

Lieutenant John Swallow Hibberd

Regimental number: -

47th Battalion, Canadian Infantry, Canadian Expeditionary Force

born: probably 14 July 1877 - died: 29 September 1918

Lieutenant John Swallow Hibberd was probably born on 14 July 1877 in Devizes, Wiltshire, England,¹ the youngest child of William and Sarah Ann (née Snook) Hibberd.² He was christened on 19 August 1877 in Urchfont, Wiltshire. Both his parents were born in Urchfont – William in about 1831 and Sarah Ann in about 1835³ – and were married there in 1857.⁴

John was one of ten children born to William and Sarah Ann, all of who survived to 1911:⁵ William (born in about 1859),⁶ Martha (born in about 1860),⁷ Gertrude (born in about 1862),⁸ Emily Amelia (born in about 1864),⁹ George Herbert (born in about 1866),¹⁰ Ernest Vernon Joe (born in about 1869),¹¹ Lillian (born in about 1873),¹² Rose (born in about 1873),¹³ Jane (born in about 1875)¹⁴ and John.

John's father, William, died the year after John was born, at the age of 47.¹⁵ He died on 24 November 1878, leaving a personal estate of under £1,500.¹⁶ William had been an inn keeper at a public house in Sneed, Wiltshire,¹⁷ but by 1871, he was also a farmer.¹⁸ He was the inn keeper at the Bell Inn in Urchfont and farming. After he died, John's mother was farming twelve acres of land in Urchfont,¹⁹ like her father, John Swallow Snook, who had farmed in Urchfont for many years before his death in 1877.²⁰ John was probably named after his mother's father.

In 1891, John's mother was still in Urchfont, living on her own means, with her two youngest children – Jane and John.²¹ Her daughter, Gertrude, now married to John W. Cooke, and their three children were also living with her. Her sister, Susanna, was living next door.

By 1901, the last two children had left home. John was working at a cabinet maker in Walton on Thames and was boarding with the Aldertons on Ashley Terrace.²² His sister, Jane, had married James Worboys, a butcher, in 1898²³ and was living at 4 Prospect Street in Caversham, Oxfordshire.²⁴ John's mother was living with them. Ten years later, she was a lodger, living with Ada Fry at Newbury House in Urchfont.²⁵ She died three years later, in Devizes.²⁶

John immigrated to Canada in 1910, sailing on the ss *Virginian*, leaving from Liverpool and arriving in Quebec City on 3 June 1910.²⁷ He was travelling to his ultimate destination, Preston, Ontario, on the Grand Trunk Railway. It is not clear where John lived during the four years that he was in Canada. A year after arriving in Canada, he may have been living an hour west of Preston in St Mary's, as a lodger in the home of Edward and Ellen Pittman on Bloor Street.²⁸ However, in August 1914, he made a will in Victoria, British Columbia.²⁹ Then he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Valcartier, Quebec in September 1914.³⁰ On most army documents, he gave his address as that of one of his siblings in England.

He enlisted in the 7th Battalion (Regimental number: 16848) on 23 September 1914.³¹ He was 36 years old³² and a cabinet maker. He had a dark complexion, grey eyes and dark hair that was turning grey. He had previously served for a year and half in the 3rd Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment.

John was promoted to Corporal just days after his enlistment. He sailed to England, arriving in January 1915 and was stationed at Lark Hill on Salisbury Plain. A few days after arriving in England, John was hospitalised for ten days with influenza. While at Lark Hill, he transferred to the Divisional Cyclist Company, which had been formed in October 1914, in Valcartier, Quebec when the 1st Canadian Division was formed.³³ He was promoted to Lance Sergeant in Sept 1915 and then to Sergeant in December of the same year. In May 1916, he transferred to the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion, which had just been formed through the reorganisation of the various cyclist companies.

Since, during the first years of the war, the Allied troops were more static than expected, the cyclist companies were also trained to carry out other duties, such as “traffic control, sapping and mining, trench guide, listening posts, battalion runners and despatch riding duties.”³⁴ Indeed, between June 1916, when he first went to France, and February 1918, John had a variety of postings. These included postings to the Assistant Provost Marshall, who was responsible for the military police,³⁵ to the 2nd Canadian Division Traffic Control and to a Prisoner of War cage in the field.

During this period, he was admitted to the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his face. However, he returned to duty the next day – 1 October 1917.

In the spring of 1918, John went back to England. He attended the Canadian School of Musketry in Mychett, Surrey and then, in May, the Officer Training Course in Bexhill. A few months later, he was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant.

In August 1918, John transferred to the 4th Reserve Battalion and, a few days later, went back to France with the 47th Battalion.³⁶ He arrived in France on 17 September. Just twelve days later he was fatally wounded.

On 29 September the 47th Battalion was engaged in activities on the Front near Bournonville, just west of Cambrai.³⁷

While second in command of “D” Company, which was marching to the rear near Cambrai under enemy shell fire, [John] was wounded in the stomach by shrapnel for an enemy shell which burst close to him. His wounds were dressed, and he was carried to the dressing station of the 50th Canadian Infantry Battalion and later evacuated to No 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station where he died.³⁸

The Battalion’s war diary noted, “One officer casualty was incurred on the way out, Lieut. J. S. Hibberd, being wounded. This officer died of wounds shortly after reaching the dressing station.”³⁹ Indeed, he was admitted on 29 September to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds that penetrated his chest and abdomen.⁴⁰ He died the same day and was buried on 1 October in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 7, Plot 8, Row A) with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding. John is also remembered on the Urchfont War



Urchfont War Memorial (Source: “Urchfont War Memorial,” Wiltshire OPC Project/Cathy Sedgwick/2015. Photo by Michael Day 2015)

memorial.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.⁴¹ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.⁴² A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

His brother, George Herbert Hibberd, who was living at 6 Cheriton Road in Winchester, Hampshire, was his next of kin and was notified of his death.⁴³ Another next of kin, Miss Davison, living at the Nurses Home of the London Hospital, who was identified as possibly his sister, although this does not seem likely. For several years, his pay was assigned to Mrs W. Hodge of 4 Weybourne Terrace, Dartmouth in Devon.⁴⁴ Alice Hodge (born in 1862 in Harberton, Devon) was living at that address with her husband, William Hodge, and two children in 1911.⁴⁵ The pay assignment was later changed to his sister, Lillian Hibberd, also living in Dartmouth. It is not known who Miss Davison or Alice Hodge were connected to John.

On 14 August 1914, John had signed a will in Victoria, British Columbia, that made his brother-in-law, James Warboys of Northwood, Middlesex, his executor.⁴⁶ He bequeathed \$1,000 to his sister, Jane Warboys; \$500 to his brother, George Herbert Hibberd; and \$500 to each of three other sisters, Lillian Hibberd, Emily Amelia Hibberd, Rose Byrd (wife Frederick Canning Byrd⁴⁷) and the balance to two nephews, Leslie James Worboys and Stanley Arthur Byrd. He left his jewellery and personal possessions to his sister, Jane, to dispose of as she saw fit. John's will was probated in London in 1919. In the probate, he was shown as living at Green Lane in Northwood, Middlesex. His effects amounted to £768 15s 10d.

It is not clear why some of his older siblings or other nieces and nephews were not included in his will. It is possible that his eldest brother, William immigrated to Australia in 1874⁴⁸ and died there in 1932.⁴⁹ His eldest sister, Martha was living with her husband, Robert William Lyne in Urchfont in 1911.⁵⁰ Gertrude had married John William Cooke and was living in Hornsey, Middlesex in 1911⁵¹ and Ernest Vernon died in 1911.⁵² Of those included in the will, in 1911, Emily was a nurse and living in West Norwood, London⁵³, George was living in Sparshot, Winchester,⁵⁴ Lillian was a cook living at "Redwalls" in Dartmouth, Devonshire,⁵⁵ Rose Byrd was living at 305 Wighman Road, Hornsey, Middlesex,⁵⁶ and Jane Worboys was living in Northwood, Middlesex.⁵⁷

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Swallow Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 101. This record and the subsequent baptism record, give his year of birth as 1877. His attestation form for the Canadian Expeditionary Force gives his day of birth as 14 July.

² "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530-1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Swallow Hibberd

³ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Sarah Ann Hebberrb, Registration district: Devizes, Sub-registration district: Lavington, ED, institution, or vessel: 11, Household schedule number: 89, Piece: 1911, Folio: 59, Page Number: 17

⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Sarah Ann Snook, Registration district: Devizes, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 124

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- ⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Sarah Ann Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, Registration District Number: 246, Sub-registration district: Lavington, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 79, Piece: 11945
- ⁶ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 April 2016), entry for Sarah Ann Hebberrb, Registration district: Devizes, Sub-registration district: Lavington, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 89, Piece: 1911, Folio: 59, Page Number: 17
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, ED, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 2042, Folio: 129, Page Number: 11
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for William Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 66
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for William Hibberd
- ¹⁷ "1861 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2016), entry for William Hibberd, Registration district: Melksham, Sub-registration district: Melksham, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Household schedule number: 19, Piece: 1294, Folio: 17, Page Number: 4
- ¹⁸ "1871 England Census," entry for Sarah Ann Hebberrb
- ¹⁹ "1881 England Census," entry for John Hibberd
- ²⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for John Swallow Snook, Registration district: Devizes, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 73; "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for John S. Snook; "1851 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Susannah Snook, Registration district: Devizes, Sub-registration district: Bishops Cannings, ED, institution, or vessel: 01a, Household schedule number: 57, Piece: 1839, Folio: 185, Page Number: 13
- ²¹ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John S. Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, ED, institution, or vessel: 12, Piece: 1601, Folio: 126, Page Number: 7
- ²² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Hibberd, Registration district: Chertsey, Sub-registration district: Walton, ED, institution, or vessel: 01, Piece: 587, Folio: 8, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 47
- ²³ "England Marriages," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Jane Hibberd, Place: Urchfont, County: Wiltshire
- ²⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for James Worboys, Registration district: Henley, Sub-registration district: Caversham, ED, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 1371, Folio: 57, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 39
- ²⁵ "1911 England Census," entry for Sarah Ann Hibberd
- ²⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Sarah A. Hibberd, Registration district: Devizes, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 108
- ²⁷ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Jno S. Hibberd
- ²⁸ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Hibberd, Province: Ontario, District: Algoma West, District Number: 55, Sub-District: 23 - Tarentorus, St Marys, Sub-District Number: 23. Although this may be John, his month and year of birth are shown as May 1876, which is not consistent with the month and year of birth shown on his attestation form.
- ²⁹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918>)

[cef/Pages/search.aspx](#); accessed 16 April 2016), entry for John Swallow Hibberd, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 4316 – 8, Digitized service file - PDF format: B4316-S008

³⁰ Ibid. Unless otherwise noted, all information about his military career comes from this source.

³¹ Ibid.

³² His attention form reports his year of birth was 1878; however his birth and baptismal records indicate that he was actually born in 1877. This means that he was actually 37 years old.

³³ "Canadian "Cyclist Battalion" in The Great War," Canada at War (<http://www.canadaatwar.ca/forums/showthread.php?t=2673>; accessed 17 April 2016)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Provost marshal," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provost_marshal" accessed 17 April 2016)

³⁶ The journal of the chaplains at the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station indicates that he was with the 37th Battalion when he died. However, all other army records show that he was with the 47th Battalion.

³⁷ "MIKAN 2005999: War diaries - 47th Canadian Infantry Battalion," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>; accessed 17 April 2016), File: RG9-III-D-3. Volume/box number: 4940. File number: 439. Copied container number: T-10747

³⁸ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for John Swallow Hibberd

³⁹ "MIKAN 2005999: War diaries - 47th Canadian Infantry Battalion"

⁴⁰ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 696

⁴¹ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

⁴² "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 17 June 2015)

⁴³ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 696

⁴⁴ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for John Swallow Hibberd

⁴⁵ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 17 April 2016), entry for Alice Hodge, District: Totnes, Registration district number: 273, Enumeration district: 6, Subdistrict: Dartmouth, Subdistrict number: 3, Census reference: RG14PN12816 RG78PN737 RD273 SD3 ED6 SN117, Piece number 12816

⁴⁶ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for John Swallow Hibberd

⁴⁷ "England Marriages 1538-1973," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 April 2016), entry for Rose Hibberd, County: Wiltshire

⁴⁸ "New South Wales, Australia, Unassisted Immigrant Passenger Lists, 1826-1922," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for William Hibberd

⁴⁹ "Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for William Hibberd, Registration Number: 16754

⁵⁰ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Martha Lyne, Registration district: Devizes, Registration District Number: 246, Sub-registration district: Lavington, ED, institution, or vessel: 11, Household schedule number: 27, Piece: 11946

⁵¹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Gertrude Cooke, Registration district: Edmonton, Registration District Number: 132, Sub-registration district: Hornsey, ED, institution, or vessel: 18, Household schedule number: 191, Piece: 7210

⁵² "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 April 2016), entry for Ernest Hibberd

⁵³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Emily Hibberd, Registration district: Lambeth, Registration District Number: 25, Sub-registration district: Norwood, ED, institution, or vessel: 26, Piece: 2125

⁵⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for George Hibberd, Registration district: Winchester, Registration District Number: 103, Sub-registration district: Winchester, ED, institution, or vessel: 15, Household schedule number: 93, Piece: 6128

⁵⁵ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Lillian Hibberd, District: Totnes, Registration district number: 273, Enumeration district: 7, Subdistrict: Dartmouth, Subdistrict number: 3, Census reference: RG14PN12817 RG78PN737 RD273 SD3 ED7 SN105, Piece number 12817

⁵⁶ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for Rose Byrd, Registration district: Edmonton, Registration District Number: 132, Sub-registration district: Hornsey, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Household schedule number: 428, Piece: 7197

⁵⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 April 2016), entry for James Worboy, Registration district: Uxbridge, Registration District Number: 127, Sub-registration district: Uxbridge, ED, institution, or vessel: 7, Household schedule number: 200, Piece: 6777