1916. After training in England for several months, he landed in France on March 18, 1917, where he joined his front line unit, the 1st Canadian Field Artillery Brigade. The unit was part of the 1st Canadian Division under the command of General Arthur Currie.

In early May, Gunner Wyley's battery was positioned near the village of Fresnoy, in the area of Vimy. The unit's War Diary for May 8 reports heavy artillery shelling on their positions: "*At an early hour this morning, a very heavy 5.9 barrage was put on our defensives to our right on the Fresnoy front... Following this barrage the enemy launched a strong attack and were successful in forcing our troops out of the village of Fresnoy. The gas attack last night caused many casualties in this brigade.*" On that day Gunner Wyley was reported wounded and evacuated to No.6 Casualty Clearing Station. On May 20, he was reported as having "*died of wounds received in action.*"

Four years later, his mother Edith would have received the awards her son was entitled to: the 1914-1918 British War Medal; the Inter Allied Victory Medal; a Memorial Plaque (a bronze medallion often referred to as "Dead Man's Penny"); and a scroll from King George V. She would also have received a "Mother's Cross".

Gunner Thomas Wyley is buried at Barlin Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France, about 11 km south-west of Bethune. In Canada he is commemorated on page 354 of the *First World War Book of Remembrance*, located inside the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower in Ottawa. As of November 11, 2018, he is also commemorated on a plaque on the Cenotaph in front of the Coldwater Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

We will remember him.