

## Lance Corporal Rowland George Bailey

Regimental number: G/2051

“D” Company, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

born: 1892 - died: 30 April 1916

Lance Corporal Rowland George Bailey was born in the spring of 1892<sup>1</sup> and baptised in Cheriton, Kent<sup>2</sup> on 15 May 1892.<sup>3</sup> He was the eldest son of Rowland and Emma Matilda Bailey.<sup>4</sup> His father was born in 1872 in Nonington, Kent and his mother, the former Emma Matilda Browne, was born in about 1871 in Marshside, also in Kent. Rowland and Emma were married in Woodnesborough, Kent, at the end of 1891.<sup>5</sup> By 1911, the couple had seven children: Rowland George, Percy Thomas (born in early 1894),<sup>6</sup> Cyril Edward (born in early 1896),<sup>7</sup> Ivy Katherine (born in about 1899),<sup>8</sup> Arthur William Joseph (born in about 1900),<sup>9</sup> Victor Harold (born in about 1903)<sup>10</sup> and Walter James (born in about 1906).<sup>11</sup>



L/Cpl Rowland George Bailey  
Source: Bailey of Kent\* family tree [www.Ancestry.co.uk](http://www.Ancestry.co.uk)  
(with permission)

In 1901 the family was living on Chapel Lane in Hawkinge, Kent, where Rowland's father was a carter.<sup>12</sup> By 1911, they had moved to Puddinghole, where his father was a coal storeman and Rowland himself was a farm labourer.<sup>13</sup>

Rowland enlisted in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) in Folkestone, Kent.<sup>14</sup> The East Kent Regiment has been called The Buffs since 1751 when it was given the nickname based on the colour of the its uniform facings.<sup>15</sup> In April 1916, the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion was stationed in northern France or southern Belgium, somewhere near Bailleul, France.<sup>16</sup> In the latter half of the month, the Battalion had experienced fairly regular enemy shelling, culminating on the 30<sup>th</sup> with heavy fire with shrapnel and high explosives. Five Other Ranks were wounded on that day alone. One may have been Rowland, since he died at the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 30 April of wounds and gas poisoning.<sup>17</sup>

Rowland was a member of the Church of England<sup>18</sup> and was buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot II, Row D, Grave 121).<sup>19</sup> Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several Casualty Clearing Stations, including the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian, were quartered there for considerable periods. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918, and occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.<sup>20</sup>

A letter was sent to his mother to notify her of his death. No evidence was found of the medals he was awarded, but he was likely eligible for at least the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

The Bailey family suffered heavy losses in the Great War. Two of Rowland's younger brothers – Percy and Cyril – were also in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of The Buffs and lost their lives in the war.

Percy was a Private (Regimental number G/1590).<sup>21</sup> He died, at the age of 19, just four months after Rowland. At the beginning of September 1916, the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion was stationed near Longueval,

France.<sup>22</sup> On the evening of 1 September, the Battalion supplied 220 men to carry rations and water to the Rifle Brigade, which had just taken back trenches from the enemy. One Other Rank was wounded. The following day, "D" Company moved off to support the 72<sup>nd</sup> Brigade in Delville Wood. At noon on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, "B" and "C" Companies attacked the strong point at the junction of two trenches. They faced considerable enemy machine gun fire and lost all officers of "B" Company. A second attack was launched later in the afternoon, but it also met considerable resistance and all the infantry supporting them became casualties. Percy may have been wounded in one of the attacks over the days preceding the 3<sup>rd</sup> because he died on 3 September 1916, at the age of 19, just four months after Rowland.<sup>23</sup> He is buried in Serre Road Cemetery No.2 (Plot XXVIII, Row D, Grave 4)

Cyril was also a Private (Regimental number G/4965) and was in "D" Company, like his brother, Rowland.<sup>24</sup> He died on 26 September 1915, also at the age of 19. On 25 September his Battalion was stationed at Béthune, France, where it was addressed by Colonel Romer, who said "Men, I am not going to say very much to you this morning, only to ask you to remember that you are The Buffs."<sup>25</sup> That evening they moved forward to attack the village of Vendin-le-Vieil. About midnight they came under attack and were ordered to withdraw. They spent the night in the trenches and mid-morning were ordered to attack an enemy position about a mile away. There was heavy enemy fire. The Buffs came within 25 yards of the enemy barbed wire. But there were no gaps in the wire and the Battalion was ordered to withdraw because of increasingly heavy enemy fire, which cause "considerable losses." The Battalion was relieved on the evening of 27 September but its attack the previous day "drew off sixteen Battalions of the enemy who were to have reinforced the German Line opposite the French, thus considerably helping the latter to capture Souchez +14,000 prisoners."<sup>26</sup> The Battalion lost 24 officers in the attack and 230 rank and file soldiers. Perhaps Cyril was one of these. He is commemorated on the memorial at Loos, Belgium (Panel 15 to 19)<sup>27</sup> and on the roll of honour in Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.<sup>28</sup>

In the eleven months between late September 1915 and early September 1916, the Baileys lost their three eldest sons.

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<sup>1</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland George Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 1014

<sup>2</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland George Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Registration District Number: 66, Sub-registration district: Folkestone, ED, institution, or vessel: 24, Household schedule number: 94, Piece: 4648

<sup>3</sup> "England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:29 NJQS-6QJ> : accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland George Bailey, 15 May 1892; citing Cheriton, Kent, England, reference item 4 p 161; FHL microfilm 1,866,543.

<sup>4</sup> "1911 England Census," entry for Rowland George Bailey

<sup>5</sup> There are two possible dates for their marriage – 29 November or 30 December 1891. "England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland Bailey, FHL Film Number: 1866578, Reference ID: item 10 p 145; "England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland Bailey, FHL Film Number: 1866579, Reference ID: it4 27

<sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Percy Thomas Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 968; "England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JS7B-PVX> : accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Percy Thomas Bailey, 22 Apr 1894; citing Kent, England, reference Page 7 & 8; FHL microfilm 1,786,276.

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- <sup>7</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Cyril Edward Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 998; "England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NNR5-X2H>; accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Cyril Edward Bailey, 10 May 1896; citing Kent, England, reference Page 177; FHL microfilm 1,786,276.
- <sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Ivy Katherine Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 1021
- <sup>9</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Arthur William J. Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 1089
- <sup>10</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Victor Harold Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 1039
- <sup>11</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Walter James Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a
- <sup>12</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Rowland G. Bailey, Registration district: Elham, Sub-registration district: Folkestone, ED, institution, or vessel: 21, Piece: 850, Folio: 9, Page Number: 10, Household schedule number: 43
- <sup>13</sup> "1911 England Census," entry for Rowland George Bailey
- <sup>14</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Roland George Bailey
- <sup>15</sup> "Bufs (Royal East Kent Regiment)," National Army Museum (<http://www.nam.ac.uk/research/famous-units/buffs-royal-east-kent-regiment>; accessed 29 August 2015)
- <sup>16</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), Regiment or Unit: Buffs (East Kent Regiment), Sub Unit: 8th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary Dates: 1915 Aug - 1918 Jan, Piece Description: Piece 2207/1: 8 Battalion Buffs (East Kent Regiment) (1915 Aug - 1918 Jan), Piece Number: 2207
- <sup>17</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIIC10, volume 4556, Record number 75
- <sup>18</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 63
- <sup>19</sup> "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Clewlow, Bert, Service No: 8390
- <sup>20</sup> "Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000047/Bailleul%20Communal%20Cemetery,%20Nord>; accessed 5 August 2015)
- <sup>21</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Percy Thomas Bailey
- <sup>22</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," Regiment or Unit: Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
- <sup>23</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," entry for Percy Thomas Bailey
- <sup>24</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Cyril Edward Bailey
- <sup>25</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," Regiment or Unit: Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); accessed 29 August 2015), entry for Bailey, Cyril Edward, Service No: G/4965
- <sup>28</sup> "Sussex," Roll of Honour (<http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Sussex/Bexhill-on-Sea.html>; accessed 29 August 2015)