

## **Percy James JACKMAN**

Born Dawlish 19<sup>th</sup> April 1886  
Private 6747

Died France 14<sup>th</sup> September 1914, aged 28  
Coldstream Guards, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion

**Percy James Jackman** was the fourth child of James and Sarah Ann Jackman. James was born in Sandford, near Crediton, and was the son of John Jackman (1832-1906) and Maria Southcott (1833-1877). They had a first son, William (1857- ) also born in Sandford.

William married and was living in Old Town Street, Dawlish in 1881 with his wife Mary, a son Walter (1880- ), and his brother James, who was then 21 and working as a general labourer.

James Jackman married Sarah Ann Perry in the July-Sept quarter of 1881 (N.A. District, Vol 5b, p 222) and they had two daughters, Alice Maud (1883- ) and Amelia R (1886- ) and a son **Percy J**, all born in Dawlish.

**Percy** was baptised in St Gregory's on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1886. He was at school in Dawlish when, in 1891, the census shows they were living in Old Town Street, Dawlish. His father was an agricultural labourer and his mother a washerwoman.

In 1901 the parents, James and Sarah Ann, had moved to Exwick with **Percy** who is shown as a Butcher's boy, aged 14.

The Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects shows that **Percy Jackman** enlisted at Dawlish on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1906, just after his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The census entries for 1911 show that he was at home "Soldier, Private on Furlough" with his mother (Housekeeper) at 23 Sandford Street, Exeter, with four young children of the Harding and Fewins families as boarders. The father, James, was a boarder at 5 Portland Place, Paris Street, and employed by the railway company as a Plate Layer. There is a death record for James Jackman in Exeter in July-Spt 1915, aged 57 (Vol 5b, p 79).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Coldstream Guards was part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) that was moved to France and Belgium on the German invasion of that country at the outbreak of war in August 1914. After initial engagements the Germans launched attacks in an effort to wipe out the BEF which withdrew from Mons in late August. They held at the battle of the Aisne and at Soupir on 14<sup>th</sup> September the dead included **Private Percy J Jackman**.

He is not included on the town War Memorial, nor the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour, possibly because he had moved with his family to Exwick before he was 14. He is remembered on Exwick War Memorial.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/578467/JACKMAN,%20PERCY>

He is buried in Vailly Cemetery and the record shows:

The village of Vailly-sur-Aisne was the point at which the 3rd Division crossed the river Aisne on 13 and 14 September 1914 during the Allied advance from the Marne.

As they moved northward, the Germans were closely pursued by units of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and their French allies. The first British troops crossed the Aisne at Venizel on the evening of 12 September, and Allied units crossed at different points along the river over the course of the next day. The Royal Scots and Royal Irish regiments made their way over the remains of the bridge at Vailly-sur-Aisne, under steady shellfire, on the afternoon of the 13th. By the early hours of the following morning British and French troops had formed bridgeheads at several points on the north bank of the river and were preparing to attack. The

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Allied intention was to advance north toward Laon, capture the heights, and force the German armies to continue their retreat. Allied commanders were unaware of the real strength of the enemy forces on the Chemin des Dames ridge, but it soon became clear that the German units had dug trenches, were supported by heavy artillery, and intended to stand and fight.

In heavy rain and dense mist, brigades of the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the BEF began advancing toward the German lines between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. on the morning of 14 September. They had hoped to seize as much enemy ground as possible before day break, but despite some early successes German resistance was determined and by 7 a.m. British troops were coming under heavy rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire. Thick fog, combined with the sheer number of units deployed and the unexpected strength of the German forces, caused much confusion on the battlefield. The British battle plan was also frustrated by the unexpectedly accurate fire of German howitzers on the heights. As the day wore on, the battle descended into a series of attacks and counter-attacks and both sides suffered heavy casualties.

By nightfall on 14 September, British units on the north bank of the river had been ordered to dig trenches and reinforce their positions, which now spanned a twenty-mile front. Although the Battle of the Aisne continued for another ten days, neither side could claim a decisive victory; the German forces failing to drive the Allies back across the river, and the Allies unable to push the Germans from the ridge. This 'stabilization' of the front marked the beginning of trench warfare – a gruelling stalemate that would last for almost four years.

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves – Vailly Cemetery data)

Last known address: Mother, 23 Sandford Street, Exeter

Next of kin: Mother. His Will was shown in favour of his mother, Sarah.

### References:

Coldstream Guards history website

Free Birth Marriage Death records

Family history material, incl Baptism register page

Subscription website:

Census records

UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects