

SIVELL, Alfred Gilbert

Service Number 16936

Rank Private

Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment) 7th Battalion

Born April 12, 1876, Valparaiso, Chile

Died April 24, 1915, Ypres, Belgium

Occupation Rancher

Marital Status Married to Elizabeth

Alfred Gilbert Sivell spent his earliest years in Chile. His father, a captain in the Royal Naval Reserve, had married a Chilean woman and several of their children were born there. The entire family eventually moved to London, England. As a youth, Albert joined the Merchant Navy and travelled the world. According to his family, his poor eyesight led to him to leave the Navy after several years. He took up work as a surveyor in Canada, first joining a brother and sister in Alberta and then making his way to British Columbia, to Victoria and finally to a farm in Errington.

He enlisted as soon as WWI broke out. Just before Christmas 1914, while training in England, he married. He was then sent to the Western Front. The 7th Battalion took part in the 2nd Battle of Ypres in April 1915. Casualties were huge during the struggle to secure the line. Another Errington resident, Frank Brignall was killed in action on April 24, 1915, the same day Alfred Sivell was reported missing.

It is possible Frank Brignall and Alfred Sivell may have been friends as they came from the same area of London and both lived in Errington.

Afterwards, Alfred's name turned up on a German list of prisoners who had died. In a letter, Alfred Sivell's wife, Elizabeth, later said she had come across two men who said he had been shot on that day. Alfred Gilbert Sivell is commemorated at the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium.

Sources:

Photo: The Daily Colonist, August 11, 1915

Personnel Records of the First World War, Library and Archives Canada

Books of Remembrance, Veterans Affairs Canada

Dulwich College 1914-1918.co.uk

