

Private Sam Redfearn©

Regimental number: 204711

1st/4th (Hallamshire) Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment

born: 6 September 1892 – died: 16 August 1917

Private Sam Redfearn was born on 6 September 1892, the son of Sam and Martha Redfearn. He was baptized on 26 April 1893, at St John the Baptist Church Daw Green in Dewsbury, Yorkshire.¹ Both his parents were born in Batley, Yorkshire—his father, Sam Redfearn, in about 1862 and his mother, Martha Street, in about 1860.² They married at All Saints Church in Dewsbury on 25 July 1883³ and had six children, four of whom survived to 1911.⁴ Five of the six children were Sarah Elizabeth (born in 1883),⁵ Amy (born in 1887, but died in 1891),⁶ Ada (born in about 1889),⁷ Sam, and Ben (born in March 1895).⁸ The sixth child was probably Martha, who was born in 1886 but died soon after birth.⁹

The family lived at 31 Tweedale Street in Dewsbury for at least three decades. In 1891, there were two children in the family and Sam's father was a rag grinder.¹⁰ Sadly, when Sam was only 6 years old, his father died.¹¹

In 1901, Sam's mother Martha was still living on Tweedale Street with her four children.¹² Ten years later she still had the four children at home, but all were working, mostly in cotton or woolen mills. Sam was working as a piecer in a woolen mill. Martha's sister and brother, Eliza and Tom Roberts Street, were also living with the family.¹³

In 1914, Sam married Maggie Raspin in Dewsbury.¹⁴ Maggie was the daughter of John Edward, a rag merchant, and Kate Raspin. She was born on 19 December 1891 and baptized on 23 February 1892 in the parish church in Dewsbury.¹⁵

The year after his marriage, Sam enlisted in the army in Dewsbury. When he enlisted on 11 December 1915, he was 23 years old, 5' 3" tall and a wool spinner.¹⁶ He was living on Tweedale Street.

He was mobilized 19 June 1916. It is not known when he joined the Western Front, but he probably transferred to the York and Lancaster Regiment in March 1917. In early August 1917, the 4th Battalion, with which he was serving, was stationed in Zuydcoote, France, just 10 kilometres along the coast from Dunkirk.¹⁷ The battalion had taken over the coastal defences. Most days the battalion was engaged in training, "getting the men fit as quickly as possible."¹⁸ This included parades in the morning and late afternoon and "close order drill, Manual, Specialist training, Bayonet fighting, Recreational Training and Bathing."¹⁹

The battalion's war diaries record casualties every day between 12 and 22 August, except for 14 August. These casualties were "almost entirely due to the mustard gas which remained in the tunnells [sic] for a long period after shelling had ceased."²⁰ Yet, it was on 14 August that Sam was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gas poisoning.²¹ He died two days later at 10:20 p.m.²² and was buried in Adinkerke Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: B. 2).²³ He was 21 years old.

Even though he was married, the monies owing to him from the army upon his death and his medals were sent to his mother.

Sam's younger brother Ben also served and died in the Great War. He enlisted in Dewsbury and served in the 9th (Service) Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment (Regimental number: 38829).²⁴ He died on 22 October 1917, as the age of 22, just two months after Sam. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Zonnebeke, near Ypres, Belgium, in West Flanders.²⁵

Sam's mother lost two children in childhood, her husband and then both her sons in the Great War. She was still living on Tweedale Street after the war.²⁶ His sister Ada, who had married Fred Goldthorpe in 1913,²⁷ was living with Sam's mother. It is not known what became of his sister Sarah Elizabeth.

Sam was survived also by his wife, who was living at 53 Mount Pleasant, Earlsheaton, in Dewsbury. Maggie did not remarry and in 1939 was living with her mother and sister at 136 Sykes Avenue in Dewsbury. She was a blanket weaver.

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¹ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfearn, FHL Film Number: 1542214, Reference ID: p 72

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Martha Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, ED, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 3733, Folio: 39, Page: 21

³ "West Yorkshire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Martha Street

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Registration district number: 503, Sub-registration district: Dewsbury, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 27303

⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sarah Elizabeth Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 631

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Amy Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 69; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Amy Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 438

⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Ada Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 659

⁸ "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Ben Redfearn. The baptismal record shows his birth year as 1893, but this probably wrong because the General Record Office index of his birth ("England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Ben Redfearn (Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 688) and census records suggest he was born in 1895.

⁹ "England & Wales births 1837–2006," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 May 2016), entry for Martha Redfearn, District: Dewsbury, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 663; "England & Wales deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 May 2016), entry for Martha Redfearn, District: Dewsbury, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 424

¹⁰ "1891 England Census," entry for Martha Redfearn

¹¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 484

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- ¹² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Sub-registration district: Dewsbury, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 4267, Folio: 78, Page: 9, Household schedule number: 72
- ¹³ 1911 England Census," entry for Sam Redfearn
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 1433
- ¹⁵ "West Yorkshire, Non-Conformist Records, 1646–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Maggie Rasin, Reel number: Batley Carr, Dewsbury, Earlsheaton, Gawthorpe, Hanging Heaton, Mirfield Knowle; WC21, Reference number: C7/6/1/1
- ¹⁶ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Sam Redfern [sic]. Unless otherwise noted, all information about his military career comes from this source.
- ¹⁷ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany) 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), Regiment or Unit: York and Lancaster Regiment, Sub Unit: 1/4th (Hallamshire) (T.F.) Battalion, 1/5th (T.F.) Battalion, Division: 49th Division, Diary dates: 1915 Apr-1919 Feb, 1914 Aug-1919 May, Piece description: Piece 2805: 148 Infantry Brigade (1914–1919), Piece number: 2805
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 – 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 and 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 338
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Redfearn, S., Service No: 204711
- ²⁴ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 May 2016), entry for Ben Redfearn
- ²⁵ "Global, Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 May 2016), entry for Private Ben Redfern [sic]
- ²⁶ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," entry for Sam Redfern [sic]
- ²⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 May 2016), entry for Ada Redfearn, Registration district: Dewsbury, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 1069