

# Teetzel, Henry “Harry” Duncan

Harry Teetzel, a Canadian, died in July 1918 in the Cottage Hospital, Beverley, after an air accident near Beverley Aerodrome where he had gone to collect an aircraft. The CWGC entry for him reads as follows:

**Name:** TEETZEL, HARRY DUNCAN

**Initials:** H D

**Nationality:** United Kingdom

**Rank:** Second Lieutenant

**Regiment/Service:** Royal Air Force

**Unit Text:** 60th Training Sqdn.

**Age:** 21

**Date of Death:** 10/07/1918

**Additional information:** Son of Roland Bruce Teetzel and Christina Teetzel, of Highgate, Ontario, Canada.

**Casualty Type:** Commonwealth War Dead

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** C. 31.

**Cemetery:** [BEVERLEY \(ST. MARY\) CHURCH CEMETERY](#)

Harry Teetzel was stationed at RAF Scampton where he was attached to the 60<sup>th</sup> training squadron as a flying instructor. He was killed after coming to Beverley to collect an aircraft that he was expected to fly back to Scampton. As the report of the inquest indicates, he crashed shortly after taking off from Beverley. He is buried in St. Mary's cemetery, Molescroft, Beverley.

An inquest was held at a Yorkshire town on Thursday, into the cause of death of Second-Lieut. Henry Duncan Teetzel, R.A.F., aged 20, a native of Canada, stationed in Lincolnshire. He was sent to Yorkshire with instructions to fly a machine back to Lincolnshire, and crashed to the ground just after leaving the aerodrome. He died from internal injuries the following day. It was stated that he joined the Air Force in Canada, and since his arrival in England had risen to the position of Instructor. The officer who started the engine said that when deceased had risen to a height of 300 feet, engine trouble developed. Deceased endeavoured to land, but lost his flying speed in turning, and nose-dived from a height of 150 feet. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.



The airplane was a Camel numbered B5598. It had already been involved in a number of crashes – see later in this article.



The Teetzel family has a letter written on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1918 by Letitia Coulson who was the matron of the Cottage Hospital in Beverley. Built in 1876, it was located at the bottom of Morton Lane but was demolished in the 1990's to make way for a housing development. Letitia describes the hospital as "a very pretty little place with a beautiful garden."

Letitia says that after his flying accident Harry Teetzel was brought into one of the Private Wards and was quite conscious until half an hour before he died. He lived for 21 hours after the accident and was able to take liquid refreshment. "He did not appear to suffer much and he had no idea that he was so badly injured. His injuries were chiefly internal."



After his death, they decided to leave the body in the hospital room and he remained there until the funeral. It seems that they felt that his parents would feel better about it if he did not go to the hospital mortuary. Apparently they decorated the room up with local flowers and "The coffin was of beautiful unpolished oak with brass fittings." His brother (believed to be Jack) didn't make it to the funeral until after the casket was closed so he didn't get to see him one last time. A large number of his brother officers came over from Scampton Aerodrome and acted as bearers and lowered the coffin into the grave. Many officers from Beverley Aerodrome attended as well. According to the letter, they went out and managed to collect "sufficient Canadian Maple Leaves to line the inside of the grave." This act would mean a great deal to a Canadian. She describes the cemetery as "a beautiful sunny spot, a little outside Beverley."

This fine lady describes how she "cut off a couple



of locks of his hair” and enclosed them in the letter to his mother.

Harry was buried in St. Mary’s cemetery Molescroft, Beverley. Initially the grave was marked by a wooden cross. Then a gravestone by Robert Pape of Beverley was placed on the grave, paid for by a lady called “Elsie”. The original gravestone was then replaced by an “official” CWGC gravestone which now heads his grave.

Harry first joined the army and then transferred to the Canadian section of the Royal Flying Corps. Harry Teetzel was based at RAF Scampton, an aerodrome in Lincolnshire that is now the home of the famous “Red Arrows” aerobatics team and during World War 2 was the home of the “Dambusters”. Harry had qualified as a pilot in January 1918 after just two months of training. He was a member of the Royal Flying Corps of Canada, an extension of the British RFC. We have the record of his training and it is shown and transcribed below.

1.	Year	1918
2.	Name and rank	2/Lieut H.D. Teetzel
3	Regiment	RFC Canada
<u>Qualifications</u>		
4.	Sent to Headquarters RFC Canada	From CRO Canada
5	Period of course at No. 4 S. M. A.	7 weeks
6.	Percentage of marks obtained	60%
7	Period of course in aviation	1.11.17 – 4.1.18
8	Types of machine and ability to fly them	J.N.4 Fair pilot
9	No. of landings (solo)	73
10	Cross country flying	Fair
11	Mechanical knowledge	Fair
12	Lewis Guns	Very Good
	Vickers Guns	Very good
13	Photography	Good
14	Wireless	Very good
15	Night landings	Nil
16	Qualities as an officer	Keen and energetic with the right idea of discipline. Should make a good officer
17	Total time in air as pilot	23 hours
18	Whether likely to make a fast pusher or fast tractor pilot. If so say which	Possible fast tractor
19	Date of last instructional flight	4.1.18
Place Toronto		
J. M.Mitchell Capt. Staff Capt. for General Officer Commanding		
Royal Flying Corps Canada		

A few points are notable about the attestation:

- the low number of hours (23) required compares to today’s requirement of 45 hours including 10 solo to qualify for a pilot’s license.
- The reference to fast tractor or fast pusher describes the configuration of an airplane according to whether the engine is in front (pusher) of or behind

(tractor) the propeller. Most early aircraft were “pushers” but the tractor configuration became dominant once interrupter gear became established and allowed forward guns more easily to be fired.

REPORT ON THE EFFICIENCY AND PROGRESS OF  
 STUDY OF INDUSTRY AND TO RECOMMEND  
 TO THE GOVERNMENT IN COMPLETE PREPARATION

1. Year:- 1918  
 2. Name and Rank:- S/Lieut. H. D. Testuel  
 3. Regiment:- H. F. C. Canada

4. Period of Service:- From 6.3.18, Canada  
 5. Period of Service at H. F. C.:- 7 Weeks  
 6. Percentage of work completed:- 60 %  
 7. Period of absence to aviation:- 1-11-17 to 4-1-18  
 8. Types of Machine flown and ability in them:- Sopwith  
 9. No. of Landing:- 15  
 10. Cross-country flights:- Fair  
 11. Mechanical knowledge:- Fair  
 12. Gun work:- Very Good  
 13. Stunt work:- Very Good  
 14. Stunt work:- Very Good  
 15. Stunt work:- Very Good  
 16. Flight Instructor:- Nil  
 17. Suitable as an Officer:- Yes and energetic with the right ideas of discipline. Should make a good Officer in time.  
 18. Other likely to make a good pilot (if as yet, which):- Possible Post Tractor  
 19. Date of last Instructional flight:- 4-1-18  
 20. Remarks:- He has passed all tests and practical at School of Aerial Gunnery, H.F.C., Canada on 1st Nov in syllabus of work.

Place Toronto  
 Date 21-1-18  
 Staff Capt.  
 For General Officer (Commanding)  
 Royal Flying Corps  
 Canada

The training record was obtained from the Public Records office in Kew. There is other correspondence in the file between Canada and London asking if he can wear his wings whilst on a weeks leave prior to going overseas and the reply (by telegram) was that he could. They thought that it might encourage recruitment.

Flight magazine on May 28<sup>th</sup> reported the notice in the London Gazette that Harry had been promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the Flying Branch of the RAF with effect from 26<sup>th</sup> April 1918 having previously been 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant on probation. It subsequently reported on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1918 that he had been killed.

F.S. FORM 559.  
 (L. 2254) W. 3717704. 10,000. 578 P.S.P.L.D.

**CASUALTY CARD.** Tests completed 11

Rank, Name and Unit Testuel 2Lt Harry Testuel Went overseas 60.T.S.

Graduated as Pilot on (date) 26.4.18 At Time of Accident Pilot  
 Employed as Pilot

Date Report Received and Official Reference.	Date of Casualty.	Where occurred.	Type of Machine.	Nature and Cause of Accident.	Result of Accident.	Name of other Occupant of Machine.	Remarks.
Tele Card 60 Lincoln	9-7-18	Home	Sop Cam B 5498 C 12048	Crashed engine in planning down started machine near ground with insufficient weight to recover with result front machine nose down to ground	Injures serious	Nil	Details of inquiry is being held. Cof 2 as over
Further info S. 551 . 4. 15 2 of 3 12/2/18 23-7-18	10-7-18 4.50 P.M.		Clermont WD/11394		Diad of injuries		

Harry’s death was reported on a casualty card pictured above. It contains the basic detail of the accident. A court of inquiry was held into the accident on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1918.

Its rather terse conclusions state: "The cause of the accident was due to an error of judgement on the part of the pilot without sufficient height or flying speed."

## Sopwith Camel



The airplane in which Harry died was a Sopwith Camel – number B5598; a similar one is pictured below. The Camel was said to be an agile, highly manoeuvrable biplane. The Sopwith Camel accounted for more aerial victories than any other Allied aircraft during World War I. Credited with destroying 1,294 enemy aircraft, it was called the

*Camel* due to the humped fairing over its twin machine guns. Much like a real camel, this aircraft could turn and bite you. Noted for its tendency to kill inexperienced flyers, many pilots feared its vicious spin characteristics. Until sufficient speed was developed during takeoff, Camel pilots maintained full right rudder to counteract the torque the rotary engine. Failure to do so often resulted in a ground loop with the Camel crashing on its starboard wingtip. During World War I, 413 pilots died in combat and 385 pilots died from non-combat related causes while flying the Sopwith Camel.

"A great number of trainee pilots had been killed learning to fly this machine, as its tricks took some learning, although they were really simple to overcome. Its main trouble was that owing to its very small wingspan, and its purposely unstable characteristics, coupled with the gyroscopic effect of a rotating engine and propeller, it flipped into a spin very easily at low speeds. Consequently, in landing and taking off, a tremendous number of fatal accidents occurred, and a general felling of dislike for the machine was prevalent. It really had people frightened." [Arthur Cobby](#)

The record for Harry's aircraft in the Camel File suggests that that it had a chequered history. It shows that the plane was the Sopwith Camel B5598 C120 HP Clerget WD/11395. The engine was manufactured in France by the Clerget company and generated 120 hp. In the January of 1918, the plane was in Westroosbeke, France and was flown by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant G R Howsam, a Canadian.

George Robert Howsam was born in Reach Ontario on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1895 to George and Aoma (Cutting) Howsam. He went from high school into the army in March 1916, serving with the 116th Battalion and 182nd Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in the spring of 1917, learning to fly at Deseronto and Camp Borden, Ontario. In August 1917 he went to France and was posted to 70 Squadron. Flying the Sopwith Camel he scored his first victory in December 1917. On 22 January 1918, he shot down four Albatros scouts in one day. After recovering from wounds received in combat on 24 March 1918, he was posted to 43 Squadron as a flight commander in October 1918. Flying a Sopwith

Snipe, he scored his final victory on 30 October, shooting down a Fokker D.VII over Aulnoye. Howsam returned to Canada in May 1921. He attended the Royal Air Force staff college in 1930. During World War II, Howsam served as director of training with the Royal Canadian Air Force and retired in 1945 with the rank of Air Vice-Marshal.

George Howsam crashed B5598 on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1918 south of Comines. It was then returned to England to be fitted with a fire-proof tank. It's likely that this work was done at Beverley. Lt. Teetzel was then sent from Scampton to Beverley to fetch it and had the accident which caused his death. There is no mention of any other activity with B5598 in the intervening period.

## The Teetzel Family

Henry "Harry" Duncan Teetzel was the son of Roland Bruce Teetzel and Christine McIntyre. Roland was born in 1859 and died in 1944; he is buried at Gosnell Cemetery, Highgate, Ontario; his occupation was mail courier and town constable. Christine was born in 1862 and was buried in Gosnell cemetery on her death in 1927. They married on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1886 and were buried in the same plot.

Roland and Christine had several children between 1886 and 1897; Harry was their youngest child. Ruth Teetzel is the grand-daughter of Harry's next older brother, Lewis Bruce Teetzel born in 1895. The children were:

- Percy Lawn Teetzel 1886 - 1964 Occupation: Druggist , Hedley , British Columbia , Canada Burial: Cremated with burial in Cemetery in Princeton British Columbia Age at death: 77. Married Elsie Mae Cook 1890 - 1961 Burial: Princeton , British Columbia Age at death: 71 est.
- William "Willie" S. Teetzel 1888 - 1960 Occupation: Barber in Chilliwack (Owned barbershop & salon) Burial: ,Chilliwack , British Columbia Age at death: 72 Married Anna Gertrude "Sadie" Robinson 1891 - 1974 Burial: ,Chilliwack , British Columbia Age at death: 83 est.
- Franklin Dean Teetzel 1890 - 1938 Burial: Gosnell Cemetery,Highgate,Ontario GE 12 Age at death: 47 Married Kathleen Mary Innes 1892 - 1950 m: 29 Nov 1908 Burial: Gosnell Cemetery Highgate , Ontario Plot # GE 12 Age at death: 58 est. He enlisted on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1918.
- John "Jack" Edgar Teetzel 1892 - 1971 Occupation: Pharmacist Burial: Maple Cemetery , Maple , Ontario Canada Age at death: 79 Married Mary LOUISA Harding 1899 - 1974 Age at death: 75 est. Jack is mentioned in Letitia Coulson's letter as being on active service in France at the time of Harry's death.
- Lewis Bruce "LOUIS" Teetzel 1895 - 1966 Occupation: Chief Accountant D.H.O when retired in 1962 Burial: Richmond Hill , Ontario , Canada , Presbyterian Church Cemetery Age at death: 71 Married Zella "Zell" Grace Tyndall 1905 - 1976 m: 26 Jun 1929 Occupation: Housewife & Mother Burial: Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, Presbyterian Church Cemetery Age at death: 71

- Henry "Harry" Duncan Teetzel 1897 - 1918 Occupation: Second Lieutenant British Airforce during 1<sup>st</sup> World War Burial: Beverley(St Mary) Church Yard , Yorkshire , England (Grave Reference C.31) Age at death: 21

The Teetzels are able to trace their ancestry back to:

- John Soloman Teetzel 1762 - 1836 Occupation: Marblecutter, Stone Mason, Assessor , Tax Collector & Teacher Burial: Palermo Cemetery , Trafalgar Twp., Halton Cty., Upper Canada Age at death: 74
- Rachel Van Till 1765 - 1813 m: 05 Nov 1786 Occupation: Housewife & Mother Burial: Grimsby : Upper Thirty Cemetery near their farm Age at death: 48 est.

These Teetzels were Harry's great-great-grandparents.

The full Teetzel Family tree may be found at

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/t/e/e/William-B-Teetzel-St-Thomas/PDFODT1.pdf>

A remote cousin of Harry's also served in the RAF and the Canadian Royal Army Medical Corps during WW1. He was Hugh Mowbray Teetzel; by 1918 he was a Flight Officer. The medal index record gives an address of 184 Glasgow St, Ardrossan in Scotland. There is also a record for him in the National Archive – "Page 148: Hugh Mowbray Teetzel. RNAS Officers Service."

Name	Corps	Reg. No.	Rank	Date of Discharge	Cause of Discharge
Teetzel Hugh Mowbray	R.A.F. Can. R.A.M.C.		Flight Officer	Enlistment	
Date of application	(a) Badge 3.5.18 (b) Medal				
No. of File	220006/1 4413/2/B				
Address of applicant	184 Glasgow St. Ardrossan				
Action taken	Passed to our number				
	22-5-18				

W6749-115226 100,000 3/17 H.W.V.(P.52) 111/1833

## Chatham and Kent Cenotaph

Harry Teetzel was one of those whose name was missed when the cenotaph was originally dedicated in 1923 in Chatham and Kent County of Ontario where Harry's home was located. The local newspaper reported on the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 1 as follows:

"A moving event will be occurring in Chatham, Ontario this November 11th; something that is thought to be unique in Ontario and possibly Canada. The Cenotaph for the fallen of Chatham and Kent County will be re-dedicated for the 90th anniversary of the armistice of the First World War. The re-dedication, however, will be for the over 150 local men and one nursing sister who died in 1914-18 but who

were missed when the Cenotaph was originally dedicated in November 1923.” Harry Teetzel was one of those men whose memory was restored.

The report describes the origin of the re-dedication which resembles the project that investigated the backgrounds of the soldiers of Bishop Burton who died in World War 1.

“The ceremony, a full military event that will be attended by a large contingent from the Essex & Kent Scottish Regiment, is the culmination of one man's five year search to find people omitted from the original dedication. That search began with the purchase of a small pine document box at a local auction.

Jerry Hind, of Chatham, purchased the little box at an estate sale in Ridgeway, Ontario years ago and found, to his delight, that it contained the diaries of a local farmer, Harry Smith. Smith wrote at length about Victor Pyne, a Bernardo boy who was sent from England to live and work on the Smith farm. Pyne enlisted at the outbreak of the war with the 1st Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and by February 1915, he was in the trenches in France. He died of wounds on May 9, 1916, however, Hind discovered that he was not listed in the original 1923 cenotaph dedication program. As Hind began to delve into the Chatham and Kent County enlistments, he found more and more men who had been missed, including a prominent local officer whose mother had actually contributed to the erection of the monument.

After five years and thousands of hours pouring over newspaper microfiche, the CEF online database, and the Commonwealth War Graves records, Hind has found over 150 men and women who had either been born, were living in, or had enlisted from Chatham-Kent whose ultimate sacrifice had, like Cpl. Pyne, not been included in the original dedication. Until now!”

## Ruth Teetzel



Ruth Teetzel is Harry Teetzel's great-great niece. A Canadian citizen she visited Beverley and Bishop Burton in 2009 and is here pictured by the plaque in All Saints' Church.

Ruth was able to show us a letter sent by a lady called "Elsie" to Harry's mother in Canada. The Teetzel family has a letter dated November 1943 from "Elsie" to Mrs Teetzel, Harry's mother, in Canada. The letter implies that many letters had passed in both directions but only one has survived. It's possible that Letitia Coulson and Elsie are one and the same person but we cannot be sure. The name Elsie may have been derived from her initials ELC or LC. She was then working at the Yorkshire School for the Blind in York. The School was located at the King's Manor buildings

in the centre of York, now part of the University of York; it opened in 1833 and closed in 1958. More information about the school may be found at <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/guideleaflets/disability/doc4%20wilberforce.htm> Elsie's letter suggests that she took some time tending Harry's grave in Molescroft and paid for the gravestone installed by Pape's.