# Driver William George Stroud©
## Regimental number: 14097
## 23rd Battery, 40th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

**born: about 1892 - died: 30 May 2018**

Driver William George Stroud was the last child of Edmund and Emily (nee Smythe) Stroud, of Swansea, Glamorganshire, Wales.[1] They had married in Barnstaple, Devon, in 1873,[2] and their first child, a son Edmund John, was born on 6 May 1874.[3] They then had five daughters—Susan Elizabeth (born in about 1876),[4] Sarah Annie (born in about 1878),[5] Emily (born in about 1880),[6] Mabel Smyth (born in about 1884)[7] and Mildred Jane (born in about 1886).[8] They lost two of their daughters at a young age—both Emily and Mildred died at the age of 1.[9] Their last two children were sons—James (born on 8 September 1889)[10] and finally William George (born in about 1892).[11]

Neither Edmund nor Emily were originally from Wales—Edmund was born in Whitstable, Kent, in about 1850 and Emily in Ilfracombe, Devon, in about 1852.[12] Yet most of their children were born in Swansea. Only their first son, Edmund, was born in Ilfracombe—perhaps Emily had gone home to have her first child.

After their marriage, Edmund, Emily and their family lived in Swansea. In 1881, they were living at 123 Western Street, where Edmund was a lock gate man and diver.[13] Then, by 1891, they had moved to St Helens Avenue and Edmund was a diver, probably with the Swansea Harbour Trust.[14] Swansea Harbour Trust managed the Swansea docks. Ten years earlier the Trust had completed the construction of the Prince of Wales dock, which had been opened on 18 October 1881 by Edward, Prince of Wales.[15]

William's mother probably died in 1900 in Swansea.[16] By 1901, the family had moved to 187 Kensington Crescent, where some of the family would live for nearly the next 20 years. Edmund was a widower.[17]

Edmund was still living at Kensington Crescent when he remarried in 1910. He and Alice Mary Hunwick were married at the parish of St. Peter's in Swansea on 14 December 1910.[18] However, at the beginning of April 1911, Edmund was staying with his daughter Sarah and her family.[19] Sarah had married Henry Edward English in 1902[20] and they had four children.[21]

In 1911, William, who was living with his stepmother Alice at 187 Kensington Crescent, was an engineer apprentice with the Swansea Harbour Trust, where his father had worked.[22] In 1905, the Swansea Trust began construction of the King's Dock—a much larger dock than the Prince of Wales. Perhaps William worked on the construction of this dock, which was completed in 1909.[23]

William enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery in Swansea[24] in about August 1914[25] and went to France on 9 January 1915.[26] He lasted more than three years on the Western Front before being injured near Béthune in northern France. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 29 May 1918 with shrapnel wounds to his back. He died the next day and was buried the same day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row D, Grave No. 27) with the Canadian chaplain R. K. Lambert presiding.[27]

Pernes Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.[28] William was one of 95 admissions to No. 1 CCCS on 29 May but, in the whole month of May, a total of nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted to this station and 115 died.[29]

William's sister Sarah was living at 14 Bernard Street in Swansea when, as his next of kin, she was notified by letter of her brother's death.[30]

William's father died just six months after the death of his son, dying on 18 November 1918 at his home on Kensington Crescent[31]—just a week after the Armistice. Hopefully he knew that Britain and its allies had won the war and that his son's sacrifice was not in vain.

Probate of Edmund's estate was awarded to Jenkin Thomas Evans. Jenkin was Edmund's son-in-law. He had married William's sister Mabel in 1908[32] and, after the war, they were living at 179 Kensington Crescent[33]—just a few houses from Edmund. It was Jenkin who requested the following inscription for William's gravestone:

LOVED IN LIFE
LAMENTED IN DEATH[34]

William's father was his legatee and, as such, Edmund's estate received the monies owning to William from the army upon his death.

William was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).[35] William is also honoured on the Swansea Cenotaph War Memorial.[36]

William was not the only son in the family to serve in the Great War. The last time William's brother Edmund was living with his family was in 1891, when he was working as an apprentice fitter.[37] On 15 July 1896, he enlisted in the Royal Navy (service number: 268782), as a fitter and turner. His first posting was to HMS Vivid II. HMS Vivid was not a ship, but rather the Navy barracks in Devonport. Vivid II was the Stokers and Engine Room Artificers School.[38] Edmund went on to a variety of different postings, with regular returns to HMS Vivid. When he left the Navy on 24 January 1918, he was serving on HMS *Blake*, a depot ship.[39] While he was in the Navy, he married Florence Louise Wellington in 1897 in Devon.[40]

His sister Susan married in 1898 in Swansea.[41]

James Tait followed his brother Edmund to sea. James was awarded the Certificate of Competency as a second mate for foreign-going steamships in July 1917 in Swansea.[42] The year before he had married Lilian Emily Edgar in Swansea and, in 1939, they were living at 119 Glanmor Road in Swansea. Lilian's widowed mother was living with them. James was working then as a harbour pilot.[43]

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[11] "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/: accessed 7 May 2018) entry for Stroud, William George, Registration district: Swansea, Volume 11A, Page 923

[12] "1891 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for Edmund Stroud, Registration district: Swansea, Sub-registration district: Swansea, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 45, Piece: 4483, Folio: 107, Page: 40

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