

In Memory of Private Roy Alfred Whitman

1893 - 1917

(20th Battalion, Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment))

Age: 23

Parents: Norman Lennox Whitman & Luella Gertrude Fuller

Conflict: World War I, The Great War

Country Enlisted In: Canada

Country of Death: Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

Relation: Paternal 7th Cousin 3X Removed



At just 23 years old, Roy Alfred Whitman left Canada to serve in the Great War. He originally enlisted in Toronto with the 198th (Canadian Buffs) Battalion, part of the Central Ontario Regiment. Like many such units, the 198th was broken up upon reaching England in 1917, its men absorbed as reinforcements for front-line battalions. Roy was transferred to the 20th Battalion, Canadian Infantry, a battle-tested unit of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division.

By June 1917, the Canadians were holding ground in the Arras sector of northern France, fresh from their monumental victory at Vimy Ridge two months earlier. The cost at Vimy had been staggering, and the battalions in the line faced constant danger as they consolidated their gains and endured the daily grind of trench warfare.

The atmosphere in early June was tense and punishing. Warm weather dried the mud but filled the air with dust and the stench of decay. Artillery duels rumbled day and night, German shells screaming overhead and bursting among the Canadian lines.

The sharp rattle of machine-gun fire echoed across No Man's Land, and every patrol into the broken ground carried the risk of sudden death. In rare quiet moments, Roy may have thought of home in Ontario, far removed from the ruined villages and scarred fields that now defined his world.



*20th Battalion, Canadian Infantry
(Eastern Ontario Regiment)
Private*

On 6 June 1917, amid this relentless struggle, Private Whitman was killed in action. The precise details are lost in the confusion of trench warfare, but his death came in the line of duty, under the ceaseless fire of the front. He was just 23 years old.

Today, he lies at rest in Villers Station Cemetery, France. His headstone, carved in the familiar white of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, bears silent witness to a young man's sacrifice. Though his life was brief, his name lives on in the memory of the 20th Battalion and among the thousands of Canadians who gave everything in France.

*Villers Station Cemetery
Villers-au-Bois, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-
Calais, France*

