

## Metis Soldiers in the Boer War (1899-1902)

On October 12, 1899, the South African, or Boer War, began. This conflict was the culmination of several years of bitter strife and controversy, as Great Britain colonized and expanded their holdings in the Cape Colony and into the neighbouring Boer States of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This expansion was strongly resented and resisted by the Boer settlers.

Great Britain enlisted support from Canada, New Zealand and Australia for their war effort. While many English-Canadians supported Britain's cause in South Africa, most French-Canadians and many recent immigrants from countries other than Britain did not. Out of concern with maintaining national stability and political popularity, Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not want to commit his government. As a compromise, Laurier agreed to send a battalion of volunteers to South Africa.



Men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Mounted rifles

Most of the Metis who participated were members of the various regiments of the Canadian Mounted Rifles. Two hundred and forty-two Canadian soldiers were killed. One of these was a Metis soldier from Manitoba, Charles Edgar Hallett (1879-1901). Charles was born at St. Charles (Red River) the son of John Henry Hallett and Martha Ann Stodgell. He enlisted at Winnipeg and was a Trooper, South African Constabulary, "F" Squad. He died in South Africa of wounds on May 31, 1901 at Reitfontein. Charles was the grandson of William Peter Hallett, one of the Metis leaders who opposed Louis Riel in 1869-70 and was imprisoned at Fort Garry. William Hallett was for many years a

leader of the Red River Buffalo Hunt and later led the “49<sup>th</sup> Rangers” a group of 30 Metis armed and mounted scouts employed by the Boundary Commission (1872-1875).

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS			South African Constabulary No. 1829
<i>Hallett</i>	<i>CHARLES (Trooper)</i>		
<small>SURNAME</small>	<small>CHRISTIAN NAMES</small>	<small>SERVICE NO.</small>	<small>SERVICE</small>
			<i>Died of Wounds 31-5-1901</i>
<b>10 SERVICE DOCUMENTS</b>			
<small>MEDICAL BOARD TO H.O. DATE _____</small>			
<small>RETURN THESE DOCUMENTS TO WAR SERVICE RECORDS DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS</small>			
<b>THE CONTENTS OF THIS ENVELOPE ARE CONFIDENTIAL</b>			

Another Metis soldier who served in the Boer War was Trooper Richard George Hardisty (1871-1943) In 1901, Trooper Hardisty served in the Boer War, and afterwards he became district commissioner in Northwest Rhodesia with the British South Africa Company. In 1914 Major Hardisty went overseas with the 49th Battalion C.E.F. from Edmonton, and returned to Canada in 1917. Richard was born on May 10, 1871 in Victoria Settlement (Pakan), Alberta, the son of Chief Factor Richard Charles Hardisty and Elizabeth Victoria McDougall. He died on July 23, 1943 in Vancouver, British Columbia. He married Margaret Taylor on September 1892 in Edmonton.

Ambroise Boyer (b. 1880) was born at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, the son of Juliennne Bousquet and William Boyer. Ambroise was just five years old when his father fought in the 1885 Resistance. Sixteen years later, while living at Medicine Hat and working as a rancher, Ambroise enlisted in the Canadian Mounted Rifles and served in support of the British in the Boer War in South Africa. His papers are shown in the appendix below.

Andrew Robert Flett was born on the Deh Cho (McKenzie River) in 1864. He was 32 years of age and a former special constable with the Northwest Mounted Police when he signed up. He had served in the Prince Albert Home Guard during the 1885 Metis Resistance. He died at Denare Beach near Flin Flon and was buried at Beaver Lake, Saskatchewan in 1940. When he returned from South Africa he had worked for Revillon Freres and the Hudson’s Bay Company in the far north fur trade.



The 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles on the veldt in the Transvaal, March 1902.

APPENDIX  
Starts next page.

**CANADIAN YEOMANRY.  
ATTESTATION PAPER.**

No.

.. 898 .. *Jarvis A Boyer* of *240 M.R.* Folio

**QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.**

1. What is your name? ..... *Ambrose Boyer*

2. In what Township or Parish, and in or near what town and in what County or Country were you born? .....  
In or near ~~what~~ <sup>the</sup> Town of *Duck Lake*  
in the County of *Saskatchewan*  
in the *North West Territories*

3. \* What is the name of your next of kin? ..... *William Boyer*

4. \* What is the address of your next of kin? ..... *Balsche N.W.T.*

5. What is your age? ..... *21* Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months.

6. What is your Trade or Calling? ..... *hauling*

You are hereby warned that if you give a wilfully false answer to any of the following five (5) questions you are liable to 2 years' imprisonment with hard labour.

7. Are you an Apprentice? ..... *No*

8. Are you Married? ..... *No*

9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? ..... *No*

10. Have you ever served in His Majesty's Imperial Army, Marines, Navy or Indian Forces, or in any Corps of the Active Militia of Canada, or North-West Mounted Police? ..... *No*

If so, state particulars of former Service, and the cause of Discharge, and produce Certificate of Discharge. Men belonging to the Imperial Army Reserve, or absent therefrom, are not to be omitted.

11. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service, or for His Majesty's Indian Forces, the Active Militia of Canada, or North-West Mounted Police? ..... *No*

12. Do you understand the nature and terms of your Engagement? ..... *Yes*

13. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the Canadian Yeomanry for a period of 12 months or until the termination of the present war in South Africa. *For a period of twelve months*

Signature of Man. *Ambrose Boyer*

Witness

**DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

I, *Ambrose Boyer*, do sincerely and solemnly declare, that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above answers to the foregoing questions made and signed by me are true; and that I am willing to be attested for the term above named, provided His Majesty should no longer require my services, or until legally discharged.

*Ambrose Boyer* } Signature of Man. } *Walter S. W. W. P.* } Signature of Witness.

**OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

I, *Ambrose Boyer*, do sincerely promise and swear (or solemnly declare) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty, King Edward VII, His Heirs and successors and that I will faithfully defend Him and them in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies and will obey all orders of the Officers set over me.

Witness my hand,  
Signature of Man. *Ambrose Boyer*

Witness present *Walter S. W. W. P.*

The above questions were asked of the said *Ambrose Boyer* and answered by him in my presence, as herein recorded: and the said *Ambrose Boyer* made the above Declaration and Oath before me at *Therons Lake* this *12* day of *January* One Thousand Nine Hundred and *two* at *5 30* o'clock *P.* M.

Signature of Attesting Officer *Walter S. W. W. P.*



CANADA

WAR VETERANS' ALLOWANCE BOARD

SOUTH AFRICAN

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE NO.  
AND PLEASE QUOTE  
YOUR REGIMENTAL NUMBER

DALY BUILDING,  
OTTAWA, January 31st, 1948.

Officer i/c Records  
A. G. Branch  
FEB 4 1948  
Nat. Defence Hqrs.  
Ottawa, - Canada.

*Plc  
Hob*  
*687071*

Director of Records,  
Department of National Defence.

Re BOYER Ambrose Regt. No. 898  
(Surname) Ambroise (Christian Name) 2nd C.M.R.

Dear Sir:

To enable the War Veterans' Allowance Board to determine the eligibility of the above named, will you kindly furnish the following particulars concerning his service during the South African War. He states he served in the following Units:

Enlisted at Medicine Hat December 1901.  
Discharged September 1902.

W.C.N. Marriott,  
Secretary,  
War Veterans' Allowance Board.

- 1. Did the applicant serve in the South African War? **Yes**
- 2. Field of service in the South African War. **South Africa**
- 3. If in South Africa, name of Unit. **2nd C.M.R.**
- 4. Dates and places of all enlistments. **12-1-02, Medicine Hat, Alta**
- 5. Dates of all discharges and reasons. **Not stated.**
- 6. Date and place of birth as per attestation paper. **21 on enlistment, Duck Lake Sask.**
- 7. Domestic status, and if married name in full of wife. **Single.**
- 8. Medals and honours awarded for service in South Africa 1902. **Queens Medal and three**
- 9. Port of disembarkation in South Africa. **Durban**
- 10. Date of disembarkation. Day **25th** Month **February** Year **1902**

EM/3-2-42.

*W.E.L. Coleman*  
(W.E.L. Coleman) Major,  
Officer i/c Records,  
for Adjutant General.

V.A. 18A 1M-4-38 Req 288  
W V A 5 M 1 8 Req 189

# CANADIAN MOUNTED RIFLES.

## ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. Folio  
Regiment.

No. 57 Name Andrew Flett of 5<sup>A</sup> C.M.R.

### QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

1. What is your name? ..... Andrew Flett
2. In what Township or Parish, and in or near what town and in what County or Country were you born? .....  
 In or near what Town of Prince Albert  
 in the County of Sask. N.W.T.  
 in the Prov. of Canada
3. \*What is the name of your next of kin?..... Sister Mrs. Sevanston
4. \*What is the address of your next of kin?..... Prince Albert Sask. Canada
5. What is your age?..... 32 Years 7 Months.
6. What is your Trade or Calling?..... Farmer

You are hereby warned that if you give a wilfully false answer to any of the following (5) questions you are liable to 2 years' imprisonment with hard labour.

7. Are you an Apprentice?..... No.
8. Are you Married?..... No.
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?..... No.
10. Have you ever served in His Majesty's Imperial Army, Marines, Navy or Indian Forces, or in any Corps of the Active Militia of Canada, or North-West Mounted Police?..... Served as Sq. Cond. in N.W.M.C.

! If so, state particulars of former Service, and the cause of Discharge and produce Certificate of Discharge. Men belonging to the Imperial Army Reserve, or absentees therefrom, are not to be enlisted.

11. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service, or for His Majesty's Indian Forces, the Active Militia of Canada, or North-West Mounted Police?..... No.
12. Do you understand the nature and terms of your Engagement?..... Yes
13. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the Canadian Mounted Rifles for a period of 12 months or until the termination of the present war in South Africa. Yes

Signature of Man Andrew Flett  
 Witness W. B. ...

### DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Andrew Flett, do sincerely and solemnly declare, that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above answers to the foregoing questions made and signed by me are true; and that I am willing to be attested for the term above named, provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Signature of Man Andrew Flett } Signature of Witness W. B. ...

### OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Andrew Flett, do sincerely promise and swear (or solemnly declare) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Edward VII., His Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully defend Him and them in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies and will obey all orders of the Officers set over me.

Witness my hand,  
 Signature of Man Andrew Flett  
 Witness present W. B. ...

The above questions were asked of the said Andrew Flett and answered by him in my presence, as herein recorded; and the said Andrew Flett made the above Declaration and Oath before me at Prince Albert this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and two at 4 o'clock P.M.

Signature of Attesting Officer W. B. ...



# The Canadian Legion

OF THE

British Empire Service League  
Flin Flon (Man. No. 73) Branch

SMOKE "LEGIONS"

*✓ Jones I*

P.O. Box "N"  
Flin Flon, Man.  
Aug. 15th, 1940

Office i/c Records  
A. G. Branch  
AUG 23 1940  
Nat. Defence Deps.  
Ottawa, - Canada.

To: Officer I/C Records,  
Dept. National Defense,  
Ottawa.

Dear Sir:

#57 Andrew Robert Flett  
Canadian Mounted Rifles, South Africa.

The above named died in the General Hospital Flin Flon on August 13th. He was born on McKenzie River North of Arctic Circle in 1864. Mother Indian, Father Scotch. Father went through to Yukon in 1849 by land. Andrew served on home defence at Prince Albert during Rebellion of 1885.

Was in Yukon in 1897 as prospector and served as guide and carried mail in and out of Yukon under Colonel Steel with R.C.M.P. While crossing Chilcoot Pass saved Soapy Smith from some of his own gang. Soapy reciprocated by pinning his own gang badge on Andrew during riot in Skagway enabling Andrew, a Canadian Special Police, to escape.

Served with C.M.R.s in South Africa, enlisting in Prince Albert. On return was in employ of Hudson's Bay Company and Revillion Freres in the far north, mainly among the Eskimos. Could speak, Cree, Chipawyan and Eskimo. Was a great student of Indian tales and customs and gathered a vast fund of knowledge about them. He left Du Brochet in 1929 and finally settled at Beaver Lake.

He was a sincere student of the Bible and never missed a Sunday without observing it with his beloved Good Book which was given him by his father in 1874. He was intensely patriotic and followed and studied every move of the war and in every way he could either by effort or examply was giving all the help he could.

On Beaver Lake his kindly nature made him beloved by all, particularly the children, many of whom, he guarded for hours when he thought they were in danger.

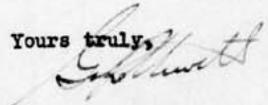
Deceased was buried at Beaver Lake, Sask. about 14 miles from Flin Flon on August 15th, Rev. H. Percy of Flin Flon officiating with members of the Flin Flon Branch of the Canadian Legion being in attendance in addition may old friends from other

*"They served till death! Why not us?"*

- 2 -

points and practically the entire population of Beaver Lake  
Denare Beach.

Yours truly,

  
G. A. Rothwell  
Secretary



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell  
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research  
Louis Riel Institute