

## Frank M. Keffer

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Franklin Mager Keffer, son of Wellington Keffer and Ellen Priscilla Warren, was born in Hespeler, Ontario, on October 17, 1893. After attending local public schools he enrolled at the Galt Collegiate Institute in 1910, where he was also a member of the school rugby team. It appears he was a talented athlete at school, as he was awarded the Championship Cup (donated by alumni from the Buchanan family) in 1911 and 1912. According to local newspapers, Keffer was a "particularly bright lad, who made good at school and threw every available ounce of energy into his work." Furthermore, he was "unassuming in his bearing, honest in purpose and always willing to do a friend a kindly act." He graduated from GCI in 1913 with full pass matriculation standing.



After graduation, Keffer moved to teach school near Calgary, Alberta, and then went on to attend the University of Saskatoon. When the call was made for reinforcements for the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), Keffer responding by enlisting with the University Corps on March 18, 1915.

Keffer arrived in England in April 1915, where he suffered from a bout of rheumatism for a couple of months before returning to his unit for training at Shorncliffe. He went to France in July 1915 to join the PPCLI at the front, where he was affectionately known by his immediate friends in the unit as "Keff." Not long after arriving at the front, Keffer wrote a brief letter to his mother:

*France, Aug. 3rd, 1915.*

*Dear Mother — We got into the trenches last night and now we are taking it comparatively easy in the first line. I have done a little shooting, but there is nothing to be seen except the enemy's parapets some distance away. Am not a bit curious so don't either of you worry about it[,] will all come out right.*

*Your loving son*

*Frank*

Keffer was killed in action during the Battle of Mount Sorrel on June 2, 1916. In a letter addressed to his parents, a friend from Keffer's battalion explained that their son was shot in the head on the first day of the battle. Keffer's younger brother, Ernest, was killed three months later during the fighting at Flers and Courcellette.

Sources:

CEF Personnel Files, RG 150, Box 5032-41. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa; Commencement Program, 5 December 1913. Galt Collegiate Institute and Vocational School Archives (GCI Archives), Cambridge; Galt Collegiate Institute Roll of Honour. GCI Archives, Cambridge; *Hespeler Herald*, 26 August 1915, p. 1; *Hespeler Herald*, 18 June 1916, p. 1; *Hespeler Herald*, 7 September 1916, p. 8; Newspaper clippings from World War I. GCI Archives, Cambridge; Registration of Births and Stillbirths, 1869-1912. MS 929, reel 118. Archives of Ontario, Toronto.

Photograph from the Keffer family photograph, 1915. Accessed from Jeff Outhit, "Remembering brothers-in-arms: 'No nobler, grander death than this,'" *The Record*, 6 November 2015, accessed on 26 August 2019, <https://www.therecord.com/news-story/6085655-remembering-brothers-in-arms-no-nobler-grander-death-than-this/>.