

**Private William Alfred Tyler**  
**Regimental Number: 799050**  
**19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force**

**born: 17 March 1897 - died: 3 December 1918**

Private William Alfred Tyler was born on 17 March 1897, the son of William and Gertrude Tyler.<sup>1 2</sup> William's father was William Stephen John Tyler, born in Kent in 1875.<sup>3</sup> His wife was the former Gertrude Annie Coleman, also born in Kent in 1875.<sup>4</sup> They were married in the autumn on 1894 in Kent.<sup>5</sup> William was the eldest of their six children: William, Albert (born in 1901, but who died the following year),<sup>6</sup> Gertrude (born in 1907),<sup>7</sup> Cornelius Alfred (born on 12 January 1909 and died the same year),<sup>8</sup> Doris Ena (born in December 1910 and died in April 1911)<sup>9</sup> and Victor John (born 1912).<sup>10</sup> In 1901, the family lived at 10 Hawthorn Road in Milton, Kent, where William's father was a brickfield labourer. William's brother, Albert Edward Tyler (born about 1880), who was living with the family, was also a brickfield labourer, as had been their father before them.<sup>11</sup>

William, his wife and two children (William and Gertrude) immigrated to Canada in 1909, leaving from Liverpool on the *Virginian* and arriving in Quebec City on 23 October 1909.<sup>12</sup> They settled in Toronto, Ontario and were living at 108 Ferrier Avenue, York. Just months after they arrived in Canada, their son, Cornelius, died on 5 December of broncho-pneumonia.<sup>13</sup> Another daughter, Doris Ena, was born late the following year. However, sadly, Doris also died in infancy of bronchitis and gastro-enteritis at the age of four months.<sup>14</sup>

In 1911, the family was living at 120 Ferrier Avenue, with William's brother, Albert, and his wife and infant son. Albert had immigrated to Canada in 1907. He married his wife, Eliza (also known as May) Reynolds in 1908. Eliza was also originally English, born in Kent in about 1881. Their first child, Edward Lawrence, was born the following year. They subsequently had four more children: Violet May (born in 1911 and died the same year),<sup>15</sup> Sydney Douglas (born 1912),<sup>16</sup> Albert (born about 1915)<sup>17</sup> and Dora (born about 1916).<sup>18</sup>

Both William and his uncle, Albert, served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. William enlisted on 12 January 1916 in Toronto at the age of nearly 19. At the time, the family was living at 1000 Logan Avenue in Toronto. William was a clerk and had previously served for eight months in the militia. He was a clerk, 5' 5½" tall, with fresh complexion, blue eyes and black hair. He was recorded as Church of England, although census records show the family also as being Baptist and, when he died, he was identified as Presbyterian.

He enlisted as a Private in the 134<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion (48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. This Battalion was later absorbed into the 12<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion in 1918.<sup>19</sup> When he was died, he was serving with the 19<sup>th</sup> Canadian Battalion.

His uncle, Albert enlisted a few months later, joining the 198<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 31 March 1916.<sup>20</sup> He was 36 years old and a labourer. His uncle survived the war, but William did not.

William was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 26 November 1918. He died there just over a week later of influenza. He was buried in the Gosselies Communal Cemetery (Grave 258) on 4 December, with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. The chaplain also notified his mother of his death. The day that William died was a busy day for the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS as it had to accommodate all the patients from the 36<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> CCCS, which were moving.<sup>21</sup>

Influenza accounted for most deaths at the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station after the Armistice.<sup>22</sup> In spite of the horrific number of soldiers killed in World War I, the influenza pandemic, which affected the whole world and scourged Europe in 1918-1919, killed more people than the war itself.<sup>23</sup>

When he was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS, the 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion was stationed in Spy, about 20 kilometres north-east of Charleroi, Belgium, where the soldiers were enjoying a day of rest.<sup>24</sup> The Battalion was on a march to the Rhine to participate in the occupation force. Hopefully, William was aware of the festivities and commemorations in which the Battalion had participated in previous days. On 21 November, in Trazegenies, the troops were “accorded a most generous welcome by the civilian population of the various towns, the streets being gaily decorated. ... In the evening the town band paid an unexpected compliment when they serenaded the H.Q. Officers mess.”<sup>25</sup> Three days earlier, a Battalion dance was held at the schoolhouse. A week earlier “a largely attended public funeral was accorded to our boys who had fallen in the closing hours of the war, the civilians sending plenteous floral tributes wherewith to decorate the graves.”<sup>26</sup>

After the war, William’s parents, his sister, Gertrude, and brother, Victor, continued to live in Toronto,<sup>27</sup> as did his uncle and his family.<sup>28</sup> William’s father died in 1931<sup>29</sup> and his mother in 1937.<sup>30</sup> They had lost four of their six children – three in infancy and one through war. William’s uncle, Albert, died in Toronto in 1944.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for William Alfred Tyler

<sup>2</sup> “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for William Tyler, Registration district: Milton, Sub-registration district: Milton, ED, institution, or vessel: 28, Piece: 810, Folio: 99, Page Number: 24, Household schedule number: 154

<sup>3</sup> “England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for William Stephen J. Tyler, Registration district: Milton, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 785

<sup>4</sup> “England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Gertrude Annie Coleman, Registration district: Milton, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 757

<sup>5</sup> “England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for William Stephen J. Tyler, Registration district: Milton, Inferred County: Kent, , Volume: 2a, Page: 1722

<sup>6</sup> “England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Albert Edward Tyler, Registration district: Milton, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 769

<sup>7</sup> “1901 England Census,” entry for William Tyler,

<sup>8</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Cornelius Alfd Tyler

<sup>9</sup> “Ontario, Canada Births, 1869-1913,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Doris Ena Tyler

<sup>10</sup> “Ontario, Canada Births, 1869-1913,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Victor John Tyler

<sup>11</sup> “1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for William Tyler, Registration district: Milton, Sub-registration district: Milton, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 716, Folio: 126, Page Number: 12

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- <sup>12</sup> "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Wm Stephen Jno Tyler
- <sup>13</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Cornelius Alfd Tyler
- <sup>14</sup> Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Doris Ena Tyler
- <sup>15</sup> "Ontario, Canada Births, 1869-1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Violet May Tyler. "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Violet May Tyler
- <sup>16</sup> "Ontario, Canada Births, 1869-1913," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Sydney Douglas Tyler
- <sup>17</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Albert Taylor, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: York South, District Number: 144, Sub-District: York (Township), Sub-District Number: 32, City, Town or Village: York Township
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> "134th Battalion (48th Highlanders), CEF," *Wikipedia* ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org); accessed 9 April 2015)
- <sup>20</sup> Alfred attestation
- <sup>21</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G))
- <sup>22</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G): accessed 15 December 2014)
- <sup>23</sup> "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," (<https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>: accessed 3 February 2015)
- <sup>24</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 19th Canadian Infantry Battalion," Canadian Great War Project (<http://www.canadiangreatwarproject.com/warDiaryLac/wdLacP08.asp>; accessed 8 April 2015)
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for William John Tyler, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: York South, District Number: 144, Sub-District: Toronto (City), Sub-District Number: 42, City, Town or Village: Toronto City
- <sup>28</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," entry for Albert Taylor
- <sup>29</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for William Stephen John Tyler
- <sup>30</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 April 2015), entry for Gertrude Annie Tyler
- <sup>31</sup> "Veterans Death Cards: First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-110.02-e.php?q2=36&interval=50&sk=0>; accessed 14 April 2015), entry for Tyler, Albert Edward