

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR NOVEMBER 17, 2025 CELEBRATES LIEUTENANT SAMUEL LEWIS HONEY, VC

Samuel Lewis “Lew” Honey was born on February 9, 1894, in Conn, Ontario, the eldest son of Rev. George and Metta Honey. His father served as the Methodist minister for the Conn circuit, living in the parsonage at Maple Street and Highway 89 until 1896, when Rev. Honey was called to serve in Listowel.

Honey earned a teaching certificate and graduated in 1914 with credentials in teaching methods, later completing a cadet instructor course. Though he planned to attend college, the outbreak of war changed his path. On January 22, 1915, he enlisted. During basic training, he was promoted to Acting Sergeant and sailed to England that October. His rank led him to Aldershot for specialized courses in physical training and bayonet fighting, which he later taught at Bramshott Camp until August 1916.



The Honey's home in Conn

That same month, Honey became a Sergeant and joined the 78th Infantry Battalion in France. His courage quickly stood out. On February 22, 1917, he earned the Military Medal for Gallantry after raiding a German trench under heavy grenade fire. At Vimy Ridge in April, he received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for leadership under intense fire. Later that year, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant and returned to Bramshott as an instructor before completing officer training and returning to the front in October.



In September 1918, during the assault on Bourlon Wood, Honey's regiment advanced through three enemy positions. On September 27, after all commanding officers were killed, Honey assumed command. That day, he earned the Victoria Cross—the highest military honour a Canadian soldier can be awarded—by single-handedly capturing a German position, its guns, and 10 prisoners. That night, he led another daring raid to seize a German post. Wounded on September 29, Honey died the next day, the final day of the 78th Battalion's attack.

Admired by his men, Honey was buried in France. His legacy endures: a plaque first placed at Westcott United Church in Conn in 1964 now stands at the Royal Canadian Legion in Mount Forest. In 1975, his family donated his medals to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, ensuring his story remains part of Canada's proud military heritage.

Submitted by Councillor Penny Renken, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable