



COLDWATER REMEMBERS

PRIVATE CHARLES ELVIN ROBINSON

Charles Elvin Robinson was born in Coldwater, Ontario, on October 5, 1896, son of William and Ida Robinson. On September 2, 1915, Charles enlisted at Camp Niagara with the 76th Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was 19 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 5 inches tall, with grey eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Presbyterian, and his trade as butcher. He had no prior military experience.

Private Charles "Chas" Robinson, regimental number 644121, sailed from Halifax on the S.S. Empress of Britain, arriving at Liverpool, England, on May 5, 1916. After training in England for a few months he landed in France and, on August 10, joined his front line unit, the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion (Victoria Rifles). The unit was part of the 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division.



In late August 1916, the Canadian divisions moved from Flanders to the Somme, where they took over a section of the front line west of the village of Courcellette. In the major offensive, which began at dawn on September 15, Canadians fought around the village of Courcellette as casualties mounted. Private Charles Robinson was killed on October 1, 1916, in the trenches North West of Courcellette. There are no specific details as to the circumstances of his death, but a report from the 24th Battalion the following day summarizes what the men had just been through: "*By 9.00 A.M. all this Battalion's wounded had been evacuated and as many of the dead as could be found were buried, and their personal effects removed. Estimated casualties for the tour were nine (9) Officers and one hundred and ninety-five (195) O.R. [Other Ranks].*"

Four years later, Charles' 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 Charles Elvin Robinson has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, alongside more than 11,000 fallen Canadian soldiers having no known place of burial in France. In Canada Charles is commemorated on page 155 of the *First World War Book of Remembrance*, located inside the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower in Ottawa, as well as on a Cenotaph in Barrie, Ontario.

We will remember him.