

David MacEachern - WW1

“To Parents / Without Consent”

Personal Profile

- Full Name: David McEachern (MacEachern... pp. 1, 3).
- Date & Place of Birth: April 2, 1896, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia (MacEachern... p. 1).
- Age at Enlistment: 18 years, 11 months (MacEachern... p. 2).
- Trade or Calling: Machinist (MacEachern... p. 1).
- Next-of-Kin: Dougal McEachern (Father), residing in Antigonish, Nova Scotia (MacEachern... p. 1).

Physical Description

- Height: 5 feet, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (MacEachern... p. 2).
- Complexion & Features: Medium complexion with blue eyes and brown hair (MacEachern... p. 2).
- Religious Denomination: Presbyterian (MacEachern... p. 2).

Military Service & Enlistment Timeline

- Enlistment: Formally attested on March 12, 1915, at New Westminster, British Columbia (MacEachern... pp. 1-2).
- Regimental Numbers Assigned: 29606 and 429606 (MacEachern... pp. 3, 5, 9).

Service Record: A clerk accidentally issued the exact same service number (29606) to Private Soule from Vancouver when he enlisted in the 16th Battalion, before he later transferred to the Canadian Ordnance Corps. David MacEachern's number is 29606.

- Initial Unit: Assigned to the 47th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (MacEachern... pp. 3, 5).
- Former Service: Notes previous service with the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (MacEachern... pp. 1-2).

Administrative Confusion & Early Discharge

- Transfer Attempt: On May 1, 1915, he was slated to transfer to a draft bound for the 30th Battalion (MacEachern... pp. 5, 9).
- The Paperwork Error: His official Attestation Paper was mistakenly sent ahead to England with the 30th Battalion draft on June 4, 1915 (MacEachern... p. 9). However, David McEachern did not physically accompany the draft and was never actually on strength in England (MacEachern... p. 9).

- **Official Discharge:** Because he stayed behind, he was officially discharged from service in Canada on June 3, 1915, under the designation "to parents / without consent".

In Canadian military records (most notably from the First and Second World Wars), the phrase "to parents / without consent" indicates that an underage boy lied about his age to enlist, and his parents later found out and legally demanded his release. It is a specific administrative classification used when a minor was discharged from service under the following circumstances:

Enlistment by Fraud (Underage) - During mobilization, thousands of underage teenagers (often 15, 16, or 17 years old) desperately wanted to fight. To join the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) or WWII active forces, they committed "clerical fraud" by falsifying their birth dates on their Attestation papers to meet the legal minimum fighting age (which was 18 for general service and 19 for overseas deployment).

The "Without Consent" Factor - Under Canadian military law at the time, minors could not legally enlist without the express, written permission of their legal guardians. When a boy ran away or secretly signed up, he did so "without parental consent."

The Parents' Intervention - Once the parents discovered their underage son had joined the army, they had the legal right to intervene. They would contact the military authorities or their local Member of Parliament (MP), presenting official proof of the boy's actual age—such as a church baptismal certificate or a provincial birth registry record.

The Resulting Discharge - Once the military verified the proof of age and confirmed the parents' formal objection, the army was legally obligated to discharge the boy immediately. The phrase in his file notes that he was being formally released back to the custody of his parents because his original enlistment lacked their mandatory legal consent.