

## **Private George Reid Atkinson<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental number: 93567**

**1/8th Battalion, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters)**

**born: 1898 – died: 16 June 1918**

George Reid Atkinson was born in the fall of 1898 in Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland and was the first of Charlotte Jane and Thomas Burdis Atkinson's four children.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Burdis, born in nearby Haydon Bridge in 1873,<sup>2</sup> was a railway worker, serving as both a porter and a ticket collector.<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Jane, née Reid, was two years older, born in Blackhill, Durham, in 1871.<sup>4</sup> They were married in Lanchester, Durham, in 1897.<sup>5</sup> Their other three children were Thomas Burdis, born in 1900,<sup>6</sup> Olive May, born in 1903,<sup>7</sup> and Charlotte Isabelle, in 1906.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1901 Census, George Reid was living with Charlotte's sister Elizabeth Ann and her husband Hugh Bell in Hexham, Northumberland,<sup>9</sup> while his parents and four-month-old Thomas Burdis were living in Gateshead.<sup>10</sup> The family was also not together at the time of the 1911 Census, with Charlotte Jane, her two daughters and her mother visiting Elizabeth Ann and Hugh Bell in Jarrow, Northumberland,<sup>11</sup> while Thomas Burdis the elder and his two sons were living 34 miles away with his sister Mary Hellen and husband John Wilson in Chollerton, Northumberland.<sup>12</sup>

George Reid had just turned 16 when the Great War broke out in 1914, at which time the official enlistment age was 18, and you had to be 19 to fight overseas.<sup>13</sup> However, many younger men enlisted by lying about their age. In about February 1917, George Reid enlisted in the 1/8th Battalion of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment (known as the Sherwood Foresters).<sup>14</sup> The 1/8th Battalion, along with the 1/5th, 1/6th, and 1/7th Battalions, landed in France in February 1915 for service on the Western Front.<sup>15</sup> Private Atkinson was likely mobilized in the summer of 1917.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1918, the battalion was stationed in the Essars sector.<sup>17</sup> This was a relatively quiet period in the war, though there was extensive patrolling to enemy lines and beyond.<sup>18</sup> On 15 June, just before the battalion was relieved by the 1/6th Battalion, the 3rd Division on the battalion's left flank advanced their line under an artillery barrage, and the battalion's left subsection received a good deal of retaliation.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps as part of this action, or perhaps on patrol, Private George Reid Atkinson was mortally wounded; he was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to the neck, left arm and right thigh, and he died there the next day, 16 June.<sup>20</sup> He was one of only two soldiers in the battalion killed during the month of June.<sup>21</sup> He was buried on June 17 at the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row B, Grave No. 1). The inscription on his tombstone reads

IN SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION <sup>22</sup>

The cemetery lies one kilometre west of Pernes-en-Artois, in the region of Pas de Calais, and contains the remains of 1096 soldiers from the two world wars.

Private George Reid Atkinson received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service.<sup>23</sup>

George Reid's parents were still alive in 1939, living together in Durham.<sup>24</sup> His father died in 1948, aged 75.<sup>25</sup>

George Reid's brother, Thomas Burdis, was only 13 when the war began. He married, in 1922, Mary Ethel Barker.<sup>26</sup> In 1939 he was a constructional engineer, living in Newburn, Northumberland.<sup>27</sup> He died in 1984, aged 83.<sup>28</sup>

Olive May, George Reid's sister, returned from a trip to Australia in 1930,<sup>29</sup> then married Harold Richard Simpson in New Zealand in 1936.<sup>30</sup> In 1939 she was living back in England, in Sussex, with her sister Charlotte Isabelle.<sup>31</sup>

Charlotte Isabelle also got married, in 1929 in Gateshead, to Harry Alexander Scott.<sup>32</sup> They had two children, Ian Harry in 1932<sup>33</sup> and Graham in 1933.<sup>34</sup> As mentioned above, she was living with her sister Olive May in Sussex in 1939. There are five records still closed in the register in that household, which may be their husbands and children. Charlotte Isabelle died in 1982 in Swindon, Wiltshire, aged 75.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for George Reid Atkinson, Registration district: Newcastle upon Tyne, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 10b, Page: 46

<sup>2</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Thomas Burduss Atkinson [*sic*], Registration district: Gateshead, Sub-registration district: Gateshead, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 4753, Folio: 158, Page: 05, Household schedule number: 27

<sup>3</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Thos Atkinson, Registration district: Hexham, Registration district number: 561, Sub-registration district: Chollerton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Household schedule number: 5, Piece: 30952

<sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Charlotte Jane Reid, Registration district: Durham, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 352

<sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Charlotte Jane Reid, Registration district: Lanchester, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 508

<sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Thomas Burdis Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 970

<sup>7</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Olive May Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 1062

<sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Charlotte Isabelle Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 1017

<sup>9</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for George R. Atkinson, Registration district: Hexham, Sub-registration district: Hexham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 4824, Folio: 133, Page: 8, Household schedule number: 35

<sup>10</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Thomas Burduss Atkinson [*sic*], Registration district: Gateshead, Sub-registration district: Gateshead, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 4753, Folio: 158, Page: 5, Household schedule number: 27

<sup>11</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Charlotte Jane Atkerson [*sic*], Registration district: South Shields, Registration district number: 556, Sub-registration

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district: Jarrow, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 517, Household schedule number: 231, Piece: 30365

<sup>12</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Thos Atkinson, Registration district: Hexham, Registration district number: 561, Sub-registration district: Chollerton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Household schedule number: 5, Piece: 30952

<sup>13</sup> "How did Britain let 250,000 underage soldiers fight in WW1?" *BBC* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zcvdhyc>: accessed 4 December 2018)

<sup>14</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for George Reid Atkinson

<sup>15</sup> "Sherwood Foresters," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherwood\\_Foresters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherwood_Foresters): accessed 4 December 2018)

<sup>16</sup> "Derbyshire Territorials in the Great War," *Wordpress* (<https://derbyshireterritorials.wordpress.com/tag/93567-pte-george-reid-atkinson/>: accessed 4 December 2018)

<sup>17</sup> Weetman, W.C.C., *The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War, 1914–1919, 1/8th Battalion*, Nottingham: Thos. Forman & Sons, 1920, page 17, *Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/stream/thesherwoodfores20527gut/pg20527.txt>)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, page 242

<sup>19</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 December 2018), entry for Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) Regiment, Sub-unit: 1/6th Battalion, Piece description: Piece 2694/1, page 265

<sup>20</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 25 November 2018), entry for Atkinson, G.

<sup>21</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 December 2018), entry for Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) Regiment, Sub-unit: 1/8th Battalion, Piece description: Piece 2695/2, pages 351–2

<sup>22</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 September 2018), entry for Atkinson, George Reid, Service No: 93567

<sup>23</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 25 November 2018), entry for Atkinson, George R.

<sup>24</sup> "1939 Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 November 2018), entry for L. Burder Atkinson [*sic*], Schedule number: 230, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: FBBH, Registration district: 557/1

<sup>25</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 November 2018), entry for Thomas B. Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 1a, Page: 627

<sup>26</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 25 November 2018), entry for Thomas Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 1812

<sup>27</sup> "1939 Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Thomas B. Atkinson, Schedule number: 61, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: GCOH, Registration district: 560/3

<sup>28</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 November 2018), entry for Thomas Burdis Atkinson, Registration district: Northumberland Central, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 1, Page: 1614

<sup>29</sup> "UK, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878–1960," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 24 November 2018), entry for Miss O M Atkinson, Official number: 147948

<sup>30</sup> "New Zealand, Marriage Index, 1840–1937," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 31 November 2018), entry for Olive May Atkinson, Folio number: 903

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<sup>31</sup> "1939 Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Olive M Simpson, Schedule number: 176, Sub-schedule number: 5, Enumeration district: EKPJ, Registration district: 74/1

<sup>32</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 25 November 2018), entry for Charlotte I Atkinson, Registration district: Gateshead, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 1738

<sup>33</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Ian H Scott, Registration district: Croydon, Inferred county: Greater London, Volume: 2a, Page: 593

<sup>34</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 28 November 2018), entry for Graham Scott, Registration district: Croydon, Inferred county: Greater London, Volume: 2a, Page: 535

<sup>35</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 November 2018), entry for Charlotte Isabell Scott [*sic*], Registration district: Swindon, Inferred county: Wiltshire, Volume: 23, Page: 1851