

Private Alfred Barber©

Regimental number: 33217

1st/5th Battalion, Yorkshire and Lancaster Regiment

born: about 1890 – died: 14 August 1917

Private Alfred Barber was born in about 1890, the son of William and Sarah Emily Barber. His parents were both born in about 1852—his father, William, in Rawdon, Yorkshire and his mother, in Manchester, Lancashire.¹ They married in about 1872 and had twelve children, nine of who survived to 1911.² The surviving children were probably John William (born in about 1872),³ Walter (born in 1878),⁴ Arthur B. (born in about 1880),⁵ Sarah Ellen (born in 1882),⁶ Edith (born in about 1885),⁷ Herbert (born in 1887),⁸ Ada (born in about 1888),⁹ Alfred and Emily (born in about 1892).¹⁰

The family lived at 379 Little Horton Lane in Bradford for at least four decades and during this time Alfred's father was working in the wool trade. In 1881, he was a wool sorter and his wife was a worsted weaver. They had three children.¹¹ Ten years later, they had eight children. By 1901, seven of the children were still living with their parents,¹² but two children—Alfred and his sister, Ada—were living with William's sister, Ellen, and her husband, William Robinson. They were living at 377 Little Horton Lane, next door to the Barber family.¹³ By 1911, only the youngest two children—Alfred and Emily—were still at home with their parents.

On 23 March 1913, Alfred married Clara Dixon at All Saints Church in Bradford.¹⁴ Clara was probably born in Bradford in 1892, the daughter of William and Lucy Dixon.¹⁵

Alfred enlisted in the West Riding Regiment (Regimental number: 31299) in Bradford on 9 May 1916.¹⁶ He was 5' 3½" tall and a bootmaker. He was mobilized on 20 March 1917 and joined the Western Front in France on 21 June 1917. A few weeks later he transferred to the York and Lancashire Regiment.

In August 1917, he was serving with the 5th Battalion, which was stationed near Dunkirk. In the early days of the month, a number of new soldiers from Other Ranks (non-officers), with four months training, had been drafted to the battalion. The battalion was losing ten men a day as casualties of gas and shell attacks. Part of the battalion was relieved by the 4th Battalion of York and Lancashire Regiment on 12 August. The remainder was relieved on 18 August.¹⁷

But this was too late for Alfred. He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 14 August 1917, less than two months after he joined the Front. He had gunshot wounds to his face, chest, right and left legs and his penis.¹⁸ He died the same day, at the age of 27. He was buried the following day in Adinkerke Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: A. 37).¹⁹ Adinkerke Military Cemetery is 20 kilometres east of Dunkirk, in the community of De Panne, just across the border into Belgium. There are 168 Commonwealth soldiers from the Great War buried in the cemetery.²⁰

His wife received the monies owing to Alfred from the army upon his death. She also received his personal effects, which included "3 discs, Letters, Photos, Cards, Pipe, ... Wallet, 2 farthings, 2 religious books, 2 badges/numerical, 1 Key Knife (aluminium), ..." ²¹ She noted on the receipt for these possessions that "My husband had a Brown Kid Belt on which I have not got." ²²

Nearly three months after his death, (on 3 November 1917) Alfred's only child—a daughter, Vera—was born in Bradford.

After the war, in October 1919, all members of Alfred's family were still living in Bradford, except for his brother, Walter, who had possibly died.²³ His wife and daughter were living at 33 Coventry Street in Bradford.²⁴ Three of his sisters had married before the war: Sarah married Herbert Hartley in 1905,²⁵ Edith married Douglas George Ormiston in 1908²⁶ and Ada married Thomas Hollings Binns in 1909.²⁷ His youngest sister, Emily, was still living at home with her parents.²⁸

Alfred was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁹

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¹ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 May 2016), entry for Alfred Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Sub-registration district: Horton, ED, institution, or vessel: 28, Piece: 3640, Folio: 112, Page Number: 23

² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 May 2016), entry for Alfred Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Registration District Number: 498, Sub-registration district: Horton, ED, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 26837

³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for John William Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Inferred County: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 119

⁴ "West Yorkshire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Walter Barber

⁵ "1891 England Census," entry for Alfred Barber

⁶ "West Yorkshire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Sarah Ellen Barber

⁷ "West Yorkshire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Edith Barber

⁸ "West Yorkshire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Herbert Barber

⁹ "1891 England Census," entry for Alfred Barber

¹⁰ "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 16 May 2016), entry for William Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Archive reference: RG13, Piece number: 4168, Folio: 38, Page: 27

¹¹ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 May 2016), entry for William Barber, Registration district: Bradford, ED, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 4458, Folio: 44, Page Number: 33

¹² "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," entry for William Barber

¹³ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Alfred Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Sub-registration district: Horton, ED, institution, or vessel: 35, Piece: 4168, Folio: 38, Page Number: 28, Household schedule number: 196

¹⁴ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 May 2016), entry for Alfred Barber

¹⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Clara Dixon, Registration district: Bradford, Registration District Number: 498, Sub-registration district: Bowling, ED, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 26677

¹⁶ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," entry for Alfred Barber. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Alfred's military career comes from this source.

¹⁷ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920, Regiment or Unit: York and Lancaster Regiment, Sub Unit: 1/4th (Hallamshire) (T.F.) Battalion, 1/5th (T.F.) Battalion, Division: 49th Division, Diary Dates: 1915 Apr - 1919 Feb, 1914 Aug - 1919 May, Piece Description: Piece 2805: 148 Infantry Brigade (1914 - 1919), Piece Number: 2805

¹⁸ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 – 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 343

¹⁹ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2016), entry for Barber, Alfred, Service No: 33217

²⁰ "Adinkerke Military Cemetery," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/>; accessed 30 April 2016)

²¹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," entry for Alfred Barber

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Sarah Ellen Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Inferred County: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 160

²⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Edith Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Inferred County: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 105

²⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Ada Barber, Registration district: Bradford, Inferred County: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 224

²⁸ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," entry for Alfred Barber

²⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Alfred Barber