

Private George Lepine Foster

Regimental number: 2418540¹

1st Canadian Mounted Rifles, 3rd Canadian Division

born: 26 November 1888 - died: 16 September 1918

Private George Lepine Foster was born on 26 November 1888 in Halifax, Nova Scotia,² the son of Willis and Elizabeth Foster.³ Both his parents were born in Nova Scotia – William in 1858 and Elizabeth in 1862⁴ – and married in Halifax in 1883.⁵ They probably had four children: William (born in 1884),⁶ George, Annie (or Annette) (born in 1897)⁷ and Donald Alexander Campbell (born in 1899).⁸ In 1891, the family was living in Halifax, Nova Scotia.⁹ They remained in Halifax until at least 1911. In 1901, George's father was an "assessor" and, in 1911, an auditor.¹⁰

George probably moved to Saskatchewan sometime in the 1910s. He enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Saskatoon, on 10 July 1917.¹¹ He was a teamster, was 5' 7½" tall, had a ruddy complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair. He was a Baptist.

George served with the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles¹², an infantry unit of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, formed in Brandon in 1914 and landed in France on 22 September 1915.¹³ Although originally a mounted infantry unit, after it landed in France, it was apparent that the conditions of the Western Front made its mounts more of a hindrance than a benefit. As a result, at the beginning of January 1916, both CMR brigades were dismounted, converted to infantry and reorganized as the 8th Infantry Brigade.

In September 1918, the 1st CMR was in Divisional Reserve.¹⁴ On 11 September, the unit relieved the 42nd Canadian Infantry Battalion and was on the Front Line. The unit received harassing artillery fire on 15 September, but parties from "D" Company were sent to establish posts, after which the Battalion was relieved by the 5th CMR, however, not before several officers and Other Ranks were killed and 20 Other Ranks were wounded. George may have been one of them.

Whilst taking part in an attack on any enemy post, in front of Sauchy Cauchy, he was wounded by shell fire in the legs and stomach. His wounds were attended to and he was removed to No 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station where he succumbed in a few hours.¹⁵

He was indeed admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 15 September with gunshot wounds that penetrated his buttock and bladder and shrapnel wounds to his left foot.¹⁶ He died the following day and was buried on 17 September at Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 9, Plot 6, Row H)¹⁷ with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. His wife, who was living then at 2239 Quebec Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, was notified of his death.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁸ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁹ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

George's younger brother, Donald, enlisted, at the age of 19, in Halifax (Regimental number 3186399).²⁰ He appears to have survived the war. When he enlisted on 5 August 1918, he was an automobile machinist and living in Halifax.

His older brother, William, had married and he and his wife, Laura, and son, Gordon, were living with George's parents in Halifax in 1911.²¹ In 1921, they were living with George's mother's sister, Isabelle Hamilton, still in Halifax, where William was a civil engineer.²²

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¹ His regimental number appears in different documents as 2418540, 2418340 or 2418840.

² "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for George Lepine Foster

³ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for Geo Laboria Foster, Province: Nova Scotia, District: Halifax (city/cité), District Number: 33, Sub-District: Halifax (City/Cité) Ward/Quartier No, Sub-District Number: F-7

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics* (<https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/>; accessed 20 November 2015), entry for Elizabeth Hamilton

⁶ "1901 Census of Canada," entry for Geo Laboria Foster

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for George Foster, Province: Nova Scotia, District Number: 33, District: Halifax City, Subdistrict: Ward 2c

¹⁰ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for George L. Foster, Province: Nova Scotia, District: Halifax, District Number: 45, Sub-District: 84 - Ward 6, Sub-District Number: 84

¹¹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," entry for George Lepine Foster

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "1st Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, CEF," Wikipedia

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Battalion,_Canadian_Mounted_Rifles,_CEF; accessed 13 November 2015)

¹⁴ "MIKAN [2004667](http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca): War diaries - 1st Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles," Library and Archives Canada (<http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca>; accessed 12 November 2015)

¹⁵ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for George Lepine Foster, Service number: 2418340

¹⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 654

¹⁷ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Foster, G. L., Service No: 2418340

¹⁸ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

¹⁹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)

²⁰ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for Donald Alexander Campbell Foster

²¹ "1911 Census of Canada," entry for George L. Foster

²² "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 November 2015), entry for William H. Foster, Province or Territory: Nova Scotia, District: Halifax, District Number: 47, Sub-District: Halifax (City), Sub-District Number: 71, City, Town or Village: Halifax City