

Cst. Perry A.



PERRY, ALFRED - CST. Regimental No. 2181

June 8, 1889 - Near Lethbridge, North-West Territories Age 20

Before joining the North-West Mounted Police at Calgary in July of 1888, Alfred Perry worked as a labourer in England, and Cochrane, Ontario.

On Thursday, June 6, 1889, he left Lethbridge to go to his detachment at a camp on the west side of the Belly River, some 20 miles to the southwest. Because the river was high, he took the ferry across, but lost the trail to the camp on the other side. That night he crossed back and said he would ride along the side of the river and cross it somewhere else lower down.

When he didn't show up at the camp by Saturday, June 8, NWMP Superintendent R. B. Deane took 17 men and went looking for him. They found that he had stayed Thursday night at Fixley and Whear's ranch and then pressed on Friday morning. The search party continued to follow his horse tracks and saw several places where he had tried to ford the river. Apparently, each time, Cst. Perry had found the water too deep and had come back out and moved further along the bank on this side.

To speed up the search process, the posse split in two and, soon after that, the group under Sgt. Ross found Perry's horse tracks going into the water. This time they did not come back out on the same side of the river. Across the way, they saw Cst. Perry's horse standing on the other side with his saddle and bridle still on. When they retrieved the horse, they found the mail still secure in the saddle wallets. The horse had apparently lost its rider and saved itself. There was no sign of Perry, who was known to be a good swimmer. Further investigation revealed that the water at this point was very fast and deep. Two children had drowned here a year ago and a local farmer, Mr. Hodman, had spoken to Cst. Perry and warned him about the treachery of the river in this area. He had offered to put the constable up for the night so that he could ride further down the river in the morning, but Cst. Perry had declined.

In the belief that he has probably drowned, policemen were assigned to search the river banks for his body. Any attempt to use grappling hooks was useless because of the rocky, uneven bottom of the river. Ten days later, Cst. Perry's body was found. Due to the stones and boulders on the bottom of the fast flowing stream, his face was scoured and so badly marked that it was almost unrecognizable.

Cst. Alfred Perry, the young immigrant recruit from England, was buried far from his parents and family in the Mountain View Cemetery of Lethbridge, Canada. He had not yet completed one full year or service with the North-West Mounted Police.