

## **Private Charles Lancelot Cotton<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental Number: 343947**

**7th Canadian Siege Battery, Canadian Garrison Artillery**

**born: 27 June 1898 – died: 15 March 1918**

Charles was born to James Cotton and Eleanor (Nellie) Jackson on 27 June 1898 in Navan, Ontario.<sup>1</sup> James was a school teacher and farmer, and the son of Irish immigrants, James and Mary Cotton.<sup>2</sup> Nellie was the daughter of Irish immigrants Lancelot (thus Charles' middle name) Jackson and Mary Ann McCulloch.<sup>3</sup> James and Nellie had ten children, all of whom were born in Navan and remained in and around Navan or Ottawa, Ontario:

- Mary Ann, who was born on 3 October 1892.<sup>4</sup> Mary died on 23 Sept 1989 and is remembered on a common gravestone with her sister Doris and brother Francis;<sup>5</sup>
- Clara Elizabeth, who was born on 2 November 1894<sup>6</sup> and died on 9 November 1898 at the young age of four;<sup>7</sup>
- Charles (who signed his name on his attestation as "Charlie"<sup>8</sup>);
- Mildred Hannah, who was born on 20 July 1900.<sup>9</sup> On 21 March 1928, Mildred, who was a nurse, married Robert Archibald McCaughan, who was with the Royal Canadian Air Force.<sup>10</sup> Sadly, Mildred died from influenza and pneumonia on 8 January 1929, four days after giving premature birth to her son, who also died;<sup>11</sup>
- Francis Hugh, who was born on 8 November 1902<sup>12</sup> and died on 11 November 1968.<sup>13</sup> He does not appear to have married;
- Edward James, who was born on 28 October 1904.<sup>14</sup> He married Edith McIlwain and died on 5 February 1965, apparently from cancer;<sup>15</sup>
- Sidney William, who was born on 15 July 1907.<sup>16</sup> Sidney was a farmer and appears to have resided with several of his siblings.<sup>17</sup> He married Verna Coburn, and died in 2001;<sup>18</sup>
- George Earnest Jackson, who was born on 12 June 1909.<sup>19</sup> George was also a farmer.<sup>20</sup> He married Reta I. Taylor and died in 1980;<sup>21</sup>
- Eleanor Susanna, who was born 29 April 1911.<sup>22</sup> She married Lincoln Colin Beaton on 15 March 1947, had two daughters, and died on 8 September 1983;<sup>23</sup>
- Doris E., who was born on 15 February 1916, shortly before her oldest brother Charles had enlisted to fight in the Great War. Though she married a Mr. Reid, she is buried with her siblings Francis and Mary in Navan, Ontario. Doris died on 2 October 2007.<sup>24</sup>

Charles enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 3 December 1916 at the age of 18. He listed his occupation as farmer and named his sister Mildred as his next of kin. His will was written on 6 February 1917 and left everything to his mother Nellie. As was permitted, Charles had \$15 of his monthly salary paid to his mother in Canada.<sup>25</sup> Permission was granted to soldiers to assign a portion of their pay to their relatives, that portion not exceeding four-fifths of the monthly amount to a maximum of \$25. In 1914, daily rates of pay for a private were \$1 plus \$.10 for being in the field.<sup>26</sup>

Prior to mobilization, on 20 January 1917, Charles was hospitalized with tonsillitis, but he spent only three days in a Kingston, Ontario hospital.<sup>27</sup> Charles was mobilized from Halifax aboard the SS *Missanabie*, arriving in England on 7 April 1917. He was drafted into the 73rd Battery, but transferred to the 7th Canadian Siege Battery.

Siege batteries were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in a high trajectory, generally to destroy or neutralize the enemy artillery, dumps, stores, roads and railways behind enemy lines.<sup>28</sup>

Charles was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 27 February 1918 suffering from carbuncles on his neck and back.<sup>29</sup> A carbuncle is a cluster of boils that exude pus and is usually caused by a staph infection. The bacterial infection is highly contagious and can turn lethal, as in this case, though complications are now rare due to modern antibiotic treatment. Carbuncles can be caused from rashes (such as where clothing rubs repetitively against the skin), poor hygiene or nutrition, or a weakened immunity.<sup>30</sup>

Charles was in the station until his death on 15 March 1918. By 3 March 1918, his condition was recorded as “dangerously ill” and he was also suffering from pneumonia. His condition would improve then deteriorate; even the day before his death, Charles’ condition was recorded as “improving.”<sup>31</sup>

Charles was buried on 16 March 1918 in the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Barlin, France, at Plot II, Row E, Grave 30. The extension was commenced by French troops in October 1914, but was taken over by Commonwealth forces in March 1916. In November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz, but the extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.<sup>32</sup>

Charles’ mother posthumously received the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Memorial Cross for her son’s involvement in the Great War.<sup>33</sup> Charles is remembered on the Navan Veterans Memorial in Navan with other local men who sadly lost their lives during this war.



**Close up of part of the Navan Veterans Memorial**

Source: Sheila Dohoo Faure, 2018

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<sup>1</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Charles Lausollette [sic] Cotton

<sup>2</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Chas L Catton [sic], Province: Ontario, District: Russell, District number: 112, Sub-district: Cumberland, Sub-district number: D4

<sup>3</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Eleanor Jackson

<sup>4</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Mary Ann Cotton

<sup>5</sup> “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Mary Ann Cotton

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- <sup>6</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Clara Elizabeth Cotton
- <sup>7</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Clara Elizabeth Corton [sic]
- <sup>8</sup> "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Cotton, Charles Lancelot, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 2036 - 16, Item number: 96019, Digitized service file - PDF format: B2036-S016
- <sup>9</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Mildred Hannah Cotton
- <sup>10</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Mildred Hannah Cotton
- <sup>11</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Mildred Hannah McCaughan
- <sup>12</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Francis Hugh Cotton
- <sup>13</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Francis H Cotton
- <sup>14</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Edward James Cotton
- <sup>15</sup> "Ontario, Canada, The Ottawa Journal (Birth, Marriage and Death Notices), 1885–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Edward J Cotton
- <sup>16</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Sidney William Cotton
- <sup>17</sup> "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Sidney Cotton in 1940, Location: Russell, Ontario, Canada, Electoral district: Russell
- <sup>18</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Sydney [sic] Cotton
- <sup>19</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for George Earnest Jackson Cotton
- <sup>20</sup> "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for George Cotton in 1965, Location: Russell, Ontario, Canada, Electoral district: Russell
- <sup>21</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for George E J Cotton
- <sup>22</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Eleanor Susanna Cotton
- <sup>23</sup> "Ontario, Canada, *The Ottawa Journal* (Birth, Marriage and Death Notices), 1885–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Eleanor Cotton
- <sup>24</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Doris E Reid
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> "Lest We Forget Information Package First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/lest-we-forget/Documents/First-World-War-Information-Package.pdf>: accessed 13 January 2017), Pay and Allowances, page 15
- <sup>27</sup> "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Cotton, Charles Lancelot, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 2036 - 16, Item number: 96019, Digitized service file - PDF format: B2036-S016

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- <sup>29</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 10 January 2017), entry for Cotton, C.S.
- <sup>30</sup> *Web MD* (<http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/guide/carbuncles-causes-treatments#1>: accessed 1 February 2017) entry for carbuncles
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- <sup>32</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery](http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery): accessed 10 January 2017), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension
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