

Private Herbert Walmsley Kay

Regimental number: 210949

1st Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

born: 1897 - died: 27 July 1918

Private Herbert Walmsley Kay, born in about 1897, was the son of Thomas and Mary Ann Kay of Darwen, Lancashire.¹ Thomas Kay was born about 1869 in Darwen and his wife, the former Mary Ann Walmsley, was born about the same year, also in Darwen. They were married there in 1895.² Herbert was the first of Thomas and Mary Ann's three children: Herbert, Alexander (born in about 1898)³ and Thomas (born in about 1904).⁴ Sadly, Herbert's mother died in 1905, when Herbert was just seven and his youngest brother was a year old.⁵ In 1906, Thomas remarried, marrying Jane Ellen Hirst, born in 1873 in Burnley, Lancashire.⁶ They probably did not have any children.

In 1901, Herbert's father was a paper finisher⁷ and, in 1911, a paper mill worker.⁸ That year the family was living at 49 Perry Street in Darwen. Herbert was a cotton worker, as was his younger brother, Alexander, who was working part-time.

Herbert enlisted in Preston, Lancashire in the 1st Battalion of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment,⁹ a Regular Battalion. It served on the Western Front for the duration of the Great War.

On 24 July 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with multiple shrapnel wounds, including to his forearm, face, scrotum and penis, and a fractured thigh.¹⁰ He died three days later and was buried that day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery with the chaplain, R. L. Brydges, presiding. Chaplain Brydges was replacing Chaplain J. K. Tibbits, who had left on leave a week earlier.¹¹ Herbert was a member of the Church of England.

The day that he was admitted to the 1st CCCS, there were 108 admissions and Herbert was one of 39 to die at that CCCS in July.¹² Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.¹³ This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

Herbert's step-mother, Jane Ellen, who was then living at Waddicon, 20 Ashton Street in Darwen, was notified of his death¹⁴ and received the monies owing to him from the army after his death.¹⁵ It is possible that his father had died in 1915.¹⁶ Herbert was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁷

Herbert's brother, Alexander, also served in the Great War, but he survived.¹⁸ At the age of 18, he signed on in July 1916 for the duration of the war and was assigned to the Service Corps reserve. He identified Herbert as his next-of-kin. Both brothers were then living at 22 Ashton Street, Darwen.

Alexander was mobilized in February 1917 and sent to Woolwich, where he was attached to the Royal Engineers with the rank of Pioneer. In July he was transferred to the Royal Engineers in Bedfordshire. After the end of the war, he was sent to the Heaton Park Disposal Station in Manchester, where he was honourably discharged from the army on 28 January 1919.

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- ¹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Hebert W. Kay, Registration district: Blackburn, Registration District Number: 474, Sub-registration district: Darwen, ED, institution, or vessel: 12, Piece: 25149
- ² "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Thomas Kay, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 805
- ³ "British Army Service Records 1914-1920," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2-15), entry for Alexander Kay, Form Title: Short Service Attestation
- ⁴ "1911 England Census," entry for Hebert W. Kay
- ⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Mary Ann Kay, Registration district: Blackburn, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 314
- ⁶ "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Thomas Kay, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 834
- ⁷ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Herbert W. Kay, Registration district: Blackburn, Sub-registration district: Darwen, ED, institution, or vessel: 15, Piece: 3921, Folio: 145, Page Number: 19, Household schedule number: 118
- ⁸ "1911 England Census," entry for Hebert W. Kay
- ⁹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Herbert Walmsley Kay
- ¹⁰ "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 636
- ¹¹ "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=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)
- ¹² "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31"
- ¹³ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ¹⁴ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 636
- ¹⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Herbert William Kay
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Thomas Kay, Registration district: Blackburn, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 572
- ¹⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2015), entry for Herbert Walmsley Kay
- ¹⁸ "British Army Service Records 1914-1920," entry for Alexander Kay