

Sapper Samuel Beresford May
Regimental number: 158525
257th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

born: 1893 – died: 15 August 1917

Sapper Samuel Beresford May was born in 1893¹ in Hasland, Derbyshire, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth May.² The family was from Derbyshire. His father was born in about 1859 in Wingerworth and his mother in 1860 in Derby. His father Thomas married Elizabeth Hargreaves in Brampton on 25 December 1878³ and they had 11 children.⁴ Nine of their children survived to 1911—they were probably Annie (born in about 1879), Alfred (born in about 1881), George (born in about 1883), Ellen (born in about 1885), Harriett (born in about 1890), Samuel, Frederick (born in about 1896), Doris (born in about 1899) and Edith (born in about 1900).⁵

In 1901, the family was living on Derby Road in Hasland, where Samuel's father was a coal miner.⁶ Ten years later he was still a coal miner (hewer) and Samuel had joined him in the coal mines.⁷ As a banksman Samuel unloaded cages when they reached the surface of a coal mine and signalled the descent of the workmen.⁸

Samuel enlisted as a sapper in the 257th Tunnelling Company of the Royal Engineers.⁹ On 14 August 1917, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.¹⁰ He died the following day of gas poisoning. On the day that he was admitted, Samuel was one of 193 soldiers to be admitted to the 1st CCCS.¹¹ A total of 1,896 were admitted in the month of August.

Samuel was buried in the Adinkerke Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: C. 18).¹² The cemetery is 20 kilometres east of Dunkirk, in the community of De Panne, just across the border into Belgium. There are 168 Commonwealth soldiers from the Great War buried in the cemetery.¹³

His father, Thomas, was his next of kin and was notified of his death.¹⁴ Thomas also received the monies owing to Samuel from the army upon his death.¹⁵ Sadly, Thomas died a few years after the war. He was living at 330 Derby Road, Birdholme, in Chesterfield when he died on 8 February 1921.¹⁶

Samuel was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁷

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Samuel Berrisford [sic] May, Registration district: Chesterfield, Inferred County: Derbyshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 719

² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Samuel B. May, Registration district: Chesterfield, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, ED, institution, or vessel: 34, Piece: 3246, Folio: 114, Page: 46, Household schedule number: 243

³ "England & Wales Marriages, 1538–1940," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Thomas May

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Samuel May, Registration district: Chesterfield, Registration district number: 438, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 21084

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- ⁵ "1901 England Census," entry for Samuel B. May; "1911 England Census," entry for Samuel May
- ⁶ "1901 England Census," entry for Samuel B. May
- ⁷ "1911 England Census," entry for Samuel May
- ⁸ "Dictionary of Old Occupations," *Family Researcher* (<http://www.familyresearcher.co.uk/glossary/Dictionary-of-Old-Occupations-jobs-beginning-B.html>): accessed 9 May 2016)
- ⁹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Samuel Berresford [sic] May
- ¹⁰ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 and 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 334
- 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=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02016202_e.html&r=1&f=G)
- ¹² "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 9 May 2016), entry for May, Samuel Beresford, Service No: 158525
- ¹³ "Adinkerke Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 30 April 2016)
- ¹⁴ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 334
- ¹⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 19 January 2016), entry for Samuel Beresford May
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Thomas May
- ¹⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2016), entry for Samuel B May