



## COLDWATER REMEMBERS PRIVATE WILLIAM LANG

William Lang was born in Coldwater, Ontario, on Dec 18, 1896, son of James and Martha Lang. On September 27, 1915, William enlisted in Toronto with the 81<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was 18 years old and single. On his Attestation Form he is described as 5 feet 8 inches tall, with brown eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Church of England, and his trade as wood cutter. He had no previous military experience.

Private William Lang, regimental number 157618, sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the S.S. Olympic, arriving in Liverpool, England, on May 6, 1916. After training in England for several months, he landed in France and joined his front line unit, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, on June 29, 1916. The unit fought as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division.



A summary of the 4<sup>th</sup> CMR's War Diaries for early October 1916 describes the unit's task of helping to take an enemy position identified as Regina Trench: *"This proved very costly as Regina Trench was not fully captured and held. Vicious, close, bomb for bomb, hand to hand fighting saw advances into Regina Trench won and lost, as shell and sniper fire withered the attack to a halt as worn and very tired men and dwindling munitions made for a very long and very costly day. Some 70 men of the 4th CMR were lost as a result of that one day alone."* Private Lang, who had been reported wounded on Sept 15, but returned to duty five days later, was killed in action on October 9, 1916, near the village of Pozières. No details are available as to the circumstances of his death.

Six years later, William's 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 William Lang has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, about 8 km northeast of Arras. In Canada he is commemorated on page 116 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 Vespra (Barrie). And 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.