

Driver Alfred Joseph Charman

Regimental number: T2/11909

2nd Company, 8th Divisional Train, Army Service Corps

born: 14 August 1892 - died: 21 September 1918

Driver Alfred Joseph Charman was born on 14 August 1892, the son of Robert and Martha Charman of Dumfries Street in Treherbert, Glamorganshire, Wales.¹ He was baptised on 9 October in Ystradyfodwg, Glamorganshire.

His father, Robert, was born in about 1840 in Unsted, near Guildford in Surrey.² His mother was born Martha Cox in 1858 in Merthyr Tydfil in Glamorganshire.³ When she was just 15, Martha married Jonas Wilkins in Pontypridd, Glamorganshire. The couple had at least three children:⁴ James (born in about 1881), William H. (born in about 1883) and Edward C. (born in about 1885). Sadly, Jonas died in 1885 at the age of only 38.⁵ Martha remarried, marrying Alfred's father, Richard Charman, in 1887. Martha and Richard had at least four children of their own. Unfortunately only one of Alfred's three siblings survived infancy: Beatrice Maud, who was born in about 1888.⁶ Alfred's two brothers died before their first birthday: Edwin Joseph R. was born in 1891,⁷ but died the same year⁸ and Ivor John was born in about 1895⁹ and died the following year.¹⁰

It is not clear what became of Richard Charman, but Martha married again in 1901, marrying David Franklin, with whom she had already had a child, who carried his father's name. David Franklin was born in about 1899. It is not clear if they had any more children after that.

In 1901, Alfred was living with his mother and step-father, David Franklin, his sister, Beatrice and two step-brothers in Merthyr Tydfil, where David was a coalminer (coal hewer).¹¹ In 1911, the family was in Treherbert and Alfred had joined his step-father in the mines.¹²

Two years later, Alfred married Catherine A. Thomas near Pontypridd, Glamorganshire.¹³ In 1914, they had a daughter, Beatrice Maud.¹⁴

Alfred enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in Pentre, Wales.¹⁵ On 18 October 1914, he joined the Western Front,¹⁶ probably serving in Horsed Transport.¹⁷ He survived nearly the four years of the Great War. But he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 20 September, less than two months before the end of the war.¹⁸ He died the following day of broncho-pneumonia and influenza. He was buried on 22 September in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 27, Plot 6, Row H) with the chaplain, A. D. Reid presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁹ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁰ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Alfred's wife was his next-of-kin and was notified of his death.²¹ She was living at 69 Snowden Road, Trecnchy in Rhondda Valley, Wales. She also received the monies owing to him from the army after his death.²²

Alfred was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).²³

After the war, his wife remarried, marrying John Price in 1927.²⁴ His mother, Martha Franklin, died in 1928.²⁵ His sister, Beatrice, married Samuel Davies in 1906.²⁶

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- ² "1891 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Richard Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Sub-registration district: Ystradyfodwg, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 4422, Folio: 19, Page Number: 31
- ³ "England and Wales Birth Registration Index, 1837-2008," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:26Y2-K62>; accessed 19 December 2015), Martha Cox, 1858; from "England & Wales Births, 1837-2006," *Findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com> : 2012); citing Birth Registration, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, Wales, citing General Register Office, Southport, England.
- ⁴ "1891 Wales Census," entry for Richard Charman
- ⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Jonas Wilkins, Registration district: Pewsey, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 5a, Page: 94
- ⁶ "1891 Wales Census," entry for Richard Charman
- ⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Edwin Joseph R. Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Inferred County: Glamorgan, Volume: 11a, Page: 527
- ⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Edwin Joseph R. Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Inferred County: Glamorganshire, Volume: 11a, Page: 401
- ⁹ "Wales, Glamorganshire, Parish Registers, 1538-1912," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KCYN-41Y> : accessed 19 December 2015), Ivor John Charman, 10 Nov 1895, Baptism; from "Parish Records Collection 1538-2005," *Findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com> : 2012; accessed 19 December 2015), citing Treherbert, Glamorganshire, Wales, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey.
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Ivor John Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Inferred County: Glamorganshire, Volume: 11a, Page: 329
- ¹¹ "1901 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Martha Franklin, Registration district: Merthyr Tydfil, Sub-registration district: Lower Merthyr Tydfil, ED, institution, or vessel: 32, Household schedule number: 179, Piece: 5027, Folio: 21, Page Number: 34
- ¹² "1911 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 December 2015), entry for Alfred Tremblin, Registration district: Pontypridd, Registration District Number: 589, Sub-registration district: Rhondda, ED, institution, or vessel: 05, Household schedule number: 380, Piece: 32333
- ¹³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 December 2015), entry for Alfred J. Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Inferred County: Glamorgan, Volume: 11a, Page: 1178
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 December 2015), entry for Beatrice M. Charman, Registration district: Pontypridd, Inferred County: Glamorgan, Volume: 11a, Page: 1437

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- ¹⁹ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ²⁰ "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)
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