

Pte. John L. "Jack" Lorenzetto (1894–1918)

Jack Lorenzetto was born in the Snaza'ist area (Hedley) and was the eldest of 16 children of Peter Lorenzetto and Edith Barrington Price Lorenzetto. Edith was from the First Nations Similkameen people in the Keremeos area and Peter harkened from Ohamil, B.C., just outside of Hope along the Fraser River.

Jack's paternal grandfather, Andrew Lorenzetto, was a wine merchant from Italy. He came to B.C. to follow the gold rushes of the Fraser River and the Cariboo and had some good fortune in this province. Around 1862, he settled onto eighty acres of farmland in Ohamil (just outside of Hope, B.C.) with his First Nations wife, Ouillet aka Marie. She was the daughter of a Chief and hailed from Boston Bar, B.C. Their son, Peter, was one of five children born to this union.

Jack's maternal grandfather, Barrington Price of England, pre-empted land on the Upper Bench of Keremeos in 1873 and then established the still-standing Grist Mill (and store) on his property there in 1877. Price had a relationship with a First Nations Similkameen woman by the name of Catherine who gave birth to their daughter, Edith Barrington Price, in 1875.

Peter Lorenzetto came to Keremeos seeking employment and went to work on the Barcelo Ranch located just a short distance north of Barrington Price's land on Hwy. 3A. After Peter and Edith married, they then shortly established their own ranch 11km southeast of Hedley, on the present-day Lawrence Ranch property, in ca. 1896. This would be their home for the next 53 years.

As a young man, Jack participated in Labour Day foot races, winning in his age group, despite standing only a sprite 5' 4". He was also said to be an excellent horseman, winning at races again in local competitions. And in July 1915, he participated in a "smoker" fundraiser - for tobacco for the troops - volunteering himself in a boxing match. From these small details we can surmise young Jack was quite the athlete.

Jack was 23-years-old, as yet unmarried and self-described as a "rancher" in Feb. 1918, when he was conscripted into the Canadian Army. He first served with the 1st Depot Battalion, but was later transferred into the 29th Battalion where he remained until his death.

On Mothers Day, May 1918, Jack wrote his mother from England, "I made good shooting on the range last week and will likely be a sniper. I made 53 points out of 60 which is very good and hard to beat... This soldiering is a hard life but I'll be back home soon maybe if I'm not pushing up daisies in France." Four months later – and two months before the end of the war – Jack was dead, killed by shell fire, 8 Sept. 1918, while transporting rations to his comrades on the front line between Sains-lez-Marquion and Baralle, France.

Pte. Jack Lorenzetto is buried in Dominion Cemetery, Arras, France. He was 24 years of age when killed.

PTE. JACK LORENZETTO (1894-1918) ~ LETTERS

Postcard addressed to Mrs. Lorenzetto, Hedley, B.C.
Vancouver, B.C., Feb 18, 1918

Dear Mother,

I am very sorry I could not stay here longer so I could at least have time to write a letter we are leaving the camp here at 9:15p.m. It is perhaps better for all of us to leave this way. I know it is easier for me. Be brave and take it easy don't worry. I will write as soon as I get to London. There are five other boys from down that country going also so I will not be alone. Well goodbye. lots of Love & Best wishes.

Your Son, Jack

Mother's Day, May 13, 1918 - Canadian YMCA

Dear Mother,

Just a line or two to let you know I've just had my leave six days. I was two days in London seeing the sights the other four days I was down with Billy R visiting his people. I am sending you some pictures we had taken down there it was a pretty place just half an hour out of London on a fast train. I am on draft now and have got my overseas equipment. I made good shooting on the range last week and will likely be a sniper. I made 53 points out of 60 which is very good and hard to beat. Billy R and I are the best shots in our outfit. Billy made 59 out of 60 one point short of a possible. I saw the big smoke city of London was in two days and saw the Zoological Gardens the Museum and the wax works. they were wonderful and rode all over london in the tubes the underground railways. London is twenty miles square so she is some burgh. I saw some good shows. I will be in france by the 28th of May. I'm going into the 29 Battn with most of our boys from penticton and round there. they are all going to the 29th to be together there is lots of men over there so we won't go up to the front line for a month maybe unless the Germans start some or move by the time you get this it takes three weeks for you to get this so I'll be in france when you get this I think I have had no letters from home since I got here I had one letter from Katherine one from B[?]etsy Marcell Mina too. write me often because your letters are a great comfort to me. this soldiering is a hard life but I'll be back home soon maybe if I'm not pushing up daisies in france. well good night for this time with love to all the family and yourself yourself especially today because it is mothers day a day when everybody pays their respects to their mothers and is kept sacred here in this country I am sending some pictures we had taken while we were on leave good by god bless you all with love from your loving son,

J. L. Lorenzetto