

Mont Alexander Wood

Introduction

Good afternoon, everyone! I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Jacqui Roberts. I am the granddaughter of Mont Wood and the eldest daughter of Tom, Mont's son.

Today, I am going to talk about the life and death of my grandfather Constable Mont Alexander Wood. He was a son, a husband, a father and friend. He was also a WW1 veteran who served overseas and a county police officer who served the people of Lennox & Addington County.

Mont lived a life of military and public service. He served overseas during the first world war where he met and married his first wife Jessie Smith. They returned back to Canada where they started their family. In 1933, he became a widower and was left to raise 4 daughters. Eleven years later, he met and married Lizzie Irvine and fathered 2 more children, a son and a daughter who passed at the age of 2 weeks. He became a county constable in around 1923. His life came to a tragic end in 1952. He was 58 years old.

Early Life

Mont Alexander Wood was born on Mar 11, 1893 to William Wilson Wood and Lois Adeline Hicks in Fernleigh, Frontenac County. He was one of five children. He spent his youth in this area. In 1916, when he was 23, he enlisted in the military serving his country. He served in WW1 overseas with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces 146th battalion and the 254th Quinte's own battalion until 1919. He met his first wife Jessie Smith in Scotland around 1916 and married there. They returned to Canada around 1919. After returning, he worked as a labourer, a farmer and a miner. He was an active member of the local veteran's community. He was also a charter member of Northbrook Canadian Legion branch and served as their Sergeant-at-arms. He was also a member of the Loyal Orange Lodge. He was known for his humour and for his always finding the funny side of things. He was an avid fisherman and hunter. Once while out hunting with friends, it was said that he engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with a bear throwing it a few times before being able to reach his rifle and shooting the bear. In 1933, Jessie passed away leaving Mont a widower and single father of 4. He later remarried Lizzie Irvine and had 2 more children. He became a county constable in 1923.

His Career in Policing

As mentioned, after his military service and working various jobs, he eventually became a county constable dedicating the rest of his life to policing and serving his community.

He became a county constable for Lennox & Addington County and served the area for approximately 29 years and became a respected member of the community. He was known as a dedicated officer who helped those in his community. He responded to emergencies and those in need. He was a dedicated and responsible officer and was always there to be of assistance.

The Night of His Death

In the early morning hours of a foggy December 1, 1951, Mont was travelling on Hwy 41 at Harlowe Rd, near Northbrook. He across a stranded truck driver and stopped to assist him. While waiting for a tow truck, he noticed headlights approaching in the heavy fog in the distance. He stepped out from behind his patrol vehicle to close his door. Tragically, the approaching vehicle struck him. The impact threw him 20 feet through the air, gravely injuring him. Constable Gordon Stout of Northbrook OPP detachment arrived and transported Mont to Belleville General Hospital in his patrol vehicle. Unfortunately, his injuries were fatal and he passed shortly after arriving. He was 58 years old.

His Funeral

His funeral was held Dec 3, 1951 at Northbrook United Church. His was the largest funeral in that village's history at the time. There were over 500 people in attendance. Several members of the OPP attended. His body was interred in the Northbrook cemetery. He was survived by his widow Lizzie, his young son Tom (who was 7 at the time of his death) and 4 adult daughters.

His Legacy

Mont Alexander Wood is remembered as a dedicated police officer who lost his life while doing his duty and helping another person. Today, more than 70 years later, his name is honoured on the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation's Honour Roll among other officers who died while doing their duty. His name is memorialized on the Wall of Honour near the Ontario legislature at Queen's Park in Toronto. This dedication was attended by family, dignitaries, the Ontario Premier as well as the Governor-General. His son Tom placed a wreath at the Wall.

In May of this year, a bridge crossing on Highway 401 at Hwy 41 in Greater Napanee was dedicated and named the Constable Mont Alexander Wood Memorial Bridge. Family members including grandchildren Bill Cox, Joyce Parks, Lillian Hasler and myself, police officers as well s community leaders attended the dedication ceremony. This dedication transformed a name in historical records into a visible memorial to be seen by millions of travellers. He died while aiding a driver. Now, today, he watches over all those who travel that stretch of highway.

Conclusion

Mont Wood's life was dedicated to family and service. He served his country during WW1 and then nearly 30 years serving his community as a police officer.

His death was tragic not only that it happened but that it happened doing something he set his life out to do...helping others.

He is remembered not for only how he died but also for how he lived—serving his country, his community and those in need.