

Private George Crawford
Regimental number: 267804
28th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 7 March 1896 - died: 12 September 1918

Private George Crawford was born on 7 March 1896 in the County of Perth in southern Ontario.¹ He was the son of Robert Crawford and his wife, Christina (née McDonald). Both his parents were born in Ontario. Robert was born on 7 July 1868² in Ingersoll, the son of Joseph Armitage Lyons and Mary (née Bray) Crawford.³ Christina (née McDonald) was born on 17 April 1871⁴ in Mornington, the daughter of Hugh and Jane (née Reid) McDonald.⁵ Robert and Christina were married on 21 December 1892 in Millbank, Ontario.⁶ They subsequently had three sons and one daughter: Hugh McDonald (born on 5 October 1893),⁷ Robert Roy (born on 7 November 1894),⁸ George and Jean Reid (born on 7 September 1898).⁹

In 1901, the whole family was living in Elma Township in Perth North, where Robert was employed as a labourer.¹⁰ Sadly, George's mother, Christina, became ill with tuberculosis a couple of years later.¹¹ She died of tubercular peritonitis on 20 January 1906, at the age of 34.

After this, the family dispersed. In 1911, George was probably working as a farm labourer on the farm of James Oliver McKay in Grey Township. The whereabouts of his father and siblings is not known. However, sometime before 1914, Robert and his sons moved out West. On 6 February 1914, George's sister Jean, aged 16, married Philip Bradshaw, a farmer in Logan Township.¹² As Jean was under the age of 18, her guardian, David Harrison, had to agree to the marriage. He has been appointed her guardian after the death of her mother and her father's move out of Ontario.

In 1916, Robert and his three sons were registered on the census in Wood Creek, Saskatchewan, where Robert was still farming. However, Robert Roy and George were actually living at the time at Camp Hughes in Manitoba. Camp Hughes was a military training camp, with extensive trench systems, grenade and rifle ranges, and military structures, located near Carberry, Manitoba.¹³ During World War I, more than 38,000 troops of the Canadian Expeditionary Force trained at this camp.

George enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 12 April 1916 in Davidson, Saskatchewan.¹⁴ When he enlisted, he was living in Davidson, Saskatchewan, was 5' 10 ½" tall, had a clear healthy complexion, hazel eyes and light brown hair and wore glasses. He was a Presbyterian. He embarked on the H.M.T. Grampian in Halifax on 16 April 1917 and arrived in Liverpool on 29 April. He was taken on strength with the 15th Battalion that day, but went overseas with the 28th Battalion on 4 July 1917. Between September 1917 and March 1918, he had a number of infractions for which he forfeited pay or was confined to barracks or detained for various periods of time.

George survived just over fifteen months on the Front, before being injured in early September 1918:

About 9.30 p.m. on September 10th 1918, while on outpost duty, he was severely wounded in the left chest and arms. After receiving attention, he was evacuated to No 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station where he succumbed to his wounds two days later.¹⁵

The chaplains' diary of the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station indicates that he was admitted on 11 September with shrapnel wounds to his chest and right breast.¹⁶ He died on 12 September and was buried the following day in the Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave No. 61, Plot 5, Row H) with the chaplain Andrew D. Reid presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁷ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁸ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

His father, who was his next of kin, was notified of his death. However, in June 1917, George had signed a will, leaving all his possessions to his brother, Hugh.¹⁹

George's brother, Robert Roy, also served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force but, unlike George, he survived, although seriously wounded.²⁰ Robert enlisted on the same day as George. However, just a few weeks after enlisting, he was diagnosed with diphtheria. He had some pharyngeal paralysis, but it was expected to clear up in a few weeks and he was declared fit for overseas service. Just over two months later, he arrived in England on the ss *Justica*, landing on 5 July 1917. He proceeded to France, with the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles, on 7 March 1918. Like his brother, he had a number of infractions between September 1917 and March 1918.

George was wounded twice. He was first wounded just two months after joining the Front and was admitted to the 23rd Casualty Clearing Station on 1 May 1918 with gas poisoning. From there, he was transferred to the No 7 Canadian General Hospital in Etaples and finally to the Convalescent Depot in Trouville. He was discharged from hospital on 30 May. He was wounded a second time just four months later – this time more seriously – on 29 September 1918 near Cambrai, France. He was admitted to the 33rd Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his face. On 3 October, he was transferred to Canadian Hospital in Camiers. His left eye was removed and an artificial eye was ordered. He returned to England on 12 October and, on 7 November, was transferred to the West Cliff Canadian Eye and Ear Hospital in Folkestone and, eventually, to the Princess Patricia Canadian Red Cross Hospital in Bexhill, England, later that month. He was discharged on 15 January 1919 and returned to Canada in March.

In 1921, George's father, Robert, and his brother, Hugh, were farming near Wood Creek, Saskatchewan. Robert had remarried, probably in about 1916/17.²¹ His wife's name was probably Henrika – she was born in about 1884 and had emigrated from England in 1912. Robert and Henrika had two children (Owen B. and Irene V.) Hugh was living next door to Robert and his family.²² In 1921, George's sister, Jean, was still living in Logan Township with her husband and four children (John, Margaret, Annie C., and Richard George).²³ There is no evidence of where Robert Roy was at the time.

In 1922, George's father and his second family moved to the United States. In 1930, the family was living in the Township of McMillan, Luce County, Michigan, where Robert, now 60, was a fireman in an electric power house.²⁴

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¹ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869-19138," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for George Crawford

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- ² "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for George Crawford, Province: Ontario, District: Perth (north/nord), District Number: 104, Sub-District: Elma, Sub-District Number: B-8
- ³ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for Robert Crawford, Marriage County or District: Perth
- ⁴ "1901 Census of Canada," entry for George Crawford
- ⁵ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," entry for Robert Crawford,
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869-19138," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for Hugh McDonald Crawford
- ⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869-19138," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for Robert Roy Crawford
- ⁹ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869-19138," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 November 2015), entry for Jean Reid Crawford
- ¹⁰ "1901 Census of Canada," entry for George Crawford
- ¹¹ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for Christina Crawford
- ¹² "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 November 2015), entry for Jean Crawford, Marriage County or District: Perth
- ¹³ "Camp Hughes," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Hughes; accessed 1 November 2015)
- ¹⁴ "Soldiers of the First World War: 1914-1918," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.lac-bac.gc.ca/; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for George Crawford, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 2120 - 19. Item Number: 124386
- ¹⁵ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for George Crawford, Service number: 267804
- ¹⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record 652. There are discrepancies in the description of the location of his wounds between the 1st CCCS journal and the army record.
- ¹⁷ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ¹⁸ "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)
- ¹⁹ "Soldiers of the First World War: 1914-1918," entry for George Crawford
- ²⁰ "Soldiers of the First World War: 1914-1918," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.lac-bac.gc.ca/; accessed 31 October 2015), entry for Robert Roy Crawford, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 2120 - 55
- ²¹ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 November 2015), entry for Robert Crawford, Province or Territory: Saskatchewan, District: Last Mountain, District Number: 218, Sub-District Number: 53, City, Town or Village: Wood Creek
- ²² "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 November 2015), entry for Hugh M D Crawford, Province or Territory: Saskatchewan, District: Last Mountain, District Number: 218, Sub-District Number: 53, City, Town or Village: Wood Creek
- ²³ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 November 2015), entry for Jean Bradshaw, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: Perth South, District Number: 117, Sub-District: Logan (Township), Sub-District Number: 19, City, Town or Village: Logan Township
- ²⁴ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 November 2015), entry for Robert Crawford