



**Private Albert (James) Peake (reg.no. 10479)** was the youngest son of parents, Samuel and Annie Peake (nee Sinclair), who were married on the Island of Bute in Scotland in 1871. Samuel was a serviceman with the Royal Navy serving for over 14 years. The couple had six children. Their eldest son John, born in 1880 (Donegal), joined the Army Service Corps in 1899 where he had a long army career and was a much respected soldier "honest, sober, reliable and intelligent". Brother Dougal was also born in Donegal (1884). William and James were born in County Mayo and his sister Mary and young Albert were both born in Kerry. The family probably followed Samuel's work commitments at various ports.

Father Samuel's navy records mention that he had a 'disease' of the heart so the family moved back to live in Isleworth, which was Samuel's birthplace. The surrounding fields were rich with market gardens that needed labourers. After his naval career, he knew he would be able to find work there. In 1899, the family can be found living in a dwelling house at 8 Queen's Square, Isleworth. Just two years later the 1901 Census records that Dougal (16), his brother William (14) and his father Samuel (54) are all working as market gardeners. Only George's mother Annie (47) and the three younger children James (10), Mary (9) and Albert (5) are at home during the day. Sadly, not long after the Census was taken, George's father Samuel (55) died leaving Annie with the five of their remaining children to bring up alone. She too went out to work in the market gardens. Then in 1904, Annie's only daughter died from heart failure. She was 13.

There must have been some very difficult years for Annie and her family. Slowly the family appears to break down. Albert's brother James (16), joins the Army Militia in 1907 giving his Uncle and Aunt's address in Worple Lane, as his. No other records can be found. Brother Dougal (also known as George) resorts to petty crime and is imprisoned on several occasions. In 1911, 16 year old Albert and his brother William (25) can be found working as collier hewers in the Rhonda Valley in Wales. They are both boarders. The boy's mother, Annie, is now an 'inmate' at Brentford Workhouse.

When war was declared, Albert immediately attested in 1914 in Kingston, joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This battalion was quickly mobilised, landing at Boulogne on 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug '14. On 24<sup>th</sup> they were taken by train to Le Cateau and from there they proceeded to march to Cambrai. **In fact, they marched too far and on 26<sup>th</sup> August, found themselves surrounded by German soldiers who outnumbered them 3 to 1.** Many soldiers were taken as prisoners. Over 1,000 soldiers had landed in France with Albert - by Sep 13<sup>th</sup> there were just 478. **Albert died of his wounds on 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 1914. He had been in France just 6 days.** His body was buried in a communal grave with 8 other fallen soldiers. His body was exhumed in 1920 and was identified by his Royal Dublin Fusilier epaulettes. Albert was reburied at Montigny Communal Cemetery Nord. Ref E1. Young Albert was 19 years old. He was awarded the British & Victory Medal and 14 Star. Albert left about £8 to his beloved mother and just over a £1 to each of his brothers. George & Albert appear on St Bridget's Memorial as D Peake & J Peake – the 'J' refers to this reference – *alias James Peake* in the Register of Soldiers' Effects.

Albert's brother George (Dougal) also enlisted with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was killed in action on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1915 after only 39 days in the field. Albert's brother John survived the war but lost his wife in 1915 from pneumonia. **A family marred by tragedies.**

