

VETERAN OF THE WEEK

19-25 October, 2025

252498 Private Taisuke Tanaka

209th and 10th Battalion, C.E.F

First World War



Photo: Cap badge of the 209th Battalion. Courtesy of John Griffin

Born in Kagoshima, Japan, Taisuke Tanaka immigrated to Canada in 1906, he enlisted with the 209th Battalion on the 15th of March, 1916 and deployed with the battalion to the United Kingdom. Following the disbandment of the 209th, Taisuke was posted to the 9th Reserve Battalion. While in England he contracted mumps but made a full recovery. After being discharged from the hospital, he was posted to the 10th Battalion for duty in France. On the 15th of August, 1917, Taisuke was admitted to the No. 33 Casualty Clearing Station with severe wounds to his head and face. He had suffered significant shrapnel wounds to his right eye and left arm. Due to the seriousness of his wounds his right eye was surgically removed and he was sent to the No. 7 General Hospital at St. Omer for further treatment. He later was invalided back to the U.K. and admitted to the King George Hospital in London. From there he was sent to the Westcliff Canadian Eye and Ear Hospital for specialist treatment for his eye wounds. After seeing the specialists, he was sent to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital at Monks Horton to be fitted for his prosthetic eye. Due to scar tissue in the back of his eye socket wearing the glass eye was extremely uncomfortable. In addition to the scars on his left arm and the loss of his right eye, Taisuke suffered from headaches, nerve damage to the right side of his face/head, and partial vision loss in his left eye. His wounds were very debilitating and thus he was to be discharged as medically unfit due to wounds. On the 31st of January 1918 he embarked for home, sailing to New York, then travelling north to Regina, where on the 2nd of July 1918 he was formally discharged from service. Sadly, his son Tpr. Minoru Tanaka would be killed in action during WW2.