



## COLDWATER REMEMBERS LANCE CORPORAL C. MCKERRALL

Charles McKerrall was born on December 17, 1886, in Simcoe County, Ontario. The son of a British mother, Elizabeth, and a Scottish father, Peter McKerrall, Charles had an older brother, Archibald, and three younger siblings, Florence, Peter, and Mildred. Just before the war, the family resided on Bush Street in Coldwater, Ontario.

On February 12, 1916, Charles, his brother Peter, and dozens of other Coldwater young men enlisted with the 157<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force during a recruiting drive in Coldwater. Charles was 28 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 6 inches tall, with blue eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as United Church, and his trade as clerk, with no previous military experience.



Private Charles McKerrall, regimental number 644025, sailed to England on the S.S. Cameronia, arriving on October 28, 1916. After training in England for several months, he landed in France on February 11, 1917, where he joined his front line unit, the 116<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division. A few months later, Charles was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal.

On July 23, 1917, the 116<sup>th</sup> Battalion launched an attack on German trenches near Avion. Under heavy bombardment and gas attack from the German side, the battalion's three companies assaulted their objectives and killed or captured dozens of enemy troops. During the raid, Lance Corporal McKerrall suffered a gunshot wound to the abdomen and was evacuated to No.7 Casualty Clearing Station. He was later reported as having "died of wounds received in action." His brother Peter, served for the remaining of the war with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion.

Four years later, Charles' mother Elizabeth would have received the awards her son was entitled to: the 1914-1918 British War Medal; the Inter Allied Victory Medal; a Memorial Plaque (a bronze medallion often referred to as "Dead Man's Penny"); and a scroll from King George V. She would also have received a "Mother's Cross".

Lance Corporal Charles McKerrall is buried at Noeux-les-Mines Communal Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. In Canada he is commemorated on page 285 of the *First World War Book of Remembrance*, located inside the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower in Ottawa. As of November 11, 2018, he is also commemorated on a plaque on the Cenotaph in front of the Coldwater Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

We will remember him.