

Private Kenneth Norman McRae

Regimental number: 304568

9th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery

born: 23 August 1895 - died: 11 September 1918

Private Kenneth Norman McRae was born on 23 August 1895 in Bayfield, Wisconsin, United States.¹ He was adopted by John and Matilda McRae.² John was born on 9 December 1854 in Ontario, the son of Farquhar and Isabella McRae, and his wife, the former Matilda McManus (who was also known as Lillie or Tilly) was born on 21 September 1855 in New Brunswick.³ Both Kenneth's parents were of Scottish descent. John and Matilda married in Norman, near Algoma in northern Ontario on 15 August 1888. They had a son, William, born in about 1890 in Ontario.⁴

In 1891, Kenneth's parents and brother, William, were living in Norman, where William's father was a foreman in a saw mill.⁵ They were members of the Free Church. At some point after that they adopted Kenneth and, in 1901, were still living in Algoma and John was a millwright.⁶ By 1911, when Kenneth was 16, the family had moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where John was not the manager in saw mill.⁷ His son, William, was also working in a saw mill as a shipper. The family was living at 1401 6th Avenue West in Vancouver.

At the age of 22, Kenneth enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 29 November 1915 in Kingston, Ontario and served in the 9th Brigade⁸. He was a law student, 5' 8¾" tall and had a medium complexion, grey eyes and brown hair. He was a Presbyterian.

He survived nearly three years in the war. On 10 September 1918, enemy artillery was continually harassing the forward areas of the 33rd Field Battery of the 9th Brigade.⁹ About this time, Kenneth was wounded.

While with a forward section of his Battery, South West of Ecourt, St Quentin, he was severely wounded by a shell which landed nearby about 5.30 p.m. on September 10th 1918. First aid was administered and he was taken to a dressing station, from there evacuated to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died the following day.¹⁰

He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to his arm and left leg and knee.¹¹ He died on 11 September and was buried the same day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 55, Plot 5, Row H), with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. His father was identified as his next-of-kin and 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 1917.¹² The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹³ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September.

His father died sometime between 1911 and 1921 because, in 1921, his mother, a widow, was living with Kenneth's brother, William, his wife, Elizabeth, and their two children (Donald, born in about 1917, and Kenneth J., born in about 1919).¹⁴ They were still living at 1401 6th Avenue West in Vancouver. William was an inspector in the lumber industry.

¹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for Kenneth Norman McRae. Some census records suggest that he was born in 1893 or 1894.

² "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for Kenneth McRae, Province: Ontario, District: Algoma, District Number: 44, Sub-District: Rat Portage, Sub-District Number: N2-6

³ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for John McRae, Marriage County or District: Rainy River

⁴ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for John McRae, Province: Ontario, District Number: 46, District: Algoma, Subdistrict: Norman

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "1901 Census of Canada," entry for Kenneth McRae

⁷ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for Kenneth McRae, Province: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District Number: 12, Sub-District: 41 - Vancouver City, Sub-District Number: 41

⁸ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," entry for Kenneth Norman McRae

⁹ "MIKAN 2004760: War diaries - 9th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.lac-bac.gc.ca; accessed 16 October 2015)

¹⁰ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 October 2015), entry for Kenneth Norman McRae, Service number: 304568

¹¹ "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 643

¹² "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

¹³ "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=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)

¹⁴ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2015), entry for Mrs Matilda McRae, Province or Territory: British Columbia, District: Vancouver, District Number: 13, Sub-District: Ward 6, Sub-District Number: 20, City, Town or Village: Municipality Vancouver, BC