

Percy John SWEETINGHAM

Born: 1892, Newport

Parents: William Henry Sweetingham and Agnes Caroline Wells

Last known address: Lower Derby Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth

Last known occupation: Railway labourer

Service number: 49816

Regiment: 2nd Battalion Durham Light Infantry

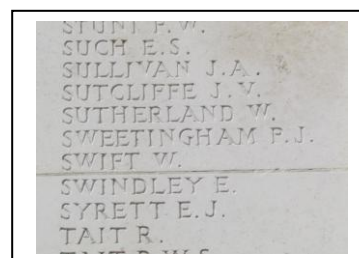
Service history summary:

- enlisted : Winchester, date unknown
- rank: Private
- decorations: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Died: 14 July 1918

Age: 26

Commemorated: [Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium](#)



Family/descendants: Percy was the youngest son of William Henry Sweetingham and Agnes Caroline Wells. William and Agnes were married in 1882 in Newport. William was a brickmaker all his life. In 1901 Percy's elder brothers were both at work – Arthur as a general labourer and Albert as a milk-boy. Albert remained in the dairy trade as he was described as a dairy worker in the 1911 census and Arthur a farm labourer. Sister Beatrice was a servant in a restaurant and Percy was a fish salesman “on his own account”. The family now lived in Church Road, Gurnard.

They were still living there when his father (a brick maker) died in 1919 aged 65. Sister Ethel Kate (domestic servant in Victoria Road, Cowes) was aged 24 and was also living at Sunnycroft Villa when she died in 1919 at the Frank James Memorial Hospital, East Cowes. It must have been a terrible time for his mother to lose a son, a daughter and husband all within 18 months. Agnes herself died in 1939 and Albert in 1947. Albert married Mary Ann Crabb, had one daughter and died in 1969. Beatrice married George Henry Duffin in 1913 and had two children. Beatrice died in 1971 and the last known Island relative was Irene (Maisie) Sweetingham who died in Ventnor on May 29th 2008.

Percy married Lilla Louise Cauvin on December 4th 1915 at Portsmouth Register Office. At the time Percy was a railway labourer and gave a Portsmouth address on his marriage certificate. Lilla was born on March 29th 1895 and died in 1981 in Portsmouth. They had a son, Percy William, born on the Isle of Wight in 1918. On the death of Percy senior Louise requested that his medals be sent to her address in Portsmouth.

Brothers: Albert Henry (1883) and Arthur Edward (1886)

Sisters: Beatrice Mary (1889) and Ethel Kate (1895)

Wife: Lilla Louise Cauvin (1895)

Son: Percy William (1918)

Northwood/Gurnard connection: all the children are recorded as being born in Newport but in 1901 the family were living at 3 Kings Cottages, Debourne Lane, Northwood, which was somewhere in the vicinity of the top of Pallance Lane and Cockleton Lane. In 1911 the family were living in Church Road in Gurnard and at the end of the war his parents and sister Ethel were at Sunnycroft Villa in that road. Agnes and Albert later lived in Barleyfield Cottage in Pallance Road and brother Alfred and his wife lived in the Avenue in Gurnard.

War record: Percy enlisted in Winchester, date unknown but it must have been 1916 at the earliest. It may have been after general conscription was introduced in March that year. The 2nd Battalion the Durham Light Infantry landed at St Nazaire in France on September 10th 1914 and served on the Western Front throughout the War in the 18th Brigade of the 2nd Division. They took part in many major actions including the battles of the Aisne in 1914, the Somme in 1916 and Cambrai in 1917. In 1918 the Battalion was on the Ypres salient and were given the task of capturing German positions at Ridge Wood and Elzenwalle. The following extract comes from *A short history of the 6th Division August 1914 – March 1919* by Sir Thomas Owen Marden (1920)

After careful reconnaissance the 18th Infantry Brigade, assisted by two companies of the 1st Middlesex Regiment of the 33rd Division, attacked the enemy at 6 a.m. on the 14th July. The attack delivered by the 1st West Yorkshire Regiment and the 2nd D.L.I, and the two above-mentioned companies was a complete success. The enemy, taken entirely by surprise, only offered any resistance in one or two isolated cases, and the dash and prompt initiative of the attacking troops soon dealt with these. All objectives were gained, Ridgewood and Elzenwalle retaken, and 7 officers, 341 other ranks, 25 machine-guns, and 3 trench-mortars captured at small cost to the attackers. Large quantities of trench-mortar ammunition, found dumped close up to the front line, demonstrated the correctness of the view that the enemy had in contemplation a resumption of his offensive on this front.

Unfortunately, Percy was part of the 'small cost' as he was killed in the action. It would seem that his body was not recovered as he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial rather than buried in the Ridgewood Cemetery.