

Lieutenant Duncan Peter Bell-Irving (1888-1915)



Son of Dr. D. Bell-Irving, Vancouver BC he was born in England on January 3rd, 1888 and came with his parents to Vancouver in April of 1888.

He attended school in Vancouver and graduated from the Royal Military College in Kingston, in 1908. He returned to British Columbia and was articled to Mr. G.H Dawson, B.C.L.S. the former Surveyor General, obtaining his commission as a BC Land Surveyor in 1913. He entered into partnership with Captain K.C.C Taylor, D.S.O., B.C.L.S. under the firm name of "Taylor and Bell-Irving". He was on a Government survey on the Naas River when war broke out and immediately made arrangements to return to Vancouver to enlist.

He left North Vancouver as an Engineer Lieutenant with the first draft and arrived in France in January of 1915 as a section commander in the 2nd Field Company Canadian Engineers.

On the evening of February 25th, he was in charge of four sappers working in the trenches 100 yards from the German lines. At 1130 PM the Germans opened fire on their work area with rifles and machine guns. He was shot through the head.

He was the first member of 6 Field Company, the first Canadian Engineer officer, the first British Columbia Land Surveyor and the first British Columbia officer killed in action. He was buried the next day in the yard of a field hospital approximately 1 mile east of Armentiers. Many of the company officers, NCOs and Sappers attended the burial service with members of his section acting as his pall bearers. Corporal Stanley Fenwick the section NCO that was with him when he was killed called him "*An awfully fine man.*"