

William Burgess

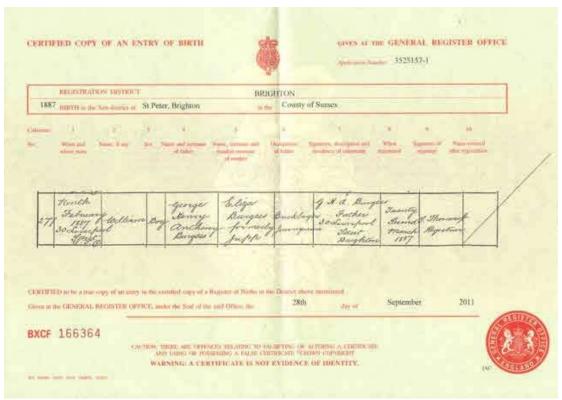
1887-1968

By Ivor Williams





William Burgess, was born on Wednesday 9th February 1887 at 30 Liverpool Street, Brighton to the parents of George and Eliza Burgess, nee Jupp. At stated in his fathers' story, Liverpool Street no longer exists and is now part of the Albion Hill area.



Copy of William's Birth Certificate

This Addendum, as with William's brother, George, is not an attempt at his life story because again, this has not been researched. I do intend to describe some of William's life, especially his military record.

As with his brother George we have very little knowledge of William's childhood days. The first record we have is the same as his other family members and that is the 1891 Census. In the Census we can see William, known as Willie on the form, is four years of age and living at No 9 Boss's Gardens.

Again Boss's Gardens has been covered in many other Stories and Chapters and will not be repeated here.

1891 Census – Brighton		Ward - Pier		Address - 9 Boss Gardens, Brighton, S		
Name	Relationship	Con	DoB	Age	Profession	Where Born
George H Burgess	Head	Married	1864	27	Bricklayer	Brighton, Sussex
Eliza	Wife	Married	1867	24		Brighton, Sussex
George H. A	Son	Single	1885	6		Brighton, Sussex
Willie	Son	Single	1887	4		Brighton, Sussex
Eva	Daughter	Single	1890	1		Brighton, Sussex

There is no mention of William attending school but I can only assume he received some education because future records prove he could read







and write.

You can also see on the Census that William is the second of three Children born so far to George and Eliza Burgess.

Sadly William's Sister, Eva, died in 1892 when William was just five years of age. After that tragic event the next record we have for William is the 1901 Census. William is still shown living at 9 Boss's Gardens and has now gained a further Brother with Thomas and two Sisters, Emily and Edith.

901 Census – Brighton Ward – Pier Address - 9 Boss Gardens, Brighton, Sussex						nton, Sussex
Relationship	Con	DoB	Age	Profession	Where Born	Remarks
Head	Married	1864	37	Bricklayer	Brighton, Sussex	Burgers in census
Wife	Married	1867	34	1.5000000000000000000000000000000000000	Brighton, Sussex	
Son	Single	1885	16	Brickies Labourer	Brighton, Sussex	
Son	Single	1887	14	Brickies Labourer	Brighton, Sussex	
Daughter	Single	1894	7		Brighton, Sussex	
Daughter	Single	1897	4		Brighton, Sussex	
Son	Single	1900	T		Brighton, Sussex	
	Relationship Head Wife Son Son Daughter Daughter	Relationship Con Head Married Wife Married Son Single Son Single Daughter Single Daughter Single	Relationship Con DoB Head Married 1864 Wife Married 1867 Son Single 1885 Son Single 1887 Daughter Single 1894 Daughter Single 1897	Relationship Con DoB Age Head Married 1864 37 Wife Married 1867 34 Son Single 1885 16 Son Single 1887 14 Daughter Single 1894 7 Daughter Single 1897 4	Relationship Con DoB Age Profession Head Married 1864 37 Bricklayer Wife Married 1867 34 Son Single 1885 16 Brickles Labourer Son Single 1887 14 Brickles Labourer Daughter Single 1894 7 Daughter Single 1897 4	Relationship Con DoB Age Profession Where Born Head Married 1864 37 Bricklayer Brighton, Sussex Wife Married 1867 34 Brighton, Sussex Son Single 1885 16 Brickies Labourer Brighton, Sussex Son Single 1887 14 Brickies Labourer Brighton, Sussex Daughter Single 1894 7 Brighton, Sussex Daughter Single 1897 4 Brighton, Sussex

What is of great interest on this Census form is the fact that William is working as a Bricklayers Labourer at the tender age of 14.

It can probably be assumed that William had been working since the age of 10, which was common back then. Even if he attended school the chances are he would also have been working from the age of 12 or 14. It must have been very hard work for a young boy to carry bricks up and down a ladder all day or mix cement by hand day in, day out, for 10 to 12 hours a day and for little or no pay.

The next event we have recorded for William was when he was married in 1906. This would have made him just over 19 years of age at that time.



Brighton Registry Office







William married a Clara Staniforth at the Brighton Registry Office on Friday 23rd November 1906. It is known the happy couple had at least two children. Clara Irene Burgess was born on Saturday 4th March 1916. There is also a Son, William George Burgess, but his date of birth is somewhat difficult to read. There are two possible dates and these are either Monday 26th November 1917 or Tuesday 26th November 1907.

I would guess that as they were married in 1906 then a child may have followed in 1907. Until this is proved it is only speculation. As has been mentioned previously, no intensive research has been carried out on William and his family so no Certificates purchased. However the Ancestry site shows the 1907 date is more likely.



The information we do have on William Burgess is found in his Military Records. We know Britain declared War on Germany on Tuesday 4th August 1914.

We also know that about this time William was living at 19 Riley Road with his wife and possibly Son, William George.

In addition to this we know William answered his Country's call to Arms and joined the Army very soon after this date. I believe this may have been because William had previously served two years with the Royal Field Artillery (Territorial) and

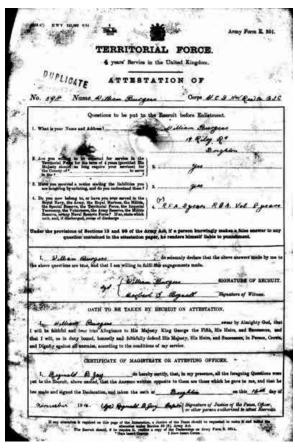
another Eight years with the Volunteer Force, therefore William was an Army Soldier through and through and would have jumped at the chance to join the Regular Army.

So with his enthusiasm as a Soldier leading him on, William signed his Attestation paper at Brighton on Monday 16th November 1914, just three months after the start of hostilities with Germany.

The Attestation Paper, does not give us a great deal of detail except his new 'Regimental Number' of 239529.

His Regiment at the time appears to read 'H C D No1 (Res) Co ASC' which I believe stood for the 'Home Counties Division No 1 (Reserve) Company, Army Service Corp.

The Army Service Corp, or the Royal









Army Service Corp as it was to become when it received it's 'Royal' prefix late in 1918, were the unsung heroes of the War, in fact of any War or Campaign throughout history. An Army without supplies, be it food, ammunition or equipment is not an Army and in fact would not last long in any battle situation.

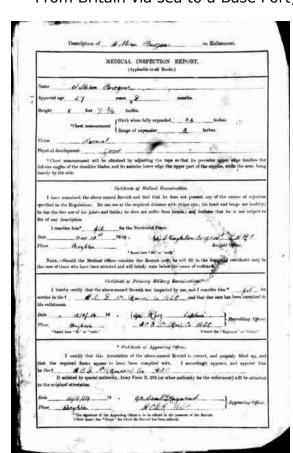
The ASC at its peak numbered an incredible 10,547 officers and 315,334 men but merits just four mentions in the Official History of the war.

The ASC was organised into Companies, each fulfilling a specific role. William was with 545 Company.

It is difficult to comprehend just what supply to the army in France alone which built up to more than 2 million men actually means. Here are some statistics that give an idea:

Size of forces on Western Front Monthly issues in lbs (Pounds weight) or							
<u>Gallons</u>							
	Men	Horses	Meat	Bread	Forage	Petrol (Galls)	
1914							
August	120,000	53,000	3,600,000	4,500,000	5,900,000	842,000	
1918							
November	3,000,00	500,000	67,500,000	90,000,000	32,250,000	13,000,000	

These huge tonnages were moved through a complex chain of supply, which usually went broadly like this:
From Britain via sea to a Base Port;



By rail from the Base Port to a Divisional Railhead or an Advanced Supply Depot;

By motor transport from Railhead or Advanced Supply Depot to a Divisional Refilling Point;

By horsed transport to the forward dumps where goods were taken over by a unit's quartermaster; The unit itself would then move material by horse transport and man to the front line positions.

Returning to the Attestation Form we can see it confirms William's address in Riley Road and it also confirms he served some time with the Territorial and Reserve Forces.

It is also interesting to read question three which states;

'Have you received a notice stating the liabilities you are incurring by enlisting, and do you understand







them?'

The Army Form 'E624' is shown on page VII but basically is the standard 'do you know we can send you anywhere, any time for as long as we want' type of liability. There are notes to read and then the 'E624' is signed as binding.

Next we can move on to William's Pre-Medical Inspection Report, shown left, carried out at Brighton on Thursday 12th November 1914 before his Attestation.

As you can see William was 27 years and 8 months of age when he joined the Army, not a young man by any means but as a Builder by trade he would be strong and fit. William had a 34 inch chest which had an expansion of 2 inches.

Like his brother George, William was not a tall man at just 5ft $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall and weighing a little over $10\frac{1}{2}$ stone, or 87 Kilos. His vision was good, as was his physical development.

Once William had joined the Army on the Monday 16th November he had another medical that same day. This just confirms his age of 27 years and 8 months, his trade before joining, which was a builder. His height of 5ft 8in and weight of 10st 8lbs. It then goes on to describe his chest measurement of 34½ inches with an expansion of 2 inches and describes his build as 'good'.

It goes on to mention four vaccination marks in his left arm. William's vaccination record is shown later in this story and mentions three TAB inoculations, which are for Typhoid. William's eyesight was good and it then states he was posted to 545 Company ASC. (Army Service Corp) and his Army Number was 239529. Although initially with the Territorial's his number appeared to be 598.

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The Descriptive Report on Enrolment asks more medical questions, which were answered on the previous form. However this form goes on to confirm William's wife as Clara Burgess of 19 Riley Road, Brighton and also confirms the marriage details giving her maiden name of Staniforth and the place and date of marriage. It also asks and states whether the Wife was a Spinster or Widow.

Why it should ask such a personal question I do not know?

It also names their two children, William George and Clara Irene but these would have been added a long time later as and when they were born, except William if his birth was 1907.

It also names their two children, William George and Clara Irene but these would have been added a long time later as and when they were born, except William if his birth was 1907.

I cannot say for certain where William served during his time with the Forces. I know he did serve abroad but spent most of his Army career at 'Home'. Records show that 545 Company was based in the 'Home Counties' which would normally be somewhere in South East England, possibly Windsor?

Whether William was happy with a 'Home posting' we will never know. We can guarantee that Clara was probably very relieved William never served in the danger areas of France from where millions never returned to their family and friends. We do know that William worked hard where he was and gained the respect of those around him as he initially gained rapid promotion.

Before we go into William's promotional record any further it may be worth mentioning the 'Agreement' which I mentioned earlier when talking about liabilities. As the form has William's number as 598 this proves the Agreement or 'E624' is only signed while still a 'Territorial' Soldier. However most of the forms seem to carry this number and not his full 'Regular' number so I can only apologise for any confusion. The forms also do not help due to the fact they are not in any particular order and later forms seem to have earlier dates and earlier forms seem to contain later date. It all makes the explanation and story very difficult to tell.

On the right are the notes which have to be read before the 'Agreement is signed. This is the normal 'Army Bureaucracy' which has consisted

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

- 1. On undertaking the liability to serve abroad in time of national emergency, at officer or man of the Territorial Force will be required to sign an agreement, on Army Form E. 624, in the presence of the Officer Commanding the Territorial unit to which he belongs, and, unless notification to the contrary is given to the Commanding Officer, the liability will continue as long as the officer's or man's engagement in the Territorial Force lasts.
- 2. The engagement on Army Form E. 624, of an officer or man of the Territorial Force to accept liability for service outside the United Kingdom in time of national emergency, will be to serve with his own unit, or with a part of his own unit, only. He cannot, under this agreement, be drafted as an individual to any other unit.
 - Except as regards liability for foreign service, the conditions of the officer's or man's service in the Torritorial Force will not be 'affected by this agreement.
 - 4. A badge will be awarded to each individual accepting such liability for service outside the United Kingdom. This badge may be worn, when in uniform, on the right breast of the officer or man so long as the liability continues.

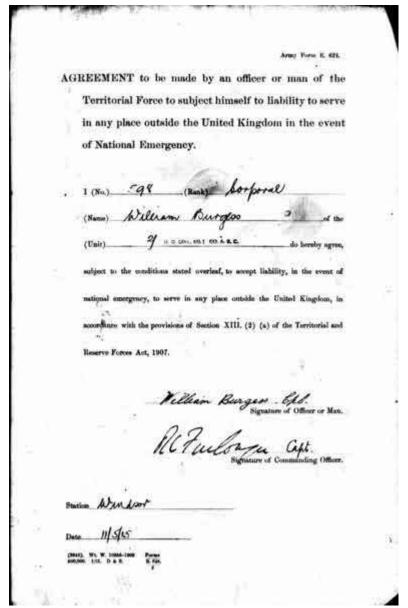
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since Army Records began.



On the Agreement shown left, we form, can see William has made an agreement to serve where ever he is required to do so outside of the UK. Αt the bottom of the `Conditions of Service' form it actually states a badge is issued to everyone signing this form. As it states this badge can be worn when Uniform then this makes it completely different to the 'War Badge' which can only be worn in civilian clothing.

This badge is pictured on the last page of this Addendum.

We can also see that on this form, signed on Tuesday 11th May 1915 that William holds the rank of Substantive Corporal. Had he still been 'acting' then he would have signed this 'A/Cpl'.

However the records show, as you read on, that he did not appear

to be given the Corporal rank, or Lance Sergeant as it was known, until July of that year.

As the old saying goes; - 'ours is not to reason why'.

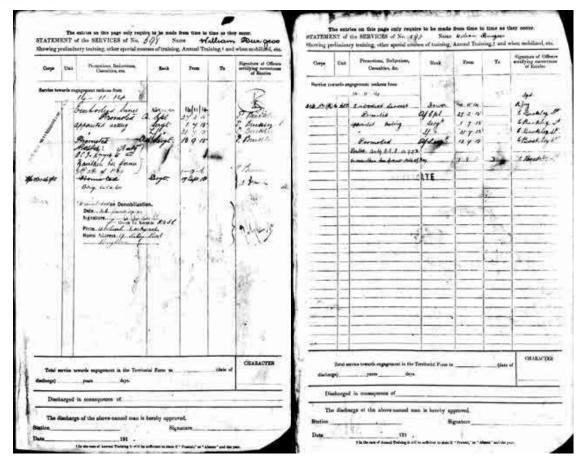
You can see at the bottom of this form the 'station' does state Windsor.

William's 'Statement of Service' form gives his promotional record. For some reason there are two records of which one is a 'duplicate' form. I am not sure why this would be but both of these forms are shown below. The duplicate record is shown on the right but has less information entered than the original









We can see from the record that from his date of joining, Monday 16th November 1914, William was a driver. However it appears that within just three months, on Saturday 27th February 1915, he has been promoted to Acting Corporal. That is quite an impressive promotion in such a short time period when not in an 'Active Theatre'. There are occasions in War when soldiers get a 'Field Promotion' when on active service, but as stated previously, William is on a 'Home Posting' so to be promoted this quickly he must have impressed.

If that was not good enough, it was just a little less than 5 months later on Thursday 1st July 1915, William is promoted again to Acting Sergeant. There appeared to be no stopping William because just a few weeks later on Saturday 31st July 1915 William was promoted to Lance Sergeant. This was in fact Corporal (two stripes) but this time substantive and higher pay.

Again, less than two months later on Monday 13th September 1915, William is again promoted to Acting Sergeant.

The record for Friday 1st September 1916 is difficult to decipher. It appears to read either 1677 or 16777 or similar. Either way I cannot find any meaning. There was an 1167 Company ASC but this Unit was in France and William's record states he served at 'Home'. However this will be contradicted on a later from when France seems to be a posting location for William. We will return to this subject later. Whatever the entry means we know it states William is to maintain his 'former rate of







pay'. I can only assume that whatever this means William reverted to his Rank of Corporal but continued to be paid as a Sergeant.

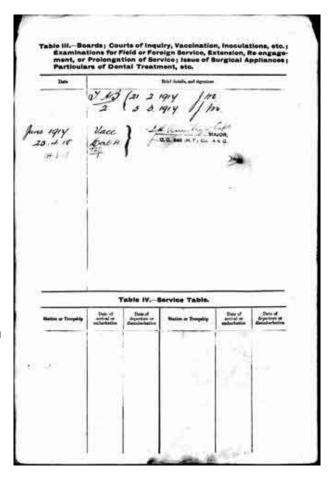
William remained at the last posting and rank until Thursday 19th September 1918 whenhe received the substantive rank of Sergeant.

Shown right is William's Vaccination record which shows the date of his inoculations in 1915, 1917 and 1918.

Now may be the time to look again at William's promotions and the places where he was stationed. Some of this is shown on William's 'Casualty Form'.

There is a little bit more information about William on this form. For example we can see that his religion was of 'non-conformist' Church of England. He seems to have initially joined the Army for a term of four years. There is no date of when this record form was started but William held the rank of Acting Sergeant at that time.

The form has a note to the left side giving his 'next of kin' as 'Wife, 19 Riley Road, Brighton'.



The additional information we have is that when William was promoted to Acting Sergeant on the 13th September 1915 it appears this was on his Posting to Sevenoaks in Kent.







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On Wednesday 5th June 1918 William was again posted but this time to Number 2 Reserve Depot at Blackheath in London. Here he received his Substantive Sergeant three months later.

I do know from the 'Long Long Trail' website, which holds a fantastic amount of information, that there were four Companies based at Blackheath. These were;

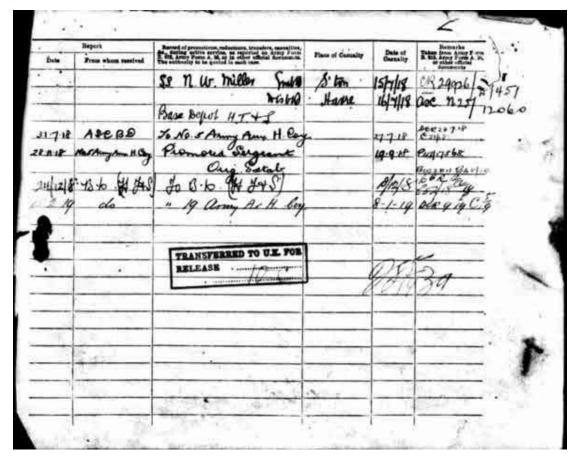
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There is an entry on Monday 15th July 1918 for what seems to be a posting, or embarkation, to S.S NW Miller at Southampton and William appeared to disembark the very next day on the 16th July at (Le) Havre? Searches have failed to find a ship or base called S.S N W Miller or similar. The 'S.S' would, in this case, stand for Steam Ship.









This entry would seem to imply that William went abroad to France although this sheet does not confirm that. His Medal Card does not mention the French Theatre either, so this is a little confusing. However, to confuse matters even more there is an entry on William's 'Military History Sheet' shown on the next page, which shows he did go to France on the 15th July 1918 and did not return to England until Thursday 29th May 1919.

Further research has found that unfortunately this meant William did not qualify for the 'Star' medal issued to Soldiers who served in France. The criteria for this was for the 1914 Star, Soldiers had to have served in France or Belgium between 5th August 1914 to midnight on 22nd November 1914 inclusive.

Qualification for 1914-15 Star was awarded to all who served in any theatre of war against Germany between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915, except those eligible for the 1914 Star. Unfortunately it appears the 'Home Theatre' was not counted, if it was, then William is owed a medal.







On the right we can see the Military History Sheet which shows William served in France for just over a year before returning to England on Thursday 29th May 1919. To break this period down a little more we can see on the form on the previous page that William was posted to at least four different Units or places but started at the HT Depot.

The `HT' stood for Horse Transport. Although the British the Army was most mechanised of all in the Great War, it still relied largely on horse power for transportation of supplies, guns, ammunition and men. The ASC Horsed Transport Depot Companies filled a variety of administrative, recruitment, induction, training and supply roles.

The Base Depots were based in the United Kingdom or at the port of entry to a theatre of war.

We can quickly mention this form on the right before returning to the 'Casualty Form'

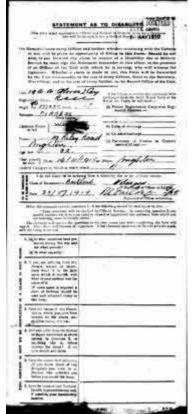
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as there is little information on there that we do not already know. It mentions Clara and her address, William's medals and his 'Theatre Dates'. These dates show he was in the 'Home Theatre' from Tuesday 16th November 1914 until Sunday 14th July 1918.









Next we have the 'France Theatre' from Monday 15th July 1918 until Wednesday 28th May 1919. Finally there is an entry from Thursday 29th May 1919 until Wednesday 25th June 1919. This latest period was 'leave' and will be discussed in more detail later.

Returning to the 'Casualty Form' we can see in the centre a stamp which states 'Transferred to UK for release'. To the right of that stamp appears a date of 28th May 1919 and a signature. This is explained by the 'Statement of Disability' form, shown left.

William was at this time with the 19 a.a.(Horse)
Company of the now
'Royal' Army Service Corps and was due for release from the Army.

In the centre of the form

William has claimed he is not suffering from any disability due to his Military Service.

He has completed a medical, at Bailleul in France. This is a town located in French Flanders near Lille and close to the Belgium border.

Shown right is the continuation to the 'Statement of Disability' form. On here we can see William has completed his medical on Friday 23rd May 1919 with the intention of ending his Service life and returning to his trade of 'Builder and Decorator' back in England.

William travels back to England on the 28th May 1919 and returns to Crystal Palace which was the dispersal point from where William was sent on his 28 days Furlough before finally being discharged on Thursday 26th June 1919 at his home address in Brighton.

Below is shown a 'Protection Certificate and Certificate of Identity' form. Parts of the form state;

The above named soldier is granted 28 days furlough from the date stamped hereon after which date uniform will not be worn except on occasions authorised by Army Orders.

As this is the address to which pay and discharge documents will be sent unless further notification is received, any change of address must be reported at



Mairie De Bailleul

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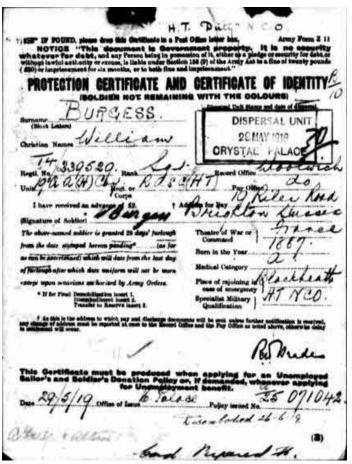






once to the Record Office and the Pay Office as noted above, otherwise delay in settlement will occur.

This certificate must be produced when applying for an Unemployed Sailor's and Soldier's Donation Policy or, if demanded, whenever applying for Unemployment benefit.



I am not entirely sure why this form had such a dramatic name of 'Protection' or 'Identity'. Further research may find a reason but I am assuming one reason would be to stop deserters returning to civilian life without being caught and punished or to stop people asking why a person of military age is walking about during war time?

There was a story in 'The Brighton Gazette' of 13th June 1916 entitled;

"A Brighton Round -Up"

'An experience of an unusual character befell travellers arriving at Brighton Central Railway Station last evening between 6 and 8 o'clock. The Military held a "round-up" of all passengers arriving, with a view to securing any of military age unable to offer satisfactory reasons for not being in the Army or Navy.

It was the first experience of the sort in Brighton, and was conducted with much efficiency and with as little inconvenience as possible to travellers.

Only one "arrest" was made, but some 60 names and addresses were taken for further investigation.'

And so on Thursday 26th June 1919 William was no longer a serving soldier.

He continued his life as a Builder and settled back down to life with Clara and their children.

I can only assume William eventually

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received both the medals that were due to him. They were the British War and Victory Medals and when on display together they are sometimes known as "Mutt and Jeff"







Army Service Corps postcard from The Long Long Trail www.1914-1918.net

The 'War Service' Badge

Hopefully William and his family had a long and happy life. No further research has been carried out to confirm the remainder of their story.





Sources:

Ancestry (<u>www.ancestry.co.uk</u>) for First World War Service Records and Medal Index Cards

Images, unless otherwise stated are from the author's collection