

## **Lance Corporal Dalton Edgar Ferris**

**Regimental number: 642813**

**4th Canadian Infantry Battalion**

**born: 13 January 1895–died: 5 October 1918**

Lance Corporal Dalton Edgar Ferris was born on 13 January 1895 in Mulmur, Dufferin County, Ontario.<sup>1</sup> He was the youngest child of Alexander Ferris (born in Ireland on 16 May 1848)<sup>2</sup> and the former Jane Whitley (born in about 1857 in Ontario).<sup>3</sup> Alexander came to Canada in about 1863 with his family.<sup>4</sup> Alexander and Jane married on 16 May 1877 in Creemore, Simcoe County, Ontario<sup>5</sup> and had nine children:

- William Thomas (born on 3 May 1878)<sup>6</sup>
- John Hugh Alexander (born on 23 April 1880)<sup>7</sup>
- Samuel Earnest Ferris (born on 12 February 1882, but died on 10 July 1883 of lung inflammation and is buried in Perm Methodist Cemetery in Dufferin County)<sup>8</sup>
- James Edward (born on 10 November 1883)<sup>9</sup>
- Mary Allace (born on 10 January 1886)<sup>10</sup> (known also as Alice)
- Argue Island (born on 29 September 1887)<sup>11</sup>
- Annie Bell (born on 22 March 1890)<sup>12</sup>
- Unnamed male child (born on 20 Sep 1892,<sup>13</sup> who may have died soon after birth)
- Dalton Edgar (born on 13 January 1895)<sup>14</sup>

Alexander Ferris was a farmer in Mulmur for most of his working life.<sup>15</sup> In 1898, his wife Jane died in childbirth.<sup>16</sup> She died on 8 September 1898 and was buried with her son Samuel in Perm Methodist Cemetery.<sup>17</sup> Alexander died just five years later, on 6 September 1913, due to a stroke and pneumonia;<sup>18</sup> he was also buried in Perm Methodist Cemetery.<sup>19</sup>

Three years later (on 1 February 1916) Dalton joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Alliston, Ontario.<sup>20</sup> He was a farmer living with his siblings at R.R. No. 3, Mansfield, Dufferin County, 5'8" tall and had a dark complexion, brown eyes and fairly dark hair. When he enlisted, he joined the 177th Battalion of the 1st Central Ontario Regiment. He left Canada on the SS *Metagama* at the beginning of May 1917 and arrived in England on 14 May. He went to the military camp at West Sandling, near Saltwood, Kent. He transferred to the 4th Battalion and went to France on 8 September 1917, joining his battalion on 13 November. Less than a year later, he was promoted to lance corporal.

At the end of September 1918, the 4th Battalion was near the Canal du Nord, in northern France, engaged in the Allies' Hundred Day Offensive that eventually led to the Armistice.<sup>21</sup> Friday, 27 September marked the beginning of the first phase of the Battle of Cambrai.

Battalion attacked in first phase of CAMBRAI Battle. Zero hour 5:20 AM visibility low at zero. Barrage was excellent and battalion made a good start. ... Attack progressed feverishly and Companies reached their objectives on time. ... Orders received to stand fast for the night, ready to form defensive right flank with the 1st battalion.<sup>22</sup>

The attack had cost the battalion seriously; casualties included nine officers and 132 Other Ranks. Dalton was probably one of them:

Just after crossing the Canal Du Nord near Valenciennes on the 27th September 1918, an enemy shell exploded near his platoon. He was struck in the neck and left leg by a splinter. His wounds were immediately dressed and he was evacuated to the Dressing Station, but he succumbed later at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.<sup>23</sup>

Dalton was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 1 October 1918 with wounds to his neck, knee and leg. He died on 5 October.

A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.<sup>24</sup>

Dalton was buried on 6 October in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 7, Row B, Grave 14) with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.<sup>25</sup> No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months. As a result of the serious and urgent nature of the cases admitted to No. 1 CCCS, the death rate was high in October—a total of 83 deaths occurred during the month.<sup>26</sup>

A cable was sent to his brother William to notify him his brother's injuries on 11 October and a second was sent on 15 October to indicate that he had died of his wounds.

Dalton was awarded posthumously the Distinguished Conduct Medal, given to Other Ranks for gallantry in the field in the face of the enemy.<sup>27</sup> He was also awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

Dalton's siblings remained in the Mulmur area and, for the most part, were farmers.

Dalton's eldest brother and his next of kin, **William**, married just before Dalton enlisted. On 5 January 1916, William married Ethel Peardon in Peel County, Ontario.<sup>28</sup> She was the daughter of Edwin and Annie Peardon. In 1921, he owned land and farmed near Mulmur.<sup>29</sup> William died in 1959 and is buried with his wife in Mansfield Presbyterian Cemetery in Mansfield, Dufferin County, a few kilometres from Mulmur.<sup>30</sup>

**John** had wed the year before William, marrying Mary Rebecca Ellen Black on 5 March 1912 in Rosemont, Simcoe County.<sup>31</sup> In 1921, he was a merchant working on his own account.<sup>32</sup> He died on 30 December 1960 in Mulmur and is buried in Alliston Union Cemetery in Alliston, Simcoe County.<sup>33</sup>

In 1911, Dalton's brother **James** was not living with the family—he had struck out on his own—but was living next door to them. He was farming land in the next concession.<sup>34</sup> The following year, he married Lucy Peardon on 28 February 1912 in Chinguacousy Township, Peel County.<sup>35</sup> Lucy was the sister of William's wife Ethel. James was farming in Mulmur in 1921.<sup>36</sup> James died sometime between 1957, when he was retired and living in Shelburne, Dufferin County,<sup>37</sup> and 1965, when his widow Lucy was living at 54 Joseph Street in Brampton, with her sister Mary.<sup>38</sup>

His sister **Allace** was the first sibling to wed. She married Clifton Hand, a farmer, on 3 March 1910 in Stanton, Dufferin County.<sup>39</sup> The following year, they were still in Mulmur farming.<sup>40</sup> She died on 22 May 1962 and is buried in Mansfield Presbyterian Cemetery.<sup>41</sup>

**Argue** married Viola Grace Hunter on 24 June 1922 in Toronto.<sup>42</sup> In 1935, Argue was a thresher in Alliston.<sup>43</sup> He died on 21 October 1961 and is buried in Alliston Union Cemetery.<sup>44</sup>

**Annie** married John Russell Bates, a farmer, on 17 November 1915 in Stanton. Dalton was a witness at their marriage—three months before he enlisted.<sup>45</sup> In 1921, John owned a farm in Mulmur.<sup>46</sup> Annie died in Alliston on 5 January 1978 and is buried with her husband in Alliston Union Cemetery.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 15 August 2020), entry for Ferris, Dalton Edgar, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 3062 - 28, Item number: 388007, Digitized service file - PDF format: B3062-S02

<sup>2</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 August 2020), entry for Dalton Ferris, Province: Ontario, District: Simcoe (South/Sud), District number: 211505, Sub-district: Mulmur, Sub-district number: 1

<sup>3</sup> "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 August 2020), entry for Alexander Ferris, Province: Ontario, Division number: 1

<sup>4</sup> "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 24 March 2020), entry for Daulton [*sic*] Ferris, Province: Ontario, District: Dufferin, District number: 62, Sub-district: Mulmur, Sub-district number: 20

<sup>5</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826-1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 August 2020), entry for Alexander Ferris

<sup>6</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for William Thomas Ferris

<sup>7</sup> "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry*, entry for Alexander Ferris

<sup>8</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Samuel Ferris; "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Samuel Earnest Ferris; *Find a Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com>: accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Samuel E. Ferris

<sup>9</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for James Edward Ferris

<sup>10</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Mary Allace Ferris

<sup>11</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Argue Island Ferris

<sup>12</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry*, entry for Dalton Ferris. There is some confusion about Annie's name. In the 1891 Census, she appears as Nancy A., age 1. In the 1901 Census, she is shown as Annie; in 1911, as Annie B. When she marries, her name is Annie Bell and, on her death record, Annie Nancy J.

<sup>13</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1858-1914," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for [unnamed male] Ferris

<sup>14</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada*, entry for Ferris, Dalton Edgar

<sup>15</sup> "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry*, entry for Alexander Ferris; "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 24 March 2020), entry for Daulton [*sic*] Ferris

<sup>16</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Jane Ferris

<sup>17</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Jane Ferris

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- <sup>18</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Alexander Ferris
- <sup>19</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Alexander Ferris
- <sup>20</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," entry for Ferris, Dalton Edgar. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Dalton's military service comes from this source.
- <sup>21</sup> "War Diaries - 4th Battalion, Canadian Infantry," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>: accessed 20 August 2020) File: RG9-III-D-3, Volume/box number: 4916, File number: 361, Copied container number: T-10708.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Dalton Edgar Ferris, Service number: 642813
- <sup>24</sup> "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 2 May 2020)
- <sup>25</sup> "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 7 October 2015)
- <sup>26</sup> "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/>: accessed 17 June 2015)
- <sup>27</sup> "A Guide to British Awards for Gallantry or Meritorious Service in WW1," *The Great War 1914–1918* (<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-gallantry-awards.htm#MM>: accessed 19 August 2020)
- <sup>28</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for Wm Thos Ferris
- <sup>29</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 October 2020), entry for Wm T Ferris, Province or territory: Ontario, Municipality: Mulmur, District number: 72, Sub-district: Mulmur (Township), Sub-district number: 16
- <sup>30</sup> "Global, Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and Other Select Burial Locations, 1300s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 August 2020), entry for William Thomas Ferris
- <sup>31</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for John Hugh Alexander Ferris
- <sup>32</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 October 2020), entry for John H Ferris [sic], Province or territory: Ontario, Municipality: Mulmur, District number: 72, Sub-district: Mulmur (Township), Sub-district number: 16
- <sup>33</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for John Hugh Alexander Ferris
- <sup>34</sup> "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 24 March 2020), entry for Fanne Ferry [sic], Province: Ontario, District: Dufferin, District number: 62, Sub-district: Mulmur, Sub-district number: 20
- <sup>35</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for James Earnest Ferris
- <sup>36</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for James C Farris [sic], Province or territory: Ontario, Municipality: Mulmur, District number: 72, Sub-District: Mulmur (Township), Sub-district number: 16
- <sup>37</sup> "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for James Ferris in 1935, Electoral district: Dufferin-Simcoe
- <sup>38</sup> "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for Mrs Lucy Ferris in 1965, Electoral district: Peel
- <sup>39</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Alice Ferris

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<sup>40</sup> "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 24 March 2020), entry for Mary Alice Band [*sic*], Province: Ontario, District: Dufferin, District number: 62, Sub-district: Mulmur, Sub-district number: 20

<sup>41</sup> "Web: Canadian Headstone Index, 1840–2017," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Mary Alice Ferris Hand

<sup>42</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Argue Island Ferris

<sup>43</sup> "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Argue Ferris in 1935, Electoral district: Dufferin-Simcoe

<sup>44</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 August 2020), entry for Argue Ferris

<sup>45</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for Annie Bell Ferris

<sup>46</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for Annie Bates, Province or territory: Ontario, Municipality: Mulmur, District number: 72, Sub-district: Mulmur (Township), Sub-district number: 16

<sup>47</sup> "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 August 2020), entry for Annie Nancy J. Ferris