

VETERAN OF THE WEEK

10-16 November, 2024

252365 Private George Halifax White

209th Overseas Battalion

First World War



Photo: Cap Badge of the 209th Overseas Battalion. Courtesy of John Griffin.

George was born on the 28th of June 1904 in Capetown, South Africa to George and Mary White. He immigrated to Canada in 1907 alongside his mother and siblings. Once in Canada, they met up with his father and the family settled on a homestead near Burnham, SK. Two years after the outbreak of the Great War, despite being only twelve years old, George went to Swift Current and enlisted with the 209th Overseas Battalion. In order to enlist, George had to lie about his age. Claiming to be fourteen years old, George would serve as the bugler for the 209th Battalion. After completing initial training in Swift Current, he followed the battalion to Camp Hughes.

From there, George and his comrades headed to the east coast, where on the 1st of November 1916, they embarked for duty in the U.K. After a ten-day journey across the Atlantic, George and the 209th arrived in Liverpool. On the 27th of November, George was transferred from the 209th Battalion to the 34th Battalion. He would serve with the 34th Battalion until the 29th of January 1917, as he was to proceed back to Canada. After returning to Canada, George would be honourably discharged from the C.E.F on the 1st of April 1917 due to being a minor. Sadly, George's father, who also enlisted with the 209th Battalion, would not survive the war. His father was killed in action on the 28th of April 1917 at Arleux-en-Gohelle. His father, George Sr. has no known grave and is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial.