

James BRIMICOMBE

Born Kenn, 7 February 1890

Died 4 April 1919

Acting Bombardier, Service no. 3016

3rd Wessex Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

James Brimicombe was born on 7 February 1890 (GRO ref St Thomas, 1890 Jan-Mar, vol 5b, p 76) at Higher Thornton, Kenn, to Edwin George and Mary Brimicombe. His mother Mary Brimicombe (formerly Martin) registered his birth with her mark on 17 March 1890. The surname appears variously as Brimacombe, Brimmicombe, Brimicombe and Brinicombe in census entries. The spelling used on the CWGC headstone is used here.

Edwin George Brimicombe (1862-1929) was born to Samuel and Sophia Brimicombe.

Samuel Brimicombe (1832-1884) was an agricultural labourer who married Sophia Dodge in 1853 (GRO ref St Thomas, 1853, July-Sept, vol 5b, p 123). The Census of 1871 shows their son Edwin George Brimicombe, 8, born in Mamhead. (GRO ref 1862, St Thomas, Apr-June, vol 5b, p84).

They do not appear in every census, so far as has been seen. A marriage was registered of Edward (sic) G Brimicombe to Mary Martin (1861-) in 1879 (GRO ref Newton Abbot, Oct- Dec, vol 5b, p277).

In the 1901 Census, Edwin and Mary are living at No 5 Court, Chudleigh and the household is:

Geo Brimicombe,	Head 42,	General Labourer	born Mamhead
Mary "	Wife, 44		Chudleigh
George	Son, 19	General Labourer	Newton Abbot
James	Son, 11		Kenton
William	Son, 9		Kenn
Joseph	Son, 7		Chudleigh
Frederick	Son, 5		"

The 1911 Census shows Edwin George and Mary Brimicombe at Brickyard Cottage, with three children:

Edwin George,	son, 29	born in	Newton Abbot
Joseph	son, 17		Chudleigh
Frederick,	son, 14		Chudleigh

The form also shows that they had been married 30 years and that they had ten children, all still living.

The lack of an 1891 census form for this family makes it difficult to identify five of the children. It seems quite possible that any girls may have been working as domestic servants away from home, or have married.

James is missing from the 1911 census. His Service Record shows that he "married Louisa Dodge at Newton Abbot 29.9.1912" (GRO ref 1912, Newton Abbot, July-Sept, vol 5b, p 323). Her parentage may be traced by sight of the marriage certificate, but there are a number of births in Newton Abbot district in 1885. Her death as Louisa Brimicombe is more certain in 1930 (GRO ref 1930, Exeter, Sept, vol 5b, p 99). She may have been descended from **James' grandmother**, Sophia nee Dodge.

James Brimicombe enlisted, was considered fit for service on examination at Exeter on 16 August 1915, and was posted to the 4th Wessex Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. His service was short as he became an Acting Bombardier (unpaid) on 12 October 1915 but was discharged as "no longer physically fit for War Service" on 1 April 1916. He served for 230 days and did not leave the country.

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Surviving discharge papers show that a Medical Board on 14 March 1916 determined that he had "Phthisis, Tubercule of the Lung" . He had previously worked as a gardener at Cockwood, where he may have met members of the Dodge family. He was living at 2 Glencoe Cottages, Cofton, Starcross when called for service and he had a daughter Danily (?) Lucy Brimicombe on 2 May 1913, according to his military record, but no reference of this can be found in Birth registers.

The report states that his health was good before he was sick with cough while "out in France". However, a Minute Sheet states that "A/Bombardier James Brimicombe did not serve in France during the period of his Service."

The conclusion of the Medical Board was that his condition was "Aggravated by Active Service, exposure and hardship." His case was reviewed at 6-monthly intervals until 22 August 1917, and then annually until his death. On 9 March 1917 the note states "Total incapacity, no earnings" which may be a reference to his inability to take a civilian job.

His death occurred at Southbrook Cottage, Starcross, on 4 April 1919. His death was registered by A.Bennett and the cause is shown as Pulmonary Tuberculosis. He is described as Bombardier, Royal Field Artillery (pensioner). He was buried in the churchyard of St Mary's, Cofton and the CWGC headstone is placed east of the church. The Cofton War Memorial panel shows him with an incorrect date of death as April 3rd 1919.

Commonwealth War Graves entry:

Last known address: Southbrook Cottage, Starcross

Next of kin: Louisa Brimicombe, nee Dodge, wife

References:

Free Birth, Marriage, Death refs

Copy Birth and death Certificates from General Record Office

refs via subscription site:

Census entries

BMD references

Army record of discharge