

**George Charles Kearley**

**1911 census, Lugley Street, Newport**

Martha Willcocks	Head	79	Essex, England
Amy Willcocks	Daughter	43	

***George Charles Kearley Grandson 29 General Porter Newport, Isle of Wight***

**Isle of Wight County Press – 5 February 1916**

**ISLAND RIFLEMAN RECRUIT'S SUICIDE.**

**DEPRESSED BY MEDICAL UNFITNESS FOR SERVICE.**

On Wednesday the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest in the Library at Parkhurst Barracks on the body of Rfn. George Charles Kearley, 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants Regiment, who was found hanging in one of the Barrack huts on the previous morning. Capt. Seagers, officer of the deceased's company, was present, as also was Insp. H. Sibbeck, of the County Constabulary, Mr. J. R. Wise was foreman of the jury.

Charles Kearley, 5 Yarborough-terrace, East Cowes, merchant seaman, identified the body as that of his son, aged 34. Deceased joined up about six weeks ago. Witness last saw him about two weeks after he enlisted, when he seemed happy in his new surroundings, and there was "nothing out of square" with him.

Corpl. Charles Maybee, 1/8<sup>th</sup> Hants Regiment, attached to the 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants, recently returned from Gallipoli, said he last saw deceased alive at 6 p.m. on Sunday, when he was doing orderly work. On the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. he was going round the huts with Lieut. Norman L. Smith for inspection. When they reached No. 10 Hut witness opened the door on the east side and saw deceased hanging from a beam, which was about 8ft. from the ground, at the west end of the hut. He cut down the body, which was quite cold. Deceased's work was to clean up the hut. The huts had recently been taken over for the Derby men, and the men only slept there at present. Deceased would have had only about two hours' work in the hut. He was hanging by a cord, which he could have got off a bed. His toes were just touching the floor. There was no stool near where he was hanging. He could have got on the bed to put the cord round his neck and slidden off. Deceased seemed very lively, and there appeared nothing the matter with him. He did his work properly and well acquainted with his comrades. He had never heard him quarrel with his companions or complain of being in bad health and unsuitable for the Army.

By the Foreman: He could not say whether deceased was missed at breakfast time.

Rfn. Walter Chenery said he did not think deceased went to get his breakfast that morning.

Corpl. Maybee said deceased had locked and plugged the door at the west end of the hut. The key of the other door, at the east end of the hut, was in the deceased's pocket, and he evidently thought he had locked that door, but he had not done so.

2<sup>nd</sup>-Lieut. Norman Leslie Smith, of the 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants, confirmed the Corporal's evidence.

Capt. Seagers said that during the time he had been in command of the company deceased had been more or less under the medical officer, so he could not speak as to him.

Rfn. Walter Chenery, 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants Regiment, said he spoke to deceased at about 8.30 on Tuesday morning, when he was in bed. Witness asked why he was not up, and deceased said he

hoped to get his work done before the officer came in. He seemed all right then, and was quite happy and cheerful. It would take from one and a half to two hours to clean up the hut.

By the Foreman: He did not hear deceased say anything about the possibility of his being ineligible for service.

Rfn. Ward Young, 1/8<sup>th</sup> Hants, attached to the 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants, said he saw deceased on January 21<sup>st</sup>, when he was in conversation with him as he was sitting on his bed. Deceased told witness that he was going "to do himself in" in some way or another because he was "getting his ticket," meaning his discharge from the Army. He seemed very worried about it. Witness conversed with him for about 10 minutes, but did not say much on the subject. Deceased used to come round to the cook-house for tea. He said he had no home to go to and that he had been to the Workhouse once, but did not want to go there again.

Capt. George Raymond R.A.M.C., attached to the 3/8<sup>th</sup> Hants, said deceased came before him for the first time on January 4<sup>th</sup>, when he complained of a cold, and he put him on light duty for three days. At the end of that time he complained of pains all over, though he had no temperature, but was very excitable. It was very difficult to get anything out of him, as he stuttered so badly. He saw that deceased was physically weak, so he thoroughly examined him on the 7<sup>th</sup> ult., put him off duty altogether for four days, and told him to rest, instead of which deceased kept roaming to Newport, so he put him on light duty. He found deceased was quite hopeless of becoming an efficient soldier, so he recommended him to go before a medical board, which he did on the 15<sup>th</sup> ult. Deceased said he wanted to go before the Board, as he knew he could not do the work. He had not done military duty. He was supposed to have been medically examined prior to joining the Army on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Deceased did not lead him to understand that he had broken down under the strain of the training. He did not suppose deceased ever had a pack on. He last saw him alive on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. when he was in bed and complained of a fearful pain in his stomach, due he said, to having swallowed a tooth, which he said was boring through his stomach. Witness could find no evidence of a tooth being missing recently. Deceased had only a few teeth left. Witness suggested that deceased should go before a Board and that he would be sure to get his discharge. He always thought deceased rather weak-minded. He (witness) did not pass him for enlistment.

The Coroner said that deceased seemed unfit for the Army, and that fact appeared to have preyed upon his mind, together with the worry of the thought that he would have no work in civilian life to return to. The result was that he committed suicide. One rather regretted that a man like deceased should have been received into the Army, but no doubt in the tremendous hurry in dealing with recruits he was passed without a close medical examination, which was otherwise applied. He might mention that some time ago deceased had been charged with attempting to commit suicide, and he did not think there was any doubt that he was suffering from temporary insanity at the time he hung himself.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane."

*Transcription by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,*  
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