

Private Edwin Charles Loper[©]

Regimental number: 23/489

“B” Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd New Zealand (Rifle) Brigade

born: 28 February 1886–died: 17 July 1916

Private Edwin “Ted” Charles Loper was probably born on 28 February 1886 in Waimate South, New Zealand¹—about half way between Christchurch and Dunedin on the South Island. His parents were John Loper (born in 1842)² and Annie Butler (born in 1854).³ Annie was not John’s first partner; John had married 19-year-old Sarah Harpur on 15 September 1864.⁴ They probably had six children, who would be Ted’s step-siblings:

- Elizabeth Annie—born in 1867, married Thomas Charles Scorrige in 1886 and died in 1937 in Wellington⁵
- Thomas Loudon—born in 1868 and died in Waimate in 1939⁶
- George—born in 1869, married Nicholine Richmond in 1920 and died in 1935⁷
- Maria—born in 1870⁸
- Rosa—born in 1873,⁹ married John William Reiroa in 1892¹⁰ and died in 1950¹¹
- Castelena Loper—born in 1875,¹² married twice (Henry Knight, 1893, and George Forrest, 1899)¹³

Sarah died on 7 June 1875 and was buried in Waimate Old Cemetery.¹⁴

John and Annie were married in 1877¹⁵ and probably had six children:

- A child (born in 1878, but died soon after birth on 23 April 1878)¹⁶
- Lydia Kate (born on 19 June 1879)¹⁷
- William Joseph (born on 17 April 1885)¹⁸
- John Wesley (born on 20 August 1882)¹⁹
- Edwin Charles
- Beatrice Annie (born in 1881)²⁰

The family lived in Waimate, where John Sr. was a labourer. In 1890, he owned ¼ acre and a house. A reference in that year’s electoral roll suggests that the family was part Māori and part Caucasian.²¹ By 1908, Ted was also a labourer and living on Coronation Street in Waimate.²²

When Ted enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, at the age of 29, he was still a labourer in Waimate. He joined the New Zealand Rifle Brigade on 30 May 1915.²³ He was 5’ 9¾” tall and had a dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair. When he joined the rifle brigade, which had been created in April 1915, it was known as the Trentham Regiment (Earl of Liverpool’s Own). In January 1916, New Zealand’s infantry was divided into three brigades and the Rifle Brigade was officially known as the 3rd New Zealand (Rifle) Brigade.²⁴

Ted was probably in training for the first months of his service but, on 15 November 1915, he disembarked in Suez, Egypt. Less than three weeks later he was admitted to the Australian Dermatology Hospital in Abbassia, Egypt, to be treated for venereal disease. He was not discharged

Mr J. Loper, Coronation Street, today received advice from the Defence Department that his son, Private “Ted” Loper, has been killed in action. Private E. Loper went with the Trentham Rifle Brigade. Two brothers are on active service.

“Personal,” *The National Library of New Zealand Waimate Daily Advertiser*, Volume XVIII, Issue 353, 26 July 1916, Page 3

until 20 February 1916 and rejoined his battalion on 18 March. Two weeks later the New Zealand forces left from Alexandria, Egypt, to sail to Marseille, France, and join the Western Front.

In mid-July 1916, Ted's battalion was in the field near Bois-Grenier, in northern France, less than 10 kilometres from the Belgian border.²⁵ It was engaged in the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, which would last for four and a half months and would wound or kill one million men.²⁶

Ted was wounded on 15 July and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with wounds to his lower back and spine. He died there two days later, at 3:20 a.m.

Some records suggest that Ted was initially buried in Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension; however, he now lies in Bailleul Cemetery Extension Nord (Plot II, Row E, Grave 15).²⁷

IN MEMORIAM.

LOPER—In sad but loving memory
of Rifleman "Ted" Loper, who
died of wounds received at Bail-
leul, July 17th, 1917.

Do not ask us if we miss him
There is such a vacant place
Can we ever forget his footsteps
And his dear familiar face.

Sadly missed.

—Inserted by his sorrowing mother
and sister Dollie.

"In Memoriam," *Waimate Daily Advertiser*

1923, and was buried with her husband.³⁰

Ted was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).

On the fourth anniversary of Ted's death, his mother and sister inserted a memorial message in the local newspaper.²⁸

Ted's father died a few months after the end of the war, on 28 May 1919, and was buried in Waimate Old Cemetery.²⁹ Annie died a few years later, on 31 May

Both Ted's brothers also served in the Great War. **William** was a private (regimental number 6/1609) in the 2nd Company, "C" Regiment, 1st Battalion.³¹ He enlisted on 12 December 1914 and was in the Dardenelles in April 1915. He returned to Alexandria in December 1915. When New Zealand forces left the Middle East, William left for France with them on 6 April 1916.

On 28 September, William was wounded, receiving gunshot wounds to his head, left arm and both legs. He was taken to England and admitted to No. 1 New Zealand General Hospital in Brockenhurst, Hampshire. In early January 1917, he went to a convalescent hospital in Hornchurch, Essex. He was ultimately considered to have a permanent disability and on 13 January he left for New Zealand. He was formally discharged on 5 April 1917 as being "no longer fit for military service due to wounds received in action." Like his brother, he was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914–15 Star.

William married Winifred Joyce in 1919.³² They probably had two children—Winifred (born in 1919) and Edwin Charles (born in 1921), named after his late uncle.³³ William died in Waimate on 12 April 1957.

Edwin's brother **John** had a long military career.³⁴ He first enlisted on 6 Jan 1901 and served in South Africa with the 8th Contingent of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles. He was serving with the Studholme Mounted Rifles when he requested a transfer to the permanent force in 1905 (regimental number 1135).

In 1914, John married Honora Emily Brown in Napier, New Zealand.³⁵ They had two children—John Nelson (born 5 May 1914)³⁶ and Nonie (3 August 1916).³⁷ Tragedy would befall the couple while John was in service.³⁸ Honora (also known as Nonie) died suddenly on 7 August 1916, four days after her daughter's birth.³⁹

The many friends of Mr G. Loper and family will regret to hear that the wife of his son, (Sergt. Major W. J. Loper, who is at present on active service) died suddenly at Wellington on August 7th. A family of two children is left, the younger being only a few days old.

"Personal," *Waimate Daily Advertiser*

When Honora died, John was in France with the 15th Battery of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. On 27 March 1916, John had been seconded to the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as a sergeant major (regimental number 2/3571), and a week later he embarked for overseas service. He arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on 3 May 1916. Just eight days later, he left Egypt for the Western Front. In June, he joined the 15th Battery and reverted to being a gunner to join his unit in the field. Six months later he was ill and was admitted to hospital in France with bronchitis and then, four days later, was sent back to England and admitted to No. 2 New Zealand General Hospital in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

In mid-January 1917, he was sent to the New Zealand convalescent hospital in Hornchurch, Essex—he may well have arrived at the convalescent hospital just days before his brother William left for New Zealand. John followed William to New Zealand four months later.

On arrival in New Zealand, he was treated as an outpatient at the Wellington Hospital for a couple of months and on 26 July 1917 he was deemed to not be fit for active service in the war. In August 1917, he reported for duty again, as a regimental sergeant major, with the New Zealand Field Artillery. In 1919 he was remarried to Mary Rachel Curteis. He probably remained with the field artillery until his discharge on 1 August 1935. After the war he remarried, wedding Mary Rachel Curteis (née McInness) in 1919.⁴⁰

John received many words of praise during his long service, notably with respect to his abilities as an instructor. He was also described as being a good practical man with exceptional ability in administration and horsemanship, reliable, knowledgeable in ledger keeping, and trustworthy. After most likely being awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, John also received a number of medals for long, meritorious service: the Long and Efficient Service Medal (1922), the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (1924) and the Meritorious Service Medal (1927). In 1943 John became a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—an award conferred by the King.⁴¹ John died on 14 March 1962.⁴²

All three of Ted's sisters survived him. **Lydia Kate**, Ted's older sister, married William Hollamby in 1900⁴³ and probably died in Waimate on 31 January 1955.⁴⁴

Ted's younger sister, **Beatrice Annie**, had a challenging life. She had a son, Cedric Roy, in 1901.⁴⁵ No father was identified on the birth index, but the *New Zealand Police Gazette* indicates that the father was presumed to be Joseph Johnson, who was charged in June 1901 with failing to provide for the maintenance of his illegitimate child.⁴⁶ The final outcome of this charge is not clear.

In 1908, Beatrice married Charles Waterreus⁴⁷ and they probably had five children—Netta Kathleen (born in 1908), William Leonard (1910), Ivy Rita (1912), Joan Alicia Esme (1913) and John Edwin (1915).⁴⁸ In 1911, a warrant was issued for Charles for failing to provide his wife with adequate means of support.⁴⁹ Beatrice and Charles appear to have lived together until at least 1914.⁵⁰ In 1915, there was again a warrant for failing to comply with terms of a maintenance order—his arrears were £153 10s.⁵¹ It is not clear how their relationship ended, but Beatrice Annie Waterreus married Malcolm Emmerson in 1929.⁵² Malcolm was a widower with four children;⁵³ his wife Martha had died in 1915.⁵⁴ Even Malcolm, a baker, had a small incident with the law: in 1921, he was charged with the use of obscene language and fined £3.⁵⁵ Beatrice died in Wellington, New Zealand, on 8 April 1954.⁵⁶

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¹ Ted's attestation form indicates that he was born on 28 February 1887 and he was 28 years and 3 months old when he enlisted in 1915 ("New Zealand army service records," *DigitalNZ* (<http://www.digitalnz.org/>: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for Loper, Edwin Charles. The New Zealand index of births indicates that he was born in 1886. "Birth Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online* (<https://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/>: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for Edwin Charles Loper. If Ted were born in 1886, he would have been over 29 when he enlisted. There is no evidence to suggest why he would have wanted to remove a year from his age.

² "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for John Loper

³ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for Annie Loper

⁴ "International Genealogical Index (IGI)," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:1:97Q2-CJR>: accessed 19 January 2026), entry for John Loper

⁵ "Pedigree Resource File," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:QJGN-T74>: accessed 19 January 2026), entry for Elizabeth "Lizzie" Annie Loper

⁶ "Pedigree Resource File," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:QJGN-T77>: accessed 19 January 2026), entry for Thomas Loudon Loper

⁷ "Pedigree Resource File," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:QJGN-T7W>: accessed 21 January 2026), entry for George "Teoti" Loper

⁸ "Birth Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Annie Loper

⁹ "Birth Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Rosa Loper

¹⁰ "Marriage Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Rosey [sic] Loper.

¹¹ "Pedigree Resource File," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:QJGN-T7H>: accessed 19 January 2026), entry for Rosa 'Rosie' Loper

¹² "Birth Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Castelena Loper

¹³ "Pedigree Resource File," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:QJGN-T7Q>: accessed 19 January 2026), entry for Castelina [sic] Loper

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Marriage Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Annie Butler

¹⁶ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 January 2026), entry for child of Loper

¹⁷ "Marriage Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Lydia Kate Loper

¹⁸ "New Zealand army service records," *DigitalNZ* (<http://www.digitalnz.org/>: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for William Joseph Loper. Unless otherwise noted, all information about William's military service comes from this source.

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- ¹⁹ Ibid, entry for John Wesley Loper. Unless otherwise noted, all information about John’s military service comes from this source.
- ²⁰ “Birth Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Beatrice Annie
- ²¹ “New Zealand, Electoral Rolls, 1853–1981,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2026), entry for John Loper, Electoral year 1890
- ²² “New Zealand, Electoral Rolls, 1853–1981,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 January 2026), entry for Edwin Charles Loper, Electoral year 1908
- ²³ “New Zealand army service records,” *DigitalNZ* (<http://www.digitalnz.org/>: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for Loper, Edwin Charles. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Ted’s military service comes from this source.
- ²⁴ “Infantry units,” *New Zealand History* (<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/infantry-units/new-zealand-rifle-brigade>: accessed 27 June 2022)
- ²⁵ “Collections search,” *Archives New Zealand* (<https://collections.archives.govt.nz/>: accessed 6 June 2022), entry for 1st Battalion - 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade - War Diary, 14 July - 4 August 1916
- ²⁶ “Battle of the Somme,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme: accessed 2 June 2022)
- ²⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2022), entry for Edwin Charles Loper
- ²⁸ “In Memoriam,” “PapersPast,” *The National Library of New Zealand*, (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>) *Waimate Daily Advertiser*, Volume XX, Issue 353, 17 July 1920, Page 2. Note that there was an error in the year of Ted’s death in the newspaper—it was 1916, not 1917
- ²⁹ Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for John Loper
- ³⁰ “Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for Annie Loper
- ³¹ “New Zealand, World War I Service Records, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry*, entry for Loper, William Joseph Loper
- ³² “Marriage Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for William Joseph Loper
- ³³ Birth Index, *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entries for Winifred Loper and Edwin Charles Loper
- ³⁴ “New Zealand army service records,” *DigitalNZ*, entry for John Wesley Loper. Unless otherwise noted, all information about John’s military service comes from this source.
- ³⁵ “Marriage Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for John Wesley Loper
- ³⁶ Birth Index, *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for John Nelson Loper
- ³⁷ Birth Index, *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Nonie Loper
- ³⁸ “PapersPast,” *The National Library of New Zealand* (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>: accessed 25 June 2022), *Waimate Daily Advertiser*, Volume XVIII, Issue 366, 9 August 1916, Page 3
- ³⁹ “Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 January 2026), entry for Honora Amelia Brown Loper
- ⁴⁰ “Marriage Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for John Wesley Loper
- ⁴¹ “PapersPast,” *National Library of New Zealand* (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>: accessed 25 June 2022), *Evening Post*, Volume CXXXV, Issue 129, 2 June 1943, Page 4
- ⁴² “New Zealand army service records,” *DigitalNZ*, entry for John Wesley Loper
- ⁴³ “Marriage Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Lydia Kate Loper
- ⁴⁴ “Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for Lydia Kate Hallomby
- ⁴⁵ “Birth Index,” *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Cedric Roy Loper

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- ⁴⁶ "Deserting Wives and Families," *National Library of New Zealand* (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>: accessed 25 June 2022), *New Zealand Police Gazette*, Volume XXV, Issue 13, 19 June 1901, page 149, entry for Beatrice Annie Loper
- ⁴⁷ "New Zealand, Marriage Index, 1840–1937," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for Beatrice Annis [*sic*] Waterreus, Folio number: 7825
- ⁴⁸ "Birth Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entries for Waterreus (mother's maiden name Beatrice Annie)
- ⁴⁹ "PapersPast," *National Library of New Zealand* (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>: accessed 25 June 2022), *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 25 January 1911, Page 37
- ⁵⁰ "New Zealand, Electoral Rolls, 1853–1981," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 June 2022), entry for Beatrice Annie Waterreus, Electoral year: 1911
- ⁵¹ "PapersPast," *National Library of New Zealand* (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/>: accessed 25 June 2022), *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 22 May 1918, Page 313
- ⁵² "Marriage Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Beatrice Annie Waterreus
- ⁵³ "New Zealand, World War I Army Reserve Rolls, 1916–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 June 2022), entry for Malcolm Emmerson
- ⁵⁴ "Death Index," *Births, Deaths & Marriages Online*, entry for Martha Catherine Emmerson
- ⁵⁵ "New Zealand, Police Gazettes, 1878–1945," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 June 2022), entry for Malcolm Emmerson, Trial date: 14 April 1921
- ⁵⁶ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 June 2022), entry for Beatrice Ann [*sic*] Emmerson