



## COLDWATER REMEMBERS

# PRIVATE JAMES HARRY WALLER

James Harry Waller was born in Coldwater, Ontario, on December 14, 1892, son of Harry and Kate (Colley) Waller. On February 21, 1916, James enlisted in Orillia with the 157<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion (The Simcoe Foresters), Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was 24 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 8 inches tall, with blue eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Presbyterian, and his trade as toolmaker. He claimed some previous military experience in the militia with the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment in Hamilton.



Private James Waller, regimental number 644121, sailed from Canada on the S.S. Cameronia, arriving in England on October 28, 1916. After training in England for a month, he landed in France, and on November 29 joined his front line unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion (Western Ontario Regiment). The unit was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division under the command of General Arthur Currie.

On April 9, 1917, Canadian troops - including James' unit - launched the now famous assault on Vimy Ridge. Within a few days, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had captured its objective and prepared to push back an expected counter-attack. On April 11, Private Waller suffered a severe gunshot wound to the knee and was evacuated, first to No 13 General Hospital in Boulogne, and then to the 5<sup>th</sup> London General Hospital in England. On May 29 he died of an aneurysm resulting from that wound.

Four years later, James' parents would have received the awards their 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. His mother would also have received a "Mother's Cross".

Private James Harry Waller is buried at Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, 30 miles from London, England. In Canada he is commemorated on page 344 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.