

Of Your Charity Please Pray for

John Durr

Private J. Durr (47239)

10th Battalion Manchester Regiment

Died 6th June 1918

Buried at Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette, Somme, France¹

John Durr was born in Stockport in 1891.² The family were living at 36, High Street³ but then moved to 7, Fletcher Street close to St. Joseph's Church.⁴ Both his parents, John (Senior) and Sarah née King, worked in the cotton spinning mills. John was the eldest and had two brothers, including Joseph, and five sisters.⁵

By 1911 John Durr (Senior) was working for Stockport Borough Council as a labourer, possibly in the council depot that was behind St. Joseph's Church. Also in 1911 John Durr (Junior) was working as a duffer in the cotton mills.⁵ At some point the family moved to 124, Newbridge Lane.⁶

From his original Service Number 3721⁷, it would seem that John enlisted in the 10th Battalion Manchester Regiment in June 1915.⁸ After some rapid training John was posted to his Battalion then fighting at Gallipoli. He arrived on 24th October 1915 at the back end of the campaign.⁷ The Battalion was withdrawn from Gallipoli at the end of December 1915. They moved via Mudros to Egypt where they spend the whole of 1916 in defence of the Suez Canal and other key installations.⁹

In early spring 1917 the Battalion sailed from Egypt arriving at Marseille on 6th March. By mid-April they had arrived at the Somme. They spent the next year in the trenches of the Western Front. The Battalion was in trenches near Hebuterne in June 1918 when John died.⁹ He may have contracted influenza.¹⁰ His tombstone has the inscription "Their Glory Shall Not Be Blotted Out."¹

John's brother, **Joseph** also enlisted in the South Wales Borderers in December 1915 and was transferred to the Royal Welch Fusiliers in February 1916. After a spell in hospital Joseph was discharged in March 1916 as medically unfit. He had curvature of the spine and tuberculosis. It transpired that Joseph had been in a sanatorium for 6 months during 1915. He was given a sum of £52 in lieu of a pension and went back to his previous work as a railway porter.⁶

+ Rest in Peace +

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¹ Commonwealth War Graves Commission "Find War Dead" <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/286062/durr-/> [Accessed 8 April 2015]

² General Registry Office Online Index https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp [Accessed 11 August 2018]. Name: Durr, John, Mother's Maiden Surname: King, GRO Reference: 1891 M Quarter in Stockport Volume 08A Page 75

³ The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; 1891. Class: RG12; Piece: 2797; Folio: 38; Page: 36.

⁴ The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; 1901. Class: RG13; Piece: 3291; Folio: 19; Page: 29. Note that Patrick King is living with the family in 1901 and is identified as John Durr's (Senior) Brother-in-law.

⁵ The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; 1911. 1911. Class: RG14; Piece: 21395.

⁶ War Office: Soldiers' Documents from Pension Claims, First World War (Microfilm Copies); (The National Archives Microfilm Publication WO364; Piece: 1083); Records created or inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and related bodies; The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Kew, Surrey, England. This is Joseph Durr's pension record.

⁷ Army Medal Office. WWI Medal Index Cards. In the care of The Western Front Association website. [Accessed via ancestry.co.uk 18 July 2014].

⁸ Nixon, Paul, Army Service Numbers 1881-1918 <http://armyservicenumbers.blogspot.com/2009/02/10th-manchester-regiment.html> At the time Army Service Numbers were issued sequentially by regiment. Nixon has analysed these numbers by year, so the Manchester Regiment issued Service Number 3661 on 3 June 1915 and Service Number 3792 on 2 July 1915. This indicates that John Durr enlisted between these dates.

⁹ The Manchester Regiment, The Tenth (Territorial) Battalion <https://www.themanchesters.org/10th%20batt.htm> [Accessed 11 August 2018].

¹⁰ John's records note that he died rather than died of wounds which would indicate death from disease or other causes. The 10th Battalion had recently helped train newly arrived American troops (See reference 9 above May 1918) and John may have been exposed to influenza at that time.

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