

First world war veteran dies at age 107

February 22, 2007

Victor "Lloyd" Clemett, Canadian First World War veteran and resident at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre passed away late last night. Mr. Clemett's passing leaves only two surviving Canadian veterans from the Great War. Mr. Clemett was 107.

Lloyd Clemett was born Victor Lloyd Clemett on December 10th, 1899 in Toronto. At the early age of five his mother passed away. When he was seven, he and his two sisters and three brothers were orphaned. This resulted in a move to Omemee, Ontario to live with an older cousin, his wife and their four children. Due to a financial strain on the family he went to work in a creamery wrapping butter at the tender age of eight years. He worked at various jobs including the leather tannery until the war started in 1914.

In 1916, at the young age of 16, he felt the need to follow in the steps of his three older brothers who had previously enlisted. He joined the 93rd Battalion in Peterborough as a Private. Shortly thereafter he transferred to the 109 Battalion in nearby Lindsay, after he learned the Colonel was from his hometown of Omemee. That summer, after three weeks of training in Kingston, Pvt. Clemett was sent to England. While stationed in England, his Colonel discovered his youthful age and decided to transfer him into the Forestry Brigade instead of sending him home. In July 1917, the Brigade was deployed to France, and Lloyd was stationed in Aubin St. Vast.

He stayed with the Corps until 1918. At which time the Germans were making a heavy push toward the front lines. Clemett volunteered to go to the front lines several times and was headed there when the armistice was declared.

His brother Albert was injured in action as the result of grenade shrapnel to his head. He survived and lived a relatively normal life until age 96. His two other brothers returned home as well.

Upon his return to Canada, Mr. Clemett took advantage of courses offered by the Army to help him obtain employment as a railway agent with the Canadian Pacific. He played hockey for the Brampton Maple Leafs from 1925 to 1928 and also coached a ladies softball team during that same period.

In the late 1920's he and his brother-in-law started a lawn mower sales and service business on Danforth Avenue in Toronto. They managed to survive the Great Depression and in the early 1940's closed the business. He then worked for Rennie Seeds servicing lawn mowers in downtown Toronto until the early 1950's. After that, he was hired by the old Village of Leaside, now part of Toronto, as a meter reader and repairman. His coworkers elected him as their union steward and he retained that position until his retirement in 1965.

He and his wife Catherine with their two boys spent many happy summers at their cottage on Lake Huron near Kincardine. The cabin was constructed originally in 1939 by his mother-in-law. Lloyd made a significant contribution to the Point Clark Beach Association. In honour of his 100th birthday, the Association named a street after him and made him an honorary life member. At 106 Lloyd still looked forward to being at the cabin for part of the summer.

After his wife, Catherine passed away in 1993, Lloyd continued to live alone in his family home in North Toronto and enjoyed baking bread and cookies. He was an avid hockey fan and recorded the scores of every Toronto Maple Leaf game from the early days, even before they were called the Maple Leafs. He also maintained a daily diary from the time he retired, logging in the events of the day including weather and temperature.

Mr. Clemett has resided in the veterans' residence of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre since the fall of 2004. He is survived by his two sons.

There will be a private funeral service for family and close friends. The family has asked that media do not attend.

Media Contact:

Sally Fur, Communications Advisor,
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
416.480.5057