

In Memory of  
Company Sergeant Major  
**William Harold Vernon**

27975, "H" Coy. 15th Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 29 April 1915 Age 35

Son of the late Richard and Alice Vernon; husband of Sarah Alice Vernon, of 76, Gladstone Rd.,  
Altrincham, Cheshire, England.

Remembered with Honour  
**Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## **Company Sergeant Major Henry (Harry) Vernon**

### **5th Battalion ('H' Coy), Canadian Infantry**

#### **(1st Central Ontario Regiment)**

Died: 29th April 1915      Age: 35

How Died: Killed in action

Country of burial: Belgium - No known grave

Cemetery or Memorial: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

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#### **Extra Information:**

Born during the June quarter 1879 in the Altrincham R.D. - ref: 8a/196, the elder son of Richard James & Alice Vernon (nee Fielden). Birth registered as William Harold Vernon.

1881 Census - 7 Enbridge Street, Salford. Son - aged: 1 - born: Altrincham. Head of household - Richard J. Vernon - Married - aged: 30 - occ: Book Deliverer - born: Altrincham. Also Alice Vernon - Wife - aged: 33 - born: Lees, Lancashire.

His father Richard James Vernon died in 1883, aged: 32.

1891 Census - 32 Bridgewater Road, Altrincham. Son - aged: 11 - Scholar - born: Altrincham. Head of household - Alice Vernon - Widow - aged: 43 - occ: Shirt Seamstress - born: Mossley, Yorkshire. Plus 1 younger brother, and 2 visitors.

1901 Census - Enville Villas, Manchester Road, Altrincham. (4 doors along from the Navigation P.H.). Son - aged: 21 - occ: Electrician - born: Broadheath. Head of household - Alice Vernon - Widow - aged: 50 - born: Springhead, Yorkshire. Plus 1 younger brother, an aunt and a boarder.

1911 Census - No Trace Probably emigrated to eastern Canada c1904, as by 1914, he had served for 9 years in the 48th Regiment (Canadian Infantry).

His Canadian attestation form, signed on the 22nd September 1914, at Valcartier, Quebec, states that his name was HAROLD VERNON and that he was born at Altrincham on the 7th May 1879. He was then aged 35 years 5

months, 5 feet 7 inches in height, had a 33½ + 2½ inch chest (fully expanded). His complexion was: fresh, his eyes: blue and his hair: fair. The papers also state that he was a Carpenter by trade and that he had previously served for 7 years in the Cheshire Regiment and for 9 years in the 48th Regiment. He had a scar on his left thigh and his right cheek. He had a tattoo in the shape of a heart with the word "Alice" on his left arm.

On the 22nd April 1915 the Germans launched the second Battle of Ypres and in so doing employed the first large scale gas attack of the Great war. Fully exploiting the release of chlorine gas the Germans advanced westwards from the village of Langemarck towards the Yser canal. The Canadians suffered huge losses from gas poisoning at St. Julian north-east of Ypres.

On the 28th April 1915, the 15th Battalion was in a line of trenches in a field to the north of St. Jeane, along the Ypres to Poperinghe Main Road. Still there on the 29th and a note in their War Diary states that "The enemy is quiet". At 19.30 hrs the Battalion moved to take up a new line of trenches at No. 4 Pontoon Bridge.

Religion - C of E. He was married and his wife - Sarah Alice Vernon, 10 Geneva Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, was listed as his next of kin. Post War, his widow - Sarah Alice resided at 76 Gladstone Road, Altrincham.

During WWI the 15th Battalion (48th Highlanders of Canada) went overseas with the first Canadian contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in October 1914 in uniforms paid for by the Regiment as the Regiment's contribution to Canada. For the war the 48th recruited three battalions, the 15th and two reinforcement battalions, the 92nd and 134th, plus companies equal to two more battalions for other units. The 15th Bn faced the first gas attack of the war at the Second Battle of Ypres on 24 April 1915, losing 664 Highlanders, killed, wounded or prisoners of war. The 15th Bn was immediately reinforced and continued fighting until the Armistice. The names of the regiment's 21 Battle Honours including Ypres, the Somme, Passchendaele, Vimy and Amiens are familiar to all Canadians and historians. In all, 1,467 Highlanders were killed in action.

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**Memorials found on:**

Broadheath Congregational Church



ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. 27975  
Folio. 1057

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

(ANSWERS.)

1. What is your name? *Harold Kernou (27.9.15.)*
  2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? *Altricham Cheekie Bay*
  3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? *Sarah Alice Kernou (Wife)*
  4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? *10 Geneva Ave. Toronto Ont*
  5. What is the date of your birth? *May 4<sup>th</sup> 1879.*
  6. What is your Trade or Calling? *Carpenter*
  7. Are you married? *Yes*
  8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? *Yes*
  9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? *Yes*
  10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? *I Cheekie Regt 4<sup>th</sup> Gen Regt 9<sup>th</sup> Bde*  
*If so, state particulars of former Service.*
  11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? *Yes*
  12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? *Yes*
- Harold Kernou* (Signature of Man).  
*H. W. Wilson* (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Harold Kernou*, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

*Harold Kernou* (Signature of Recruit)

Date *22<sup>nd</sup> Sep* 1914. *H. W. Wilson* (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Harold Kernou*, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

*Harold Kernou* (Signature of Recruit)

Date *22<sup>nd</sup> Sep* 1914. *H. W. Wilson* (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at *Victoria* this *22<sup>nd</sup>* day of *Sep* 1914.

*J. Currie* (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

*L. Langmuir* (Approving Officer)

*15th Battalion  
48 High*  
Description of Vernon, Harold on Enlistment.

Apparent Age 35 years 5 months.  
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)

Height 5 ft. 7 ins.

Chest measurement (Girth when fully expanded) 33 1/2 ins.  
(Range of expansion) 2 1/2 ins.

Complexion Fairish

Eyes Blue

Hair Fair

Religious denominations  
 Church of England   
 Presbyterian .....  
 Wesleyan .....  
 Baptist or Congregationalist .....  
 Other Protestants (Denomination to be stated) .....  
 Roman Catholic .....  
 Jewish .....

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.

(Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless the man acknowledges to any previous service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of the Approving Officers.)

*5 vac. L.  
Scar left thigh  
" right cheek  
Tattoo, Heart & Alice left arm.*

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him\* ..... for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date Sept 18 1914.

Place Valcartier

*W. P. Bethun*  
 Captain A.M.C.  
 Medical Officer.

\*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness:—

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Harold Vernon having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

*J. McDonald* (Signature of Officer)

Date Sept 18 1914.

C/Sgt/Major (William) Harold Vernon's Attestation Form