

## **Captain Frank Pitchford Silvers**

**Regimental Number: –**

**Company D, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment**

**born: 1893 - died: 27 May 1918**

Frank Pitchford Silvers was born in early 1893.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Frederick Arthur Silvers and his wife, Sarah Pitchford.<sup>2</sup> His father was born about 1853 in Dudley, Worcestershire.<sup>3</sup> When he was young, he worked as a clerk at the iron works in Dudley.<sup>4</sup> His mother, Sarah, was born in 1852 in Stepney, London.<sup>5</sup> By 1871 Sarah had moved to Wolverhampton where she and her sister, Elizabeth, were living with her uncle, who was an innkeeper.<sup>6</sup> Sarah and Frederick married in Wolverhampton late in 1877.<sup>7</sup>

After their marriage, they lived with Sarah's sister, Elizabeth, who was then the licensed victualler of the Talbot Hotel at 23/24 King Street.<sup>8</sup> Frederick was a manager – presumably in his sister-in-law's establishment. They employed about ten staff. By 1891, Frederick was the licensed victualler<sup>9</sup> and later identified himself as the hotel proprietor.<sup>10</sup> It was here that Frank was born. He had four older siblings: a sister, Ann Purcell Silvers (born in 1878)<sup>11</sup> and three brothers: Arthur Talbot (born 1880),<sup>12</sup> Charles Owen (born 1884)<sup>13</sup> and George Frederick (born 1889).<sup>14</sup>

Between 1903 and 1910, Frank was a student at the Wolverhampton Grammar School.<sup>15</sup> While he was there, in 1907, his father, Frederick, died.<sup>16</sup> Frank's mother, Sarah, continued as the hotel proprietor and two sons, George and Frank, were still living with her in 1911.<sup>17</sup> Frank was an accountant clerk and was articled to Mr R. H. Johnston, accountant.<sup>18</sup>

Frank enlisted as a Sergeant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment<sup>19</sup> and infantry regiment of the British Army.<sup>20</sup> Frank entered the theatre of war on 26 June 1915. He was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 28 August 1915<sup>21</sup> and then to Captain in January 1918,<sup>22</sup> just a few months before his death. When he died, he was serving with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Territorial) in northern France, where he received gun shot wounds that fractured his head.<sup>23</sup>

He was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 26 May 1918, but he died the next day. He was buried the following day in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row D, Grave 4). Frank was identified as a member of the Church of England and the burial office was read by Rev. Gordon Dickens of the Canadian Forces. Arrangements for the notification of the family were made by the Church of England chaplain.

On 26 May, 86 soldiers were admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, bringing the total number of patients to 450.<sup>24</sup> In the whole month of May, there were 115 deaths at this CCCS – more than in any of the other three and a half months that the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military 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.<sup>25</sup>

Frank was awarded 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).<sup>26</sup> His medals were sent to his mother who was still living at the Talbot Hotel.

Frank was honoured as a former student of the Wolverhampton Grammar School with the following profile:

FRANK PITCHFORD SILVERS (1903-1910: 25), Captain, 1/6 Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, was the youngest son of Mrs Silvers of the Talbot Hotel, Wolverhampton. At school he was an enthusiastic player of football, taking the position of outside left in the 1st XI of 1909-1910, and later becoming captain of the Penn Fields club. On leaving school he was articled to Mr R H Johnston, Accountant, and when the war came he at once enlisted in the South Staffordshire Regiment. Devotion to duty and great capability led to advancement through the non-commissioned ranks until he received a commission, and finally he became captain in his own battalion. His superior officers and those who were more intimately associated with him unite in deploring the loss of one who was so good an officer and so true a man, a courageous and conscientious soldier, a merry companion, and a firm friend. Thus we see the qualities that we admired in the boy at school, brought to maturity in young manhood and manifesting themselves in the cruel test of war. Captain Silvers died on May 27th 1918, as the result of severe wounds in the head received during a bombardment, and he was buried with all military honours at Pernes on the following day. He won the Military Cross last year, the award being accompanied by the following official statement: "This officer has done very good work since the Division came to France. As Battalion Lewis Gun Officer he did valuable work in training and instructing Lewis Gunners. He is now commanding a company in a most efficient manner. During the successful attack on the 24th June 1917, his company captured and consolidated Fosse 3, de Lievn, and Admiral trench."<sup>27</sup>



Frank's brother, George, also served in the Great War. He enlisted on 31 October 1914 as a driver in the Royal Field Artillery (Regimental number: 805407). He joined the British Expeditionary Force in France on 28 February 1915. He was demobilized on 12 January 1919 and he was not "suffering from any disability due to his military service."<sup>28</sup> There was no evidence found as to whether either of Frank's other two brothers served in the Great War. If they did, they survived the war. All three brothers lived into their 70s and 80s.<sup>29</sup> His mother, Sarah, died in 1938, just before the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>30</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 31 January 2015), entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 630

<sup>2</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 11 January 2015), entry for Frank P. Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Eastern, ED, institution, or vessel: 01, Piece: 2679, Folio: 10, Page Number: 11, Household schedule number: 55

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 27 January 2015), entry for William E. Harris, Registration district: Dudley, Sub-registration district: Dudley, ED, institution, or vessel: 8, Household schedule number: 122, Piece: 3011, Folio: 58, Page Number: 34

<sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 31 January 2015), entry for Sarah Pitchford, Registration district: Stepney, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1c, Page: 518

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- <sup>6</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 January 2015), entry for William E. Harris, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Eastern, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 85, Piece: 2936, Folio: 14, Page Number: 21
- <sup>7</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Frederick Arthur Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 809
- <sup>8</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Fredk. Arthur Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Eastern, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 2800, Folio: 10, Page Number: 14
- <sup>9</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Rosina Byrch, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Eastern, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 2232, Folio: 5, Page Number: 4
- <sup>10</sup> "1901 England Census," entry for Frank P. Silvers
- <sup>11</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Ann Purcell Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 578
- <sup>12</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Arthur Talbot Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 548
- <sup>13</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Ann Purcell Silvers, Registration district: Shifnal, Inferred County: Shropshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 606
- <sup>14</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for George Frederick Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 568
- <sup>15</sup> Active History, entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers ([http://www.activehistory.co.uk/Miscellaneous/wulfsww1/obits/silvers\\_fp.htm](http://www.activehistory.co.uk/Miscellaneous/wulfsww1/obits/silvers_fp.htm) : accessed 30 January 2015)
- <sup>16</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Frederick A. Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 407
- <sup>17</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 January 2015), entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Registration District Number: 369, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Eastern, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 203, Piece: 17053
- <sup>18</sup> "Black Country Territorials," ([http://www.blackcountry-territorials.org/dbphp/ssr\\_db\\_soldier\\_detail.php?index=3040](http://www.blackcountry-territorials.org/dbphp/ssr_db_soldier_detail.php?index=3040) : accessed 1 February 2015)
- <sup>19</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 31 January 2015), entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers
- <sup>20</sup> "South Staffordshire Regiment," *Wikipedia* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Staffordshire\\_Regiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Staffordshire_Regiment): accessed 1 February 2015)
- <sup>21</sup> "The London Gazette, 3 September 1915, Supplement 29284, Page 8820," <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29284/supplement/8820>: accessed 1 February 2015, entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers
- <sup>22</sup> "The London Gazette, 28 December 1917, Supplement 30450, Page 46," <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29284/supplement/8820>: accessed 1 February 2015, entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers
- <sup>23</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2014), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 527
- <sup>24</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): accessed 15 December 2015)

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<sup>25</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>26</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers

<sup>27</sup> Active History, entry for Frank Pitchford Silvers. Although this tribute states that he received the military cross, no other evidence was found to confirm that he received this award.

<sup>28</sup> "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 February 2015), entry for George F Silvers, Regimental Number: RH RFA805407, Form Title: Territorial Force Attestation

<sup>29</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 February 2015), entry for Arthur T. Silvers, Registration district: Bournemouth, Inferred County: Hampshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 107; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Charles Owen Silvers, Registration district: Salisbury, Inferred County: Wiltshire, Volume: 7c, Page: 2047; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for George Frederick Silvers, Registration district: Dover, Inferred County: Kent, Volume: 16, Page: 0983

<sup>30</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 February 2015), entry for Sarah Silvers