

7. Mark Baggett, CAN^D I F – 8th July 1917 (Age 26).

811953 – Private Mark Guy Baggett – 31st Battalion, Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment)



Mark was born in Barry (likely at 34 Phyllis Street) on 27th March 1891 to Joseph Frederick and Mary Ann (née Slocombe) Baggett. Joseph (b. 1855 – d.1925) was a labourer from Bristol and Mary Ann (b.1855) was also from Bristol. They had 5 daughters, Alice Mary (b.1879 - 1968), Amy (b.1883 - d.1976), Mary Ann Salisbury (b.1893 – d.1988), (Florence) Mabel (b.1898 – d.1987) and Clara (b.1901 – d.1902). There were 4 sons, Mark Guy and his brothers John Andrew (b.1885 – d.1977), Joseph (b.1889 – d.1954) and Percy (b.1895 – d.1971). On 27th October 1902 Mark and his brother Percy were admitted to Holton Road School for Boys in Barry. Their address was listed as 2 Morgan Street.

On 26th January 1903, Mark was admitted to Bishton Council School but left in March which is possibly when they moved home as by 1911 the family was listed at Refail House in Rudry [now The Old Smithy] and Mark was working as a coal hewer. Missing from the family is Clara, who died in 1902 - Mary Ann Baggett was noted as having had 11 children of which 2 had died. Alice had married Robert George Turner (colliery stoker) on 25th February 1901 and moved from Barry to 26 Rhôs Row, Bedwas Road. In 1911 they were noted there with children Robert John (b.1903) and Lillian Doris (b.1911). Rhôs Row survives, at least in part, as numbers 158 to 182 Bedwas Road, opposite Lansbury Park.

We know that shortly after the 1911 census the family moved from Refail House to Yew Tree Cottage, Rudry (between the Maenllwyd and Draethen).

Records show that Mark's parents, Joseph and Mary, along with Mark, Percy and Mabel were all recorded as being aboard the SS Royal George bound for Montreal on 10th August 1914 – a 17 day voyage. The passenger list does not note any other 'Baggetts'.

Mark and his brother Percy were both noted as lodgers at the same address in Edmonton in the 1916 Prairie Provinces Census. There was no mention of his parents or Mabel.

We cannot establish when others of his family moved to Canada but Mary Ann Salisbury Baggett died 11th August 1988 in Edmonton. John Andrew Baggett died 5th December 1977 and is buried in Linaria, Alberta. Alice died on 21st March 1968 in Westlock, Alberta. Their Father, Joseph, died [in 1925] in Edmonton.

So it was in Edmonton, the capital city of Alberta, that on 14th February 1916 aged 24, Mark joined the Canadian Infantry. He was noted as 5'3½" tall with a 37½" chest, blue eyes and brown hair.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Mark Guy Baggett....., do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Date,..... 14th Feb'y 1916 Mark Guy Baggett.....(Signature) of Recruit
..... V. Reay.....(Signature of Witness)

In July 1916, Mark made his will leaving all to his Mother but strangely at Yew Tree Cottage. (After he was buried, his headstone was later inscribed with 'Thy will be done' which was requested by Mrs R Turner of Yew Tree Cottage, at a cost of 3s/9d.) We have been unable to discover a connection to Mrs Turner.

Mark was initially in the 138th Battalion which was specifically recruited in Edmonton as a reinforcing unit and sailed from Canada on the SS Olympic on 24th August 1916 with 32 officers and 870 other ranks.

The Royal Mail Ship (RMS) Olympic, launched in 1910, was the older sister of RMS Titanic and the largest ship afloat at the time of her launch.

When war was declared, Olympic was selected as a troopship and spent much of the war ferrying troops to and from Canada.



Mark arrived in England on 30th August 1916 and after further training with the 138th, then the 175th Battalions, was transferred to the 31st Battalion ('Bell's Bulldogs') in France on 16th February 1917.

Initially, as with all troops arriving in France, Mark was at the base camp in Étaples, Northern France, which was used for training soldiers on their way to the front.

In May 1917, at the battle of Fresnoy, the 31st Battalion lost 225 men, nearly half its strength. We don't know for sure but Mark was likely here as he was noted as being admitted to No. 4 General Hospital in Camiers on 4th May with a gunshot wound to his right shoulder.

He returned to duty on 8th June and was with his Battalion engaged in operations towards Lens.

It was during these operations that Mark then suffered a gunshot wound to the head on 8th July 1917 and was taken to No.7 Casualty Clearing Station where he sadly died that same day aged 26.

He is buried at Noeux-les-Mines Communal Cemetery.



Through the course of the First World War, a total of 4,675 men served in the 31st Battalion, Canadian Infantry, which suffered 941 dead with 2,312 wounded.

Canada sent 418,052 troops to fight overseas during WW1 of which 56,638 never returned home. 39,456 were killed in action and a further 17,182, like Mark, died from their wounds.