

Private William James Boorman[©]
Regimental number: 6303
4th Battalion (City of London), Royal Fusiliers

born: late 1879 or early 1880–died: 30 April 1918

Private William James Boorman was born in late 1879 or early 1880 in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, the son of John and Eliza (nee Doyle) Boorman.¹ He was baptized in All Saints Church in Southend on 11 January 1880.² Both his parents were born in Kent in 1847³—John Edwin in Canterbury and Eliza in Gillingham about a year later.⁴ They married in the spring of 1869 in Medway, Kent,⁵ and had five children—two born in Kent and three after they moved to Essex:

- John Henry (born on 20 June 1870),⁶
- Thomas Alfred (born in 1874),⁷
- Alice Helene (born on 7 September 1877),⁸
- William, and
- Daisy May (born on 17 December 1886).⁹

In 1871, John and Eliza, with their 9-month old son, were living with John's mother, Eleanor, at 60 Murston Road in Sittingbourne, Kent. John, like his older brother, Henry, was a brick moulder.¹⁰ Ten years later, the family had moved to Essex and was living at 3 Sutton Street, in Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea.¹¹ In 1891, they were still at the same address and John's mother was living with them.¹²

Three of William's siblings married before the turn of the century—John married Ada Stock at St. Mary the Virgin church in Prittlewell in 1893,¹³ Thomas married Eliza Poole the following year¹⁴ and their sister Alice married Frank Bevis on 23 October 1899 at All Saints church in Southend.¹⁵

By 1901, William's mother Eliza was a widow. Her husband John had died in 1900 near Rochford, Essex.¹⁶ The following year, Eliza was living with their last daughter Daisy and two boarders. She had moved from 3 Sutton Street to No. 5. William was not with the family at the time.¹⁷ His married siblings were also living elsewhere with their spouses—John and Ada were living in Prittlewell with two children;¹⁸ Thomas and Eliza were also living in Prittlewell, also with two children;¹⁹ and Alice was living in Lambeth, London, with her husband Frank and their daughter Ethel.²⁰ Sadly, Alice's husband died just a few months later and was buried in Norwood Cemetery, Norwood Road, Lambeth, on 25 July 1901.²¹

Alice remarried two year later, marrying William Harold Gray at St. John the Baptist church in Southend on 25 March 1903.²² The last sibling to marry was Daisy, who married Charles Frederick Lilly on 26 December 1908 at All Saints church in Southend.²³

At the end of March 1911, William was again living with his mother and his two now married sisters—Daisy and Alice—still at 5 Sutton Street.²⁴ Louisa Hollister was a visitor in the house and only a few months later would become William's wife.²⁵ Louisa, a domestic servant, was born in Chelsea, London, on 7 November 1879.²⁶ They do not appear to have had any children.

William enlisted in about November 1914²⁷ in Southend.²⁸ He joined the 4th Battalion (City of London) of the Royal Fusiliers—a volunteer unit of the Territorial Force recruited from East London²⁹—and went overseas on 31 May 1915.³⁰ It is not clear how William was injured but, three years after he went overseas, he died on the Front Line. In early April 1918, his battalion was

reinforced with two drafts of 420 trained soldiers that had the effect of turning this East London battalion into:

... a mild imitation of the Tower of Babel, for among them could be traced the accents of London, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, the broader dialects of Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Wiltshire, and even the unmistakable tones of Scotland and South Wales.³¹

On 19 April, his battalion took part in a large-scale raid that engaged one platoon from his regiment in an attempt to advance the outputs in the sector, during which 24 men from the battalion were wounded.³² William was not admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station until 30 April, and he was already dead. He had died of gunshot wounds to his right hand and fractured ribs that penetrated his lungs. He was buried the same day in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row A, Grave 23) with the Canadian chaplain G. C. d'Easum presiding.³³

The chaplain sent a letter to his wife, who was living at 28 Prittlewell Street, Southend, to notify her of his death. She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.³⁴

William was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).³⁵

William is honoured on the County Borough of Southend Roll of Honour in Prittlewell.³⁶

His wife Louisa does not appear to have remarried and, in 1939, was living with Kitty and Aubrey James Smith.³⁷ Kitty's maiden name was Boorman and she was born on 1 September 1903. When she married Aubrey Smith in 1923, her father's name was recorded as William James Boorman.³⁸ However, there is no evidence of a Kitty (Kate, Catherine etc.) Boorman born in September 1903 and no evidence that William was married at the time. Perhaps Kitty's father was another William James Boorman or she was an illegitimate child whose birth was not registered. Louisa probably died in Southend in 1951.³⁹



**County Borough of Southend
Roll of Honour, Prittlewell**
Source: Imperial War Museums

William's four siblings stayed in Essex and Kent until their deaths:

- in 1939, John was living at 8 Beresford Avenue in Rochester, Kent, where he was a building painter.⁴⁰ He died in 1957 near Maidstone, Kent;⁴¹
- Thomas, who had been a house painter⁴² like his brother, died in 1932 near Rochford, Essex;
- when the register was taken on 29 September 1939, Alice was living at 8 Baxter Avenue in Southend,⁴³ but William, a retired police sergeant, was a patient in the Southend General Hospital on Prittlewell Chase.⁴⁴ He died just over a month later.⁴⁵ Alice died on 22 August 1966 at the Southwold Nursing Home, just outside Southend, at the age of 78;⁴⁶ and
- in 1939, Daisy and Charles were living in the former family home at 5 Sutton Street.⁴⁷ Daisy died in 1968 in Southend at the age of 81,⁴⁸ and Charles, two years later at the age of 90.⁴⁹

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- ² "Essex Baptism Index 1538–1920," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for William James Boorman, Archive reference: D/P 537/1/1
- ³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 October 2019), entry for John Edwin Boorman, Registration district: Canterbury, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 5, Page: 57; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 October 2019), entry for Eliza Doyle, Registration district: Medway, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 5, Page: 353
- ⁴ "1881 England Census," entry for William J. Boorman
- ⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for John Boorman, Registration district: Medway, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 625
- ⁶ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2019), entry for John Boorman, Schedule number: 44, Sub-schedule number: 4, Enumeration district: DINR, Registration district: 47-1
- ⁷ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 11 October 2019), entry for Boorman, Thomas Alfred, Registration district: Medway, Volume 02A, Page 473
- ⁸ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2019), entry for Alice H. Gray, Schedule number: 220, Sub-schedule Number: 1, Enumeration district: DAGY, Registration district: 195-3/E.D.No 54
- ⁹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2019), entry for Daisy M. Lilly, Schedule number: 24, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: DAGS, Registration district: 195-3/E.D No 49B/71
- ¹⁰ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for Eliza Boorman, Registration district: Milton, Sub-registration district: Milton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 30, Household schedule number: 121, Piece: 984, Folio: 16, Page: 23
- ¹¹ "1881 England Census," entry for William J. Boorman
- ¹² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for William Boorman, Registration district: Prittlewell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Piece: 1392, Folio: 17
- ¹³ "Essex, England, Church of England Marriages, 1754–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 October 2019), entry for John Henry Boreman [sic]
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Thomas Alfred Boorman, District: Rochford, County: London, Volume: 4A, Page: 734
- ¹⁵ "Essex, England, Church of England Marriages, 1754–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Alice Helena Boorman
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for John Boorman, Registration district: Rochford, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 4a, Page: 374
- ¹⁷ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 October 2019), entry for Eliza Boorman, Registration district: Rochford, Sub-registration district: Prittlewell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 1681, Folio: 103, Page: 42, Household schedule number: 243
- ¹⁸ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 October 2019), entry for John W. Boardman [sic], Registration district: Rochford, Sub-registration district: Prittlewell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 20, Piece: 1681, Folio: 19, Page: 29, Household schedule number: 175

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- ²¹ London, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813–2003,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 September 2019), entry for Frank Bevis
- ²² “Essex, England, Church of England Marriages, 1754–1935,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Alice Helena Bevis
- ²³ “Essex, England, Church of England Marriages, 1754–1935,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Daisy May Boorman
- ²⁴ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 October 2019), entry for William James Boorman, Registration district: Rochford, Registration district number: 195, Sub-registration district: Prittlewell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 29, Household schedule number: 99, Piece: 10141
- ²⁵ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 September 2019), entry for William J. Boorman, Registration district: Rochford, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 4a, Page: 1256
- ²⁶ “London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840–1911,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Louisa Hollister
- ²⁷ 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 14 September 2019), entry for William James Boorman
- ²⁸ “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 September 2019), entry for William James Boorman
- ²⁹ “4th (City of London) Battalion, London Regiment,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_\(City_of_London\)_Battalion,_London_Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_(City_of_London)_Battalion,_London_Regiment): accessed 15 October 2019)
- ³⁰ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 September 2019), entry for William J. Boorman
- ³¹ “The War History of the 4th Battalion The London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) 1914–1919,” Captain F. Clive Grimwade, 1922, *Project Gutenberg* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/50098>: accessed 15 October 2019)
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 11 October 2019), entry for Boorman, W.
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- ³⁶ “County Borough Of Southend Roll Of Honour,” *Imperial War Museums* (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/22791>: accessed 15 September 2019)
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- ⁴⁰ “1939 England and Wales Register,” entry for John Boorman

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- ⁴¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2019), entry for John H. Boorman, Registration district: Maidstone, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 5b, Page: 739
- ⁴² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 October 2019), entry for William James Boorman, Registration district: Medway, Registration district number: 47, Sub-registration district: Rochester and Chatham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 38, Household schedule number: 440, Piece: 3922
- ⁴³ "1939 England and Wales Register," entry for Alice H. Gray
- ⁴⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2019), entry for William H. Gray, Schedule number: 6, Sub-schedule Number: 61, Enumeration district: DAJD, Registration district: 195-3/ED Special 1
- ⁴⁵ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for William Harold Gray
- ⁴⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 October 2019), entry for Alice Helena Gray
- ⁴⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," entry for Daisy M. Lilly
- ⁴⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2019), entry for Daisy M. Lilly, Registration district: Southend on Sea, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 4a, Page: 1260
- ⁴⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2019), entry for Daisy M. Lilly, Registration district: Rochford, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 4a, Page: 2242