

KENNETH ARMSTRONG BARKER (RAMC)

and

PATRICIA MARY HUMFREY



One of the entries in the Wood Norton parish register transcripts that particularly stands out is the record of a marriage which took place in All Saints church on the 6th April 1944:¹

Groom: Kenneth Armstrong Barker, age 32, single, The Hall, Wood Norton
Sergeant, RAMC

Bride: Patricia Mary Humfrey, age 29, single, The Hall, Wood Norton.

One of the witnesses to the marriage was Annie Norris (mother of William Forbes Norris who was killed in action at Gallipoli in 1915). The Norris family were a former owners of Wood Norton Hall, the property having been sold in 1928.

Kenneth Armstrong Barker was born in Darlington in 1912, the son of Joseph Armstrong and Edith Barker.² Joseph Barker and Edith Williamson married in 1911,³ and in the 1911 census they are living at 33 Elton Parade, Darlington; Joseph gives his occupation as a draper's assistant. Joseph was aged 28 and Edith was aged 27.⁴ It appears from the records that Kenneth had two younger siblings, Winifred (born in 1913)⁵ and Geoffrey (born in 1915).⁶

Patricia Mary Humfrey was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1914,⁷ the daughter of Herbert Humfrey, a stockbroker's clerk,⁸ her mother's name is not yet known.⁹

How Kenneth and Patricia met is not yet known, but there must have been ample opportunity to meet at local events, dances, through mutual friends or in church – and it seems likely that Kenneth or Patricia were billeted at Wood Norton Hall, as this is the address from which they were married.

Kenneth was a Sergeant in the RAMC (the Royal Army Medical Corps), service number 7262546. In 1941 he was 'Mentioned in Despatches', his name appearing in *The London Gazette*, Number 35396, Second Supplement dated 30th December 1941 (along with ninety-eight other officers and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps):¹⁰

¹ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1944 (p.107).

² FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1912, Darlington, Vol.10a, p.25* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1911, Darlington, Vol.10a, p.47* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁴ 1911 census, Darlington (Schedule 336) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁵ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1913, Darlington, Vol.10a, p.73* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1915, Darlington, Vol.10a, p.41* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁷ Ireland, Civil Registration Births Index, 1864-1958 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁸ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1944 (p.107).

⁹ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1944 (p.107).

¹⁰ See <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35396/pages/7351>.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve that the following be Mentioned in recognition of distinguished services in the Middle East (including Egypt, East Africa, The Western Desert, The Sudan, Greece, Crete, Syria and Tobruk) during the period February, 1941, to July, 1941:

7262546 Sergt. K. A. Barker

Kenneth would have been eligible for the award of the 1939-1945 War Medal and the 1939-1945 Star. As he had also been 'Mentioned in Despatches', he was eligible to wear a bronze oak leaf emblem on the ribbon of the 1939-1945 War Medal.¹¹

1939-1945 War Medal,
with oak leaf



1939-1945 Star



Kenneth and Patricia had at least one child, a daughter, Margaret Alice Barker, born in Ireland in 1945, and it seems likely that Patricia returned to her parent's home for the birth of her child.¹² Margaret died in Toronto, Canada, in 2001, aged 56.¹³

On the 6th September 1952, Kenneth was promoted to Warrant Officer Class I in the RAMC.¹⁴ Patricia died shortly after, on the 14th October 1952, at The County Hospital, Ayr, aged 38.¹⁵ Kenneth died on the 8th November 1987 in West Hougham, Dover, aged 75.¹⁶

¹¹ See <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/war-medal-1939-1945>.

¹² Ireland, Civil Registration Births Index, 1864-1958, *Quarter to March 1945, Dublin North, Vol.2, p.526* (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹³ Web: Obituary Daily Times Index, 1995-2016 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁴ See <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/11622630/warrant-officer-class-1-k-a-barker-british-army-royal-army-medical-corps/>.

¹⁵ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁶ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 (www.ancestry.co.uk).