



# Sabretache

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January 2019

## Sgt. Anthony Blaikie DCM, MM Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery

Over the years I have enjoyed collecting any Canadian militaria relating to the Yukon Territory or North of the 60<sup>th</sup> Parallel for that matter. Recently I have gained some very interesting information about one Yukon soldier that enlisted for service in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces for the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> World War many medals of bravery were awarded to the Yukon soldiers. Of the first original 50 men who enlisted in 1914, one soldier was awarded two medals of bravery, that being the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal. He was one of 255 Canadian recipients of this medal combination in the CEF during the war.

Anthony Blaikie was born on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1874 in Woodstock, New Brunswick to parents John and Jane Blaikie. Anthony had four younger siblings, two sisters and two brothers. He came to the Yukon Territory in 1898, likely with the rest of gold seekers by the lure of the Klondike Gold Rush. In 1901, a general census was conducted and at the time Blaikie was single, 27 years old, from New Brunswick, a miner, earning a salary of \$258 and had been in the Yukon for three years.

Blaikie was involved with the community and even became a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge in Dawson City. Blaikie must have done some travelling as on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1914, he had arrived in Ketchikan, Alaska from Victoria, B.C. on the *SS Princess Maquinna*. The ship's manifest noted that he was almost 40 years old, a clerk and place of residence was Dawson City. The reason for this trip is unknown.

When war was declared in August 1914, Blaikie immediately enlisted with Boyle's Yukon Machine Gun Detachment. This unit was raised and equipped at the expense by the gold mining entrepreneur Joseph White-side Boyle. The Canadian military accepted Boyle's generous gift to the war effort as they did for other notable influential people. Department Store magnate Timothy Eaton, Sir Clifford Sifton and Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden all contributed by funding similar machine gun units. Boyle's unit would have to wait until they had 50 enlistees before they could leave to go "outside" (a term used by residents when leaving the territory) to Vancouver, B.C. to be officially attested in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. In the meantime they would get some rudimentary training courtesy of the Royal North West Mounted Police.



*Sgt. A. Blaikie, studio photo taken somewhere in France 1917. Source family relative*

The  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a non-profit registered society  
which fosters the study of  
military and the police, and the heritage of  
Canada, the British Empire, and the world  
as well as the preservation of military  
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar month  
at: Petty Officers' Mess HMCS Tecumseh  
1820 - 24th Street SW Calgary AB T2T 0G6

## Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on  
**Tuesday, January 15th, 19:00 (7:00 pm)**  
At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:  
Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting Correspondence, Membership report  
Treasurer's report, Old business / New business Break, Show & Tell  
The President, **Allan Ross** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meet-  
ing for an informal time of fellowship.

Anthony Blaikie enlisted on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1914 in Vancouver, B.C. and was assigned regi-  
mental #107121. Initially the unit was trained with the 29<sup>th</sup> (Vancouver) Battalion but later  
transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles before going overseas. It was Joe Boyle's in-  
sistance that the unit stay together and not be split up for use in other units. Hence when the  
unit was attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMR they became the machine gun section and trained with  
horses. In the following group photo the unit at the time had not been issued any badges for  
their uniform. The hat and collar badges were made by a local Vancouver company, Jacoby  
Bros., and were likely issued just before leaving to go overseas.



*"J.W. Boyle's Yukon Machine Gun Detachment". Pte. Anthony Blaikie is seated front  
row, third from right. Source Dawson city Museum.*

**Meeting held on December 18, 2018 at the Petty Officer's Mess, HMCS Tecumseh****1. Meeting called to order**

By President Allan R. at 7:05 PM. 22 members in attendance.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting.**

Discussed no correction. Member Mike C. moves that the Previous Meeting Minutes be accepted. Seconded by Bob M.

**3. Newsletter.** - Received, no comments or concerns.**4. Treasures Report.**

Report by Floyd S. Lists of monies collected from book auctions, donations etc. Listing of expenditures. Member Mike C. moves that the Treasures report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Bob M. Approved.

**5. Membership Report.**

Report by Floyd S. Total 38 members (4 Life, 2 Hon, 32 Regular) with 32 having paid 2019 dues. Member David S. moves that the Membership report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Brad M. Approved.

**6. Correspondence:** - None.**7. Announcements:**

- Military Museums Events: - "Tour of Duty - Canadians in Vietnam exhibit till Jan. 13, 2019
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Calgary Militaria Show, Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Centre. Table registration now open. Registration packages will be mailed out to contact listed and are available upon request.

**8. Old Business.**

- Dave L. completed bylaw wording changes based on AGM motions passed. Draft approved. Copies will be emailed to membership.

**9. New Business:** - Marty stepping down as Secretary, need a members to step in the New Year.  
**BREAK****10. Book Raffle & Auction:**

- With David away, there was no book raffle.

**11. Show and Tell:**

Floyd S.: Doukhobor WW2 military service exemption card dated 1940.

Mike C.: Discusses UK miniature medal bars and clasps. For Army service there are approximately 106 listed events for clasps. Events that lead to a defeat are not listed.

Bob M.: Selection of medals including a Norwegian group of 5 medals with a US Occupation of Japan medal.

Bob W.: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Calgary Military Show pickup, WWII RCAMC metal insignia set & Halifax Rifles cap badge.

Jack D.: Question & discussion on an individual's flight log hours including 1,489 from flights over Europe.

Frank C.: Yard photo, F Co. 20<sup>th</sup> US Infantry, dated March 1921. Post WWII US ammo can 50 cal.

Brad M.: Israeli gas mask 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War, Canadian Turtle Helmet.

James Bal.: US Vietnam War Commemoration Veteran pin release and Certificate of Honour Program, 4 certificate categories - Former, Living American Military POW, Unaccounted For, In Memory of and Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving

Spouse.

**12. Adjournment:**

President Allan R. calls for motion to adjourn. Member Mike C. moves to adjourn. Seconded by member Brian H.

**Meeting Adjourned at 19:43**

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
January 15th.  
2019**

**7:00 pm**

At the  
Petty Officers'  
Mess  
HMCS Tecumseh

**A.A.C.C.A.  
Finest little  
gun show in  
the west  
Sat. JAN.  
12TH  
10:00 to 4:00  
@ the  
Thornccliffe  
Community  
Centre –  
5600 Centre  
St. N.**

**This story and all captions and pictures were supplied by Member Tim Popp of Battleford, Saskatchewan "Thank You"**



*Close up detail of Pte. Anthony Blaikie from group photo.*

Arriving in England in the spring of 1915, Boyle's unit now became a part of the Eaton's Motor Machine Gun Brigade. Within this unit, Boyle's men were designated as the Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery. Much more training was conducted before the unit was ready to proceed to continental Europe.

On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1916, Blaikie landed in France with his unit. Blaikie having shown leadership qualities was promoted in the field to Corporal on 14<sup>th</sup> June and then Sergeant on 30<sup>th</sup> November. He was a well-respected NCO in every sense of the word and highly admired by his men. It was in November when Blaikie earned the Military Medal, MM, for the hard fighting near Courcelette.

The official citation for Blaikie's first award reads:

*"107121 Blaikie, Anthony, Sgt., Canadian Machine Gun Service, London Gazette 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1917 – For conspicuous good work and devotion to duty near Courcelette from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1916*

*when the machine gun group under the O.C. of the Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery were in action practically day and night. During the action of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1916, his belt filling machine was destroyed, he at once organized belt filling by hand and through his cool and efficient manner under heavy shell fire he succeeded in keeping his men working to the utmost and supplying badly needed ammunition."*

In mid-October 1917, Blaikie was given a much needed 10 days leave and likely spent it somewhere in the rear away from the unit lines. It was around this time that he had a picture postcard taken of himself in a studio somewhere in France. At the end of his leave he reported back to his unit preparing to move into the line before another battle. That was Passchendaele, one of the famous battles of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War that Canadians fought at such a high cost.



*Sgt. A. Blaikie, studio photo taken somewhere in France 1917. Source family relative*



*Close up detail of previous photo of Sgt. A. Blaikie (left) compared with studio photo of Honorary Lt. Col. Joseph White Boyle (right). Note the similarities with hatbadge & collar badges in both photos. Source of Boyle photo – Yukon Archives.*

The previous photo shows Blaikie wearing a maple leaf style hatbadge and collar badge. Unfortunately the photo is too grainy to determine what badges he is actually wearing but based on the shape and size it is speculated that it is the “Boyle’s Yukon MGD” badge. Comparing the two photos, Blaikie and Boyle, there is distinct similarities with the hat and collar badges. The “Boyle’s Yukon MGD” badges were made up by the unit while they were waiting to head overseas. Joe Boyle reportedly had a set made for himself specially made out of Klondyke gold. The unit had their badges made out of bronze or brass. When the unit landed in England in 1915 they were still wearing these badges. It was not until later in 1916 that the crossed machine badges with the gold pan with facsimile gold nugget and “Y.T.” was produced in England by J.R. Gaunt.

Blaikie, other original unit men and newly assigned replacements were wearing the new crossed machine gun badge as soon as it came out and was issued. Joe Boyle never wore this badge as he had no control over the unit when it became apart of the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMR. It may never be determined why Blaikie was wearing the maple leaf style “Boyle’s Yukon MGD” style badge when he had his studio photo taken. The white spot above the left breast pocket of Blaikie’s uniform could be a MM ribbon but again due to the grainy photo this may never be positively identified.

Blaikie’s second medal of bravery was the Distinguished Conduct Medal, DCM, was for Passchendaele and was awarded 15<sup>th</sup> December 1917. It is suspected that the actual medal was not presented but only the ribbon was likely pinned to his tunic.

The official citation reads:

*"107121 Blaikie, Anthony, Sgt. MM, Canadian Machine Gun Corps, London Gazette 28<sup>th</sup> March 1918 – For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of four machine guns, his officer and other NCO's being casualties. Under very heavy shelling in the open he repaired slightly damaged guns and kept them in action, and helped and dressed wounded."*

The Battle of Passchedaele was costly for Canada. Over 15,600 casualties was price of the Canadian Forces for a piece of ground that within the following year would be retaken by the German army. Blaikie survived the quadmire of the mud that took it's share of casualties.

It was unfortunate though that a brave solider like Anthony Blaikie was eventually killed in action. Up to the time of his death he had been very lucky to avoid being wounded. When he went into battle he had a feeling that this would be his last engagement. When he was killed, his death was heartfelt by many and the unit was dealt a huge loss of a valuable NCO.

Long-time friend of Blaikie, Martha Black who was living in England to be closer to her husband and son who were also overseas, took time to take pen and paper to hand to send a personal condolence letter to Anthony's father. Martha described Anthony's death as told to her by her husband Capt. George Black, who was with the same unit as Blaikie. Part of Martha's letter is copied below.

*"April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1918*

*Dear Mr. Blaikie,*

*Because your son, Sgt. Blaikie, was such a good friend of my husbands, of my son's, of my brother in law's and, in fact, of our entire family's I feel that I would like to write you a few words of sympathy in your present grief.*

*Sgt. Blaikie has been a family friend for so many years, we knew him so well and admired him so sincerely that in his loss we have all felt a personal touch.*

*Your son fell while with my boy Lyman and I am going to quote just a few words from my husband's last letter in which he speaks of Sgt. Blaikie's death ...*

*March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Orders to move received at about 2A.M., pulled out at daylight, travelled about sixty five miles, - received orders to go into the line, moving up until encountering advancing enemy. Mounted guns right in the open on the surface and went at 'em. Stood them off all day, during the night Infantry fell back without warning machine guns. Our first intimation that infantry had left was when we saw the Boche advancing at about two hundred yards away, in fours, we opened up with our two machine guns point blank and mowed them down in swaths, held them up and stuck it till enemy opened up from both flanks with machine guns and a whizz bang battery out in front and put one of our guns out of action. Then we withdrew about a quarter of a mile to a better position. While retiring Sgt. Blaikie was killed and Pte. Fisher mortally wounded. Lyman stopped long enough to turn poor Blaikie over and found him to be dead, a bullet hitting him in the head, probably killing him instantly, had no time to take either his papers or personal effects. Spoke to Fisher, found him shot through the stomach and dying, the brave man urged Lyman to leave him as he knew he was all in, Lyman said good bye to him and promised to send a stretcher if possible, as the Hun was right on him he had to run for it. ...*

*If it is any consolation, and it must be, your dear son was taken instantly, without one moment of pain. Sgt. Blaikie has left a memory with all his friends that is an inspiration, we admired him, we respected him as a man, and we loved him as a friend, and because my own dear sons are doing what he was doing, my heart and sympathies go out to you and your wife in this sad hour.*

*If there is any way in which I can be of any help to you and yours, please do not hesitate to call upon me.*

*With sincere regards and sorrow for you in your sorrow, I am,*

*Very Sincerely Yours,*

*Martha Munger Black*

Reading this letter must have been a devastating blow to John Blaikie. Blaikie's mother had passed away in 1907 and therefore no Memorial Cross was sent to the family. Any of his other personal effects, service medals and decorations were eventually sent to his father in New Brunswick. In 1923 the Canadian Government sent a grieving father Blaikie's DCM, MM, British War Medal, Victory Medal as well as the Memorial Scroll and Plaque. I can only imagine that John Blaikie would rather have his son sent home instead.

Over the years the medals were passed down to next of kin and are now in a place of honour with a family relation.



*Obverse of Sgt. A. Blaikie's DCM & MM.  
Source family relative*



*Reverse of Sgt. A. Blaikie's DCM & MM.  
Source family relative*

I was fortunate to contact a family member of Anthony Blaikie and was able to obtain photos of the DCM and MM as well as a copy of Martha Black's letter. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, the British War Medal, Victory Medal, Memorial Scroll and Plaque can not be found.

The following photos, from the family, reveal interesting the naming of the DCM and MM which is something very unique as I haven't seen this style before.

The naming on the MM is the following: "107121 SJT:A.BLAIKIE. YUKON COY CAN:M.M.G.S.". This is the first I have seen an additional unit being included with the naming, that being Yukon Company as well as Canadian Motor Machine Gun Service.



“107121 SGT: A.BLAIKIE ...”



“... YUKON COY CAN:M.M.G.S.”

Similarly with the DCM there is an additional unit as well in the naming, “107121 SGT:A.BLAIKIE. M.M. YUKON M.M.G.BY:CAN:M.G.C.”. Blaikie’s previous MM award follows the surname as well as the additional unit Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery and Canadian Machine Gun Corps.



“107121 SGT:A.BLAIKIE ...”



“... M.M. YUKON M.M.G.BY ...”



“... CAN:M.G.C”

I have no reasoning as to why the additional Yukon unit would have been added to the bravery medals. Service records confirm that Blaikie did serve in the Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery. Why does the MM have “YUKON COY” and the DCM have “YUKON M.M.G.BY” ? At the time Blaikie was with the 1st CMMGB, the size of the battery was not company size.

I would be interested to hear from other medal collectors if they have seen two unit naming in any bravery or service medals.

I have in my collection a MM that was awarded to a Yukon CEF member but there is no additional “YUKON” unit name added. It can only be speculated that Blaikie’s BWM and the Victory Medal would not have the additional unit name.

Anthony Blaikie was truly a great Canadian. He was a fine soldier, well respected with his peers and a true friend. He made the ultimate sacrifice for his country during the Great War and now lies far away in a foreign field with his comrades.





*Grave of Sgt. Anthony Blaikie, DCM, MM, Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918, Pragny British Military Cemetery, France. Source Maple Leaf Legacy Project, volunteer Doug Hay*

I am truly honoured to have helped family relatives to research and understand more of what their great grand uncle had done during the 1st WW.

If any collectors who would like to discuss this further or have any questions about this research, I would be happy to hear from them.

Author Tim Popp. Contact him through our Calgary Military Historical Society, website [www.cmhs.ca](http://www.cmhs.ca)

#### References:

Abbink, Harry and Cindy, *The Military Medal Canadian Recipients, 1916-1922*, Calgary, Alberta, Alison Publishing Company, 1987

Edwards, Ron, personal research notes, photographs and information courtesy of the late Ron Edwards, Powell River, British Columbia

Gates, Michael, *From The Klondike To Berlin, The Yukon in World War 1*, Maderia Park, B.C., Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd., 2017

Hamilton, Walter R., *The Yukon Story*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Mitchell Press, 1964

Library and Archives of Canada, Anthony Blaikie file, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 790 – 62, Ottawa, Ontario

Library and Archives of Canada, 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, RG9-III-D-3. Box No: 4987, File No: 627, T-10822.

Library and Archives of Canada, 2nd Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, RG9-III-D-3. Box No: 4987, File No: 629, T-10820/21.

Martha Black's letter obtained from family relative of Anthony Blaikie

Neatby, D. Blair and Gates, Michael, *The Yukon Fallen of World War I*, Madeira Park, B.C., Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd., 2018

Riddle, David K. and Marshall, Donald G., *The Distinguished Conduct Medal Awarded to Members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1920*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Kirkby-Marlton Press, 1991

Research notes, photographs and information from my personal collection

[www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca) – researching website for information – Anthony Blaikie

**“IN MEMORIUM”**  
**WYN van der SCHEE**

**WYN WAS A LIFE MEMBER AND ONE OF THE ORIGINAL  
FOUNDERS OF THE “CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY”**



*A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving  
for the Life of*

**6137 Lt.-Col. (ret'd) WYN van der SCHEE**

*March 13, 1942 - January 2, 2019*

*Monday, January 7, 2019, 2:00 pm*

*Cathedral Church of St. George  
270 King Street E. at Johnson St.  
Kingston, Ontario*

**Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there.. I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.**

**When you awaken in the morning's  
hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die.**

**Mary Elizabeth Frye**

Born in South Holland in the Netherlands during the Second World War, Wyn's parents (Arie and Neefje) immigrated with him to Southwestern Ontario in 1947.

Wyn joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1959 as a Cadet at Collège Militaire Royale (St Jean, QC), and completed a BA (Military History) at the Royal Military College (Kingston, ON). He went on to serve with The Fort Garry Horse and then Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), and after retiring, went on to command The King's Own Calgary Regiment.

The military remained an important part of his life, and post-military, Wyn was active in initiatives such as Reserves 2000. He was an avid collector of Militaria, and was a member of the Military Collectors Club of Canada. His collection of historical military books and documents, which were amassed over his lifetime, were donated to the Fort Frontenac Library. The contents of the Wyn van der Schee collection are an invaluable source of military history and data, and are used as research tools by students at RMC and beyond.

Wyn spent the second part of his career working with the City of Calgary as the Recycling Manager and oversaw the startup and maturation of the recycling program, from the late 1980s to his retirement in 2002.

Wyn met his beloved wife Gail in Calgary, and the two married in 1967. They had two children: Jennifer and David. Wyn became the cherished Opa to three grand-children: Jillan, Alistair, and Kathryn.

Wyn and Gail retired to Kingston in 2004 where Wyn continued his involvement in the military community, and was a member of the Royal Kingston United Services Institute (RKUSI). He was a parishioner at St George's Cathedral and organized the RMC "Copper Sunday" service for several years.

Wyn passed away at home on January 2, 2019 at the age of 76. He is survived by Gail, his children, and grandchildren, as well as his siblings Jacob, Ben, Sylvia (Head), and Trudy (Dipasquale) and joins his other siblings Harry, Nancy, and Cornelius.

Donations in lieu of flowers are welcome to be made to "Lunch by George" (<http://www.osgk.org/Donations.html>)