

Private Edward Charles Lloyd Key

Regimental number: 204394

15th Battalion (48th Highlanders of Canada), Canadian Infantry

born: 12 September 1898 - died: 28 September 1918

Private Edward Charles Lloyd Key was born on 12 September 1898 in Portskewett, Monmouthshire, South Wales.¹ He was the son of Charles and Jessie Key and was baptised on 14 October 1898.² Charles was born in 1869 in Abberly, near Martley, Worcestershire³ and Jessie (formerly Jessie Lloyd) in 1873 in Manchester, Lancashire. Before they married Charles was a domestic groom/coachman⁴ and Jessie was a housemaid at Highgate School in Hornsey, London.⁵ Charles and Jessie married in 1895 in Bromyard, Herefordshire.⁶ They had three children: Sam Thomas (born in 1895),⁷ Jessie Ann (born in 1897)⁸ and Edward. All three children were born and baptised in Portskewett, Monmouthshire.

In 1901, Edward's father was a railway signalman and the family was living at 5 Burns Row in St Brides Minor in Glamorgan, Wales.⁹ Edward was not with the family because he was staying with his grandparents, Edward and Harriet Lloyd at Menderfield Stocks in Avenbury, Herefordshire.¹⁰

In 1905, Edward, age 7, was admitted to Mynyddislwyn or Newbridge Boys' School in Newbridge.¹¹ He left on 3 March 1906. He was admitted four years later to Llanhilleth Junior Mixed and Infants School in Llanhilleth.¹² He was admitted on 29 August 1910, coming from Brynhyfryd Mixed School. He left the Llanhilleth School on 2 June 1911 to go to Canada. Indeed, the family did immigrate to Canada over the spring/summer of 1911.

In April 1911, the family was still living in Wales – at 33 High Street, Llanhilleth, near Newport, Monmouthshire – and Edward's father was working for the Great Western Railway.¹³ His brother, Sam, was working as a coal seller and his sister, Jessie, was doing domestic work at home.

The following month, Edward's father, Charles, left for Canada.¹⁴ He left from Avonmouth and arrived in Quebec City on 10 May 1911 on the Royal Edward. He intended to go to Winnipeg, Manitoba where he planned to work as a railway signalman.

Edward, his mother and his sister followed a few months later. They arrived in Quebec City on 2 September 1911 on the Royal George (part of the Royal Line).¹⁵ They indicated that they were joining Charles in Saskatoon and planned to live in Canada permanently. They travelled on to Saskatoon by train.

Although, when he immigrated, Charles had indicated that he had never worked on a farm and intended to work as a railway signalman,¹⁶ within a few years he had become a farmer.¹⁷ In 1916, Charles was farming near Biggar, Saskatchewan.¹⁸ His wife and daughter were living on the farm with him, but Edward had enlisted in the Canadian army and was at Camp Hughes, a Canadian military training camp, located near Carberry, Manitoba. It was used for Army training from 1909 to 1934 and had a World War I battlefield terrain, created for training purposes by the Canadian Department of National Defence between 1915 and 1916.¹⁹

Within five years of arriving in Canada, Edward enlisted, at the age of 17, in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. When he enlisted in Saskatoon on 6 March 1916, he was living at 305 33rd

Street, Saskatoon and was working as a fireman. He was 5' 5" tall and had a fresh complexion and brown eyes and hair. He served with the 15th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry.

At the end of September 1918, the 15th Battalion was operating in the area of Buissy, near Marquoin, just west of Cambrai, France.²⁰ On 26 September, the Battalion was preparing for an upcoming operation. The Battalion moved to new Assembly Positions after dark and, in spite of heavy rain and unfamiliar terrain, the whole Battalion was in position by midnight. The advance started on the morning of the 27th and by about 2 p.m. the Battalion had reached its objective. The success of the advance led to the following message from the Corps Commander: "I am proud to have the honour of most cordially of congratulating 1st Cnd Division on the splendid Victory achieved today and wish them the same measure of success tomorrow."²¹

However, this victory came at a price. Over thirty officers and Other Ranks were killed and over a hundred were wounded and sent to hospital. Perhaps Edward was one of the wounded.

Whilst taking part in the advance on enemy positions near Saucie-Lestree on September 27th, 1918, he was hit by an enemy machine gun bullet. He was taken to a dressing station and evacuated to No 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died the following day.²²

Indeed Edward was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 27 September with gunshot wounds to his abdomen.²³ He died the following day, just days after his twentieth birthday. He was buried the same day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 23, Plot 7, Row A) with the chaplain W. Fisher presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.²⁴ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁵ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Edward's mother was his next-of-kin and was notified of his death.²⁶ She was living then in Perdue, Saskatchewan.

Edward earned the Military Medal and Bar²⁷ for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.²⁸ He, like most soldiers, was probably also awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

It does not appear that Edward's brother, Sam Thomas, went to Canada with the family. It is possible that he served and died in the Great War with the British Army.²⁹ He may have served in the East Yorkshire Regiment (Regimental number: 21628) and then the 2nd Battalion of the Yorkshire Hussars (Alexandra, Princes of Wales' Own) (Regimental number: 36275) and died in France on 9 April 1917.

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¹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 March 2016), entry for Edward Charles Lloyd Key

² "Monmouthshire Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Edith Charles Lloyd Key, Page: 19

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- ³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Charles Key, Registration district: Martley, Inferred County: Worcestershire, Volume: 6v, Page: 257
- ⁴ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 February 2016), entry for Charles Key, Registration district: Barnsley, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 3768, Folio: 28, Page Number: 47
- ⁵ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 February 2016), entry for Jessie Lloyd, Registration district: Edmonton, ED, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 1061, Folio: 81, Page Number: 22
- ⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Charles Key, Registration district: Bromyard, Inferred County: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 669
- ⁷ "Monmouthshire Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Sam Thomas Key, Page: 11
- ⁸ "Monmouthshire Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Jessie Ann Key, Page: 16
- ⁹ "1901 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Charles Key, Registration district: Bridgend, Sub-registration district: Ogmores, ED, institution, or vessel: 12, Household schedule number: 36, Piece: 5046, Folio: 8, Page Number: 7
- ¹⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Edward Loyd Key, Registration district: Bromyard, Sub-registration district: Bishop Frome, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 2490, Folio: 15, Page Number: 6, Household schedule number: 27
- ¹¹ "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870-1914," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Edward Key, Book type: Admissions, Archive reference: CEA/179/7, Folio / page no.: -
- ¹² "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870-1914," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Edward Key, Book type: Admissions, Archive reference: CEA/17/16, Folio / page no.: -
- ¹³ "1911 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 4 February 2016), entry for Edward Charles Lloyd Key, Registration district: Pontypool, Registration District Number: 586, Sub-registration district: Llanhilleth, ED, institution, or vessel: 05, Household schedule number: 319, Piece: 31894
- ¹⁴ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Chas Key
- ¹⁵ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Edward P Key
- ¹⁶ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* entry for Chas Key
- ¹⁷ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Edward Key, Sub District Desc.: (A & B) Townships 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, whole or fractional, ranges 12 and 13, W. 3. M., south of the North Saskatchewan River
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ "Camp Hughes," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Hughes; accessed 1 November 2015)
- ²⁰ "War diaries - 15th Canadian Infantry Battalion," Library and Archives Canada (www.lac-bac.gc.ca; accessed 16 January 2016), RG9-III-D-3. Volume/box number: 4924. File number: 393. Copied container number: T-10719
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 February 2016), entry for Edward Charles Lloyd Key, Service number: 204394
- ²³ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 679
- ²⁴ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ²⁵ "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->

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²⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 679

²⁷ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," entry for Edward Charles Lloyd Key, Service number: 204394

²⁸ "A Guide to British Awards for Gallantry or Meritorious Service in WW1," *the Great War* (<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-gallantry-awards.htm#MM>; accessed 5 February 2016)

²⁹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 February 2016), entry for Samuel Key