



For the Glory of The Maple Leaf

MAJOR HAL FRYER, M. C.

Major Fryer was an old Fort William boy, popular with all his associates. He attended collegiate institute here, and later studied law at Osgoode hall, Toronto. He was studying there when he enlisted with the 52nd battalion in 1915.

Major Fryer was the last officer appointed to the 52nd battalion before leaving Canada and went over to France as junior subaltern. His remarkable ability very soon attracted notice, however, and he rapidly climbed to the rank of major. During July and August, 1916, he organized and led a series of daring trench raids in the Ypres salient and Hill 60 sectors. For these he was awarded the military cross "for conspicuous gallantry."

Became Adjutant

In September, 1916, Lieut. Fryer was appointed assistant adjutant. This position he held until Capt. Guild, the adjutant, was wounded on the Somme in October, when he became adjutant. However, he very soon relinquished the adjutancy in order to command "C" company of the battalion. This unit he led through the winter of 1916 until an operation for appendicitis sent him to England. "C" company during the winter bore a great reputation for their work in the trenches and for raids on the German lines, daringly planned and executed, the credit for which was undoubtedly due to their young leader, whose magnetic personality had endeared him to officers and men alike.

After recovering from appendicitis, Capt. Fryer was appointed to command "A" company and from then on this company was the pride of the battalion. In the attack on "Cinnibar trench" where he met his glorious death, Major Fryer achieved the impossible. For ten days previously the whole of a Canadian infantry brigade had attempted to capture this objective, their result being that they were cut to pieces and driven back. Major Fryer, with three companies of the 52nd, attacked on the 3rd of September and captured the trench with a large number of prisoners.

Blow To Whole Battalion

His death was a tremendous blow to the battalion. For days they seemed numb, unable to realize that this bright personality had indeed passed over the great divide. Many were the queries as to the gloom over the 52nd battalion, which even an outsider could not help but notice. The sorrow shown over the death of Major Fryer was remarkable, because sorrow for the death of a comrade was as a rule the sorrow of a moment only, for one could not sorrow and retain his sanity on the western front.

Major Fryer was twice mentioned in despatches for his gallant services, and was also recommended for the D. S. O. With Lieut. Ray Penniman he was among the first local men to win military crosses and was mentioned in Haig's 1918 New Year's honors.

He was but twenty-two years of age when he died. He was the elder son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fryer, 128 south John street.

At St. John, on his way to France, Major Fryer was married to Miss Pearl Malcolm, of Port Arthur, who accompanied him to England, where she remained until his death. Since then she has returned and has made her home in Victoria, B. C.