



CAPTAIN SYDNEY VYVYAN TREVENEN MC

49TH BATTERY, 40TH BRIGADE ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

Sydney Vyvyan Trevenen was born in Carlisle on 2 January 1894 to Jessie (née Atkinson) and Sydney William Trevenen, a Solicitor, living at Welton, Christ Church Road, Cheltenham. Sydney had an elder sister, Irene.

Sydney attended Glyngarth Preparatory School, Duoro Road, Cheltenham, now known as Farnley Lodge, a Cheltenham Ladies' College house. (It had been the inspiration for the fictitious St Custards, featured in *Down With Skool!* written by Geoffrey Willans and illustrated by Ronald Searle. Willans had been a pupil at Glyngarth until 1924.)

The 1901 census shows Jessie, Irene and Sydney living in Walton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire in the Humble household. It was a large household which included the Humbles' three children and a Governess, so it would appear that the children were being schooled at home. Sydney's father had died in January of that year and Jessie is shown as living on her own means.

The family returned to Cheltenham and Sydney attended Cheltenham College as a Day Boy

between May 1908 and December 1911. From there he gained entry to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich on 3 January 1912. He left the Academy on 18 December 1913 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant to the Royal Field Artillery on the 19th.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 Sydney was living in Halifax, Yorkshire and enlisted at Leeds. He was amongst the first to go over to France arriving on 20 August and the following June he was promoted to Lieutenant.

In June 1916 Sydney was Mentioned in Despatches and later awarded the Military Cross (MC). The Military Cross is awarded for gallantry during active operations against the enemy. His citation in the *London Gazette* of 20 October 1916 reads: *The King has been graciously pleased to confer the Military Cross on the Officer in recognition of conspicuous gallantry. He crawled out some 1,000 yards in front of our forward trench, and brought back useful information. He twice acted as liaison officer and showed marked resource and coolness.*

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The *Gloucestershire Echo* of 23 October 1916 reported his award: *Lieut Sydney Vyvyan Trevenen (OC) RFA on whom the King has bestowed the Military Cross for gallantry in the field is the son of Mrs Trevenen of Welton, Christ Church Road, Cheltenham.*

In October 1916 Sydney was admitted to XI Casualty Clearing Hospital in Varennes with a gun shot wound to his left eye. He was transferred to an Officers' Hospital in Gezaincourt on the 26th. He returned to duty on 2 November.

In 1918, soon after his promotion to Captain, Sydney was severely gassed on 7 June whilst serving with the 49th Battery of 40th Brigade. He was evacuated out of the battle zone and died in hospital on 10 June; he was 24 years of age. A telegram from No 1 British Red Cross (Duchess of Westminster) Hospital at Le Touquet dated 11 June records that Sydney died from septic bronchial pneumonia following gas poisoning.

The *Gloucestershire Echo* dated 11 June 1918 reported his death: *TREVENEN - On 10th June, at a*

hospital in France, of septic bronchial pneumonia, following gas poisoning, Capt. Sydney Vyvyan Trevenen, MC, RFA, only and dearly-loved son of the late S W Trevenen and Mrs Trevenen, of Welton, Christ Church Road, Cheltenham.

Captain Trevenen is buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, Plot XXVIII, Row N, Grave 8; the inscription on his headstone reads *In the Hand of God*. His grave was originally marked by a wooden cross which now resides in St Stephen's Church, Cheltenham; it is mounted on the left-hand wall of the Lady Chapel. The details on the cross reads: *Capt S. V. Trevenen MC, 40th Brigade RFA, 10.6.18*. Up until 1945 his grave marker was at Cheltenham Cemetery. It was then moved to the church by his parents who also had a stained glass window made showing the figure of St George but the face is done in the likeness of their son. He is also remembered on the Christ Church Roll of Honour and Cheltenham War Memorial.

Sources and acknowledgements:

Leaving all that was dear : Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux & G Sacker
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