

**Englefield Green Cemetery,  
Runnymede, Surrey**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2356605 PRIVATE**

**B. K. SAUNDERS**

**CAN. FORESTRY CORPS.**

**17TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 25**

*When At Thy Call*

*We Journey Forth Some Day*

*Close Together*

*Let Our Spirits Stay*

## Blackden Kenedy SAUNDERS

Blackden Kenedy Saunders was born on 29th June, 1894 (as per Jamaican Civil Registration Birth, Marriage & Death records) in Spanish Town, Jamaica to parents Richard Horton Saunders and Dorothy Saunders (nee Kennedy).

Blackden Saunders, Machinist, aged 20, was a passenger on S.S. *Coppename* sailing from Puerto Barrios on 2nd April, 1914 & arriving at the port of New Orleans on 6th April, 1914. His description was 5ft 11 inches, black complexion, black hair & eyes. His place of birth was listed as Spanish Town, Jamaica. The last permanent residence was listed as Barrios, Guatemala & his final destination was listed as Detroit, Michigan. Blackden Saunders listed his nearest relative as Richard Saunders, of Barrios, Guatemala.

The World War 1 Draft Registration Card, dated 5th June, 1917, for Blackden Kennedy Saunders recorded his date of birth as 11th June, 1894, born Spanish Town, Jamaica. His address was listed as 327 Macomb, Detroit, Michigan & he was employed by Michigan Copper & Brass on a rolling machine. Blackden Kennedy Saunders stated he was a British subject, of African race & married. The card lists he “*would like to enlist in British Army.*”

Blackden Kennedy Saunders enlisted with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 9th April, 1918 at London, Ontario. The listed the following details – born 11th June, 1894 in Spanishtown, Jamaica. Married to Mrs Blanche Saunders, of 345 Orleans St, Detroit, Michigan & employed as a Machinist. His religion was Church of England & he was aged 23 years & 10 months.

Private Blackden Kennedy Saunders was attached to the Canadian Forestry Corps with a service number of 2356605.

### Canadian Forestry Corps

The Canadian Forestry Corps was formed following an appeal from Britain on February 14, 1916 for troops to undertake lumbering operations overseas. The Canadian Forestry Corps assumed various tasks, including clearing land for airfields, preparing railway ties and lumber for use in trenches, duckboards, building barracks and hospitals as well as farming. During the critical days of 1918, the Corps also supplied 1,280 men to the infantry.

Several regiments originally slated for the front lines became military lumberjack units instead. Canadian troops with their coniferous-tree cap badges identifying them as the Canadian Forestry Corps cut trees in forests in England, Scotland and France, where the timber was squared, sawed and transported. The CFC also built aerodromes in France for the ever-burgeoning Royal Flying Corps.

Altogether, some 35,000 Canadians served in the Forestry Corps—which eventually was composed of dozens of companies (each composed of several hundred workers). Although individual troops in emergency situations were sent to fight on the front lines the CFC usually served well back of the fighting. Occasionally, Forestry Corps units were employed as labour units for the Canadian Corps on the front lines with duties such as stockpiling artillery ammunition, assisting in the quick construction of rail and road systems in the wake of attacking troops, or in helping to evacuate the wounded.

Towards the final two years of the war, more and more Canadian soldiers volunteered for the Forestry Corps, as it was viewed by many as a way to serve the country without facing the German Army in direct conflict. Many members were also underage volunteers—who had lied about their age to be accepted for overseas service, but were strongly suspected to be under the age of 19 and not legally allowed to service in combat. The Corps was not without casualties however, accidents like those which would occur in a forestry camp in Canada were not uncommon: power saws, machinery and transport all took lives. Additionally, particularly during the last 100 days of the War, the Forestry Corps was repeatedly combed for volunteers for transfer into the infantry.

*(Information from Wikipedia & Sault History Online)*



**The Canadian Forestry Corps badge.**

Blackden Saunders was included in a list of U.S. residents serving in Canadian Expeditionary Forces 1917 – 1918. The card records that Blackden Saunders was born in 1894, of British nationality, from 345 Orleans St, Detroit, Wisconsin. He was a married machinist. Under general information – “C.E.F. Detroit to London 11-4-18.”

Private Blackden Kenedy Saunders died on 17th August, 1918 at Beech Hill Hospital, Englefield Green, Surrey, England from Influenza. He was attached to C.F. Corps (Depot) as listed on the Canadian Expeditionary Force War Grave Register Card.

A death for Blackden K. Saunders, aged 24, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Windsor, Berkshire, England.

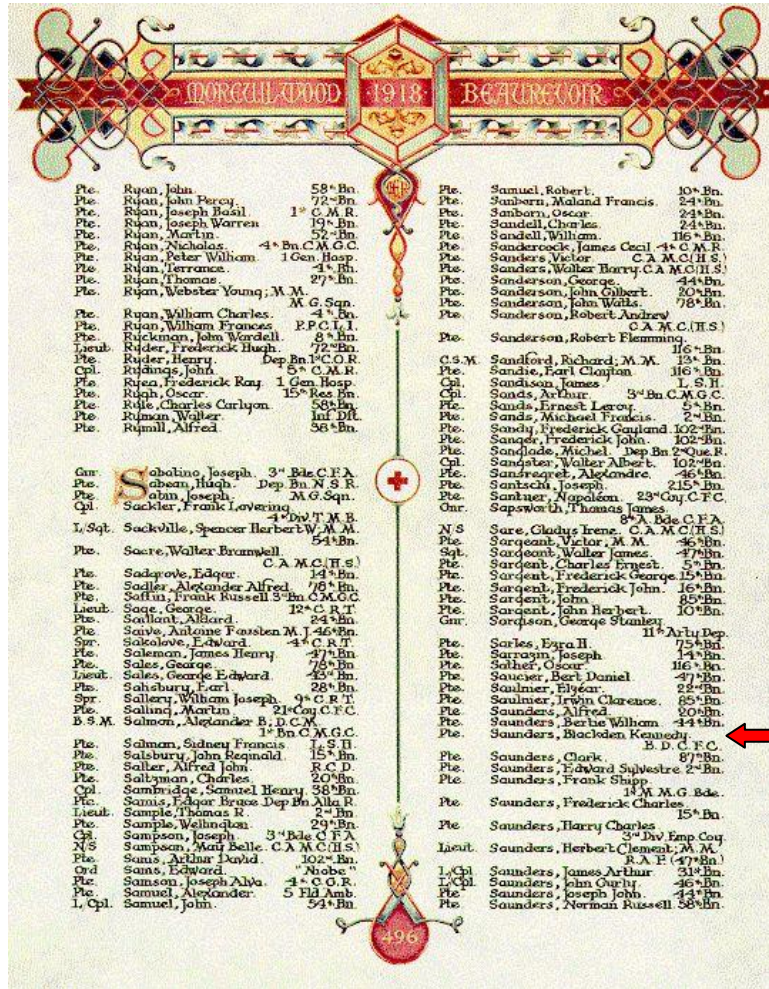
Private Blackden Kenedy Saunders was buried in Englefield Green Cemetery (also known as St. Judes Churchyard), Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey, England – Plot number 10.737 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Blackden Kenedy Saunders – service number 2356605, aged 25, of Canadian Forestry Corps. He was the son of Richard and Dorothy Saunders; husband of Blanch K. Saunders, of 2625 Jay St., Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. Born at Sydney, Australia.

Private Blackden Kenedy Saunders is remembered in the Canadian First World War Book of Remembrance – page 496.

Pte.	Sarles, Ezra H.	75 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Sarrasin, Joseph	14 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Solher, Oscar	116 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saucier, Bert Daniel	47 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saulnier, Elyéar	22 <sup>nd</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saulnier, Irwin Clarence	85 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saunders, Alfred	20 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saunders, Berlie Wilham	44 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Saunders, Blackden Kennedy	B. D. C. F. C.
Pte.	Saunders, Clark	87 <sup>th</sup> Bn.

**Canadian First World War Book of Remembrance**



Private B. K. Saunders is remembered on the Englefield Green War Memorial, at St. Jude's Churchyard, Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey.



Englefield Green War Memorial (Photo from jsa Architects)

Private B. K. Saunders is remembered on the Cross of Sacrifice in Englefield Green Cemetery, Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey, England.



**Cross of Sacrifice in Englefield Green Cemetery** (Photo by Basher Eyre)

Private Blackden Kenedy Saunders is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

*(Note: It appears that Private Saunders' name on the Commemorative Roll was based on the information that his next-of-kin's address was listed as Australia & therefore the soldier concerned it was assumed would be Australian. There is no reference to Australia for Private Saunders or his widow that could be located.)*

The 1920 United States Census recorded Blanche Saunders, widow, aged 34, black race, of 345 Orleans Street, Detroit, Wayne, Michigan, U.S. She was born in Ohio & was employed as a Waitress in a Hotel & had two 19 year old Borders living with her.



**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (Capital Photographer)

### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (previously Imperial War Graves Commission) allowed families to inscribe a message on the Headstone, often encouraged to use text from a prayer. Personal messages were also allowed however there was a limit of "66 Letters". Personal inscriptions were initially charged at 3 ½ d per letter, but this was changed to a voluntary contribution after many families were unable to afford the payment. The Canadian Government decided from the outset not to impose any form of charge for the epitaph lettering and costs were met by the government.

Private B. K. Saunders does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*When At Thy Call We Journey Forth Some Day Close Together*

*Let Our Spirits Stay*

### **Englefield Green Cemetery (also known as St. Judes Churchyard), Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey, England**

Englefield Green Cemetery contains 94 Commonwealth War Graves – 67 from World War 1 & 27 from World War 2. There are 32 Canadian Graves in the Cemetery. The Canadian Forestry Corps had a hospital at Beech Hill and the Princess Christian Military Hospital was at Englefield Green (in huts).



**Englefield Green Cemetery** (Photo by Ashley Coates)



**Englefield Green Cemetery** (Photo below from CWGC)



Photo of Private B. K. Saunders' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Englefield Green Cemetery (also known as St. Judes Churchyard), Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey, England.

*Note - The Canadian maple leaf emblem appears on all Canadian Commonwealth War Grave headstones whereas other countries use the badge of the Battalion or Corps.*



*(Photo courtesy of julia&keld)*