



Private Charles McCarthy (Regimental Number 5741), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, Charles McCarthy was a recruit of the 15th(?) Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury**, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on July 9, 1918. It was a procedure which found him...*Fit for Foreign Service*.



**The building was to serve as the Regimental Headquarters in Newfoundland for the duration of the conflict.*

It was to be on the day of that medical assessment, July 9, and at the same venue, that Charles McCarthy was now to be enlisted. He was engaged...*for the duration of the war**...at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar to which was to be appended a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*

Only a further few hours were then to go by before there came to pass, while still at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same ninth day of that July* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Charles McCarthy officially entered the service of the King.

**It had been two months prior to this that the Newfoundland Military Service Act (conscriptio had come into effect. From May 11 through to the end of the Great War, the Department of Militia was to call a total of 1,470 men into active service. No evidence found among his documents suggests that Charles McCarthy was or was not one of those to be conscripted.*

Many of the recruits during this period are recorded as having been granted several days of a final furlough before departure for *overseas service*. However, even though Private McCarthy, Number 5741, had declared his place of residence to be in not-distant – and accessible by train – Riverhead, Harbour Grace, there are no documents among his papers to suggest that he was to return home during that period – although of course it is not impossible.

Even if he had done so, his stay would not have been a prolonged one, and thus at the time on his enlistment – and after any period of leave - he surely reported to quarters in St. John's**, these likely in the *Prince's Skating Rink* in the eastern end of the city.

(Right: *This photograph of the Prince's Rink in St. John's with military personnel, apparently attired in uniforms of Great War vintage, on parade is from the Ice Hockey Wiki web-site. There appears to be no further information a propos.*)

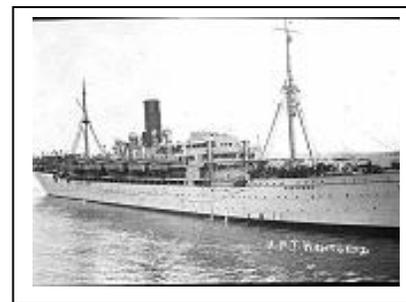


The next record of Private McCarthy is the entry in his file of September 9 which documents him being posted for...*special duty*...to the *Reid Nfld. Dry Dock* in St. John's Harbour.

He was recalled from there on the 16th of the same month.

Six days later again, on September 22, Private McCarthy was one of the 24th Draft to leave Newfoundland. It took the train from St. John's to Port aux Basques, to North Sydney and on as far as Québec (his files record to Halifax but – if the date of September 22 is correct – other information makes Québec almost certainly the ultimate Canadian destination – it is likely he travelled *via* Halifax, there changing trains to travel onward to Québec).

In the Port of Québec the Newfoundland troops embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Huntsend* and sailed for the United Kingdom on the 28th day of the month. Unfortunately, the three troopships in the convoy – *Victoria* and *City of Cairo* the other two - were all infected with the influenza which was soon to engulf the world: about one hundred men in all would die at sea and more were to expire after having arrived in England.



(Right above: *The image is of the former German vessel Lützow which had been seized by the British in 1914 and re-named Huntsend. – the photograph is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site*)

(continued)

Private McCarthy was admitted into hospital on board *Huntsend* on October 8.

The son of Justin McCarthy, fisherman, and of Mary McCarthy (née O'Neill*) of St. Marks Road, River Head, Harbour Grace, he was also brother to Felix, Justin Jr., Anastasia, Maud and to Edward.

**The couple had been married on November 30, 1892.*

Private McCarthy was reported as having...*died at sea* – of pneumonia - at a quarter past seven o'clock on the morning of that same October 8, 1918. He was immediately...*buried at sea*.

Charles Louis McCarthy had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-four years of age: date of birth at River Head, Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, October 18, 1893 (from Newfoundland Vital Statistics as is also the name *Louis*).

Private Charles McCarthy was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service.



River Head
Hr Grace

Jan 29th

W. F. Rendell chief Staff Officer
1920

Dear Sir

I notice by the papers that the pay & Record office in London ceases to exist according to this all business there must be settled up and I think it is about time the effects of 5741 pte C. McCarthy should be forwarded to me

Late in November my son Justin McCarthy called at the Depot of Militia and made inquiries about 5741 pte C. McCarthy's personal belongings they told him all had been destroyed but on applying to Capt Nunns the officer who conducted the draft at the time 5741 died at sea he found they had told a lie at the Dept of Militia Capt Nunns gave him a list which you will find a copy of at Room No. 3 In that list at the Bottom you will notice the sum of \$12 Twelve Dollars cash which was handed in to the Record Office If you will explain why I have not received this I shall be more than obliged

Yours Truly

Mrs Justin McCarthy
Mother of Desised

(continued)

PS a letter sint about too weeks ago has not been replied to yet so I ask a reply to this one

Note written on above letter: Letter of Jan 2nd addressed to Casualty officer was passed to Lieut Crawford for attention by this office...

The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – January 30, 2023.