

Percy John HOCKADAY

Born Q2, 1884, in Dawlish
Sergeant, 15361

Died 31st August 1917, Sudan, aged 33
Royal Engineers, 'K' Telegraph Company

Percy John Hockaday was the second son of John Hockaday and Matilda Hayes Bevan. John Hockaday was the eldest son of William Hockaday (1823-) who had been born in Lewtrenchard and married Martha (1826-) from Bridestowe, West Devon. By 1871 William was set up as a 'Fly Proprietor' and living at 3 Westcliff Hill, Dawlish with his children, all born in Dawlish, who were:

Mary A Hockaday (1852-) assisting her mother, a Lodging House keeper

John Hockaday (1854-1922), a Fly driver **

Emma " (1862-) a scholar

Frederick " (1864-) "

Richard " (1866-) "

Elizabeth " (1868-)

Thomas " (1870-)

** A fly is a fast carriage with two wheels and usually drawn by one horse, also known as a handsom cab.

John Hockaday and Matilda Hayes Bevan (1855-1945) married in 1879. Matilda was from Chudleigh. They had four children of which the eldest had died young:

Percy John Hockaday (1880-1882)

Winifred Hockaday (1882-1929),

Percy John Hockaday (1884-1917),

Alfred Hayes Hockaday (1886-1965).

In 1881 John Hockaday is listed in the census at 16 Brunswick Place, Dawlish but his wife and her first son Percy, 8 months old, were staying at the time with her mother, Mary Bevan, in Fore Street, Chudleigh. Her mother was a milliner and dress maker. **Percy John Hockaday's** birth was registered in the April-June quarter of 1884 (Newton Abbot district, vol 5b, page 118) and he was given the same names as the first child.

John Hockaday ran a carriage hire business and was located at Brunswick Place in 1891, and at Plantation Terrace in 1901. By this time there were twelve in the household at census time. As well as he and his wife, **Percy** was working as a coach painter, and Alfred was at home; there were two boarders, both bank clerks; Helen Ashby, a widow aged 64 and living on her own means was there with her daughter Violet Caroline Townley-Parker, aged 9; there were also a cook, a nurse, parlourmaid and an housemaid.

(The entry for Violet Caroline Townley-Parker (1891-1979) is deceptive because it is entered on the line above Helen Ashby, her mother, and appears at first sight to place her as the 'dau' of John Hockaday. However, other references show that Violet was the daughter of Gerald Townley-Parker and Helen Ashby. She went on to marry in 1915 to Guy de Hoghton but this was annulled three years later. She died on 1 June 1979 at The Corner House, Headley Down, Bordon, Hants and Probate was granted in the sum of £112,050. Violet had been born in Dawlish but the connection with the Hockaday family is unclear.)

By 1911 John and Matilda Hockaday had moved to Exeter where he was a stableman, possibly indicating a failure of business in Dawlish or the impact of the new motor cars. They were living at 16 Eaton Place, Exeter with their daughter Winifred who had married Henry Thomas

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Simmonds (1880-) in 1905 and their child, John Henry L Simmonds (1910-). John and Matilda had adopted a son, Ernest John Gilman Hill (1901-) and there were three boarders. Alfred Hayes Hockaday, married Dorothy Lucy Farleigh in 1909 and was working as a labourer for a railway contractor. They had a son, Jack Mervyn Hockaday (1910-1995).

From the news report in the Western Times of 7th September 1917 (*see pictures, below*) it appears that **Percy Hockaday** joined the Royal Engineers ca 1904 when he was twenty and specialised in wireless telegraphy. He may have been serving abroad at the time of the 1911 census, but in 1912 he was at home and **Percy** married Gertrude Gummer (1891-) in Exeter. It is not known if they had children or if she married again after his death. A War Gratuity of £18. 10s. 0d. was paid to his widow Gertrude in 1919.

He was appointed Inspector of Telegraphs for the Egyptian Government in 1912 and although granted leave in 1914 he remained in Egypt and the Sudan on the outbreak of war.

Percy John Hockaday was entitled to the 1915 Star as well as the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Sultan's Sudan (1910) Medal with the 'Darfur 16' clasp. This last was given by the Khedive of Egypt and there are a large number of differing clasps given as the medal was issued over years. A Medal Roll Index Card gives his rank as Sergeant and this is adopted here.

His death was given as sunstroke.

Further information about the Royal Engineers' role in developing and inspecting telegraph services may be found in the extensive Sudan Archive in Durham University Library. There are papers relating, inter alia, to the Sudan Government Railways 1911-1932, Posts and Telegraphs 1914-1932 (Boscott A.J.) and Egyptian Army 1909-1935 (Butler S.S.).

He is remembered on the Devon Roll of Honour as 'Hockaday, Percy John, Divn Insp, R.E., 31 Aug 1917, Egypt' and on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour as 'Hockaday.P.J. Divn Ins, Tel'.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: HOCKADAY.P.J. Divn Ins, Tel R.E.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: HOCKADAY, PERCY JOHN 2nd Corporal 15361
31/08/1917 Royal Engineers, K. Telegraph Coy.
Grave Ref: 6. C. 16. [Khartoum War Cemetery](#), Sudan.

Last known address: 16 Eaton Place, Exeter

Next of kin: Gertude Hockaday, widow

References:

Free birth marriage death refs
profile by Sheila Ralls – see Document
refs via subscription websites:
Census data
UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects
British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards
Farleigh/Skinner family tree; Ancestry.co.uk
<http://www.angelfire.com/realm3/ruvignyplus/004.html>