

PERCY WILLIAM AMOS HOWARD

Private G/22327, 2nd Bn., The Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment

Killed in action 13th May 1917, Bullecourt, age 20

Percy Howard would have had a boisterous childhood, with 9 brothers and sisters and, as next to last, would have had to have got used to hand-me-downs and bread-and-dripping. With father Henry a bricklayer's labourer not earning much and 10 children to feed and clothe, money would have been tight.

At 20, Henry Howard married the 17-year-old Mary Parsons at St Michael's, Aldershot in 1873. Both being born at Pirbright, it is a mystery why they didn't choose to marry here. Harriet, the oldest child, arrived next year and by the time of the 1881 census, when they were living at Boro Hill Cottage, another 3 had been born.

By 1891 they were living in one of Searles Cottages, at the Green end of Chapel Lane, with 7 children, as the older ones had started to leave home. By 1901, at the same address, Percy had arrived. He was born on February 28th 1897 and baptised on May 14th. One more brother, Sidney, arrived 3 years later, making a spread of 26 years for all the children.



In 1905 the family made their final move, to 5 Pirbright Terrace, a much larger and more modern house. This would mean the luxury of 3 bedrooms for the 2 parents and 4 boys that remained. Percy, at just 14, had just left school and had no occupation. Leonard was a gardener, Walter a house boy and young Sidney still at school.

Giving up his job at the Friary Brewery, Percy enlisted at Guildford in October 1914 and was posted to the 2nd Battalion of the Queens. These two press cuttings from the Surrey Advertiser in May and June 1917 graphically tell of Percy's fate at Bullecourt, near Arras and give news of his brothers, who survived -

PIRBRIGHT.

(See also Page 6).

PTE. PERCY HOWARD KILLED.

Pte. Percy W. A. Howard, of the 2nd Queen's, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Howard, 5, The Terrace, Pirbright, was killed in action on May 12. In a letter to deceased's mother, an officer of the battalion stated that he was killed instantaneously. He added: "Pte. Howard was always a good lad—always cheerful and popular among his comrades." Deceased, who was 20, joined the Army in October, 1914, and went to the front at the beginning of January last. Before the war he was employed at the Friary Brewery, Guildford. He has four brothers serving, two of whom, Lance-Corpl. F. Howard, The Queen's, and Pte. L. Howard, of the R.A.M.C., are now at the front. The other two, Pte. Arthur Howard, 4th Reserve Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and Driver Walter Howard, of the A.S.C., are at present in England.

HOW PTE. HOWARD WAS KILLED.

Last week we reported the death in action of Pte. Percy W. A. Howard, The Queen's, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Howard. In a letter to parents a comrade of deceased says:—We were attacking a certain position in which we had to establish a strong point after we had taken the objective. Just before reaching our objective we had to take cover in a shell hole, as the shells were whizzing round making it perfect hell. As we lay in this hole waiting for the moment to spring forward your son must have thought we had gone on ahead, for after a while we saw him running towards us still holding his Lewis gun, which it was his last thought to save. Eventually we won our objective, and commenced to dig ourselves in. . . . We were resting for a short spell, when a big shell alighted right on top of the trench where your son, myself and two others were, killing the other three. His death was instantaneous."