

Private Frank Burt[©]
Regimental number: 31646
7th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry

born: 1899–died: 23 April 1918

Private Frank Burt was just 19 when he died, after fighting in World War I for less than one year. Fortunately for his family, his brother returned safely from his war service.

Frank's birth was registered in the third quarter of 1899 in Colne, Lancashire, United Kingdom.¹ He was the youngest child of William Burt and Sarah Duxbury, having one brother, John Duxbury, who was born on 7 August 1890,² and one sister, Martha, who was born on 16 June 1893.³ William Burt was born in St. Pinnick, Cornwall, in 1858 to James and Mary Ann Burt,⁴ the second oldest of at least a dozen children, as recorded in censuses. Sarah Duxbury was born in Accrington, Lancashire, in 1863 to John and Martha Duxbury.⁵ William and Sarah had married in 1889 in Haslingden, Lancashire.⁶

Both the Burt and Duxbury families had been involved in the cotton weaving trade. William turned to farming and by 1901 was operating a dairy farm in Colne.⁷

In 1911, William and son John were working the dairy farm while Martha was a millinery shop assistant. Frank was a scholar at the age of 12.⁸

As the older brother, John Duxbury enlisted with the Royal Garrison Artillery on 23 June 1916, regimental number 103105. There he was a gunner and appears to have been injured and subsequently discharged from service on 19 February 1918.⁹ In 1920, John married Elizabeth Wadsworth in Burnley, Lancashire.¹⁰ He returned to his farming roots, and in 1939 he was a poultry farmer and market gardener living in West Lancashire.¹¹ John died at the age of 57 in 1948 in Southport, Lancashire.¹²

Frank's sister Martha married John Iddon in 1922 in Ormskirk, Lancashire.¹³ In 1939 John and Martha were living in West Lancashire with their 15-year-old daughter Muriel. John was a waterman and Muriel was a cotton weaver. Their neighbours appear to be John's parents.¹⁴ Martha was the one remaining family member when mother Sarah died in 1954 and was named as her beneficiary.¹⁵

Regrettably, only about 30 per cent of UK service records still exist, due to a fire resulting from a 1940 air raid on the Army Records Office in Walworth, London,¹⁶ and it appears that Frank's records were not saved. As a result, certain specifics of Frank's military experience were not obtainable.

We know that Frank enlisted with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, being assigned to the 7th Battalion.¹⁷ He was entitled to a war gratuity of £3,¹⁸ suggesting that he enlisted within a year of his death.¹⁹ The war gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those WWI servicemen who had served in the home service for a period of at least six months, or for any length of time if the man had served overseas.²⁰

On 23 April 1918 Frank was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station suffering from gunshot wounds to his chest and penetrating his right arm and face.²¹ A casualty clearing station (CCS) is a military medical facility behind the front lines that is used to treat wounded soldiers. A



Gravestone of Private Frank Burt

Source: *Find a Grave*

CCS would usually be located just beyond the range of enemy artillery and often near transportation facilities (e.g., a railway). The CCS receives battlefield casualties from regimental aid posts located in the combat zone. Casualties that cannot be adequately treated in the CCS are stabilized there before being transported to a field hospital or military hospital.²²

Sadly, on the same day as his admission, Frank died and was buried in the Pernes British Cemetery, in Plot 1, Row D, Grave 15. His mother requested the following inscription be added to his grave marker:^{23,}

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NO MORNING DAWNS
NO NIGHT RETURNS
BUT WHAT WE THINK OF HIM
SADLY MISSED BY ALL AT HOME

Pernes British Cemetery was not opened until April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian CCSs pulled back to Pernes, driven back by the German advance in Flanders. There are 1,098 First World War burials in

Pernes.²⁵

Frank's father William died at the age of 68 early in 1926 at Ormskirk, Lancashire²⁶ while his mother Sarah died at the age of 91 on 28 May 1954 in Tarleton, Lancashire.²⁷

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¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Frank Burt, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 292

² "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for John D Burt, Enumeration District: NZUG, Borough: West Lancashire

³ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Martha Iddon, Enumeration District: NZUH, Borough: West Lancashire

⁴ "1861 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for James Burt, Registration district: Liskeard, Sub-registration district: Liskeard, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 1530, Folio: 96, Page 14

⁵ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Sarah Duxbury, Registration district: Haslingden, Sub-registration district: Accrington, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 15, Household schedule number: 198, Piece: 4144, Folio: 81, Page: 36

⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Sarah Duxbury, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 243

⁷ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for William Burt, Registration district: Burnley, Sub-registration district: Colne, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 19, Piece: 3887, Folio: 113, Page: 44, Household schedule number: 262

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- ⁸ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for William Burt, Registration district number: 472, Sub-registration district: Colne, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 18, Piece: 24930
- ⁹ "UK, Silver War Badge Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for John Duxbury Burt
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for John D Burt, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 861
- ¹¹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for John D Burt
- ¹² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for John D Burt, Registration district: Southport, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 10f, Page: 626
- ¹³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Martha Burt, Registration district: Ormskirk, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8b, Page: 1440
- ¹⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Martha Iddon
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Sarah Burt
- ¹⁶ "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 7 February 2021)
- ¹⁷ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Burt, F.
- ¹⁸ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Frank Burt
- ¹⁹ "War Gratuity Calculator," *War Gratuity Resources in WW1 records* (<https://www.wargratitude.uk/war-gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 7 February 2021)
- ²⁰ "What is the war gratuity?" *War Gratuity Resources in WW1 records* (<https://www.wargratitude.uk/what-is-the-war-gratuity/>: accessed 7 February 2021)
- ²¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Burt, F.
- ²² "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 7 February 2021)
- ²³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Burt, F., Service No: 31646
- ²⁴ *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123046815/f-burt/photo>: accessed 7 February 2021) entry for Private F Burt
- ²⁵ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for Pernes British Cemetery
- ²⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 7 February 2021), entry for William Burt, Registration district: Ormskirk, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8b, Page: 954
- ²⁷ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry*, entry for Sarah Burt