

Private David Ross McLeod©

Regimental number: 222094

13th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 1 May 1885 – died: 11 March 1918

Private David Ross McLeod was the ninth of 11 children born to James Thomas McLeod and Christine (Christy) Ann Murray¹ in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. James was the only son of Daniel McLeod and Nancy McDonald, and grandson of James McLeod who hailed from Scotland. The McLeod men had farmed on family land in Union Center, Pictou, Nova Scotia. Christy Ann was the daughter of Donald Murray from Pleasant Valley, Pictou, Nova Scotia.²

The 11 McLeod children were:

- Donald Fraser, 22 March 1873–12 March 1927; he attended Cornell University and was a civil engineer. Donald married fellow alumni Lula Rumsey and had one daughter;³
- Murray, 20 June 1874⁴–23 December 1880;⁵ he died of diphtheria as a child;⁶
- James Duncan, born about 1876;⁷ he apparently moved to Alberta where he was a farmer;⁸
- Robert William, 8 April 1877⁹–1927;¹⁰ he remained on the family farm¹¹ and was still single in 1921;¹²
- Alexander Zola, 31 Aug 1878–29 January 1939;¹³ around 1892 Alex immigrated to New York, where he worked as an electrical engineer.¹⁴ Alex was drafted to the US Army in 1918,¹⁵ but it was not clear whether he went to war. He married Ethel and had seven children;¹⁶
- Edward Eaben, 8 Nov 1879¹⁷–2 October 1962;¹⁸ Edward remained in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia;¹⁹
- John C., 6 August 1881–5 Aug 1921;²⁰ he married Blanche Boyer in 1906,²¹ and was invalided after service with the US Army.²² He died in Washington, D.C. and is buried at Cedar Grove Cemetery, New York;²³
- George C., 14 December 1883²⁴–June 20, 1901²⁵; he died at the age of 18;
- David Ross, our soldier, 1 May 1885²⁶–11 March 1918;²⁷ he was born at Boston, Massachusetts,²⁸ according to his Attestation Paper for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, dated in the fall of 1915. None of the other children were born outside of Nova Scotia. He was an electrician and single, naming his mother as next of kin. He had previously served for four years with the 78th Regiment;
- Wesley Mackay, 14 March 1887²⁹–1969;³⁰ Wesley married Helena McPherson in 1913.³¹ He too enlisted with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force in 1916, where he identified that he was a carpenter and had previously served with the 78th Pictou Highlanders.³² Although he was considered fit, no other information was found of his service with the CEF, until he reapplied in 1918. In this Attestation, he indicated that he was a miner, and had been discharged from the 193rd Battalion due to pulmonary tuberculosis.³³ He was then just 31 years old, and it was recommended that he be readmitted to a sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis;
- Ann Sophia, 15 May 1889³⁴–10 Jan 1969;³⁵ she married Harry Payne, and moved to British Columbia, where she eventually died.

In the 1911 Census, Wesley was head of the family with Christy, Robert and Annie living at home in Pictou,³⁶ but no information was found as to where James was during that period of time. In 1921 Christy was living with Robert on the family farm.³⁷

David was a private in the 13th Canadian Infantry Battalion³⁸ (Royal Highlanders of Canada) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. It was sent to England as part of the First Contingent in September 1914, but David only joined it in late 1915 or early 1916. The battalion served on the Western Front until the armistice in November 1918.³⁹ It was not clear exactly when David joined the 13th Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada, but an account of their service was published by the battalion in 1925.⁴⁰ This book describes, in Chapter 16, the winter of 1917/1918, ending when David was killed in action. On 6 March 1918:

“The Battalion took over the front line from the 14th Battalion. Lieut. Mowry, United States Army, was attached to the Royal Highlanders for instruction at this time and created a favourable impression by his keenness. The officers of the 13th were interested to hear from him of the speed with which American troops were being brought to France and of the preparations that the United States was making to fill an adequate part in the war.

During the tour that followed the Canadian heavy artillery carried out several concentrated ‘shoots,’ while the light and heavy trench mortars were also active. The enemy was by no means slow in retaliating for the punishment inflicted upon him, and the Highlanders suffered a casualty list of 1 killed and approximately a score wounded. Owing to the excellence of the klaxon warning system, however, and the speed with which the men donned respirators when necessary, losses from a large number of gas shells which the Hun sent over were entirely avoided.”⁴¹

The war diary for the 13th Canadian Battalion for 11 March 1918 sheds some light on what David was enduring:

Mar 11th: About 10:30 p.m. last night the enemy commenced a heavy strafe on Mason House –in there were about 200 pineapple bombs filled with gas. This lent additional interest to the strafe. Several direct hits were also made on Canteen Alley. Our stokes were called upon for retaliation which they gave in the form of 50 rapid rounds which brought the desired result. Last night gas shelling was reported in LOO.S – in St. Pierre and also in our support Company Areas. There were 7 O.P. casualties today including 3 gassed with the 3rd Aust. tunnelling company. Shoot A was proposed but owing to the very poor visibility – was postponed. At 2:15 there was a request from B Company for retaliation for hostile trench mortar fire. This was effectively secured.⁴²

David was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 11 March 1918 at the age of 35, and died the next day of gunshot wounds and a fractured skull.⁴³ Just days after David died, No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station was evacuated and



Memorial stone for David and two brothers at the Union Centre Pioneer Cemetery, Pictou County, Nova Scotia. Source: “Web: Canadian Headstones.com Index”

moved further behind the lines.⁴⁴ It is therefore likely that David was killed during a harsh attack of the advancing enemy during the “First Battles of the Somme.”⁴⁵

David was buried on 12 March 1918 at the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Barlin, France, at Plot II, Row E, Grave 24. The extension was commenced by French troops in October 1914, but was taken over by Commonwealth forces in March 1916. In November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz, but the extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.⁴⁶

David is also memorialized on a stone at the Union Centre Pioneer Cemetery with two of his brothers. The inscription reads “George C. died June 20, 1901 aged 18 yrs; David R. killed in France March 11, 1918 aged 38 yrs; Robert W. 1899–1937.”⁴⁷

David’s father James died in Pictou, Nova Scotia, on 26 October 1920,⁴⁸ when he was 76. He had suffered a stroke several years earlier and had been confined to a wheelchair.⁴⁹ David’s mother Christy died of arterial sclerosis on 24 July 1929, when she was 83.⁵⁰ Both are buried near their sons in the Union Centre Pioneer Cemetery, Pictou County, Nova Scotia.⁵¹

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¹ “Farms & Farmers of Pictou County,” *The Evening News*, August 11, 1920, Union Center & Glengarry, page 2, NovaStory (<http://www.novastory.ca>: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for James Thomas McLeod

² Ibid.

³ Cornell University memorial, March 12, 1927 for Donald F. McLeod. A copy of the memorial was viewed on the McCaffrey Family Tree, owned by Luicina, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 December 2016)

⁴ “Nova Scotia Births and Baptisms,” *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Murray McLeod [*sic*], Indexing Project (Batch) number: C53463-1, System origin: Nova_Scotia-ODM, GS film number: 1298875

⁵ “Canada, Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for D. Murray McLeod

⁶ See Endnote 1

⁷ “1891 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 23 December 2016), entry for David McLeod, Province: Nova Scotia, District number: 39, District: Pictou, Sub-district: Middle River

⁸ See Endnote 1

⁹ “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for James T. McLeod, Province: Nova Scotia, District: Pictou, District number: 38, Sub-district: Middle River, Sub-district number: V-1

¹⁰ “Canada, Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016) entry for Robert W. McLeod

¹¹ See Endnote 1

¹² “1921 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for Christy Ann McLeod, Province or territory: Nova Scotia, District: Pictou, District number: 62, Sub-District: Middle River, Sub-district number: 42, City, town or village: Municipality Pictou

¹³ “U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016) entry for Alexander Zola McLeod

¹⁴ 1910 United States Federal Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016) entry for Alexander Mccloud [*sic*], Manhattan Ward 21, New York

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- ¹⁵ "U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016) entry for Alexander Zola McLeod, Registration state: New York, Registration county: New York, Roll: 1766146, Draft board: 123
- ¹⁶ "1920 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Alexander McLeod, Manhattan, New York, New York
- ¹⁷ "Nova Scotia Delayed Births, 1837–1904," *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Edward Eaben McLeod [*sic*], Certificate number 4084
- ¹⁸ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Edward Eaben McLeod
- ¹⁹ See Endnote 1
- ²⁰ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for George C. McLeod
- ²¹ "New York, New York, Marriage Index 1866–1937," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016) entry for John C McLeod
- ²² "District of Columbia Deaths and Burials, 1840–1964," *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for John C McLeod
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ See Endnote 9
- ²⁵ "Web: CanadianHeadstones.com Index," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for George C. McLeod
- ²⁶ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for David Ross McLeod
- ²⁷ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2016), entry for McLeod D.R.
- ²⁸ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for David Ross McLeod
- ²⁹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Wesley MacKay MacLoud [*sic*]
- ³⁰ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Wesley M. McLeod
- ³¹ "Nova Scotia, Canada, Marriages, 1763–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Wesley McKay MacLeod
- ³² "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Wesley MacKay MacLoud [*sic*]
- ³³ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records>: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Wesley McKay MacLeod
- ³⁴ "Nova Scotia, Canada, Births, 1836–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Ann Sophia MacLeod
- ³⁵ "British Columbia, Canada, Death Index, 1872–1990," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Anna [*sic*] Sophia Payne
- ³⁶ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for Christy A McLeod, Province: Nova Scotia, District: Pictou, District number: 50, Sub-district: 24, Sub-district number: 24
- ³⁷ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for Christy Ann McLeod, Province or territory: Nova Scotia, District: Pictou, District number: 62, Sub-district: Middle River, Sub-district number: 42, City, Town or Village: Municipality Pictou
- ³⁸ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2016), entry for McLeod, D.R. Pte

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- ³⁹ *Wikipedia* (www.wikipedia.org: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for 13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada), CEF
- ⁴⁰ *The 13th Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada, 1914–1919*, edited and compiled by R. C. Fetherstonhaugh, published by The 13th Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada, 1925, (<https://archive.org/stream/royalhighlanders00fethuoft#page/n7/mode/2up>: accessed 27 December 2016)
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 224
- ⁴² “13th Canadian Infantry Battalion, War Diaries,” *Canada at War Forums* (<http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001088718.jpg>: accessed 29 December 2016)
- ⁴³ “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 12 December 2016), entry for Barker, J.
- ⁴⁴ “LAC 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 13 December 2016)
- ⁴⁵ “The First Battles of the Somme, 1918,” *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914–1918*, (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-first-battles-of-the-somme-1918/> accessed 17 December 2016)
- ⁴⁶ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, (www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension
- ⁴⁷ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Find a Grave* (www.findagrave.com: accessed 24 December 2016), entry for David R. McLeod
- ⁴⁸ “Web: Canadian Headstones.com Index,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for James T. McLeod
- ⁴⁹ See Endnote 1
- ⁵⁰ “Web: Canadian Headstones.com Index,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Christy A Murray McLeod
- ⁵¹ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 26 December 2016), entry for Christy A. McLeod