

HENRY ARMSTRONG

Henry was born in Partney in 1888. He was known as Harry and in 1891 was living with his grandparents, William and Sarah, his mother Mary Ann, a Charwoman, and his brother George (aged 24) in Partney. His grandfather, a shoemaker, died in 1895 aged 82.

By the 1901 Census Henry was living with his 88 year old grandmother and his mother Mary Ann, now a housekeeper, in Partney. His grandmother Sarah Armstrong died in 1902 aged 90.

On 1st March 1909, aged 21, Harry married Sarah Ann Jarvis. On the night of April 2nd 1911 the couple were visiting Harry's mother in Partney and are recorded there on the 1911 Census.

Their son Henry William was born in Partney on 5th September 1911 and baptised in St Nicholas Church on 8th October 1911. The Parish Register records Harry as working as a labourer at this time.

Two further children were born to the couple who had by now moved to Croft Marsh, Wainfleet. They were Mary Elizabeth on 22nd November 1913 and Phyllis born 20th April 1916.

Harry enlisted for service in the First World War on 24th June 1916 and was called up and signed up on 5th January 1917 in Lincoln for the duration of the War. He was 28 years and 219 days old, a farm labourer. His Service Record shows that he stood 5'7½" tall and weighed 143lbs. His chest was 34½ inches but 37" when expanded. His address was now given as Braeside, Drummond Road, Skegness. Harry's cousins, William and Albert Piper also fought in the Great War.

He was appointed to the 12th Training Reserve Battalion at Brocton in Staffordshire on 9th January 1917. During his training he spent the period 6th to 27th March 1917 in hospital with measles, complicated by bronchitis. He made a full recovery from the illness but not, perhaps, from the death of his daughter Phyllis on 6th March 1917 at the age of 10 months from pneumonia followed by cardiac failure. The army kindly recompensed him the 2s7d cost of providing her death certificate.

On 30th April 1917, after just under 4 months training, he was sent to Folkestone and on to France. He was now with the 11th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters (the Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment).

He was posted home on 23rd October 1917 to the Military Hospital in Endell Street, London for an operation on a small wound. This Military Hospital was entirely staffed by women and was founded in 1915 by a group of public spirited women who were determined to prove they could run hospitals, whether as medical, management, or ancillary staff. Two of the founders were suffragettes, Louisa Garrett Anderson and Dr Flora Murray. Sir Alfred Keogh the Director of the Royal Army Medical Corps invited the women to set up the

hospital though other members of the RAMC thought it would not work and close soon after opening.

Harry transferred to the auxiliary hospital on 12th November 1917 and was discharged on 3rd December 1917 'on furlough'. He had refused an operation for his rupture and surgical opinion was that he should wear a truss.

On 21st December 1917 he was transferred to the 3rd Reserve Battalion in Sunderland and then on 7th August 1918 to the 3rd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. On 20th September 1918 he proceeded to the Transfer Centre in Dublin for compulsory transfer under Army Council Instruction 720 to the Labour Centre at Newtownards.

Presumably this transfer had something to do with the fact that he was suffering with his rupture as he then transferred to the Agricultural Company of the Labour Corps. By now Harry was 31 and his condition recorded as BII. Nevertheless, the Medical Officer Selection Board felt he was fit for agricultural work.

The transfer document records his last employer as Mr R S Hand of Croft Marsh, nr Wainfleet. This was Richard Hand who farmed Croft Grange at Croft Marsh.

On 30th November 1918 Harry was found to be off base at Tattoo and punished by losing 6 days pay.

He was officially demobbed on 18th February 1919 having been awarded both the Victory Medal and the British War Medal and remaining a Private throughout his service.