**George Albert Charles Broome**

Biography of a Canadian soldier from the First World War

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History 466

September 20, 2011

George Albert Charles Broome was born March 20, 1897, in London, England. Since there are no census records for him or his immediate family before 1911, it can be assumed that they immigrated to Canada sometime before the First World War. They settled in the small town of Melfort, Saskatchewan, where a number of other Broomes were already located. From his letters, it is evident that George had a few younger siblings, including Alex and Doris. George, who was a bank teller, enlisted with the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force in the spring of 1915.[[1]](#footnote-1)

George was just barely eighteen when he enlisted, and at first he seems to have regretted his decision. He mentions in a letter to his mother “I am sorry I act so hastily” and regrets not consulting her in his choice. George, like many men at the time, “thought only of honour and country” when he signed up. He mentions that perhaps his mother should send a few lines saying that she wished him not to fight. However, she did consent and George started training to go overseas.[[2]](#footnote-2)

 In his letters, George appeared to be a little lonely during training and warned his father to stay away from the Militia as “it is bad enough for single fellows” as “the Canadian Government does not know the first thing about looking after soldiers.” George was sent overseas at the beginning of September with 2,000 others.[[3]](#footnote-3)

 Once in England, training became harder and more intense. At this camp George reunited with some friends from Melfort and was able to learn to roller skate in his free time. Like many British born Canadian soldiers, George used his time in England to visit some relatives and made contact with his Grandfather and Uncle.[[4]](#footnote-4)

 George was sent to France in early 1916 where he was a part of the 5th Battalion and worked as a machine gunner. In September 1916 he was wounded at Somme. He “had quite a hole in [his] right arm,” but, he recovered and was sent back within six weeks. He also suffered a few cuts from a rifle grenade. The realities of war were starting set in as George mentions there were very few of his Melfort friends left. George began to feel quite homesick and expressed his wishes of going home to be back amongst “the ice and snow.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Unfortunately George would never be able to go back to the home that he dearly missed because he was seriously wounded at Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917. A bullet in his spine caused George to become paralyzed in his legs and back. He was treated at King George Hospital and survived surgery; however, he later became quite ill and eventually died due to his injuries. George died on July 11, 1917 was buried in Orpington (All Saints) Churchyard Extension located in Kent, United Kingdom.[[6]](#footnote-6)

At the age of twenty, Private George Albert Charles Broome, had been on and off the front lines for over a year, gone through tremendous pain due to three injuries, and seen the deaths of many of his friends and comrades. George Broome was just one of many soldiers who gave their lives for their country. His sense of duty and honour carried him through many hard months of war where his life ended much too soon.

Works Cited

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George’s grandfather suspected that George “was worked nearly to death” and that his “heart was affected with his soldiering.”

1. “Attestation Papers of George Albert Charles Broome,” *Library and Archives of Canada*, <http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/> (accessed September 15, 2011).

“1911 Canadian Census,” [www.automatedgenealogy.com](http://www.automatedgenealogy.com) (accessed September 15, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. George Albert Charles Broome to Mother (Milly Broome), July 1, 1915

All letters are from *The Canadian Letters and Images Project,* [www.canadianletters.ca](http://www.canadianletters.ca) (Accessed September 15, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. George to Mother, August 23, 1915.

George to Mother, September 4, 1915. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. George to Mother, September 17, 1915.

George to Mother, September 19, 1915. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. George to The Journal, Melfort, January 4, 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. George to Mother, September 17, 1917.

Father (S. Hucter) to Milly, April 21, 1917.

“Broome, GAC,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission,* [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) (accessed September 15, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)