

Floyd Hallick Wismer Video Transcription

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August 11, 1918. "We didn't half bite the dust. Several of our boys were wounded or killed."
Words of Floyd Halleck Wismer of Saugeen Township, Bruce County, written in France.

My name is Cadet Corporal Little from the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, 340 Griffin Squadron. This is the story of First World War soldier Floyd Halleck Wismer.

Born in 1893, Floyd attended school regularly and was a diligent student, attending every day of school he could. As Floyd grew up and graduated, he worked as a tinsmith in Saugeen Township. His job was to make and restore items that were made of thin metals. In 1916, when he was 23 years old, a recruiting drive began in Bruce County and Floyd had to make the tough decision to either continue working his job or enlist to fight in the war.

Although Bruce County provided many soldiers in 1914 and 1915, the 160th Battalion was formed in December 1915 to recruit more men exclusively from Bruce County. In 1916, recruiting stations were set up in most of the County's towns and villages and many communities held parades, rallies and military balls to give recruiters a chance to meet people. An average of 16 men began signing up each day.

Floyd enlisted with the 160th Battalion on February 7, 1916, and became a member of their Band, which played in recruitment parades throughout the County.

By May 1916, there were 1,260 members of the 160th Battalion when it mobilized in Walkerton. In June, the Battalion marched from Walkerton to Chesley to receive its Regimental Colours. Then, they trained for three months in London, Ontario. In October 1916, they went to England where they trained at Witley and Bramshott camps for over a year. They were lucky to train together with their neighbours and friends. As part of the band, Floyd provided entertainment in addition to participating in regular drills.

During his time training with the 160th, Floyd would write home almost every day, letting his family know what he was up to. He also cherished receiving mail from his family. It kept him happy throughout the war. He received many items from his family as well. His mother gave him

a fountain pen, instead of a pencil, so he could write more letters home. Meanwhile his sister, Annie, had sent him over some tobacco along with a few other items, he wrote that: *"It was lovely."* (12/02/17)

Eventually, the mail stopped coming, *"No mail for two weeks"* (27/02/17).

Floyd began to miss the mail and began to wonder if he was going to get any at all. However, he still wrote home in hopes of response, still no mail: *"A good box from Canada would be appreciated very much now."* (26/02/17)

After a month of not receiving any mail, he heard that the Lucania was torpedoed with American mail and citizens on board. He would not be expecting mail for a long time now, even more than the month he had already been waiting.

But a week after, he finally received mail from home, *"We got a big bunch of mail. Mostly Boxes. I got five boxes myself."* (07/03/17)

In 1918, the 160th was demobilized and the soldiers were reassigned to many other Battalions. Floyd was transferred to the 47th Battalion and fought alongside the 1st Motor Machine Gun Brigade.

After the war, Floyd remained overseas with the military until 1919. Even after the war, Floyd still loved hearing from home, *"Got a couple letters from home. Oh joy."* (12/02/19)
Although Floyd had survived the war, he had been hit by shrapnel in the arm and had to go to the hospital, where he also had picked up the Spanish Flu. When he recovered, he heard that he was going home soon. The last entry in his journal before he reunited with his family after 5 long years read: *"Arrived home at Night."* (21/04/19)

Floyd Halleck Wismer was lucky to return home. In his journal he noted deaths and burials on every other page. This meant that at any point, it could have been him.

99 of the soldiers Floyd trained with in the 160th were killed in action or later died of their wounds. 255 were wounded in action and 52 were gassed. Of the approximately 2000 Bruce County men and women who enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, over 650 did not come home or died shortly after returning home due to injuries suffered in the course of duty.

Many like Floyd have fought and died for our country, and it shows today. We will remember them. We will never forget their sacrifice.