

Private Henry John Shimell©
Regimental number: 10908
11th Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

born: 1895 – died: 28 or 29 June 1918

Private Henry John Shimell was born in 1895¹ in Balham, Surrey² and baptized on 8 September of the same year at St Stephen's Church in Clapham Park.³ He was the son of William James and Jane Shimell. The Shimell family came from Teignmouth, Devon, where Henry's father was born in about 1852.⁴ A few years after the birth of his father, the family moved to London.⁵ His mother, the former Jane Voice, was born in about 1864 in Billingshurst, Sussex, but his parents were married in the London borough of Wandsworth in 1888.⁶

His father had had a previous marriage to Caroline and they had at least two children—Florence Augusta (born in about 1873) and William Charles (born in about 1880).⁷ After the probable death of Caroline in 1886,⁸ his father remarried and he and Jane had ten children—seven of whom survived childhood.⁹ There were eight sons—Arthur Sidney (born in 1888),¹⁰ Thomas Archibald (born in 1889),¹¹ Albert George (born in 1890, but died five years later),¹² Richard Alfred (born in 1891),¹³ Frank Montague (born in 1893),¹⁴ Henry John, Walter Percy (born in 1899)¹⁵ and Hubert Stanley (born in 1901 and died a few months later)¹⁶—and two daughters—Hilda May (born in 1894 and died the following year)¹⁷ and Margarette Edith (born in 1897).¹⁸ Henry's sister Hilda was baptized with him on 8 September 1896,¹⁹ but six other siblings (Arthur, Thomas, Richard, Frank, Margarette and Walter) were baptized together on 23 April 1899 in Balham, Wandsworth.²⁰

In 1891, William and his family were living on Ravenswood Road in Wandsworth, where his father was a carpenter and joiner.²¹ Ten years later, the family was living at 5 Verran Road in Streatham, Wandsworth.²² In 1911, the family was living at 43 Laitwood Road in Balham, where Henry was now working as a domestic coachman's assistant.²³

Henry enlisted in the army in Lambeth, Surrey and served in the 11th Battalion of The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). At the end of June 1916, the 11th Battalion was in the trenches near Armentières, close to the French–Belgian border. There had been quite a bit of artillery activity on both sides and sniping across no man's land. "At 8.35 pm on 24th June, 1916, just before they were about to be relieved, the enemy bombarded two sections of their front line trenches and an observation post, Monmouth House with heavy trench mortars and rifle grenades. They sent over about forty of these missiles and Trench 98 and the observation post were demolished."²⁴ It is not known when Henry was injured, but it may have been during these operations. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station but he died there on 28 or 29 June 1916.²⁵ In the month of June, 16 Other Ranks (non-officers) had been killed and 33 wounded.

He was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave Reference: II. E. 137). Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several casualty clearing stations, including the No 1 Canadian, were quartered there for considerable periods. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918, and occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when soldiers' remains were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.²⁶

His mother was his next of kin and was notified of his death. She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.

Henry was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁷

Henry's brother Frank also served in, but survived, the Great War. He enlisted on 8 June 1915 and served with the Army Service Corps²⁸ as a motor driver. He joined the Western Front in August 1915 and was demobilized in July 1919. It is not known if any of Henry's other brothers served in the Great War.

Henry's mother died in 1923²⁹ and his father in 1940.³⁰

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¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Henry John Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 810

² "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Henry Shimell

³ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 September 2016), entry for Henry John Shimell, Parish or Poor Law Union: Clapham Park St Stephen, Borough: Lambeth, Register type: Parish register

⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Henry J Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Sub-registration district: Streatham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 34, Piece: 474, Folio: 87, Page: 16, Household schedule number: 112

⁵ "1871 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 8 May 2016), entry for William J Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Archive reference: RG10, Piece number: 720, Folio: 51, Page: 22

⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for William James Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 785

⁷ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for William Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 36, Piece: 637, Folio: 104, Page: 17

⁸ "London, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Caroline Mary Shimell, Borough: Lambeth, Register type: Bishop's transcript

⁹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Henry John Shimall [*sic*], Registration district: Wandsworth, Registration district number: 26, Sub-registration district: Streatham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 2308

¹⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Sydney Arthur Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 739

¹¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Thomas Archibald Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 759

¹² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Albert George Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 698; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Albert George Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 9

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- ¹³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Richard Alfred Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 767
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Frank Montague Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 847
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Walter Percy Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 787
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Hubert Stanley Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 711; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Hubert Stanley Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 414
- ¹⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Hilda May Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 757; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Hilda May Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 9
- ¹⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Margarete Edith Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 821
- ¹⁹ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Hilda May Shimell, Parish or Poor Law Union: Clapham Park St Stephen, Borough: Lambeth, Register type: Parish register
- ²⁰ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Marguerite [*sic*] Edith Shimell, Parish or Poor Law Union: Balham Hill Ascension, Borough: Wandsworth, Register type: Parish registers. Records for five siblings are at the same source.
- ²¹ "1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 January 2016), entry for Willm Jas Shimmell [*sic*], Registration district: Wandsworth, Archive reference: RG12; Piece number: 456, Folio: 21, Page: 36
- ²² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Henry J Shimell
- ²³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Henry John Shimmell [*sic*]
- ²⁴ "The London WW1 Memorial 1914–1918 Profile Page," <http://www.londonwarmemorial.co.uk/>; accessed 28 September 2016), entry for Henry Shimell
- ²⁵ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2016), entry for Shimel [Shimmell]. The chaplains' journal records his death as being on 28 June 1916, but other army records suggest it was 29 June.
- ²⁶ "Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000047/Bailleul%20Communal%20Cemetery.%20Nord>: accessed 5 August 2015)
- ²⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Henry Shimell
- ²⁸ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Frank Shimell
- ²⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for Jane Shimell, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 661

³⁰ ““England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2016), entry for William James Shimell