

WW1: Honouring Those Who Volunteered in January, 1917

In January 1917, David Stanley Bernhardt was the only volunteer from our community.

DAVID STANLEY BERNHARDT

Regimental Number: 1099026

David Stanley Bernhardt was born on the 25th of January, 1880. His baptismal record and attestation paper agree.

He was the son of Robert James & Catherine (Maracle) Barnhart. (The spelling of David Stanley's last name is taken directly from his signature on his attestation paper and does contradict the spelling of his father's last name.)

David volunteered on the 4th of January, 1917, in St. Catharines, Ontario for the 256th Overseas Railway Construction Battalion.

According to his military personnel file, he worked as a machinist before the war and lived in Port Dalhousie, Ontario. He had no previous military experience.

David left Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the 26th of March, 1917, and arrived in Liverpool, England, on the 7th of April, 1917.

He was transferred to the 10th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops, on the 31st of May, 1917, and proceeded to France in June of that year. Upon arrival in France, he was sent to the field. David was given 11 days leave in November, 1917.

On the 2nd of June, 1918, David was sentenced to 3 days of Field Punishment Number 2 for being Absent without Leave for one and a half hours. He was granted leave in England for 14 days in August, 1918, and then returned to the Field.

David was transferred to England for demobilisation on the 22nd of January, 1919. He sailed to Canada on the 10th of March, 1919, and was discharged on the 21st of March in Toronto with the rank of Sapper, "War Service Badge Class A". His discharge papers state he served in France & Belgium.

The 10th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops, supported railway construction on the Western Front in the British sector in France from June, 1917, until the end of the war. The railways that were built were essential for transporting troops and supplying troops, often right up to the front lines.

David's military personnel file indicates that he was married at the time he enlisted. We have not located a marriage record yet but in his personnel file David states the name of his wife as Jennie Bernhardt. There are also records for two children where the mother is named as Jessie Gordon (this is likely Jennie with a maiden name of Gordon). Some of those documents indicate that a marriage took place in Penetanguishene, Ontario, around 1906 or 1907. Their son Stanley was born and died in 1912. They also had a daughter, Beatrice Catherine, who was born in 1913. We have no further information about her.

After his marriage to Jennie, David Stanley married a widow, Frances May (Kingsley) Hunt, on the 4th of November, 1933, in Jordan, Ontario. We know of two children; one boy that was born and died in 1935, and another son Robert David Stanley Bernhardt, born in 1938.

David Stanley Bernhardt died in 1960 (possibly on the 15th of June in Hamilton). He is buried at the Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines, Ontario.



Most of the information here is from his military personnel file [LAC RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1020 - 20]. This file has been digitized and can be found at <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>. Other information has been taken from MBQ Records. Information was also kindly provided by Stephanie Bernhardt.