

**Private Norman Francis Staples<sup>©</sup>**  
**Regimental number: G/7056**  
**8th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)**

**born: 1890 –died: 21 May 1916**

Private Norman Francis Staples was born in 1890 in Sevenoaks, Kent,<sup>1</sup> the son of Walter Staples (born in 1857, also in Sevenoaks) and his wife, the former Fanny Maria Woods (born in 1852 in Leiston, Suffolk).<sup>2</sup> Walter was a resident in the new parish of All Saint's Knightsbridge and Fanny was living at 84 Hamilton Terrace, in St John's Wood, when they applied, on 15 October 1877, for a license to marry.<sup>3</sup> They married that year in St George Hanover Square, London.<sup>4</sup>

Their first two children, Jessie Florence and Walter Victor Ronald (known as Victor) were both born in St George Hanover Square—Jessie in 1880<sup>5</sup> and Victor in 1882.<sup>6</sup> Their third child, Eva Theresa, was born in East Hampstead in 1887. Norman was their last child.

At the time of Jessie's birth, the family was living in St George Hanover Square, at 145 Alderny [*sic*] Street, where Walter was a domestic messenger.<sup>7</sup> In 1891, the family had moved back to Walter's home town of Sevenoaks and were living at 12 Grove Road. Fanny was working as a charwoman and raising the four children.<sup>8</sup> She was described as a widow, but Walter was still in St George Hanover Square, working as a domestic butler at 28 Aldford Street.<sup>9</sup>

In 1901, the family was together again, but now in Ireland. They were living at House 5 in Carton Demesne in Maynooth, County Kildare.<sup>10</sup> Norman's brother Victor was no longer living at home.

Ten years later, the family was split up again. Fanny was living with two children at 93 Philipsburgh Avenue in Clontarf West, Dublin. In this census record, Fanny was listed as being married. Norman, at the age of 20, was still a scholar. Jessie was not at home—she had married John George Crozier in 1908.<sup>11</sup> Victor was also not at home. In fact, he was probably already in the army because he was serving with the 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge's Own) (regimental number: 261) when he died on 17 August 1911 in Sialkok, India (now Pakistan). His father received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death. Before enlisting, Victor was a valet in Westminster, London.<sup>12</sup>

Their father Walter was living at House 3 in Carton Demesne.<sup>13</sup> He was a butler and living in the home of Lord Frederick FitzGerald, the brother of the Duke of Leinster at the time.<sup>14</sup> He may have been working at Carton House, an historic estate and the ancestral seat of the Earls of Kildare and Dukes of Leinster.<sup>15</sup>

The family had already lost one son who had been in the army when Norman enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in Dublin, Ireland,<sup>16</sup> in about May 1915.<sup>17</sup> He went to the Front on 1 October 1915 and served with the 8th Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), which was formed in Maidstone, Kent, in September 1914. The battalion went to the Front at the end of August 1915 and Norman followed a month later. Seven months after arriving at the Front, Norman was stationed with his battalion near Dranoutre, Heuvelland in Belgium and was in the trenches at the beginning of May 1916. There was shelling on 6 May, but no casualties were reported. The battalion went back into reserve before returning to the trenches on the night of 14/15 May, relieving the 8th Battalion of the Queen's Regiment. There was a false gas alarm, but otherwise no incidents reported before the battalion returned to brigade reserve on 20 May.<sup>18</sup> It is not known how or when Norman

was wounded but he died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station of wounds to his back on 21 May 1916.<sup>19</sup>

He was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot I, Row A, Grave 12). Bailleul is in France, but near the Belgian border, about 15 kilometres southwest of Ypres.<sup>20</sup> It was occupied in October 1914 and became an important hospital centre, not just for No. 1 CCCS but also for No. 1 Australian and five British Army casualty clearing stations.

A letter was sent to his mother at 9 Woodland Villas, Leeson Park, Renelagh, in Dublin, to notify her of her son's death.<sup>21</sup> She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.<sup>22</sup>

Norman 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).<sup>23</sup> He is honoured on the online memorial to the fallen of Kent.<sup>24</sup>

Norman's mother died in mid-1932 in Celbridge, Ireland<sup>25</sup>—20 kilometres west of Dublin. Walter remarried later in 1932, marrying Mary Anne Wilson in Naas, Ireland.<sup>26</sup> He died just four years later on 7 October 1936.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Staples, Norman Francis, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Volume 02A, Page 639

<sup>2</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 41, Piece: 106, Folio: 75, Page: 39

<sup>3</sup> "London and Surrey, England, Marriage Bonds and Allegations, 1597–1921," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 16 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples, Reference Number: Ms 10091/254 Part 4

<sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 16 December 2019), entry for Fanny Maria Woods, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 657

<sup>5</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Staples, Jessie Florence, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Volume 01A, Page 414

<sup>6</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Staples, Walter Victor Ronald, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Volume 01A, Page 438

<sup>7</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Fanny M Staples, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 673, Folio: 135

<sup>8</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Fanny M Staples, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 673, Folio: 135

<sup>9</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples, Sub-registration district: Mayfair, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 69, Folio: 58

<sup>10</sup> "Web: Ireland, Census, 1901," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples

<sup>11</sup> "London and Surrey, England, Marriage Bonds and Allegations, 1597–1921," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 16 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples

<sup>12</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Victor Walter Staples

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- <sup>13</sup> "Web: Ireland, Census, 1911," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples
- <sup>14</sup> "Death of Lord Frederick Fitzgerald," *Co. Kildare Online Electronic History Journal* (<http://www.kildare.ie/ehistory/index.php/death-of-lord-frederick-fitzgerald/>: accessed 17 December 2018)
- <sup>15</sup> "Carton House," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carton\\_House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carton_House): accessed 17 December 2018)
- <sup>16</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 December 2018), entry for Norman Staples
- <sup>17</sup> Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.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 13 December 2018), entry for Norman Staples
- <sup>18</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 December 2018), Regiment or unit: Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment, Sub-unit: 8th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary dates: 1915 Aug–1919 Apr, Piece Description: Piece 2213/2: 8 Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) (1915 Aug–1919 Apr), Piece number: 2213
- <sup>19</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 16 August 2018), entry for Staples, N.
- <sup>20</sup> "Bailleul Community Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 17 January 2017)
- <sup>21</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 16 August 2018), entry for Staples, N.
- <sup>22</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 December 2018), entry for Norman Staples
- <sup>23</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 December 2018), entry for Norman Staples
- <sup>24</sup> "WW1 Royal West Kent Regiment Roll of Honour," (<http://www.kentfallen.com/west%20kent%20pages.html>: accessed 15 December 2018)
- <sup>25</sup> "Ireland, Civil Registration Deaths Index, 1864–1958," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Fanny Maria Staples, Registration district: Celbridge, Volume: 2, Page: 181, FHL film number: 101739
- <sup>26</sup> "Ireland, Civil Registration Marriages Index, 1845–1958," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples, Volume: 2, Page number: 483, FHL film number: 101576
- <sup>27</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 December 2018), entry for Walter Staples