

Percival King

Born 25 June 1887, Gillingham, Dorset
Engineer Lieutenant Commander R.N.,

Died Dawlish, 23 October 1919, aged 32
Retired

Percival King was a cousin of Charles Frederick King who was killed in action on 20 September 1917 (q.v.). Their grandparents were George and Elizabeth King, born in Gillingham. George King (1830-) was a tailor employing one man and two boys in his business. They had five children by the 1871 census, being:

James Frederick	son,	(1855-)
Ellen J	dau,	(1857-)
William Charles	son,	(1859-)
Lucy A	dau,	(1865-)
Kate Eliza	dau,	(1867-).

William Charles King was an accountant, aged 24, when he married Amy Hatcher in Wilton, Somerset on 6 September 1883. Her father had died by that date, and James.F King was a witness at their wedding. Their first child was Arthur, baptised on 5 October, 1884.

By 1891 they had moved to Weston Super Mare and were living at Walliscote Grove Road with **Percival**, aged 3. There is no sign of Arthur at home at that date.

By 1901, **Percival King** was a boarder at King's School, Ottery St Mary, aged 13. The headmaster, Frank Wyatt, had three children, all born in Dawlish.

The 1911 census shows the parents at 5 Severn Road, Weston Super Mare, with Arthur, by now a Solicitor aged 26. There had only been two children, both still living.

Percival King entered the Royal Navy and served four years as an Engineering Student at the Training College, Keyham, Devonport. He was given the rank of Engineer Sub Lieutenant with seniority of 1 August 1906. He was posted on the books of H.M.S.VIVID (Naval Base, Devonport) while under training, but then took passage in H.M.S.HAWKE to Kong Kong to join H.M.S. KING ALFRED on the China Station (28.11.1907-30.10.1908). He passed 'creditably' for Engineer Lieutenant and was appointed with seniority of 1 November 1908.

He returned to the Home Station and was posted to the Royal Naval College, Osborne in May 1911. He was noted in August 1913 as a volunteer for service in the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps.

Frequent reference is made to his sporting abilities, playing Rugby Football for the Royal Navy. His character references were "VG, VG, VG, Temperate, zealous, good officer & good at games" and similar. He appears to have done "excellent work with the Cadets (at Osborne)."

On 22 January 1914 **Engineer Lieutenant Percival King** was appointed to H.M.S.SWIFT. This was to give him first hand experience of "a unique destroyer leader designed and built for the Royal Navy prior to World War 1, another product of Admiral Jackie Fisher's relentless quest for speed. The class was envisioned as a large ocean-going destroyer, capable of both the usual destroyer requirements and of high-speed scouting duties for a major fleet. "(Wikipedia).

On 6 November 1915 he was appointed to H.M.S.VIVID -"additional for NARWHAL – building". This would have placed him at the centre of construction and inspecting the engineering element of the ship under construction. She was one of 103 'M' Class destroyers being built. It might be imagined that the role of Engineer officer was focused on propulsion but it included all mechanical and electrical systems that kept the ship's weapons in operating condition.

NARWHAL was being built by William Denny & Brothers on the Clyde, and was launched on 30 December 1915, to join the Home Fleet on 3 March 1916. **Percival King** was "passed provisionally for Engineer Lieutenant Commander on 26 February 1916 at Glasgow and promoted on 31 October 1916 to Acting Engineer Lieutenant Commander. By this stage the ship had been part of the Home Fleet destroyer screen at the Battle of Jutland. He was shown to have passed "very creditably for Engineer Lieutenant Commander" on 13 October 1917, and was 10 days later confirmed in the rank with seniority of 1 November 1916.

Engineer Lieutenant Commander Percival King was appointed on 30 November 1917 to H.M.S.VICTORY (R.N. Base, Portsmouth) additional for WINCHESTER. Once again he was in a supervisory role for the construction of an Admiralty 'W' Class Destroyer being built by Samuel White at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. She was laid down on 12 June 1917, launched 1 February 1918 and completed on 29 April 1918 (Wikipedia).

Engineer Lieutenant Commander Percival King had been taken sick in February 1918, and was 'Reported to be sick from Consumption'. He was admitted to R.N.Hospital, Haslar with pulmonary tuberculosis, and on 22 March he was discharged to King Edward VII Sanatorium, Midhurst.

He was to be submitted to a resurvey at Haslar on 1 June 1918, but the Acting Medical Superintendent at KG VII, Midhurst reported that Eng Lt Cdr King 'is unfit to travel'. He was placed on the Retired List as 'Physically Unfit' on 11 May 1918.

The *Dawlish Gazette* reported that Percival King had joined the Royal Navy in 1893 which is patently untrue, and that he died at the residence of his uncle James Frederick King of 'Longlands'. It appears likely that he had been staying in Dawlish at the home of the Headmaster of Dawlish Boys' School and that his aunt may have persuaded him to come to Dawlish to convalesce. Frances King, became a volunteer with the Dawlish Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) and worked as Head Cook from November 1914 to April 1915 and then as a needleworker until April 1919. Mildred King was a Nurse at Torquay V A Hospital during 1916. The association with Dawlish VAD is further shown by the presence of the Commandant (Mrs Hildyard) at the funeral.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: Burial index – Dawlish Cemetery, grave ref 2448 Son of William Charles King of 5 Severn Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

Last known address: Longlands, Dawlish

Next of kin: William Charles King, father

References:

Naval-History. Net

National Archive, Kew for Service Record, ADM 196/131/81

Free BMD refs

Charles Frederick King (dawlishww1.org.uk)

Wikipedia for Naval Ship data

Refs via subscription sites;

Birth Marriage Death refs

Census data