

PERCY RIDGLEY

Born during 1895 in Saunderton, Buckinghamshire, England

Died of his wounds on April 22nd 1917 in Arras, France

Commemorated on the War Memorial in the graveyard of St Mary and St Nicholas church, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire.

Percy's family name is misspelled as 'Ridgeley' on the memorial

Percy was born to William and Eliza Ridgley (née Newell) in 1895, and his parents registered his birth during September 1895 at High Wycombe. He was the fourth child and third son of their five children. His father already had one child, William Albert, born in 1879, from his previous marriage to Charlotte Barlow (who died in 1883), and had also been married to Maria Stevens from 1869 until her death in 1876 (but it is not possible to identify if William and Maria had any children). Percy's mother, Eliza, already had three children; Frederick born in 1873, Ada born in 1878 and George born in 1880, from her previous marriage to Jesse Williams, who had died in 1881. William Ridgley and Eliza Williams married in



September 1887. William was an agricultural labourer for most of his life, working on Pigeon House Farm in Little Marlow, Chorley Farm in West Wycombe and Pond Farm in Saunderton, near the Rose and Crown public house (now much altered (*left*) and called The Chiltern on the A4010).

At the time of the March 1901 census, Percy was listed as a schoolboy living with his parents on Pond Farm in Saunderton, and in the April 1911 census he was listed as a 'Cow Boy on Farm' living with his parents at Pond Farm in Saunderton Lea.

aPercy's enlistment records were destroyed by fire during the Second World War but we can be certain of the following facts: he enlisted in Aylesbury and joined the 2nd Battalion of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. By the New Year of 1917 there were severe weather conditions on the Somme plain and in March 1917 the Germans began to withdraw from the Hindenburg Line. The second Battalion moved from the Somme to the back areas of Arras. This soon became the Arras Offensive (*right*), which lasted from April 6th to May 16th 1917 and included the Battles of Scarpe and Arleux. Percy died of wounds he sustained on April 22nd 1917.



Percy is commemorated in the St Sever Cemetery extension near Rouen, France. His grave reference is Block O, Plot IX and Grave E9. He was posthumously awarded the two campaign medals: the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His older brother, Alfred was killed in action on May 7th 1915 during the second battle of Ypres. Alfred is also commemorated on the memorial at St Mary and St Nicholas church in Saunderton. Both Alfred and Percy are also commemorated on the memorial at Loosely Row village cemetery.

Percy was survived by his parents, one sister, Ellen and two of his brothers, Frank and Herbert Ridgley as well as his half siblings Frederick, Ada and George Williams. Herbert Ridgley served in the Royal Army Service Corps from his enlistment on March 2nd 1916 until his discharge on March 5th 1919 and survived the war. There are no records about Frank Ridgley's war service.

Gary Knight 31 March 2014