

## Private Frank Barber Durrant

Regimental number: 41165

7<sup>th</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment

born: 1899 - died: 30 June 1918

Private Frank Barber Durrant, born in about 1899 in Fordcombe, Kent,<sup>1</sup> was the son of Horace and Ellen Durrant.<sup>2</sup> His father was born in about 1867 in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and his mother, the former Ellen Sara E. Baber, in about 1864 in Hastings, Sussex. Horace and Ellen were married in Tonbridge, Kent in 1886.<sup>3</sup> Horace was a journeyman butcher and, in 1911, the family was living in Penshurst, Kent.<sup>4</sup>

Frank was one of eleven children born to Horace and Ellen: Annie (born in 1886),<sup>5</sup> Horace (born in 1887),<sup>6</sup> Edith (born in 1889),<sup>7</sup> Charles (born in about 1891),<sup>8</sup> Harold (born in about 1894),<sup>9</sup> Ellen (born in 1896),<sup>10</sup> Clara (born in about 1898),<sup>11</sup> Frank (born in 1899), twins Frances and Henry (born in 1900, but sadly Frances died the following year)<sup>12</sup> and Edward (born in 1902).<sup>13</sup> Each child was given Frank's mother's maiden name, Barber, as a middle name.

Frank served with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment.<sup>14</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment was a Service battalion given the nickname of "The Mobbs' Own" because one of the first men to volunteer was Edgar Mobbs, a well-known rugby player.<sup>15</sup> After training in England, the Battalion went to France at the end of August 1915, as part of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 24<sup>th</sup> Division, where it remained until the end of the war. The Battalion would take part in a large number of major engagements on the Western Front. After the heavy fighting during the German Spring Offensive in March 1918, the Battalion was reinforced by soldiers from other units.



F. B. Durrant in Pernes Cemetery (Source: Author, July 2015)

Between January and July 1918, 21 Other Ranks and one officer were killed and 53 Other Ranks were wounded in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion.<sup>16</sup> The day that he was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, 22 June 1918, his unit had been subject to heavy hostile shelling in the morning, which resulted in the death of one Other Rank and the wounding of another<sup>17</sup> – perhaps Frank. He was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS with gunshot wounds to his left leg and arm. He survived for eight days. He died on 30 June and was buried the following day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5. Row D. Grave No. 4), with the chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding. The chaplains' journal identifies Frank as a member of the Church of England. The chaplain also notified his mother, who was then living at 51 Chandler Road in Bexhill, Sussex, of his death. She also received the monies owing to him from the army after his death.

Frank was one of 210 patients admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS on 22 June and one of 82 to die at that CCCS in that month.<sup>18</sup> Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.<sup>19</sup> This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

Frank was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Frank Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 705

<sup>2</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 January 2015), entry for Frank Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Sub-registration district: Penshurst, ED, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 749, Folio: 127, Page Number: 12, Household schedule number: 70

<sup>3</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Horace Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 1031

<sup>4</sup> "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for William Brumby, District: Sevenoaks, Registration district number: 49, Subdistrict: Penshurst, Subdistrict number: 3, Enumeration district: 8, Piece number 4035, Schedule number: 14; Census reference: RG14PN4035 RG78PN155 RD49 SD3 ED8 SN14

<sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Annie Barber Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 692

<sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Horace Barber Durrant, Registration district: East Ashford, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 799

<sup>7</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Edith Barber Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 692

<sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Charles Barber Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 731

<sup>9</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Harold Barber Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 685

<sup>10</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Ellen Barber Durrant, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 731

<sup>11</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Clara Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 700

<sup>12</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Frances Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 696; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Henry Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 696; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Frances Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 453

<sup>13</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2015), entry for Edward Barber Durrant, Registration district: Sevenoaks, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 796

<sup>14</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 608

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<sup>15</sup> [7th Service Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment.](http://www.huntscycles.co.uk/C%20L%206%207th%20Service%20Battalion%20Northamptonshire%20Regiment.htm)” The Charles Laughton pages ...  
(<http://www.huntscycles.co.uk/C%20L%206%207th%20Service%20Battalion%20Northamptonshire%20Regiment.htm>; accessed 19 April 2015)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 12 March 2015), entry for Northamptonshire Regiment, Sub Unit: 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Piece Description: Piece 2218/2: 7 Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment (1915 Aug - 1919 Jun), Piece Number: 2218

<sup>18</sup> “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

<sup>19</sup> “Pernes British Military Cemetery” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

<sup>20</sup> “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Durrant, Frank B.