

Corporal John Charles Buck[©]

Regimental number: 2755 (first); 935855 (second)

Royal Field Artillery, Territorial Force, 3rd (London) Brigade

born: 1883–died: 21 October 1918

John Charles Buck was born on 31 December 1883 in St. Luke Parish, Finsbury, Islington (London), England. He was actually baptised *Thomas* Charles on 20 January 1884,¹ probably named after his father's brother.² He was the third child of William Buck and Amelia Arnold, who were married in St. Barnabas Church, St. Luke, on 23 December 1877.³ William was a carpenter like his father; his father-in-law also worked with wood—he was a cabinet maker. Amelia was a work box maker. Their eldest child, William George, was born in 1878,⁴ followed by a daughter, Amelia Annie, in 1881.⁵

John seems to have been known as Thomas until he was of school age, because this is how he is listed in the 1891 Census, when he was 7. His grandfather, John Buck, was living with the family at the time.⁶ Perhaps Thomas chose to change his name to John in memory of his grandfather, who died in 1892,⁷ because this is the name he was using by 1901 and thereafter.⁸

The family never moved far from their roots: William Sr. was born in St. Luke in 1855;⁹ Amelia Sr. was baptised in nearby St. Thomas Charterhouse Church on 23 August 1857.¹⁰ They lived with their children on Ironmonger Street, St. Luke, from at least 1881¹¹ until 1901.¹² By this time, William Sr. was a horse hair curler, an occupation described as “dressing” horse hair, used extensively in the Victorian upholstery trade.¹³ Until at least 1891, Amelia Sr. was still working as a work box maker, more specifically a box liner.¹⁴ By 1901, Amelia Sr. was no longer working; however, her daughter, Amelia Annie, had taken up the trade but as a “fancy” box maker. William Jr. was working as a printer and John, at 17, is listed as a blacksmith.¹⁵

William Jr., or William George Buck, married Elizabeth Hewman on 15 September 1906 in St. Paul's Church, Finsbury.¹⁶ They had a daughter, Constance Elizabeth, born on 8 July 1907.¹⁷ Amelia Annie Buck married Edward Walter Harris three weeks after her brother on 6 October 1906 in the same church where her parents had married: St. Barnabas.¹⁸ Also like her brother, Amelia had a daughter, another Amelia, born 24 July 1907.¹⁹

John never married and was living with his parents at 23 St. Paul Street, Islington,²⁰ in 1911; like his father, he was working as a horse hair curler.

Little is known about John's actual war time experiences, except that he fought with the 3rd (London) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery²¹ in what was referred to as the Territorial Force. The Territorial Force, established in 1908, was a part-time volunteer force intended to augment the regular British Army.²² There were apparently two 3rd (London) Artillery units, the 1st and the 2nd, but only the 1st went to the Continent, landing at Le Havre on 5 October 1915 and moving up to the Front a couple of weeks later. It became part of the 56th Artillery Division which, in 1916, was part of the Somme Offensive. In January 1917 it was detached from the 56th Division and was subsequently attached to other units needing additional artillery support. For example, during the Battle of Arras (April 1917) it was attached to the 14th (Light) Division, while for the Battle of the Selle (October 1918) it was supporting the 4th Division.²³

Although no records were found indicating exactly when John joined up, that he was promoted to Corporal may indicate a significant period of active service. What is known is that he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 20 October 1918²⁴ and died the following day of bronchitis.²⁵ John was buried on 23 October 1918 in the Duisans British Military Cemetery in Grave 22, Plot 8, Row B.²⁶

John was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁷

John's father passed away in 1924²⁸ but his mother was still alive and living at the same address on St. Paul Street when World War II broke out in 1939.²⁹ His brother died late in 1925;³⁰ his sister in 1964.³¹

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¹ "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 January 2019), entry for Thomas Charles Buck

² "1861 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for Thomas Buck, Registration district: St. Luke, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 29, Piece: 203, Folio: 64, Page: 8

³ "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1932," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for Amelia Arnold

⁴ London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for William George Buck

⁵ London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 January 2019), entry for Amelia Annie Buck

⁶ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for Thomas Busk [sic], Residence Place: London, St. Luke, London, England, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Piece: 232, Folio: 5

⁷ "England & Scotland, Select Cemetery Registers, 1800–2016," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com; accessed 29 January 2019), entry for John Buck

⁸ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for John C. Buck, Registration district: Holborn, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 20, Piece: 259, Folio: 49, Page: 14, Household schedule number: 117

⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 January 2019), entry for William Buck, Registration district: St. Luke, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1 b, Page: 512

¹⁰ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for Amelia Arnold, FHL film numbers: 597922, 597923

¹¹ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for William Buck, Registration district: Holborn, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 363, Folio: 14, Page: 21

¹² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for William Buck, Registration district: Holborn, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 20, Piece: 259, Folio: 49, Page: 14, Household schedule number: 117

¹³ "Victorian Occupations," (www.victorianoccupations.com: accessed 28 January 2018)

¹⁴ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for William Busk, Residence Place: London, St. Luke, London, England, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Piece: 232, Folio: 5

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- ¹⁵ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 November 2018), entry for William Buck, Registration district: Holborn, Sub-registration district: City Road, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 20, Piece: 259, Folio: 49, Page: 14, Household schedule number: 117
- ¹⁶ "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1932," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for William George Buck
- ¹⁷ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 January 2019), entry for Constance Elizabeth Buck, Parish: St. Philip, Dalston, Borough: Hackney
- ¹⁸ "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1932," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 December 2019), entry for Amelia Annie Buck
- ¹⁹ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 28 January 2019), entry for Amelia Elizabeth Harris, Parish: St. Luke, Finsbury, Borough: Islington
- ²⁰ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 5 January 2018), entry for John Charles Buck, Registration district: Islington, Registration district number: 10, Sub-registration district: Islington South East, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 52, Piece: 954
- ²¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 11 November 2018), entry for Buck, John Charles, Service No: 935855
- ²² "Territorial Force," *Wikipedia* (www.wikipedia.org: accessed 29 January 2019)
- ²³ "2nd Middlesex Artillery Volunteers," *Wikipedia* (www.wikipedia.org: accessed 29 January 2019) Note: The 2nd Middlesex Artillery became the 3rd London Brigade, Royal Field Artillery
- ²⁴ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 10 April 2018), entry for Buck, J. C.
- ²⁵ "UK, Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 23 April 2018), entry for John Charles Buck
- ²⁶ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 10 April 2018), entry for Buck, J. C.
- ²⁷ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 16 May 2018), entry for John C. Buck
- ²⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 29 January 2019), entry for William Buck, Registration district: Limehouse, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1c, Page: 236
- ²⁹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 December 2018), entry for Amelia Buck, Residence Place: Islington, London, England, Schedule number: 112, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: ALHY, Registration district: 10/3
- ³⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 29 January 2019), entry for William G. Buck, Registration district: Romford, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 4a, Page: 554
- ³¹ "James Family Tree," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 7 February 2019), entry for Amelia Annie Harris