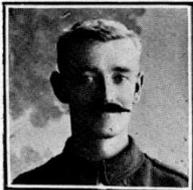


## William Albert Gash



William Albert Gash was born in Ham, Surrey in 1888. He was the son of William Gash (born in 1839 in Henley, Oxfordshire), an agricultural labourer, and his wife Amy nee Piggott (born abt. 1847 in Hambledon, Buckinghamshire). His parents married in 1863 in Henley and by 1911 William and his parents were living at 27 Orchard Road, Wellington Road, Hounslow in 1911. The 1911 census records that the parents had had 21 children, 14 of which had died by then. In 1911 his father, William, was listed as a gardener. By 1917 William and Amy had moved to 33 St Mark's Road Hanwell. William died in 1918 followed by his wife Amy in 1931. Both deaths were registered in Brentford. In 1912 William married Rhoda Elizabeth Maria Spink (born 1888, registered Brentford) at Holy Trinity Church, Hounslow on the 25<sup>th</sup> December. They had a son Donald William R. Gash in 1913. He married Dorothy Beadle in Brentford in 1939, was a captain in the merchant navy and died in Yeovil in 1939. William worked as a soap factory hand at Pears Soap Works and is listed on the A & F Pears Ltd War Memorial which was formerly at their site in London Road, Isleworth; he is also on the St John's Memorial in Isleworth. The commemorations (*below left*) appeared in the Pears Soap Factory "Bubbles" magazine and Middlesex Chronicle of the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1917. The In Memoriam (*below right*) was published in the Middlesex Chronicle on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1918.

**Pte. William Gash**, 31, South Wales Borderers (West Melting House). Gave his life in the great cause on the 27th March 1917. He died of cerebral meningitis at No. 7 General Hospital, St. Omer, and was buried at the Souvenir Cemetery. The Commanding Officer wrote to Mrs. Gash as follows: "DEAR MRS. GASH,—It was with the deepest regret that I heard of your husband's death at the Base. He was with us only a very short time, but long enough to have gained the respect, admiration, goodwill, and confidence of all the Officers and men of this Coy. He was in my Platoon, and I feel keenly that I have been robbed of one of my best men—one whose character was pure white. I feel how fruitless and weak must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from a loss so overwhelming. I pray our God may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of British freedom.—Yours very sincerely and respectfully, C. A. SUNDY, Officer in charge, 15 Platoon."



Pte. W. GASH

The "Middlesex Chronicle" published the accompanying:—  
**"DEATH OF A PEARS' WARRIOR.**  
 "Widespread regret will be occasioned by the death in France of Pte. W. Gash, S.W. Borderers, late of the Queen's Regiment, who gave his life in the great cause on 27th March at No. 7 General Hospital, St. Omer. He was the youngest of three soldier sons of Mr. and Mrs. Gash, who resided for 20 years in Orchard Road, Wellington Road, Hounslow, and before joining up was employed at Messrs. Pears' Soap Works for a period of twelve years. In May last, with many others from the same firm, he answered the call, and after three months' strenuous training at Sittingbourne was dispatched to France to take his part in the great struggle. Deceased was an ardent sportsman, and many followers of football and cricket will remember him in connexion with these favourite pastimes as an enthusiastic and keen player."

**"Gash:** In loving memory of my darling husband, Private. W Gash, 10<sup>th</sup> South Wales Borderers, who died in France, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1917, aged 27 years, to the great grief of those who loved him,—60 Linkfield Rd, Isleworth. A loving husband, a father kind, a beautiful memory left behind. He proudly answered his country's call. His life he gave for one and all. Could we have raised his dying hand, or heard his last farewell the blow would not have been so hard. To us he loved so well".

St Omer was a considerable hospital centre for Commonwealth troops. The cemetery has 3177 identifiable casualties and

23 men of the Chinese Labour Corps.

Whilst William's brother Frederick (born 1879), who served in the Princess Charlotte of Wales (Royal Berkshire) Regiment, survived the war, his brother Frank (born 1886), was killed in action on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1917 also serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers. William and Rhoda lived at 60 Linkfield Road, Isleworth (*see right for a 2017 photo of the house*) where she continued to live well into the 1960s. She remarried in Hounslow in 1966 to Herbert G Rouse and died in 1968 in Sudbury.

