

Sapper Cyril Collis

Regimental number: 495377

81st Brigade, Signal Sub. Section Royal Engineers, Royal Garrison Artillery

born: about 1889 - died: 17 September 1918

Sapper Cyril Collis was born in about 1889 near Steyning, Sussex.¹ He was the son of Alfred and Emma Jane Collis.² Alfred was born in Arlesford, Hampshire in about 1861 and his wife, the former Emma Jane Chant, in Broad Chalk, Wiltshire, two years later. They were married near Alresford, Hampshire, in 1882³ and had five children – three of whom survived to 1911.⁴ Cyril's eldest brother, Frank, was born in 1883⁵ and his older sister, Edith, in about 1885.⁶ He had another older brother, Alfred, born the year before Cyril, but who died the following year.⁷ The name of the Collis' fifth children is not known.

The family lived Brighton area. In 1891, it was living at "Fir Grove," Dyke Road Avenue, Patcham, where Alfred was a gardener.⁸ By 1901, the family had moved to 14 Robertson Road, Preston, and Cyril's brother, Alfred, had also become a gardener.⁹ In 1911, they were still living in Preston, but at 13 Bates Road and Cyril had become a plumber's assistant working for a builder.¹⁰ Cyril's sister, Edith, had married John Henry Venables in 1906 and in 1911 was living in Farnham, Sussex. Edith and John's eldest daughter, Edith Amelia, however, was living with her grandparents in Preston.¹¹

In 1915, Cyril married Mabel Florence Sadler near Steyning, Sussex¹² and they had a daughter, Ada May, born on 4 October of the same year.¹³ His wife, Mabel, was probably born in about 1889 near Elham, Kent.¹⁴

Cyril enlisted as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers in Brighton.¹⁵ On 15 September 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.¹⁶ He died of bronchial pneumonia just two days later and was buried that day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 10, Plot 6. Row H), with the chaplain W. Fisher presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁷ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁸ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Cyril's wife, who was living at The Cottage, Mount Harry, Surrenden Road, Preston Park, near Brighton, was notified of his death.¹⁹ She also received the monies owing to him from the army after his death.²⁰

Cyril was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²¹ He is honoured on the Brighton War Memorial and listed on the memorial at St. Johns Parish Church, Preston Park.²²

His wife, Mabel, died in 1978 near Brighton.²³ His daughter, Ada, married George S. Wilkins in 1940, near Brighton.²⁴ George was probably a Canadian – perhaps serving in the Second World War.²⁵ They had two children – John, born 17 April 1941 and Marian J., born 20 May 1946. Ada died in Worthing, West Sussex in May 1994.²⁶

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- ¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Inferred County: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 288
- ² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis, Registration district: Steyning, ED, institution, or vessel: 46, Piece: 824, Folio: 63, Page Number: 30
- ³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Alfred Collis, Registration district: Alresford, Inferred County: Hampshire, Volume: 2c, Page: 299
- ⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Registration District Number: 80, Sub-registration district: Preston, ED, institution, or vessel: 7, Household schedule number: 221, Piece: 5159
- ⁵ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 7 November 2015), entry for Frank Collis, FHL Film Number: 6344418, Reference ID: 78
- ⁶ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 7 November 2015), entry for Edith Collis, FHL Film Number: 634441
- ⁷ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 7 November 2015), entry for Alfred Collis, FHL Film Number: 1468911, Reference ID: - 2:2K8X0C6; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 7 November 2015), entry for Alfred Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Inferred County: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 169
- ⁸ "1891 England Census," entry for Cyril Collis
- ⁹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Sub-registration district: Shoreham, ED, institution, or vessel: 34, Piece: 939, Folio: 160, Page Number: 38, Household schedule number: 272
- ¹⁰ "1911 England Census," entry for Cyril Collis
- ¹¹ Edith and John Henry eventually had at least seven children (Edith Amelia, Albert Edward, Ivy Rose, Cyril F., Dorothy Yypres, John H. and Arthur) between 1906 and 1924.
- ¹² "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Inferred County: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 846
- ¹³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 11 November 2015), entry for Ada Collis, Registration district: Steyning, Inferred County: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 361
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Mabel Florence Sadler, Registration district: Elham, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2b, Page: 983
- ¹⁵ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis
- ¹⁶ "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 IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 657
- ¹⁷ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ¹⁸ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)
- ¹⁹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 657
- ²⁰ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Cyril Collis
- ²¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Harry Reuben Knight
- ²² "Brighton War Memorial (1914-1921)," Roll of Honour (http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Sussex/Brighton_WW1_C.html; accessed 7 November 2015)

²³ "England & Wales, Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 November 2015), entry for Mabel Florence Collis, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred County North Riding, Volume: 18, Page: 0194

²⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Ada M Collis, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred County: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 886

²⁵ "UK, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Ada Wilkins, Official Number: 8375/01

²⁶ "England & Wales, Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2015), entry for Ada May Wilkins, Registration district: Worthing, Inferred County: West Sussex, Register Number: 4B97B, District and Subdistrict: 7864B, Entry Number: 213