**George Montague de Beger**

George Montague de Beger, born in Paddington in 1885, was the son Alice Mary Pearce, who married George William De Beger in 1888, two years after George (jnr) was born. Whether he was the natural son of George William de Beger or whether he was adopted by him when George married Alice is not known, but George Montague's birth was registered as George Montague Pearce.  In the 1891 census he was living in Kensington with George William, a plumber, Alice and a younger sister, Mabel. By 1901 the family had moved to Hertfordshire and the de Beger family home was 77 Villiers Road, Oxhey. George, now aged 15, was employed as a mason’s labourer.

In 1907, George married Mabel Spires, and they had two daughters, Mabel Irene (born 1908) and Gladys (1910). At the time of the 1911 census George, by then a plumber like his father, was living at 296 High Street Watford with his parents-in-law, Albert and Elizabeth Spires, his wife Mabel and their two daughters. In 1914, his wife, Mabel died at just 27 years of age. On Christmas Eve the same year, George married Minnie Woodwards at Holy Trinity, Leverstock Green, and they lived in Leverstock Green, near Hemel Hempstead. George and Mabel’s two daughters were both baptised at Holy Trinity, Leverstock Green, near Hemel Hempstead on 21st March 1915.

George enlisted in Watford and joined the Norfolk Regiment, though he later became Lance Corporal 17376 in the 5th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. He went to France on 31st May 1915 but was wounded two and a half months later on 16th August 1915 and died at 8 am the following morning, 17th August 1915, aged 30.

A letter written to his widow, Minnie, after his death by N. Cathcart, No. 1 Platoon Commander, "A" Company, 5th Northamptonshire Regiment contained the words: ‘He was a very good and steady worker, and was extremely popular with both officers and men’. Minnie also received a letter from F. W. Butler, the Office Commanding "A" Company, 5th Northamptonshires in which he wrote: ‘(your husband)... lies in a beautiful cemetery, with many of his fellow soldiers and French Compatriots, and we were able to get a Chaplain to read over him the beautiful Burial Service of our Church’. George's wife, Minnie, was the sister of Harry Woodwards who also died in the War. She lost her husband in August 1915 and her brother less than a year later in July 1916.

Georgewas buried at Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres Nord, in France. He is commemorated on the memorial at Leverstock Green, near Hemel Hempstead and on the memorial in Bushey and Oxhey Methodist Church.

Adapted from www.ourdacorum.org.uk/page\_id\_\_360\_path\_\_0p12p49p.aspx‎

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