

Private Percy William Harradine[©]
Regimental Number: 17519
'A' Company, 11th Suffolk Regiment, British Army

born: 1897¹ – died: 5 March 1916

In 1911 at the age of 13, Percy Harradine worked with the rest of his family on Rectory Farm, in Conington, Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire). He is listed in the 1911 English Census as a “ploughboy” on the farm.² Percy’s father Albert was the farm housekeeper while his older brother Arthur was a labourer on the farm where all the family lived. Percy’s mother, Caroline indicated on the census form that she had given birth to 11 children, two of whom had died when this census was taken. Seven of her children were still living at home. Along with Arthur and Percy were Horace (b. 1902), Leonard (b. 1906) and Albert (b. 1908), Mable (b. 1901) and Ethel (b. 1904). Percy’s older sister Florence (b. 1890) worked and lived, as a general servant, in nearby Longstowe.³



Badge of the Suffolk Regiment
Source: Wikipedia.org

In 1912, the family moved to Conington, where Albert and Caroline became the proprietors of a local inn and pub, the White Swan. They remained as the innkeepers there until 1919.⁴

Just four short years later, by January of 1915, Percy was on the battlefield fighting for his country. He enrolled with the 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment after war broke out in 1914. By the beginning of 1915 the regiment was at full strength, with a complement of 1350 men. In March 1915, Percy and the other soldiers in his unit were issued with khaki uniforms and on 19 May 1915 they left Cambridge for Ripon, Yorkshire, where they remained until August of that year. Percy’s unit, ‘A’ Company, then proceeded to Sunderland to train at the Whitburn Musketry Camp.⁵

Christmas of 1915 was spent at Sutton Verney, near Warminster, and the Regiment left for France shortly thereafter, on 7 January 1916. After a period of instruction with the 8th and 23rd Divisions, the regiment moved to the front line at Bois-Grenier, just south of Armentieres, and then on to Albert, where they dug assembly trenches for the coming offensive.⁶

The first soldier in the Battalion to lose his life in action died on 2 March 1916. Three days later, on 3 March 1916, Percy became the fourth casualty of the fighting, when he died of his wounds at the Base Hospital.⁷ He was treated by the 1st Canadian Casualty Station prior to his death.⁸

Percy William Harradine was 18 years of age.

He is buried at the Le Touquet-Paris Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calai, France, Plot: II. B. and is commemorated on the Conington Roll of Honour found within the village church⁹ and on the



Grave of Percy William Harradine

Source: *Find a Grave*

(<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=24555018>)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission website. A picture of his gravestone can be found on the International War Graves Photography Project website, which can be accessed through www.twgpp.org or ancestry.com.¹⁰

Percy William Harradine was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹¹

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¹ “England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2014), entry for Percy William Harradine, Registration district: St. Ives, Inferred county: Huntingdonshire, Volume: 3b, Page: 292.

² “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2014), entry for Percy Harradine, Registration district: St. Ives, Registration district number: 172, Sub-registration district: Swavensy, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 2, Household schedule number: 13, Piece: 8777.

³ “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2014), entry for Percy Harradine, Registration district: St. Ives, Sub-registration district: St Ives, Enumeration district institution or vessel: 5, Piece 1479, Folio: 23, Page: 8, Household schedule number: 51.

⁴ Email from current proprietor of the White Swan Inn, dated: 14 May 2014, Chris, Landlord, White Swan Inn, Conington, Cambridgeshire, CB23 4 LN.

⁵ “Abridged Chronology of the 11th Battalion, Resource Guide—The 11th Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment, (The Cambs Suffolks),” (www.curme.co.uk/101.htm#Chronology%20-%20Cambs%20Suffolks; accessed March 2014)

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 March 2014), entry for Percy William Harradine & “Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914–1919,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 March 2014), entry for Percy William Harradine.

⁹ “Conington Roll of Honour,” *Roll of Honour* (www.roll-of-honour.com/Cambridgeshire/Conington.html: accessed March 2014)

¹⁰ “Find a Grave Index,” *Find A Grave* (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=24555018&ref=acom>; accessed 2 June 2016).

¹¹ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2014), entry for Percy W. Harradine.