

**Private Wilfred Arthur Malpass**  
**Regimental Number: 645760**  
**7th Battalion, Canadian Infantry (B.C. Regiment)**

**born: 27 Aug 1892 – died: 13 February 1918**

Wilfred Arthur Malpass was born on 27 August 1892 in Nanaimo, British Columbia, to Joseph Malpass (b. 1858) and his wife, Marion Jane Cain (b. 1864).<sup>1,2</sup>

At the age of 22, Wilfred enlisted with the 158th Battalion of the British Columbia Regiment on 8 February 1916.<sup>3</sup> His attestation papers indicate he was a single man working as a labourer and living in Vancouver.<sup>4</sup> Wilfred was 5 feet, 2 inches tall, had a dark complexion with dark brown hair and brown eyes. He was raised as a Methodist. When he signed up with the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), Wilfred's parents had been separated for some time. On enlistment Wilfred and his mother were living at the Aleazar Hotel in Vancouver. His mother later moved to San Francisco, California, where she resided at 736 McAllister Street.<sup>5</sup>

Wilfred likely trained in Canada from February to October 1916, because he departed from Halifax with his battalion on 14 November 1916 on the SS *Olympic*. He arrived in Shorncliffe, England, on 20 November 1916, where his battalion was incorporated into the 7th Battalion, Canadian Infantry early in January 1917.<sup>6</sup> That December, Wilfred was admitted to the King George Hospital in Stamford, London, with a sub-acute case of rheumatism. He remained in hospital until mid-January 1917, when he was discharged to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital in Bromley, Kent. He remained there until 19 March 1917, when he rejoined the 7th Battalion and was deployed overseas to France.<sup>7</sup>

Less than a month later, on 9 April 1917, Wilfred was wounded by shrapnel in the right shoulder at the beginning of the battle of Vimy Ridge. His wound was immediately dressed in the field and he was picked up by the 9th Field Ambulance and transferred to No. 13 Casualty Clearing Station and then on to No. 8 General Hospital at Boulogne, where he arrived the next day. He later transferred to the Military Hospital at Orpington, Kent, where he had another flare-up of rheumatism, which must have slowed his recovery. He was posted back to the field at the end of May 1917.<sup>8</sup>

Wilfred remained in the field until November 1917. On 10 November he was reported as missing in action in the field. Two days later he was admitted to 55th General Hospital in Boulogne with another shrapnel wound; this time to his right arm. It was listed as a "slight wound" but was still serious enough to require that he be sent first to a convalescent hospital in Boulogne, then to a rest camp in Marlboro, England, before his return to the field at the end of January 1918.<sup>9</sup>

Eleven days later, the war diary for the 7th Battalion, Canadian Infantry indicates that Wilfred's company was in the trenches in the St. Emile Sector of the Flanders Front near Lens, France. At the beginning of February, the situation had been quiet and normal with nothing of real note occurring until 8 February 1918. At that point, the soldiers in the battalion conducted a general clean-up of equipment, engaged in range practice at the rifle ranges and moved personnel in and out, as a new major assumed command of the battalion on February 6. This was done to cover off the temporary absence on leave of the lieutenant colonel in charge.

On the night of 8 February 1918, Wilfred's unit relieved the 3rd Canadian Infantry Battalion. The diary states, "One man killed during the night, otherwise situation normal." The next day, on 9

February, things were again quiet throughout the morning and afternoon. However, there was some hostile activity later in the day. As a result two officers were killed and one soldier wounded. It is likely that that soldier was Private Wilfred Arthur Malpass.<sup>10</sup>

For a third and final time Wilfred received shrapnel wounds. No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station admitted him on 9 February 1918. His condition was noted as very critical. He was dangerously wounded in his head, chest, arm and both legs, with a fracture to his skull. Wilfred survived for four days and died of his wounds on 13 February.<sup>11</sup> He was buried the next day at the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, 2½ miles southwest of Noeux-les-Mines, France. He is buried in Plot 3, Row E, Grave 19.<sup>12</sup>

Barlin is a village southwest of Bethune between the Bethune-Arras and Bethune-St. Pol roads. The Communal Cemetery and Extension lies to the north of the village on the road to Houchin.

The extension was begun by French troops in October 1914 and when they moved south in March 1916, it was used for burials by the 6th Casualty Clearing Station, largely for Commonwealth casualties. In November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz. The extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and contains 1095 Commonwealth, 63 French and 13 German burials from the First World War.<sup>13</sup>

Private Wilfred Arthur Malpass was survived by his parents, Joseph and Marion Malpass, and his sister, Sarah Elizabeth Malpass Sprague (b. 1886).<sup>14,15</sup> Wilfred's father Joseph (b. 1858),<sup>16</sup> had roots in England, but was also a native of Nanaimo, British Columbia. He worked as a miner.<sup>17</sup> His mother Marion was from Illinois in the United States. She worked as a nurse.<sup>18</sup>

Wilfred had three brothers and one sister. By the time he enlisted in the CEF all his brothers had died, each before the age of ten. His brother Joseph (b.1884)<sup>19</sup> was born prematurely and lived for only five days;<sup>20</sup> John Leonard (b. 1889)<sup>21</sup> contracted tuberculosis and died at age 9 in 1898,<sup>22</sup> and Percival (Percy) Sidney (b. 1895)<sup>23</sup> died suddenly in 1897 when he was just 1 year and 8 months old. The *Oakland Tribune* (California) noted that Percy's mother Marion was visiting in Oakland at that time and received news of his sudden death while there.<sup>24</sup>

It seems likely that Wilfred's parent's marriage did not survive the tragedy of the loss of all these children, as in 1901 the family was living apart. Wilfred, his mother Marion and sister Sarah were found in the 1901 Census of Canada living in the middle ward of Nanaimo, while her husband Joseph was boarding with his brother, James Malpass, and his family, also in Nanaimo.<sup>25,26,27</sup> In July 1927, Marion returned to the United States<sup>28</sup> and settled in California where she died in 1948, aged 84.<sup>29</sup>

Wilfred's sister Sarah Elizabeth (b. 1886) moved to the United States after her marriage to Guy Byron Sprague in 1906<sup>30</sup> and settled in Washington State.<sup>31</sup> Shortly before Christmas 1948, Wilfred's father Joseph crossed the Canada-U.S. border and went to live out the rest of his life with his daughter.<sup>32</sup> He died in Tacoma, Washington, in May 1949 at the age of 91.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Marion Malpass, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District number: 3, Sub-district: Nanaimo (City/Cité) Middle Ward, Sub-district number: E3, and

“1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District number: 3, Sub-district: Nanaimo, Sub-district number: E-5

<sup>2</sup> “Commonwealth War Graves Commission,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Wilfred Arthur Malpass, Service number: 645760

<sup>3</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 10 July 2016) entry for Wilfred (*sic*) Arthur Malpass, Attestation form, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5881-20, Item number: 173473

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> “War Diaries of the First World War: 7th Battalion Canadian Infantry 1914/10/16–1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=7th+Battalion&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%3A%2F%2Fwww.collectionscanada.gc.ca%2Farchivianet%2F02015202\\_e.html&r=0&f=S](http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=7th+Battalion&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%3A%2F%2Fwww.collectionscanada.gc.ca%2Farchivianet%2F02015202_e.html&r=0&f=S); accessed 19 July 2016)

<sup>11</sup> “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Wilfred Arthur Malpass

<sup>12</sup> “Commonwealth War Graves Commission,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 25 July 2016), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Birth Index, 1851–1903,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Sarah Elizabeth Malpass

<sup>15</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Registrations, 1859–1935,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Sarah Elizabeth Malpass and Guy Byron Sprague

<sup>16</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Registrations, 1859–1932; 1937–1938,” *Family Search* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass

<sup>17</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District number: 3, Sub-district: Nanaimo, Sub-district number: E-5

<sup>18</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Marion Malpass, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District number: 3, Sub-district: Nanaimo (City/Cité) Middle Ward, Sub-district number: E-3

<sup>19</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Birth Registrations, 1854–1903,” *Familysearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass

<sup>20</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Death Registration 1872–1986, 1992–1993,” *FamilySearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass

<sup>21</sup> “British Columbia, Canada, Birth Index, 1851–1903,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for John Leonard Malpass

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- <sup>22</sup> "British Columbia, Canada, Death Registration 1872–1990," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for John Leonard Malpass
- <sup>23</sup> "British Columbia, Canada, Birth Index, 1851–1903," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Percival Sidney Malpass
- <sup>24</sup> "Oakland Tribune Newspaper, June 21, 1897, Gannon Family Tree," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Marion Malpass and Percival Malpass
- <sup>25</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for James Malpass and Joseph Malpass, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District number: 3, Sub-district: Nanaimo, Sub-district number: E-3
- <sup>26</sup> "British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Registrations, 1859–1932; 1937–1938," *Family Search* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for James Malpass
- <sup>27</sup> "British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Registrations, 1859–1932; 1937–1938," *Family Search* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass
- <sup>28</sup> "U.S. Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1956," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Marion J. Malpass.
- <sup>29</sup> "California, Death Index, 1940–1997," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Marian (*sic*) J. Malpass
- <sup>30</sup> "British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Index, 1872–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Sarah Elizabeth Malpass
- <sup>31</sup> "1910 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for Lizzie Sprague
- <sup>32</sup> "U.S. Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1956," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 27 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass
- <sup>33</sup> "Washington Death Index, 1940–1996," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Joseph Malpass