

World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



William Henry Oates



Rank: Private

Demobilised: 3rd
December 1918

Tank Corps & Machine
Gun Corps.



Summary

William Henry Oates family home was Hopton Fold, Upper Hopton where he was raised by his parents George and Martha Selina Oates and worked as a miner at Cardwell Pit.

William Henry was married to Nellie May Ottewell and had a son.

In December 1918 William Henry was discharged and declared as being no longer physically fit for service - entitled to Kings certificate. Disability - Gas poisoning (conjunctivitis) was written on his records. After the gas poisoning he was an inmate of an Australian hospital in France for a short period.

Two of his brothers were killed in action on the Western front. Ernest in August 1917 and Robert Lewis in July 1918.

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William Henry Oates

Family details

Date of Birth	14th October 1890
Date of Baptism	19th November 1890
Church Baptised	Christ Church, Battyeform
Father	George
Father's occupation	Masons labourer
Mother	Martha Selina (nee Nutton)
Siblings	Robert Lewis, Ernest, George Richard, Fred, John Arthur, Martha Hannah, Emma Selina
Parents residence	Hopton Fold, Upper Hopton
Soldiers residence	Hopton Fold, Upper Hopton
Soldiers Occupation	Miner - Cardwell Pit
Married	Believed to have married in October 1920
Spouse	Nellie May Ottewell from Wombwell Barnsley . b. 15 March 1899
Children	Son - Robert Raymond born 13 July 1923
Burial / Memorial	St John's Church, Upper Hopton
Age at death	75

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William Henry Oates

Oates family 1911 Census



CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

Number of Schedule 160
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	INFIRMITY
George Oates	Head	41	Married	Labourer (Mason)	South Elmham		
Martha Selina Oates	Wife	60	Married		Sheffield		
Robert Lewis Oates	Son	25	Single	Domestic Gardener	Sheffield		
William Henry Oates	Son	20		Miner	Sheffield		
Frank Oates	Son	16		Millhand - Scourer	Sheffield		
Harry Justin Oates	Grandson	3			Sheffield		

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature George Oates

Postal Address Upper Hopton, Sheffield



The photo on the left shows William's mother and father Martha Selina and George with the dog "Tiny". When George and Martha moved to Upper Hopton the farmer allowed them to make a dwelling in the barn opposite Hopton Hall.

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William Henry Oates

William Henry lived in Hopton Fold, shown in the photo below
(Several years later some of the cottages were demolished)



William Henry Oates & Nellie May Ottewell's Marriage Banns 1920

NAMES.	Condition	Age.	Residence.	1920 PUBLICATION.		When Married or Certificate Given.
				Date.	By Whom	
William Henry Oates	B		Upper Hopton	1 Sept 19	J S R	Civil: Oct 4.
Nellie May Ottewell	S		Wombwell	2 26	J S R	
				3 Oct 3	J S R	



Nellie May Ottewell was born in Derbyshire, Whitwell but in 1911 was living at 48 Wombwell Main, Nr Barnsley with her parents Herbert and Florence. Herbert and his eldest son were miners like William Henry Oates.

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William Henry Oates

Military Details

Attestation / Enlistment	17th May 1912 (Territorials)
Deployment	Serving in France from 14th April 1915 to 28th August 1918
Rank	Private
Medals / Certificates	1914-1915 Star British War Medal Victory Medal Kings Certificate
Regiment number	75241 for the Tank & Machine Gun Corps (Formerly 2104 West Riding Regiment)
Regiment	Tank Corps formerly Machine gun Corps. (formerly Territorial Force - 5th Bn West Riding Reg't - W R Drill Cycle)
Regimental Badge	 
Date of death	19th October 1966
Cemetery or Memorial	St John's Church, Upper Hopton
Age at death	75
Embodied service	5/8/1914 W.R.Reg't Army Cyclist Corps. Transferred to Machine Gun Corps Heavy Section 12/12/1916. Home 17/5/1912 to 13/4/1915, France 14/4/1915, Home 29/8/1918 Tank Depot & discharged 3/12/1918

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William Henry Oates



The photograph shows William Henry front row second from the left.

William Henry enlisted on the 17th May 1912 and passed his medical for the 5th Battalion West Riding Regiment on the 25th May 1912 getting final approval on the 27th May 1912.

He embarked in Southampton on the 13th April 1915 and disembarked in France on the 14th May 1915 to join the British Expeditionary force.

Discharged due to injuries.

William was wounded in action on the 23rd July 1918 and shipped back to England on the 29th August 1918 and admitted to hospital.

On the 3rd December 1918 he was declared no longer physically fit for service and discharged. His injury entitled to a Kings certificate. Gas poisoning by a gas shell was written on his medical records (conjunctivitis). William was an inmate of an Australian hospital in France for a short period.

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William Henry Oates

Machine Gun Corps

William was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Heavy) on the 19th December 1916.

A year of warfare on the Western Front proved that, to be fully effective, machine guns must be used in larger units and crewed by specially trained men. To achieve this, the Machine Gun Corps was formed in October 1915 with Infantry, Cavalry and Motor branches, followed in 1916 by the Heavy Branch. The Heavy Section was formed in March 1916, becoming the Heavy Branch in November of that year. Men of this branch crewed the first tanks in action at Flers, during the Battle of the Somme in September 1916. In July 1917 the Heavy Branch separated from the MGC to become the Tank Corps, later called the Royal Tank Regiment.



British Vickers machine gun crew wearing PH-type anti-gas helmets. Near Ovillers during the Battle of the Somme, July 1916. The gunner is wearing a padded waistcoat, enabling him to carry the machine gun barrel. IWM photograph Q3995, with permission. Note that the left hand soldier has an MGC badge on his shoulder.

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William Henry Oates

Tank Corps

Tanks were used for the first time in action on the battlefield of the Somme on 15 September 1916. 36 Mark 1 tanks of C and D Companies arrived on the start line for the renewal of the Somme offensive: this action was later designated as the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. When the German army attacked in March 1918, British tanks were little used as a defensive weapon, but played an important part in the extraordinary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 24-25 April.

On 4 July 1918 at Le Hamel and in front of Amiens on 8 August 1918, tanks played a central role in the crushing success of the Allied attack. Tank Corps was a temporarily spent force. It was not until the assaults on the Hindenburg Line in late September 1918 that a large enough force had been assembled again. From 21 August 1918 to the Armistice on 11 November 1918, some 2,400 men and officers of the Tank Corps became casualties.

William Henry's Medal card

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Name	Rank	Regt. No.
OATES	Pte	2104
William	Pte	75241
Medal	Roll	Page
VICTORY	101	161
BRITISH	do	do
15-STAR	Tank/18	10
Service	14. 4. 15	14. 4. 15
Address		

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Name	Rank	Regt. No.
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Medal	Roll	Page
VICTORY	101	161
BRITISH	do	do
15-STAR	Tank/18	10
Service	14. 4. 15	14. 4. 15
Address		

Remarks: Disc. 3. 12. 18

Not amended. Anti Eng. 1A+

K 1380.

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William Henry Oates

William's Medals



1914 - 1915 Star



British War Medal



Victory Medal

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William Henry Oates

The King's Certificate of discharge

The King's certificate was awarded to soldiers who were discharged due to injuries in the theatre of war.

Silver War Badge

The Military records show that William Henry was awarded the Silver War Badge. The badge number was B60309.

The badge was awarded for soldiers who had been honourably discharged from the army under Kings Regulations (the most commonly reason for discharge and issue of the badge is that a soldier had been released on account of being physically unfit).



Military Service Records

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William Henry Oates

Medical Report

Table II.—Only for Admissions to Hospital or to the Sick List in

Name of Hospital	Admitted to Hospital			Discharged from Hospital			Disease	Number of days in Hospital	Remarks bearing on use. In case subsequent p given in the
	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year			
MYRTLE AUX. HOSP. ST. JOHN V.A.D. ATTB. 167 W. GENL. HOSP. LIVERPOOL.	29	8	18				Gas poisoning (gas shell)- 171. Keratitis 166. Conjunctivitis 329. Varicose veins, left leg.		A severe not compl Locally re Pronounced 20, for rel radical can Generally as could anorexia Recommen -tion from

The above medical report states that William Henry was admitted to Myrtle Aux. Hospital, St John V.A.D., Liverpool on the 29th August 1918.

The Doctors diagnosis was:

Gas Poisoning (Gas Shell)

171 Keratitis (inflammation of the cornea)

166 Conjunctivitis

329 Varicose Veins, left leg.

It was probably mustard gas which caused William Henry injuries. The gas is highly toxic and causes blistering of the body and damage to the eyes. Even the soldiers wearing gas masks suffered as the gas settled on clothing and blistered their skin.

Some of the effects of the gas are:

Dizziness, body discomfort, abdominal tenderness, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and anorexia.

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William Henry Oates

Medical Report – cont'd

to Hospital or to the Sick List in the case of Warrant Officers treated in quarters.

Disease	Number of days in Hospital	Remarks bearing on the cause, nature, or treatment of the case, likely to be of interest or of future use. In cases of syphilis, admissions and re-admissions to hospital will be shown. The subsequent progress, including particulars of treatment out of hospital, transfers, &c., will be given in the special syphilis case sheet.	Signature of Medical Officer
<p>irritation (gas shell) - cratitic conjunctivitis - varicose veins, t.</p>		<p>A severe case with tedious & tardy recovery, not complete on discharge from hospital. Locally much inflammatory trouble in both eyes. Pronounced varicose condition left leg. On Sept. 20, for relief of this condition operation performed, radical case. Result satisfactory. General - recovery has not been as complete as could be wished. There has been much anorexia and general debility. Recommended to Medical Board, with recommendation letter "permanently unfit" -</p>	<p>W. H. Oates M.D.</p>

The following is an attempted transcription of the above medical report:

A severe case with tedious(causing fatigue) and tardy (slow progress) recovery, not complete on discharge from hospital.

Locally much inflammatory trouble in both eyes.

Pronounced varicose condition left leg. On Sept. 20 for relief from this condition operation performed, radical case. Results satisfactory.

General – Recovery has not been as complete as could be wished. There has been much anorexia and general debility.

Recommended to -----?-----, with recommendation letter "permanently unfit".

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Dewsbury Reporter 10th August 1918

The newspaper article about Robert Lewis Oates also mentions William Henry Oates who was gassed and blinded and an inmate of an Australian hospital in France.

TANK MAN KILLED, BROTHER BLINDED

Very painful facts are bound up with the death in action of Gunner Robert ("Bob") Lewis Oates, of the Tank Corps, formerly gardener to Mr. George Ellis, Eastthorpe House, Mirfield. Although official information has not yet been



Pte. R. L. Oates, Mirfield (killed).

received the news is given in a letter from the deceased's commanding officer, and is confirmed in a sympathetic letter from a chaplain who says Gunner Oates was killed on July 23rd. "Poor Oates was a splendid man," writes the former, "always ready and smart at any duty which called him. He went as a runner into action in a tank, as I hoped he would be safer and less exposed. Unfortunately, his tank was hit by a shell and several inside were killed or injured, but

not before we had gained our objectives, and in conjunction with the French taken 1,800 prisoners, three villages and many guns. Personally, I feel his loss very much indeed, for such a man cannot be replaced." Unhappily on the day that followed the receipt of these sad tidings, Mr. and Mrs. Oates, of Upper Hopton, the parents of the deceased soldier (who was 32 years of age) received information that another son, William Henry Oates (26), had been gassed and blinded, and was then an inmate of an Australian hospital in France. He, also, was in the Tank Corps, and was an old Mirfield "Terrier," who was in training at the outbreak of war. His elder brother enlisted on October 28th, 1916, and had been fourteen months in France. Both brothers were formerly choristers at Upper Hopton Church.

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William Henry Oates



William Henry as a young man before the war.

William Henry Oates with his sisters Emma Selina on the left and Martha Hannah on the right in 1959. After his WW1 experiences William Henry suffered respiratory problems and his eyesight was affected. He died in 1966 age 75.

