

Gunner Thomas Henry Chillmaid©
Regimental number: 175608
164th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

born: 1889 - died: 12 May 1918

Gunner Thomas Henry Chillmaid (probably known as Henry) was born in 1889 in Middlesbrough, Yorkshire.¹ His parents, Henry and Ellen (known as Eleanor), had probably only moved to Yorkshire a few years before. Both his parents were born in Gravesend, Kent—Henry Sr. in about 1849 and his wife, the former Ellen Chapman in about 1850.² They married in 1870 in North Aylesford, Kent,³ and, the year after their marriage, they were lodging at 7 Commercial Place, Northfleet, in the home of David Nightingale, a shoe maker. Henry was a cement labourer. Their first child, a daughter named Edith Emily, was born in 1871⁴—followed by two more daughters: Eleanor Louisa (born in 1873)⁵ and Maud Theresa (born in 1875).⁶ Then they had a son, Henry John (born on 25 February 1877);⁷ sadly he died within a few days, on 2 March 1877 in Barrackfield, Northfleet.⁸ After Henry's death, they had four more girls—Florence Rose (born in 1878),⁹ Alice Ada (born in 1881),¹⁰ Amy Celia (born in 1883)¹¹ and Adelaide Ethel (born in 1886).¹² Finally, they had two more sons: Henry, and Frederick William (born in 1891).¹³

In 1881, the family was living at 12 Springhead Road in Northfleet, where Henry Sr. was a labourer.¹⁴ Sometime after 1881, the family moved to Yorkshire. In 1891, they were living at 47 France Street in Middlesbrough, Yorkshire.¹⁵ Ten years later, they were living at 15 Avon Street, still in Middlesbrough, and Henry Sr. was now a stevedore labourer.¹⁶

Sadly, Henry Sr. died in 1909, when Henry was only 10.¹⁷ Two years later, his wife was living at 41 Myrtle Street in Middlesbrough with her two sons. Henry Jr. was a shop assistant, working for a draper, and his brother Frederick was canvassing for advertisements for a local daily newspaper.¹⁸

In 1915, Henry Jr. married Alice Mary Maud Bird. Alice was born in Asfordby, Leicestershire, in about 1893, the daughter of Frederick and Dinah Bird.¹⁹ Henry and Alice's daughter, Edna, was born later in 1915.

A couple of years after his marriage, Henry enlisted as a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery in Middlesbrough,²⁰ probably in about May 1917.²¹ He was serving with the 164th Siege Battery, but it is not known exactly where the battery was located in May 1918. Henry was gassed and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 9 May 1918. He died three days later and was buried in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row B, Grave 43) on 13 May, with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.²² Reverend Tibbits had only arrived at No. 1 CCCS the day that Henry was admitted.²³

Pernes British Military Cemetery was set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.²⁴ Bertrand was one of 331 admissions to No. 1 CCCS on 9 May. In that month, a total of nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted and 115 died.²⁵

His wife, who was living at 2 Cliffe Cottages, Acklam Road in Middlesbrough, was his next of kin and was notified of his death. She received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death²⁶ and arranged for the following inscription to be placed on his gravestone:

WE CANNOT LORD
THY PURPOSE SEE
BUT ALL IS WELL
THAT IS DONE BY THEE²⁷

Henry was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁸

Henry's brother Frederick also served in the Great War. He appears to have enlisted in November 1915, but to have been mobilized only in February 1917—probably just a few months before his older brother enlisted. In 1915, he was probably a shell maker, living at 12 Hanson Street in Redcar, Yorkshire.²⁹ He served with the Royal Engineers (Regimental numbers: 243224, WR/505488)³⁰ in the Inland Water Transport and Docks—a unit set up to support transportation along the canals and waterways in France and Belgium. Sappers from this unit worked to “maintain communication and transportation of food, supplies, ammunition and the evacuation of wounded. In 1916 its work was extended to Mesopotamia and in 1917 to Egypt and Salonika.”³¹

He was demobilized in February 1919 and, like his brother, Frederick was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.³² Frederick married Bertha Britton on 17 February 1913 and they had at least two children—Florrie, born on 23 June 1914³³ and Frederick W, born on 27 February 1926.³⁴ In 1939, Frederick, his wife and son were still living at 12 Hanson Street, where Frederick was a stevedore.³⁵

In 1920, Henry's widow Alice immigrated to the United States with their daughter.³⁶ On the ship that took her to Philadelphia was a passenger named Frederick Cyril Wakeling, who was born in Yorkshire in 1896.³⁷ Whether they met on board or knew each other before they left, Alice and Frederick married soon after arriving in the United States. They probably had three children—all born in Pennsylvania: Victor, who may also have been known as Frederick (born in 1921), Kenneth (born in 1925) and Donald (born in 1927).³⁸

In 1929, Alice and her three sons and her daughter Edna made a trip home for a couple of months to see her parents, who were still living at 2 Cliffe Cottages in Middlesbrough.³⁹ In September of that year, Henry's mother Eleanor died.⁴⁰ Although Alice left at the beginning of September, perhaps Eleanor had a chance to see her granddaughter Edna one last time before she died.

The following year, the family was living at 436 60th Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Frederick was a milkman. By 1935 they had moved to 4069 Ford Road, where they were still living in 1940. Frederick was then a supervisor in a milk business. Living with them was Henry's daughter Edna, who had married Robert Hampton, a foreman in a milk business. Edna and Robert had a son, Kenneth, born in 1939.⁴¹

All of Henry's sisters had married well before the war and most remained in Middlesbrough:

- Edith married John George Wallace in 1893 and, in 1939, was living at 2 Brookfield Gardens, Middlesbrough;⁴²
- Eleanor married Thomas William Wood in 1892 and, in 1939, was living at 310 Borough Road, Middlesbrough;⁴³
- Maud married Albert Allwood in 1898;⁴⁴
- Rose married John Sansom in 1900;⁴⁵

- Ada married Henry Hawes in 1903 and, in 1939, was living at 14 Teak Street, Middlesbrough;⁴⁶
- Amy married John Barrass in 1906 and, in 1939, was living at 36 West Terrace, Middlesbrough;⁴⁷ and
- Adelaide married in 1910.⁴⁸

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¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Thomas Henry, Registration district: Middlesbrough, Volume 09D, Page 536

² "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2018), entry for Henry Chillmaid, Registration district: North Aylesford, Sub-registration district: Northfleet, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Household schedule number: 118, Piece: 896, Folio: 14, Page: 20

³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 February 2018), entry for Henry Chillmaid, Registration district: North Aylesford, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 613

⁴ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Edith Emily, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 409

⁵ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Eleanor Louisa, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 397

⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Maud Theresa, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 425

⁷ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Henry John, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 480

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⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Florence Rose, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 464

¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Alice Ada, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 492

¹¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Amy Celia, Registration district: North Aylesford, Volume 02A, Page 514

¹² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Adelaide Ethel, Registration district: Strood, Volume 02A, Page 544

¹³ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 February 2018) entry for Chillmaid, Frederick William, Registration district: Middlesbrough, Volume 09D, Page 549

¹⁴ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 February 2018), entry for Henry Chillmaid, Registration district: North Aylesford, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 877, Folio: 5, Page: 3

¹⁵ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 February 2018), entry for Henry Chillmout [*sic*], Sub-registration district: Middlesbrough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 4007, Folio: 112

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