

World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



Percy Dyson

Rank: Private

**Died of wounds: 23rd
October 1917 (France &
Flanders)**

**21st Bn. Prince of Wales's
Own (West Yorkshire
Reg't.)**



Summary

Percy Dyson family home was Brighton Cottages, Lower Hopton where he was raised by his parents Joe Charles and Ann Dyson.

Percy's occupation was Corn Millers Clerk.

Percy died of his wounds (age 27) on 23rd October 1917 whilst serving just north of Ypres on the Western Front with the Prince of Wales Own West Yorkshire Regiment.

Percy was laid to rest in the Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium.

Two of his younger brothers served on the Western Front. George Harry Dyson was killed in action (age 25) on the 8th November 1917 (17 days after his brother) and Clifford survived the war and was eventually demobilised in November 1919. His youngest brother Harold served in WW2.

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Percy Dyson

Family details

Date of Birth	26th December 1889
Date of Baptism	16th February 1890
Church Baptised	St Paul's, East Thorpe
Father	Joe Charles 1867-1933
Father's occupation	Woollen Teaser
Mother	Ann (nee Mann) 1866-1950
Siblings	George Harry, Emma Elizabeth, Clifford, Harold
Parents residence	Brighton Cottages, Lower Hopton
Soldiers residence	
Soldiers Occupation	Corn Millers clerk (1911)
Married	
Spouse	
Children	
Burial / Memorial	Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Age at death	27

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Percy Dyson



Percy's sister Emma Elizabeth Dyson.
(Emma worked at Glendinning Brothers, Tanfield Mill, Huddersfield as a worsted cloth mender)



Percy's parents Joe Charles and Ann Dyson



Percy Dyson

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Percy Dyson



Joe Charles Dyson on right with friend. Joe worked at Kilner Brothers, Fold Head Woollen Mill, Newgate, Mirfield. (Note Joe's clay pipe).

**Percy's father
Joe Charles Dyson**



Dyson family Census 1911

Connection between the Dyson and the Mann families:

- Wentworth Mann b. 1893 had a sister Hannah b. 1884 she married Ben Allan Dyson b. 1879 they had 4 children.
- Ben Allan Dyson's brother Joe Charles Dyson is the father of Percy, George Harry, Emma, Clifford, Harold Dyson.

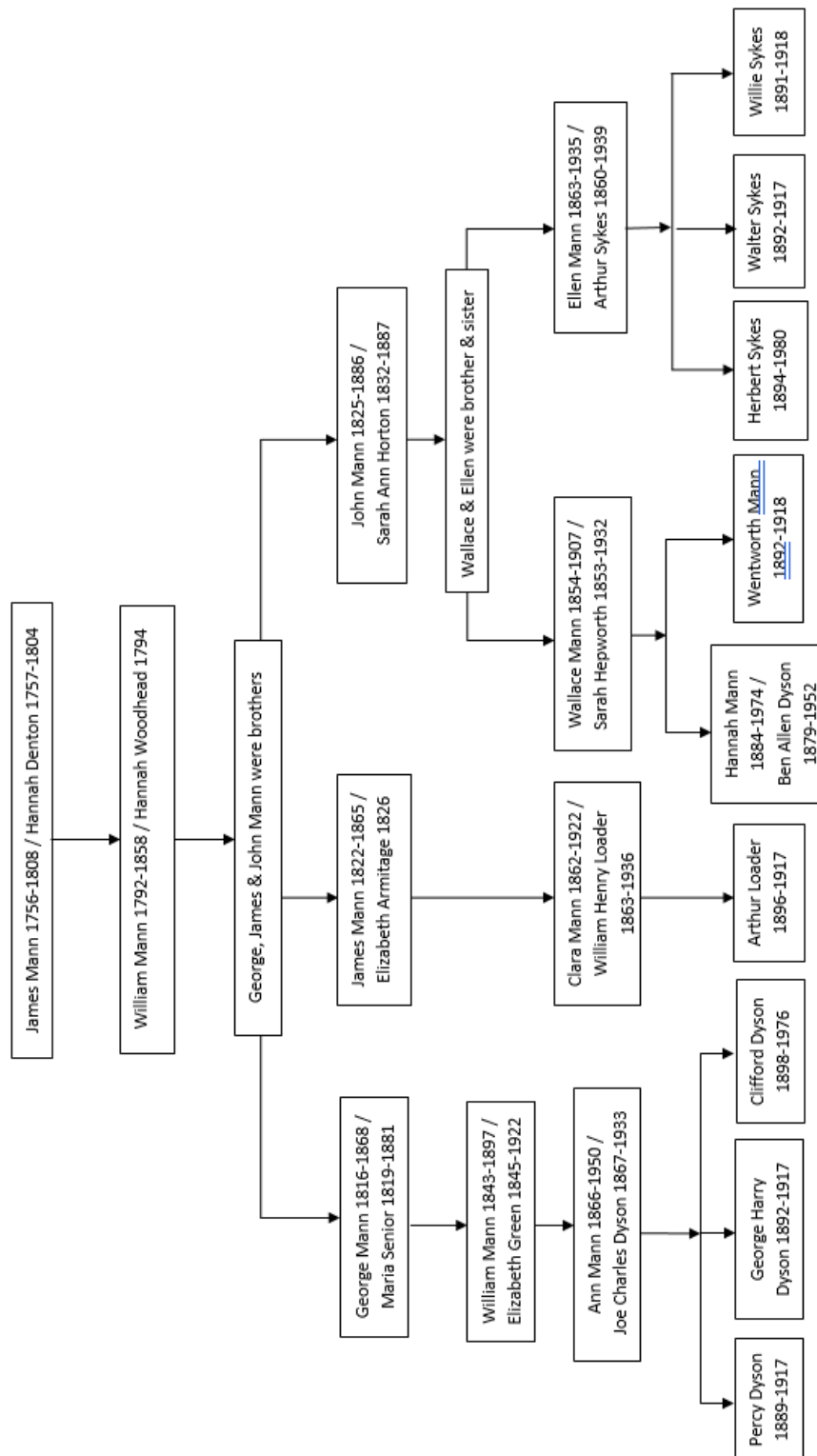
The next page shows the links between the Dyson, Mann, Sykes and Loader families, who all served on the Western Front in WW1.

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Percy Dyson

WW1 links between the families Loader, Mann, Dyson & Sykes



Arthur Loader, Wentworth Mann, Walter Sykes and Willie Sykes, Percy Dyson & George Harry Dyson all lost their lives in WW1. Herbert Sykes the brother of Walter & Willie was badly injured, Clifford Dyson also survived the war. Ben Allen Dyson and Joe Charles Dyson are brothers.

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Percy Dyson

Military Details

Attestation / Enlistment

Deployment

Rank

Private

Medals

British War Medal

Victory Medal

Regiment number

21/718

Regiment

21st Bn. Prince of Wales's Own (West
Yorkshire Reg't.)

Regimental Badge



Died of wounds

23rd October 1917 (France &
Flanders)

Cemetery or Memorial

Dozinghem Military Cemetery,
Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

Age at death

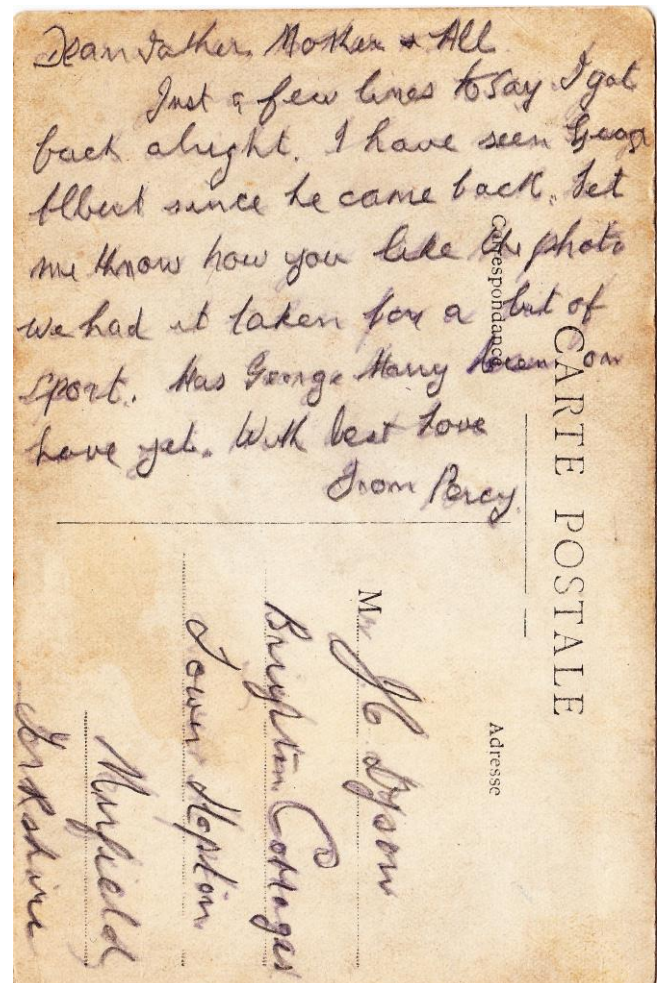
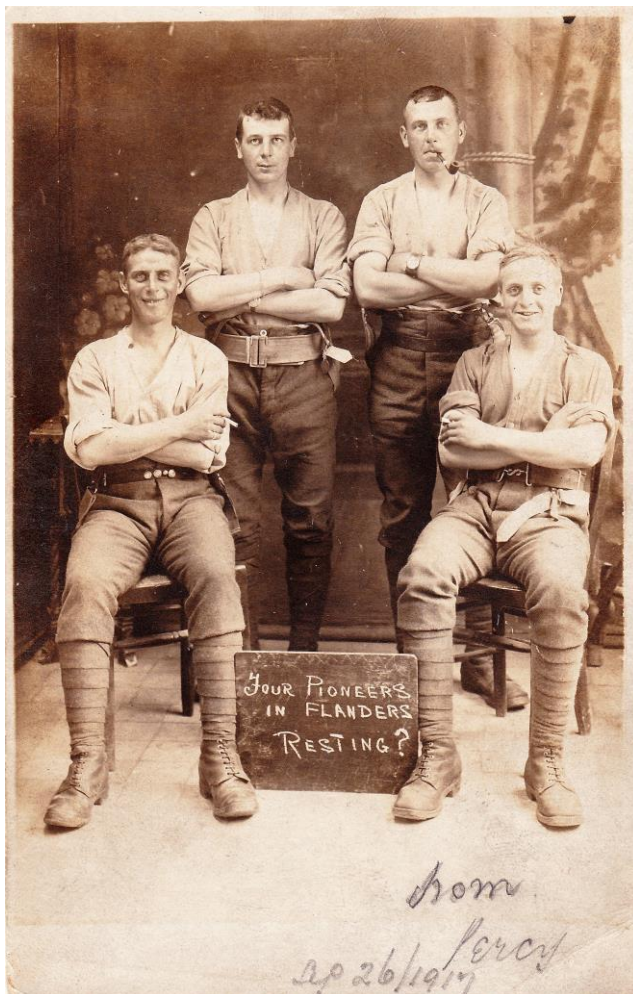
27

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Percy Dyson

Postcard from Percy to his family.



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Percy Dyson

21st Bn. Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Reg't.) - Service - Wool Textile Pioneers

Battalion formation

This Battalion was formed in Halifax in September 1915. It went to France in June 1916 and joined 4th Division as its Pioneer Battalion. At that time infantry divisions had 12 battalions and 3 brigades. In 1915 it was decided to give infantry divisions an extra battalion who were not intended to take part in attacks or to man trenches but to perform labouring and semi-skilled duties, in and close to the lines. Duties would include building and repairing roads and railways, digging new communication trenches etc.

21st Battalion's involvement from 1916 to 1918

1916

On 1st July 1916, 21st Battalion HQ was at Bertrancourt on the Somme front line and five officers and 198 men were working in the trenches that day and on the 2nd July nine officers and 296 men, "were engaged with 4th Division attack" and had 12 casualties. Over the next week the battalion had nine more casualties clearing the battlefield.

On the 21st July, 4th Division proceeded to the Ypres salient where it remained until mid September when it returned to the Somme. On 26th August the battalion had 16 casualties when 50 men were working on a support trench. Still on the Somme between 18th and 22nd October, 21st Battalion had 26 casualties whilst working near the trenches.

21st Battalion spent the end of 1916 behind the lines on the Somme front and remained on the Somme into 1917.

1917

By the beginning of March 1917, 4th Division was attacking during the Battle of the Scarpe; 21st Battalion was repairing roads to allow artillery and transport to follow the advance. 21st Battalion remained in the Arras area until the beginning of September when it went into a rest area with 4th Division.

4th Division took part in the Battle of Broodseinde on the 4th October 1917. 21st Battalion had nine men wounded on the 2nd of October when working on rail and tram ways prior to the fighting and on the 4th October, the battalion Lewis gun teams went into the attack. It is known that 8 men were killed that day and probably more were wounded. In the next several days the battalion had 20 casualties and then on the 9th October 18 men became casualties, from German artillery, whilst working on a light railway. The battalion returned to Arras in November 1917.

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Percy Dyson

1918

When the great German spring offensive began, 21st April 1918, the battalion was little involved although an officer and 5 men were wounded on 23rd April. On the 27-28th March the battalion was working in trenches in the Arras area when German shelling caused 24 fatalities, 82 wounded and 3 gassed. Between the 5th and 18th April 1918 the battalion had 44 casualties from shelling. A further ten occurred between 29th and 31st April.

On 16th Sept. the battalion was involved in clearing roads between Eterpigny to Etaing after an advance and had 16 casualties from shelling. During the Battle of Valenciennes on the 1st November, the battalion had 15 casualties whilst road clearing.

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Percy Dyson



The above map shows the advance of the German army in 1914 through northern Belgium.

During the early campaigns of 1914, the Belgian army had been pushed out of the fortified cities of Liège, Namur and Antwerp by the German advance. Although they succeeded in delaying the Germans at some actions, they were forced to withdraw, first to Antwerp, and into the far north-west of Belgium. By October 1914, the Belgian forces were holding a position along the Yser river and Ieperlee canal along a 35 Km stretch from Nieuport and Dixmuide.

After months of retreat, the Belgians forces were considerably reduced and were exhausted. They flooded a large expanse of territory in front of their lines, stretching as far south as Dixmuide. Between 16 and 31 October, the Belgians held off the German army at the Battle of the Yser, suffering 3,500 killed and 15,000 wounded. The Battle of the Yser established a front line which would endure until 1918.

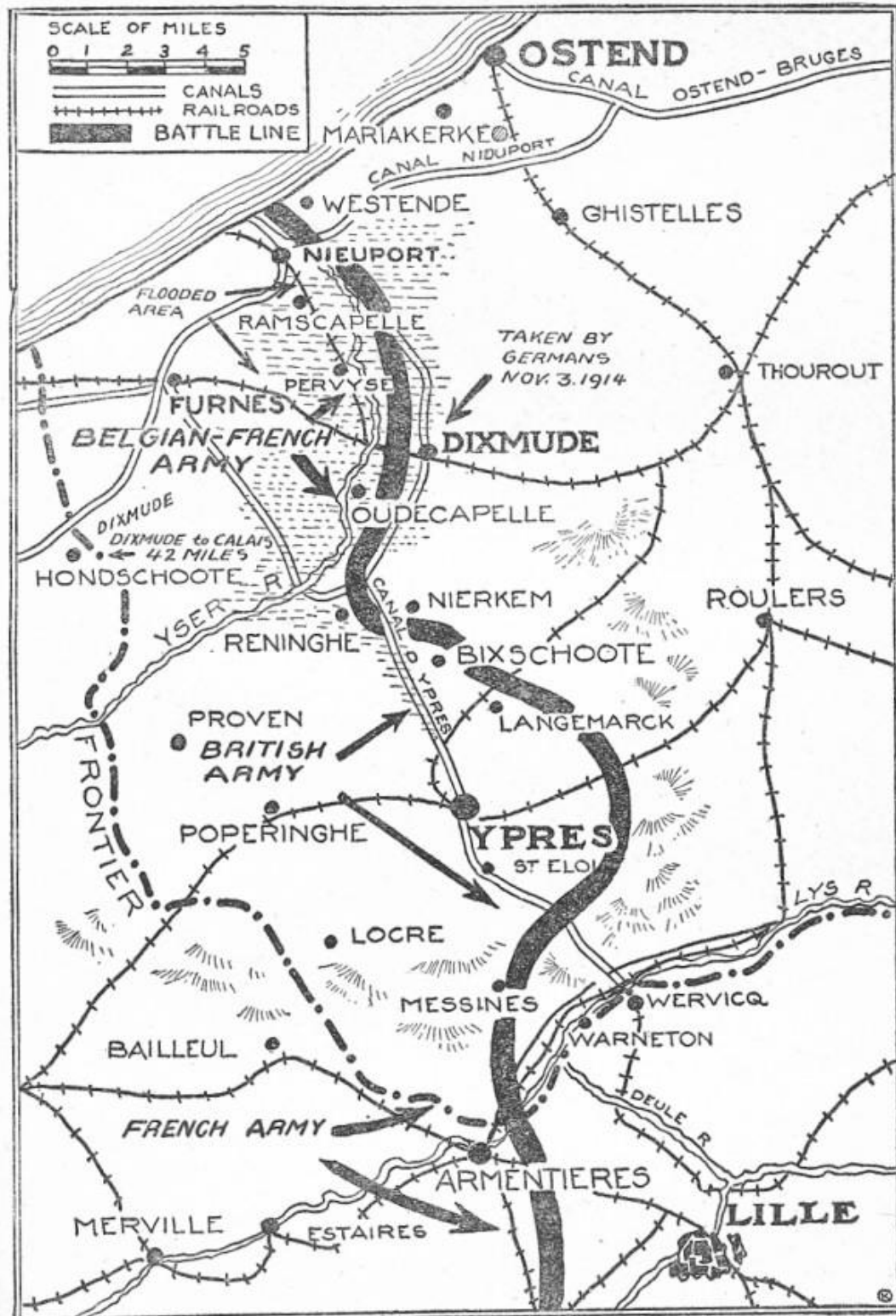
According to the official war diaries, just before his death in October 1917 Percy's Battalion was involved around the Yser Canal and finally at Chasseur Farm. (Chasseur Farm is 7km north of Ypres)

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Battle front in Flanders in 1914 (Percy was buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery, near Poperinghe, see map below).



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Third Battle of Ypres, 1917 31-Jul-1917 —10-Nov-1917

From early in 1916 it was the intention of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.), Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, to break out of the Ypres Salient. Having successfully secured the high ground of the Wytschaete-Messines Ridge in the Battle of Messines (7-14 June) the plan for the next operation was to advance against the German Front Line east and north-east of Ypres. On reaching the strategically important high ground of the Passchendaele Ridge to the north-east of Ypres, the British intention was to continue to push westwards, cutting off access for the German forces to the Belgian ports of Ostende and Zeebrugge. German forces were in control of these ports and using Zeebrugge in particular for shipping and submarines (U-Boats).

A British offensive in Flanders before the autumn weather closed in, would also draw the focus of German Army commanders away from the Aisne battlefield to the south. The large-scale offensive on the Chemin des Dames Ridge in April of 1917, planned by the French Commander-in-Chief, General Robert Nivelle, was a failure. Very high casualties for the French Army resulted in a struggle to maintain discipline in some of its units and soldiers mutinied.

In Flanders, the Third Battle of Ypres was launched on 31st July. The British Fifth Army commanded by General Hubert Gough advanced in a north-easterly direction away from its positions near Ypres with the Passchendaele Ridge in its sights. The French First Army was on its left. The British Second Army, under General Herbert Plumer, was on its right, holding the ground won during the Battle of Messines a few weeks earlier. Some ground, approximately two miles, was gained on the first day, but that night rain began to fall. The ground all around the British attackers quickly turned into a quagmire. Churned up by the artillery bombardment of the German Front Line and rear areas, the ground the British were now having to advance across was badly damaged and filling up with rainwater which could not drain away through the heavy clay soil. Added to this, several small streams flowed through the area and their natural drainage channels had been destroyed. Due to persistent rain over the next few weeks the whole operation became literally bogged down in thick, sticky Flanders mud. Conditions were so bad that men and horses simply disappeared into the water-filled craters.



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The Third Battle of Ypres comprised of 8 phases. The battle which began on 31st July often takes the name it is more commonly known by, the Battle of Passchendaele, from the First and Second Battles of Passchendaele, which were in fact the last two phases of Third Ypres.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Battle of Pilckem Ridge | 31-Jul-1917—02-Aug-1917 |
| ▪ Battle of Langemarck, 1917 | 16-Aug-1917—18-Aug-1917 |
| ▪ Battle of the Menin Road Ridge | 20-Sep-1917—25-Sep-1917 |
| ▪ Battle of Polygon Wood | 26-Sep-1917—03-Oct-1917 |
| ▪ Battle of Broodseinde | 04-Oct-1917 |
| ▪ Battle of Poelcapelle | 09-Oct-1917 |
| ▪ First Battle of Passchendaele | 12-Oct-1917 |
| ▪ Second Battle of Passchendaele | 26-Oct-1917—10-Nov-1917 |

Many thousands of the casualties on both the Allied and German sides were killed in the fighting during the Third Battle of Ypres. Thousands were listed as missing in action and whose remains, if found, have never been identified.

At the beginning of March 1917, 4th Division was attacking during the Battle of the Scarpe; 21st Battalion Prince of Wales Own (Percy's Battalion) was repairing roads to allow artillery and transport to follow the advance. 21st Battalion remained in the Arras area until the beginning of September when it went into a rest area with 4th Division.

4th Division took part in the Battle of Broodseinde on the 4th October 1917. The 21st Battalion Prince of Wales Own had nine men wounded on the 2nd of October when working on rail and tram ways prior to the fighting and on the 4th October, the Battalion Lewis gun teams went into the attack. It is known that 8 men were killed that day and probably more were wounded. In the following days there were 20 more casualties for the Battalion. On the 9th October fire from the German Artillery caused 18 casualties, whilst they were working on a light railway. The battalion returned to Arras in November 1917.

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Passchendaele. Australian troops over a duckboard track at Chateau Wood.

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Percy Dyson

WW1 War Diaries – Army Form C. 2118 – Extract 9th to 31st October

Prince of Wales's Own - 21st Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (PIONEERS)

Diary written by Major Edwin Finn for Lt Col commanding.

YSER CANAL BANK – October 1917

9th Oct. - IV Division attacked again. "B, C & D" Coys repaired SCHREIBOOM – POELCAPPELLE Road up to V19 a 72. "A" on railways at RUDOLF FARM. – 3 killed, 15 wounded.

10th Oct. - Work as above. Lt. Col. Sir E. H. St. L. Clarke Bart. D.S.O. wounded in leg. Work on road by daylight.

11th Oct. – As Above – 3 wounded

12th Oct. - "B, C & D" Coys repairing road PILCKEM – POELCAPPELLE. "A" Coy on light railways. - 1 killed, 6 wounded.

13th Oct. - Work as above. - Casualties nil.

14th Oct. - Work as above. - 1 wounded.

15th Oct. - Work as above. - Casualties nil.

16th Oct. – Battalion less "A" Coy moved to SARAWAK CAMP, S1 Area IV DIVISION less Artillery & Pioneers move to 3rd Army Area.

17th Oct. – Rest & cleaning up.

18th Oct. – As above.

CHASSEUR FARM – October 1917

19th Oct. – Battalion marched to B11 a 33 Sheet 28 & pitched camp. Transport to B14 a 55.

20th Oct. – Battalion at work on light railways under ADLR5 WARWICK to HANLEY SWITCH – 5 wounded.

21st Oct. – Work as above BIRMINGHAM to VULCAN line. – 5 wounded

22nd Oct. – Work as above - Lt. HANSON wounded, 7 ordinary ranks wounded.

23rd Oct. – "A" Coy re-join battalion, 4 Coys work as above – 2 wounded.

24th Oct. – As above - casualties nil.

25th Oct. – As above – 1 wounded

26th Oct. – "A" Coy at work with 7th YORK & LANCS, B,C & D work as above – Casualties nil.

27th Oct. – "A" Coy work at PHEASANT FARM "B, C & D" on BIRMINGHAM – LANGEMARK line all under A.D.L.R.5. – 7 wounded.

28th Oct. – As above – casualties nil.

29th Oct. – As Above – 3 wounded.

30th Oct. – As Above – Casualties nil

31st Oct. - As above – 2 killed, 2 wounded.

Heavy bombing at night by enemy on 30th & 31st. Fighting strength 28 officers, 696 ordinary ranks. (Chasseur Farm is near the village of Boezinge which is north of the city of Ypres in West Flanders, Belgium. The farm is adjacent to a road called Hynderickstraat).

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Percy's Medal Card

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
14 DYSON Percy.	21. W Yorks	Pte	21/718
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	A898. 0/2/104B3	276	5/9/21
BRITISH	"	"	Dec 392
STAR			4-3-18 ?
			Dofwds 23/10/17.
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

11.8 APR 1984

E19/3553 E/464952/2. K. 1389.

Correspondence.

61/c. no 2. Recs York. fuds nom Roll of men of W. Yorks.
Rgt. for whom W.O. Effects Form 118^a has not yet been received.
28. 6. 20.

Address.
Mr Arthur M. A.K.
Pte Charles Dyson
Brighton Cottages,
Lower Hopton,
Middx
Yorks.

(25456-14a) W.L.W. 5347. H.P. 6451. 2000ms. 10/18 H. St. Est. 5450/1233

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Percy Dyson

In Memory of
Private

Percy Dyson

21/718, 21st Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 23 October 1917 Age 27

Son of J. C. and A. Dyson, of Lower Hopton, Mirfield, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Dozinghem Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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Percy Dyson

Percy's grave at Dozinghem



Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

Westvleteren was outside the front held by Commonwealth forces in Belgium during the First World War, but in July 1917, in readiness for the forthcoming offensive, groups of casualty clearing stations were placed at three positions called by the troops Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem. The 4th, 47th and 61st Casualty Clearing Stations were posted at Dozinghem and the military cemetery was used by them until early in 1918. There are now 3,174 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery and 65 German war graves from this period. The cemetery also contains 73 Second World War burials dating from the Allied withdrawal to Dunkirk in May 1940.

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Percys dedication booklet.

