

William Samuel Key

William Samuel Key was born May 1898, Bowers Gifford into a farming family.



William shared the family home with his parents William Key (1864) and Rose Key (nee Chapman, 1868) and two sisters and three brothers.

His mother had previously given birth to twin sisters before William was born, but due to the poor home life conditions, the twin girls had died before the age of two in 1894 of bronchial illnesses.

In the early 1900's William's family moved to Butts Road, Mucking, and they worked for a local farm where he and Williams brother (my grandfather) were both horsemen.

Although William was engaged to be married, in May 1916 at the age of 18, he joined up with the 12th Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment as a private soldier. Tragically just a few months later William died in action on 2nd October 1916 at Gheluwe Switch in Belgium.

William is buried in a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery at Zillibeke in Belgium. William's British War medal and Victory medal were given to his mother, Rose.

There 's a record of his death in 'The History of the 12th (Bermondsey) Battalion East Surrey Regiment' book which reads.....

"On 2nd October 1918 at dawn the 15th Hants and the 18th K.R.R.s advanced under a barrage through the 12th Battalion East Surrey Regiment's lines to continue the attack and drove the enemy out of Gheluwe Switch, but did not entirely clear the village.

At 10.00 a.m. Capt. J A Rogers was detailed to mop up part of Gheluwe with A Company. It was impossible to clear these desperate Boche machine-gunners out of their lairs without paying the usual price in casualties and amongst those who were killed during the day was Private William Samuel Key".

Story provided by Williams great nephew, Graham Hodgson.

WILL

In the event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to my Mother.

Mrs W. Hey
13 utts Road
Mucking
Stanford-le-Hope
Essex

Signature W. S. Hey
Rank and Regiment Pte 12 East Surrey
Date 23/9/18

William was required to make a will whilst in Military service. He left his property and effects to his Mother, Rose.

INFORMAL WILL

W.O. No. 1 E/47088/1.
Record No. 301.221. 19.

DOMICILE, English.

The enclosed document dated 23/9/18 and signed W. S. Hey

of the name of William Samuel Hey

Regt. No. 38826, Pte.

appears to have been written or executed by the person named in the margin while he was "in actual military service" within the meaning of the Wills Act, 1837, and has been recognized by the War Department as constituting a valid will.

Date of Death 10. 18.

WAR OFFICE.

Date 25/1/19

N. Walker
for the Assistant Financial Secretary.



A photo of Williams gravestone at the cemetery in Zillibeke, Belgium.

