



DEATH AND SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The festive season is upon us, and I want to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a peaceful and healthy time.

This time of year is not happy for everyone, and in this edition we look at those servicemen who passed away on each of the holidays. I also focus on two burials in Bath's Locksbrook Cemetery, of a father and son who died as a result of the conflict and who were laid to rest together.

I think I have won my battle with technology, and have started to put some new videos on the YouTube Channel: you can find out more in this edition.

The last few weeks have also seen me complete my research on the First World War graves in Somerset: four years that have taken me to places I'd not expected, and uncovered stories of love and heartbreak.

Thank you for your support over the past year, and I look forward to catching up again in 2025!

Until next time.

Best wishes,

Richard

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Death and Service:

Volumes 1 and 2 are available in paperback and eBook.



Did you know?

The Death and Service website now has over 1500 researched WW1 graves. This includes all of those in Somerset, dozens from twelve other counties, plus the Channel Islands.

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR...

All of the deaths I have researched have been tragic, but those over the festive season seem even more so. Grief comes in many forms, but when a passing is inextricably linked to a day that should otherwise be celebrated, she is a harder taskmaster.

With the Yuletide season upon us, it is worth paying particular commemoration to those who died during it.

24TH DECEMBER

- Private John Kennell of the Dorsetshire Regiment: died through causes unknown on 24th December 1919 and buried in Sherborne Cemetery, Dorset.

25TH DECEMBER

- Private William Haylor (Royal Sussex Regiment) died through illness on 25th December 1915: laid to rest in Cuckfield Cemetery, West Sussex.
- Private James Jones of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, died following a seizure on Christmas Day 1915, and buried in St John's Churchyard, Llangollen, Denbighshire.
- Private Edward Savage (Loyal North Lancashire Regiment) died on 25th December 1915, following a fall at his barracks in Penarth, Glamorgan. Buried in the St Augustine's Churchyard in the Welsh town.
- Private Edward Ham of the Devonshire Regiment died on Christmas Day 1917, aged 31. Laid to rest in Burnham Cemetery, Somerset.
- Pioneer William Hamilton was in the Royal Engineers. He drowned on 25th December 1917, at the age of 47, and was buried in Amesbury Cemetery, Wiltshire, close to his barracks.
- Pioneer Charles Churchill served in the Royal Engineers. He died from pneumonia on Christmas Day 1919, and was buried in the graveyard of St Mary's Church in West Chinnock, Somerset.

26TH DECEMBER

- Private James McEwan served in the Lancashire Fusiliers, and was based at Codford, Wiltshire. He died on Boxing Day 1915, following a bout of pneumonia.
- Second Lieutenant Francis Wakeford served in the Lancashire Fusiliers and Royal Air Force. He died from a chronic illness on 26th December 1918, and was buried in St Augustine's Churchyard in his home town of Penarth, Glamorganshire.

31ST DECEMBER

- Corporal Charles Fernley served in the Essex Regiment, and died of dysentery on 31st December 1915, and was laid to rest in Holy Trinity Churchyard in Newton St Loe, Somerset.
- Private Walter Fry fought with the Gloucestershire Regiment. He died on New Year's Eve 1916 from injuries sustained in France. Just 19 years old, he was buried in Twerton Cemetery, Bath, Somerset.
- Private Walter Mutter (Worcestershire Regiment) died on 31st December 1918, following months as a prisoner of war in Germany. He was buried in Locksbrook Cemetery, Bath, Somerset.
- Lance Corporal Henry Greenfield of the Sherwood Foresters died from sickness on New Year's Eve 1918. He was laid to rest in Broadwater Cemetery, West Sussex.

1ST JANUARY

- Boy Bernard Smyth, Stokers Horace Bernthall, William Eley and William Fawkes, and Petty Officer William Felton of the Royal Navy; Stoker Henry Souter of the Royal Naval Reserve: all died during the sinking of HMS Formidable off the Dorset coast on New Year's Day 1915. Buried in Lyme Regis Cemetery, Dorset.
- Private Herbert Cleal of the Worcestershire Regiment, died through causes unrecorded on 1st January 1919. Buried in St James-the-Less Churchyard, Hambridge, Somerset.

GRAVES OF THE MONTH



Grave Location:

Locksbrook Cemetery
Cedric Road
Bath
Somerset
BA1 3PD

Name: King, Alfred

Rank: Lance Corporal

Regiment: Somerset Light Infantry

Date of death: 22nd February 1916

Age at time of death: 19

Cause of death: Died of wounds

Alfred Frederick King was born at the start of 1897, and was the oldest of two children to Alfred and Mary. Alfred Sr was an army pensioner-turned-carman, and both he and his wife were born in Bath, Somerset. By the time of the 1911 census, the family of four were living at 31 Avondale Road, in the Walcot area of the city.

Alfred Jr had completed his schooling by this point, and was working as an errand boy. War was not far off, however, and it would result in the ultimate sacrifice for the King family.

Alfred Sr enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry in September 1914, but was deemed not fit for service, as he was suffering from chronic stomach issues. This may have prompted his son to join up, and he did so in October 1915.

Sadly, Alfred Jr's full service details no longer remain, but from what is left, it is clear that he joined the Somerset Light Infantry, and was assigned to the 8th (Service) Battalion. His unit was sent to France, and he would spend the rest of the year on the Western Front.

Private King was involved in a number of skirmishes in the coming months, and soon gained a promotion to the rank of Lance Corporal. In late January or early February 1916, he was wounded, and medically evacuated to Britain. He was admitted to the East Suffolk Hospital in Ipswich, but his injuries would prove too great: he passed away on 22nd February 1916, at the age of just 19 years old.

Alfred Frederick King's body was taken back to Somerset for burial. He was laid to rest in the sweeping grounds of Bath's Locksbrook Cemetery.

GRAVES OF THE MONTH



Grave Location:

Locksbrook Cemetery
Cedric Road
Bath
Somerset
BA1 3PD

Name: King, Alfred

Rank: Private

Regiment: Somerset Light Infantry

Date of death: 1st April 1921

Age at time of death: 48

Cause of death: Unknown

Alfred William King was born in the autumn of 1872, the oldest of eight children to Alfred and Caroline King. Alfred Sr was a labourer from Bath, Somerset, and this is where the family were raised.

Times were tough for the King family. The 1891 census recorded most of them living at 89 Avon Street in the city. Alfred Jr, meanwhile, seems to have been an inmate at the Bath Union Workhouse in Lyncombe.

On 24th May 1896, Alfred Jr married Mary Pemberton. The daughter of a coachman, she lived in the next street. Both Alfred and his father were, by this point employed as carters, and the new groom was back living in Avon Street. The young couple went on to have two children, Alfred and Dorothy, and made their home in a small terraced house in Avondale Road, Bath.

The 1911 census recorded Alfred as being an army pensioner and night porter. While previous service records no longer exist, his enlistment papers for the First World War suggest he had spent time in both the Somerset Light Infantry and the Royal Garrison Artillery. Certainly, Alfred's eagerness to serve his country - he joined up on 18th September 1914, at the age of 42 - suggests he had had military service in the past.

Private King's medical report confirms that he was 5ft 5.5ins (1.66m) tall and weighed 145lbs (65.8kg). He was noted as having grey hair, light brown hair and webbed toes on both feet. Alfred's time in the army was to be brief. A later medical report noted that he had a *"dilated stomach of old standing. [He was] absolutely unable to retain food unless stomach is washed out twice a week."* He was medically dismissed from the army on 3rd November 1914, after just 45 days.

Alfred's incapacity for military service may have been what prompted his son, Alfred, to enlist. After time in the Somerset Light Infantry, and a rise to the rank of Lance Corporal, he was to die of wounds in February 1916. His father would live on for just five more years. He passed away on 1st April 1921 at the age of 48 years.

Alfred William King was buried alongside his son in Bath's majestic Locksbrook Cemetery.

MORE VIDEO DIARIES

It's been a while, but I think I have managed to get my head around the difference between a *short* and a *video* on YouTube. (If you're interested, a short is a portrait/vertical-style clip of up to 180 seconds, while a video is a horizontal/landscape clip of any length, or a vertical film of more than three minutes. The maximum length of a short has changed from 60 seconds recently, which meant that my trips locally over the last few months have proved a bit of a waste. Ah well!)

When there was a break in the weather recently, I set out to record some more videos, and will be posting them over the coming weeks.

First up in the idyllic setting of St Dunstan's Churchyard in Baltonsborough, Somerset. You can see what I recorded [here](#).

Stay tuned to the Death and Service YouTube Channel for more video diaries coming soon.



St Dunstan's Church, Baltonsborough



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