

Sapper Thomas Ernest Grant

Regimental number: 386825

4th Signal Company, Royal Monmouthshire, Royal Engineers

born: 7 April 1877 - died: 5 July 1918

Sapper Thomas Ernest Grant (known first as Thomas and later, in the army, as Ernest) was born in on 7 April 1877¹ in Lambeth, London.² He was the son of Levi and Fanny Grant and was baptised when he was five years old in the parish of Emmanuel, West Dulwich in Lambeth.³ His father, Levi, was born in about 1847 in Crediton, Devon,⁴ the son of Thomas and Sarah Grant.⁵ His mother, the former Fanny Pike, was born in about 1849 in Alderbury, Wiltshire, the daughter of Nathaniel and Leah Pike.⁶ Fanny moved to London with her mother and brother after the death of her father.⁷ In 1871, the three were living in Lambeth, Surrey.⁸ By 1871, Levi, a carman, had also moved to London and was living with his sister in Marylebone.⁹

Levi married Fanny in 1874 in Lambeth, Surrey¹⁰ and they had five children: Mary Ann Louise (born in 1874),¹¹ Thomas Ernest, Leah Florence (born in 1879)¹² and twins, Frederick and Alfred (born in 1886).¹³ It appears that Fanny had a son, William (born in 1871), prior to her marriage to Levi.¹⁴

By 1881, Levi was a police constable and living with Fanny and four of their children at 4 Champness Terrace in Lambeth. Beginning in 1884, Thomas was a student at Salter Hill School, on Gypsy Road in Lambeth, where his conduct was described as good.¹⁵ Levi died in 1886¹⁶ and so, in 1891, Fanny was a widow living with her five children on Clive Road in Lambeth. She was a domestic cook and Thomas was an errand boy.

In 1901, Thomas, then listed as Ernest, was probably living in the barracks at Tidworth House in Dulwich, London.¹⁷ He was a Driver with the Royal Engineers. Although Thomas had enlisted and was living away from home, the rest of the family remained close for several decades. In 1901, his mother was living at 6 Whitely Road in Lambeth with her son, William, and his wife and three children and her twin sons, Frederick and Alfred.¹⁸ Fanny died the following year.¹⁹ Her son, William, was living at 24 Anerley Road in Upper Norwood in 1911, where he was an advertisers' and publishers' agent.²⁰ His twin brothers, Frederic and Alfred, also in the publishing industry, were still living with William and his family. His sister, Mary Ann Louise, had married William Staniford, a constable with the Metropolitan police, in 1897²¹ and, in 1911, was living in Upper Norwood. Her sister, Leah Florence, who never married,²² was living with them.²³

Late in 1904 or early in 1905, Thomas Ernest married Hannah Hilley Teasell in London.²⁴ Hannah was born in about 1877, possibly in Clerkenwell, London.²⁵ In 1911, Thomas and Hannah (then called Ann) were living at 24 Handforth Road in Brixton.²⁶ They did not have any children. Thomas was a carman, working for a laundry and Ann was a dining room keeper.

Ernest served with the Royal Monmouthshire, a militia unit of the Royal Engineers.²⁷ It was originally an Infantry Militia charged with home defence, but became a Royal Engineer unit in 1896. At the outbreak of the Great War, Ernest was already 37 years old, but he still enlisted as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers early in the war, perhaps because he had already served with this corps. He went to France on 14 December 1914.²⁸

Ernest survived three and half years on the Front but, on 14 June 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with a compound fracture of his skull.²⁹ The cause was accidental. He was one of 91 admissions to the 1st CCCS that day.³⁰ He survived just over three weeks – an exceptionally long time for a soldier at the 1st CCCS – but died of his wounds on 6 July. He was buried the following day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row D, Grave 47) with the chaplain J. K. Tibbitts presiding. Ernest was identified as Church of England.

Ernest was one of 39 to die at this CCCS in July 1918 and one of over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery – most of them were soldiers who died at one of the nearby clearing stations.³¹ The Pernes British Military Cemetery was set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

His wife, who was then living at 50 Brewer Street, Shaftsbury Avenue, London W., was notified of his death.³² She also received the monies owing to him by the army after his death.³³ She continued to live at 50 Brewer Street until at least 1935.³⁴

Ernest was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).³⁵



E. Grant in Pernes British Military Cemetery
(Source: Author, July 2015)

© BIFHSGO, 2015

¹ "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 May 2015), entry for Thomas Grant

² "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Thomas Ernest Grant, Registration district: Lambeth, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 531

³ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Thomas Ernest Grant. His sister, Leah, was baptised the same day.

⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Levi Grant, Registration district: Crediton, Inferred County: Devon, Volume: 10, Page: 72

⁵ "1851 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Levi Grant, Registration district: Crediton, Sub-registration district: Crediton, ED, institution, or vessel: 2a, Household schedule number: 57, Piece: 1887, Folio: 45, Page Number: 13

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 May 2015), entry for Fanny Pike, Registration district: Alderbury, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 8, Page: 245; "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 May 2015), entry for Fanny Pike, FHL Film Number: 1239221

⁷ Family source; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 May 2015), entry for Nathaniel Pike, Registration district: Blandford, Inferred County: Dorset, Volume: 5a, Page: 175

-
- ⁸ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Fanny Pike, Registration district: Lambeth, Sub-registration district: Brixton, ED, institution, or vessel: 3, Household schedule number: 189, Piece: 681, Folio: 39, Page Number: 35
- ⁹ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Levi Grant, Registration district: Marylebone, Sub-registration district: St Mary, ED, institution, or vessel: 12, Household schedule number: 844, Piece: 168, Folio: 91, Page Number: 117
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Levi Grant, Registration district: Lambeth, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 546
- ¹¹ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Mary Ann Louise Grant
- ¹² "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Lead Florence Grant
- ¹³ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entries for Alfred Grant and Frederic Grant
- ¹⁴ "1871 England Census," entry for Fanny Pike
- ¹⁵ "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840-1911," entry for Thomas Grant
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 May 2015), entry for Levi Grant, Registration district: Camberwell, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 439
- ¹⁷ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Ernest Grant, Registration district: Andover, Sub-registration district: Ampport, ED, institution, or vessel: 8, Piece: 1114, Folio: 69, Page Number: 12, Household schedule number: 61
- ¹⁸ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Fanny Grant, Registration district: Lambeth, Sub-registration district: Norwood, ED, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 438, Folio: 135, Page Number: 13, Household schedule number: 5
- ¹⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 May 2015), entry for Fanny Grant, Registration district: Lambeth, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 273
- ²⁰ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 May 2015), entry for William Walter Grant Grant, Registration district: Croydon, Registration District Number: 39, Sub-registration district: Penge, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 15, Piece: 3405
- ²¹ "London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 May 2015), entry for Mary Louisa Grant, Parish: Christ Church, Norwood, Borough: Lambeth, Register Type: Parish Register
- ²² "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 May 2015), entry for Mary Louisa Staniford
- ²³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Mary Louise Staniford, Registration district: Lambeth, Registration District Number: 25, Sub-registration district: Norwood, ED, institution, or vessel: 43, Piece: 2142
- ²⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Thomas Ernest Grant, Registration district: Westminster, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 795
- ²⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 May 2015), entry for Thomas Ernest Grant, Registration district: Lambeth, Registration District Number: 25, Sub-registration district: Brixton, ED, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 2052
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ "The Royal Monmouthshire RE (Militia)," *The British Army* (<http://www.army.mod.uk/royalengineers/units/28725.aspx#>; accessed 6 May 2015)
- ²⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 May 2015), entry for Ernest Grant
- ²⁹ "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 618
- ³⁰ "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](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

³¹ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

³² "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 618

³³ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 5 May 2015), entry for Ernest Grant

³⁴ "London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 13 May 2015), entry for Hannah Hilley Grant

³⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," for Ernest Grant