

Captain Richard James Tipton©

Royal Flying Corps, 40th Squadron and Royal Field Artillery

born: 25 April 1892 – died: 12 March 1918

Richard (Dick) was born 25 April 1892¹ at Oxton, Cheshire, England, to John William Tipton and Mary Maud Leitch. He was christened 29 May 1892² in the Church of England. John was born about 1855 in the United States as a British Subject, and like his father before him, John was a cotton broker.³ Since all of John's siblings were born in Cheshire, England,⁴ it is possible that John's parents, Richard Tunkey and Adelaide Tipton were on a cotton buying trip to the United States when John was born. Mary Maud and her twin Margaret Florence Leitch were born to James and Lydia Leitch and christened 11 May 1859 at Walton Breck, Holy Trinity, Lancashire, England.⁵

John and Mary Tipton had five children:

- Robert Stewart, born 22 April 1883 in Birkenhead, England.⁶ Robert had emigrated from London, England on 1 March 1911, aged almost 28, aboard the SS *Sardinian*, where he identified himself as a clerk.⁷ He had arrived at St. John, New Brunswick on 17 March 1911, and passed through St. Albans, Vermont, U.S.A. en-route to Chicago.⁸ He enlisted with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force at Vancouver, B.C. in July 1916. At that time, he was single, 6'2" tall, 33 years old, and a longshoreman.⁹ Robert served as a corporal with the 211th (Alberta Americans) Infantry Battalion.¹⁰ The 211th Battalion was essentially comprised of American soldiers who enlisted in Vancouver as the U.S.A. had not yet joined the war.¹¹ A war diary for the 211th Canadian Infantry Battalion for February 1917 indicated that the battalion was still quarantined from their arrival at Witley Camp, Surrey, U.K. on 28 December 1916, as an epidemic had broken out on the H.M.T. Olympic while sailing from Canada.¹² It is likely that Robert died on 25 January 1968 in Vancouver,¹³ that he had been married to Margaret, and been a merchant in Comox, Alberni, B.C., for many years.¹⁴
- Lydia Mary was born 3 September 1885 in Oxton, Cheshire England.¹⁵ She married Henry Stubbs in 1912,¹⁶ had three children and died at the age of 93 at Surrey, England on 25 May 1979.¹⁷
- John Blakeway was born 24 July 1890 at Cheshire, England,¹⁸ and died 6 April 1940 at Denbighshire, Wales. He had been a Temporary Lieutenant with the Naval Reserve.¹⁹ In March 1920, John achieved a Certificate of Competency as Master of a Foreign-Going Ship.²⁰ His estate was left to his sister Lydia Mary Stubbs.²¹
- Richard James, our soldier, born 25 April 1892.
- Arthur Raynell was born 20 October 1895 at Cheshire, England,²² and died March 1972 at Wirral, Cheshire, England.²³ He too participated in the Great War with the Royal Engineers, Inland Waterways and Dock Companies.²⁴ His attestation was completed in September 1914, just a month before his 19th birthday. Therein, he noted that he was an apprentice to a cotton broker, presumably his father. Like his brother Robert, he was tall, 6'1.5". He was quickly promoted to sergeant. In his records is a 1920 letter from the Record Office to his father asking for information as to the whereabouts of Arthur. A second letter in August 1920 from the Record Office to John asks that he kindly ascertain and provide the date of Arthur's discharge, demobilization or transfer from the Royal Engineers and also the regimental number he held at that time. Arthur replied to that letter indicating that he had been transferred from the Royal Engineers to the Lancs. Cheshire R.G.A. during September 1914. He was demobilized from the R.A.F. in February 1919.²⁵ Interestingly, Arthur must

have continued working in the family business as a cotton broker and in that capacity travelled to Rangoon, Burma, returning to London in May 1933.²⁶

Richard attended Birkenhead School between 1902 and 1909, being a Prefect and playing on the football team.²⁷

On 7 January 1910, Richard was 17 years and 8 months old when he first applied for military service. The Attestation was to serve for four years in the United Kingdom. He was a commercist in the employ of Tipton & Sons, likely the family business. Included in the packet is a letter from Richard, then a private, asking to be discharged as he intended to take out a commission in the 3rd Brigade West Lancs, R.F.A. (undated). He was discharged 4 March 1911 after serving one year and 57 days with the Territorial Force.²⁸

Richard attended flight school to become a pilot at the Military School, Northolt, graduating 19 June 1915, with his certificate taken on Maurice Farman Biplane.²⁹



Maurice Farman Biplane, *Longhorn*, 1912¹

In May 1916, Richard transferred to the R.F.C. and went to Egypt with the 14th Squadron. On 18 June 1916, while on a bombing raid on El Arish, Egypt, Richard's plane was brought down, and he was taken prisoner by the Turks. He was held at Kastamani for 14 months before he, with two other officers, escaped. After almost 50 days of perilous journey, including recapture and rescue by bandits, he reached the Crimea and eventually England. Richard had the honour of a private interview with the King at Buckingham Palace to discuss his adventures.³⁰

Although Richard was offered three months leave, he immediately rejoined the R.F.C. and was sent to France. During a confrontation with the enemy, Richard was wounded by a machine gun bullet. He was successful in both bringing the enemy plane down and in landing his plane safely. Unfortunately, Richard died three days later from his wounds. Lieutenant-Colonel J.P. Reynolds wrote of Richard: "Of all the young men I have had to do with in my busy life, Dick stands out as the one whose personal magnetism has affected me most. It is seldom that one finds in one person so many high qualities as those with which he was endowed." He was known to be a great leader, particularly considering his age (25 when he died), gallant, personable and greatly respected.³¹

For more about the war exploits of Richard see the following links:

- *Lives of the First World War*, <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/5409714>. This link identifies a couple of newspaper articles written about Richard from 1916 and 1917.
- *A Kut Prisoner*, by Harry Coghill Watson Bishop, London (a fellow prisoner who escaped with Richard) a Project Gutenberg eBook, http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34069?msg=welcome_stranger. This book includes several photos.

- *The Aerodrome Forum*, a discussion group specifically talking about Richard's exploits, essentially summarizing the book noted above, <http://www.theaerodrome.com/forum/showthread.php?t=40863>.

Richard was wounded in his plane on 9 March 1918 and was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.³² Just days after Richard died, No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station was evacuated and moved further behind the lines.³³ It is therefore likely that Richard was killed during a harsh attack of the advancing enemy during the "First Battles of the Somme."³⁴

Richard is buried at the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Barlin, France at Plot II, Row A, Grave 26. The extension was commenced by French troops in October 1914, but was taken over by Commonwealth forces in March 1916. In November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz, but the extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.³⁵

Richard was awarded several medals: the 1914-15 Star (Lieut., R.F.A.); British War and Victory Medals, with M.I.D. oak leaf (Capt.). Those medals were auctioned by Dix Noonan Webb in June 2002.³⁶

Richard's father John died 3 January 1923 in Birkenhead, Cheshire at the age of 68. He left his estate of his wife Mary and his son Arthur, cotton broker.³⁷ Richard's mother Mary died 18 October 1936 in Birkenhead at the age of 77. She left her estate to her daughter Lydia.³⁸

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¹ "Great Britain, Royal Aero Club Aviators' Certificates, 1910-1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016) entry for Tipton, Richard James

² "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530-1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016) entry for Tipton, Richard James

³ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016) entry for John William Tipton, Registration district: Birkenhead, ED, institution, or vessel: 21b, Piece: 3588, Folio: 13, page: 25

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Liverpool, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Mary Maud Leitch, Liverpool Record Office; Reference number: 283 WBK/2/1

⁶ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton, regiment number 258655

⁷ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895-1956," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton

⁸ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton

⁹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton, regiment number 258655

¹⁰ *Canadian Great War Project* (<http://www.canadiangreatwarproject.com/searches/soldierDetail.asp?ID=158905> accessed 28 December 2016) entry for Corporal Robert Stewart Tipton

¹¹ Letter from Lt. Col. W. M. Sage, Commanding, 211th O'Battn, to the Officer commanding 14th Can. Inf, February 6, 1917, at (<http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e059/e001472669.jpg>: accessed 28 December 2016)

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- ¹² "War Diaries of the First World War – 211th Canadian Infantry Battalion, War Diaries." *Canada at War* (www.canadaatwar.ca: accessed 28 December 2016)
- ¹³ "British Columbia, Canada, Death Index, 1872–1990," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton, Registration number: 1968-09-001880, BCA number: B13287, GSU number: 2033931
- ¹⁴ "Canada, Voters Lists, 1935–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Robert Stewart Tipton for Comox, Alberni, BC, 1935, 1953, 1940, 1949
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Lydia Mary Tipton
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Lydia Mary Tipton
- ¹⁷ "Surrey, England, Church of England Burials, 1813-1987," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for Lydia Mary Stubbs
- ¹⁸ "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for John Blakeway Tipton
- ¹⁹ "Web: UK, Naval Officers' Service Record Cards and Files Index, 1880–1950s." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for John Blakeway Tipton, temporary Lieutenant number 574
- ²⁰ "UK and Ireland, Masters and Mates Certificates, 1850–1927," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for John Blakeway Tipton
- ²¹ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966, 1973–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016), entry for John Blakeway Tipton
- ²² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Arthur Rennell Tipton
- ²³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Arthur Rennell Tipton
- ²⁴ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Arthur Raynell Tipton
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ "UK, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2016), entry for Arthur Rennell Tipton
- ²⁷ *Memorials of Old Birkenheadians Who Fell in the Great War 1914–1918*, by Liverpool, Henry Young (https://issuu.com/birkenheadschool/docs/ww1_memorial_book?e=8039437/6432798: accessed 28 December 2016)
- ²⁸ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016) entry for Tipton, Richard James
- ²⁹ "Great Britain, Royal Aero Club Aviators' Certificates, 1910–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 December 2016) entry for Tipton, Richard James
- ³⁰ See footnote 27
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 12 December 2016), entry for Tipton, R.J.
- ³³ "LAC 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=THESOFT&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 13 December 2016)

³⁴ "The First Battles of the Somme, 1918," *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918* (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-first-battles-of-the-somme-1918/>; accessed 17 December 2016)

³⁵ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, (www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery accessed 13 December 2016), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension

³⁶ *The Aerodrome Forum* (<http://www.theaerodrome.com/forum/showthread.php?t=40863>; accessed 28 December 2016), entry by "Graeme"

³⁷ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com; accessed 27 December 2016) entry for John William Tipton

³⁸ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com; accessed 27 December 2016) entry for Mary Maud Tipton