

Private Harry Gadd©

Regimental number: M2/131224

Army Service Corps, attached to the Royal Engineers

born: 8 February 1890 – died: 30 April 1918

Private Harry Gadd was born on 8 February 1890 and baptized at St Mary's Church in Walton on Thames, Surrey, on 14 September 1890.¹ His parents, Walter and Alice, were both born in Surrey in about 1862—Walter in Norbiton and Alice about 25 miles away in Windlesham.² Alice's maiden name was Nix,³ but no evidence was found for a marriage between her and Walter.

Harry had one older sister, Ethel Janet, born in 1886.⁴ The year after Harry's birth, the family was living in the Chapel Street Hope Cottages in Walton-on-Thames, where Walter was a cab driver.⁵ Ten years later, they had moved to Sunbury Lane and Walter was now a labourer.⁶

On Christmas Day 1909, Ethel married William Burton in St Peter's Church, Hersham, Surrey. Their witnesses were Ethel's brother Harry and Clara Charge, who would become Harry's wife eight years later.⁷ In 1911, Ethel and William were living in Hersham, where William was a domestic coachman.⁸ Harry was also living in Hersham with his parents. He was assisting in a draper's business.⁹

By the time Harry enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force on 6 October 1915 in Kingston-on-Thames, he was a motor driver.¹⁰ He was living on Police Station Road in Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, when he joined the Army Service Corps (Mechanical Transport). He went overseas with the 30th Field Ambulance Workshop Unit, leaving Avonmouth on 6 November 1915 and arriving in Rouen five days later. Field ambulances were medical posts (not vehicles) that are part of the casualty evacuation chain—a chain that also included the casualty clearing stations. The field ambulance workshop units were set up to maintain the vehicles.¹¹

On 17 December 1915, Harry was appointed an acting lance corporal, although not yet with the level of pay. In the field, on 10 May 1916, he was admonished for "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in that he took orders from a private he being an A/L Cpl."¹² In September 1916, Harry was transferred to the 73rd Field Ambulance and then, in January 1917, he was given 10 days leave. It was during this leave that he married Clara Charge. They married on 17 January 1917, at St Mary's Church in Walton-on-Thames. William was shown as a lance corporal in Mechanical Transport of the Army Service Corps, and his home was still on Police Station Road in Hersham. Clara was living at 17 Florence Road in Walton-on-Thames.¹³

On his return from leave, he was appointed a corporal and assumed these duties, with pay, on 14 March 1917. Three months later he reverted to being a private. During 1917, he appears to have moved around among different Army Service Corps units until, on 13 March 1918, he joined the "G" Special Company of the Royal Engineers. The Special Companies were created to develop the British response to the German poison gas attacks.¹⁴ Just six weeks later he was fatally wounded and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to both legs, which had to be amputated, and his left arm. The following day he died and was buried in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row A, Grave 22) with the Canadian chaplain G. C. d'Easum presiding.¹⁵

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. Harry was one of 110 soldiers admitted on 29 April and one of 46 soldiers to die at the station that month.¹⁶

The chaplain sent a letter to Harry's wife of less than a year and a half, at 12 Florence Road, to notify her of his death. She received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death and requested the following inscription for his gravestone:

THEM ALSO
WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS
GOD WILL BRING WITH HIM¹⁷

Harry was awarded posthumously 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).¹⁸

At the time of his death, Harry's sister was living in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Ethel and her husband William had immigrated to Canada—William left England first, in 1913, and Ethel followed the next year.

William also served in the Great War. He had previously served with the 9th Lancers Imperial Service in Britain and, on 26 Oct 1915, he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and joined the Canadian Mounted Rifles as a trooper.¹⁹ He arrived back in England in April 1916 and went to Strathcona House in Thorncliffe. He appears to have served with the Corps of Military Police in England throughout the war and came home to Canada on 22 September 1918. He was discharged on 9 November 1918—just two days before the armistice—as being medically unfit for service. In 1921, William and Ethel were living at 21 McDonald Avenue in Niagara Falls, where William was a gardener.²⁰

Harry's mother died in 1933 and was buried on 17 January 1933 in St Peter's Church in Hersham.²¹

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¹ "Surrey, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 October 2019), entry for Harry Gadd

² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2019), entry for Harry Gadd, Registration district: Chertsey, Sub-registration district: Walton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 02, Piece: 587, Folio: 35, Page: 7, Household schedule number: 44

³ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 November 2019), entry for Gadd, Harry, Registration district: Chertsey, Volume 02A, Page 39

⁴ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 November 2019), entry for Gadd, Ethel Janet, Registration district: Chertsey, Volume 02A, Page 39

⁵ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 October 2019), entry for Walter Gadd, Registration district: Walton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 550, Folio: 61

⁶ "1901 England Census," entry for Harry Gadd

⁷ "Surrey, England, Marriages, 1754–1937," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2019), entry for Ethel Janet Gadd

⁸ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2019), entry for Ethel Janet Burton, Registration district: Chertsey, Registration district number: 32, Sub-registration district: Walton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Household schedule number: 95, Piece: 2988

⁹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2019), entry for Harry Gadd, Registration district: Chertsey, Registration district number: 32, Sub-registration district: Walton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Household schedule number: 119, Piece: 2988

¹⁰ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2019), entry for Harry Gadd. Unless otherwise specified, all information about Harry's military service come from this source.

¹¹ "Field Ambulances in the First World War," *The Long, Long Trail* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>: accessed 17 October 2019)

¹² "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," entry for Harry Gadd

¹³ "Surrey, England, Marriages, 1754–1937," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2019), entry for Harry Gadd

¹⁴ "The Special Companies of the Royal Engineers," *The Long, Long Trail* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>: accessed 8 November 2019)

¹⁵ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 17 October 2019), entry for Gadd, H.

¹⁶ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/results/images?module=images&SortSpec=score+desc&Language=eng&ShowForm=hide&SearchIn_1=mikanNumber&SearchInText_1=2005082&Operator_1=AND&SearchIn_2=&SearchInText_2=&Operator_2=AND&SearchIn_3=&SearchInText_3=&Level=&MaterialDateOperator=after&MaterialDate=&DigitalImages=1&Source=&ResultCount=10: accessed 28 March 2018)

¹⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2019), entry for Gadd, Harry, Service No: M2/131224

¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 October 2019), entry for Harry Gadd

¹⁹ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 8 November 2019), entry for William Burton, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1328 - 5, Item number: 78687, Digitized service file–PDF format: B1328-S005. Unless otherwise noted, all information about William's military service comes from this source.

²⁰ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2019), entry for Ethel J. Burton, Province or territory: Ontario, District: Welland, District number: 138, Sub-district: Niagara Falls (City), Sub-district number: 36, City, town or village: Niagara Falls City

²¹ "Surrey, England, Church of England Burials, 1813–1987," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 October 2019), entry for Alice Gadd