

Frank BALDUE

Born: 28 Feb 1873, L'Orient, France
Private 258963

Died: 9th June 1918, Dawlish, aged 45
Canadian Forestry Corps, 104 Company

Frank Baldue was born in L'Orient, a major port on the west coast of France in the Department of Morbihan. His records are thin but the Attestation paper for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force shows that he had served five years with the French Navy before he enlisted on 20th October 1916 at Calgary, Alberta. There is no information about his emigration from France to Canada.

His current address was Prince George, British Columbia and his trade was a Cabinet Maker. He was then 43 years old. His next of kin was shown as his mother, Mrs Marie Louise Baldue of A' Keryado en Ploeumeur, L'Orient, Morbihan, France.

At the time of his death a document shows that notification was sent to Mrs Yve Baldue, rue de vieux gaz, A'Keryado, (Morbihan), France.

He was assigned to the 211th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) and sailed from Halifax on the S.S.OLYMPIC on 15th December 1916, arriving Liverpool on the 28th December. He was first sent to a depot at Purfleet in Essex and was transferred to the 8th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops Depot on 17th March 1917 before landing in France on 20th April 1917.

Frank Baldue's service record was blemished by two occasions when 'on Active Service, Absent without leave.' On 22nd April 1917 he was absent from 2pm until apprehended by the Military Police at 10.10p.m. and forfeited 1 day's pay. On 17th June from 10 p.m. he was absent until 18th June 2 p.m. and forfeited 2 days' pay.

He also had medical problems, shown only as 'gastritis' in September and October 1917, requiring short periods of admission to the General Hospital at Le Treport.

He was returned to Britain aboard the GRANTULLY CASTLE and was admitted to Queen Mary's Military Hospital, Lancashire on 24th October 1917. On 15th November he was transferred to the Woodcote Park Hospital, Epsom, Surrey where treatment continued until 9th January 1918. During this period he was transferred to the books of the Purfleet Depot until 5th March 1918 when he moved to the Canadian Forestry Corps (CFC) based at Sunningdale and on 30th March moved to 54 District.

The success of German U-Boats in the Atlantic in the First World War caused a restriction on the number of imports to Britain. Millions of tons of lumber has travelled across the ocean from Canada to the UK in 1915. In Feb 1916, the British government requested assistance from Canada with regards to the production of timber, hoping to utilize resources available in Britain. The 224th Canadian Forestry Battalion was raised and arrived in England in Apr 1916, less than three months after the initial request. The battalion moved to Virginia Water Camp in Surrey, to produce sawn lumber. Detachments were sent to other places in England and Scotland.

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A second British request for additional forestry units resulted in the formation of the 238th Canadian Forestry Battalion, which arrived in England in Sep 1916.

In Oct 1916, authority was granted to form the Canadian Forestry Corps. Both battalions joined the corps; by Nov 1916, six forestry battalions had arrived overseas, including the 242nd Battalion, CEF.

In Dec 1916, the battalions were broken up to form independent forestry companies. Eventually 102 companies were formed in Europe.

No 104 Company of the CFC was formed from No 4 Company and from April 1917 was working in woodland at Stover and Mamhead, near Chudleigh, Devon. Their work involved felling trees for trench props, boxes and temporary huts in France where the war had devastated woodland sources.

Frank Baldue died at 7.50 a.m. on Sunday 9th June 1918 at Strand Hill, Dawlish. This precise hour was given at an inquest held by Sidney Hacker, Coroner, on the 11th June which determined that cause of death was fracture of the skull due to having fallen over an embankment next to the road and was accidental.

George Rounsefell, an ex-Police Constable living at Commercial Road, saw **Baldue** at about 10.30 p.m. on Saturday night. "He came up Strand Hill. I spoke to him, he asked me the way to the camp at Starcross. I directed him by the main road. He was not sober, but he was not hopelessly drunk. He seemed to get along the road all right."

Charlotte Lucy Sweeting, a trained nurse living temporarily at Strand Hill, said that she "heard a commotion outside my house and was told that a man was dying in the road. I went to him, he was unconscious and I could see that he was dying. I could see at once that the man had had a fall. There was a large bruise on the back of his head. He died at 7.50 in my presence."

Thomas Wyborn Abell says:-

"I live at Thorn Hill, Dawlish, and am a dairyman. I found the Deceased lying in the road at Strand Hill. He was unconscious. I lifted him up and went to get some help.Just opposite to where he was lying there was an embankment of 10 or 12 feet high. There is a wide path at top of the embankment leading to path fields. There was a clump of furze at top of bank. The furze bush appeared to have been broken down. I am opinioned that the Deceased walked over the edge of the bank probably in the dark. "

Frank Baldue's Commanding Officer, Major George Alexander Ramsden, identified the body and said that he was stationed at Luscombe Camp. **Baldue** had been with the company for about five weeks and he had no complaint of him whatever.

Doctor Montague Cutcliffe had carried out a post-mortem and found quite extensive fracture of the back part of the skull, quite sufficient to cause death, probably caused by a fall over the embankment mentioned by witnesses. There were a few prickles of furze in his tunic.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: BALDUE, F Private 258963 9/06/1918

Canadian Forestry Corps Grave Ref: 2652. [Dawlish Cemetery](#)

His name does not appear on the Dawlish War memorial.

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Last known address: Prince George, British Columbia, Canada

Next of kin: Mme Marie Louise Baldue, Morbihan, France

Keryado is within [Morbihan](#) and is northeast of [Kerfichant](#) and north of [Kerforn](#) and [Le Mir](#). Keryado has an elevation of 38 metres. Is in the north western part of L'Orient.

References:

Library and Archives of Canada - Canadian Attestation papers on enlistment and medical record