

KENNY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

Account written by Philip's mother.

Friday, March 3. 1916.

Heard from Mrs. Kenny that her husband was coming to town and would be at The Palace at 10 o'clock - no details.

Saturday March 4.

Bright and very cold, went up by 9.15 train, waited outside the gates of Buckingham Palace where there was a kind and benevolent looking policeman who assured me he would be sure to see Sgt. Kenny going in and would tell him that a lady wished to see him. I walked about there till 10.30 being told at intervals that he had not come, but that he was being enquired for, and finally that he was in the Palace.

A good many people, officers and ladies drove up in taxis and motors and were sent on into the courtyard. A big dark Goldstream Guardsman was warmly welcomed by the policeman and I was told was going to get the V.C. At 10.30. I was told that the "governor" had been asked about me and soon after that I might go in. I walked in under the entrance that one sees from the gates, into a rather gloomy looking square with buildings all round. In the middle was a man whom I approached nervously. I was graciously received and was told to go up some steps into the entrance facing the one I had come in by. I found myself in a square hall with wide steps on three sides and large pillars. I was

Sergeant T. Kenny leaving Buckingham
Palace with the mother of Lieut.
P.A. Brown.

March 4, 1916.



wears the French Croix de Guerre. 5. Major Lowe (London Regiment) with his family
after receiving the D.S.O. 6. Sergeant Thomas Kenny, V.C., with his mother at the
Palace. In centre: Second-Lieutenant A. V. Smith, V.C., the story of whose superb self-
sacrifice was published on Saturday, with his mother and father, who is Chief Constable of
Barnley. Lieutenant Smith was in the act of throwing a grenade when it slipped from his
hand and fell into the trench close to his comrades. Knowing it would explode he threw
himself upon it without hesitation and was instantly killed. By this magnificent act he
the Blackpool Constabulary.

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Photos Michael
Murray
Kenny
family

told I could go up the steps and sit on a couch at the top where there was a long, low gallery at right angles to the entrance door and on the other side of it, through an open door, I could see a room looking on to the garden and men in uniform lined up in it. There were numbers of (very eligible for the army) young men, in livery of red or black, ^{about} one with a Derby armlet. One of them told me that those who had been decorated would come to a little table at the right of the door of this room to get a box for their decoration and that I should then see my man. I sat in great comfort and warmth and after a quarter of an hour some officers came along the gallery to the right and up to the table where their decorations were taken off and put in boxes. The first was a minute and elderly Naval officer covered with decorations. Then one or two very happy looking younger officers (army). One was welcomed by a lady and two dear little girls sitting close to me. Then I heard someone say "a V.C." and as the man looked rather like the photograph of Kenny, I got up as he passed and said "Sgt. Kenny" and he at once turned and shook hands. We went down the red carpeted steps into the square hall where his coat was put on. A man at the door asked for his signature (as a "souvenir"). We walked through the two courts and turned out to get a taxi and met an array of photographers. I got out of the way quickly so as not to appear in the photographs. We went in a taxi to the Wykeham Studios to have Kenny's picture

taken and I pinned on the V.C. which he had in a box. After this we went into Westminster Cathedral (K. is a R.C.) and then on to Westminster Abbey which impressed him immensely and then looked at the Houses of Parliament and went on to Westminster Bridge. We then went back by omnibus to Victoria Station and had lunch in the upstairs Restaurant.

After lunch we came down to Beckenham and to Broomhill where only Rose was visible (Marjory was in Bed) After we had talked for a time I took him in to see the Abbey School and he was much interested to see the boys playing football. Mr. Salter and Mr. Gulliver came out and talked to Kenny and congratulated him and saw the V.C. They said they had never seen one before. We then came back and had tea and he left at 4 o'clock saying he had never seen so much in life before.

He is a goodlooking man - a miner by trade. He was at first rather silent and grim and was decidedly critical of everything but his devotion to Philip and the eloquence with he spoke of him was most striking. He seemed as if he could never say enough about his goodness to him, his hard work, his bravery his consideration for others and the love that they all had for him. "It quite broke up the battalion" he said to hear of his end.

Kenny told me all about the night of Nov. 4. and how he and Lt. Brown went as usual between the lines and decided to return to the same "listening post" by which they had come out. It was black night and they soon found they had lost their way and were close to the German lines. They tried to

find their way back but did not succeed. They were crawling on the ground and when beginning to get up Philip suddenly threw up his arms and fell back. Kenny asked him if he was wounded and he said yes. A bullet had gone through one thigh and into the other where it had exploded. Kenny got him on his back, Philip putting his arm round his neck. He crawled on and then put Philip down to see where they were. This he did many times for about an hour and once found they were again in the German lines. At last he found a spot by a small stream or drain that he recognised and left Philip there and went back to the listening post and Captain White and some with a stretcher came out. Captain White applied a field dressing to the wound and they began to bring him in but a machine gun was opened on them and they all laid down in the ditch except Kenny who stood over Philip to protect him. He said "I was past feeling any fear" -but he never got even a scratch. They had to carry him over the parapet a position of great danger and Captain White stayed behind in the dark keeping off the Germans with his revolver. He has now received the Military Cross. When they got to the dressing station Philip asked Kenny if he was all right and said "Well you are a hero, Kenny." Kenny had his arm under Philip's head but he was so sick and exhausted that Capt. White sent him away and got another man in his place. He was told two hours after that Philip was dead and said "It nearly broke my heart." The whole party were in great peril as rifles and bombs as well as machine guns were fired on them.

It is a comfort to think that though he did not survive, he at least died among those who loved him which was a fitting end for one who had not a personal enemy in the world. He was perfectly conscious to the end.

Kenny was deeply impressed with the ceremony at Buckingham Palace and told me all about it, how he came behind some officers and copied what did, stopping a few paces in front of the King when a full description of his valour was read out. The King pinned on the Cross and spoke very warmly of how proud he was of his brave men and how such an act showed an entire absence of self, shook hands with him, holding his hand for some time. Kenny's verdict was "He's a real gentleman." - He's very small, no sort of size at all. "I think he was rather overcome with it all and very glad to see me and I was much relieved at succeeding in meeting him as it was not easy to do and the poor man would have been quite alone otherwise. He told ^{me} he had heard great tales of officers taking you up to the Palace but there was nothing of that sort. I think he thoroughly appreciated seeing things though his general attitude was "I don't mind if I do." The size of the houses amazed him and he continually said what a dreadful thing it would be if the Zeppelins got here. He spoke of the terrible sights of ruined churches in France and of the many, many graveyards you saw. He was going back to Durham for a week so his wife and children would see the Victoria Cross.