

2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey Julian Balcombe Adams

Regimental number: -

1/5th (City of London) Battalion (London Rifle Brigade)

born: 3 January 1894 - died: 27 September 1918

2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey James Balcombe Adams was born on 3 January 1894, the son of Harold William and Katherine Mary (née Balcombe) Adams.¹ He was baptised on 15 February at St Mary de Lode in Gloucestershire. Geoffrey's father, Harold, was probably born in 1852 in Bristol, Gloucestershire² and his mother, Katherine, was born on 15 January 1855 in Corfu, where her father, James Balcombe, was serving as a Quartermaster, with the 57th Regiment of Foot on the Ionian Islands.³

Harold and Katherine were married in Dublin, Ireland in 1880.⁴ They had six children, five of who survived to 1911.⁵ The surviving children may have been: Philip Bertram (born 1882),⁶ Harold Rupert (born 1884),⁷ Cyril Weldon Balcombe (born 1888),⁸ Geoffrey and Philippa Margery B. (born 1899).⁹ The first three children were born in Dublin. Geoffrey was born in Gloucester and his sister was born in Hampstead, near London.

In the first years of their marriage, Harold and Katherine probably lived in Ireland but, in 1894 when Geoffrey was born, his father was a merchant in Gloucester. By 1891, he was a manager at a corn merchant's and was living with wife and three children in a lodging home at 112 London Road, Gloucester, owned by Hannah Price. In 1901, he was a grain broker working for himself. The family was living at 46 Cautley Avenue, Clapham, Wandsworth, London. Geoffrey's older brother, Cyril, was away from home, at a residential school of the Royal Asylum of the St Anne's Society in Reigate, Surrey.¹⁰

Geoffrey's older brother, Harold, married Mary Rose Williams in Lambeth in 1904¹¹ and had a daughter, Muriel, in about 1909.¹²

Sadly, Geoffrey's father died in 1910 in Lambeth.¹³ The following year, Geoffrey, then a clerk working for an insurance broker with Willis Faber and Co. Ltd.,¹⁴ was living with his mother, brother, Harold, and sister, Philippa at 62 Water Lane, Brixton, London.¹⁵ Even though Harold was married, he was living with his mother and siblings. His wife, Mary Rose, was living with their daughter just a few miles away in Balham Hill.¹⁶ Geoffrey's other brother, Cyril, was a marine insurance clerk and visiting in the home of his uncle in Guildford, Surrey.¹⁷

Geoffrey enlisted as a Private (Regimental number: 9605)¹⁸ in the 1/5th (City of London) Battalion.¹⁹ He joined the Front, landing in Le Havre on 5 November 1914.²⁰ He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on 13 June 1918.²¹ In September, his Battalion was stationed south west of Arras on the Front in France. He had joined his Battalion on 19 September.²² The second half of the month was spent preparing for an operation that began on 26 September. Unfortunately, it was during that operating that Geoffrey was injured.



2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey Julian Balcombe Adams

Source: "We remember those members of the Lloyd's community who lost their lives in the First World War," *Lloyds*

B Coy who had to clear up W bank of Canal and cover the crossing had a few casualties including 2/Lt G. J. Adams and 2/Lt H. Cross both of whom died afterwards. Remainder of Bttn crossed the Canal du Nord quite easily and reached all objectives with very little opposition.²³

Geoffrey was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 27 September with gunshot wounds that penetrated his abdomen.²⁴ He died the same day. He was buried two days later in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 56, Plot 7, Row A) with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.²⁵ No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918²⁶ and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁷ A total of 75 patients died at No. 1 CCCS in September 1918.²⁸

Geoffrey 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).²⁹ He is commemorated on the Willis Faber war memorial at the Willis Building on Lime Street, London.³⁰

It is not known if either of Geoffrey's brothers served in the Great War. It is not known what became of his eldest brother, Philip. Harold had married before the war and Cyril married Mabel Grace Haybittel in 1920 in London.³¹ They had a daughter, Julian Marjorie in 1921.³² His sister, Philippa, did not marry³³ and, in 1939, she was living with her mother and her sister-in-law, Mabel in Sutton, Surrey.³⁴ The following year, Katherine died,³⁵ as did Mabel.³⁶ Cyril remarried, marrying Violet B. M. Basker in 1941 in London.³⁷

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¹ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 February 2016), entry for Geoffrey James Balcombe Adams. This baptism records his second Christian name as James. However, his birth registration and all subsequent records show the name Julian and, in some cases, he is called by the name Julian.

² "England, Bristol Parish Registers, 1538-1900", *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XT98-RS6> : accessed 19 February 2016), entry for Harold William Adams, 1852

³ "Canada, British Regimental Registers of Service, 1756-1900," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for James Balcombe

⁴ "Ireland, Civil Registration Marriages Index, 1845-1958," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Harold William Adams, Date of Registration: Jan-Feb-Mar 1880, Registration district: Dublin South, Ireland, Volume: 2, Page number: 572, FHL Film Number: 101253

⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Jeoffrey Julian Adams, Registration district: Lambeth, Registration district number: 25, Sub-registration district: Norwood, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 2109

⁶ "Ireland, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1825-1998," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Philip Bertram Adams, Date of Registration: Jan-Feb-Mar 1882, Registration district: Dublin South, Ireland, Volume: 2, Page number: 641, FHL Film Number: 101058

⁷ "Ireland, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1825-1998," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Harold Rupert Adams, Date of Registration: Jan-Feb-Mar 1884, Registration district: Dublin South, Ireland, Volume: 2, Page number: 594, FHL Film Number: 101060

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- ⁸ "Ireland, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1825–1998," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Cyril Weldon Balcombe Adams, Date of Registration: Oct-Nov-Dec 1888, Registration district: Dublin North, Ireland, Volume: 2, Page number: 428, FHL Film Number: 101062
- ⁹ "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Phillippa Marjorie Balcombe Adams
- ¹⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Cyril Walden Adams, Registration district: Reigate, Sub-registration district: Reigate, ED, institution, or vessel: Royal Asylum of St Annes Society, Piece: 628, Folio: 119, Page Number: 15, Household schedule number: 1
- ¹¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Harold Rupert Adams, Registration district: Lambeth, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 524
- ¹² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Mary Rose Adams, Registration district: Wandsworth, Registration District Number: 26, Sub-registration district: Streatham, ED, institution, or vessel: 21, Piece: 2306
- ¹³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 January 2016), entry for Harold W. Adams, Registration district: Lambeth, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 202
- ¹⁴ "We remember those members of the Lloyd's community who lost their lives in the First World War," *Lloyds* (<https://www.lloyds.com/~media/files/lloyds/about.../ww1/ww1booklet20141111.pdf>; accessed 29 May 2017)
- ¹⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 February 2016), entry for Jeoffrey Julian Adams, Registration district: Lambeth, Registration District Number: 25, Sub-registration district: Norwood, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 2109
- ¹⁶ "1911 England Census," entry for Mary Rose Adams
- ¹⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 February 2016), entry for Cyril Weldon B Adams, Registration district: Guildford, Registration District Number: 33, Sub-registration district: Guildford, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Household schedule number: 81, Piece: 3071
- ¹⁸ "We remember those members of the Lloyd's community who lost their lives in the First World War," *Lloyds* (<https://www.lloyds.com/~media/files/lloyds/about.../ww1/ww1booklet20141111.pdf>; accessed 29 May 2017)
- ¹⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 February 2016), entry for G. J. Adams
- ²⁰ "We remember those members of the Lloyd's community who lost their lives in the First World War," *Lloyds* (<https://www.lloyds.com/~media/files/lloyds/about.../ww1/ww1booklet20141111.pdf>; accessed 29 May 2017)
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," ANCESTRY Regiment or Unit: London Regiment, Sub Unit: 5th (City of London) Battalion (London Rifle Brigade), Division: 56th Division, Diary Entry Start Date: Sep 1918, Diary Entry End Date: 6 Sep 1918, Diary Dates: 1917 Apr 1 - 1917 Apr 30, Diary Entry Location: Boisieux Au Mont, Piece description: Piece 2962/4-6: 169 Infantry Brigade: 1/5 Battn London Reg (London Rifle Brig) (1917 Aug - 1919 May), Piece number: 2962
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916–10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 685
- ²⁵ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ²⁶ "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>; accessed 17 June 2015)

²⁷ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun"

²⁸ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31"

²⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2016), entry for G. J. Adams

³⁰ "We remember those members of the Lloyd's community who lost their lives in the First World War," *Lloyds* (<https://www.lloyds.com/~media/files/lloyds/about.../ww1/ww1booklet20141111.pdf>: accessed 29 May 2017)

³¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Cyril W. B. Adams, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 928

³² "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Julian M. H. Adams, Registration district: St George Hanover Square, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 704

³³ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Philippa Margery Balcombe Adams

³⁴ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Katherine M. Adams, Ref: RG101/1391I/012/2 Letter Code: CNKR

³⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2016), entry for Katherine M. Adams, Registration district: Westminster, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 859

³⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Mabel Grace Adams

³⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2016), entry for Cyril W. B. Adams, Registration district: London City, Inferred County: Middlesex, Volume: 1c, Page: 25