

Private William James Duxbury©

Regimental number: G/19280

9th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

born: 26 May 1899 - died: 1 June 1918

Private William James Duxbury was born on 26 May 1899¹ in Colne, Lancashire,² the son of Pickles and Margaret Ann (nee Ridehalgh) Duxbury.³ Both his parents were born in Colne—Pickles in about 1868 and Margaret Ann in about 1869. Their marriage was registered in Burnley, Lancashire, in 1894⁴ and they had three sons—Wilfred (born in 1896),⁵ William and Rennie (born in 1907).⁶ Sadly, Rennie died when he was about 1 year old.⁷

In 1901, the family was living at 31 Earl Street, Colne, where Pickles was a cotton loom overlooker.⁸ The young family was living with Margaret Ann's mother, Mary Ridehalgh, who was a widow. When he was 4 years old, William was admitted to the Lord Street Infants' School in Colne. He remained there for three years, until he left on 31 July 1906 to transfer to a mixed school.⁹ In 1911, the family was still on Earl Street and Wilfred had joined his father in the cotton industry, working as a coloured cotton weaver.¹⁰ William was still in school.

William enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in Nelson, Lancashire,¹¹ sometime after June 1917.¹² He served first with the Royal Fusiliers (regimental number G/81877) and then with the 9th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment.¹³

On 24 May 1918, William's battalion replaced the 7th Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment in the field near Loos, in northern France. There were occasional casualties in the following days. But just before midnight on 31 May about 400 gas projectiles were fired on the battalion and another 20 in the early hours of the morning. They were large projectiles, which produced a great concentration of gas, and casualties were heavy—21 Other Ranks (non-officers) wounded or killed.¹⁴

William was probably one of these, because he was already dead when he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. He had sustained gunshot wounds to his left thigh and had been gassed. He was buried the same day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row E, Grave No. 6) with the Canadian chaplain, R. K. Lambert, presiding.¹⁵ This military cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.¹⁶

His mother, who was living at 9 Craven Street in Colne, was William's next of kin and was notified of his death.¹⁷ However, it was his father who requested the following inscription for William's gravestone:

SLEEP ON BELOVED
WE LOVED THEE WELL
BUT JESUS LOVED THEE BEST¹⁸

William was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁹

William's mother probably died in 1932 in Burnley.²⁰ In 1939, his father was living at 8 Craven Street in Colne²¹ and he died on 8 January 1946 at the same address.²² William's only remaining

brother, Wilfred, married Clarice Bocker Carey in 1924²³ and, in 1939, they were living with Wilfred's father on Craven Street.²⁴ Wilfred died in 1978 near Burnley.²⁵

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¹ "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William James Duxbury, Book type: Admissions, Archive reference: SMCo/16/3, Folio / page no.: 21

² "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William James Duxbury

³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Duxbury, William James, Service No: 19280

⁴ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for Pickles Duxbury, District: Burnley, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 476

⁵ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 13 June 2018), entry for Duxbury, Wilfred, Registration district: The Burnley Union, Volume 08E, Page 273

⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 13 June 2018), entry for Duxbury, Rennie, Registration district: The Burnley Union, Volume 08E, Page 270

⁷ "GRO online index–death," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 13 June 2018), entry for Duxbury, Rennie, Registration district: The Burnley Union, Volume 08E, Page 203

⁸ "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William J. Duxbury, Registration district: Burnley, Archive reference: RG13, Piece: 3886, Folio: 105, Page: 12

⁹ "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William James Duxbury

¹⁰ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William James Duxbury, Registration district: Burnley, Registration district number: 472, Enumeration district: 7, District number: 7, Sub-district: Colne, Sub-district number: 5

¹¹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for William James Duxbury

¹² Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 June 2018), entry for William James Duxbury

¹³ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for William J Duxbury

¹⁴ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 June 2018), Regiment or unit: Royal Sussex Regiment, Sub-unit: 9th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary entry start date: Mar 1916, Diary entry end date: 24 Mar 1916, Diary dates: 1915 Aug–1919 May, Piece description: Piece 2219/2: 9 Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment (1915 Aug–1919 May), Piece number: 2219

¹⁵ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for Duxbury, W. J.

¹⁶ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹⁷ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for Duxbury, W. J.

¹⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Duxbury, William James, Service No: 19280

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- ¹⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for William J Duxbury
- ²⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 June 2018), entry for Margaret A. Duxbury, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 365
- ²¹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for Pickles Duxbury, Schedule number: 243, Sub-schedule Number: 1, Enumeration district: NTZC, Registration district: 472A - 3
- ²² "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 May 2018), entry for Pickles Duxbury, District: Nelson, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 353
- ²³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for Wilfred Duxbury, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 341
- ²⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for Pickles Duxbury
- ²⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2018), entry for Wilfred Duxbury, Registration district: Burnley and Pendle, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 40, Page: 1179