

Private Samuel Busby

Regimental number: 40844

8th Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

born: 1899 - died: 7 July 1918

Private Samuel Busby, born in 1899,¹ was the son of Joseph and Gertrude Busby of Bilston, Staffordshire.² His father, Joseph, was born about 1879 in Walsall, Staffordshire and his mother, probably the former Emily Jane G. Ward, in about the same year in Bilston. They were married in the summer of 1899 in the district of Wolverhampton.³ They had five children – only three of whom survived to 1911.⁴ They included Samuel and two younger sisters – Gwendoline (born in 1901) and Martha Jane (born in 1905). In 1911, the family was living at 5 Quarry Street in Bilston, where Joseph was a colliery carpenter. Samuel was in school.

Samuel first enlisted in the South Staffordshire Regiment in Lichfield on 6 March 1915.⁵ He claimed on his attestation form that he was born on 22 September 1897 and was an ironworker. At the time, he was 5' 3" tall, weighed 112 pounds, and had a fresh complexion, brown eyes and hair. He was a member of the Church of England. He was considered fit for service. However, he was discharged just seven months later. He was discharged on 9 October 1915 because he had lied about his age at enlistment and was under the age of 17 at the date of discharge. In fact, he had only just turned 16. Even during this short service, he managed to have a disciplinary event on his record. He overstayed a pass from tattoo to 8 p.m. the following evening. For his misdemeanour, he was confined to barracks for four days and lost two or three days' pay.



S. Busby in Pernes British Military Cemetery
(Source: Author, July 2015)

He later enlisted in the 8th Battalion of the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment). At the beginning of the war, the King's Own was made up of "two Regular and two Territorial Battalions as well as a Special Reserve Battalion. By the end of the war it had expanded to 17 battalions, ten of which had seen active service. During the war over 44,000 men served with the Regiment, of whom nearly 7,000 died."⁶ The 8th Battalion was a service battalion made up of volunteers in 1914. The 8th Battalion served in many major engagement on the Western Front.

On 7 July 1918, Samuel was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds that penetrated his head and his right arm.⁷ He died and was buried the same day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row D, Grave 50). The chaplain J. K. Tibbits presided and notified his mother of his death. She also received the monies owing to him by the army following his death.⁸

The day that he was admitted to the 1st CCCS, he was one of 30 admissions and he was one of 39 to die at that CCCS in the month of July.⁹ 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.¹⁰ This cemetery was

only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

Samuel was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹¹

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 2 June 2015), entry for Samuel Busby, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 69

² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Samuel Busby, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Registration District Number: 369, Sub-registration district: Bilston, ED, institution, or vessel: 15, Household schedule number: 240, Piece: 17126

³ "England & Wales, Marriage Index, 1916-2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Joseph Busby, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume Number: 6b, Page Number: 1029

⁴ "1911 England Census," entry for Samuel Busby

⁵ "British Army WWI Pension Records 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Samuel Busby, Regimental Number: 17954, Form Title: Short Service Attestation

⁶ "Regimental History - 20th Century," King's Own Royal Regiment Museum (<http://www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com/ww1.htm>; accessed 3 June 2015)

⁷ "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 622

⁸ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Samuel Busby

⁹ "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)

¹⁰ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

¹¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Samuel Busby