

Private Joseph Acton[©]

Regimental number: 8373

1st Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

born: 1887 - died: 30 September 1918

Private Joseph Acton was born in 1887¹ and baptised on 25 May 1887 at Christ Church in Bradford, Lancashire.² He was the son of Richard and Martha Ellen Acton. His father was born in about 1858 in Northwich, Cheshire and his mother (the former Martha Ellen Jackson) in about 1861 in Manchester, Lancashire.³ They were married in 1884 near Prestwich, Lancashire⁴ and had five children:⁵ David (born in about 1886),⁶ Joseph, Herbert (born in about 1890),⁷ Sarah A (born in about 1892)⁸ and Emma (Emily) (born in about 1894).⁹

In 1891, the family was living at Moneypenny Court in Bradford, near Manchester, where Richard was a carter. Ten years later, they had moved to 18 Garden Street in Ashton under Lyne. By then, Joseph was a springer in a cotton mill. In 1910, Joseph's mother died¹⁰ and a year later the family was living at 21 Boardman in Oldham, where Joseph's father, was a labourer and Joseph was a piecer in the cotton mills. Joseph probably married Jane Finn near Ashton under Lyne in 1907,¹¹ but she was not living with him in 1911.¹²

Joseph enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) in Manchester¹³ and went to France on 24 August 1914.¹⁴ He survived until very nearly the end of the war. But on 30 September 1918, he was fatally wounded. He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his thigh and a fractured leg. He died the same day and was buried the next day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 8, Plot 8, Row A) with the Canadian 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 1917.¹⁵ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918¹⁶ and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁷ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

His next of kin was his sister, Emily,¹⁸ who had married Herbert Hindley in Oldham in 1916.¹⁹ She was notified of her brother's death at 86 West Street, Oldham. However, it appears that the monies owing to him from the army after the war were paid to Ann E. Barlow. There are two Ann (or Annie) E. Barlows born in Oldham in 1887²⁰—the same year as Joseph—but no evidence was found to connect either to the Acton family.

Joseph was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918),²¹ the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre)²² and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).²³

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 16 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton, Registration district: Ashton Under Lyne, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8d, Page: 518

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- ² "Manchester, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813 –1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton, Reference Number: GB127.M190/1/1/5
- ³ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton, Registration district: Prestwich, ED, institution, or vessel: 29, Piece: 3256, Folio: 101, Page Number: 39
- ⁴ "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2016), entry for Richard Acton, District: Prestwich, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8D, Page: 494
- ⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2016), entry for Joe Acton, Registration district: Oldham, Registration District Number: 469, Sub-registration district: Oldham Central, ED, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 24484
- ⁶ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton, Registration district: Ashton under Lyne, Sub-registration district: Audenshaw, ED, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 3788, Folio: 31, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 40
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2016), entry for Martha Ellen Acton, Registration district: Oldham, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8d, Page: 397
- ¹¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton, Registration district: Ashton under Lyne, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8d, Page: 1184
- ¹² "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Acton, J., Service No: 8373; "1911 England Census," entry for Joe Acton
- ¹³ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton
- ¹⁴ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton
- ¹⁵ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org: accessed 7 October 2015)
- ¹⁶ "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>: accessed 17 June 2015)
- ¹⁷ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org: accessed 7 October 2015)
- 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 697
- ¹⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2016), entry for Emily Acton, Registration district: Oldham, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8d, Page: 894
- ²⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 April 2016), entry for Annie E. Barlow, Registration district: Oldham, Sub-registration district: Oldham Below Town, ED, institution, or vessel: 31, Piece: 3808, Folio: 148, Page number: 13, Household schedule number: 94; "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 April 2016), entry for Ann Ellen Barlow, Registration district: Oldham, Registration District Number: 469, Sub-registration district: Oldham East, ED, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 24447
- ²¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton
- ²² Ibid.

²³ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2016), entry for Joseph Acton