

PRIVATE CHARLES THOMAS AMES

Regimental # 2128923



Charles, born on December 10, 1893 in Brookdale, Manitoba, was the 4th oldest of Samuel and Marilda (nee Whelpton) Ames' ten children. Once Charles heard about the possibility of land ownership in Northern Alberta, he travelled by train, arrived in Grande Prairie and subsequently filed a homestead application on SW 15-72-3-W6 in 1916. He also filed by proxy on land for his brothers; George, Fred and Roy. Charles spent the first winter at the Goodwin Stopping Place on the east side of the Smoky River trapping and cutting logs for various farmers. In the spring of 1917, he found employment with Shortreed and Rosser's sawmill at the Wapiti River. By fall, Charlie returned to Manitoba to assist with the harvest and once completed, he returned to Bezanson and worked again in Shortreed and Rosser's sawmill for the winter.

On January 5, 1918, while in Manitoba, Charles was called-up for service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1st Depot Battalion Manitoba Regiment. He disembarked at Liverpool on March 4, 1918 where he was transferred to the 11th Reserve Battalion and trained until he was sent to France on June 22, 2018 with the 16th Battalion. On September 2, 1918 near Arras, Charles received a gun-shot wound to the left foot. He was admitted to hospital where he recovered and by November 7th, he was described as fit for duty. Charles sailed for Canada on the S.S. Olympic on January 11, 1919 and arrived at Halifax six days later. He was discharged on demobilization on February 12, 1919 at Winnipeg. Charles had served in Canada, England and France and received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

As soon as Charlie arrived in Manitoba, he and Ernest Ford bought a Sawyer-Massey steam threshing machine and went to work for various farmers. Once the harvest was finished, they shipped the steamer to Grande Prairie and then drove it to the Smoky River near Bezanson where they sawed lumber until the spring of 1920. The steamer was then used to break land for Charlie, his brothers and Ernest Ford. In the fall, the steamer was used to thresh for local farmers; however, once winter arrived, the steamer was sent to the Bezanson Townsite where it was used to saw lumber. In the spring of 1921, as the ferry was moved to the "Goodwin Crossing", Charlie rafted their lumber down to the Crossing and had Bill Moody operate a lumber yard for them. The following summer,

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the steamer was used again to break land and at harvests time, it was put to use threshing again. Charlie then decided file on land in Main Pine River in BC. He operated a steam engine for Landry's Sawmill at Doc River, BC that winter. In the spring of 1922, he went prospecting followed by employment for the CNR building bridges. That summer he worked for Loughheed Placer Mining in Barkerville. The summer of 1923, he travelled to Prince Rupert and Hydro, Alaska only to return to Barkerville to try prospecting. A period of time was also spent prospecting along the Okanagan Lake following which, he ran Archie Middleton's steamer on a threshing outfit for fall work. The following winter, he found employment in Vancouver building plank partitions in ocean liners for hauling grain. By 1926, Charlie moved to Turner Valley where he worked firing oil-well oilers for 16 years. On one trip back to Manitoba for a visit, he met Elsie Cox whom he married in December 1931 and they had one child, Prince Charles, born in 1932. By 1944, Charlie decided to move his family back to Bezanson where he built a home on Ernest Ford's property. He soon found employment at the Crooked Creek Lumber Company as a steam engineer and his wife, Elsie, worked as the Company's bookkeeper and also worked in the store. In 1949, Charlie went into partnership with Charlie Moon on a D7 Caterpillar and they eventually purchased two D8's and a D6. In 1963, Charlie retired; therefore, dissolved the partnership.

In his retirement, Charlie decided to locate and restore his original 25-75 Sawyer-Massey Steamer. Charlie and Elsie's son, Prince, had married Donna Ford in 1952 and they had three children, Jean, Ernie and Howard. Prince died in July 1955 after he had been hit on the head by a pitched ball during a baseball game. He was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Charlie passed away in 1981 and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Elsie passed away in 2011 and was laid to rest alongside Charlie.



Reference

Smoky to Grande Prairie History Book
South Peace Regional Archives Land Database
1906 Canada Census