

Cecil George Green

Corporal 2102, D Company, 16th Battalion London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles)

Cecil Green was born on 4 November 1892 in Camberwell, London to Philip and Alice Sophia Green, formerly Burtenshaw. He was the youngest of five children of whom sadly two died in infancy. His father was recorded as a police constable in the Metropolitan Police, and by the 1901 Census Philip was Acting Sergeant in Bromley, Kent.

At the age of 17yrs 10mths, Cecil enlisted in the Territorial Forces as a reservist with the Queen Victoria Rifles.

In the 1911 Census his occupation is recorded as invoice clerk for a firm of tailors. He is living with his parents and brother William John, still in Bromley. His father is a club steward and his brother a student teacher. Alice, his sister, and her husband Walter Richards are Master and Matron of the Union Workhouse in Fordingbridge, Hampshire. They soon moved to Amersham and were appointed Master and Matron of the Union Workhouse in Whielden Street. Philip and Alice Sophia join them and Philip is appointed Deputy Master.

After serving four years with the Territorials, Cecil enlisted in Westminster with the London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles) and embarked on 1 November 1914 for France. They arrived at Le Havre on 3 November, where his regiment came under command of the 18th Brgd. in the 16th Div.

For the first six months the battalion was in the Armentieres sector before moving up to the Ypres Salient at the end of May 1915, where they spent eight months.

In February 1916 the battalion joined the 169th Brgd. in the 56th Div. which was re-forming in France and with which it remained to the end of the war.

On 1 July 1916 their division took part in the disastrous attack on the Somme Front at **Gommecourt**. It was recorded that the cost was 600 casualties out of 750 who went into action. In August they were deployed carrying gas cylinders to the front line, and in September moved to trenches north east of **Faviere Wood**.

A letter from France brought Philip Green the sad news that his son Cecil had been killed in action by a shell at 11am on the morning of 8 September 1916, death being instantaneous. The Officer expressed sympathy from himself and the platoon and remarked that Cpl. Green was a promising soldier and that there was every prospect of his having a commission had this sad event not occurred.

Cecil Green left a short form of will¹ dated 26 May 1916 stating "In the event of my death I give the whole of my property & effects to my Father Philip Green, The Workhouse, Amersham, Bucks, England".

At the monthly meeting of the Amersham Board of Guardians held at the Union House, a vote of sympathy was offered to the Matron on the sad loss of her brother. Her husband, Master of the Union Workhouse, was absent as he had enlisted in the Queen's Westminster Rifles, the former regiment of his brother-in-law, and had commenced military duties that week.

¹ The War Office provided a form in each soldier's pay book so that, once placed under orders for active service, they could state briefly how they wished their effects to be disposed of in the event of their death. Samples of correct wording were provided. The will did not have to be witnessed but had to be wholly in the soldier's own writing. See G Bridger, *The Great War Handbook*, 2009, p80.

Cecil George Green was awarded The Allied Victory Medal, The British War Medal, 1914-18 and The 1914 Star.

Walter Richards survived the war and returned to his earlier position as Master at the Union House.

Philip Green died 9 October 1920 in Amersham and Alice Sophia died 26 April 1947 in Hereford.

Cecil George Green is remembered with Honour and is buried at
Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt, Somme, Grave no. 111 G.7



Photo: Chalmers Cursley

Sources:

Bucks Examiner, 22 Sept. 1916

Nigel Crompton Associates History (www.ncahistory.com)

The short-form will of Cecil G. Green dated 26 May 1916 was obtained from www.Forces-War-Records.co.uk