

Private William Charles Jarvis[©]
Regimental Number: 33620
1st Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment

born: 1895 – died: 19 April 1918

William Charles Jarvis was born in the spring of 1895 in Sidcup, Kent, England,¹ as the first child of William and Louisa Ada Jarvis. William Sr. was born about 1873 at St. Mary Cray, Kent, and was a linotype operator in a printing company. Louisa was born about 1876 in Bombay, India. William and Louisa had seven children: William Charles; John, who was born about 1897; Isabel May, who was born about 1899; Edward Samuel, who was born about 1901; Gladys, who was born about 1905; Arthur, who was born about 1908; and Alfred, who was born about 1910. The family had moved about, as the first three children were born in Sidcup, Kent; the next three children were born in Lieve, Sussex; and the last child was born in Leyton, Essex. In 1911, at the age of 16, William Charles was a junior clerk at a “builders merchant.”²

Regrettably, only about 30% of UK service records still exist, due to a fire resulting from a 1940 air raid on the Army Records Office in Walworth, London,³ and it appears that William’s records were not saved. As a result, certain specifics of William’s military experience were not obtainable.

William had enlisted at Epping, Essex, and fought with the 1st Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. Originally, he had been assigned regimental number 11364 and was part of the Army Cyclist Corps.⁴ The primary roles of the cyclists were reconnaissance and message taking. They were armed like the infantry and would provide mobile firepower if required. They also spent much time in the trenches doing manual work.⁵

At some point William was transferred to the 1st Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, which had a long and distinguished history. The battalion’s war diary described the events that led to William’s death. The battalion had just relieved the 1st Gloucester in the defence of Le Preol and on 16 April 1918 had moved into the La Basse Canal sector at Givenchy. On the 18th, at 4:15 a.m. the enemy commenced an intense bombardment of the front lines. At 8:10 a.m., under cover of the resulting smoke, the enemy succeeded in filtering into the trenches, reaching and occupying the main line of resistance before countermeasures could be taken. This was met by vigorous counterattacks by companies C and D, which eventually succeeded in ejecting the enemy from the main line such that by 11:00 a.m. the enemy was only holding a few isolated outposts.⁶

It was on 18 April 1918 that William received gunshot wounds to his right foot and arm. He was transported to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station that day but succumbed to his injuries the next day. He was buried on 19 April at the Pernes British Military Cemetery in Plot 1, Row C, Grave 28 with the Reverend Robert K. Lambert officiating. He was 23 years old.⁷ Pernes British Cemetery was not opened until April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations pulled back to Pernes, driven back by the German advance in Flanders. There are 1,098 First World War burials in Pernes.⁸

William’s medals, the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Allied Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre), were provided to his family.⁹

It is likely that William’s father was also fighting in the Great War with the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, but with the 7th Battalion. Sadly, he died prior to his son.¹⁰ No further information could

be found, however. Louisa died at the age of 86 and is buried at Chingford Mount Cemetery in Greater London.

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¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for William Charles Jarvis, Registration district: Bromley, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 466

² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for William Jarvis, Registration district: West Ham, Registration district number: 188, Sub-registration district: Walthamstow, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 87, Household schedule number: 61, Piece: 9761

³ "How to research a soldier," *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914–1918* (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/how-to-research-a-soldier/>: accessed 30 May 2017)

⁴ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for William Charles Jarvis

⁵ "Army Cyclist Corps," *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914–1918* (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/army-cyclist-corps/>: accessed 6 October 2017)

⁶ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 October 2017), Regiment or Unit: Loyal North Lancashire, Sub-unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 1st Division, Diary entry start date: 1918, Diary dates: 1918 Feb–1919 Apr, Piece description: Piece 1266/1: 1 Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (1918 Feb–1919 Apr), Piece number: 1266

⁷ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for Jarvis, W.

⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for Irving, A., Service No: 46394

⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for William C Jarvis

¹⁰ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 6 October 2017), entry for Jarvis, A., Service No: 33620