

Percy White

1877 - 1917

Married and settled in Oxford

Builder

Died near Ypres, aged 39, on 14 February 1917

Family and Education

Percy Henry White was born on 2 March 1877 at Aston, Warwickshire. In 1891 he was living in Kentish Town, London. His father, Henry White, was a goldsmith and diamond merchant. His mother was Sarah and he had 2 brothers and a sister. At the 1901 census, aged 24, he was living in Burbage, Derbyshire, and working as a stonemason.

Between October and December 1903 in Oxford, Percy married Emily May Moore. In 1911 he was living at 133 Kingston Road, Oxford, and working as a builder. He was 37 when war broke out and it is not clear whether he volunteered for service or was obliged to join up, being still two years short of the upper age limit when conscription was introduced in 1916. At some point he enlisted in the Alexandra Princess of Wales Own (Yorkshire) Regiment (Green Howards).

War Service: 9th (Service) Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment

Percy became a Private in the 9th (Service) Battalion, which was attached to 69th Brigade, 23rd Division. His medals indicate that he did not begin active service until 1916, when his unit had already experienced several months at the front. They were involved in action in the spring of 1916, and took part in a series of major engagements in the Battle of the Somme. Percy must have lost many comrades at this time, although as a Private he would have been less exposed to danger than the officers of his platoon. He survived into 1917, when his unit must have moved to the trenches near Ypres, although it was not involved in significant action there until June. He died on 14 February, presumably the haphazard victim of a sniper or shell. He was 39, and his body was recovered and buried at Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm). His widow seems to have remarried, taking the name Grose, and moved to Carshalton, Surrey.

This is the story of one of the men who appear on a war memorial at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford, UK. These stories were compiled in 2018-19 from a variety of family history and military sources. In particular, Chris Baker's site, 'The Long, Long Trail' has provided valuable details of the men's experience of battle:

<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>