

Seymour Marcus DERBYSHIRE
Sapper 229298
3rd Light Railway Operating Company, Royal Engineers
Died of wounds 24th May 1917 age 27
Buried at Choques Military Cemetery, France
Grave reference: **Plot I. Row K. Grave 32**

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Seymour was born around 1890 in Bryn, the son of Alfred Derbyshire. The family's address is recorded as both 220 Soughers Lane and 220 Downall Green Road, Bryn. War Office records include correspondence from a sister, Helen.

He worked as a Railway Clerk and on 29th November 1915 responded to the call for men to "attest", which meant that they would voluntarily agree to serve in the armed forces when called up to do so and was allocated to Army Reserve. He had attested for "Short Service" which meant for the duration of the war. He would then be discharged to return to his former occupation. (Men were not conscripted into the army until early 1916). He was mobilised on 18th January 1917, posted as a Sapper on 19th January 1917 and embarked for France on 9th February 1917.

On 23rd May 1917, Seymour is recorded as having been "dangerously wounded" whilst serving on the Bethune Front, having sustained shrapnel wounds to the scalp, back and left arm and a compound fracture of the femur. He was operated upon and the fracture repaired by wire. Sadly, he succumbed to his wounds on 24th May 1917. The town of Bethune was an important hospital base but also a major railway transport junction. As such, it was constantly shelled by the German artillery to disrupt communications.

Choques Military Cemetery is situated near Bethune and was a Casualty Clearing Station for the area. It is beautifully maintained by the dedicated Commonwealth War Graves Commission gardeners. Seymour received the British War Medal and Victory Medal – all who served were entitled to these two medals.

The army subsequently returned Seymour's private effects to his father at Downall Green Road, Bryn, near Wigan with a request that receipt of the following articles should be acknowledged to them:-

Letters, photos, wallet, pocket-knife, notebook, cap badge, 2 razors, 1 mirror, 1 strap, 1 safety razor, holdall, documents (various), metal ring, 2 pairs of socks, knife and fork (combined), 5 brushes, 1 bunch of keys and a silver cigarette case.

One can barely imagine the sadness felt within the family when these personal possessions were received.