

Ann Brooks WW1 exhibit St Cuthbert's Church Brattleby 2014

My Grandmother's brother Percy Johnston was a stretcher-bearer in the 1st World War and was killed on the 22nd October 1915.

Our family has handed down documents and letters that, to some extent bring to life the sacrifice that he and his family made, along with so many others.

At the beginning a very poignant letter from his parents pleading for news that he was alive, through the wonderfully poetic letters from his friend and Commanding Officer describing his death and burial, And then the cold forms from the war offices making his death official, and paying four shillings, the balance of his pay. Then 6 years later the war medal "signed " by the king.

Percy's friend F. Pike wrote to my Grandmother after he was killed.

Belgium
28th Oct 1915

Dear Madam,

It is with deep regret & real
heartfelt sorrow, that I pen these lines to inform
you that your Noble Son was killed in action
on the 22nd Oct. A party of our men
had just laid burning Station just ~~there~~ ^{formed} to
you & it was on the just full day of his work
that some part of a German Shell struck him.
The only lived a very short time after; & as far
as I can make out, ^{he} was unconscious so that he
suffered very little. You will in due time ^{also} ~~must~~
receive from headquarters all his effects, as
they have to go through the Official Channel,
but I am writing this in order that you
should know that your Noble Son Percy
Johnston, was loved & respected by every Officer
N.C.O & Man of the Ambulance & particularly
of his own Section, & we feel with you
in your sorrow & ask one of his Section
with me to convey their heartfelt sympathy
& trust that you will be consoled by the
fact, that your Son died for his Country.

& while attending the Wounded; This is the
first of our losses; & we all feel it very
much, Percy was a bright lad & always full
of life; his friend (Pte) Hyde is also very much
cut up & I believe he has written to you or to his
young Lady; Your dear Boy was laid to rest
in a cemetery between Popinghe & Blarmeringe
on the Ypres Road. ^{On 23rd Oct} All his Section paid their last
respects to your dear son, the full Service was
read & the officer commanding & also the Officers of
his Section; ^{we are delighted} We propose placing a Cross over this
grave to ^{as a token of} show our love & respect for him.
I would like any particular words, or Text
put on it, if so please let me know, or any
other information which you may require, I will
gladly supply if it lays in my power, the
following address will find me,
Staff. Sergt. F. Pike. 51st Field Ambulance
88th Division. British Expeditionary
Force. G.P.O London. This letter is first
for publication & I have written it
in order that you should know all the details
I am five, but this letter must not be
published. Finally may God be very

near you at this time, & give you strength
& courage, death is not the end of all
things but the beginning. & your Boy
has gone to a higher & nobler life, & a
life of joy & peace with Jesus, & now may
that same Jesus who suffered, in order
that we may enjoy peace & happiness in
the life to come, comfort & cheer you
in this time of your sorrow, is the earnest
prayer of yours sincerely
F. Pike

"God is our refuge & strength
& underneath are the everlasting arms"



In 1921 my Grand mother received this war and victory medal from the king.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I join with my grateful people
in sending you this memorial
of a brave life given for others
in the Great War.

George R. S.



My Grandmother's brother Percy Johnston was killed on 22nd October 1915
He was a private in The Royal Army Medical Corps serving in Belgium.

The anguish of his parent not knowing whether he is safe is very touching

Please write by
the return we are
anxious to know what is
the matter
write soon

we are very uneasy
about you we don't
know what is the matter
I want you to write
by the return to let
me know what is the
matter Good night and
God Bless you
from your loving Father
and mother J. A. Johnston



P. O. No. 6. Record Office,

Widmershot Station,

3rd November, 1915.

Sir, Madam,

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office notifying the death of

(No.) 38802 (Rank) Private

(Name) Johnston J. (Regiment) Royal Army

Medical Corps which occurred at No 51 Field Amb,

British Expeditionary Force on the 22nd

of October 1915. and I am to express to you the

sympathy and regret of the Army Council at your loss. The cause of death was

Killed in action.

If any articles of private property left by the deceased are found, they will be forwarded to this Office, but some time will probably elapse before their receipt, and when received they cannot be disposed of until authority is received from the War Office.

Application regarding the disposal of any such personal effects, or of any amount that may eventually be found to be due to the late soldier's estate, should be addressed to "The Secretary, War Office, London, S.W.," and marked outside

It will comfort you to know that he suffered no pain, and passed easily and gently into the great beyond, while great shells were crashing over head, and crackling rifles sang their ceaseless song of death, he slept peacefully; at rest. At night we had him borne back from this awful place and he was buried next day with full military honour.



Royal Army medical Corps,
Record Office,
Aldershot. 9th December 1918.

R.O.

S.S.

Cas.

Sir or Madam,
I am directed to inform you that the following particulars have been received regarding the burial place of the late No. 38802
Rank Private name P. Johnson
Royal Army medical Corps.

Buried in the Field adjoining
School rooms at Brandhoek now
used as a burial ground.
Officiating Chaplain:-
Rev: J. C. McCready.
I am,

Sir, or Madam,
Your obedient Servant,

Mr J. C. Johnson
23 Park St
Stourbridge

J. Johnson
Colonel.
Officer i/c R.A.M.C., Records.

(P 4 87) GDM:1/2 15,000 5/19 HWVP: R18291

Effects--Form 45a. (W.G.)

Any further communication on this subject should be addressed to--
The Secretary,
War Office,
Imperial Institute,
South Kensington,
London, S.W.7,
and the following number quoted.

WAR OFFICE,
IMPERIAL INSTITUTE,
SOUTH KENSINGTON,
LONDON, S.W.7.

E/149673/3 (A/cs. 4.)

6th August 1919

Kadon

I am directed to acquaint you that the Command Paymaster, Eastern Command, Science Museum, Exhibition Road, S. Kensington, London, S.W.7, has been authorised to issue to you the sum of four Pounds

Enclosures.

being the ^{balance} amount that is due to the estate of the late 4038802 Private Percy Johnson
Royal Army Medical Corps on account of War Gratuity.

Should no communication on this subject be received from the Paymaster within the next few days, application for payment should be made to him by letter.

The above amount is issued to You as sole legatee
in accordance with the deceased's will

I am,
Kadon
Your obedient Servant.

Mrs A. Johnson

C Harris
Assistant Financial Secretary.



My father "Cyril" was sent these by his father from the Front.

