

MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES



Lance Corporal John Shiwak who received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, died at the Battle of Cambrai in northern France Nov 20, 1917. Shiwak, a hunter and trapper of Inuit

descent from the remote Rigolet community in Labrador, was a sniper and a scout with the “F” Company of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment. Shiwak distinguished himself as an expert sniper while serving on the front lines. An unidentified officer reportedly called him the best sniper in the British Army. Captain R.H. Tait of the Newfoundland Regiment called the 28 year old Lance Corporal, “a great favourite with all ranks, an excellent scout and observer, and a thoroughly good and reliable fellow in every way.” Shiwak attributed his sniping prowess to his experience “swatching” seals—a Newfoundland and Labrador term for watching the water to shoot seals as they resurface to breathe. When he died on the battlefield of shell wounds, he was 28 years old. Fellow “F” brigade member **Private Frederick Freida**, from the remote Hopedale community of Labrador was more fortunate. He returned home. When he was 55 years old in 1951, Private Freida decided to serve his country as a Canadian Arctic Ranger.