

Uzzell Ross

Military record – Attested 14.12.1916 of Hillside terrace,
Kingscourt, age 17, clerk. Mobilised 10/05/1917

1918 absent voter (Kingscourt)

Vaisey Herbert

1918 absent voters (Spillmans Pitch)

Veale A

Stroud and The Great War, published by Stroud News 1920:
A.S.C. 7th Worcs. 1914-15

Veale Bert

Bath Rd, Stroud ASC

Voak George

Military record – attested 25/11/1914, of Kingscourt, age 44
Dicharged on enlisting with artillery 28/12/1918

Valsey H.

Stroud and The Great War, published by Stroud News 1920:
R.N. 1914-15

Verrier Percy

Stroud Journal 18th Dec 1914:

Pte. Percy Verrier son of Mr Harry Verrier, late of Twerton Villas, Butterrow and now residing at Middlebrough (the latter formerly being employed by Messrs. Hill Paul & Co, Stroud) has been severely wounded in three places during the fighting at Meuse Hills in France while on sentry duty. He was shot in the back and by wonderful good luck the shot had an upward glance, thus saving his life. Hardly before he had time to realise he was injured, he was shot gain through the elbow and at the same time a piece of shrapnel hit him on the wrist. He was sent to a hospital at St. Lazare, and from there to the Southern Hospital at Plymouth. He is now quite recovered and is awaiting the next draft for the front. He has been in the 1st Gloucesters for three years and was among the first Expeditionary Force sent to the front.

The cutting was sent to the Cleveland Family History Society with the thought that he might have descendants in the Middlesbrough area and the response was the following wonderfully researched article.



PERCY VERRIER – DID HIS LUCK HOLD?

At the end of the article 'A Bullet With His Name On It' in the July issue of the Journal, it was wondered if Percy Verrier, the subject of the article, had survived WWI and it was hoped that more could be revealed about his life. Two members responded with some fascinating further research.

Bill Burnett reveals his research findings. Percy Harry Verrier was the eldest of 6 surviving children of Harry Livingstone Verrier and his wife Marie, née Veal. Harry and Marie were both born in Bristol and married in the Keynsham district of Bristol in 1892. Harry worked as a



tailor's cutter and soon after their marriage the couple moved to Bradford in West Yorkshire where Harry worked in the booming clothing industry. Their son Percy was born in Bradford in 1895 and baptised at St. John's Anglican Church, Bradford on 29 May 1895. His sister Maud and his brother Leslie were born in Bradford before the family moved back to Gloucestershire, where his brothers Harold, Edwin and Cyril were born. Their father, Harry Verrier, set up his own business as a merchant tailor; when he left school Percy went to work as a groom.

On 20 Mar 1913 Percy joined the British Army. He enlisted at Gloucester as Pte No.9830 in the 1st Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment. When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 Aug 1914 Percy's battalion was at the military training camp at Bordon in Hampshire. The battalion was mobilised and became part of the British Expeditionary Force [BEF]. They left Bordon railway station in the early hours of the morning of 12 Aug 1914 and upon arrival at Southampton embarked for France in the ship *SS Gloucester Castle*, landing at Le Havre on 13 Aug 1914. Percy's battalion was involved in the Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne and the First Battle of Ypres before moving into winter operations. It was during these winter operations that Percy Verrier was wounded, as described in the original article.

Having recovered from his wounds Percy was transferred to the 45th Machine Gun Company [MGC] (infantry) as Pte No.12542 and he was returned to service. On 12 Feb 1916, 45th MGC was attached to the 15th (Scottish) Division, which had been in France since July 1915 and Percy returned to France to join them. Percy would have taken part in the Battle of Pozieres (23 Jul – 3 Sep), a phase of the Battle of the Somme, but on 1 Sep 1916 he reported to a casualty clearing station suffering from gastro enteritis and was sent to a field hospital. It is not known how long it took for Percy to recover but his active service with the BEF in France ended on 25 Oct 1916 and he returned 'home' to base.

Percy was then posted to the machine gun section of the 17th Lancers (cavalry) Regiment and in the spring of 1917 he was one of several men from this unit and other machine gun sections who became members of the 10th Squadron of the Machine Gun Cavalry Brigade. This squadron joined the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force and from 20 May 1917 Percy Verrier was back on active service in present day Iraq. He had arrived at a time when the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Stanley Maud, had paused to regroup his force after successful offensives during March and April 1917.

Operations were renewed in September 1917 with the Battle of Ramada, resulting in the eventual capture of the town on 29 Sep 1917, and after further major successes the Turkish Army surrendered. On 1 Oct 1918 the Armistice of Mudros officially brought to an end hostilities between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire.

Percy remained in Iraq as part of an occupying force until 4 Apr 1919, then returned home. Percy's excellent war service was recognised with the award of the 1914 Star (known as the Mons Star), the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. In 1919 he was awarded the 'Clasp and Roses', which was given to those who served under fire in France and Belgium in August-November 1914.

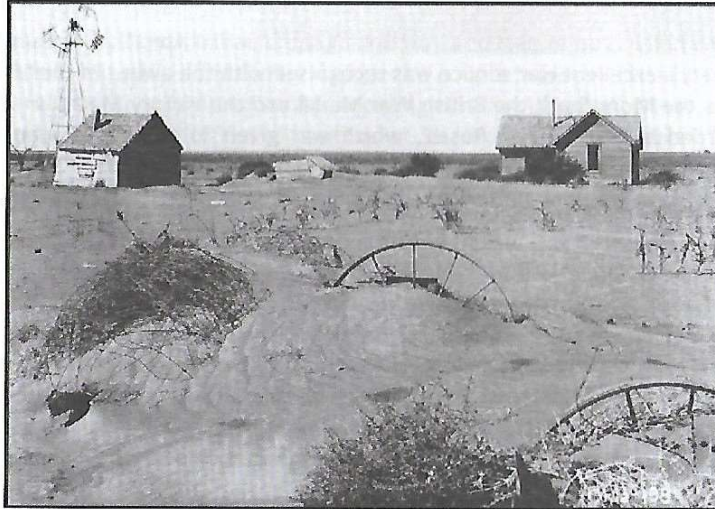
On 8 June 1921 he transferred to the Royal Tank Corps and was placed in Section 'B' of the Army Reserve. This was the most common form of army reserve service for men who had completed their service in the regular army and were serving their normal period (typically five years) on reserve. Section 'B' reservists could only be called upon in the event of general mobilisation. Pay was 3 shillings and 6 pence a week. The men returned to civilian life and work but had to attend training at agreed times during each year. Percy went to live with his parents, who by this time had moved to Middlesbrough, and six months later in December 1921 his father, Harry Verrier, died and was buried in Linthorpe Cemetery, Middlesbrough.

Percy was finally discharged from the Army Reserve on 17 Mar 1922 and gave his address as 11 Surrey Street, Middlesbrough. He was discharged 'free to reside permanently outside the UK' and five days later, taking advantage of the British Government's Overseas Settlement Scheme he was on his way to Canada.

The scheme offered free passage to ex-service men and women to any country in the British Empire. He left Liverpool on 25 Mar 1922 aboard the *SS Montcalm*, of the Canadian Pacific Line, destined for St John's, New Brunswick, Canada. On his declaration form, completed upon arrival at St John's, Percy stated that his present occupation was steel worker, that his intended occupation in Canada was farming and that his destination in Canada was Ogema, Saskatchewan where his "uncle" Francis J Mead was living. Ogema was in the back of beyond and only had its first settlers in 1908 and there are no further references to Percy in Canadian records. Did he make it?

Here, David Moden takes up the story. Checking US records, in the 1930 US Census a P.H. Verrier was found renting a room in Oklahoma City. His place of birth was given as 'Canada Eng', indicating his earlier move from England to Canada, and his year of immigration into the US was 1928, so he must have worked in Canada for six years before moving on.

The early 1930s was a particularly difficult time in Oklahoma, when a drought hit the region, resulting in crop failures and with nothing to bind the soil it was blown from the lands, which became known as the Dust Bowl. Farmers, with no crops to sell, were unable to pay back the banks and so had their farms repossessed. Their struggles were made famous in John Steinbeck's classic novel *'The Grapes of Wrath'*.



At the time of the 1930 Census Percy was working as a meat packer in a packing plant in Oklahoma City. Two years later, in September 1932, Percy Harry Verrier married Edie Mullins, age 19, in Oklahoma. He continued to work for Wilson & Co., a food processing company.

In 1946 Percy had a change of direction. The World War II US Army Enlistment Records (which include records beyond the War's end) show that Percy enlisted on 1 March 1946 as a Staff Sergeant with the Transportation Corps. He gave his birth year as 1900 rather than 1895, possibly to ensure that this was within the age limit for his role (as he was really 51 years old on enlistment). Maybe he made the move because the Army pay was better than what he was getting from working at the meat processing plant? Percy served for three and a half years, until his discharge on 17 September 1949.

He then returned to living with his wife, Edie, in Oklahoma City, until his death in June 1961. His wife successfully applied to the US Government for a headstone, which they paid for because of his army service.

So the answer to 'did his luck hold?' is yes. Percy did survive his return to the front and went on to be honoured for his army service, and then spent the rest of his life in the New World.

To complete the story, Bill traced Percy's family still in Middlesbrough. The 1939 Register recorded his widowed mother Marie, his brother Cyril and his married brother Edwin with his wife Grace, living together at 11 Surrey Street. Marie Verrier died in Middlesbrough in December 1939 and was buried in the same grave as her husband Harry in Linthorpe Cemetery. Cyril Verrier married at Middlesbrough shortly after the 1939 Register was taken and there were descendants of his still living in Middlesbrough in 2014.

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Sources:

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England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975 – Family Search
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British Army Medal Index Cards, 1914-1920 – Ancestry
Passenger Lists Leaving UK 1890-1960 – Findmypast
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Saskatchewan, Canada, Online Genealogy Records – Family Search
1939 England and Wales Register – Ancestry
UK Electoral Registers 2002-2014 – Findmypast

Vick George Mortimer

1918 absent voters (Spillmans Pitch)

Vass Charles Frederick

1918 absent voter (White Lion, Dudbridge)