

# On The War Memorial Trail in Europe... Manitoba Cemetery in France

Daria Valkenburg

Pieter Valkenburg, Branch Service Officer for the Borden-Carleton Legion, who is researching the names on the Cenotaph outside the Borden-Carleton Legion, was in France to visit the graves and memorials for the men listed on the Cenotaph. The Manitoba Cemetery, outside the village of Caix and located on a farm road, is the burial place of James CAIRNS, one of the names listed on the Cenotaph.

According to the information panel at the cemetery, the village of Caix was captured from the Germans in February 1917, lost in March 1918, and recaptured by the Canadian Corps four months later. Named after the Manitoba Regiment of the 8th Canadian Battalion (known as Winnipeg Rifles), the cemetery has the graves of two British and 117 Canadians who fell in the recapture.

James Cairns was born on February 22, 1897 in Kinkora, the son of Thomas Cairns and Mary Jane MacDonald. The family moved to Manitoba from the island, and Cairns enlisted

with the 190th Battalion Manitoba Regiment on July 8, 1916. He was killed in action during the Battle of Amiens on August 9, 1918. The Battle of Amiens, which began on August 8, 1918, was the opening phase of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive that ultimately led to the end of the First World War.

According to the Canadian War Graves Register circumstances of death, Cairns 'Was instantly killed on the afternoon of August 9th 1918, while advancing with his battalion, in the face of stout opposition from the enemy, who placed a heavy barrage at the "jumping off" place, and from hidden nests poured machine gun fire in the ranks of the troops who pushed forward.'

While Valkenburg doesn't have a photo of James Cairns, a glimpse into his personality is seen in a letter that the sister of James Cairns received on September 18, 1918 from the 83rd Canadian Battalion British Expeditionary Forces:

*"My Dear Miss Cairns: I regret that the conditions of war made it impossible for me to write you sooner regarding the*

*death of your brother Pte. James Cairns. He died in the afternoon of Aug 9th during the second day of our advance in front of Amiens. Death was instantaneous, the result of a machine gun bullet. I buried the body in a cemetery on the battlefield where many of his comrades lie. The grave is marked and will be permanent.*

*I knew your brother. He was doing well and was liked by everybody. His life has been given for human freedom and it will not be in vain. God will be pleased to accept the sacrifice and to make through it a better world. I pray God will bless you abundantly and sustain you all in this trial.*

*Believe me to be yours in deepest sympathy.*

*J. W. Whillans - Capt. and Chaplain"*  
While writing in the

In a Guest Register, we saw that the previous visitors, from July 13, had come to honour their great-uncle and great-great uncle Theodore (Ted) ARSENAULT from Abrams Village. Who would believe that the last visitors to Manitoba Cemetery visited a soldier from PEI? Of course, Valkenburg

couldn't leave without placing flags by the grave of another PEI soldier.

This was one of many stops on the War Memorial Trail in Europe. If you have photos or information about James Cairns please email Valkenburg at dariadv@yahoo.ca. You can also visit the blog at <https://bordencarletonresearch-project.wordpress.com>



Grave of James Cairns at Manitoba Cemetery. (Photo: Pieter Valkenburg)



Grave of T. E. Arsenault of Abrams Village. (Photo: Pieter Valkenburg)



Pieter at the entrance to Manitoba Cemetery outside Caix. (Photo: Daria Valkenburg)

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## TOWN OF KENSINGTON HALLOWEEN CURFEW

Door to Door Trick or Treating within the Town of Kensington is to CEASE PROMPTLY AT 8:00 P.M.

The Town of Kensington would like to take this opportunity to remind residents of the Town's "Nuisance Offences Bylaw", specifically as it relates to Halloween night. The bylaw states:

2.23 Unless accompanied by a person over the age of 18 years, no person under the age of 16 years shall be in a public place within the Town of Kensington between 8:00pm October 31st and 7:00am on November 1st.

"There will be Zero Tolerance towards the breaking of this Bylaw; those under 18 years of age may be held at the Kensington Police office until picked up by parents."

We wish you all a safe and Happy Halloween.

Mayor Rowan Caseley and Town Council

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