

Albert McPhee - WW1



Personal Profile

- Full Name: Albert McPhee (MacPhie, A... p. 1).
- Date & Place of Birth: July 6, 1888, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Trade or Calling: Electrician (MacPhie, A... p. 1).
- Marital Status: Single (MacPhie, A... p. 1).
- Next-of-Kin: Alexander McPhee (Father), residing in Antigonish, Nova Scotia
- Regimental Number: 214120 (MacPhie, A... p. 1).

Physical Description & Health

- Age at Enlistment: 27 years, 8 months (MacPhie, A... p. 2).
- Height: 5 feet, 7 inches (MacPhie, A... p. 2).
- Complexion & Features: Fair complexion with brown eyes and brown hair.
- Medical Fitness: Declared fully fit at enlistment on March 14, 1916 (MacPhie, A... p. 2).

Units Served In & Timeline

- Enlistment: Formally attested on March 14, 1916, at Windsor, Ontario (MacPhie, A... p. 1).
- 99th Overseas Battalion: Joined as an original member and sailed from Halifax aboard the S.S. *Olympic* on May 31, 1916, arriving in England on June 8, 1916 .
- 35th Canadian Infantry Battalion: Transferred to this reserve training pool in England on July 6, 1916 (MacPhie, A... p. 39).
- 4th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR): Transferred on August 27, 1916, and deployed to active combat lines in France the following day (MacPhie, A... p. 39).

Though originally formed as a cavalry unit, the 4th CMR was permanently converted to an infantry battalion on January 1, 1916. They fought as part of the 8th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division. By the time Albert joined them in the field, they were operating strictly as foot-soldiers, enduring some of the harshest conditions of the war.

- UK Reserve Depots (1917–1918): Following hospitalizations, he rotated through the 2nd Central Ontario Regimental Depot (CORD), the 8th Reserve Battalion, and the 3rd Reserve Battalion while on light duty streams (MacPhie, A... p. 40).

✂ Battles & Combat Injuries Sustained

- The Battle of the Somme (September 1916): Private McPhee was heavily engaged in frontline operations with the 4th CMR during the high-intensity Somme offensive (MacPhie, A... pp. 15, 39).

The Battle of the Somme (fought from July 1 to November 18, 1916) was one of the largest, bloodiest, and most heavily contested strategic campaigns of the First World War (MacPherson... pp. 11-12). Fought along the banks of the Somme River in northern France, it pitted the joint British and French armies against the German Empire, becoming the defining symbol of industrial trench attrition.

The 4th CMR moved into the Somme sector in September 1916. They took part in brutal, muddy fighting around Fabeck Graben, Hessian Trench, and the bloody assaults on the Regina Trench network throughout September and October.

- The Wounding (September 26, 1916): During the capture of enemy positions, he was struck by exploding high-explosive shrapnel (MacPhie, A... pp. 25, 29). He sustained severe Gunshot Wounds (GSW/Shrapnel) to his left thigh and his chest wall (MacPhie, A... pp. 7-8).

On September 26, 1916, the 4th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR) was heavily committed to the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, a major offensive within the wider Battle of the Somme in northern France.

The Battle of Thiepval Ridge (fought from September 26 to September 30, 1916) was the first large-scale, multi-division offensive mounted by the Canadian Corps acting in tandem with the British Army during the Battle of the Somme. It is remembered as a grinding, tactical success that finally captured one of the most heavily fortified German strongholds on the Western Front, though it came at an immense physical cost.

- This precise morning marked the exact operational moment Private Albert McPhee was struck by exploding high-explosive shrapnel, sustaining the severe chest and thigh injuries that ultimately ended his frontline deployment.
- Field Evacuation (October 1, 1916): He was stabilized in the field and moved to No. 11 Stationary Hospital in Rouen, France, where his entry wounds were surgically cleaned and evaluated before his cross-channel transfer to Great Britain (MacPhie, A... pp. 7, 21).



Hospitalization & Recovery in the UK (1916–1917)

Private McPhee spent nearly seven months rotating through the British hospital network to heal his structural wounds:

- 1st Western General Hospital (Liverpool): Admitted on November 4, 1916 (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21). Clinical charts indicate that while the chest wound stabilized, a small abscess formed on his left leg (MacPhie, A... p. 25). Doctors had to surgically open and drain the abscess to resolve the localized infection (MacPhie, A... p. 25).
- Lancashire Military Convalescent Hospital (Blackpool): Transferred on November 14, 1916, to begin specialized physical therapy and wound healing protocols (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21). He was briefly discharged on February 3, 1917 (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21).
- Monks Horton Convalescent Hospital: Re-admitted on February 21, 1917, due to residual stiffness and tissue irritation in his chest wall and thigh (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21).
- Shorncliffe Military Hospital: Transferred on April 4, 1917, for a final evaluation (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21). He was officially discharged to light base duties on April 18, 1917, with his wounds successfully closed (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 21).



Subsequent Illnesses (1918)

Because his combat injuries left him permanently downgraded from frontline service, he remained stationed at English training camps, where he was hospitalized three more times for non-combat medical conditions (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 41):

- Specialized Treatment (March–June 1918): Spent 91 days inside the Canadian Special Hospital at Witley undergoing monitoring (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 41).
- Hemorrhoids: Admitted to No. 12 Canadian General Hospital in Bramshott from August 18 to October 1, 1918, where he underwent an operation to resolve the issue (MacPhie, A... pp. 8, 29).
- Wartime Influenza: Admitted to the same Bramshott hospital from November 9 to November 19, 1918, right as the global Spanish Flu pandemic was peaking (MacPhie, A... pp. 10, 21). He successfully recovered and was granted 10 days of excused light duty (MacPhie, A... pp. 10, 31).



Discharge & Later Life

- Return to Canada: Sailed home from England aboard the *Grampian*, arriving in St. John on December 24, 1918 (MacPhie, A... p. 19).
- His final discharge medical board conducted in Canada on January 16, 1919, provides an official assessment of his long-term recovery (MacPhie, A... p. 29):
- Scarring: Doctors noted permanent, visible shrapnel scars on his left side over his 6th rib (MacPhie, A... p. 29).

- Physical Disability: The examining medical officer officially declared "No Disability" (MacPhie, A... p. 29). The notes state his wounds were entirely healed, his heart and lungs were normal, and he retained full free movement of his limbs (MacPhie, A... pp. 2, 29). He was passed as "dentally fit" and honorably discharged to civilian life (MacPhie, A... pp. 19, 23).
- Official Discharge: Formally discharged from the military on January 21, 1919, at Toronto, Ontario, due to general Demobilization (MacPhie, A... pp. 19, 27). His post-war address was noted as Toronto (MacPhie, A... p. 19).
- Post-War Note: Master casualty registers stamped inside his folder indicate he passed away as a civilian on May 22, 1958, at the age of 69 (MacPhie, A... pp. 3, 5). It appears he died in Quebec .