SIMON COLLINS

8217 Private Simon Collins, Cambridgeshire (1st T.F.) Regt

There's a sad parallel story running behind Wilfred's, involving his cousin Simon. Simon Collins was the youngest son of Wilf's uncle Charles, a gamekeeper working on the Grange Estate. Simon was older than Wilf, born in 1882; his mother had died when he was two. He'd worked at various jobs, one of them a Pottery Carter lodging, with his older brother William, in Weston super Mare.

By 1911 he was back in BSM living with the family and working as a labourer. Later that year he married Annie Brownsell of Chardstock, and they had a daughter, Lucy, in Nov 1912 – she was baptized at BSM in Feb 1913. By 1916 they were living in Combe Street in Chard, and during that year Simon was called up. At the end of September was he sent to the Cambridgshire Regt, a Territorial Forces unit, based in Cambridge. He travelled there with other recruits from Taunton.

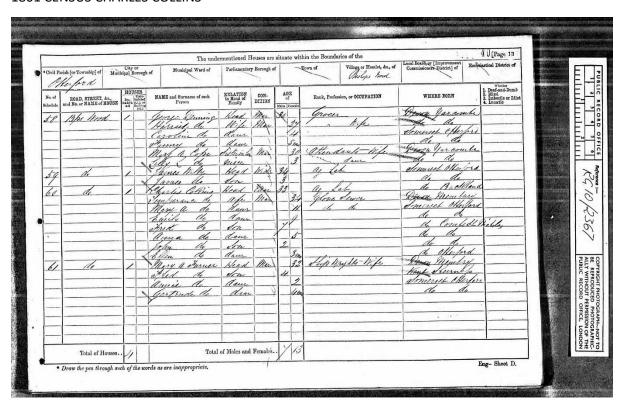
What went wrong, and what his state of mind must have been we don't know. His fellow recruits realised he was miserable and withdrawn and tried to support him, but the next morning he cut his throat. So no plaudits or hero's welcome for Simon, no featuring on the Memorial Board in BSM Church or the Roll of Honour in the School log book.

At the inquest and in the Army's records it looks as if everyone behaved decently – there are some rather naïve but certainly well-meaning comments from his superior officer. The Army record skirts round the difficult problem of suicide (then illegal) by mentioning temporary insanity, and his daughter was given a pension till she was 16. He is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery beneath the normal military headstone.

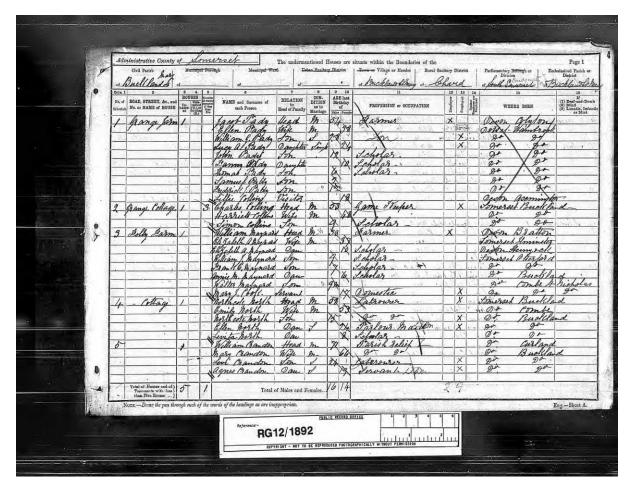
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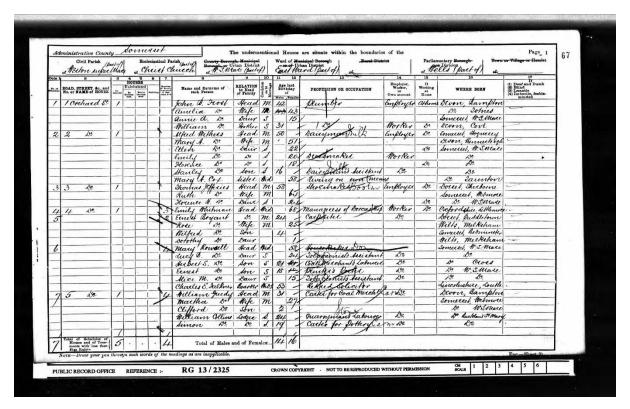
1861 CENSUS CHARLES COLLINS



1871 CENSUS CHARLES COLLNS



1891 CENSUS



1901 CENSUS

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Page 92.	Page 93.
BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Duelland Mary in the County of Armerst. in the Year 1854	BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Roselland S. Mary in the County of James Helding in the Year 1882.
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SMON COLLNS

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LUCY COLLINS

DISTRICT NEWS.

DONYATT

DONYATT.

Donyatt Man's Sad End.—The Cambridge Borough Coroner (Mr H. Saunders French) held an inquest at the Coroner's Court, Cambridge, on the 9th inst., touching the death of Simon Collins (38), of Crock Street, Donyatt, near Ilminster, a recruit for the Cambs. Regiment, who was found with his throat cut in an outhouse in the rear of No. 18, New Square, Cambridge, on Saturday morning.—Private Eraest Charles Corolish, Cambs. Regiment, billeted at 18, New Square, said he travelled with Collins and a number of other recruits from Taunton on Friday last. On Saturday morning Collins got up about seven o'clock. He saw him later waiting for breakfast. He said nothing to the others, but walked out to the back and came in again. Witness went out about 8.15, and saw Collins walking up and down the garden. A little later witness went to call him in to breakfast, and he said he would be in in a uninute. About 8.30 witness went out to the back, and saw blood coming from under the lavatory door. He did not open the door, but ran for help, and told a policeism in Fitzroy Street. The policeisman came and forced the door open. The gaan was lying face downwards, with a pocket knife in his right hand covered with blood. His throat was cut. Witness thought he was dead. Collins seemed "quiet, worried, and full of study," overnight. He did not say anything, and did not complain of anything. They tried to cheer him up, but he did not seem to take much notice of it, and "bid quiet all the time."—P.c. Mansfield gave corroborative evidence, and said on the body was found 12-34d in cash, a birth and marriage certificate, two registration cards, a partly-written letter, and two envelopes addressed to Mrs Collins, Crock Street, Donyatt, near liminster. The man was a farm labourer.—The Coroner said the letter was only just commenced. It ran: "Just a few lines boping —" The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide," and there was no evidence to show the gian's state of mind. Captain Ollard said he wished to express on behalf of the regiment an

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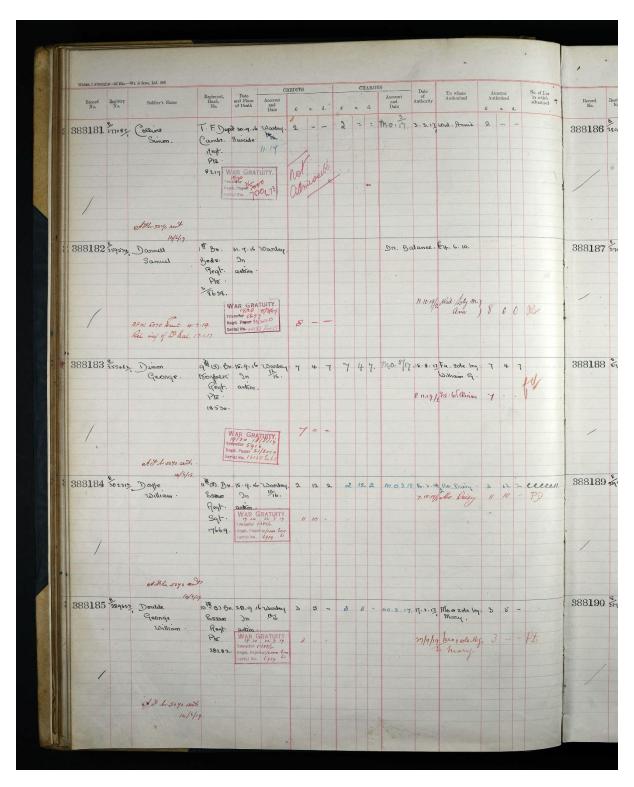
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