

Private Duncan Edward Currie, M.M.©

Regimental number: 811240

49th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 1897–died: 1918

Private Duncan Edward (or Edmond) Currie was born on Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, on 3 December 1897, the eldest son of Hector Currie and Lucy Annette, née Matthews.¹ Their other children were Benjamin Kenneth (known as Kenneth, b. 1900),² and Allan McMillan (b. 1905).³ Hector also had four daughters from a previous marriage to Margaret J. Champion, who died in 1894,⁴ these being Margaret (b. 1883),⁵ Ellie (b. 1885),⁶ Anna (known as Annie, b. 1887) and Sarah (known as Sadie, b. 1890).⁷ The first two girls did not survive infancy, both dying in 1885; Margaret at age two and Ellie at two months.⁸

Hector (b. 1858)⁹ was a tailor.¹⁰ He married Lucy Annette Matthews (b. 1868)¹¹ in 1897.¹² She was the daughter of Edmund Matthews, an egg pedlar.¹³ In 1901 they were living in PEI with their first two sons and Hector's two daughters from his previous marriage.¹⁴ However, two years after the birth of their third son, Lucy died in 1907, aged 39.¹⁵

It does not appear that Hector played much of a role in raising his sons (his daughters were 20 and 17 at the time of their stepmother's death). Less than two years later, in March 1909, Hector left for Western Canada by train, taking a position in Lucy's brother Benjamin Matthews' general store in Daysland, Alberta. Then, six months later, he moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, to work for the firm of Murphy, Ready Co., owned by two men from PEI.¹⁶ By 1915 he had moved on to Seattle, Washington, where he once again worked as a tailor,¹⁷ and where he died in 1920.¹⁸

Duncan and his brother Allan were living with their mother's sister Emily and her husband William MacGregor in Daysland, Alberta, in 1911,¹⁹ while Kenneth was in Edmonton with another of Lucy's sisters, Lillian, and her husband Reginald Armstrong.²⁰ According to information in an obituary for Duncan in the Edmonton Journal, Duncan went to high school in Kamloops, B.C. (perhaps because another brother of his mother, Allan F. Matthews, was Inspector of Schools for Kamloops), graduated with the highest marks in literature ever made in the history of that school, and passed his entrance exams to McGill University. It is not known whether he attended or graduated from McGill, but he attended the Normal School at Camrose,²¹ which was an institution in Alberta dedicated to educating teachers.²²

In December 1915, just after his 18th birthday, Duncan enlisted in Edmonton and was assigned to the 138th (Edmonton) Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).²³ His calling was listed as schoolteacher. The battalion trained in Canada for a few months. On 28 January 1916 Private Currie was promoted to lance corporal, but he reverted to private on 25 May. He also forfeited two days' pay for being absent without leave in February 1916. On 21 August 1916 the battalion embarked for England from Halifax, sailing on the SS Olympic and arriving in Liverpool on 30 August.

While in England training continued, including target practice, at which Private Currie proved to be a crack shot, having the fourth highest score among three thousand men. In November 1916 he was hospitalized for the removal of a thyroid cyst the size of a small cherry.

Once Private Currie had turned 19, he was sent to France to join the 49th Battalion (Edmonton Regiment), Canadian Infantry, arriving on 14 December 1916. The battalion was located in Neuville-St.-Vaast, just north of Arras in northern France, near Vimy.²⁴ Over the next year the battalion took part in the battles of Arras, Vimy Ridge, Hill 70 and Passchendaele.²⁵ At Passchendaele, on 30 October 1917, Private Currie was buried during an attack and suffered shell shock. He was treated in hospital for multiple contusions, rejoining his unit on 22 November 1917. The following month he was given two weeks leave in Paris, from 15 to 30 December.

Private Currie remained with the 49th Battalion during 1918 until 18 August, when he was assigned to the Intelligence Branch of the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade Headquarters (the 49th Battalion was part of the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade).²⁶ According to his obituary (ref. 21), he was recommended for a commission in the R.A.F. and had been granted a furlough commencing 1 November, but he didn't make it that far. On 27 October 1918, Private Currie was wounded by shrapnel in the legs, resulting in a compound fracture. He succumbed to his wounds the following day, 28 October 1918, at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCS).

Private Currie was buried that day in the Emerchicourt Churchyard (Grave 14), two miles south of Auberchicourt. However, in 1950 his grave was transferred to the Daoui British Cemetery, Cuncy (Grave G 27).²⁷ There is no personal inscription on his gravestone.

A CCS was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation.²⁸ Casualties who did not return to their unit, die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.

No. 1 Canadian CCS, originally designated as No. 2 Clearing Hospital, was organized at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, and at Valcartier, Quebec, in August and September 1914. It was part of the first contingent of the CEF sent to Europe, arriving in England in October 1914. CCSs were not stationary: after being first established at Aire, France, in March 1915, No. 1 Canadian CCS moved 12 times to various locations in France, Belgium and finally, Germany. It ceased operations in February 1919.²⁹

The unit was shelled at least three times in 1916 and 1917. At the conclusion of the war, it was one of the foremost medical units operating on the advance into Germany. An incomplete record of the unit's operations underestimates a total of 42,489 admissions to the unit, of which 37,546 were transferred to other hospitals, to base, or returned to the field. At least 879 servicemen died at No. 1 Canadian CCS.³⁰

Private Currie was awarded the Military Medal for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire, as well as the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918). These were sent to his half-sister, Anna, since both his parents were deceased by the time the medals were delivered.

Duncan's brother Kenneth was raised by his Aunt Lillian in Edmonton, Alberta. He attended Victoria High School and was a member of its dramatic society. In 1916 he played the title role in the Shakespearean play "The Merchant of Venice," which was also staged downtown at the Empire Theatre.³¹ In 1918, his brother Duncan's obituary states that Kenneth, formerly of Motor Sales Limited, was working at the G.T.P. depot ticket office (ref. 21). This likely refers to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, which had been operating in Edmonton since 1909.³²

In 1921 Kenneth set out for Seattle, Washington, to visit his half-sister Anna. His father had died the year before. The immigration form indicates he planned to stay for four months, did not intend to return to Edmonton, and did not intend to become a U.S. citizen.³³

Kenneth stayed in Seattle for much more than four months and remained in the railway ticket agent business. In 1925 he was appointed to the position of assistant city ticket agent for Canadian National Railways.³⁴ The following year he married Leah Hart,³⁵ who had been working in Seattle as an assistant in a dentist's office.³⁶

By 1930 Kenneth was working for a different railway, the Southern Pacific, as a cashier,³⁷ and by 1932 he and Leah were living separately.³⁸ In 1938 he married again, to Wanda Taylor,³⁹ who was working as a stenographer in Portland, Oregon, for a railway company (probably the Southern Pacific with Kenneth); her mother came from Prince Edward Island and her father from Nova Scotia.⁴⁰ By 1940 they had moved to Portland, where Kenneth was working as a station passenger agent.⁴¹

In 1948 Kenneth completed a Resident Alien's Border Crossing Identification Card in Blaine, Washington, which indicates that he was still living in Portland and had never relinquished his Canadian citizenship.⁴² Wanda died in 1950,⁴³ and by 1962 Kenneth was living in West Vancouver, Canada, still working as a railway agent.⁴⁴ He died there in 1970.⁴⁵

Allan lived in Daysland, Alberta, with his Aunt Emily and her family until he turned 17, in 1922, when he travelled across the U.S. border to join his brother Kenneth in Seattle, with the intention of attending the University of Washington for four years.⁴⁶ The following year he became a naturalized U.S. citizen.⁴⁷

By 1929 Allan had moved from Seattle, Washington, to Washington, D.C, where he was a technician working for Groover, Christie and Merritt,⁴⁸ a partnership of doctors working on the use of X-rays to treat thyroid issues.⁴⁹ The reason for the move became apparent in the 1930 Census, which records him as having a wife, Alma, a registered nurse from Virginia.⁵⁰ No marriage record was found for them, but the marriage record for their son, Duncan Edmond, in 1958 shows that her maiden name was Funk.⁵¹ Duncan Edmond (b. 1937) was clearly named after his uncle killed in WW I. Allan died in Virginia of sarcoma of the intestines, a year after his son was born, on 27 July 1938.⁵²

Annie married Frank Woolner in Boston in 1909. They were both from Alberton, P.E.I., but were both working in Boston, he as an iron worker and she as a cashier.⁵³ A year later, they had crossed the country and were living in Seattle, Washington, where he was working as a draftsman architect.⁵⁴ In 1915, Annie's father Hector moved in with them, having arrived from Colorado.⁵⁵ By 1920 Frank was back working as an ironwork contractor, while Annie was the division head for a mail order house.⁵⁶

Frank and Annie presumably separated, because in 1928, Annie remarried in Vancouver, British Columbia, to James Excell Etzler.⁵⁷ He was a service station owner from Illinois and was 41 when they married (his first).⁵⁸ They continued to live in Seattle with Annie working as a sales lady in the dairy industry.⁵⁹ Annie died in 1968 of a cerebrovascular accident.⁶⁰

No official records have been found for Sadie after the 1901 Census, when she was 11 (ref. 7), except for her death record in 1918 at the age of 28.⁶¹ However, according to a RootsWeb record found in a Google search, Sadie married Clifford Matthews, a farmer and fisherman, and they

bought a farm in Hill's River, just outside Alberton, in 1911. They had no children but cared for their niece Elise Morehead for a number of years. Sadie died young, the victim of an influenza outbreak (Spanish flu).⁶²

© 2026 BIFHSGO

¹ "Web: Prince Edward Island, Baptism Index, 1788–1943," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 18 February 2026), entry for Duncan Edmond Currie

² "Prince Edward Island, Canada, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1780–1982," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 20 February 2026), entry for Benjamin Kenneth Currie

³ "US, Find a Grave Index, 1600's–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entry for Allan McMillan Currie

⁴ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600's–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entry for Margaret J Currie

⁵ "Web: Prince Edward Island, Baptism Index, 1788–1943," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 18 February 2026), entry for Margaret Adela Currie

⁶ "Web: Prince Edward Island, Baptism Index, 1788–1943," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 18 February 2026), entry for Ellie Currie

⁷ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entries for Amie [*sic*] and Sadie Currie, Province: Prince Edward Island, District number: 134, Sub-district: Lot (Township) 4, Sub-district number: 1

⁸ "Prince Edward Island, Canada, Death Card Index, 1810–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entries for Margaret A and Ellie Currie

⁹ "Prince Edward Island, Canada, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1780–1982," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 20 February 2026), baptism entry for Hector Currie

¹⁰ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entries for Hector Currie, Province: Prince Edward Island, District number: 134, Residence Place: Lot 4, Prince, Page: 28

¹¹ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entry for Lucy A Currie, Province: Prince Edward Island, District number: 134, Sub-district: Lot (Township) 4, Sub-district number: 1

¹² "Prince Edward Island, Canada, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1780–1982," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), marriage entry for Hector Currie

¹³ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entries for Edmund Matthew [*sic*], Province: Prince Edward Island, District number: 134, Residence Place: Lot 4, Prince, Page: 31

¹⁴ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 February 2026), entry for Lucy A Currie, Province: Prince Edward Island, District number: 134, Sub-district: Lot (Township) 4, Sub-district number: 1

¹⁵ "Prince Edward Island, Canada, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1780–1982," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 20 February 2026), burial entry for Mrs Hector Currie

¹⁶ "Some Islanders Abroad," in *The Charlottetown Guardian* 17 January 1910, p. 4, *Island Newspapers* (www.islandnewspapers.ca: accessed 23 February 2026), search for H. Currie

¹⁷ "U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 23 February 2026), entry for Hector Currie, 1915

¹⁸ "U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 23 February 2026), entry for Hector Currie

¹⁹ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 23 February 2026), entry for James Purrier [*sic*], Province: Alberta, District number: 6, Sub-district: Strathcona, Sub-district number: 21

²⁰ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 23 February 2026), entry for Kenneth Currie, Province: Alberta, District number: 2, Sub-district: Edmonton, Sub-district number: 52

-
- ²¹ "Pte. Duncan E. Currie," *Edmonton Journal*, 21 November 1918, p. 12, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/470150546/?match=1&terms=%22Duncan%20E%20Currie%22>: accessed 23 February 2026), search for Duncan E Currie. Unless otherwise specified, all biographical information comes from this source.
- ²² "Normal School / Rosehaven, Camrose," *HeRMIS* (<https://hermis.alberta.ca/ARHP/Details.aspx?DeptID=1&ObjectID=4665-0440>: accessed 23 February 2026), search for the normal school at Camrose
- ²³ "Canada, World War I CEF Personnel Files, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 24 February 2026), entry for Duncan Edward Currie. Unless otherwise specified, all information about his military service comes from this source.
- ²⁴ "War Diaries–49th Canadian Infantry Battalion, image 137," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Record?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=1883261&new=-8585655577019065716&ecopy=e001115047>: accessed 25 February 2026), search for war diary of 49th Battalion CEF
- ²⁵ "49th Battalion (Edmonton Regiment), CEF," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/49th_Battalion_\(Edmonton_Regiment\),_CEF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/49th_Battalion_(Edmonton_Regiment),_CEF): accessed 25 February 2026), search for 49th Battalion CEF
- ²⁶ "7th Canadian Infantry Brigade," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Canadian_Infantry_Brigade#World_War_I: accessed 25 February 2026), search for 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade
- ²⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 31 January 2026), entry for Lance Corporal Joseph Telford Cameron
- ²⁸ "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ²⁹ "War Diaries-1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Record?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=2005082&new=-8585804116857646704&ecopy=e001509146>: accessed 17 January 2026), search for No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station war diary
- ³⁰ "Record of service-Overseas Military Forces of Canada medical units," *Government of Canada* (www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/officialmilitary-history-lineages/ledgers/ww1-medical-units.html: accessed 17 June 2018), entry for 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station
- ³¹ "A Shakespearean Play," *The Edmonton Journal*, 7 February 1916, p. 8, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/469540323/?match=1&terms=%22A%20Shakespearean%20Play%22>: accessed 26 February 2026), search for Kenneth Currie
- ³² "Grand Trunk Pacific Railway," *The Newsletter of the Canadian R.P.O. Study Group (B.N.A.P.S.)* (<chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://bnaps.org/studygroups/rpo/newsletters/rpo-2004-07-v032n06-w173.pdf>: accessed 26 February 2026), search for G.T.P. depot ticket office, Edmonton 1918
- ³³ "Washington, U.S., Arriving and Departing Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882–1965," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth B Currie
- ³⁴ "Changes in Office of Canadian National," *Seattle Union Record* 30 April 1925, p. 1, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/932963531/?match=1&terms=Kenneth%20B%20Currie>: accessed 26 February 2026), search for Kenneth Currie
- ³⁵ "Washington, U.S., Marriage Records, 1854–2013," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth B Currie, 1926

-
- ³⁶ "1920 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Leah M Hart
- ³⁷ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth Currie
- ³⁸ "U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entries for Kenneth B Currie and Mrs Leah Currie
- ³⁹ "Washington, U.S., Marriage Records, 1854–2013," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth B Currie, 1938
- ⁴⁰ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Wanda Taylor
- ⁴¹ "1940 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth Currie
- ⁴² "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth B Currie
- ⁴³ "Family Data Collection - Deaths," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Wanda G Taylor
- ⁴⁴ "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth B Currie
- ⁴⁵ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Kenneth Benjamin Currie
- ⁴⁶ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 March 2026), entry for Allan McMillan Currie
- ⁴⁷ "U.S., Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791–1992 (Indexed in World Archives Project)," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 March 2026), entry for Allen [*sic*] McMillan Currie
- ⁴⁸ "U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Allan M Currie, 1929
- ⁴⁹ "Groover, T.A., Christie, A.C. & Merritt, E.A. (1929). "Roentgen irradiation in the Treatment of Hyperthyroidism: A Statistical Study of 477 Cases," *Radiology*, 12(1), 1–16
- ⁵⁰ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 February 2026), entry for Allan Currie
- ⁵¹ "Virginia, U.S., Marriage Records, 1936–2014," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 March 2026), entry for Allan McMillan Currie
- ⁵² "Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912–2014," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 March 2026), entry for Allen [*sic*] McMillan Currie
- ⁵³ "Massachusetts, U.S., Marriage Records, 1840–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Annie Currie
- ⁵⁴ "1910 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Cail F Woolner
- ⁵⁵ "U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entries for Mrs. Anna Woolner and Hector Currie, 1915
- ⁵⁶ "1920 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Cail F Woolmer [*sic*]
- ⁵⁷ "British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Index, 1872–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Anne Currie

⁵⁸ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for James Etzler

⁵⁹ "1940 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Anna Etzler

⁶⁰ "Washington, U.S., Death Records, 1907–2017," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Annie Etzler

⁶¹ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 2 March 2026), entry for Sarah A. Currie

⁶² "Sadie Curry," *RootsWeb* (<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~mnravn/Matthews-Clifford-1885.html>: accessed 2 March 2026), search for Sadie Currie d. 1918