

52nd Battalion

OFFICERS OF BATTALION BELIEVE LIEUT. COL. HAY KILLED JUNE 3

That Lieut.-Col. A. W. Hay met his death on the morning of June 3 is the opinion of a senior officer of the battalion given in a letter to Mrs. Hay at Quebec, which letter Mrs. Hay has forwarded to the Daily News-Chronicle. It reads as follows:

Dear Madam.—It is with deepest regret I find it my very painful duty to write you in connection with the fate of our gallant colonel, your husband. On my return to the battalion on the 13th instant, I found that the 52nd battalion had been through the very thickest of the fighting which continued with varying degrees of intensity from the early morning of the third instant, until after my return. From all the reports I gather that our colonel led his battalion, which was selected from the brigade, even after having just completed sixteen days in the trenches, to take part with the 49th battalion in a counter-attack upon the enemy who had succeeded in capturing a considerable portion of the Canadian frontage. The position was taken under an intense bombardment of artillery, machine gun and rifle fire, causing numerous casualties. After placing his battalion Colonel Hay proceeded to report to the officer in charge of operations, and it was on this mission that he was last seen. One of his runners, Corporal Kavanagh, was the last of the battalion to be with him, and he reports that he was separated from him in the confusion which followed the bursting of a shell in their immediate presence. He was later seen by Colonel Gascoyne, of the 60th battalion, who states that he was proceeding to the front line with a view to finding Colonel Griesbach there and since that time no confirmed information of any reliable nature has been received. On the strength of one report which seemed authentic, he was first reported wounded, but on further investigation it was necessary to report him wounded and missing. I regret to be forced to the conclusion that Colonel Hay met his death on the early morning of the third instant.

It is impossible to express how keenly his loss is felt by all ranks in the battalion. From a purely military standpoint, the army loses one of its keenest and most brilliant battalion commanders who gave promise of attaining great distinction and rising rapidly in the service.

It is from a regimental standpoint, however, that he is most sincerely mourned. During the fourteen months in which he labored with the battalion, he had come to be greatly loved by all his officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and there is not a single one in the battalion who does not mourn his loss as that of a very close friend, a true comrade and a fearless leader.

Kindly allow me to convey to you the very deepest sympathy of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the battalion in your bereavement. I can only say that your husband, our colonel, died a soldier's death, fighting for the principle of right and liberty. His memory will ever be cherished by all who had the honor to serve under him.

Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Walter Hay
(KIA) 1874-1916
Commander of the 52nd New Ontario Battalion



BODY OF COL. HAY REPORTED FOUND

An unofficial report has been received in Port Arthur that the body of Lieutenant-Colonel A. W. Hay was recently found in the debris of a dugout in the area where there was considerable heavy fighting during the early part of June. The Colonel was reported missing and several officers and men of the same battalion reported that nothing could be learned of his exact fate although they generally agreed that he had been killed, probably by an exploding shell.

Photograph: Courtesy of the Thunder Bay Military Museum
Articles: Port Arthur July 10, 1916; July 29, 1916

