

Private George Lawrence Price

of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, was the last man killed in WWI



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Private Price was born on December 15th, 1892, in Kings County, Nova Scotia and like many young men from the Maritimes he moved to the Canadian West in search of employment and opportunity. He settled in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and it was there on October, 15, 1917, that he enlisted in the 210th Infantry Battalion to fight in the Great War.

Private Price completed basic training in Regina, and was enrolled with the 1st Saskatchewan Depot Battalion in December of 1917.

By late 1917, new recruits were desperately needed to fill the places of men who had been killed or wounded. He was transferred to the 15th Canadian Reserve Battalion on February 6, 1918, and then transferred to the 28th Canadian Infantry Battalion, on May 1, 1918. He arrived in Etaples, France, on May 2, 1918, and finally arrived at the front on June 1, 1918.

In early September 1918, Private Price was wounded with poison gas in the Canal-Du-Nord area of north-western France and sent to the 1st Canadian Casualty Collection Station for treatment. He was transferred to a hospital in Etaples, France, to recover and returned to his unit on September 26, 1918.

Just a few minutes before the end of the War, Private Price's luck ran out. On November 11, 1918 at 10:50 a.m., Private Price of "A" Company was shot by a German sniper while carrying out a reconnaissance on the far side



Grave of Private George Lawrence Price

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of the Canal du Centre. Price, Private Art Goodmurphy, and two others from “A” Company had crossed the canal and entered the small village of Ville-sur-Haine on the other side to search the house from which a German machine gun had been firing just moments before. The small party of Canadians rushed the house and found the only occupants to be the owner and his family, the Germans having scuttled out the back door just before the Canadians entered the front. The Canadians moved on to the next house where they again found no Germans. As Price and Goodmurphy stepped back into the street, a single shot rang out hitting Price in the chest. Price slumped into Goodmurphy’s arms. After he had been dragged back into the house, Price was attended to by the occupants, the Lenoir’s, and a young Belgian girl, Alice Grotte, a neighbour, who seeing him fall, had risked her life to cross the street to come to his aid. Their help was to no avail, and Price died at 10:58 a.m., just two minutes before the cease fire. He was the last Allied battle fatality of WWI.

Private Price was buried at the St. Symphorien Military Cemetery, in Belgium, Plot 4 Row C, Grave 4, 2 km east of Mons. He was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. A plaque dedicated to his memory was unveiled on the 50th anniversary of his death, 1968, by the few remaining survivors of the 28th North West Battalion. It is a small plaque situated on a brick column just a stone’s throw away from where he fell.

The bilingual plaque reads:

“To the memory of 256265 Private George Lawrence Price 28th North West Battalion 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade 2nd Canadian Division killed in action near this spot at 10.58 hours November 11th 1918 the last Canadian soldier to die on the Western Front in the First World War erected by his comrades November 11th 1968”

It is an interesting coincidence that Private Price is buried within half a mile of where the first casualty of the First World War was killed. Private John Parr, of the 4 Battalion Middlesex Regiment, died on August 21, 1914, about the time Private Price arrived in Moose Jaw.

The Moose Jaw Museum & Art Gallery would like to thank Gerry Carline for bringing this interesting piece of Moose Jaw’s history to our attention and for providing us with photographs and information.