

JAMES HENRY NICHOLAS - 9 March 1878 to 23 December 1916

Died of Wounds Received in Action

Service Number: 40797; 2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment.

Buried at CONTAY BRITISH CEMETERY



James Henry Nicholas was born on the 9th March 1878 at 75 Coleshill Buildings in Pimlico, Middlesex¹. His parents were Alfred Nicholas from Pembrokeshire and Mary, nee Craddock, who was born in Egloshayle in 1845. Mary's grandfather was Richard Spoure Craddock jnr (born 1774 in North Hill and died in 1864 in the workhouse at Bodmin).

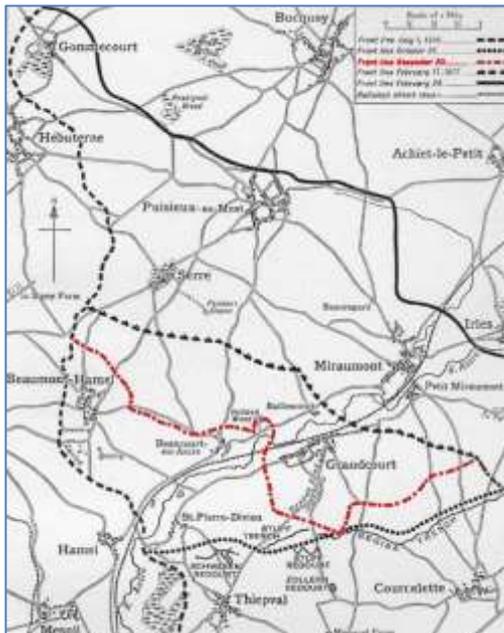
¹ Pimlico was in Middlesex until the London County Council was formed in 1890.

James married Bessie Jane Davey in 1900 in Chelsea Register Office in London. She was also a great grandchild of Richard Spoure Craddock jnr and the bride and groom were, therefore, second cousins. They had eight children, all born in the Chelsea area between 1901 and 1917. The last two children were born in January 1917 just two weeks after the death on the Western Front of their father, James.

James was a career soldier and enlisted as a young man. His first term of service was with the 1st Suffolks during the Boer War at the end of which he was awarded the King's South Africa medal with clasps for his service in The Cape Colony, The Orange Free State and in Transvaal - as shown here. At the end of the war he was transferred to the 2nd battalion and went to serve in India.



During its service in India the 2nd Battalion became known as a "well officered battalion that compared favourably with the best battalion in the service having the nicest possible feeling amongst all ranks". The 2nd was also regarded as a good shooting battalion with high level of musketry skills.



Once his term of service was over he returned to 'civvy street' and in 1911 was working as a painter. With the start of World War One, his military skills were important once more and he rejoined, initially into the London Regiment under service number 7245 before being restored to his old regiment, the 2nd Suffolks who were sent to serve in France and Flanders. At the end of 1916 the regiment were posted in the front line of the Battle of the Somme, near Beaumont-Hamel and Ancre. The front line was as shown on this map in red and it was here that James was wounded.

James was taken from the battle to the Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) near Ancre where he died of his wounds on the 23rd December 1916. His remains were buried, alongside comrades who also died at the CCS, at Contay British Cemetery in plot VII grave B2. He left a wife, pregnant with twins, and five children aged from 16 years of age to 4 years of age.

Bessie, his widow, never remarried and died in Chelsea in 1934. His daughter, also named Bessie was born in 1905 but died in infancy. Of the twins that were born after James' death, only one survived.



James was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal (above)

His last resting place in Contay British Cemetery, France (left).