

## **Private Herbert Edward Leach<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental number: 347567**

**9th Light Railway Operating Company, Royal Engineers**

**born: 1896 - died: 30 May 1918**

Private Herbert Edward Leach died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 30 May 1918.<sup>1</sup> He had been admitted the day before with a gunshot wound to his head. He was buried the day he died in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row D, Grave 32) with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding. The chaplain did not know his next of kin and so a letter was set to the adjutant of his unit—9th Light Railway Operating Company of the Royal Engineers.

But Herbert did have a next of kin—his wife of just two years, Rose Burnett. Rose was born in about 1898 in Battersea, London, the daughter of William Henry and Betsy Burnett.<sup>2</sup> They had married on 20 February 1916 at All Saint's Church in Wimbledon, in Surrey, when Rose was just 18.<sup>3</sup> Herbert and Rose probably did not have any children, but Herbert had a large birth family—parents, Alfred and Susan, and 11 siblings.

His father, Alfred Benjamin Leach, was born in about 1863 in Wandsworth, Surrey and his mother (the former Susan Elizabeth Clark) in about 1865 in Whitechapel, London.<sup>4</sup> They married in the parish church of St Anne's Wandsworth on 20 February 1887 and had twelve children, two of whom died before 1911:<sup>5</sup>

- Alfred John (born in 1887 and baptized on 10 Aug 1887),<sup>6</sup>
- Henry Charles (born in 1889 but died in 1891),<sup>7</sup>
- Susan Louisa (born in 1891 and baptized on 6 Sep 1891),<sup>8</sup>
- George (born in 1893 and baptized on 16 Feb 1896),<sup>9</sup>
- Herbert Edward (born in 1896 and baptized the same day as his brother George in the parish of Earlsfield St Andrew in Wandsworth),<sup>10</sup>
- Frederick William (born in 1897 and baptized on 2 Jan 1898),<sup>11</sup>
- Elizabeth Sarah (born in 1900 and baptized on 7 Jan 1900),<sup>12</sup>
- Henry Charles (born in 1902 and baptized on 2 Mar 1902),<sup>13</sup>
- Albert Frank (born in 1904 and baptized on 7 Aug 1904),<sup>14</sup>
- Thomas (born in 1905 and baptized on 15 Oct 1905)<sup>15</sup> and
- Stanley James (born in 1909).<sup>16</sup>

Herbert grew up at 41 Brathway Road, Wandsworth.<sup>17</sup> His father was a labourer, working for a bricklayer in 1901 and as a general labourer in 1911. By 1911, Herbert, age 15, was working as a greengrocer's boy and his mother, who still had eight children living at home in four rooms, was working as a charwoman.

Herbert later became a fitter's mate on the London & Southwestern Railway<sup>18</sup> and enlisted in the Royal Engineers in Camberwell, Surrey<sup>19</sup> sometime after May 1917.<sup>20</sup> He later served for a time in the London Regiment<sup>21</sup> but, at the time of his death less than a year after he enlisted, he was serving with the 9th Light Railway Operating Company of the Royal Engineers.<sup>22</sup>

Although his next of kin was not known when he died, he was not forgotten. His wife had the following inscription engraved on his gravestone:

## REMEMBERED FOR EVER<sup>23</sup>

In May 1918, nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS.<sup>24</sup> There were 115 deaths that month—more than in any of the other three and a half months that No. 1 CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>25</sup>

After the war, Rose, who received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death,<sup>26</sup> was living at 6 West Gardens, Robinson Road in Tooting, London<sup>27</sup> and, in 1939, she was probably living in Slough, Buckinghamshire.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 29 August 2017), entry for Leach, H.E.

<sup>2</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Rose Burnett, Registration district: Kingston, Registration district number: 40, Sub-registration district: Wimbledon, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 27, Household schedule number: 383, Piece: 3489

<sup>3</sup> “Surrey, England, Marriages, 1754–1937,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Herbert Edward Leach

<sup>4</sup> “1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Alfred Leach, Registration district: Wandsworth, Sub-registration district: Wandsworth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 21, Piece: 448, Folio: 125

<sup>5</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 September 2017), entry for Herbert Leach, Registration district: Wandsworth, Registration district number: 26, Sub-registration district: Southfields, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 25, Piece: 2416. Only 11 of the 12 children were identified. The one missing is probably the second child who died before 1911.

<sup>6</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Alfred John, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 757; “London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Alfred John Leach

<sup>7</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Henry Charles, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 753; “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2017), entry for Henry Charles Leach, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 381

<sup>8</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Susan Louisa, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 709; “London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Susan Louisa Leach

<sup>9</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, George, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 751; “London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for George Leach

<sup>10</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Herbert Edward, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 744; “London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Herbert Edward Leach

<sup>11</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Frederick William, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page

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- 750; "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Frederick William Leach
- <sup>12</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Elizabeth Sarah, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 733; "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Elizabeth Sarah Leach
- <sup>13</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Henry Charles, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 763; "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Henry Charles Leach
- <sup>14</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Albert Frank, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 769; "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Albert Frank Leach
- <sup>15</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Thomas, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 735; "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Thomas Leach
- <sup>16</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 September 2017) entry for Leach, Stanley James, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 752
- <sup>17</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 January 2017), entry for Herbt W Leach, Registration district: Wandsworth, Sub-registration district: Wandsworth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 482, Folio: 74, Page: 28, Household schedule number: 177; "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 September 2017), entry for Herbert Leach
- <sup>18</sup> "Surrey, England, Marriages, 1754–1937," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Herbert Edward Leach
- <sup>19</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Herbert Leach
- <sup>20</sup> Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Herbert E. Leach
- <sup>21</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 September 2017), entry for Herbert Leach
- <sup>22</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 29 August 2017), entry for Leach, H.E.
- <sup>23</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 December 2017), entry for Leach, Herbert, Service No: 347567
- <sup>24</sup> "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=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](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=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G): accessed 15 December 2014)
- <sup>25</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- <sup>26</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2017), entry for Herbert E. Leach
- <sup>27</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 December 2017), entry for Leach, Herbert
- <sup>28</sup> "1939 Register," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 22 February 2017), entry for Rose G Leach, Ref: RG101/21171/016/18 Letter Code: DVNP