

Driver William Purchase

Regimental number: T2SR 02542

452nd Company, 46th Divisional Train, Army Service Corps

born: 1884 - died: 6 July 1918

Driver William Purchase was born in mid-1884¹ and baptised on 4 September in Caton, Lancashire.² He was the son of William and Amelia Purchase. His father, the son of Edward Purchase, was born in about 1853 in Netherbury, Dorset.³ His mother, the former Amelia Green, daughter of Elisha Green, was born in about 1857 in Quern, also in Dorset.

William and Amelia were married on 2 November 1878 at St Paul's Church, Caton.⁴ William was a labourer throughout his entire life. For a while, after their marriage, Amelia worked as a cotton mill operative.⁵ William was one of ten children born to William and Amelia (three of whom, unfortunately, died in infancy): Elizabeth (born in about 1880),⁶ Susannah (born in about 1882),⁷ William, Edward (born in 1886, but died the following year),⁸ Amelia (born in 1888),⁹ Beatrice Annie (born in 1890),¹⁰ Rhoda Mary (born in 1894, but died the same year),¹¹ Edith Agnes (born in 1895),¹² Margaretta Etta May (born in 1899)¹³ and Edward (born in 1901, but died the same year).¹⁴ In 1911, the family was living on Hornby Road, Caton.

On 29 August 1911, William married Grace Huxtable in Lancaster.¹⁵ Grace was born in about 1890 in Lancaster, Lancashire.¹⁶ The couple appears to have had only one child – a daughter, Edna May, born on 31 January 1912.¹⁷

In 1911, William, like his father, was a farm labourer – a drainer.¹⁸ However, when he enlisted in the army in 1915, he was identified as a driver.¹⁹ He enlisted as a Driver in the Army Service Corps on 10 January 1915 in Aldershot. At the time, his wife and daughter were living at 54 Norfolk Street, Skerton, Lancashire. William was 30 years old and 5' 8" tall. He indicated that he had previously served with the 10th Battalion of the Royal Field Artillery.

Even prior to going to the Front, William had a couple of disciplinary events on his record. He was charged with being absent from midnight on 7 March 1915 to 9 p.m. on 8 May and fined. Just over two months later, he was charged with being drunk in Bore Street, Lichfield at 9 p.m. on 29 May 1915. It appears that, since he had no previous cases of drunkenness, he was only admonished for this offence.

Just over a year later, William left for the Front. He embarked at Southampton on 7 February 1916, disembarking in Havre the next day. There his disciplinary challenges continued. In October 1916 he was again convicted of drunkenness and received fourteen days of Field Punishment No. 2, which involved being placed in restraints for up to two hours a day.²⁰ The following March he was convicted of entering a café while on duty and leaving his horses unattended and was confined to barracks for fourteen days. Then, in July 1917, he was again convicted of drunkenness, this time while in charge of a pair of horses and wagon. He received 28 days of Field Punishment No. 2.

The illness that eventually took his life had appeared already two years earlier. On 8 August 1916 he was admitted to a Field Ambulance with albuminuria²¹ and then a few days later, he was admitted to No. 16 General Hospital with bronchitis. He had a short period of leave in December 1917/ January 1918.

Six months later he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station:

The above mentioned man was admitted to this CCS 30/6/18 with a temperature of 104 suffering from brocho-pneumonia. He rapidly became worse passing away at 5.30 PM July 6/18. Death was due to exposure on Active Service.²²

He was buried on 7 July in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row D, Grave 46) with the chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding. William was identified as being Church of England.

The day that William was admitted to the 1st CCCS, the unit received 174 patients – the most in any one day so far that month.²³ He was one of 39 to die at this CCCS in July 1918 and one of over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery – most of them were soldiers who died at one of the nearby clearing stations.²⁴ 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.

His wife, who was still living at 54 Norfolk St., Skerton, Lancaster, was notified of his death. She received the monies owing to him from the army following his death.²⁵ She was widowed with a six-year old daughter. William's mother had given birth to ten children, including three sons, two of whom died in infancy and the third in the Great War.

William was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁶

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 773

² "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1

³ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Sub-registration district: Caton, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 4271, Folio: 21, Page Number: 23

⁴ "Lancashire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Register Type: Parish Register

⁵ "1881 England Census," entry for William Purchase

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Elizabeth Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 753

⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Susannah Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 763

⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edward Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 786; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edward Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 6553

⁹ "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Amelia Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1

¹⁰ "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Beatrice Annie Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1

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- ¹¹ "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Rhoda Mary Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edward Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 519
- ¹² "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edith Agnes Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1
- ¹³ "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Margaret Etta May Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1
- ¹⁴ "Lancashire, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edward Purchase, Reference Number: PR 3130/1/1; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edward Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 511
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 1673
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for Edna M. Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 1327
- ¹⁷ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase, Form Title: Short Service Attestation.
- ¹⁸ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2015), entry for William Purchase, Registration district: Lunesdale, Registration District Number: 480, Sub-registration district: Caton, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 25569
- ¹⁹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for William Purchase. Unless otherwise noted, all information on William's military service from this record.
- ²⁰ Manual of Military Law, 1907
<https://archive.org/details/manualofmilitary00greauoft>; accessed 3 May 2015
- ²¹ Albuminuria is protein (albumin) in the urine and is a sign of chronic kidney disease or temporary kidney dysfunction.
- ²² "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for William Purchase
- ²³ "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=FOUND&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)
- ²⁴ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ²⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2015), entry for William Purchase
- ²⁶ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2015), entry for William Purchase