

SIDNEY ERNEST JOHNSON [1872-1963]

Sidney Ernest JOHNSON was born in Islington, Middlesex between April and June 1872¹. His parents were George Edward JOHNSON (born about 1839 in West Ham) and Harriet JOHNSON (born about 1839 in Bungay, Suffolk)² and he had ten siblings, only three of whom were surviving at the time the 1911 census was taken³. Appendix 1 shows a transcription of the 1911 census for Sidney's parents indicating the number of children that were still surviving. Table 1 shows the details of four of Sidney Ernest JOHNSON's siblings.

Table 1: Siblings of Sidney Ernest JOHNSON (details taken from census returns^{2,3,4})

Name	Sex	Approximate Year of Birth	Place of BIRTH
Alice Elizabeth JOHNSON	Girl	1864	Stratford, Essex
Charles JOHNSON	Boy	1870	St Lukes, Middlesex
Sidney Ernest JOHNSON	Boy	1872	Islington, Middlesex
William B JOHNSON	Boy	1879	West Ham, Essex
Winifred M JOHNSON	Girl	1883	West Ham, Essex

It is likely that the missing five children were born where there are large age gaps between the children listed in Table 1, i.e. between Alice and Charles, Sidney and William and William and Winifred.

At the time of the 1881 census when Sidney was 9 years old, he lived with his family at 3, Ladywell Place in the Ward of Church Street, All Souls Parish, West Ham, Essex (Figure 1). In 1870, the Elementary Education Act introduced compulsory education for children aged between 5 and 13 years old, however it was not free until 1891. As children who worked provided extra income for the family, many children were not sent to school until it was free. As it does not state on the 1881 census that Sidney was a "scholar", it is unclear whether Sidney went to school.

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The undermentioned Houses are situate within the DOMINION of the

Civil Parish (or Township) of	Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Ecclsiastical Parish or District of		
West Ham		Ward of Church St		West Ham	West Ham		All Souls		
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, Ave. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (Inhabited (1), or (2), or (3))	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lunatic
127	2 Ladywell Place	1	James H. Carr	Head	Mar	32	Labourer	North Little Batham	
			Mary Ann do	Wife	do	25		South Waggerlam	
			Annie Catherine do	Serv	do	3		Essex W. Ham	
			Alice Maria do	do	do	1 year		do do	
127	do		William Swain	Head	Mar	42	Wholesale	North Waggerlam	
			Elizabeth do	Wife	do	42		North Little Batham	
			Charles do	Son	do	14	Messengers boy	do do	
			James do	do	do	13	Errand do	Essex W. Ham	
			Mary F. do	Serv	do	6		do do	
			Matilda do	do	do	4		do do	
			Frances F. do	Son	do	2		do do	
128	3 do	1	George E. Johnson	Head	Mar	42	Iron Moulder	do W. Ham	
			Margaret do	Wife	do	42		Suffolk Bungay	
			Charles do	Son	do	11		Middlesex St. Lukes	
			Sydney E. do	do	do	9		do Islington	
			William B. do	do	do	2		Essex W. Ham	

Figure 1: Copy of Original 1881 England Census Return for Sydney [sic] E JOHNSON

Transcription of 1881 census

West Ham, All Souls Parish, Ward of Church St
 Schedule number 128, address: 3, Ladywell Place
 George E Johnson, Head, Marr, 42, Iron molder, born W Ham
 Harriet Johnson, Wife, mar, 42, born Bungay, Suffolk
 Charles Johnson, Son, 11, born St Lukes, Middlesex
 Sydney E Johnson, Son, 9, born Islington, Middlesex
 William B Johnson, Son, 2, born W Ham, Essex

By the time of the 1891 census (5th April 1891), Sidney, age 19, was an employed plumber and was still single and living with this parents, 2 siblings and 2 boarders at 29, Ranelagh Road, West Ham, Essex (Figure 2). So the family had moved house a short distance from Ladywell Place to Ranelagh Road.

Administrative County of <u>West Ham</u>		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										Page 39			
Civil Parish of <u>West Ham</u>		Municipal Borough of <u>West Ham</u>		Municipal Ward of <u>Plowden</u>		Urban Sanitary District of <u>West Ham</u>		Town or Village or Hamlet of <u>West Ham</u>		Rural Sanitary District of <u>West Ham</u>		Parliamentary Borough or Division of <u>West Ham</u>		Ecclesiastical Parish or District of <u>West Ham</u>	
Col. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No. of HOUSES	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	No. of Inhabitants	Male	Female	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Unemployed	WHERE BORN	(1) Deceased	(2) Blind	(3) Lame, Paralyzed or idiot
215	28 Ranelagh Rd	1			William E Johnson	Head	S	42	Iron Moulder	X		West Ham			
					Harriet Johnson	Wife	M	42	Iron Moulder			West Ham			
216	29 do	1			George Johnson	Head	S	21	Labourer dock	X		Middlesex			
					Harriet Johnson	Wife	M	21	Labourer dock			Suffolk			
					Charles Johnson	Son	S	11	Labourer dock	X		Middlesex			
					Sydney E Johnson	Son	S	19	Plumber	X		Islington			
					Winifred M Johnson	Daughter	S	8	Scholar	X		West Ham			
217					George E Goodyn	Boarder	S	22	Painter	X		West Ham			
					Walter H Goodyn	Boarder	S	20	Assistant (Gilmars)	X		West Ham			
218	30 do	1			Edward Barton	Head	M	69	Blacksmith	X		Worcestershire			

Figure 2: Copy of Original 1891 England Census Return for Sidney E JOHNSON

Transcription of 1891 census

West Ham, Essex, All Saints., schedule no 216, 29, Ranelagh Road
 George E Johnson, Head, married 52, Iron Moulder, employed, b. West Ham, Essex
 Harriet Johnson, Wife, married, 52, b. Bungay, Suffolk
 Charles Johnson, Son, single, 21, Labourer dock, employed, b. Middlesex
 Sidney E Johnson, Son, single 19, Plumber, employed, b. Islington, Middlesex
 Winifred M Johnson, Daughter, 8, scholar, b. West Ham, Essex
 George E Goodyn, boarder, single, 22, painter, employed, b. West Ham, Essex
 Walter H Goodyn, Boarder, single, 20, assistant (Gilmars), employed, b. West Ham, Essex

About three months later, on 31st July 1891, Sidney enlisted in the Grenadier Guards. His army records⁵ give personal details as well as information about his military career such as where he served and promotions (Appendix 2).

His attestation record states that his regiment number was 3108 and that he joined the 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards on 31st July 1891. He was born in Islington and was aged 19 years and 5 months on 31st July 1891 (suggesting he was born in March 1872) and was an apprentice plumber to Harry Cardway. He was single and had not been imprisoned. He is described as being 5 foot 8 inches tall, weighing 134lbs with a chest measurement of 34 inches (minimum) and 36 inches (maximum). He had a fresh complexion with grey eyes, dark brown hair and a slight drooping of the upper lid on the right eye. His religion was Church of England and he was pronounced fit at a medical examination at Horse Guards, London on 31st July 1891.

For the first 7 years of his military career he was stationed at "home" (Table 2). The army provided education for those soldiers who wanted to get on and Sidney was educated at the Royal Military Asylum and the Royal Hibernian Military School where he obtained a 3rd Class on 21st December 1891 and a 2nd Class on 9th March 1894. He was promoted from Private to

Lance Corporal on 14th July 1893, and then to Corporal in 1895. At this time, soldiers served in the army for 7 years and entered the reserves for another 7 years, however they could extend their service for 21 years if they wanted to. Sidney extended his service to 12 years in June 1898. From 13th July 1898 to 3rd October 1899, he was stationed in Malta until he returned home for just over 5 months until he was sent to serve in South Africa during the Boer War (18th March 1900 to 8th October 1902). Whilst in South Africa, he was promoted to Sergeant (30th May 1900). Nearly half a million men from Britain and the Empire fought in South Africa with just over 50,000 casualties (including wounded)⁶. More soldiers died of disease than from enemy action. An account of the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards during the Boer War can be read on the Anglo Boer war website at http://www.angloboerwar.com/?option=com_content&view=article&id=558 and at <http://mikegunnill.tumblr.com/post/80455000336/upchurch-war-dead-second-boer-war>. There is also a book available entitled “First or Grenadier Guards 2nd and 3rd Battalions in South Africa 1899-1902 by Brigadier-General F Lloyd and Brevet Major Hon. A. Russell (2005) <http://www.naval-military-press.com/first-or-grenadier-guards-in-south-africa-1899-1902.html>. This website describes a brief history of the service of the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards as “*The 2nd Grenadiers formed part of General Rundle’s 8th Division. They arrived in the Orange Free State in late April 1900 and continued operating in this area to the end of the campaign. During an arduous tour of 25 months the Battalion was frequently on trek and often engaged. On May 29 1900 the 2nd sustained significant losses in the action at Biddulphsberg. Thereafter, casualties were never severe.*”

Table 2: Military Service of Sidney Ernest JOHNSON⁵

Country	From	To	Years	Days
Home	31.7.91	12.7.98	6	347
Malta	13.7.98	3.10.99	1	83
Home	4.10.99	17.3.00		165
South Africa	18.3.00	8.10.02	2	205
Home	9.10.02	11.8.14	11	307
Expeditionary Force, France	12.8.14	29.10.14		79
Home	30.10.14			

Sidney was awarded both the Queens and Kings South African Campaign Medals^{7, 8}. He was awarded the Queens South Africa Medal with clasps for Wittebergen, Cape Colony and Transvaal and Kings South Africa Medal with clasps for South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902. The clasps show which battles or campaigns he fought in.

Sidney was not found on the 1901 England census returns as he was in South Africa at the time the 1901 census was taken.

After the Boer War, Sidney was stationed at home. He married Lily HEDGES on 30th April 1904^{9,10} at St Philips Church, Battersea, London. The marriage register¹⁰ (Figure 3) states that Sidney, a bachelor was aged 32 and his residence was Blenheim Barracks, Farnborough. His father was George Edward JOHNSON who was a moulder. Lily HEDGES was 21 years old, a spinster and lived at 13, Victoria Terrace, (Ruccan?) Road. Her father was Charles HEDGES who was deceased and he had been a traveller. The couple were married by Banns and both signed the marriage register.

Sidney and Lily had 5 known children (Table 4), the last known was Lily Winifred born in 1912. As Lily (senior) would have only been about 29 years old in 1912, it is possible that Sidney and Lily went on to have more children.

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19 04 . Marriage solemnized at St Philips Church in the Borough
of Battersea in the County of London

Column.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
221	30 th April 1904	Sidney Ernest Johnson	32	Bachelor	Sergeant Grenadier Guards	Blenheim Barracks, Farnborough	George Edward Johnson	Moulder.
		Lily Hedges	21	Spinster		13 Victoria Terrace, Ruccan Road (Deceased)	Charles Hedges (Deceased)	Traveller

Married in the Church of St Philip according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by Frank Warked Edmeal or after Banns by me, E. Herbert Price Vicar.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Sidney Ernest Johnson and Lily Hedges in the Presence of us, Frank Warked Edmeal and Rose Hedges.

Figure 3: St Philips, Battersea Parish Marriage Register for Sidney Ernest JOHNSON and Lily HEDGES

Transcription: 1904. Marriage solemnized at St Philips Church in the Borough of Battersea in the County of London. No 221. When Married 30th April 1904. Sidney Ernest Johnson, age 32, Bachelor, Sergeant Grenadier Guards, Blenheim Barracks, Farnborough, Father, George Edward Johnson, Moulder and Lily Hedges, age 21, Spinster, 13, Victoria Terrace, Ruccan (?) Road, father, Charles Hedges (deceased), Traveller. Married in the Church of St Philip according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by ___ after Banns by me, ? Vicar. This Marriage was solemnized between us, Sidney Ernest Johnson and Lily Hedges in the presence of us, Frank ? Edmeal and Rose Hedges.

Table 4: Known Children of Sidney Ernest JOHNSON and Lily HEDGES^{5,11}

Name	Sex	Date of Birth	Place of BIRTH
Sidney George Patrick JOHNSON	Boy	17 th March 1905	Windsor, Berkshire
Irene Rose JOHNSON	Girl	? June 1906	Battersea, London
Marjorie JOHNSON	Girl	22 nd December 1908	London
Leonard Charles JOHNSON	Boy	18 th January 1910	London
Lily Winifred JOHNSON	Girl	28 th April 1912	Windsor, Berkshire

In 1911, Sidney was living at Oudenarde Barracks, Church of England Soldiers House, West Square, Brigade Office, Caretaker RAMC Recreation Ground, Marlborough Lines, Aldershot. Farnborough, Hampshire. His wife and children were staying there also although they are recorded on a different page on the census¹¹.

On 6th March 1912, he was permitted to continue in the service beyond 21 years and with the outbreak of the first world war in 1914, Sidney went off to fight once more as part of the British Expeditionary Force in France. On the 4th August 1914, the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards were stationed at Chelsea as part of the 4th (Guards) Brigade of the 2nd Division under Field Marshall Douglas Haig¹². Later in August of the same year, the Grenadier Guards mobilised for war and landed at Havre. Sidney would have been involved in various actions on the Western Front including the First Battle of Ypres after which only four officers and 140 men remained of the Battalion¹² – he was one of the lucky ones. On 26th October 1914, Sidney was wounded in action in the field near Ypres and was transferred to England on 29th October 1914 when he was discharged⁵. He was awarded a medal for long service and good conduct.

Sidney lived to be 90 years old and died on 5th January 1963 when he lived at 45, Lancaster Avenue, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. He left £335 1s in his will and probate was granted to his son, Leonard Charles Johnson in London on 18th March 1963^{13, 14}.

REFERENCES

- ¹ GRO birth registration: Johnson, Sidney Ernest, 1872, Apr-Jun, Islington, London, 1b, 307, www.ancestry.co.uk (search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson born 1872, Islington, Middlesex with father called George Johnson and mother Harriet)
- ² 1881 England Census, Class: RG11; Piece: 1719; Folio: 110; Page: 34; GSU roll: 134141, www.ancestry.co.uk and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *1881 England Census*. Original data: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881*. Kew, Surrey, England: The National Archives of the UK (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO), 1881. (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ³ 1911 England Census, Class: RG14; Piece: 21114 www.ancestry.co.uk 1911 England Census, Original data: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*. Kew, Surrey, England: The National Archives of the UK (TNA), 1911. (Search terms: George E Johnson b 1839 West Ham, Essex).
- ⁴ 1891 England Census, Class: RG12; Piece: 1330; Folio: 36; Page: 39; GSU roll: 6096440, www.ancestry.co.uk. *1891 England Census*. Original data: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*. Kew, Surrey, England: The National Archives of the UK (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO), 1891. (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ⁵ British Army WW1 Pension Records 1914-1920, WO364; Piece: 1919, www.ancestry.co.uk. Original data: The National Archives of the UK (TNA). War Office: Soldiers' Documents from Pension Claims, First World War (Microfilm Copies); (The National Archives Microfilm Publication WO364). (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ⁶ Fowler S (2006). *Tracing your Army Ancestors*, Pen and Sword Military, Chapter 14, Boer War.
- ⁷ *Military Campaign Medal and Award Rolls, 1793-194*, WO 100; Piece: 317, *War Office: Campaign Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1949 (General Series)*. The National Archives microfilm publication WO 100, 241 rolls. The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey, England, www.ancestry.co.uk
- ⁸ *Military Campaign Medal and Award Rolls, 1793-1949*, WO 100; Piece: 163, *War Office: Campaign Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1949 (General Series)*, www.ancestry.co.uk. The National Archives microfilm publication WO 100, 241 rolls. The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey, England. (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ⁹ GRO marriage index for Sidney Ernest Johnson and Lily Hedges, Jun 1904, Wandsworth, 1d, 941 www.freeBMD.org.uk. (Search terms: marriage of Sidney Johnson and Lily between 1903 and 1905 (no place specified). Wandsworth registration covers Battersea.
- ¹⁰ *London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921*, www.ancestry.co.uk. Original data: Church of England Parish Registers, 1754-1921. London Metropolitan Archives, London, Saint Philip, Battersea, Register of marriages, P70/PHI, Item 016. (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea)
- ¹¹ England and Wales 1911 Census Return Class: RG14; Piece: 6263; Schedule Number: 123, www.ancestry.co.uk. Original record held at the National Archives, London www.ancestry.co.uk (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ¹² Forces-war records Website. <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/347/grenadier-guards/>
- ¹³ Will of Sidney Ernest Johnson. *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966*, www.ancestry.co.uk. Original data: Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*. London, England © Crown copyright. (Search terms: Sidney Ernest Johnson b 1872 Battersea).
- ¹⁴ GRO death registration: Sidney E Johnson, b. abt 1873, registered death in Mar 1963, age 90, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, 4b, 181 (search terms: death of Sidney E Johnson, between 1962 and 1964, no place stated)

APPENDIX 1

Transcription of 1911 census for George Edward Johnson³

Address: 193 Sheffield Rd Whittington Moor Chesterfield, Derbyshire, 3 rooms and shop.

George Edward Johnson, Head, 72, Married for 49 years, 10 children born alive, 3 still living, 7 had died, iron moulder General Eng, unemployed, born West Ham, Essex, Hernia (in column for infirmity)

Harriet Johnson, Wife, Married for 49 years, born Bungay, Suffolk,

Alice Elizabeth Johnson, single, 47, Tobacconist, own account, born Stratford, Essex.

APPENDIX 2Translation of British Army WW1 Pension Record for Sidney Ernest JOHNSON⁵

No 3108, Sidney Ernest Johnson, Corps: Grenadier Guards. Joined at London on 31st July 1891.

Sidney Ernest Johnson, born in Parish of Islington near town of London in Middlesex, age 19 years and 5 months, plumber, he was apprenticed to Harry Cardway (013, Grafton Road?) Plaidstow, not married, not been imprisoned.

Description of Sidney on enlistment aged 19 years and 5 months (b. about Feb 1872): 5 feet 8 inches tall, weight 134 lbs, chest measurement minimum 34 inches, maximum 36 inches, complexion fresh, grey eyes, dark brown hair, religion Church of England, slight drooping of upper lid right eye. Pronounced fit at medical examination on 31 July 1891 at Horse Guards, London.

Statement of Service

Attested 31 July 1891 private

Appointed Lance Corporal 14th July 1893

Promoted to Corporal 1895

Extended service to complete 12 years with their colours / gratuity £2.0.0 13 June 1898

Appointed (?) 21.4.99

Promoted to Sergeant 30th May 1900

Re-engaged for the Grenadier Guards at London for each term as shall complete 21 years service – Sergeant 9th June 1903

Granted Service Pay D.Y. 1st April 1904

Permitted to continue in the service beyond 21 years 6th March 1912

Selected under army order 1 of 1918 to draw pension while still serving – Sgt, 4th ? 1914.

Total Service towards	Engagement (date of discharge)	23 years 5 days,
	Pension	23 years 5 days

Military historyService at Home and Abroad

Country	From	To	Years	Days
Home	31.7.91	12.7.98	6	347
Malta	13.7.98	3.10.99	1	83
Home	4.10.99	17.3.00		165
South Africa	18.3.00	8.10.02	2	205
Home	9.10.02	11.8.14	11	307
Expeditionary Force, France	12.8.14	29.10.14		79
Home	30.10.14			

He was educated at the Royal Military Asylum and Royal Hibernian Military School and obtained 3rd Class on 21st December 1891 and 2nd Class on 9th March 1894. He passed the following classes of instruction: promotion to Corporal (5.6.94), Field works Chatham (14.9.94), Pioneer Sergeant, Chatham (14.8.95), promotion to sergeant (28.7.??).

He served in the South African Campaign (Boer War) in 1900-1902 and was wounded

He was awarded the Queens and Kings South African medal, with clasps Wittebergen, Cape Colony and Transvaal, for South Africa 1901-1902. Long service and good conduct award.

Next of Kin: (father) George, (mother) Harriet, (sister) Alice Winifred of 29, ? Road, Westhorne and (brother) Charles, Woodman P. House, Stratford.

His wife is Lily Hedges, spinster, married at St Philips. Battersea, London 30.4.04, witnesses Rose Hedges and F.W. Edmead Sgt.

Children are listed as

Sidney George Patrick, b. 17.3.05, Windsor, baptised 21.3.05 at Windsor

Irene Rose, b. 16.6.06, Battersea, baptised on 22.8.06, Battersea

Marjorie, b. 22.12.08, London, baptised 14.1.09, baptised at ? Chapel, Chelsea

Leonard Charles, b. 18.1.10, London

Lily Winifred, b. 28.4.12, Windsor

Casualty Form

Regimental no.3108. Sgt S Johnson, 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards. Enlisted 31.7.91, terms of service: beyond 21. Date of promotion to present rank: 29.5.00. Qualification: Pioneer Sergt. Re-engaged 6.3.12.

31.10.14 report: wounded in action in the field near Ypres on 26.10.14. Not reported in any medical unit with the expeditionary force. Transferred to England on 29.10.14

Transferred from 2nd 154th Bn London 29.10.14

Occupational card sent Kew 13.11.17.