

Private Peter Denis Scanlan

Regimental number: 2016

Canadian Corps Survey Section, Canadian Engineers

born: 26 July 1874 - died: 30 September 1918

Private Peter Denis Scanlan was born on 26 July 1874 in Peckham, London, England¹ but served during the Great War in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He enlisted in Valcartier, Quebec on 23 September 1914.² He had previously served in the Royal Canadian Regiment (eight years), the Yukon Field Force (two years) and the 6th Canadian Mounted Rifles—South Africa (five months). At the time of his enlistment, he was a miner, 5' 8½" tall and had a dark complexion, grey eyes and dark hair.

He was serving with the Canadian Corps Survey Section when he was injured on 8 September 1918. On that day "No. 2 Post at W.7.c [was] strafed [sic] in the afternoon, two casualties occurring, one of whom died of wounds." This was likely Peter, who was admitted that day to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to his right arm and side.³ He survived for over three weeks, but succumbed to his wounds on 30 September. He was buried that day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 95, Plot 7, Row A) with the Canadian chaplain, W. Fisher presiding.⁴

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.⁵ No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.⁶ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Peter may have come to Canada, at the age of 17, as a home child.⁷ In the late 19th century and early 20th century, children from orphanages and workhouses in England were sent to Canada as farm labourers or domestic servants by a variety of organizations, including the Barnardo's. Peter probably travelled on the SS *Circassian* with a party from a Barnardo Home, arriving in Quebec City on 21 June 1891. He was heading to Toronto, Ontario. Just before leaving England, he was probably living at Dr. Barnardo's Youth's Labour House in Stepney, London.⁸ His occupation was a wood chopper. The Labour House, on Commercial Road in London, opened as a home in 1882 and provided work for young men.⁹ It is not known why Peter was in this youth home or where he lived after arriving in Canada.

Peter was the son of Edward and Margaret Scanlan, who came originally from Ireland.¹⁰ When he was born on 26 July 1874, the family was living at 17 Alpha Street in Peckham, Surrey, where his father was a greengrocer. Both his parents were born in Limerick—Edward in about 1838 and Margaret (nee Connell) in 1836.¹¹ They probably married in Limerick. Peter's older siblings were John (born in about 1866), Ellen (born in about 1869) and Margaret (born in about 1870).

On 20 April 1892, Peter's sister, Ellen, married Francis Joseph Byrne at St. Paul in Deptford, Kent.¹² By then, Peter had left England for Canada. Ellen and her husband, Francis, also immigrated to Canada nearly twenty years later. They and their children arrived in 1910¹³ and eventually settled in Edmonton, Alberta.¹⁴ The family was living at 38 Clark Street, Edmonton, when Ellen was identified as Peter's next-of-kin on his army attestation form.¹⁵

Like Peter, Ellen's husband, Francis, also served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War.¹⁶ He enlisted in September 1915, at the age of 54, and went to England the next year. However, he had misrepresented his age, by nine years, on his attestation form and was discharged in 1917 as physically unfit because of problems with his feet and heart and being over age. He returned to Canada in August 1917, just over a year before Peter's death. His wife, Ellen, died a few months after he returned to Canada and is buried in Beechmount Cemetery in Edmonton.¹⁷

Francis moved to the United States in 1921 with his daughter, Margaret, and her husband, George C. Wood.¹⁸ Francis died in California in 1947.¹⁹

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¹ General Record Office, birth certificate for Peter Denis Scanlan

² "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 April 2016), entry for Peter Denis Scanlan

³ "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 694

⁴ The entry in the 1st CCCS chaplains' journal indicates that his step-father, Mr. Martin, who was at Vickus Hospital, at 37 West Hill in Dartford, Kent, England was notified of his death. ("Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 694.) However, no evidence was found to identify who Mr. Martin was or what his connection to Peter might have been. It may have been an error in the journal.

⁵ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

⁶ "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)

⁷ "Home Children Records," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/>; accessed 3 April 2016), entry for D P Scanlan, Microfilm Reel Number: C-4538, Reference: RG 76 C1a, Database Item Number: 33889

⁸ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 April 2016), entry for Dennis Scanlan, Registration district: Stepney, ED, institution, or vessel: Dr Barnardos Youths Labour House, Piece: 299, Folio: 58, Page Number: 3

⁹ Barnardo's (<http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>; accessed 27 April 2016)

¹⁰ General Record Office, birth certificate for Peter Denis Scanlan; "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Elleen Scanlan, Registration district: Camberwell, Sub-registration district: Peckham, ED, institution, or vessel: 30, Household schedule number: 74, Piece: 735, Folio: 98, Page Number: 15

¹¹ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Elleen Scanlan, Registration district: Camberwell, Sub-registration district: Peckham, ED, institution, or vessel: 30, Household schedule number: 74, Piece: 735, Folio: 98, Page Number: 15

¹² "England Marriages, 1538-1973," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NJ7L-W5F> : accessed 28 April 2016), Francis Joseph Byrne and Ellen Scanlon, 20 Apr 1892; citing St. Paul, Deptford, Kent, England, reference 46; FHL microfilm 384,885

¹³ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Francie Byrne

¹⁴ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Francis J. Byrne, Sub District Desc.: (A - I) inclusive, City of Edmonton, such portion as is situated in this district according to the Representation Act, 1914

¹⁵ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," entry for Peter Denis Scanlan

¹⁶ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>; accessed 17 February 2016) entry for Arthur Joseph Scanlan, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1360 - 49, Item Number: 80469, Digitized service file - PDF format: B1360-S049

¹⁷ "Cemeteries," The City of Edmonton, (<http://cowebapps.edmonton.ca/cemeteries/default.aspx>; accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Ellen Byrne

¹⁸ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Francis J. Byrne

¹⁹ "California, Death Index, 1940-1997," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2016), entry for Francis Joseph Byrne