

TIME TRAVELLER'S DIARY

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It is not known, and cannot be known, exactly how many underage soldiers fought in the First World War, but it has been estimated approximately 250,000 joined the British Army (which included those from Canada). Eager to serve their country and set off on a grand adventure, boys as young as 12 were found to have enlisted. Many were only discovered when they got to the front and revealed their age out of fear, others were never found out.

In Aurora there were for certain at least two young men who enlisted underage; however, there may have been more. Men did not need to give proof of their age in order to enlist. Of these two, one was found out and sent home; the other only returned home when he was wounded.

Allen Lorne Hill enlisted in December 13, 1916, listing his date of birth as June 17, 1898, 18 years of age. Despite his height of 5 feet 2½ inches (half an inch below the minimum height), and weight of 109 lbs, he was accepted into the 208th Battalion. He served until March 1918 when he was discharged ? for being underage. They found out that his true date of birth was June 17, 1900, making him only 16 when he enlisted. How or why he was discovered was not listed in his papers, but regardless he was sent home to his mother.

Percy Doan Lloyd enlisted with his brother, Elwood Gardiner Lloyd in September 1915. At the time of his enlistment Percy stated his date of birth as December 12, 1896, which would make him 18 years old. However; upon further research we discovered that his other brother, Roscoe Major Lloyd, who also joined, stated his date of birth as February 10, 1897 ? only two months later. Clearly, one of these two had lied about their age, but census records revealed the truth.

The 1911 Canadian census listed the Lloyd family of Aurora, parents Seneca and Effie and four sons, Elwood, Roscoe, Percy and Howard. According to the records Roscoe was born February 1897, but Percy was born December 1899 ? three years later than he claimed. This was further confirmed by the 1921 census, in which he gave the same date. This would make him only 15 when he enlisted ? and 16 when he reached the front in June 1916.

Percy was injured twice in his service. The first was a head wound, from which he recovered. The second was a gunshot to the arm, which lost him full mobility of that limb. His injury caused him to be the first Auroran sent home in April 1917, his true age never discovered by his superiors.