

## 156: William Pierce

### Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: William Pierce

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 5th Bn. Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Service Number: 2933

Date of Death: 05 September 1915

Age at Death: 40

Buried / Commemorated at: Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Canakkale, Turkey & Mold Urban War Memorial

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of the late Robert and Caroline Pierce, of Pwll-Glos, Mold, Flintshire and the husband of the late Mary Pierce, of Ince House, Parkgate, Cheshire

William Pierce was born in Holywell in April/June 1875, the second son of builder (in 1871 he was a bricklayer) Robert and Caroline Pierce.

Robert Pierce	Head	Man	41	Master bricklayer employing 2 labourers	Flintshire Mold
Caroline Pierce	Wife	Woman	41		Denbighshire Llanferres
Robert Pierce	Son		14	carpenter's apprentice	Flintshire Mold
Sarah Pierce	Daughter		12	Scholar	Flintshire Mold
William Pierce	Son		6	Scholar	Flintshire Mold
Peter H. Pierce	Son		3		Flintshire Mold

### 1881 census (extract) – 28 Cilcain Road, Mold

Robert Pierce	41	master builder employing 2 labourers	born Mold
Caroline	41		born Llanferres, Denbighshire
Robert	14	carpenter's apprentice	born Mold
Sarah	12		born Mold
William	6		born Mold
Peter H.	3		born Mold

No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, ALLEY, and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON. DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of Male Person	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	WHEAT SOWN
218	21 Pwll Glas	1	Robert Pierce	Head	Ch	41	Builder	
			Caroline	Wife	Ch	41		
			Sarah	Daughter	S	12	Assistant Schoolmistress	
			William	Son	S	6	Apprentice	
219	Pwll Glas	1	Peter Humphrey	Son	Ch	3	Scholar	
			Annice Ralph	Head	Wid	41	Landowner	
			Ann S. Jones	Son	S	12		

### 1891 census (extract) – 21 Pwll Glas, Holywell

Robert Pierce	51	builder	born Mold
Caroline	51		born Llanferres, Denbighshire
Sarah	22	assistant schoolmistress	born Mold
William	16	(?) apprentice	born Mold
Peter Humphrey	13		born Mold

William Pierce married Mary Rogers at a Civil Marriage in Holywell in late 1896 and their first child, Ceridwen Victoria, was born in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1897.

William Pierce.	Head.	M	25	Bricklayer.	Worker.	Home.	Mold.	Flint.		Born.
Mary.	Wife.	M	27	—	—	—	Flint.	"		"
Ceridwen V.	Daughter.	S.	3	—	—	—	Mold.	"		"

1901 census (extract) – 84 High Street, Mold

William Pierce	25	bricklayer	born Mold
Mary	27		born Flint
Ceridwen	3		born Mold

Their house in Mold High Street was next door to the Brown Cow public house (now The Dolphin Inn & Hotel) and could have been the left side of the black-and-white building, now forming part of the modern Hotel:



Source: Google StreetView



www.browncowpublishing.com

By the time of the 1911 census the family had moved the short distance from Mold High Street to 9 Conway Street, Mold, a terraced house which has now been demolished:





1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.
1	William Pierce	Head	34	Married	-				Bricklayer 220	Builders	Widow	-	Hamble Mold	-	-	Both
2	Mary Pierce	Wife	-	27	Married	14	4	4					"			Both
3	Ceridwen V Pierce	Daughter	-	13	Single				School 90		0		"			Both
4	Robert David Pierce	Son	9	Single					"				"			Both
5	Glynne Owen	Son	4	Single					"				"			Both
6	William James Pierce	Son	3	Single									"			Both
7	Alice Smith	Visitor	25	Married	4	3	1	1	Traveller (Actor)	Theatrical	Widow		Warrickham 101			English
8	Fredrick Smith	Visitor	2	Single									"			English
9	Walter Smith	Visitor	8	Single									"			English

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)				(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)			
I certify that— (1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper columns. (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 5 and 6 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on this Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous. Initials of Enumerator: R.D.				Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop. 4 Rooms			
Males	Females	Persons		I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature: <u>Mary Pierce</u> Postal Address: <u>9 Conway Street Mold</u>			
6	3	9					

1911 census (condensed) – 9 Conway Street, Mold

William Pierce	34	bricklayer, builders	born Mold
Mary	37		born Mold
Ceridwen V.	13		born Mold
Robert David	9		born Mold
Glynne Owen	4		born Mold
William James	3		born Mold
Alice Smith	25	visitor, traveller, actor, theatrical	born Birmingham
Fredrick Smith	2		born Birmingham
Walter Smith	8 months		born Birmingham

William and Mary had been married for 14 years and all four children had survived.

Both of William's parents died in 1912; Caroline died in April/June, aged 72, and Robert died a few months later aged 73.

William Pierce's connection to Neston is unclear; indeed, he may not have had any association with the town as the only record shows that his widow, Mary, was living at Ince House, Parkgate, after his death and the report of his death was carried by the Flintshire Observer which noted that the family lived at Alyn Bank, Mold. However, it is recorded that at least two of William's children married on Wirral, one at Neston.

Ceridwen Victoria Pierce married William Treadwell at Neston Parish Church in July/September 1928. William Treadwell wasn't local to Neston, or Wirral, but was the 12-year old schoolboy recorded in the 1911 census as living at 43, Nelson Street, Hawarden, Shotton (born Stalybridge). In the 1939 Register they were living at 13 Nelson Street, Hawarden:

William Treadwell	born 27 June 1899	electrician
Ceridwen V P	born 22 June 1897	
William O P	born 10 October 1929 (in the Bebington district)	

William Treadwell died in the Hawarden district, aged 64, in late 1963 and Ceridwen died, also in the Hawarden district, in early 1967 aged 69.

In the 1939 Register Robert David Pierce (born 1901, single, no occupation) was recorded as an inmate at the North Wales County Mental Hospital in Denbigh. He died, in the Rhuddlan district, in mid-1978 when his date of birth was recorded as *about 1901*.

Glynne Owen Pierce married Namur N Woodhouse at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in September 1933. In the 1969 Register they are recorded at 28 Bendee Avenue, Neston:

Glynne O Pierce	born 28 May 1906	bricklayer on ARP shelters
Namur N	born 13 September 1914	
Glynne W J	born 4 February 1934	
Joan Woodhouse	born 28 January 1919	married

One line of the record has been redacted

William was serving with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers when he died on 5 September 1915 but, as his Service Record has not been found, it is not possible to give any details of his army life or the circumstances of his death.

The 1/5<sup>th</sup> (Flintshire) Battalion Territorial Force was formed in Flint on 4 August 1914 as part of the North Wales Brigade, Welsh Division. On mobilisation they moved to Conway and then to Northampton, to Cambridge in December 1914 and to Bedford in May 1915 as part of the 159<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 53<sup>rd</sup> (Welsh) Division. On 13 May 1915 the formation became the 158<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Division and on 19 July 1915 they embarked for Gallipoli from Devonport, Plymouth via Imbros and Mudros where they arrived on 5 August 1915.

At 4.30am on 9 August 1915 the troops arrived at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli and landed on 'C' Beach at 6.0am before moving to bivouacs at Lala Baba. On 10 August one Company was detailed to take equipment up to the front line. They moved forward at 4.45 am and advanced across the Salt Lake under heavy shrapnel and rifle fire, passing through the entrenching battalions of the 159<sup>th</sup> Brigade at 11.30am. The *Official History of the Great War* records that the 1/5<sup>th</sup> was gallantly led by Lieutenant-Colonel B E Philips and penetrated to within a few hundred yards of Scimitar Hill and opened fire on the enemy about 200 yards from the Turkish front line before being ordered to withdraw to the 159<sup>th</sup> Brigade lines. Further attempts to take enemy positions during the afternoon also failed. All reports of the 158<sup>th</sup> Brigade's advance refer to lack of maps and confusion. The early casualties included Lieutenant-Colonel B E Philips, Lieutenant H O Williams, Second-Lieutenants R C Walton, J H F Leland, F P Synnott, R M Mocatta and 13 Other Ranks killed, 6 Officers, 116 Other Ranks wounded and 39 men missing.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers were involved in various operations in the area suffering heavy losses. By the time they were evacuated to Mudros on 11 December 1915 the Division stood at just 162 officers and 2428 men, around 15% of the complement.

William Pierce is recorded in the *Flintshire Observer* (and in the WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920, 1914-1915 Star) as having died of wounds and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli. It is known that, having being wounded on 3 September 1915, he was evacuated from the front line on the Hospital Ship *Valdivia* and that he died on board this ship.



Part of one of William Pierce's letters home was reported in a local Flintshire newspaper and his death was recorded by the Flintshire Observer [Note: the term *Moldavian* was used to describe an inhabitant of Mold].

**MOLDAVIAN'S REFLECTIONS AT THE DARDANELLES.**

Private W Pierce, who is with the Flintshire Territorials at the Dardanelles, writes as follows to his wife and children at the Lead Mills, Mold:—"Just a few lines to let you know that I am all right, and in the best of health so far, hoping you are all the same. I have not received any letter from you yet, hoping to get one soon. We have had a rough time of it so far. I suppose you have heard by now about Col. Philips being killed, and a few officers and men from Mold being wounded. When you write send me some twist tobacco,—we get some smoking given out to us. Don't send any money, as it is no use to us here. I hope the children are keeping all right. . . . Walter Evans has had a slight wound, and is in hospital. We are having a day or so rest before making another move to somewhere else. Remember me to all friends and relatives. I will write a longer letter next time. Hoping that it won't be very long before I see you all again."

**PRIVATE WILLIAM PIERCE, MOLD.**

Information was received on Saturday by Mrs. Pierce, Alyn Bank, Mold, that her husband, Private William Pierce, of the 1/5th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, had succumbed on the 5th September to injuries which he received twodays previously. He was 40 years of age, and leaves a widow and four children. Before enlisting he was employed as a bricklayer.

*Flintshire Observer, Mining Journal & General Advertiser - 14 October 1915*

**MOLDAVIAN DIES OF WOUNDS.**

*Flintshire Observer - Thursday 21 October 1915*



Private William Pierce, of Alyn Bank, Mold, who died of wounds on September 5th. He was a member of the 1/5th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, and was 40 years of age. He leaves a widow and four children. (Photo, W. Jenkins, Aberystwyth.)

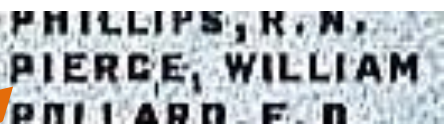
Date and publication title of newspaper unknown.

[Source: <http://www.flintshirewarmemorials.com/memorials/mold-memorial/mold-soldiers/william-pierce/>]

Locally, William is commemorated also on the Mold War Memorial:

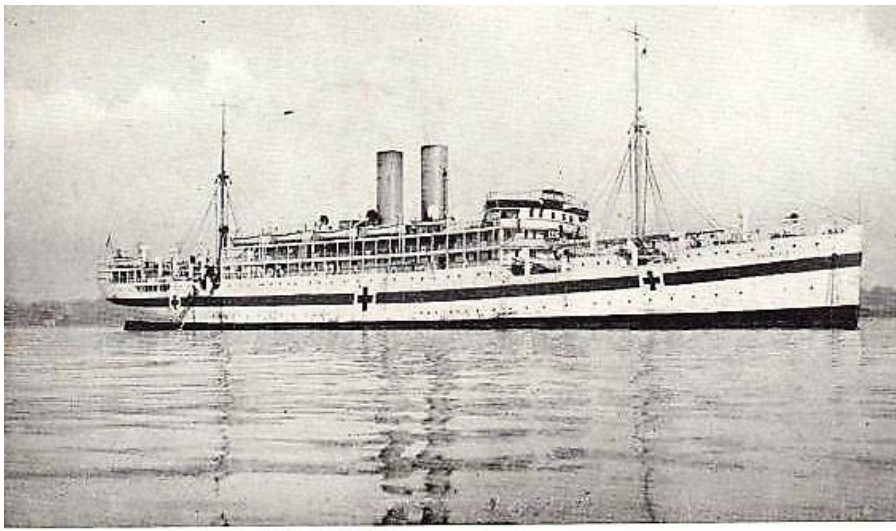


The Mold War Memorial [Source: [www.militaryimages.net](http://www.militaryimages.net)]



As William Pierce died on a hospital ship in the waters off Gallipoli, his body would have probably been buried at sea; hence his commemoration on the Helles Memorial alongside the names of those who died on land and who have no known grave.





H.M. HOSPITAL SHIP "VALDIVIA"

The *Valdivia* in 1915 The ship had around 6 Staff Officers, 12 nurses and Ward Sisters and around 60 other medical personnel. There was accommodation for 24 Officers and around 500 Other Ranks.

The *Valdivia* was built in 1911 by Chantiers & Ateliers de Provence, Port de Bouc, and was owned by the Societe Generale de Transports Maritimes a Vapeur, Marseilles. The vessel, which operated on the South America route to Buenos Aires, weighed 7,137 tonnes, was 463 feet in length and had a top speed of 15.5 knots.

During WW1 the *Valdivia* was loaned to the British Admiralty for use as a Hospital Ship (managed by Union Castle Mail Steam Ship Co.), was returned to her owners in 1919 and scrapped in 1933.

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
PIERCE	R.W. Sea	Pte	2933
William			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/02	D.36	11899
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/03	1581	
Theatre of War first served in			(23) Balkans
Date of entry therein			8-8-15

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

218484	Pierce William	15 <sup>th</sup> Bn. R. W. Sea Pte. 2933	5: 9: 15 Shrewsbury H. Ship 12: 15 Valdivia D. of War	3	4	3	3	6	3	M.O. 7/16	18-2-16	1/22: Sole Legatee	3	6	3	Mary Mary	3	9d

WAR GRATUITY.  
1919/20  
Transferred 15/5/20 1919/19  
Regd. Paper 1984/2129  
Serial No. 3102

A. F. W. 50/0 sent  
27 MAY 1919

### Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. In May 1919 William's widow Mary, as sole legatee, received a payment of outstanding wages of £3 6s 3d from the army and a War Gratuity of £3. This, a total value of £6 6s 3d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £980 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

Mary Pierce, William's wife, died aged 53 in early 1924 in Neston.