

Sergeant Ernest Talmage Kindree®

Regimental number: 142250

Canadian Corps Survey Section, Canadian Expeditionary Force

born: 9 June 1890 – died: 16 January 1919

Sergeant Ernest Talmage Kindree was born on 9 June 1890 in Owen Sound, Ontario,¹ the son of William Asie and Abigail (known as Abbie) Kindree.² William (born in 1865 in Seaforth, Ontario)³ married the former Abigail Nelson (born in 1868 in Wellington County, Ontario)⁴ on 24 April 1889 at the Salvation Army Church in Owen Sound.⁵ Ernest was the eldest of their eight children: after his birth came Herbert John (born in 1893),⁶ William Harold (born in 1895),⁷ Earl (born in 1897),⁸ Victor (born in 1898),⁹ Almeda May (born in 1901),¹⁰ Victoria Katherine (born in 1904)¹¹ and Pearl (born in 1909).¹²

Ernest and his brothers Herbert and William were born in Grey County, but his next two siblings, Earl and Victor, were born in Chicago, Illinois. There is no evidence to indicate whether the family moved to Chicago, but it is assumed that both boys were the natural children of William and Abbie. The rest of the children were born in Grey County. From at least 1901¹³ until 1921, the family lived at 497-5th Street East in Owen Sound, where Ernest's father was a boilermaker.¹⁴



Ernest Talmage Kindree in 76th Battalion
Source: Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ernest enlisted in the 76th Overseas Battalion on 18 September 1915 at Niagara Camp,¹⁵ a Canadian army training camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.¹⁶ He was a photographer, 5' 5" tall, with a dark complexion and blue eyes. Even at the age of 28, his black hair was tinged with grey. He had previously served for three years with the 31st Grey Battalion.

He was still in Canada when he was hospitalized in November/December 1915 with morphia—a skin condition. He left Halifax on 23 April 1916 and arrived in Liverpool on 5 May. Shortly after arriving he was admitted to Moore Barracks Hospital at Shorncliffe, Kent, for two weeks, where he was diagnosed with German measles. In July he transferred to the 36th Battalion and then to the 1st Battalion before going overseas to France at the end of the month.

Ernest had been at the Front for three months when he was taken to No. 1 Canadian Field Ambulance, suffering from scabies. He was discharged to duty at the end of November and rejoined his unit on 28 December 1916. The next two years of his service were fairly uneventful. He transferred to the Canadian Corps Headquarters in August 1917 and then, in May 1918, to the Canadian Corps Survey Section. In October 1918, he had two weeks leave in Paris, probably leaving Paris just days before the Armistice.

But the war had taken a toll on Ernest. After the Armistice, his unit was part of the army of occupation and stationed in Bonn, Germany, where it was engaged in training activities.¹⁷ On the night of 15 January 1919, Ernest was billeted at the Rheineck Hotel. According to a fellow soldier, he spent that evening at the hotel with his comrades, then went to his room about 11:30 p.m. and

told them that he would not be well in the morning. He requested that one bring him a cup of tea and asked them to “fix things up at the office.”¹⁸ The following morning, his roommate could not waken him and, by mid-morning, his heartbeat was weak and the doctor was called. Ernest was unconscious when he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died about 1:30 p.m. on 16 January 1919.

A post-mortem was conducted the following day and an investigation conducted. Cocaine was found in his room. In the inquiry, some of his comrades admitted that they knew he was taking drugs and said that they had tried, to no avail, to convince him to stop. As one soldier testified “. . . he informed me that he had taken drugs in civil life. The expression he used was that he had been a “snow bird.” On the afternoon of Jan'y 15th 1919 . . . [h]is appearance was unnatural. His eyes were glassy. I asked him what was the matter and he admitted having taken drugs and that he had some of the drug in his possession. He produced a plain yellow envelope containing a white powder. I snatched it from him. He begged me to return it which I refused within a few minutes I emptied it into the sewer.”¹⁹

Another comrade had a different view of Ernest and testified that he had “. . . [k]nown that late Sgt Kendree for about 4 years, never knew of him taking drugs. Served with him in 1st Canadian Bttn also 125th Bn. Saw him about 1 o'clock of the morning of Jan'y 16th. He was going to the laboratory of the Rheineck Hotel, Bonn, where we were both billeted. He seemed in normal condition. We then had a conversation and arranged to have our photographs taken that day to send to Canada as we both came from the same town, Brantford, Ont. I noticed nothing strange about him. I did not see him again.”²⁰

However, the Court of Inquiry concluded that his death was caused by cocaine or a similar poisonous drug that he had administered himself the night before.



Sgt Kindree's gravestone in Brussels Town Cemetery

Source: Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ernest was buried on 19 January in Poppelsdorfer Cemetery (Grave 19, Plot 1, Row D) in Bonn with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding.²¹ His mother was his next of kin and was notified of his death.²² At some later point, his remains were moved to the Brussels Town Cemetery (Grave Reference: X. 9. 15).²³ Brussels Town Cemetery is located in the north east corner of Brussels, Belgium. Brussels was occupied by the Germans from August 1914 to the end of the Great War. There are only 54 Commonwealth Great War graves, which include the graves of 50 prisoners of war whose bodies were brought back from Germany by the Canadian Corps in April 1919.²⁴ He is remembered on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial.²⁵

Two of Ernest's brothers also served in the Great War, but Ernest was the only one to lose his life while still in service. His two brothers William and Victor survived the war and returned to Canada, but William died young as a result of his war service.

William enlisted in the 147th Grey Overseas Battalion (Regimental number: 838796) on 8 February 1916 in Owen Sound.²⁶ He was working as a clerk at the time. He left for

England in November and transferred to the 8th Reserve Battalion in January 1917. Then in February 1917, he transferred to the 15th Canadian Machine Gun Company. Later that year and

again in early 1918, he suffered from bouts of “pyrexia of unknown origin,” a term used to refer to trench fever.²⁷ In March 1918, he was absorbed into the 3rd Battalion, Machine Gun Corps, when it was created. Just a few weeks before the Armistice, he was wounded and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station—the same CCCS where his brother would die less than a year later. He had gunshot wounds to his face, a fracture of his lower jaw and a shrapnel wound to his right wrist. From No. 1 CCCS, he was sent to the 83rd General Hospital and then sent back to England to the Queen’s Hospital in Sidcup, a hospital that specialized in plastic surgery.²⁸

In June 1919, he was invalided back to Canada. In October 1919 he was sent to Sainte Anne de Bellevue Military Hospital in Montreal and then, in December, to the Dominion Orthopedic Military Hospital in Toronto. In May 1920, he was discharged as being medically unfit. He had facial disfigurement that might need remodelling at future date. He also had acute articular rheumatism in both knees.

Immediately after the war, William was a student, and then he became a postal clerk. In 1926, he married Irene Laura Carless.²⁹ Less than seven years after his marriage (on 20 February 1933), he died of general cardiac failure. It was determined that his death was due to his military service.³⁰

Ernest’s brother Victor enlisted in the 147th Grey Overseas Battalion (Regimental number: 838903) on 28 February 1916 in Owen Sound.³¹ He was only 17 years 5 months old, but his enlistment was accepted. Just before leaving for Europe, he was hospitalized with pneumonia and pleurisy. He left Canada for England in November 1916. On 13 December, at the Canadian base in Shoreham, a medical board ruled that he was underage. He would not be 19 until the following summer. It is not clear what the impact of this finding was. He appears to have continued to serve.

In January 1917, Victor transferred to the 8th Reserve Battalion and then in April to the Canadian Machine Gun Corps. In November, he joined the 3rd Machine Gun Company, which would later become the 3rd Machine Gun Corps—the same unit in which his brother William served. On the 17th of that month, he was wounded near Lens, France. He had sustained gunshot wounds to his back and was invalided to England. It is not clear if he ever returned to the Front. He had two bouts of influenza in June 1918 and March 1919. On 14 May 1919, he embarked for Canada and was discharged from the army on 27 May.

Immediately after the war, Victor was living with his parents and working as a bookkeeper.³² He later became an assistant postmaster. He died on 3 June 1964 and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Owen Sound.³³

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¹ “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 30 November 2016) entry for Kindree, Ernest Talmage, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5156-8, Item number: 499266, Digitized service file–PDF format: B5156-S008.

² “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 December 2016), entry for Ernest T. Kindree, Province: Ontario, District: Grey (north/nord), District number: 65, Sub-district: Owen Sound (Town/Ville), Sub-district number: D-10.

³ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 December 2016), entry for William Asie Kindree.

⁴ Canada Find a Grave Index, op. cit., entry for Abigail Kindree.

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- ⁵ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2016), entry for William A. Kindree.
- ⁶ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 December 2016), entry for Herbert John Kina [*sic*].
- ⁷ Ontario, Canada, Births op. cit., entry for William Harold Kindree.
- ⁸ "Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835–1974," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 December 2016), entry for Earl Kindree.
- ⁹ Service Files of the First World War, op. cit., entry for Kindree, Victor.
- ¹⁰ Ontario, Canada, Births op. cit., entry for Alameda May Kindree.
- ¹¹ Ontario, Canada, Births op. cit., entry for Victoria Katherine Kindree.
- ¹² Ontario, Canada, Births op. cit., entry for Pearl Kindree.
- ¹³ "1901 Census of Canada," op. cit., entry for Ernest T. Kindree
- ¹⁴ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 March 2016), entry for William Kindree, Province: Ontario, District: Grey North, District number: 73, Sub-district: 43 - Owen Sound, Sub-district number: 43; "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 March 2016), entry for William Kindree, Province or territory: Ontario, District: Grey North, District number: 83, Sub-District: Owen Sound (Town), Sub-district number: 44, City, Town or Village: City of Owen Sound River Ward.
- ¹⁵ Service Files of the First World War, op cit., entry for Kindree, Ernest Talmage. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Ernest's military service comes from this source.
- ¹⁶ "Camp Niagara – A Brief Pictorial Overview," Niagara Historical Museum (<http://www.niagarahistorical.museum/media/04.CampNiagara.pdf>: accessed 2 December 2016).
- ¹⁷ "War diaries - Canadian Corps Survey Section," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.lac-bac.gc.ca: accessed 30 November 2016), Online MIKAN no. 2004912, Microfilm reel: T-10854, File no. (creator): 697, Volume: 5006, Former archival reference no: RG9-III-D-3.
- ¹⁸ Service Files of the First World War, op. cit., entry for Kindree, Ernest Talmage.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 1 December 2016), entry for Kindree, E. H. [*sic*].
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 December 2016), entry for Ernest Talmage Kindree, Service number: 142250.
- ²⁴ "Brussels Town Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 22 November 2016).
- ²⁵ *Canadian Virtual War Memorial* (<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/>: accessed 15 January 2019), entry for E. T. Kindree
- ²⁶ Service Files of the First World War, op. cit., entry for Kindree, William Harold. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about William's military service comes from this source.
- ²⁷ "Common British military abbreviations," *The Long, Long Trail* (<http://www.1914-1918.net/abbrev.htm> : accessed 2 May 2016).
- ²⁸ *The Gillies Archives from Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup* (<http://www.gilliesarchives.org.uk/>: accessed 2 December 2016).
- ²⁹ Ontario, Canada, Marriages, op. cit., entry for William Harold Kindree.
- ³⁰ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2016), entry for William H Kindree, Service number: 838796.
- ³¹ Service Files of the First World War, op cit., entry for Kindree, Victor. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Victor's military service comes from this source.

³² "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 March 2016), entry for William Kindree.

³³ Canada Find a Grave Index, *op. cit.*, entry for Pvt Victor Kindree.