

Sapper George Willie Chambers©
Regimental number: 158564
257th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

born: 1896 – died: 15 August 1917

Sapper George Willie Chambers was born in 1896 in Chesterfield, Derbyshire.¹ He was the son of Samuel and Ellen (nee Rudd) Chambers. His father was born in about 1860 in Pentlow, Essex and his mother in about 1866 in Dronfield, Derbyshire.² His parents married in 1886 at St Paul's Church in Hasland, Derbyshire.³ They had seven children, five of whom survived to 1911. Four of those who survived to 1911 were Harry (born in about 1892), Walter (born in about 1894), George and Mabel (born in about 1902).⁴ Mary Ellen (born in about 1899), may have been the fifth surviving child.⁵

George's father was a labourer in a colliery. In 1891, his parents were living on Mansfield Road in Hasland.⁶ They continued to live on that street until at least 1911.⁷ By 1911, George and his two siblings had joined their father in the colliery. George was a screener.

George enlisted as a sapper in the 257th Tunneling Company of the Royal Engineers in Chesterfield, Derbyshire.⁸ On 14 August 1917, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gas poisoning.⁹ He died the following evening, at 11:10 p.m., and was buried the following day in Adinkerke Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: C. 24). 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.¹⁰

Although no next of kin was identified in the 1st CCCS' chaplains' journal, in which his death was recorded, his mother received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.¹¹

George was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹²

George's older brother Walter also lost his life in the Great War. Walter enlisted in the Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire (Sherwood Foresters) Regiment in Chesterfield. He was serving with the 16th Battalion when he died just three months after George. Walter died on 23 November 1917 while on home service.¹³ Like his brother, Walter was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.¹⁴

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Willie Chambers, Registration district: Chesterfield, Inferred County: Derbyshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 716

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for Samuel Chambers, Registration district: Chesterfield, ED, institution, or vessel: 26, Piece: 2763, Folio: 106, Page Number: 45

³ "Derbyshire Registrars Marriage Index Transcription," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for Samuel Chambers, Reference: PC29/01/230, Register Office: 393

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Willis Chambers, Registration district: Chesterfield, Registration District Number: 438, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 21081

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- ⁵ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Willie Chambers, Registration district: Chesterfield, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, ED, institution, or vessel: 33, Piece: 3246, Folio: 86, Page Number: 51, Household schedule number: 328
- ⁶ "1891 England Census," entry for Samuel Chambers
- ⁷ "1901 England Census," entry for George Willie Chambers
- ⁸ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Chambers
- ⁹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 – 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 and 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 341
- ¹⁰ "Adinkerke Military Cemetery," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 30 April 2016)
- ¹¹ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Chambers
- ¹² "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 May 2016), entry for George Chambers
- ¹³ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Walter Chambers
- ¹⁴ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 May 2016), entry for Walter Chambers