

## **ROLAND CHARLES SANSOM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant**

**25th Squadron, Royal Air Force (ex Royal Flying Corps)**

**Died 16 May 1918, aged 21**

Roland Charles Sansom was the son of Charles Lane Sansom M.D. and Edith Elizabeth Sansom née Waring. It is through his mother Edith, who in turn was the daughter of Henry Waring of Beenham House, that Roland's name appears on the war memorial.

Edith Waring had married Charles Sansom in the second quarter of 1891 when Charles was lodging in Aldermaston; the marriage was registered in Bradfield. The April census of that year shows Charles to be from Peckham Rye then aged 30 and qualified as a surgeon. Their movements as a newly married couple are obscure but we do know that their son Roland Charles was born on 20 August 1896. It is believed that Roland was born in Wareham, Dorset, his birth having been registered there in the Oct, Nov, Dec quarter of 1896, but Roland was baptised on 10 October the same year at St. Peter, Eaton Sq. Pimlico, Middlesex. At that time Charles and Edith's address was given as 5 Grosvenor Gardens and Charles' occupation continued as a surgeon.

At the time of the 1901, Roland's parents were living at 19 Cumberland Square, Southampton; Charles is described as born London, aged 38, surgeon and married to Edith, born as a British subject in Belgium and aged 43. A Roland C. Sansom aged 4, together with Guy D. Sansom, 6 and Mary F. Sansom, 3 can be found in the 1901 census residing at "Shiela de la Warr Parade", Bexhill, described as visitors; this may have been a private school or hotel. No convincing records of either Roland or Elizabeth could be found in the 1911 census.

Surviving war office records show that Roland was originally employed as "84605 third class air mechanic" but discharged on 28 July 1917 at South Farnborough upon his appointment to a temporary commission as a 2nd Lt. for duty with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). The discharge papers show he was aged 20 years and 10 months, 5 feet 7 inches, "keen and efficient and of good military character." At this time third class air mechanics were typically armourers, welders, smiths, engine fitters etc. and 2nd Lt. were pilots or trainee pilots.

Roland was initially a Reading based cadet in 11 June 1917, promoted to 2nd Lt. on 29 July 1917 and became a Flying Officer on 10 September 1917. On 1 April 1918 the RFC was reformed as the Royal Air Force. Within weeks, the records show that he was initially reported missing, believed killed on 16 May 1918 but this was not officially accepted until 17 April 1919. A note dated 23 February 1921 says "died of wounds" and "buried south cemetery Saarbrucken, Rhine Province, Germany, grave 162" Next of kin details were given as C.L. Sansom "Banham House, near Reading" amended to London Joint City and Midland Bank, Threadneedle St.

Roland is commemorated in the Niederzwehren cemetery, Germany with additional information given as "Son of Charles Sansom, C.M.G. and Edith Elizabeth Sansom." He was awarded the British War & Victory medals. Charles Lane Sansom died 6 Jan 1951 in St. Leonards on Sea, Hastings.