

Acting 2nd Corporal William Fox
Regimental number: 412100
409th Field Company, Royal Engineers

born: 4 July 1892 - died: 16 July 1918

Acting 2nd Corporal William Fox was born at 9.30 a.m. on 4 July 1892 at 22 Gartsherrie Road in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, Scotland.¹ He was the son of David and Margaret Fox. His parents were also both born in Coatbridge – his father in about 1865 and his mother, the former Margaret Wood, in about 1872. David and Margaret married on 2 October 1891 in Larbert, about 30 kilometres from Coatbridge. They had six children but, unfortunately, only two survived to 1911. These were William and his younger sister, Ann, born in about 1901. In 1911, the family was still living in Coatbridge, where David was a pig iron weigher and William was a blacksmith's apprentice.²

William enlisted as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers in Coatbridge and was later promoted to Acting 2nd Corporal.³ He served with the 409th Field Company (formerly the 1st Lowland Field Company).⁴ The 409th went to France in August 1914 and joined the 1st Division in December 1914. William joined the Company about the same time, arriving on the Western Front on 16 December 1914.⁵ His company took part in most of the major engagements on the Western Front.

William survived for three and a half years on the Front but, just days after his 26th birthday, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with a compound fracture of his skull and shrapnel wounds in his back that penetrated his abdomen.⁶ He died on 16 July 1918 and was buried the same day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Grave 42, Plot 5, Row E). The chaplain A. D. Reid presided and later notified his mother of his death. His mother received the monies owing to him from the army after his death.⁷ His parents had now lost one of their only two surviving children.

The day that he was admitted, William was one of 129 admissions to the 1st CCCS and he was one of 39 to die at that CCCS in July. Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.⁸ This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

William was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).⁹

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¹ "Statutory registers-births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 15 May 2015) entry for Fox, William, GROS data 652/02 0780

² "1911 Scotland census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 15 May 2015) entry for Fox, David, GROS data 652/02 028/00 008

³ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 May 2015), entry for William Fox

⁴ "409th (1st Lowland) Field Company, The Royal Engineers," *The Wartime Memories Project - The Great War* (<http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/royalengineers409fldcoy-gw.php>; accessed 15 May 2015)

⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 May 2015), entry for William Fox

⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 627

⁷ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 May 2015), entry for William Fox

⁸ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 May 2015), entry for William Fox