

## **Private Peter William Maracle©**

**Regimental number: 784956**

**52nd Battalion (New Ontario), Canadian Expeditionary Force**

**born: 17 March 1893–died: 3 October 1918**

Private Peter William Maracle was born on 17 March 1893 in Marysville, Ontario.<sup>1</sup> Marysville is a community in the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, east of Belleville, Ontario. The territory was established in 1793 to provide land for the Mohawks who fought for the British in the United States' War of Independence and had lost their land in New York.<sup>2</sup> Peter was Mohawk, the son of Moses Maracle<sup>3</sup> and his wife, Eliza Annie (nee Barnhart).<sup>4</sup> Moses was probably born in about 1859, the son of William and Catherine Maracle.<sup>5</sup> Eliza was born on 18 March 1870,<sup>6</sup> the daughter of William and Elizabeth (nee Hill) Barnhart.<sup>7</sup> Moses and Eliza had at least three children before Moses died. These children were living with Eliza in 1901:

- Margaret (born on 17 January 1889)
- Jacob (born on 15 December 1891)<sup>8</sup>
- Peter

Moses probably died sometime before 1899 because, on 24 August 1899, Eliza Ann Maracle (nee Barnhart), a widow, married Joshua Brant in Tyendinaga Township. Joshua, a farmer, was 24 years her senior and also a widower.<sup>9</sup> In 1901, Eliza and Joshua were living in Tyendinaga with these three of Eliza Ann's children.<sup>10</sup>

Five years later, Peter's sister Margaret died. She was just 16, working as a seamstress, when she died of epilepsy on 13 February 1906.<sup>11</sup>

Peter married Celia Maracle on 24 July 1913 in Halton, Ontario—Peter was 21 and Celia was 17. Celia was the daughter of Jacob Maracle and Mary Smart.<sup>12</sup>

In 1916, Peter enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). He signed up in Bartonville, Hamilton, on 28 January 1916.<sup>13</sup> At the time, he was living in Hamilton—at 10 Mulberry Street—where he was a labourer. He was 5' 7¼" tall and had a dark complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair.

Even before he left Canada, he deserted from the 129th Battalion for some time beginning on 26 July 1916, and his army pay was deducted accordingly. Also before leaving Canada he signed a will leaving all his possessions to his wife Celia.

On 26 March 1917, he sailed from Halifax with the 5th Reserve Battalion on the SS *Missanabie*, arriving in England on 7 April. Initially he went to the Canadian camp at Shorncliffe in Kent and, from there, to the camp at Witley, Surrey. He appears to have remained in Witley until March of the following year, when he went to France with the 52nd Battalion. He arrived in France on 28 March 1918 and about six months later was fatally wounded in northern France.

In late September 1918, the 54th Battalion was stationed in Neuville-Vitasse, southeast of Arras in northern France. On 25 September, the battalion moved to the staging area near Bullecourt, in preparation for an attack the following day. The troops arrived at 11:15 p.m. and the following day, after a wet and slippery march, they arrived at the assembly area. The battalion was spread out

over the old battlefield and the troops sheltered in dugouts, funkholes<sup>14</sup> and trenches. The attack began the following day and the objective for the battalion was to take Bourlon Wood. It formed up at 5:30 a.m., under intense bombardment by the artillery, but by 10:58 a.m. it had achieved its objective.

On the 28th, the battalion was relieved and enjoyed a day's rest. The reprieve did not last long; on the 29th, the battalion received orders that the Canadian Division would continue the attack and it moved to the assembly area. However, it was not required to advance to the attack that night. The next day the battalion again took up position in the trenches and attacked many enemy positions on the Cambrai–Douai railway embankment. It suffered a lot of casualties—22 Other Ranks (non-officers) killed and 183 wounded—before settling on the railway cutting for the night.

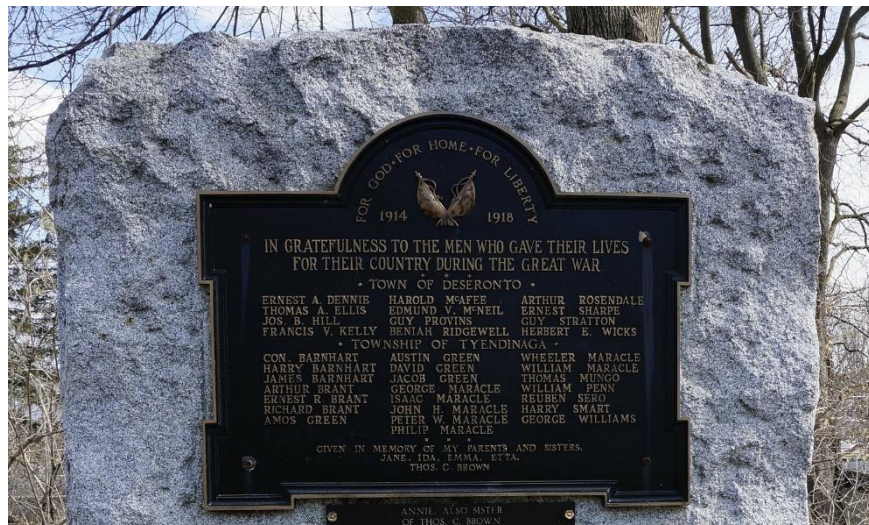
On the morning of 1 October, Peter's battalion, with the 102nd Canadian Battalion, pushed forward to establish a line but had to withdraw. It was that morning that

Whilst taking part in operations ... , [Peter] was wounded in the left side, left testicle, and received a fractured femur by enemy machine gun fire. He was given first aid and taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died two days later.<sup>15</sup>

A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.<sup>16</sup>

Peter was buried on 4 Oct 1918 in the Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 8, Row A, Grave 95) with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding. Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.<sup>17</sup> No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months.<sup>18</sup>

Peter was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre). The medals and other memorial items were sent to his wife in the early 1920s in the care of the Indian agent in Marysville. Peter is remembered on the war memorial in Deseronto.<sup>19</sup>



**War memorial, Deseronto, Ontario**

Source: *Deseronto Archives*. Used with kind permission

In 1921, Celia was living with her family—parents and four siblings—in Marysville. The census record indicated that she was single, but she was in fact a widow.<sup>20</sup> She was a widow when she married Allan Williams, a labourer from Marysville, the son of Samuel Williams and Elizabeth Brant, on 6 July 1922 Hastings, Ontario.<sup>21</sup> Sadly, Celia died

just three years later, on 13 April 1925, of Bright's disease<sup>22</sup>—what is known now as the kidney disease acute or chronic nephritis.<sup>23</sup>

Peter's brother Jacob also joined the CEF. He enlisted in Dundas, Ontario, about three weeks before his brother.<sup>24</sup> When he enlisted on 5 January 1916 he was working as a farm hand in Aldershot, Ontario. He joined the 129th Battalion as a private (regimental number 784113). He was absent without leave for 34 days starting sometime in July 1916 and, on 18 August, he was determined to be a deserter. His unit left for England three days later and Jacob was left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 18 February 2020), entry for Maracle, Peter W., Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5910 - 17, Item number: 174000, Digitized service file - PDF format: B5910-S017

<sup>2</sup> "Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyendinaga\\_Mohawk\\_Territory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyendinaga_Mohawk_Territory): accessed 29 May 2020)

<sup>3</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 29 May 2020), entry for Maracle, Peter William, Service No: 784956

<sup>4</sup> *Deseronto Archives* (<https://deserontoarchives.ca/2018/10/03/100-years-ago-peter-william-maracle-died/>: accessed 30 May 2020)

<sup>5</sup> "1881 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed October 10 2020), entry for Moses Miracle [*sic*], Province: Ontario, District number: 3, District: Hastings East, Sub-district number: B, Sub-district: Tyendinaga Division: 3 Is this punctuation correct?

<sup>6</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 April 2020), entry for Peter Maracle, Province: Ontario, District: Hastings (East/est), District number: 70, Sub-district: Tyendinaga, Sub-district number: 8

<sup>7</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826-1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 May 2020), entry for Eliza Ann Maracle

<sup>8</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry*, entry for Peter Maracle. The personnel service file for Jacob Maracle indicates that he was born on 15 January 1892, making him appear just one month older on his enlistment papers. ("Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 18 February 2020), entry for Maracle, Jacob., Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5910 - 8, Item number: 173991, Digitized service file - PDF format: B5910-S008)

<sup>9</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826-1938," *Ancestry*, entry for Eliza Ann Maracle

<sup>10</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," entry for Peter Maracle

<sup>11</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 May 2020), entry for Margaret Maracle

<sup>12</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826-1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 May 2020), entry for Peter Maracle

<sup>13</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada*, entry for Maracle, Peter W. Unless otherwise specified, all information about Peter's military service comes from this source.

<sup>14</sup> Funk holes were "small areas scraped out of the side of a trench. When it was raining, soldiers would drape a waterproof sheet over the opening and would try to get some sleep. Some officers considered funk holes too dangerous and banned men from sleeping in them." *Spartacus Educational* (<https://spartacus-educational.com/FWWfunk.htm>: accessed 31 May 2020)

<sup>15</sup> "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 May 2020), entry for Peter William Maracle

<sup>16</sup> "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 2 May 2020)

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<sup>17</sup> "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); accessed 7 October 2015)

<sup>18</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/>; accessed 17 June 2015)

<sup>19</sup> *Deseronto Archives*

<sup>20</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 12 March 2020), entry for Celia Maracle, Province or territory: Ontario, District: Hastings East, District number: 89, Sub-District: Tyendinaga Indian Reserve, Sub-district number: 49, City, Town or Village: Indian Reserve Tyendenage

<sup>21</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 7 June 2020), entry for Cecelia [*sic*] Maracle

<sup>22</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 7 June 2020), entry for Cecelia [*sic*] Williams

<sup>23</sup> "Bright's disease," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bright%27s\\_disease](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bright%27s_disease); accessed 7 June 2020)

<sup>24</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada*, entry for Maracle, Jacob. Unless otherwise specified, all information about Jacob's military service comes from this source.