

Lance Corporal Charles Edmund Bloomfield

Regimental number: 8300

“A” Company, 2nd Battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment)

born: about September 1886 - died: 25 September 1918

Lance Corporal Charles Edmund Bloomfield, born in about September 1886 in South Heigham, near Norwich, Norfolk,¹ was the son of George J. and Eliza Bloomfield.² His father was born in St Pancras, London in 1854 and his mother, the former Eliza Hansell, in Norwich in 1857.³ They married in Heigham in 1876⁴ and had fourteen children, nine of whom survived to 1911.⁵ Eleven of the fourteen children included: Maud Emma (born in about 1878),⁶ George William (born in about 1880),⁷ Arthur Henry (born in about 1882),⁸ Lily Ellen Eliza (born in about 1884),⁹ Walter Robert (born in about 1885, but died in 1906),¹⁰ Charles Edmund, Phillis Victoria (born in about 1889),¹¹ Alice Violet (born in about 1890),¹² (probably) Levina Marion (born in about 1892),¹³ Gladys Jessie (born in about 1894)¹⁴ and Ida Queenie (born in about 1898 but died in 1908).¹⁵

In 1881, George, Eliza and their first two children were living at 12 Regent Street in Norwich, where George was coal hawker and Eliza was a boot machinist.¹⁶ Ten years later they had eight children and were living at 30 Union Street in Heigham.¹⁷ George was still a coal hawker. By 1901, they were at 86 York Street in Norwich. George was now a coal and coke merchant working on his own account.¹⁸ There were ten children living at home. By 1911, there were only three children – all daughters – left at home.¹⁹ But their grandchild, George William, born in 1902, was living with them. Charles' father, now 57, was still working as a coal carter. Charles was no longer living at home. He had enlisted as a Private in the West Riding Regiment and, in 1911, was stationed in India.²⁰

He had enlisted in the West Riding Regiment on 24 October 1904, at the age of 18.²¹ When he enlisted, he was a carter, 5' 4½" tall and had a fresh complexion and brown eyes and hair. He remained in England until December 1904, when he was posted to India. He returned home in November 1913 and transferred to the Army Reserve.

With the outbreak of the Great War, he was mobilized in Halifax, Yorkshire on 5 August 1914. He joined the Front in France just three weeks later, arriving on 27 August 1914. He served in France until he died in 1918. However, he had ten days leave in the UK in June/July 1917 and then a full month later the same year. In May 1918 he attended a Veterinary course in the field.

He was appointed a Lance Corporal on 2 June 1918, just four months before he died accidentally on the Front.

At the end of September, the 2nd Battalion of his Regiment was stationed at L  cluse, just east of Arras in northern France.²² Most days had been quiet. On 23 September the Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders and the Battalion moved into the Brigade Reserve. It was at this time that Charles was wounded accidentally.²³ His army service record noted: "Horse bolted, dragging L.C. Bloomfield along road. In performance of official duties & not to blame."²⁴ A Battalion comrade provided this witness statement about his accident:

I was returning horses with²⁵ ... after delivering ... when one of our Limbers²⁶ pulled ... at the side of the road at Vis-en-Artois ... to unload a corpse. The N.C.O. in charge of us (L.C. Bloomfield) jumped off his horse to examine the limber, which had fouled

some wire. He told me to be going ... & he commenced to free the ... from the wire. I had gone about 1000 to 1500 yds, when I heard a shout from behind & as I turned in my saddle, a horse, dragging a body with one foot in the stirrup went by at a gallop. I recognised it as our horse and shouted to have it stopped, & put my horses to a trot ... it overtake the other one. I had gone about another 600 or 700 yards when I came across ... Bloomfield lying on the right hand side of the road. One man was holding the horse having freed his foot from the stirrups. I handed over my horses to sound the alarm, stood by & jumped off to attend to L/C Bloomfield. I saw he was badly hurt & could scarcely breathe as all this clothes had all worked up over his head & neck. I cut these off & as LC seemed much better we brought him home in a limber.²⁷

On 23 September, Charles was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with contusions to his face, left arm and left leg. He survived for two days, but on 25 September he succumbed to his wounds. He was buried the following day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot VI, Row H, Grave 71).

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.²⁸ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁹ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

His mother was his next-of-kin and was notified of his death.³⁰ During the war his parents were probably living at 53 Stafford Street, Norwich.³¹

Charles had served nearly fourteen years in the West Riding Regiment. While in India, he was awarded the Delhi Durbar 1911 Medal.³² This medal was issued to commemorate King George V's Coronation Durbar celebration in British India in December 1911 and many were presented to men and officers of British regiments in India.³³ Then, in February 1919, he was awarded the Military Medal – a medal given to Other Ranks for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.³⁴ In addition, he was awarded 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).³⁵

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¹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles Edward Broomfield

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2016), entry for Charles E. Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 1528, Folio: 147, Page Number: 6

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for George Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 256

⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for George Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Registration District Number: 225, Sub-registration district: West Wymer, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Household schedule number: 135, Piece: 11302

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Maud Emma Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 170

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- ⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for George William Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 153
- ⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Arthur Henry Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 162
- ⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Lily Ellen E. Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 162
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Walter Robert Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 147; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Walter Robert Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 108
- ¹¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Phillis Victoria Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 172
- ¹² "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Alice Violet Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 154
- ¹³ George and Eliza's daughter born in 1892 was identified in the 1901 census as Leonora. However no birth record was found for this name. A birth record was found for Levina Marion Bloomfield born in Norwich in 1892. ("England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Levina Marion Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 174)
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Gladys Jessie Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 178
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Ida Queenie Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 168; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for Ida Queenie Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Inferred County: Norfolk, Volume: 4b, Page: 97
- ¹⁶ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1527 January 2016), entry for George Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 1946, Folio: 115, Page Number: 22
- ¹⁷ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles E. Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 1528, Folio: 147, Page Number: 6
- ¹⁸ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles Bloomfield, Registration district: West Wymer, ED, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 1845, Folio: 128, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 41
- ¹⁹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), entry for George Bloomfield, Registration district: Norwich, Registration District Number: 225, Sub-registration district: West Wymer, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Household schedule number: 135, Piece: 11302
- ²⁰ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles Edmund Bloomfield, Country/Island: Military, Registration District Number: 641, ED, institution, or vessel: India, Piece: 34989
- ²¹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles Edmund Bloomfield. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Charles' military career comes from this record.
- ²² "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 January 2016), Regiment or Unit: Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, Sub Unit: 2nd Battalion, Division: 4th Division, Diary Entry Start Date: 1918, Diary Dates: 1918 Jan - 1919 Jun, Piece

Description: Piece 1481/3 2, Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) (1918 Jan - 1919 Jun), Piece Number: 1481

²³ "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 675

²⁴ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for Charles Edmund Bloomfield

²⁵ This text is taken from a hand-written record taken down by a Battalion Lieutenant. Some parts of the statement were difficult to decipher.

²⁶ "A limber is a two-wheeled cart designed to support the trail of an artillery piece, or the stock of a field carriage such as a caisson or traveling forge, allowing it to be towed." ("Limbers and caissons," Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limbers_and_caissons; accessed 22 January 2016)

²⁷ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for Charles Edmund Bloomfield

²⁸ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

²⁹ "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)

³⁰ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 675

³¹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for Charles Edmund Bloomfield

³² "UK, Military Campaign Medal and Award Rolls, 1793-1949," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 14 January 2016), entry for C Bloomfield

³³ "The Delhi Durbar Medal 1911," *The Delhi Durbar Medal 1911* (http://www.northeastmedals.co.uk/britishguide/the_delhi_durbar_medal_1911.htm; accessed 23 January 2016)

³⁴ "The London Gazette," entry for A. E. Grimwood (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29827/supplement/11140>; accessed 30 August 2016), Publication date: 14 November 1916, Supplement: 29827, Page: 11140

³⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 14 January 2016), entry for Charles Bloomfield