

# PERCIVAL CLEMENT ELLIS

1891-1915 Age 23



## 6th January 1915

### Private 879, 1st battalion Honourable Artillery Company (Infantry).

Percival Ellis was born on 25 September 1893 at Steeton in Craven, the youngest of five sons born to Arthur Devonshire Ellis of Sheffield and his wife Amy Collett Ellis (nee Homersham) of Shooter's Hill, Kent. Their sixth child was a daughter. Arthur was an engineer and was managing director of Thwaites Brothers Vulcan Ironworks of Thornton Road, Bradford, for more than twenty years. In 1880 this was the largest such concern in Bradford. By 1901 the family were established in Ilkley, first at Lark Hill and then at Mount Royd, Parish Ghyll Drive. From 1904, when he was practically 13 years old, until 1908, Percival made the daily journey to Bradford Grammar School, situated conveniently close for the commuter to Forster Square Midland Railway Station. He makes no appearance in the pages of *The Bradfordian* during these years.

Percival was admitted to Leeds University in October 1908, aged 17, with the intention of qualifying as a metallurgist. He studied Maths; Physics and Chemistry, General engineering and Engineering drawing; Chemistry and Fuel, and metallurgy. He was also a member of the Officer Training Corps. In his third year (1910-11) his attendance ceased after Easter 1911, and so he did not graduate. His mother had died in 1909, and by 1914 the whole family moved to Richmond in south-west London, where Arthur, four of his sons and his daughter lived at 2 Cardigan Road. Percival was working for Thwaites Brothers as an engineer. On the same day as Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, Percival presented himself at Armoury House, the Headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company in the City of London, to volunteer. It seems likely that his elder brother Alexander Arthur Ellis enlisted together, for they disembarked in France on the same day.

The 1st HAC, a Territorial battalion, was brought up to strength with 500 recruits like Percival who while not fully trained, had OTC experience. They were sent first to western France, where for a month they trained, before they were sent in early November to join 3rd Division at the front south of Ypres. At this time they had never even fired their rifles! They were educated by short spells in the trenches with regular soldiers, both British and Indian. On 3rd December they were inspected by the King and Prince of Wales. On 4th January the 1st and 4th companies were sent into the line at Kemmel, near Ypres. On 5th January it was reported all was well in the trenches, but the following day Captain Newton was killed and three men wounded by enfilade fire from a German machine gun. Although the Battalion War Diary does not name the men, Ellis was among them. He was taken to 7th Field Ambulance at Locre where he died of his wounds. He was buried in the village churchyard.

Percival's brother Henry chose the inscription for his gravestone: "*Bis Dat Qui Cito Dat*" which translates as "*He gives twice who gives promptly*". His three brothers who served in the war all survived. His possessions were returned to the family in May 1915. They included the Christmas present of a brass box of cigarettes and tobacco given by Queen Mary to all British soldiers at the front.



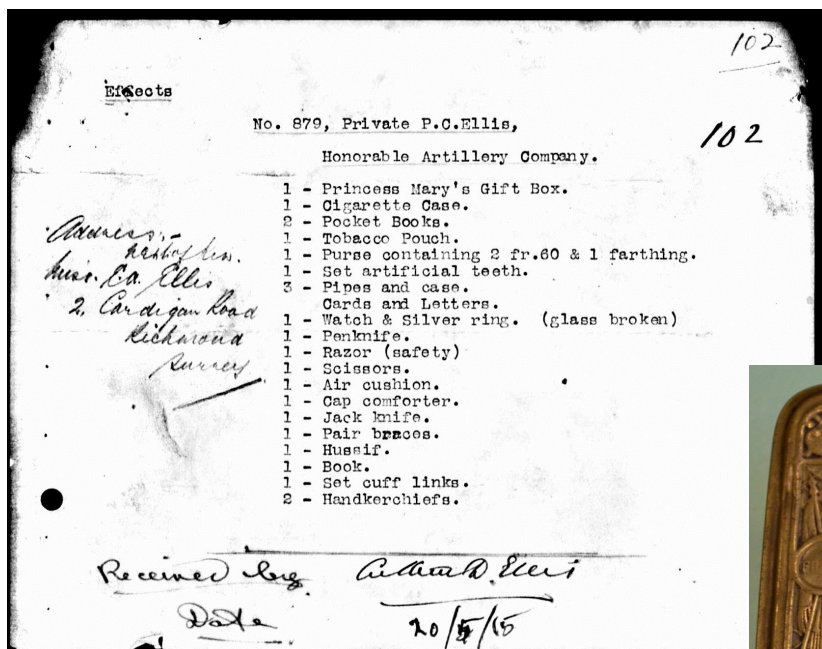




### Acknowledgements:

The Bradfordian; Ancestry was used to consult the census records for 1891, 1901, 1911, Ellis's Service Record and the Medal Roll Index cards; The Honourable Artillery Company website, "Out of the noise of battle", <https://hac1418.wordpress.com/>; Leeds University War Memorial is recorded on <http://westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-people/memorials/1646-the-university-of-leeds-otc-and-roll-of-honour.html>; the image of Ellis's grave is from <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=49407549&Pipi=62161530>; I am very grateful to Nick Brewster, Archive Assistant, Leeds University, for providing details of Ellis's university days, and to Tricia Platts of Bradford WW1 Group for sharing her research on the Ellis family with me.

Compiled by Nicholas Hooper (NAH@bradfordgrammar.com/Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) 2015.



Above: the inventory of Percival's possessions preserved in his Service Record (downloaded from Ancestry).

Right: An example of Queen Mary's Christmas gift to the soldiers (author's collection).

Below: the Medal Roll Index cards for Percival (left) and Alexander (right) showing they both enlisted as privates in the Honourable Artillery Company and went to France together (disembarkation date is given as 18th September 1914).

Campaign: *B.E.F. 1914* (A) Where decoration was earned.  
(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) <i>ELLIS</i>	<i>H.A.C.</i>	<i>Pte.</i>	<i>879</i>	<i>TP/1/22</i>
(B) <i>PC</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>H.A.C.</i>

Action taken

MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
VICTORY	<i>TP/102/B</i>	<i>30</i>
BRITISH	<i>00</i>	<i>00</i>
STAR	<i>00</i>	<i>00</i>

*Wounded 6/1/15  
Rev'd (W & K.R.) 1956/Adk*

Disembarkation Date *18/9/14*

(6 34 46) W234-HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 (OVER) *1956/Adk*

Campaign: *B.E.F. 1914* (A) Where decoration was earned.  
(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) <i>ELLIS</i>	<i>H.A.C.</i>	<i>Pte.</i>	<i>1103</i>	<i>TP/1/21</i>
(B) <i>A.A.</i>	<i>W.C. Regt.</i>	<i>2/Lieut.</i>	<i>62B</i>	<i>on W.C. Regt. T.R. 103/10/42 i. Commissioned</i>

Action taken

Disembarkation Date *18-9-14*

*Roll shows  
W.C. Regt. 1956/Adk  
W. 5/5/16  
O.C. State led  
at 18-9-14*

(6 34 46) W3138-RP133 50,000 12/17 HWV(P1947) G17/1048

There are several records relating to Percival Clement Ellis in the archive. Two parallel registry records list his presence from 1908 to 1911. He was admitted on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1908 aged 17. Home address is given as Mount Royd, Parish Ghyll Drive, Ilkley. Present or intended occupation is given as metallurgist. His first year subjects were Maths; Physics & Chemistry including lab work, General engineering and Engineering drawing. Year 2 was Chemistry and Fuel, including lab work, and metallurgy. The third year (1910-11) only Fuel lab work was undertaken. His attendance ceases after Easter 1911. He didn't graduate – he is not in the Register of Graduates.

There are some formal group photos of engineering students, but they are not annotated and I'm not sure what course he was on. The University calendars only show students by faculty, but he appears to have done exams, so may well appear in results lists towards the back of the 1909-10 and 1910-11 Calendars, which are now or will shortly be online via the University's Special Collections website.

Regards,

Nick Brewster

University Archive Asst

