

**Sergeant Richard Alfred Brooks<sup>©</sup>**  
**Regimental number: 65103**  
**1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers**

**born: 29 January 1893 - died: 1 June 1918**

Sergeant Richard Alfred Brooks was born on 29 January 1893 at 5 May Avenue, Northfleet, on the outskirts of Gravesend, Kent. He was the son of Eliza Brooks, a laundress, living at 10 Chancellor Street in Hammersmith, London.<sup>1</sup> Two years before his birth, Eliza was living with her parents, Charles and Margaret Brooks, and four siblings, at the same address.<sup>2</sup>

Why Richard was born in Northfleet when his mother was living in Hammersmith is not known. Since he was an illegitimate child, perhaps he was born in a children's home. If that is the case, he did not stay there. By the age of 8, he was living with his mother and her husband, George Parsley.<sup>3</sup>

Eliza married George Parsley the year after Richard's birth—they married on 19 June 1893 at St Peter's Church in Hammersmith.<sup>4</sup> In 1901, they were living at 10 Chancellor Street with six of their children and their extended family: Eliza's widowed mother and four of her children, George Brooks (Eliza's brother)<sup>5</sup> and his family and John Turvey (who may have been related to Eliza's mother)<sup>6</sup> and his daughter. George Parsley was a general labourer.<sup>7</sup>

Eliza and George had seven children: Margaret Louisa (born in 1894),<sup>8</sup> Charles John (born in 1896),<sup>9</sup> Albert Edward (born in 1897),<sup>10</sup> Emma Eliza (born in 1899),<sup>11</sup> George Henry (born in 1901),<sup>12</sup> Ivy May (born in 1904)<sup>13</sup> and Daniel Edward (born in 1905).<sup>14</sup>

1902 was a tragic year for Eliza and George—they lost two children, probably only a few months apart. Emma died at the age of 3<sup>15</sup> and George at 1.<sup>16</sup> Then, five years later, they lost their youngest child, Daniel, at the age of 1.<sup>17</sup> In 1911, they were living with their four remaining children at 79 Banim Street, Hammersmith, where George was still a labourer. Richard was not living with his mother at the time. He had already enlisted in the army.

In 1911, Richard was serving as a private with the 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment and was stationed at the Candahar Military Barracks in South Tedworth, Hampshire.<sup>18</sup> Tidworth Camp was established in 1897 when the War Office acquired Tedworth House and land around it. The barracks were named after British army battles in India and Afghanistan in the middle of the 19th century—the first being built in 1905. The Candahar Barracks were added later.<sup>19</sup>

Richard enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in Gravesend, Kent,<sup>20</sup> in about August 1914.<sup>21</sup> He served first with the 9th Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment (Regimental number: 9443) and joined the Front in the Balkans on 6 October 1915.<sup>22</sup> The Duke of Wellington's Regiment moved to France in July 1916<sup>23</sup> and presumably Richard went with the regiment. At some point after he arrived in France, Richard transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers.<sup>24</sup>

On 1 June 1918, the 1st Battalion was stationed near Chocques, in northern France.<sup>25</sup> The chaplain at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where Richard died, noted that he was admitted with an accidental bullet wound that penetrated his chest. He died the same day and was buried at

Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row E, Grave 31), with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.<sup>26</sup>

Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>27</sup> That month, over 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS, where there were 82 deaths.<sup>28</sup>

The chaplain was unable to identify Richard's next of kin, so a letter was sent to the adjutant of his battalion, notifying them of his death.<sup>29</sup> His next of kin was his wife.<sup>30</sup> Richard had married Mary Isabella Friend in Gateshead, Durham in 1917.<sup>31</sup> She received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.<sup>32</sup>

Mary was probably born in about 1884 in Willington, Durham. Before the war, she was working as a business assistant.<sup>33</sup> After the war she remarried: in early 1919, she wed John L H Earle.<sup>34</sup> Although Richard and Mary do not appear to have had any children, Mary and John had a daughter, Mary J Y Earle, born in 1927.<sup>35</sup>

Richard was awarded posthumously 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).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Copy of an entry of a birth," *General Register Office*, for Richard Brooks: accessed 10 November 2017, Superintendent Registrar's district: Strood, Registrar's sub-district: Northfleet

<sup>2</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Eliza Brooks, Registration district: Fulham, Sub-registration district: St Paul Hammersmith, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 36, Folio: 108

<sup>3</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Richard Parsley, Registration district: Fulham, Sub-registration district: South Hammersmith (including Starch Green), Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 03, Piece: 45, Folio: 86, Page: 49, Household schedule number: 308

<sup>4</sup> "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Eliza Brooks

<sup>5</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for George Brooks, Registration district: Fulham, Sub-registration district: St Peter Hammersmith, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 53, Folio: 25, Page: 44

<sup>6</sup> "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 November 2017), entry for Margaret Tuvey

<sup>7</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Richard Parsley

<sup>8</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Margaret Louisa, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 216

<sup>9</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Charles John, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 234

<sup>10</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Albert Edward, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 194

<sup>11</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Emma Eliza, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 238

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- <sup>12</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, George Henry, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 230
- <sup>13</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Ivy May, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 255
- <sup>14</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2017) entry for Parsley, Daniel Edward, Registration district: Fulham, Volume 01A, Page 239
- <sup>15</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2017), entry for Emma Eliza Parsley, Registration district: Fulham, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 151
- <sup>16</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2017), entry for George Henry Parsley, Registration district: Fulham, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 156
- <sup>17</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2017), entry for Daniel Edward Parsley, Registration district: Fulham, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 211
- <sup>18</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Richard Brooks, Registration district: Andover, Registration district number: 112, Sub-registration district: Amport, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10-15, Piece: 6336
- <sup>19</sup> "Tidworth Camp," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tidworth\\_Camp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tidworth_Camp): accessed 10 November 2017)
- <sup>20</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 31 October 2017), entry for Richard Brooks
- <sup>21</sup> Based on "War Gratuity Calculator," (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 October 2017), entry for Richard Brooks
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- <sup>23</sup> "Duke of Wellington's Regiment," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke\\_of\\_Wellington%27s\\_Regiment#First\\_World\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Wellington%27s_Regiment#First_World_War): accessed 31 October 2017)
- <sup>24</sup> "List of Northumberland Fusiliers battalions in World War I," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Northumberland\\_Fusiliers\\_battalions\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_I#1st\\_Battalion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Northumberland_Fusiliers_battalions_in_World_War_I#1st_Battalion): accessed 10 November 2017)
- <sup>25</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), Regiment or unit: Northumberland Fusiliers, Sub-unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Diary dates: 1914 Aug 1 - 1915 June 30, Piece description: Piece 1430/1-4: 9 Infantry Brigade: 1 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (1914 Aug - 1919 May), Piece number: 1430
- <sup>26</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 30 August 2017), entry for Brooks, R.
- <sup>27</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
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<sup>32</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 October 2017), entry for Richard Brooks

<sup>33</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 10 November 2017), entry for Mary Isabella Friend, Registration district: Gateshead, Registration district number: 557, Sub-registration district: Heworth, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 30400

<sup>34</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 31 October 2017), entry for Mary I Brooks, Registration district: Tynemouth, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 10b, Page: 405

<sup>35</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 November 2017), entry for Mary J Y Earle, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 1549

<sup>36</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 October 2017), entry for Richard Brooks