

## 15/1044 Corporal Samuel Getgood DCM



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Samuel Getgood was born on 17 December 1894 in Lisburn, County Antrim, the third of five children. Sometime after the turn of the century the family moved to Belfast, to a house on the Crumlin Road. His father, George, was a shoe maker and when Samuel left school he worked in one of Belfast's mills as a linen weaver. Samuel established a relationship with a young widow, Rachel Boyd (née Nelson) and the couple were married at St Anne's Cathedral on 13 June 1913.<sup>1</sup> They had a son, Samuel, born on 14 April 1914.

Like many of his peers, Samuel Getgood signed the Ulster Covenant on 28 September 1912 at Belfast City Hall (his father and elder brother Thomas also signed).

Getgood enlisted on 19 October 1914 into the North Belfast Battalion being raised for service with the Ulster Division. He trained with the Battalion—soon renamed 15<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles (North Belfast)—at Ballykinlar in County Down and at Seaford in Sussex before landing in France with 107<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division in October

1915. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 12 December 1915 and to Corporal on 17 September 1917.

On 16 February 1916, following an artillery barrage, he was admitted to 108<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance suffering from shell-shock; after a short period of treatment he returned to duty on 14 March. On 24 October 1916, Lance Corporal Getgood reported sick and was sent to 110<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance and then via a Casualty Clearing Station to hospital, where he was diagnosed as suffering from cellulitis in his right arm. He spent the next four months in No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital at Outreau near Boulogne and in hospital at Le Havre, before he rejoined his Battalion on 27 March 1917, and joined 'B' Company. At some time he was posted to 'D' Company, probably after his promotion to Corporal. Incredibly, by the time of the attack in March 1918, Getgood had survived unscathed the actions on the Somme, at Messines, Third Ypres and Cambrai, in addition to the routine of trench life.

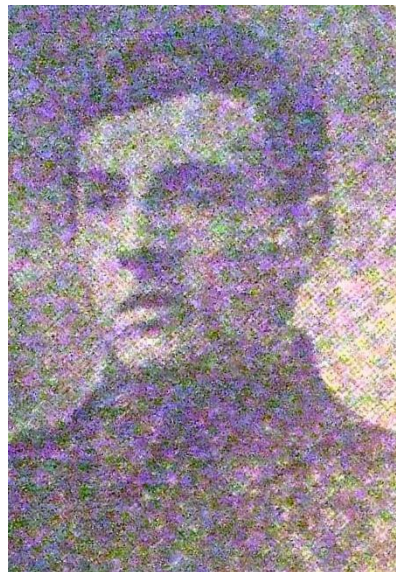
On the first day of the German offensive on 21 March 1918 he fought alongside Second Lieutenant Edmund De Wind at *Racecourse Redoubt*—for his gallantry De Wind was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Read about that action [here](#). After being captured on 21 March, Getgood was held initially at Giessen PW camp in Hesse before being transferred to Meschede PW camp in the Rhineland. He was transferred to Stargard PW camp (now Stargard Szczeciński, Poland) in October 1918, from which he was repatriated to the United Kingdom on 13 December and sent on leave. He was transferred to the Class Z Reserve on 29 March 1919. He and his wife had a daughter, Muriel Winifred, born on 6 October 1919.

Corporal Getgood was mentioned in despatches<sup>2</sup> (he received his certificate by mail on 13 November 1920) and for his gallantry at *Racecourse Redoubt* on 21 March 1918 he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.<sup>3</sup> In addition, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20 and Victory Medal (he received the latter in February 1922).

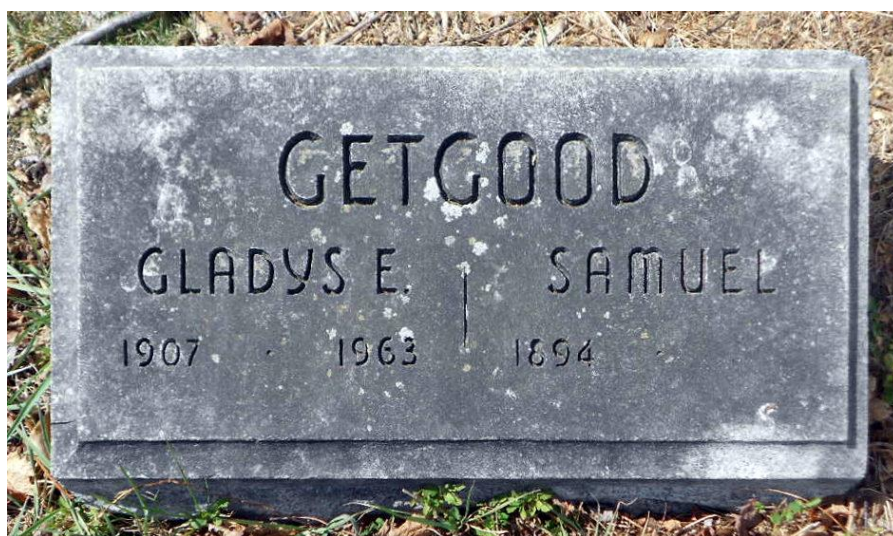
Sometime in the early 1920, Samuel Getgood decided to emigrate to the United States. Estranged from his wife and children, who remained at their home in Glentilt Street,<sup>4</sup> he sailed alone in September 1926 from Liverpool on the SS *Cedric*, destined for Philadelphia, where his uncle lived and where he found work in the iron and steel industry. He later worked as a bartender at the Monterey Hotel, in Asbury Park, New Jersey, and subsequently as a driver for Steinbach Co., a department store chain on the New Jersey shore.

While working at the Steinbach Co., in the mid-1930s, Getgood developed a relationship with Gladys Elizabeth Corbett (née Potter), a widow who had grown up and lived in Asbury Park, and on 6 September 1941 they married. In early 1959 the couple retired to Palm Beach, Florida. After a long period of illness, Gladys died there in May 1963. Samuel Getgood died in Lake Worth, Palm Springs on 15 June 1987, aged 92. They are buried together in Greenlawn Cemetery, West Long Branch, Monmouth County, New Jersey.

His older brother, Thomas, served with 9<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles (West Belfast) (9/18996, Sergeant), also in 107<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery at Thiepval on 1 July 1916 (London Gazette 18 November 1916. 29819, p 10922.) Samuel Getgood's daughter, Winifred, served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in the Second World War.



Sergeant Thomas Getgood MM



The grave of Samuel Getgood and his wife Gyadys Elizabeth in Greenlawn Cemetery, West Long Branch, NJ

<sup>1</sup> By her first marriage, Rachel Boyd had a son, Ernest, born on 30 December 1904.

<sup>2</sup> London Gazette 9 July 1919. 31442, p 8709.

<sup>3</sup> London Gazette 30 January 1920. 31759, p 1220

<sup>4</sup> His wife remained in Northern Ireland and died in Belfast. His son died in Essex in 1985. Just after the Second World War in December 1945 his daughter wrote to the Philadelphia Police Department seeking news of her father, whom she not heard from since his departure.