

Sapper James Andrew Scott[©]
Regimental number: 551139¹
526th Field Company, Royal Engineers

born: 1889–died: 3 May 1918

Sapper James Andrew Scott was born in 1889² in Sunderland, Co Durham,³ the son of John Debney and Margaret Ann Scott.⁴ At the age of 19, John, who was born in Stepney, London,⁵ married Margaret Ann Ridland, aged 18, on 8 July 1883 in Bishop-Wearmouth, Durham.⁶ Margaret was born in Sunderland.⁷ They had five children:

- Margaret Lindsay (born in 1885,)⁸
- John William (born in 1887),⁹
- Charles Henry (born in 1889),¹⁰
- James and
- Gladys (born on 18 September 1891).¹¹

James' father John was a marine engineer¹² and so, in 1891, when the family was living at 18 Stewart Street in Bishop-Wearmouth, John was not with them.¹³ He was probably at sea. Nor was he with Margaret and the four children in 1901.¹⁴

Was he there when his daughter Margaret died in 1907 at the age of 23?¹⁵ He was living with Margaret and the two children remaining at home—James and Gladys—in 1911, at 56 General Graham Street in Sunderland. By then James, age 21 and single, was an electrical engineer.¹⁶ However, he was not single for much longer. Within a few months, he married Mary A. Openshaw in Sunderland.¹⁷ They had two children before James enlisted—James Frederick (born in 1913)¹⁸ and John Debney (born in 1915).¹⁹

About a year after the birth of his second son, James enlisted to serve in the British Expeditionary Force. He enlisted in Sunderland²⁰ in about April 1916.²¹

When he joined up, James probably enlisted in the 1st Durham Field Company which, when it was first formed, was assigned to the North Eastern Coastal Defences. It was employed in, among other things, constructing field defences and erecting hutted camps. By the summer of 1915, there were “three strong lines of entrenchments, bomb-proof shelters and dug-outs linking strongpoints and gun positions along the coast as well as the fixed defences.”²² When it became clear that a full German invasion of England was unlikely and the need for field engineers on the Front was growing, the 1st Durham Field Company joined the 4th Division in France in September 1915. In February 1917, the company was renumbered to the 526th (Durham) Field Company, Royal Engineers.²³ James served in the 4th Company.²⁴

On 24 April 1918, James was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to his right thigh and knee and his left ankle and arm. He survived for ten days before succumbing to his wounds on 3 May. He was buried the same day in Pernes British Cemetery (Plot 2, Row A, Grave 3) with the Canadian chaplain G. C. d'Easum presiding.²⁵

Pernes British Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.²⁶ James was one of 77 soldiers admitted on 24 April 1918 and one of 115 soldiers to die at the station in May 1918.²⁷

The chaplain sent a letter to his wife, who was living at 38 Dean Terrace, Southark, Sunderland. She received the monies owing to James from the army upon his death and later, when she was living at 3 Sans Street South, Southwick, Sunderland, she requested the following inscription for his gravestone:

THY WILL BE DONE²⁸

James was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁹

James' father John received a campaign medal awarded to merchant seamen in World War I.³⁰ He died on 6 June 1955,³¹ 11 days after his daughter Gladys, who died on 26 May.³² Both were living at 202 Cleveland Road in Sunderland at the time of their death. It is not known what became of James' two brothers.

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¹ The No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station journal records James' regimental number as 551139. However, the record of soliders who died in World War I ("UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for James Andrew Scott) indicates that he also had regimental numbers 167327 and (T)4111, although he does not appear to have changed regimental unit.

² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, James Andrews [*sic*], Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 571

³ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for James Andrew Scott

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for James Andrew Scott, Registration district: Sunderland, Registration district number: 555, Sub-registration district: Sunderland West, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 30154

⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry*, entry for James Andrew Scott

⁶ "England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for John Debney Scott, FHL film number: 1514551, Reference ID: it 1, p 101, no 201

⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry*, entry for James Andrew Scott

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, Margaret Lindsay, Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 544; "GRO online index–death," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, Margaret Lindsay, Volume 10A, Page 390

⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, John William, Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 529

¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019) entry for Scott, Charles Henry, Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 520

¹¹ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Gladys Scott, FHL film number: 1514546

¹² "England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973," *Ancestry*, entry for John Debney Scott

¹³ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2019), entry for Margaret A Mearns [*sic*], Sub-registration district: North Bishop Wearmouth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 9b, Piece: 4128, Folio: 121

¹⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2019), entry for James A. Scott, Registration district: Sunderland, Sub-registration district: North Bishopwearmouth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 19, Piece: 4709, Folio: 32, Page: 2, Household schedule number: 9

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- ¹⁵ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Margaret Lindsay Scott, Registration district: Sunderland, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 390
- ¹⁶ “1911 England Census,” entry for James Andrew Scott
- ¹⁷ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 August 2019), entry for James A. Scott, Registration district: Sunderland, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 3a, Page: 1337
- ¹⁸ “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Scott, James Frederick, Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 1256
- ¹⁹ “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 9 August 2019) entry for Scott, John Debney, Registration district: Sunderland, Volume 10A, Page 1607
- ²⁰ “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for James Andrew Scott
- ²¹ 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: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for James Andrew Scott
- ²² “1st Durham Engineers,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Durham_Engineers: accessed 9 August 2019)
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, J. A.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ “Pernes British Military Cemetery,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ²⁷ “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* (http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/results/images?module=images&SortSpec=score+desc&Language=eng&ShowForm=hide&SearchIn_1=mikanNumber&SearchInText_1=2005082&Operator_1=AND&SearchIn_2=&SearchInText_2=&Operator_2=AND&SearchIn_3=&SearchInText_3=&Level=&MaterialDateOperator=after&MaterialDate=&DigitalImages=1&Source=&ResultCount=10: accessed 28 March 2018)
- ²⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Scott, James Andrew, Service No: 551139
- ²⁹ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 August 2019), entry for James A. Scott
- ³⁰ “Web: UK, Campaign Medals Awarded to WWI Merchant Seamen, 1914-1925,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for John Debney Scott
- ³¹ “England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2019), entry for John Debney Scott
- ³² “England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 August 2019), entry for Gladys Scott