William George Underhill

Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

1888 - 1917

William George Underhill was born on 19th Aug, 1888 in Hoxton, London. He was the son of William Underhill and his wife Catherine Elizabeth nee Cantle.

In 1891 he lived with his parents and three month old baby brother Joseph, at 49, Windsor Terrace, East Finsbury. A sister Sophia was born in 1896. In 1901 William was visiting his aunt, Ruth Harris (his mother's sister) at 19, Tyndale Place in Islington. It must have been a large house as there were five family members and eight boarders as well as William. The family must have been close, as in 1911, William is living with his father and sister Sophia, and two maternal aunts, Ruth Harris (now widowed) and Sophia Cantle (single) at 3, Woodhouse Road, Finchley. On the Census record, it says his father is widowed (Catherine had died in 1908) and had four children two of whom had died. Joseph had died in 1892 and another sibling must have been born and died between 1901 and 1911, possibly in 1908 when his mother died.

William married Edith Amy Gurnett in Swanbourne on 29th Jan 1916. Their son, William Harold Underhill was born in Lewisham on 10th Aug 1917. Edith (known as Amy) did not re-marry and died in Bromley, Kent in 1965.

William was killed in action on 2nd Dec 1917, age 29, and is buried in France. He is commemorated on Panel 8, Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France. Unfortunately his name is not on the Swanbourne War Memorial.

He was with the 1st 20th London regiment, no 28193. It is likely that he was fatally wounded during the course of the Battle of Cambrai in Nov and Dec 1917.

Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France, right

Panel 8, left

At the time of his death, Army records indicate that his next of kin, his wife Amy, was living at 7, Brightside Terrace, Hither Green, Lewisham, London with their new baby son.

William was awarded medals for his part in the war.