

FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Edward Charles ("Charlie") Rendell

R/4560 • 9th (Service) Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps

First World War: enlistment, service, capture and imprisonment

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Core finding. The evidence strongly indicates that Charlie joined the original 9th KRRC in 1914, went to France with the battalion in May 1915 while still 18, and was captured on 21 March 1918 during the destruction of the battalion in the Urvillers sector. Two German prisoner lists subsequently record him under the Stendal camp system.

Purpose and method

This revised research note brings together the surviving family information, the 1915 photograph, two original German prisoner-of-war lists, and published unit histories. It distinguishes between established record evidence, strong inference, and questions still requiring documentary proof. It is not a complete service record.

Evidence key: Established = directly supported by a named record; Strong inference = supported by several pieces of evidence but not yet personally documented; Unresolved = needs a further primary record.

1. Identity and principal conclusions

Item	Finding	Status
Name	Edward Charles Rendell, known in the family as "Charlie".	Established by the two POW lists together.
Number and unit	R/4560, 9th (Service) Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps (9 KRRC).	Established by the POW lists.
Parents	George Rendell and Louisa Rendell, née Fensom; Louisa was at 140 Longfellow Road, Walthamstow, Essex in the POW record.	Parents/date require certificate or baptismal verification; address is established.
Birth	19 August 1896, Walthamstow, Essex.	Strong family evidence; verify against a birth certificate or baptism.
Capture	21 March 1918; German lists say "Mory"; battalion evidence places 9 KRRC in the Urvillers sector near St Quentin.	Date/unit secure; precise capture point unresolved.
Imprisonment	Registered in the Stendal POW camp system.	Established; main-camp residence versus work detachment unresolved.

2. Birth, family and the age question

The family date of birth is 19 August 1896 at Walthamstow, then in Essex, to George and Louisa Rendell (née Fensom). The publicly accessible civil-registration index can establish a registration in the relevant quarter and district, but not the exact day of birth. The decisive evidence would be the original birth certificate, a baptism entry recording the birth date, or—more cautiously—the 1939 Register. A General Register Office certificate

and a matching historic GRO index entry with mother's maiden surname Fensom would securely link the registration to this family.

His attestation is said to give his age as "19 years 0 months". If he enlisted with the original 9th KRRC in late August or September 1914—as the early R/4560 number strongly suggests—his true age was only just over 18. In other words, the family story that he joined "under age" contains an important truth: he was likely old enough to enlist, but he appears to have added about a year to his age and was under the normal age of 19 for overseas service when the battalion went to France.

Question	Assessment
Was he legally under age when he enlisted?	Probably not, if he enlisted after his eighteenth birthday on 19 August 1914.
Was "19 years 0 months" accurate?	Almost certainly not if the family birth date and a 1914 attestation are both correct.
Why does this matter?	The customary minimum for overseas service was 19. In May 1915 he was about 18 years and nine months old.
What would settle it?	The full attestation/service papers and a birth certificate or baptismal record.

3. 9th KRRC: formation, training and departure for France

The 9th (Service) Battalion KRRC was one of Kitchener's First New Army ("K1") battalions. It belonged to 42nd Infantry Brigade, 14th (Light) Division. The battalion's published chronology gives a coherent setting for Charlie's early service, although his presence at every stage remains an inference until his personal papers are found.

Period	Battalion movement and likely relevance to Charlie
August 1914	9th KRRC formed at Winchester, probably at or through the KRRC depot at Peninsula Barracks.
Autumn 1914	Moved to Aldershot for the early stages of New Army training.
November 1914	Moved to Petworth, Sussex.
February 1915	Returned to Aldershot.
20–21 May 1915	Mobilised for France; sources differ by a day between embarkation and arrival at Boulogne aboard SS Victoria.

Training would have included physical drill and route marches; rifle handling and musketry; fieldcraft; bayonet work; entrenching and wiring; signalling; message carrying; and company and battalion manoeuvres. As a rifle regiment, the KRRC stressed initiative, marksmanship, speed of movement and dispersed fighting: its traditional motto was *Celer et Audax* ("Swift and Bold"). The quality of early New Army training varied because units were being created rapidly amid shortages of instructors, weapons and equipment, but 14th Division was judged ready for overseas service by spring 1915.

If Charlie travelled with the original battalion—which his low R-number makes very likely—he landed in France at about 18 years and nine months. A medal index card or KRRC medal roll may provide his individual date of entry into theatre and would turn this strong inference into proof.

4. Service before capture

If he remained continuously with 9 KRRC, the battalion history places him in some of the most severe fighting experienced by the 14th Division. **Hooge (July–August 1915)**, the Second Attack on **Bellewaarde (September 1915)**, during the fighting in which the Germans made a notable early use of flamethrowers; **the Somme including Delville Wood and Flers–Courcelette (1916)**; at **Arras (1917)**, including the **First and Third Battles of the Scarpe**; and in the **Langemarck and Passchendaele operations of Third Ypres (1917)**, before the **St Quentin sector in early 1918**.

This is battalion history, not proof of Charlie's personal presence in every action: illness, wounds, leave, training or attachment could have intervened. The battalion war diary is the best day-by-day source, but it seldom names ordinary riflemen.

The battalion's surviving war diary is held by The National Archives as **WO 95/1900/2**, covering May 1915 to June 1918: [9th Battalion KRRC war diary catalogue entry](#). War diaries seldom name ordinary riflemen, but they provide the most reliable day-by-day account of where his battalion was and what it was doing.

5. The "Lavant 1915" photograph



The inscription on the reverse reads "Lavante 1915". The most convincing interpretation is Lavant, near Chichester in West Sussex: the spelling can readily have acquired a final "e" when written from memory. East and West Lavant lie about fifteen miles south-west of Petworth, where 9 KRRC was based from November 1914 to February 1915. A march of that distance, temporary billeting, or an off-duty visit was entirely plausible during training.

An informal photo taken at Lavant, West Sussex. January or February 1915 during training. Charlie is back row left next to the corporal



The men wear British 1902-pattern service dress—peaked service-dress caps, high-neck tunics, trousers, puttees and ammunition boots—with waist belts but no webbing or field equipment. The tidy clothing, plain backdrop and chairs indicate an inexpensive studio or billet portrait rather than a field photograph. There are no steel helmets, consistent with the stated 1915 date, as helmets were not generally issued until 1916. The cap badges are indistinct but compatible with the KRRC Maltese-cross badge.

The corporal at the back right has two clear chevrons. Charlie has no visible rank chevrons, so he was still a rifleman at the time of the picture. This fits a probable January–February 1915 date, when he was about 18 years and five or six months old; the later German prisoner records show he was a lance-corporal by March 1918. The familiar pose suggests friends or a small military group, perhaps a section or platoon, rather than a formal unit portrait.

Laventie in northern France remains a technical alternative, but it is less consistent with the known 9 KRRC movements: after landing at Boulogne in May 1915 the battalion went toward the Ypres sector, and no evidence has yet been found of it being based at Laventie. The overall assessment is therefore: probably Lavant, West Sussex, in early 1915; a well-supported inference rather than proof of a specific visit.

6. Capture on 21 March 1918

Two original German prisoner-of-war lists preserved by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) independently identify No. 4560, 9 K.R.R., as captured on 21 March 1918 and registered under Stendal. One calls him Edward Rendell; the other Charles Rendell. The matching number, unit, rank and capture details make clear that both refer to Edward Charles (“Charlie”) Rendell.

ICRC list	What it records
P.A. 36553, entry 71	Edward Rendell; 4560; Gefr. (Gefreiter), rendered “L/Cpl”; 9 K.R.R.; Mory; 21.3.18; Stendal. Mother: Louisa, 140 Longfellow Road, Walthamstow, Essex. ICRC receipt stamp: 21 September 1918.
P.A. 31399, entry 37	Charles Rendell; same number, rank, unit, capture place/date and Stendal registration. ICRC receipt stamp: 2 August 1918.

“Private”, “Rifleman” and “Lance-Corporal” are not necessarily contradictory. Rifleman was the KRRC’s regimental title for a private soldier. The German lists use Gefr. (Gefreiter) with the British equivalent L/Cpl, strongly supporting an appointment as lance-corporal by the time of capture. A lance-corporal could be an appointment rather than a substantive paid rank, which helps explain variations between records.

The date 21 March appears independently on both German lists and precisely matches the opening day of Operation Michael.

7. What happened to 9 KRRC that day

On the night of 20–21 March, 9 KRRC held about 2,000 yards of front around Urvillers Wood. B and C Companies occupied separated forward posts; A Company held three strongpoints near the St Quentin road; D Company was more than two miles behind at brigade headquarters. Some posts were 300–400 yards apart and lacked connecting trenches, leaving the defence dependent on telephones, runners and artillery support.

At about 4.30 a.m. a tremendous German bombardment began under dense natural fog and gas. Men had to wear respirators; visibility was initially scarcely a yard; and within two hours every telephone line from battalion headquarters had been cut. German infantry then advanced through the fog, sometimes passing between isolated posts before other troops surrounded and reduced them. By about 10 a.m., runners reported that the line had been penetrated, Captain Singlehurst of A Company had been killed, and Germans had reached the St Quentin road.

Around midday, as the fog lifted, the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Howard-Bury, found that the scattered posts were being “surrounded and mopped up one by one”. The surviving headquarters group resisted attacks with machine guns, trench mortars and flamethrowers; rifle grenades stopped the flamethrowers, but machine-gun fire enfiladed the trench and Lewis guns began to fail. Shortly before 4 p.m. a force of roughly 500 Germans attacked from all sides. Howard-Bury’s account ends: “It was all over.” The captors were Bavarians. By evening 9 KRRC had effectively ceased to exist; the March losses were later given as 23 officers and 620 other ranks killed, wounded or missing.

This is the strongest context for Charlie’s capture. It cannot identify his exact trench, but he was probably in one of the separated company posts or with the headquarters group, enduring bombardment and gas, then being bypassed, surrounded and compelled to surrender after prolonged resistance. As a lance-corporal he may have had charge of a small section.

8. The “Mory” geographical discrepancy

The German lists say Mory, south of Arras near Bapaume. The 9 KRRC account, however, places the battalion about 55 miles south-east at Urvillers, Montescourt and the St Quentin road on 21 March. Because the battalion account is detailed and fits the date exactly, “Mory” should not yet be treated as the precise place where Charlie laid down his arms. It may be a German administrative error, a confusion with Moy, or a registration/transit location. The secure conclusion is his capture date and battalion; the most reliable battle location is the Urvillers sector.

9. Stendal prisoner-of-war camp system



The Stendal prisoner of war camp was situated about 125 miles west of Berlin, and housed roughly 15,000 Allied prisoners, including French, Russian, and British servicemen. The two ICRC lists are surviving Stendal records for Charlie. They establish that he was registered within the Stendal system, but not that he lived continuously inside the main camp. Stendal, about a mile north-east of the town, was a parent camp administering many subsidiary labour detachments and holding thousands of

prisoners on its books. Charlie could have remained at the main camp, passed through it, or spent much of his captivity at an Arbeitskommando while administratively attached to Stendal.

No further personal online record has yet been identified—such as a camp prisoner number, barrack, work detachment, medical file, disciplinary record, correspondence, parcel record, or route and date of return to Britain. This is unsurprising: German camp records for ordinary soldiers survive unevenly, and British First World War POW material is incomplete.

10. Chronology and research priorities

Date / period	Event	Confidence
19 Aug 1896	Born at Walthamstow to George and Louisa Rendell, née Fensom.	Strong; certificate/baptism required for full verification.
Late Aug–Sep 1914	Likely joined KRRC and stated that he was 19.	Very likely; exact attestation date required.
1914–15	Training with the original 9 KRRC at Winchester, Aldershot and Petworth.	Strong if he joined the original battalion.
20–21 May 1915	9 KRRC landed at Boulogne.	Established for unit; Charlie's presence highly likely.
1915–17	Western Front service with 9 KRRC.	Unit service established; individual attendance at each battle unproven.

By Mar 1918	Lance-corporal.	Supported by both German POW records.
21 Mar 1918	Captured amid destruction of 9 KRRC at Urvillers; German record says Mory.	Very strong; exact point unresolved.
Spring 1918 onward	Registered in Stendal POW system.	Established.
24 May 1918	Likely notification/administrative date, not capture.	Reasoned inference.

Most useful next steps: (1) order the birth certificate and locate a baptism; (2) obtain any surviving service/attestation papers and medal roll entry; (3) examine the 9 KRRC war diary, WO 95/1900/2, around 20–22 March 1918; (4) search Walthamstow newspapers for April–July 1918 and December 1918–January 1919; (5) ask The National Archives about WO 161 repatriated-prisoner material; and (6) contact Stadtarchiv Stendal or Landesarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt for Kriegsgefangenenlager/Stendal nominal rolls or Arbeitskommando registers, quoting both forenames, R/4560, 9 KRRC and 21 March 1918.

Sources and links

- [ICRC POW list P.A. 36553 \(Edward Rendell\), original scan](#)
- [ICRC POW list P.A. 31399 \(Charles Rendell\), original scan](#)
- [ICRC First World War Prisoners of War archive](#)
- [The Long, Long Trail — King's Royal Rifle Corps](#)
- [The Long, Long Trail — 14th \(Light\) Division](#)
- [National Archives catalogue — WO 95/1900/2, 9th Battalion KRRC war diary](#)
- [Great War Forum — transcription of 1918 9 KRRC account](#)
- [National Army Museum — King's Royal Rifle Corps](#)
- [National Archives research guide — British prisoners of war, 1790–1919](#)
- [General Register Office — order a historic birth certificate](#)

Document note: This version retains the substantive research in version 1.0 while reorganising it into a single evidence-led narrative. Interpretation is explicitly marked where the underlying record is incomplete.