

# CHARLES HERBERT LEMMON D.S.O., 1887 - 1973



President of the B.D.H.S. 1963 – 1973

## **1891 census**

Thomas	51	Col, East Surrey Regt
Ellerie	34	
Charles	4	

## **Born**

Hilsea
Shipston
Richmond

## **Residence**

Grand Hotel, Plymouth
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## **1901 census**

Thomas	61	visitor
Ellerie	45	
Charles	14	

## **Born**

Hilsea
Wiston, Warw.
Ewhurst, Surrey

## **Residence**

Queen's Hotel, Farnboro'
29 The Strand, Ryde

## **1911 census**

Charles Herbert	24	Lt, 88th Bn RFA
Thomas	70	Col, ret.
Ellerie	58	m. 26 yrs, 1 child

## **Born**

Wimbledon
Southsea

## **Residence**

Minden Barracks, Deep Cut, Frimley
Burleigh, Brimscombe

There is no record of Thomas and Ellerie's marriage, which may well have been abroad. It was his second marriage. The 1911 census says that it had then lasted 26 years; if this is so then Ellerie was Charles's mother.

## **Sir Thomas Warne LEMMON KCB**

Died at The Sycamores, Burleigh on 8 January 1928. He left £3,680 13s 8d, probate to his widow. I can find no helpful reference to him before the 1891 census. His obituary in The Times states that he was the son of William LEMMON of Gatcombe House, Hilsea and was education at Clifton. He joined the North Middlesex Regiment as Ensign in 1860; in 1868 he was promoted Captain and joined the 1st Royal Surrey Militia. He joined the East Sussex Regiment in 1887 and retired as Lt-Col in 1898. In 1900 he was made Hon Colonel and Hon Brigadier-General. He was awarded the CB at Aldershot on 1 July 1897 and the KCB in 1922. Later he commanded the 3rd Battalion (in 1928 Reserve).

**Ellerie** died at Lymington (home address as for Thomas) on 4 June 1932. She left £2,650 16s 8d, probate to Charles Herbert Lemmon, Major, H.M. Army. Her birth is too difficult to establish from official records.

## **CHARLES HERBERT LEMMON DSO**

Born 25 January 1887 in Wimbledon, he followed his father in attending Clifton College, an independent school in Bristol.

On 18 October 1911, Charles married Josephine Eliza KIMBER (4<sup>th</sup> daughter of Edmund KIMBER of Shooter's Hill) at St Margaret's, Westminster. The officiating

clergyman was the Acting Chaplain to the Forces at Woolwich. Eliza's father is given as being a solicitor.

Having followed his father's educational path Charles then followed his father into the army:

Passing-out from Royal Military Academy, Woolwich he was:

- 20 December 1906 (Gazetted 15 January 1907) Commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery;
- 20 December 1909 promoted Lieutenant;
- 13 February 1913 (Gazetted 25 February 1913) appointed Adjutant with temporary rank of Captain in the T.F., RFA, 2<sup>nd</sup> Northumbrian Brigade.
- 30 October 1914 promoted Captain, commanding the North Riding Battery (T.F.);
- 16 April 1915 (Gazetted 19 April 1915) promoted acting Major
- Awarded the D.S.O. (Gazetted 1 January 1917) at which time he was temporary Major.
- Mentioned in Despatches (Gazetted 4 January 1917).
- 6 April 1917 (Gazetted 19 June 1917) promoted Major.
- Gazetted 15 January 1919 as acting Lt-Col whilst commanding a Brigade RFA (T.F.) 30 Oct – 13 Dec 1918.
- Serving on the Western front he was present at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ypres (1915) and The Somme (1916). In the final offensive (June – November 1918) he commanded 5<sup>th</sup> Durham Battery (T.F.), in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northumbrian Brigade (T.F.).
- 24 January 1919 (Gazetted 21 March 1919) appointed Brig. Maj., vice Major G. S. Cooper.
- 18 March 1920 (Gazetted 6 April 1920) appointed from a Brig. Maj. to G.S.O. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade.
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A, now unrecorded, break in Charles' military service then ensued. However civilian life doesn't appear to have suited his for we read:

- 21 January 1924 (Gazetted 22 January 1924) 'Supernumerary Maj. C. H. Lemmon, DSO, is restored to the establishment'.
- 31 January 1935 (Gazetted 1 February 1935) Charles once more retired from the Active List but entered onto the Reserve List of Officers, retaining both his rank of Major and seniority back to 16 April 1915.
- 25 January 1937 (Gazetted 26 January 1937), his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and thus having 'attained the age limit of liability to recall' ceased to belong to the Reserve of Officers.
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But as we have seen Charles' heart was not to be found in civilian life and at some point rejoined the Colours, taking a drop in rank. However, "Cometh the hour; cometh the man" and being unable to keep a good man down we read under the list of the Regular Army coincidentally on the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings:

- 14 October 1942 (Gazetted 11 December 1942) 'The undermentioned Capts. Are rest'd to the rank of Maj.:-...C.H. Lemmon D.S.O. (3602), R.A.'

By 1947 Charles was living at Home Place, Whatlington.

Charles was a Founder Member of the Battle & District Historical Society and served as:

- 1950 – 1960 Committee Member
- 1960 – 1972 Editor of the Society's 'Transactions'  
(retiring due to ill health and the advice of his doctor)
- 1960 – 1963 Vice-President
- 1960 – 1963 Chairman of the BDHS Museum Committee
- from 1963 President, until his death in 1973

He is also described in his obituary as 'virtually the creator, and the Curator for many years, of our Museum.....no one has devoted more thought and energy to the well-being of the Society'. Charles was a frequent lecturer and writer, gaining the respect of the academic community. In addition to his numerous contributions to the Society's 'Transactions' and various magazines his works, published or compiled by the Society, include:

- 1956 'Anglo-Norman, Our Mother Tongue'  
(from a lecture delivered to the BDHS on 30 November 1956)
- 1957 'The Field of Hastings'  
(the standard work on the Battle of Hastings and reprinted many times)
- 1966 'The Norman Conquest, Its Setting and Impact' (compiled by the BDHS,  
co-written with Prof. Dorothy Whitelock, Prof. David C. Douglas & Prof. Frank Barlow,  
published by Eyre & Spottiswoode)

The Society's archive is enriched by much of his copious correspondence and research notes.

Josephine died on 3 March 1955 at Hellingly Hospital (which implies a degree of certification), leaving £698 1s, probate to Charles Herbert LEMMON; her address is given as 2 The Uplands, Maze Hill, St Leonards-on-Sea. Charles continued to live at that address until his own death. In the Autumn of 1964, an emotional roller-coaster of a year for Charles (see below), he re-married. His 2<sup>nd</sup> wife was Margaret M. SPONGE, and they were married in Hove.

Charles died 23 December 1973, his funeral service being held on 30 December at St John's Church, St Leonards-on-Sea. Mourners at the service included from this Society the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, three Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Museum Committee, and seven members. He was survived by his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, Margaret, and eldest daughter, Jacqueline. Following his death many of his papers, in 1974, were given to the Imperial War Museum and form:

*'An extensive collection of miscellaneous papers concerning his military career, including an account of the last 101 days of the First World War, together with a series of photographs depicting his family and war scenes.'*

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1030007511>

Charles & Josephine had two daughters; Jacqueline Ellerie May born in the East Riding (registered in the second quarter of 1914) and Zoe Sybil born in the Romford district (registered in the last quarter of 1915). Zoe died at Eversfield Hospital, St Leonards-on-Sea on 24 January 1964. Her address is also given as 2 The Uplands.

On 14 September 1941 their daughter Jacqueline married Pilot Officer Percy BYNG-HALL (of Vancouver) at Minchinhampton where Charles was then living. There are no further references to Jacqueline in the England and Wales records, and one must presume that she went to Canada.

<http://www.bbm.org.uk/BattleofBritainLondonMonument-POPByng-Hall.htm> records:

Percy BYNG-HALL was born in England in April 1907 but went to Canada as a child. In late 1939 he returned to England as a member of the West Nova Scotia Regiment. He transferred to the RAF in May 1940 as a direct-entry Air Gunner. He joined 29 Squadron on 7th July and served with it until 18th November 1940 when he was posted to 218 Squadron as an Air Gunner in Wellingtons. He transferred to the Administrative Branch in July 1942 and was released from the RAF in early 1946.

He returned to Canada and took up farming at Lawrencetown in Nova Scotia. In January 1948 he was admitted to Camp Hill Hospital in the capital Halifax, suffering from lung cancer. Despite treatment he died on 21st May 1948. Percy was buried at the Old Holy Trinity Anglican Church Cemetery in Middleton, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia.

There is, however, some small evidence that Jacqueline may have returned to England after being widowed. In Charles' obituary (BDHS 'TRANSACTIONS') 'heartfelt sympathy' is expressed, 'to his widow.... and to his daughter Jacqueline', thus implying that she was not only still alive but known to the Society.

Neil Clephane – Cameron, 2016 © BDHS

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**Sources:**

Battle & District Historical Society 'Transactions', 1975  
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