

WW1: Honouring Those Who Volunteered in August, 1915

In August 1915, the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte had one member volunteer to serve in World War One. Some details from his military file are below. This file can be viewed in hardcopy at Kanhiote Library.

HAROLD DEAN POWLESS

Regimental number: 453878

According to the 1901 census, Harold Dean Powless was born on the 5th of November, 1899. But according to his attestation paper, he was born on the 5th of November, 1897. It is likely that Harold was less than truthful about his age on sign up. That may explain the discrepancy in years.

Harold was the son of David J. Powless and Louisa Maracle.

He volunteered on the 21st of August, 1915, in Toronto with the **114th Battalion**** of the Canadian Expeditionary Force [CEF].

From his military personnel file we learn that before the war he was a piano worker or piano finisher. He also had military experience prior to the war with the 48th Highlanders (a reserve regiment in the Toronto area created in 1891).

He arrived in England on the 11th of November, 1916, where he was transferred to the 36th Battalion. He was hospitalized for pneumonia that December. According to his medical reports, Harold had suffered a cough from when he arrived in England. He contracted a cold "as a result of exposure to bad weather & wet conditions of

tent.” It developed into pneumonia, but he made a full recovery and was discharged from hospital in January 1917.

The report on his medical condition noted that Harold’s father, David J. Powless, was also “fighting in France.”

Harold was placed with the 3rd Reserve Battalion and soon after was appointed to Acting Sargent. Later, he was transferred to the 107th Battalion. Then, for some reason not explained in his file, at the end of January 1917, he asked to be allowed to revert to the rank of private or sapper.

He arrived in Boulogne, France in March 1917.

In April, 1917, Harold was sentenced to “7 Days #1 Field Punishment” for “Obtaining double rations by false pretences.”

In 1918, the 107th Battalion was named the 107th Pioneer Canadian Engineers.

In June 1918, he was sent to the 2nd Canadian Engineer Battalion. He was hospitalized but, returned to service within the month.

In November 1918, Harold was granted permission to marry. Records indicate he married Florence May Mason in Biscot, Bedford, England.

In December 1918, he suffered from sore feet and other ailments.

In March 1919, he was transferred to C. E. R. P. (Canadian Engineer Reserve Pool).

According to his records, Harold served for 26 months in France. He was sent back to Canada and was discharged on the 5th of August, 1919.

After demobilization, it was difficult to find a job. In a newspaper clipping from the Toronto Star dated the 17th of November, 1920, we find, “Returned soldier wishes position as bench moulder or any

suitable employment; married man. H. D. Powless, 453787. 6
Ravina cres”.

On the 1921 census, “Dean” Powless and his wife Florence are living in Toronto where he is working as a bench moulder.

Harold, his wife Florence, and their children (Thomas Dean, Melvin Earl, George Charles and Laura May) enfranchised in 1927. There are some records that indicate that Harold died in Durham Region on the 22nd of October, 1977 and was buried in Oshawa Union Cemetery.

Other than that, we have no further information about Harold or his family.

If you have more information regarding Harold Dean Powless and his family, please let us know.

The majority of this information is from the Military Personnel file of Harold Dean Powless, which has been digitized on the LAC website.

LAC RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 7950-25
<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage>

If you are descendant of Harold Dean Powless, please contact the administration office regarding receiving a flag of the 114th Battalion from a ceremony at Woodland Cultural Centre.