

Private John William Jackson

Regimental Number: 98057

164th Labour Company, Royal Engineers

born: 16 January 1878 - died: 13 November 1918

John William Jackson was born in Montreal, Canada on 16 January 1878, the son of George John Jackson and his wife, Mary Jane Rowsell.¹ George, known later in his life as John, was born in Devonport, Devon in the early 1840s.² At some point, he immigrated to Canada. His wife, Mary Jane, was born in Paulton, Somerset in the early 1850s.³ In 1871, she was living with her widowed father, William, in the home of her grandfather, Joseph Rowsell, in Winterfield, Paulton.⁴ Mary Jane immigrated to Canada sometime between 1871 and 1875, when she married John in Montreal. John and Mary were married in 1875 at the Anglican Trinity Memorial Chapel in Montreal, Quebec.⁵ Their first child, Louisa Jane was born on 6 November 1876 in Montreal and baptised at the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral on 5 January 1877.⁶ John William was born on 16 January 1878 and baptised on 19 July 1877 at the same church.⁷

The family returned to England in the following few years and, in 1881, were living at 2 Kingstree Street, Bedminster, Somerset.⁸ When their son, Clarence, was born in 1882, they were living at 12 Country Street, Bedminster.⁹ Another son, Fred, was born about 1884.¹⁰ In the mid-1880s, they moved to the London area, where three more children were born: Henry (born about 1885),¹¹ Alice (born about 1888),¹² and Mary (born in 1890).¹³ John had many occupations in his life – in 1881, he was a bar man; in 1891, a commission agent; and, in 1911, a foreman of road sweepers in Paddington.

In 1901, their son, John, 23 years old, married Grace Haynes on 9 March 1901 in Daventry, Northamptonshire.¹⁴ Their first child, Grace, was born on the 23 June 1901.¹⁵ There followed four more children: Frederick John (born 26 January 1903), Gladys May (born 14 March 1905), Amy Louise (born 18 October 1911), William (born 5 May 1914) and Mary (born on 9 January 1917).¹⁶ They also had two other children who had died before 1911.¹⁷ In 1911, the family was living at 74 Sidney Road, Woodford Halse, Byfield, near Daventry, Northamptonshire and John was a sheet repairer for the railway company.

When John enlisted in the 13th (Labour) Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment on 5 December 1915 in Bristol, he was living at 38 Picton Lane, Montpelier, Bristol.¹⁸ He was nearly 38 years old, a labourer and was 5' 10" tall. He served at home from July to September 1916 and then went to France with the Royal Berkshire Regiment in September 1916. The Royal Berks became the 164th and 165th Labour Companies of the Labour Corps in April 1917.¹⁹ Generally, soldiers who were older or rated as less physically fit than infantrymen at the front were enlisted in the Labour Corps.²⁰ John transferred to the 164th Labour Corps in May 1917.

He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 12 November 1918 with influenza.²¹ He died the following day and was buried a day later in the British Military Cemetery at Auberchicourt (Grave 10, Row C, Plot 1). The presiding chaplain was W. F. O'Neill Fisher.

John died two days after the Armistice was signed. The war diaries for the 1st CCCS noted for the day John was admitted that "Hospital still very busy. A considerable number of wounded still arriving."²² Influenza accounted for most deaths at the 1st CCCS after the Armistice. In spite of the horrific number of soldiers killed in World War I, the influenza pandemic, which affected the whole

world and scourged Europe in 1918-1919, killed more people than the war itself.²³ Sixty-seven people (soldiers and civilians) died at the 1st CCCS in November 1918. The work of the Centre had shifted from being primarily surgical to medical, to deal with the influenza pandemic.²⁴

Auberchicourt, a village about 12 kilometres to the east of Douai, was occupied by Commonwealth troops in October 1918.²⁵ The Auberchicourt British Cemetery, which is just west of the village, was set up at the end of October and was used until February 1919 while the 6th, 23rd and 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations were located nearby.

His next-of-kin was his wife, Grace, who was then living at 38 Armdale Avenue, Bath Bridge, Montpelier, Bristol, was notified of his death by the CCCS chaplain.²⁶ The monies owing to him by the army after his death were sent to her and their children.²⁷

John was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁸ The medals were sent to his wife.²⁹

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¹ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 March 2015), entry for John William Jackson, Registration district: Bedminster, Sub-registration district: Bedminster, ED, institution, or vessel: 37, Piece: 2457, Folio: 147, Page Number: 35; Birth certificate for Clarence Jackson

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for Gladys Jackson, Registration district: Paddington, Sub-registration district: St Mary Paddington, ED, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 6, Folio: 86, Page Number: 6; "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for John Jackson, Registration district: Hendon, Sub-registration district: Willesden, ED, institution, or vessel: 41, Piece: 1221, Folio: 55, Page Number: 26, Household schedule number: 193

³ Her birth dates vary from 1850 to 1854. "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for Gladys Jackson, Registration district: Paddington, Sub-registration district: St Mary Paddington, ED, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 6, Folio: 86, Page Number: 6; "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for John Jackson, Registration district: Hendon, Sub-registration district: Willesden, ED, institution, or vessel: 41, Piece: 1221, Folio: 55, Page Number: 26, Household schedule number: 193; "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2015), entry for Mary J. Rowsell, Registration district: Clutton, Sub-registration district: Clutton, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 214, Piece: 2470, Folio: 27, Page Number: 7

⁴ "1871 England Census," entry for Mary J. Rowsell

⁵ "Quebec, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621-1967," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 March 2015), entry for John Jackson

⁶ *Ibid*, entry for Louisa Jane Jackson

⁷ *Ibid*, entry for William John Jackson

⁸ "1881 England Census," entry for John William Jackson

⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for Clarence Jackson, Registration district: Bedminster, Inferred County: Somerset, Volume: 5c, Page: 692

¹⁰ "1891 England Census," entry for Gladys Jackson

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2015), entry for Mary Jackson, Registration district: Paddington, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 42

¹⁴ "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk, accessed 5 March 2015), entry for John Jackson, District: Daventry, County: Northamptonshire, Volume: 3B, Page: 132

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- ¹⁵ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 5 March 2015), entry for John William Jackson
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 5 March 2015), entry for John W. Jackson, Registration district: Daventry, Registration District Number: 164, Sub-registration district: Daventry, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Household schedule number: 99, Piece: 8463
- ¹⁸ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for John William Jackson
- ¹⁹ "The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918: The Royal Berkshire Regiment," (<http://www.1914-1918.net/berks.htm>; accessed 6 March 2015)
- ²⁰ "The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918: The Labour Corps of 1917-1918," (<http://www.1914-1918.net/labour.htm>; accessed 6 March 2015)
- ²¹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 711
- ²² "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/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G;
- ²³ "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," (<https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>; accessed 3 February 2015)
- ²⁴ "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/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 15 December 2014)
- ²⁵ "Auberchicourt British Cemetery," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/59509/AUBERCHICOURT%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 3 February 2015)
- ²⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 711
- ²⁷ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 19 January 2015), entry for John William Jackson
- ²⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2015), entry for John William Jackson
- ²⁹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for John William Jackson