

# RICHARD PENDLEBURY



7th July 1918

1871-1918 Aged 48

**Corporal 479541, 4th Battalion West Yorkshire Volunteer Regiment, 44th Special Service Company.**

Richard Pendlebury's wartime service is a reminder of just how fully the British population had been mobilized by the final year of the war. He was born in Peckham, south-east London, in 1870. His father John was a 'Certificated Schoolmaster' who taught at St. Olave's Grammar School, Southwark. During the 1870s he moved northwards with his growing family, firstly to Huddersfield and then to Horton, Bradford. By 1891 he was unemployed, and later he gave up teaching to become a clerk and cashier. Richard was the eldest of seven children who survived infancy. He attended the Bradford Grammar School for three years from 1882 to 1885 before he followed in his father's footsteps by qualifying as a certificated teacher. He taught in one of Bradford City Council's secondary schools. In 1910 he married another teacher, Maud Mary Moxon who lived with her parents on a neighbouring street in Manningham. He was forty, she eight years his junior. They had no children.

Richard was in his mid forties when the war began, and even when conscription was introduced in 1916 the upper limit for service was forty-one. As the Territorial Force which was originally intended for home defence was mobilized to serve overseas, new volunteer forces were created to fill their role. Over time the name and the organisation changed. Then in the crisis of the 1918 German Spring Offensive the upper age limit for service was extended to fifty-one, and even those exempted from active service were expected to serve in the Volunteers. When Richard joined the 4th (Bradford) Battalion West Riding Volunteer Regiment is not known, however he served for long enough to reach the rank of Corporal. After the government had sent all available trained men to France, and fearing a German descent across the North Sea, it appealed for 15,000 men from the county volunteer regiments



to form Special Service Companies for coastal defence. Richard responded by joining the 44th Company and on 29th June this force took station along the east coast. Only men under eighteen and over thirty-five could be accepted. They lived under canvas and undertook heavy work on defensive positions as well as patrolling by day and night. They received military pay and allowances. Pendlebury fell ill with influenza and he was admitted to Bridlington Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital. Although this was not the more deadly Spanish variety of influenza which became prevalent later in the year, it caused a heart attack which killed him on 7th July 1918, barely a week after he took up his station.

Corporal Richard Pendlebury died in the uniform and the service of his country, yet because he did not serve overseas he was not entitled to any medals. His body was brought to Nab Wood Cemetery, Shipley, for interment. Maud did not remarry.



### **Acknowledgements:**

Pendlebury's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com). His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the B.G.S. Annual Reports for 1883-85.

Little has been written on the subject of the various forms the volunteer defence organisation took. I have relied on an article in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* of 10th March 1919, accessed through [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk), and the erudite contributions to the ever useful Great War Forum (<<https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/3763-west-riding-volunteers/>>, <<https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/254910-another-cap-badge-id/?tab=comments#comment-2578980>>, accessed 19-6-2018). <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volunteer\\_Training\\_Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volunteer_Training_Corps)> is not entirely accurate.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in June 2018. For further information, contact [Nhooper1956@googlemail.com](mailto:Nhooper1956@googlemail.com), or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.