

Private Leonard Walter Ponsford[©]
Regimental number: 265678
8th Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

born: 1897 - died: 31 May 1918

Private Leonard Walter Ponsford was born in 1897 in Lambeth,¹ the son of Henry and Annie Ponsford.² Henry was born in about 1853 in Molesey, Surrey, and Annie in about 1861 in London, Middlesex. It is not known whether they married, but they had at least seven children:³ Harry (born in 1884),⁴ Herbert (born on 10 June 1885),⁵ Florence Alice (born on 27 September 1886),⁶ James (born in 1894),⁷ Amy Doris (possibly also known as Dorothy) (born in 1895),⁸ Leonard and Ivy (born in 1901).⁹

The family moved around a lot, but always livings within five miles of the south side of the Thames River in London. In 1891, Henry and Annie were living at Crown Villas, Crown Hill, St Mary in Lambeth, London, with their first two children.¹⁰ Henry was a fireman in the volunteer fire brigade. In the later half of the 1890s, two children were registered in Salters Hill School, on Gipsy Road in Lambeth. When Florence registered in April 1895, the family was living at 119 Auckland Terrace, Lambeth. She left two months later because she had been “removed from the neighbourhood.”¹¹ Two years later, in May 1897, her brother Herbert registered at the same school and the family was living at 251 Rommany Road, still in Lambeth. He stayed until August 1898, when he too was “removed from the neighbourhood.”¹² By 1901, the family had moved to 3 Crescent Road in Clapham, still in Lambeth.¹³ By now Annie was a widow and working as a charwoman. Leonard was not with the family. His brothers Harry and Herbert were house painters. In 1911, the family was living at 45 Zennor Road in Balham, London.¹⁴ Annie was no longer working. Harry and James were house decorators; Florence and Dorothy were daily domestic help; Leonard and Ivy were in school.

Five years later, Leonard, at the age of 19, married Ada May Glastonbury in Wandsworth, Surrey.¹⁵ Ada was born on 3 July 1899, the daughter of Frederick John and Mary Ann Glastonbury of Wandsworth.¹⁶ Leonard and Ada probably had just one daughter, Ruby Minnie D., born in 1917.¹⁷

Leonard enlisted in The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) in Balham¹⁸ in about November 1916.¹⁹ At the end of May 1918, the 8th Battalion of the Royal West Surrey Regiment was in the trenches in Les Brebis, near Mazingarbe, northwest of Lens, France.²⁰ In the days leading up to 30 May, there had been considerable bombardments from both sides. But 30 May was “quieter than usual.” Yet, two Other Ranks were wounded. Leonard was probably one of these, as he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station that day with shrapnel wounds to his head, back and thigh.²¹ His left leg was amputated, but he died the following day and was buried on 31 May in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row D, Grave 44) with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.

In May 1918, nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS.²² There were 115 deaths that month—more than in any of the other three and a half months that No. 1 CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.²³

His wife, who was living at 44 Bedford Hill, Balham, was his next of kin and was notified of his death.²⁴ She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.²⁵

No information was found about the medals awarded to Leonard but, like all soldiers, he was probably awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

Ada was only 17 when she married Leonard. After his death, she married again, marrying William Day in 1919 in Balham.²⁶ She was 20 when she married for the second time. They had a daughter, Louisa M., in 1920.²⁷ In 1939, they were probably living at "The Greenaways" in Amersham, Buckinghamshire.²⁸ William, who was born on 10 August 1884, was an officer's batman.

In 1939, Leonard and Ada's daughter Ruby was living with Seymour E. Du Vergier and his mother at 21 Upper Tooting Road in Balham.²⁹ Ruby married Seymour in 1942³⁰ and she died in 2002.³¹

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¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 October 2017) entry for Ponsford, Leonard Walter, Registration district: Lambeth, Volume 01D, Page 542

² "1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Anne Ponsford, Registration district: Lambeth, Archive reference: RG12; Piece number: 418, Folio: 166, Page: 2; "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Annie Ponsford, Registration district: Wandsworth, Archive reference: RG13, Piece: 465, Folio: 89, Page: 19

³ The 1911 census suggests they may have had eight children, but seven were living. The identify of the eighth child was not found. "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 September 2017), entry for Leonard Ponsford, Registration district: Wandsworth, Registration district number: 26, Sub-registration district: Streatham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 25, Piece: 2310

⁴ "1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Anne Ponsford

⁵ "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2017), entry for Herbt [*sic*] Ponsford

⁶ "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2017), entry for Florence Alice Ponsford

⁷ "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Annie Ponsford

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 October 2017) entry for Ponsford, Amy Doris, Registration district: Lambeth, Volume 01D, Page 562

⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 October 2017) entry for Ponsford, Ivy Eliza, Registration district: Wandsworth, Volume 01D, Page 678

¹⁰ "1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Anne Ponsford

¹¹ "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2017), entry for Florence Alice Ponsford

¹² "London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2017), entry for Herbt [*sic*] Ponsford

¹³ "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Annie Ponsford

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- ¹⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 September 2017), entry for Leonard Ponsford
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Leonard W Ponsford, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: Surrey, Volume: 1d, Page: 1258
- ¹⁶ "London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1916," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 October 2017), entry for Ada May Glastonbury
- ¹⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 December 2017), entry for Ruby MD Ponsford, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: Greater London, Volume: 1d, Page: 928
- ¹⁸ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 October 2017), entry for Leonard Walter Ponsford
- ¹⁹ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 October 2017), entry for Leonard Walter Ponsford
- ²⁰ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 October 2017), Regiment or unit: Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment, Sub-unit: 8th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary entry start Date: May 1918, Diary entry end date: 31 May 1918, Diary dates: 1918 Feb - 1919 Apr, Diary entry location: Trenches, Piece description: Piece 2208/2: 8 Battalion Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) (1918 Feb–1919 Apr), Piece number: 2208
- ²¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 29 August 2017), entry for Ponsford, L.W.
- ²² "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: accessed 15 December 2014)
- ²³ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 October 2017), entry for Leonard Walter Ponsford
- ²⁶ "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 October 2017), entry for Ada May Ponsford
- ²⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 December 2017), entry for Louisa M Day, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: Greater London, Volume: 1d, Page: 1466
- ²⁸ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2017), entry for Ada Day, Ref: RG101/2133E/008/32 Letter code: —
- ²⁹ "London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832–1965," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 December 2017), entry for Ruby Ponsford
- ³⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2017), entry for Ruby M D Ponsford, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: Surrey, Volume: 1d, Page: 948
- ³¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 October 2017), entry for Ruby Minnie D Duvergier, Registration district: Wandsworth, Inferred county: London, Register Number: C108A, District and sub-district: 2561C, Entry number: 239