

TIME TRAVELLER'S DIARY

By Erika BairdAurora Historical Society

Wilfred Ferrier Petermann was born on May 8, 1888, to Jacob and Margaret M. Ferrier Petermann of Aurora.

He was one of the first Aurorans to enlist on September 22, 1914, at the age of 26. At the time, he was married to Mary Petermann of Cobalt, Ontario and had been working for the Northern Ontario Railway in Cobalt (Aurora Banner, 1914).

Petermann spent his first few months in the war as a Lieutenant in the 5th Royal Highlanders. He was transferred in mid-1915 to the 48th Highlanders as paymaster, stationed in Portsmouth, England. His wife also joined the war effort, working as a nurse in England, travelling back and forth to Canada every few months (Aurora Banner, 1915).

In January 1916, he was promoted to Captain and was sent to the front where he was injured twice by June of that year. After spending a brief stint in the Military Hospital in London, he resumed active duty and was once again battling at the front where he was injured for the third time and recovered (Aurora Banner, 1916).

During this time the 48th was located at Mont Sorrel, near Ypres, making it likely where Captain Petermann sustained his injuries (48th Highlanders). After Mont Sorrel, the 48th and Petermann were sent to the Somme shortly after August 1916. It was also around this time that he received his final promotion to Major Petermann, after his accomplishments in the previous battles (Aurora Banner, 1916).

The Battle of the Somme was his last. It was here on September 26, 1916 that Major Petermann was killed while acting as second in command in the trenches north of Courcelette. An enemy shell directly hit the dugout, instantly killing Major Petermann (Circumstances of Death Registers). At the time of his death he was 28 years old and had left behind two children in addition to his parents and wife. Afterwards his wife continued contact with her in-laws, and returned to her station in England to work as a nurse to support the war effort (Aurora Banner, 1916).