

# COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR LESLIE BRADLEY WW1 MEDALS



TOP – FROM LEFT TO RIGHT – MILITARY MEDAL -  
FOR BRAVERY AND DEVOTION, DECEMBER 23, 1917  
FOR ACTION AT THE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE

AWARDED THE BELGIUM CROIX DE GUERRE FOR BRAVERY ON THE BATTLEFIELD  
JULY, 1918

THE GOLD LEAF WITH NUMBER 4 IN THE MIDDLE WAS WORN ON THE CAPS OF THE OF  
THE OFFICERS OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> BATTALIAN

ENGRAVED AROUND THE EDGE OF EACH MEDAL WAS THE IDENTIFICATION OF EACH  
SOLDIER WHO EARNED THE MEDAL FOR BRAVERY AND DEVOTION.

11109 W - O - CL - 2 - L - BRADLEY - 4 - CAN - INF  
HIS NUMBER, WARRANT OFFICER, CLASS 2, LESLIE BRADLEY, 4<sup>TH</sup> BATTALIAN, CANADIAN  
INFANTRY  
THE 14 - 15 MEDAL  
THE WAR MEDAL  
THE VICTORY MEDAL

“Those of us that worship at St. Stephens Anglican Church, Hornby, ON blindly find our pew seats and disperse at the end of service through the main aisle, without giving much else a thought. However, on the rear wall in the corner are two war memorial lists from the First and Second World Wars. The World War One Memorial holds the names of thirteen men that presumably served the Great War. My intention was to write short profiles on some of the men if I could positively identify them. They seem to be local born folks, residents or employees from the area. I have been able to positively identify all but two. However, the first man listed has actually proved the most interesting so far.

This man is described in his Military Medal citation as “courageous and brave”. He was also awarded a



Belgian Croix de Guerre for valour on the battlefield. He served continuously from August 1914 to March 1919, fighting in some of the fiercest battles of the war like Ypres, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, Amiens and Cambrai. In the process he received gunshot wounds 3 times, lost a thumb and was awarded both the Military Medal and aforementioned Croix de Guerre. More importantly, he is buried within our beautiful St. Stephens Cemetery (with his wife Jean) without any notification or any sign of his heroics or contributions to the Canadian Expeditionary Force. *”Bob Richardson then enlisted some of Leslie’s family to contribute and so the story goes.”*

Leslie Bradley was born March 15, 1889 in the small hamlet on Linton, King Township (between Schomberg and Nobleton, Hwy. 27) as the 4th child of farmer John Bradley and Elizabeth Bryan. Sometime between the 1891 and 1901 Canadian Censuses, the family moved to a farm in Trafalgar, Lot 12, Concession 7. In the 1911 Census, Leslie is shown as a 22 year old farm labourer still on his father’s farm and one of 8 children at home. There is no sign of the impending heroics or leadership skills to come in a few years.

He attended S.S. #7 Trafalgar. As the records show, most of the farm boys were absent during seeding and harvesting. Leslie belonged to not only the St. Stephens congregation but also the No. 165 Hornby Orange Lodge and the 20<sup>th</sup> Halton Battalion Lorne Rifles militia regiment (“H” Coy. Hornby). The 36<sup>th</sup> Peel Battalion and the 20<sup>th</sup> Halton Rifles provided 16 officers and 404 other ranks to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, CEF. 4<sup>th</sup> (Central Ontario) Battalion, CEF was organized at Valcartier under Camp Order 241 of 2 September 1914 and was composed of recruits from Military District 2 (Aurora, Brampton, Brantford, Hamilton and Niagara Falls). The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W.S. Buell who was replaced within days by Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Labatt. Leslie Bradley was one of the 404 men to travel to Valcartier attesting to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion on September 22, 1914, giving his occupation as a carpenter, address as R.R. 3, Georgetown and shaving a year off his age.

Leslie went over in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division and was thrown into the meat grinder right away and was very lucky to have survived the war since being in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division meant you were in harms way that much longer. After training in Val Cartier, Quebec they took the train to Halifax and embarked in the Canadian Troop Convoy for Southampton, but at the last minute were diverted to Plymouth because of an enemy sub.

## Emery Bradley Page 2

Emery Bradley wanted to enlist, rather than work on the farm, and not letting the family know his plans he walked to Norval, but the man who was on duty knew Emery's father, and told him he was under age and he should go back and help his family on the farm. When he told the story, he always said "That was the longest 10 mile walk I ever walked."

Later he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, and was assigned to the Ammunition Column, The 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade was formed from these Battalions in Fall of 1914,

18<sup>th</sup> (Western Ontario) Battalion  
19<sup>th</sup> (Central Ontario) Battalion  
20<sup>th</sup> (Central Ontario) Battalion  
21<sup>st</sup> (Eastern Ontario) Battalion  
4<sup>th</sup> Trench Mortar Battery

He sailed from Montreal May 16-17, 1915 on the Corinthian.

The ship he returned on was Carmania which landed in Halifax 30-12-18'

Sgt. Emery Bradley R.C.A. was in hospital in Shorncliffe after a horse stepped on his foot and broke some bones. After being discharged from the hospital he went on duty as a signalling Instructor at Shorncliffe, and later returned to the trenches.



Emery was the 5<sup>th</sup> son borne to John and Elizabeth Bradley, on  
March 39, 1895.

After World War 1 he returned to farming, and later formed a  
Real Estate partnership with his eldest son, Edgar  
in the Guelph area.

He had a keen eye for antiques and bought and sold antique  
glass and furniture.

He died in London March 12, 1981  
And is buried at St. Stephens, Hornby.

**News from the Front**  
(Taken from Milton Time Capsules)

December, 1915 – Letters were being received and printed from Sgt. Leslie Bradley who complained that the regimental goat nearly got his package from home from Gunner Emery Bradley, at the Grange Hospital, Kent who reported that his foot was healing.

Sgt. Leslie (written day before he was wounded). "I was just figuring up today. Thirteen men were in my section when we landed in France, Two are dead, ten have been wounded, two of these have returned to duty and I alone have escaped with a whole hide. Sometimes I wonder how long it will last. I have seen men die in all manner of deaths. I am still here. I have scouted over "no man's land", erected wire entanglements not a hundred yards from Fritz's machine guns, have been buried alive and have felt the breeze of bullets as they whizzed by my head. Still I am plodding along.

On Tuesday, John Bradley was notified that Sergeant Leslie Bradley, 4<sup>th</sup> Batt. was in hospital suffering from a gunshot wound. Sgt. Bradley had been the most fortunate of all the men of the First contingent. Up until the 12<sup>th</sup> he was the only one who had been regularly in the firing line who had escaped being hit.

Since the wounding of Pte Duncan Patterson, Sgt. Leslie Bradley is now the only man except Jas, Fennemore, now of the R.C.D. Of the Milton contingent to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion who had been in the firing line who had escaped death, wounding or sickness. He went to France on Feb, 15, 1915 and has been at the front ever since, except nine days spent on leave in England.

December, 1916  
Sgt, Leslie Bradley, son of John Bradley of Hornby has recovered fast from the wound received last spring and is again in France duty in the trenches.

Sgt, Emery Bradley, R.C.A, is on duty as a signalling instructor at Shornecliffe. Though discharged from the hospital there, the bones broken in one of his feet, still trouble him.

March, 1918  
John Bradley of Hornby heard from his son C.S.M. Leslie Bradley, "I have been given the Military Medal and the Belgium Croix de Guerre (Cross of the War) I am having the medals sent home. Please take good care of them and let me know if they arrive safely. Am Co. Sgt. Major now, but the rank is not yet confirmed."

News from the Front. In the letters home, wasn't always grim. A letter from Leslie Bradley reported, "We were in the trenches on the bank of a fair sized river. The banks were about as high as the Sixteen Mile Creek hills.

We were short of eatables and grouchy. One night the enemy gave us a heavier cannonade than usual. A lot of their shells dropped in the river and heaved bucketfuls of water upon us and we were grouchier than ever. There is a good side to everything however, and the fish accompanied the water. We fried them for breakfast in the morning .....



MILTON SOLDIER DESCRIBES HIS TIME ON THE BATTLEFRONT  
IN LETTER TO MOTHER

(From Milton Time Capsules)



June 1915

Pt. Leslie Bradley, of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion  
wrote to his mother June 3 at Hornby.

“We are having a bit of a rest just now,  
a few miles back of the trenches.

This country looks very pretty now. They certainly  
have everything I ever saw eaten for  
growing crops. The growth is very fast’  
The clover is now ready to be cut, and a very heavy  
crop it is. Fresh garden stuff can be got anywhere  
now and I see some peas in blossom.

A Burlington man and I had just finished burying an unknown  
soldier behind our trenches the other day  
and made a rough little cross for a mark,  
when whiz bang we were over in our dugout in the fraction  
of a moment, but it was close. It just smashed the cross  
up into kindling wood and dug a huge hole  
alongside ready for the next man.

However, we were lucky not to have another man  
to put into it . . . .



The following are excerpts from Leslie Bradley's war service record, beginning with his arrival at St. Nazaire, France on February 11, 1915 - the first use of German gas

- Participated in the Battles of Givenchy and Festubert, May & June, 1915
- Promoted to rank of Corporal, June 22, 1915
- Promoted to rank of Lance Sergeant, August 1, 1915
- Granted seven days leave, November 2, 1915
- Attached to 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn. Div. Training School, January 22, 1916
- Admitted 3rd Cdn. General Hospital, Boulogne, gun shot wound right leg & arm, March 10, 1916 -  
Battle of Sorrel
- Discharged hospitals, August 2, 1916
- Taken on strength 36<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion, West Sanding, October 8, 1916
- Transferred to 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in the field, October 27, 1916
- Admitted No. 39 General Hospital, LeHavre, December 3, 1916, VDS
- Rejoined 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in the Field, March 13, 1917
- Promoted to rank of Sergeant, May 4, 1917
- Admitted #6 Casualty Clearing Station, concussion, blown up by a shell, neurosis, November 6, 1917  
- at the Battle of Passchendaele
- Awarded Military Medal for bravery and devotion, December 23, 1917 for actions at the Battle of  
Passchendaele
- Rejoined 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in the Field, November 19, 1917
- Granted 14 days leave, December 16, 1917
- Promoted to rank of Company Sergeant-Major and warrant officer Class II, December 20, 1917
- Awarded the Belgium Croix de Guerre for bravery on the battlefield, July, 1918
- Admitted No. 32 Stationary Hospital, GSW thumb amputated, September 27, 1918 -  
Battle of Canal du Nord
- Returned to Canada, S.S. Empress of Britain, Liverpool to Halifax, February 17, 1919
- Discharged Toronto as "Medically Unfit" March 28, 1919

1. Information taken from Records of the Fourth Canadian Infantry Battalion in the Great War of 1914 - 1918....

Reg'l No. 11109 - Rank C.S.M. - Original Unit . 4th Bn., - Enlisted 22-9-14 - Date of T.O.S. unit in the field 4th Bn., 9-2-15 - Casualties -wounded 12-3-16 and 29-9-18 - Address of demobilization -R.R.No.3, Georgetown, Ontario

#### DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

No. 11109 Sgt. BRADLEY, L

Military Medal, London Gazette, No. 30573, 13-3-18

Belgian Croix-de-Guerre, London Gazette, No. 30792, 12-7-18

.Deed of Action

Military Medal – " during the operations at PASSCHENDAELE 6th and 7th of Nov, 1917. On the afternoon of Nov, 5, while taking his platoon to their assembly position this N.C.O. was blown up and badly shaken by a shell. He insisted upon carrying on and got his platoon into position. This N.C.O. received orders to move forward and dig in. Sgt. Bradley was wounded but he encouraged his men to keep moving forward. Later, when his wounds were dressed, he made his way forward and rejoined his platoon. Subsequently he was ordered to report to the Aid Post by his company commander. This N.C.O. has been with the battalion since Feb., 1915, and has at all times shown great spirit and set a very high example of courage and bravery to his men.

His five medals are in the safekeeping of his son Don and include 14-15 Medal, War Medal, Victory Medal and Military Medal and Belgian Croix-de-Guerre ( both for Bravery)"

(From the Canadian Champion dated March 1916) – "On Tuesday John Bradley was notified that Sergeant Leslie Bradley, 4<sup>th</sup> Batt. was in Hospital suffering from a gunshot wound. Sgt Bradley had been the most fortunate of all the Milton men of the first contingent. Up to the 12<sup>th</sup> he was the only one who had been regularly in the firing line who had escaped being hit.

When Leslie returned to civilian life on the farm he found that Tom Longboat, the famous long distance Indian runner, who had enlisted in 1916, had also returned to Stewarttown, and he ran along beside Tom Longboat as he was training.

Life changed on the day that Leslie had backed the wagon into the barn, and when the team suddenly bolted, he grabbed the reins, but the horses kept going and his head was smashed between the wagon rack and the beam of the doorway. He was not likely to survive, but his younger sister Lottie, who was a registered nurse, left her private nursing below Hamilton, and came to nurse him back to health

His son, Don Bradley said that wasn't the only time his Dad's sister had stepped in. While working in Toronto at a place where he handled hot steel; a piece of hot metal fell on his leg and the doctor said it should be amputated. His sister refused to let this happen, and used poultice after poultice as she nursed him, and he recovered.



Charlotte Bradley R.N

in Toronto and they would go to the hockey games.

They were second cousins and the families weren't in favour of them getting married. After the war the two were married and lived in Tottenham. When Rob was in hospital, she knew he didn't have very long to live and she brought him home and stayed at his side. (All four mentioned here, Leslie, Emery, Lottie and Roy all grew up on the same farm.)

Leslie married Jean Wilson of Hagersville in 1924 and for many years they operated Bradley's General Store at Postville at the junction of Dundas and Trafalgar Rd.. He was also the post master. It was tough going during the depression. The previous owner tried to get the property back, but Leslie was able to borrow money from the McClary sisters to pay the mortgage.



He didn't talk about the war, but when familiar veterans walked in the door Leslie brought out the 164<sup>th</sup> Battalion book and they would reminisce

Leslie retired to Orrillia. He died in Orrillia July 2, 1979.

He is buried at St. Stephens Anglican Church Cemetery

Lottie was nursing in Cleveland, but during WWII, she quit her job and volunteered to go to nurse in London while the Nazis were dropping bombs trying to destroy the city. Her nephew, a dispatch rider in the army, Lance Corporal Roy D. Bradley decided to look up his aunt while on leave. She told him of the times she would come up to Toronto from Cleveland and meet Rob Magloughlen of Tottenham,