



COLDWATER REMEMBERS

PRIVATE CHARLES HENRY ORR

Charles Henry Orr was born on June 21, 1897, one of twelve children raised by William and Marion (McCaskill) Orr of Coldwater, Ontario. On October 12, 1915, Charles enlisted in Toronto with the 95th Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was 18 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 6½ inches tall, with hazel eyes and dark brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Methodist, and his trade as farmer, with no previous military experience.



Private Charles Orr, regimental number 201242, sailed from Halifax to England on the S.S. Olympic, arriving on June 8, 1916. After training in England for several months, he landed in France where on October 9 he joined his front line unit, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Battalion (Toronto Regiment), part of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division. Along with the rest of the Canadian Corps, Private Orr and his unit fought at Vimy Ridge the following spring.

On August 15, 1917, only four months after the battle of Vimy Ridge, Canadian troops launched an assault on Hill 70, near Lens. The attack was successful in terms of reaching its objectives and capturing the high ground overlooking the city of Lens. Canadians successfully fought off a series of large scale German counterattacks over the next several days, and although they inflicted to the Germans more than 25,000 casualties – killed or wounded – and held-on to the high ground, there was a heavy cost to pay for the victory. More than 9,000 Canadian soldiers fell at or around Hill 70. Private Charles Henry Orr was one of them, killed in action on August 19, 1917.

Four years later, Charles' mother Marion 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".

Private Charles Orr has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. In Canada he is commemorated on page 303 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. The Memorial Plaque sent to his mother after his death is on display at the branch, part of the Coldwater Legion collection (see photo).



We will remember him.