

Private Vincent Cleeves

7th Battalion (1st British Columbia Regiment) Canadian Expeditionary Force

Born 23 January 1879, died 24 April 1915.

We have the precise date of birth for Vincent Cleeves since it is listed on his Canadian historic record rather than in any of our usual UK reference sources. It is one exact fact in a life that, for now at least, retains more than a few unknowns, as we will see.

His birth was registered and is listed in Rawmarsh, at that time a large village within the Borough of Rotherham.

Vincent was the sixth child, and fifth son of Frederick Cleeves, who is remembered by our Company as the Master from 1909-1911, and whose picture graces the Frontispiece of our Company History book. Indeed the volume was dedicated to his memory by the author and Clerk, Charles Fitch, who described him therein as “A Generous Benefactor Of The Company, And Beloved By All Who Knew Him.” This seems an apt and timely Dedication, since Mr Cleeves had passed away the year before the original First Edition appeared in 1926.

The life of Frederick Cleeves and his family no doubt warrants a more in depth and separate consideration than is possible here, as it appears to be quite a remarkable one, even on a cursory examination, and possibly even a Victorian “rags to riches” tale. He would seem to have been born in London in 1842 (St Luke’s’ district, Middlesex) and next appears on the 1851 Census at the age of 9, living in Shoreditch, where the household would seem to consist just of the young Frederick and his mother. Ten years on at the next Census, the two of them are now in Bethnal Green, and with a boarder also in the household. At the age of 18, Frederick is working with an Iron Merchant.

It is at some stage during those next ten years that the Cleeves’ family fortunes change markedly, since by 1871, Frederick is now settled in Rawmarsh, and very much near the heart of the thriving regional coal and steel industries of the period. As his eventual obituary (The Engineer Magazine, January 16, 1925) states: “he became early in life secretary of the Roundwood Colliery, at Rotherham.”

Frederick is also a family man by this time, having married his first wife Catherine in late 1865 (born Catherine Clifton Allen.) They live with young sons John Frederick (1868-1951) Edmund Allen (1869-1956) and his baby daughter Kate Elizabeth (1870-unknown.) John would of course also go on to be Master of the Patternmakers in the years 1921 and 1934. John and Edmund were to join the family business, whilst Kate married William Walter Hughes in 1900, and by the time of the 1911 Census was living in Hale, Cheshire. Our last trace of her at the present time is on the passenger list, along with her husband and a daughter, of a journey to Algiers in April 1925.

Despite the career success and progression of the Cleeves family, we have to remember that this is still the Victorian age, with accompanying mortality rates. A further son,

Charles Edward (1872-1950), who was also later to join the family trade and become a colliery proprietor, has his birth recorded in the last quarter of 1872. Sadly, though, what is also recorded is the death of Frederick's wife Catherine at the age of 30 in early 1873. We have a burial date of 23rd March, so although the cause is unknown, and it is unwise to speculate too much, the reasonably close proximity of Charles' birth and his mother's passing must lead to the question of whether the events connect.

Frederick married for the second time, to Mary Ann Birks (1849-1906), in 1876, and by the time of the 1881 Census, the family, still in Rawmarsh, has expanded again. John has left home, but Edmund is still there, as of course is Charles. We now also have Wilfred Birks (1877-unknown,) then the young Vincent making a first Census appearance, and an infant son Montague (1881-unknown.)

In respect of the further Cleeves sons, Wilfred Birks Cleeves also appears on the Company's Roll of Honour, where note is made of his service in the Royal Engineers during the South African War, then his work afterwards as an Engineer in the Public Works Department of the same country, and finally as a Private in the Pretoria Civic Guard during World War One. On the records currently accessible, the last entry we have for him is the retired Wilfred at 61 embarking as a passenger along with his wife for permanent residency in South Africa on 4th August 1938. Consequently, no record has yet been found of his eventual passing. In a similar way, we have little record for the life of Montague Cleeves at present. He also travelled to Cape Town, South Africa, listed as a "Merchant" in 1903, and then to New York in 1904, but it is not currently known whether he settled there or returned – there seems to be no death record in the UK at least.

A final visit to the Census records whilst our central subject, Vincent, is still at home, is made in 1891. The family remain in the Rotherham area, with Wilfred the oldest son still at home, followed by Vincent, who is now 12. New Census appearances are made by daughter Frances Mary (1883-1903) and baby Alfred Christian (1891-1919.) Once again though, the Cleeves family were to experience loss in due course, since as can be seen from the dates listed, Frances died at the early age of 20, in London and from causes apparently unrecorded, on the 22nd November 1903. As a touching footnote though to that loss, it is noted that her older brother Charles named his second daughter, born in 1906, also as Frances Mary, clearly as a tribute to his late sister.

The final Cleeves son, Alfred, also appears on our Company Roll of Honour, along with Vincent and Wilfred, as he served with the Royal Field Artillery in the War and latterly the Canadian Field Artillery. There is more to tell about his story, and it will be returned to in due course.

The early 1900s seem to mark a lower ebb of Cleeves family life, as not only did Frances die as mentioned, but Frederick lost his wife Mary in 1906, and by the time the 1911 Census is recorded, he is living in Swansea as a widower in the household of his son Charles, with their family. No doubt this aligns with the fact that the family colliery businesses had by this time been heavily involved with the South Wales mines for some considerable while.

As stated somewhat earlier, the life of a noteworthy past Master, Frederick Cleeves, and his family of seven sons and two daughters no doubt deserves more comprehensive

coverage at another time. He was clearly a multi-faceted character, on one hand being known through his business endeavours as “the father of the anthracite industry”, introducing that coal to continental customers. On the other hand he was also a “prominent and very popular member” of his Masonic Amateur Dramatic Company (from notice of his daughter Kate’s wedding – Sheffield Independent Newspaper, July 11th, 1900.) Finally, he was clearly also very active, almost up until the end of his life. A Passenger List from March 20th 1924 denotes him as leaving on a trip heading to Cristobal on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal, along with son Charles and Charles’ daughter Helen, at the age of 81 – an adventurer until almost the last!

However, this is Vincent Cleeves’ story, although as stated at the opening, there seems to be very little in the way of history available about his early life at the time of writing. Sadly, not even a photograph of him seems to have emerged at this point. Therefore putting him into the context of the entire Cleeves family, as previously, seems the best that can be done for now.

Few hard facts have been discovered about Vincent’s life as yet in the years immediately after the 1891 Census, when he was still at home in Rotherham, aged 12, and listed as a “Scholar.” However, a discovery made from his eventual Canadian Enlistment record may shed some light on the path Vincent may have chosen. A note here under the question of “Previous Service” lists the 1st Middlesex Volunteer Rifle Corps. This note has in turn unlocked further discoveries. The original Canadian Attestation Form has been located and is attached. In Vincent’s own hand, this states that his previous service constituted two and a half years with the 1st Middlesex VRC, and then one and a half years with the Kings Royal Rifle Corps, and further annotated to the South African War. In turn, this has led to his Short Service (“One Year with the Colours”) Attestation Form for the KRRC, which is also attached.

The latter Form, dated to 29th January 1900, sees Vincent list his trade as “Horticultural Student.” Literally six days after his 21st birthday, he signs up to fight in South Africa. Two medal record sheets have been found, identifying his service with the “No.1 Section, No.1 Special Service Company” of the KRRC and entitlement to South Africa medal Clasps. These would suggest by the marks made on the sheets that as well as participating in the South Africa 1900 campaign, his individual locations of service were Belmont, Transvaal, and Laing’s Nek (sic.) His duty in South Africa may also explain why he seems not to appear on any 1901 UK Census record.

Although Vincent clearly returned to Britain after his South African War service, he was to move again, and with permanent intentions, within only a few years. On the 24th May 1907, he departs from Liverpool on board the RMS Virginian, bound for Montreal and a new life in Canada. He next appears on the historical record in the 1911 Canadian Census, his nationality now clearly stated as Canadian, as a single man of 32, living in the Saanich district of Nanaimo in British Columbia. [Saanich was part of Census District 10 - Nanaimo in 1911.] He is additionally listed as an employer of staff and working as a “Fruit Grower.” There are two other historical curiosities for this Census entry. Firstly, under the “Religion” question, amongst a column of “Anglican” entries (along with a few for Methodist and Roman Catholic) Vincent’s entry clearly states “none.” That said, his later Enlistment Medical form lists him as a Congregationalist. Secondly, his year of immigration to Canada is plainly written as 1897, which seems at odds with the other historical facts we have. A simple clerical error, or did Vincent go

to Canada earlier on an unrecorded passenger journey and travel again for his South African army service? We may never know in the absence of any other corroborating evidence.

Vincent seems to have “answered the call of Mother Country” very soon after the outbreak of World War One. His attached Attestation Form from when he enlisted in Valcartier, Quebec, is dated and signed 23rd September 1914. He is still a Fruit Grower, and still single. At this point in time it can be seen that his father’s address is now Penmaenmawr in North Wales. The Medical Certificate gives us some more information about Vincent, which is helpful in the absence of any photographs. He was 5 foot, 9 and a half inches tall, with a light complexion, grey eyes, and “light” coloured hair.

The Form is over-stamped with the unit to which Vincent would be assigned – the 7th Battalion (1st British Columbia) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Another discovered document shows that he was assigned to “F” Company of the 7th Battalion, under the command of Captain R. V. Harvey.

This Battalion was initially raised on the 2nd September 1914 with recruits from British Columbia. The Battalion set off for England from Quebec on board HMT *Virginian*, the same ship Vincent had travelled to Canada aboard seven years earlier. They arrived in England on 14th October 1914 with a strength of 49 officers and 1083 men. After arriving in England, the entire Canadian contingent was stationed on Salisbury Plain for training – unfortunately during one of the worst winters on record. The Battalion eventually travelled to France early the next year, sailing from Avonmouth to St. Nazaire, arriving on the 8th February 1915, but only disembarking on the 10th due to bad weather. The Battalion became part of the 1st Canadian Division, 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade.

After two days travel by rail, the 7th Battalion arrived in Strazeele, and from there marched with the rest of the 32nd Brigade up to Ploegsteert to take its place in the line. On February 22nd 1915, platoons moved into the trenches to join English Regiments (1st Battalion the Hampshires, 1st Battalion East Lancs, and 1st Battalion the Rifle Brigade.) The Battalion spent a week there becoming accustomed to trench warfare in a “quiet” section, as was usual. Even so, it suffered its first two casualties who were also two of its youngest soldiers (Lieut. B. Boggs on 26th February, and Private A. E. Clapp died of wounds on 1st March.) This was a foretaste of what lay ahead.

Early in March, the Battalion moved on to Fleurbaix, occupying trenches between the 15th Brigade and the 19th Brigade. This was also nominally a quiet sector, but not at this point of the war due to the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (10th to 13th March 1915.) Canadian artillery took part in this, but the 7th Battalion played a holding role – had the action gone better, they would have gone forward, but in the event did not leave their trenches, although they did lose one officer (Major P. Rigby on 10th March.)

Towards the end of March the Battalion moved into rest billets at Estaires in preparation for an offensive, which in the event was called off, and from there they moved up to billets around Steenvorde. In the second week of April, the 7th Battalion and the Division took the inevitable road to Ypres, by bus, and relieved the 69th French Regiment in a sector to the north of Ypres in front of the Grafenstafel Ridge.

This was already an active part of the line, and in his book of the history of the 7th Battalion, written in 1930 (and from which much of this chronology is drawn,) a surviving officer, Major T.V. Scudamore, writes:

“From the moment of our arrival, the Germans seemed to take a most natural dislike to the Canadians and our wastage increased rather rapidly. Our artillery support was very limited and unable to reply with any effect. On the 19th April, No.2 Company had tear gas shells ranged on it for the first time.”

The timing of the move of the largely untrained and inexperienced Canadians to this section of the Front did turn out to be rather unfortunate for them. The Division was holding a line of trenches about 5,000 yards long running from a point on the Ypres to Poelcapelle Road and immediately west of that village and over to the Ypres-Roulers railway line. The French were on the left of the Division, and next to them the 3rd Brigade, then the 2nd Brigade with the 8th and 5th Battalions in the line, and the 28th Division on the right.

However, at this point, and in an endeavour to break the deadlock in the Ypres Salient, the German High Command launched what is now known as the Second Battle of Ypres. In so doing they brought into use a new weapon which they had developed, poison gas. In the late afternoon of April 22, the German artillery concentrated its fire in a violent bombardment of the front line to the left of the Canadian troops. An hour later, they opened the valves on 5,700 cylinders of chlorine gas, and long yellow clouds of asphyxiating gas were released to drift across No Man’s Land and into the French lines. The French colonial troops, Turcos and Zouaves, who were on the immediate left of the Canadians, were swept back by the fumes, and many choked to death in their trenches. Into this gap poured three German Divisions.

As Major Scudamore describes it:

“Whilst the 7th Battalion was in brigade reserve on the 22nd April, the storm burst. At about 4pm, a low cloud of yellow gas was seen to come curling over the Grafenstafel Ridge, a little to our North. Before the gas came Turcos and Algerians, running in all directions, throwing their arms away and falling as they ran. It was hard to get anything coherent from these choking, sobbing, demoralized men, but as heavy shelling increased, it was obvious a major engagement was being developed.”

The situation of the Canadians troops was one of the most critical which could arise in warfare, as their left flank was now completely exposed, and they were outnumbered at least five to one. If they withdrew, it was probable that the whole of the British forces in the Ypres Salient would be surrounded and captured, and that in turn might open the way to the Germans reaching the Channel ports. Under these desperate circumstances, the only thing to do was to stand fast. For their part, the 7th Battalion marched up the Grafenstafel Ridge that night, and waited in support trenches. At midnight the Battalion, less No.1 Company, was withdrawn and attached to 3rd Brigade. It started to dig in at Keerselaere, north of St. Julien, in hollow ground at the foot of the ridge, following a line of hedges and connecting up with a communications trench with the 15th Battalion, who were on the edge of St. Julien. This was all part of the plan by General Alderson,

commanding the 1st Division, to withdraw his left flank, so as to meet an attack from the North West, and to shorten the rest of his line.

After the first shock of the German attack was over, the Canadians' line did not budge. The 7th Battalion's position was not ideally placed "*as much dead ground lay in front of us*" but they made the best of it, and Canadian Engineers further strengthened it with more wire on the 23rd April. On the afternoon of that same day, the 7th Battalion lost its Commanding Officer, Colonel W.H. Hart-McHarg, who was mortally wounded whilst on reconnaissance. As the battle continued, Major Scudamore writes:

"At 8am on the 24th, each company commander got the order to hang on as long as possible, and a few moments later Sergeant Peerless of the machine gun section asked permission of the No. 2 Company commander to run his machine gun out some fifty yards in front of the trench. Hardly was he in position than the enemy debouched from the wood in massed formation. The machine gun played on this excellent target and the Germans broke up and fled in disorder to the shelter of the wood."

The strength of the Canadian defence, and the success of two heroic but costly counter-attacks, at Kitchener's Wood and Mauser Ridge, gave the Germans the impression that they were a much larger force than they were. Their attacks of the 24th April, in the attempt to obliterate the Salient permanently, followed the same strategy as before - another violent bombardment, followed by a gas attack, then waves of infantry. In the case of the 7th Battalion, the attack was not renewed until nearly noon, but at this point the Germans did secure a footing in St. Julien, dislodging the 15th Battalion just as three companies of the 7th were making their way into the village. An order to retire to Weiltje had been made at 11.45am but this was too late as the elements of the 7th Battalion were already completely cut off, through no fault of the 15th who were faring as badly. Major Scudamore notes that Captain Corry of the 15th was "cool and helpful" in directing the leading men of the 7th to a shallow gully where they were screened and which led to Wieltje. He goes on:

They (the enemy) isolated small sections of trenches and then rushed them. They came on in six or seven lines at intervals of fifty yards and seemed very uncertain what they were up against. With no bombs or machine guns left and with only the Ross rifle – that jammed with every round that was fired and whose funny little bayonet used to wobble off – we were quite unable to make any effective reply."

The fighting that followed was terrible, shredded by shrapnel and machine gun fire, the Canadians struggling with their jammed rifles and choking from the gas. Many heroic actions took place during these desperate times, including that of Lieutenant (later Captain) E.D. Bellew, the Battalion Machine Gun Officer, who had two guns in action on the high ground overlooking Keerselaere. The advance was temporarily halted by Bellew, who had sited his guns on the left of the right Company. Reinforcements were sent forward to help, but they in turn were surrounded and destroyed. With the enemy advancing in strength and less than 100 yards from him, with no further assistance in sight, and with his rear threatened, Lieutenant Bellew and Sergeant Peerless (mentioned earlier), each operating a gun, decided to stay where they were and fight it out. Sergeant Peerless was killed and Bellew was wounded and fell. Nevertheless, he got up and maintained his fire till ammunition failed and the enemy rushed the

position. Lieutenant Bellew then seized a rifle, smashed his machine gun, and fighting to the last, was eventually taken prisoner.

For his actions on that day, Lieutenant Bellew was awarded the Victoria Cross, the first of three won by the 7th Battalion during the War. Sergeant Peerless was awarded a posthumous DCM.

The DCM was also awarded to Sergeant W. Swindells, who led the remnants of No.1 Company out of the action after the officers had become casualties. This Company had been left on the Ridge with both flanks exposed and under constant heavy fire until the evening of 26th April when they withdrew also to Wieltje.

Despite the appalling conditions, the Canadians held on until reinforcements arrived. On April 25th, after three days of ceaseless fighting, they were finally relieved. When the Division came out of the trenches that April day it had almost ceased to exist. Many Battalions marched out only one-fifth or one-sixth of their original strength. One or two Battalions could barely muster 100 men.

In total, Canadian casualties from this whole period of 22nd April to 3rd May were 5,975 of whom c.1,000 men were killed, the worst day being 24th April when 3,058 casualties were suffered during the gas attacks, infantry assaults, and artillery bombardments. Despite the casualties, the achievements of the Canadian Division during this battle in quite literally holding the line is still seen as all the more remarkable given that they were still for the most part, untrained and amateur soldiers. Neither at Valcartier nor on Salisbury Plain had conditions been such as to make thorough training possible.

In the case of the 7th Battalion, of the twenty-four officers and 900 men who went into battle, only six officers and 325 men mustered for roll call on 25th April when they were moved to the rear. The men in No. 1 Company had been ordered out to the left to help fill the gap left by the French, as previously mentioned. They were able to hold out until 26 April in the face of gas and without support on either flank. Twenty-two out of a hundred from that Company returned to the Battalion.

The war diary of the 2nd Brigade lists the following figures for the 7th Battalion:

Officers: 6 killed, 4 wounded, 1 wounded & missing, 6 missing. Total: 17.

Other Ranks: 72 killed, 146 wounded, 26 wounded & missing, 341 missing. Total: 585.

The large number of missing is particularly striking, no doubt caused by the nature of the action, and it must be presumed that most would be later confirmed as dead, rather than POWs. Major Scudamore makes the point in respect of these losses:

“The casualties of the 7th Batt., were high even for this period of heavy fighting, and the proportion of prisoners of war may seem out of proportion to the killed and wounded, but it is not so in fact. Three companies were isolated just as they were bringing help to the troops outside St. Julien and had hardly a chance.”

Somehow and somewhere amongst all of this carnage and mayhem, Private Vincent Cleeves fell during the fighting of 24th April. If he was still assigned to his original

Company and still under the command of Captain Harvey, then Major Scudamore's book possibly offers the following clue to his and his colleagues' fate:

“One of the officers killed was Captain R. V. Harvey, who died a few days after the battle as a prisoner of war. He had fought No. 3 Company to a finish, showing magnificent courage, determination and resource, and setting an example to all around him, an example to which every man responded as his company officers, H. A. Bromley, N.A. Jessop and C. C. Holmes, died with their men.”

In the 1930 book of Major Scudamore, containing at its end the full 1914-18 casualty list for the Battalion, Private Cleeves is actually still listed as Missing. However he had in fact been identified and properly buried by this stage, although there is also an interesting tale here from the CWGC records.

Private Vincent Cleeves is buried in Poelcapelle British Cemetery (Grave Ref: VIIA. C. 1), which is located ten kilometres north-east of Ypres town centre on the Brugseweg (N313), the road connecting Ypres to Bruges, and after passing through the village of Poelkapelle itself.

Poelcapelle (now Poelkapelle) was taken by the Germans from the French on 20th October 1914, entered by the 11th Division on 4th October 1917, evacuated by Commonwealth forces in April 1918, and retaken by the Belgians on 28th September 1918. Poelcapelle British Cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and concentrated from the following smaller cemeteries: Houthulst Forest New Military Cemetery, Langemarck; Keerselaere French Cemetery, Langemarck; Pilckem Road German Cemetery, Langemarck; Poelcapelle Communal Cemetery; Poelcapelle German Cemetery; St. Jean Churchyard; Staden French Military Cemetery; and Vijfwegen German Cemetery.

The formal layout marks this clearly as a concentration cemetery, and the great majority of the graves date from the last five months of 1917, and in particular October, but certain plots (IA, VIA, VIIA where Private Cleeves lies, LI and LXI) contain many graves of 1914 and 1915. There are now 7,479 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Poelcapelle British Cemetery. 6,230 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 8 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials commemorate 24 servicemen buried by the Germans in other burial grounds in the area whose graves could not be located. There is also 1 burial of the Second World War within the cemetery.

Amongst those buried in the cemetery is Private John Condon (Grave Ref: LVI. F. 8) of the Royal Irish Regiment, who at 14 is thought to be the youngest battle casualty of the First World War commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The CWGC record of Private Cleeves burial is worth some commentary. As has been mentioned, Poelcapelle is a concentration cemetery, and amongst the usual CWGC documents is an additional Burial Return form which is enclosed here. This 1923 document shows not only the location where his body was originally found, but that originally he was an “Unknown” of the 7th Battalion, but with the record amended after he was identified. The means of identification are listed as his collar badges, clothing,

and a stamped fork – the last item may have been the key to identification, since most soldiers were issued a KFS set (knife, fork, and spoon) stamped with their regimental numbers. Despite their loss, the Cleeves family did eventually have a marked grave, unlike so very many others.

Using a trench map co-ordinates conversion tool, it has been possible to translate the original Burial Return Map Reference to a present day location. A screen shot of that location is also enclosed – it is very close to the St. Julien Canadian Memorial at Vancouver Corner. The memorial, also known as “The Brooding Soldier”, commemorates the Canadian 1st Division in action on 22nd to 24th April 1915.

This is all as much as we know at the present time of Vincent Cleeves’ story, but there is unfortunately one final twist in the family record of service and sacrifice in the Great War that needs to be reported here. Earlier on, it was mentioned that the youngest Cleeves son, Alfred Christian, also appears on our Company Roll of Honour, along with Vincent and Wilfred, serving as he did firstly with the Royal Field Artillery and latterly the Canadian Field Artillery.

The Roll records his service, but as a survivor, not a casualty. Sadly, the research undertaken on the family for Vincent’s account here has resulted in the discovery that this is not the whole story. Although he would appear to have survived the fighting in the War itself, he did not live long to enjoy peace. His death is recorded for the 21st May, 1919, although the precise cause appears not to be – the CWGC record simply states “died of sickness.” As he is commemorated by the CWGC, he is clearly recognised as a casualty of the Great War, and hence our Company of Pattenmakers rightfully should also recognise Alfred Cleeves as one of our Fallen. He is the sole CWGC burial at Brentwood Bay Our Lady of the Assumption Cemetery, British Columbia. His story deserves to be dealt with separately.

In Memory of

Private

Vincent Cleeves

16872, 7th Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 24 April 1915 Age 36

Son of Frederick Cleeves, of Merddyn Hywel, Penmaenmawr, Wales, and the late Mary Ann Cleeves.

Remembered with Honour

Poelcapelle British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

FREDERICK CLEEVES.

A PIONEER in the commercial development of the West Wales anthracite coal trade has passed away in the person of Mr. Frederick Cleeves, who died on the 10th inst., at Penmaenmawr, at the age of eighty-two years. Mr. Cleeves was, with his son Mr. Charles E. Cleeves, very actively interested in the industry until about ten years ago, when he retired. A Londoner by birth, he became early in life secretary of the Roundwood Colliery, at Rotherham, and as the owners of that undertaking later obtained an interest in the Gwaun-cae-Gurwen Collieries in South Wales, Mr. Cleeves was sent to that district, and became secretary of the undertaking, which very largely developed as the result of the energy and foresight he displayed. In course of time his interests in the trade expanded substantially, and he was joined by his sons, John, Edward and Charles, who together gave special attention to the development of the continental trade. Mr. Cleeves was also largely interested in other undertakings, including the Cross Hands, Tirydail and Llandebie collieries, and in a company known as the Cleeves Western Valleys Anthracite Collieries, Limited, which was formed in 1914. About a year ago this company disposed of its interests to the Amalgamated Anthracite Collieries, Limited, and Mr. Cleeves and his sons retired.

The Obituary of Frederick Cleeves, Vincent's father, taken from The Engineer magazine of January 16th, 1925.

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H W V 80,000 12-09 Form B. 111
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Army Form B. 111.

SHORT SERVICE.

(One year with the Colours.)

ATTESTATION OF

No. 3761 Name Vincent Cleeves Corps KINGS ROYAL RIFLE CORPS.

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name?..... Vincent Cleeves
 2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born?
 In the Parish of... St. Andrew in or
 near the Town of... St. Andrew
 in the County of... West
 3. Are you a British Subject?
 4. What is your Age?
 5. What is your Trade or Calling?
 6. Have you resided out of your Father's house for three years
continuously in the same place, or occupied a house or land of the yearly
value of £10 for one year, and paid rates for the same, and, in either case,
if so, state where?..... St. Andrew's, St. Andrew
- You are hereby warned that if after enlistment it is found that you have given a wilfully false answer to any of the following seven questions, you will be liable to a punishment of two years' imprisonment with hard labour.
7. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? if so, where?
to whom? and for what period?
 8. Are you Married?
 9. Have you ever been sentenced to Imprisonment by the
Civil Power?
 10. Do you now belong to Her Majesty's Army, the Marines,
the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Royal Navy, the Volunteers, the
Yeomanry, the Army Reserve, or the Naval Reserve Force? If so, to
what Corps?
 11. Have you ever served in Her Majesty's Army, the
Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, or the Royal Navy? If so, state
which and cause of discharge
 12. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous
Service?
 13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for Her Majesty's
Service? If so, on what grounds?
 14. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?
 15. For what Corps are you willing to be enlisted, or are
you willing to be enlisted for General Service?
 16. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its mean-
ing, and who gave it to you?
 17. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided Her Majesty
should so long require your services?
- (a) For a term of one year, unless the War in South Africa lasts longer than one year,
in which case you will be detained until the War is over. If, however, the war is over in less than one
year, you may either be discharged at once or remain until you have completed a year's service, at your
option

I, Vincent Cleeves do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

V. Cleeves SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
E. Clarke Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, Vincent Cleeves do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.
The above questions were then read to the recruit in my presence.
I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me
at St. Andrew's on this 29th day of January 1900.

Signature of the Justice E. Clarke
If any alteration is required on this page of the Attestation, a Justice of the Peace should be requested to make it and initial the alteration under Section 80 (5), Army Act.
The Recruit should, if he require it, receive a copy of the Declaration on Army Form B. 112.

* If so, the Recruit is to be asked the particulars of his former Service, and to produce, if possible, his Parchment Certificate of Discharge and Certificate of Character, which should be returned to him companionably endorsed on the (Date) re-enlisted in the (Regiment)

CO
ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. 16872

Folio.

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

(ANSWERS).

1. What is your name?..... *Vincent Cleaves*
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born?..... *Rawwash Yorks*
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin?..... *Wife Cleaves*
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin?..... *Pen-y-nan-mawr - N. Wales*
5. What is the date of your birth?..... *Jan'y 23 - 1879*
6. What is your Trade or Calling?..... *Fruit grower*
7. Are you married?..... *Wife*
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?..... *Yes*
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?..... *Yes*
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force?..... *Yes*
If so, state particulars of former Service. *V. R. C. - 1/2 year*
1st Middlesex V. R. C. 2 1/2 years
S. O. War
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?..... *Yes*
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE?..... *Yes*

Vincent Cleaves (Signature of Man).
R. Harvey C.M. (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Vincent Cleaves*, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Date *23 Sept* 1914. *Vincent Cleaves* (Signature of Recruit)
R. Harvey C.M. (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Vincent Cleaves*, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Date *23 Sept* 1914. *Vincent Cleaves* (Signature of Recruit)
R. Harvey C.M. (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence. I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at *Rawwash*, this *23* day of *Sept* 1914.

R. Harvey C.M. (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

R. Harvey C.M. (Approving Officer)

100 M. - 8-14.
 H.Q. 1772-1-13.

On previous page, Vincent Cleaves' Attestation Form for South African Service, and following it, his Form for enlistment into the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Following on is a copy of Enlistment Medical Certificate.

8
76421

Description of Alfred Niccath on Enlistment.

Apparent Age 35 years 8 months.
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.

(Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless the man acknowledges to any previous service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of the Approving Officer.)

Height 5 ft. 9 1/2 ins.

3 scars on left arm

Girth when fully expanded 39 ins.

Range of expansion 5 ins.

Complexion light

Eyes grey

Hair light

- Religious denominations.
- Church of England
 - Presbyterian
 - Wesleyan
 - ~~Baptist~~ Congregationalist
 - Other Protestants (Denomination to be stated.)
 - Roman Catholic
 - Jewish

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him* fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date 5 Sept 1914.

Place Valcartier

[Signature]
Cath A M C
Medical Officer

*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness:—

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

V. Cleaves having been finally approved, inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular have been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

[Signature] (Signature of Officer)

Date 23 Sept 1914.

POELCAPELLE 1-476E 9-134

CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials).

ALL CROSSSES ERECTED 1/12/97.E. **BURIAL RETURN.** 18.10.23.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial POELCAPELLE BRITISH CEMETERY. 20.V.20.b.7.7.

| Plot | Row | Grave | Map Reference where body found | Was cross on grave? | Regimental particulars | Means of Identification | Were any effects forwarded to Base? |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|--|
| 7.a. | C | 1. | 28.C.6.d.00.20. ✓ | No. | 16242 CLEEVES Private 7. Canadians (British Columbia) C.I.C. | PROV. S. 574 Collar Badges. Clothing & Fork std. 1791. | Yes. Poe of Fork 574/14774 |
| P.7.a. | C | 2. | 28.C.5.c.80.45. ✓ | No. | UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER Seaforth Hdrs. | Dam Ring & Kilt. | Yes. Dam Ring & Poe of Kilt. 574/14771 |
| 7.a. | C. | 3. | 28.I.18.a.95.90. ✓ | No. | UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER | Clothing & Boots. std. 383. | Yes. Poe of Boot. 574/14772 |
| 7.a. | C | 4. | 28.I.18.a.9.9. ✓ | No. | UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER | Clothing. | No. |
| 7.a. | C | 5. | 28.I.26.c.95.50. ✓ | No. | UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER | Dam Disc in Piece of Clothing. | Yes. Dam Disc in piece of Clothing. 574/14773 |

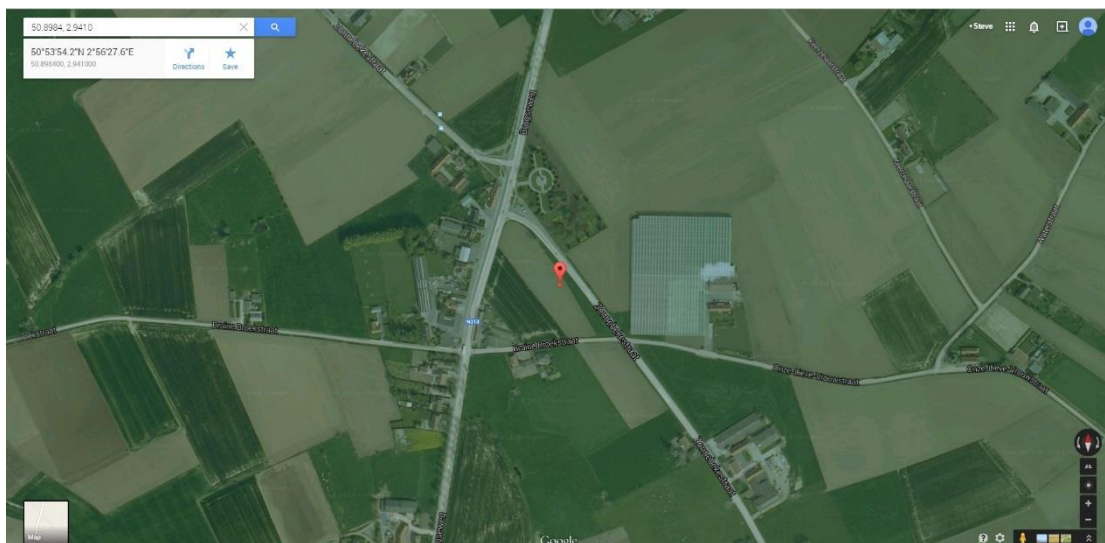
CANCELLED BY CERTIFIED REPORT
intended.....

H. Simpson
Registration Officer,
for Area Superintendent.
No.1. Area I.W.G.C.

ENTERED 30.10.23
18.11.23
CHECKED

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D. A. D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

The CWGC Burial Return for Private Cleeves, showing his original location, and the fact that he was originally listed as “Unknown Canadian Soldier”.

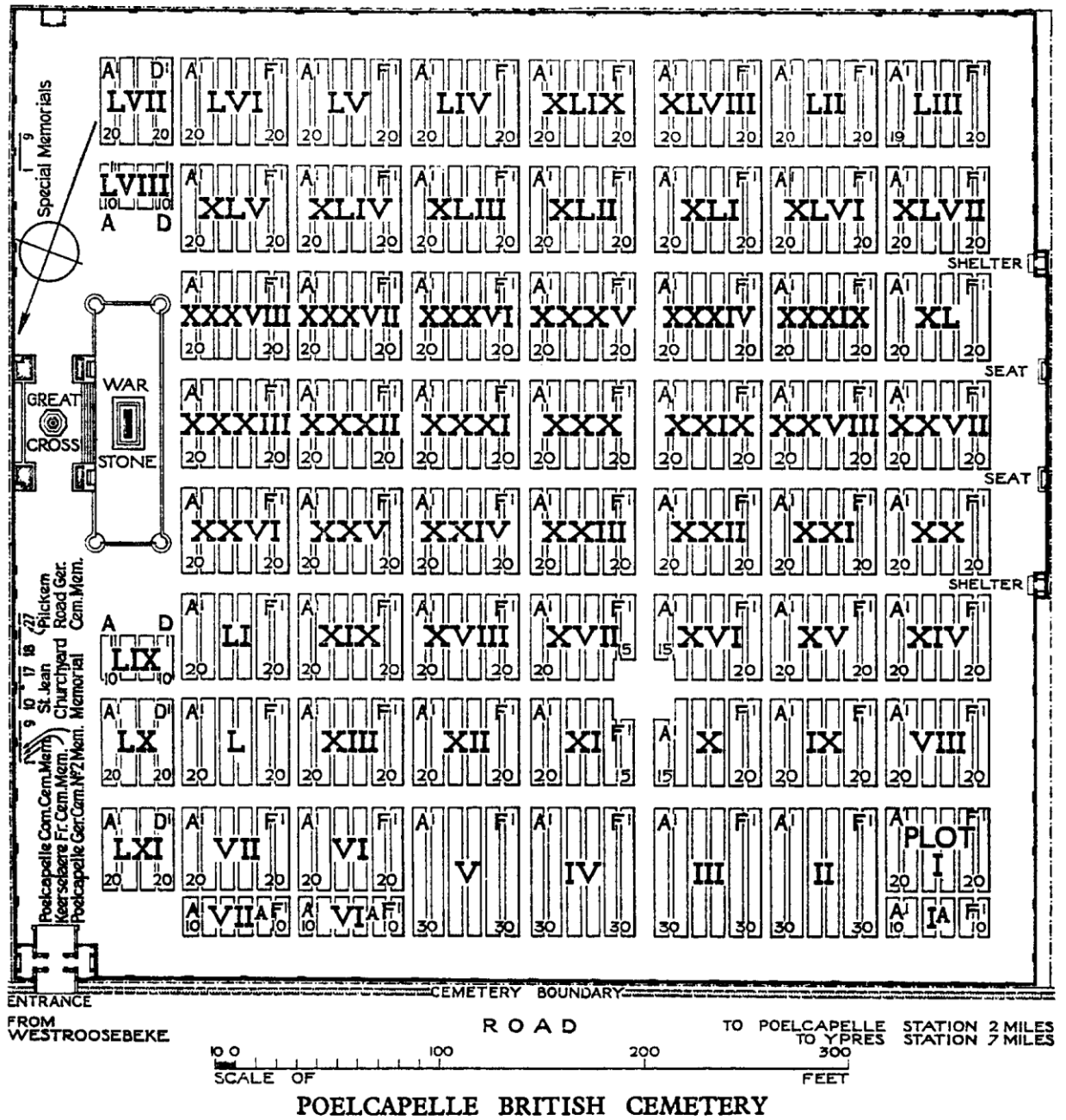


A map showing the modern day location of the Map Reference given on the Burial Return for Private Cleeves. As can be seen, it is but a short distance south of the St. Julien Canadian Memorial.



The St. Julien Canadian Memorial at Vancouver Corner. The memorial, also known as “The Brooding Soldier” is inscribed with the words:

THIS COLUMN MARKS THE BATTLEFIELD WHERE 18,000 CANADIANS ON THE BRITISH LEFT WITHSTOOD THE FIRST GERMAN GAS ATTACKS THE 22ND-24TH OF APRIL 1915. 2,000 FELL AND HERE LIE BURIED



Grave Reference: VIIA. C. 1.

