

6: Arthur Bartley

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Arthur Bartley

Rank: Serjeant

Battalion / Regiment: Royal Army Medical Corps. 26th Gen. Hosp.

Date of Death: 01 June 1918

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Etaples Military Cemetery, Etaples, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: Husband of Annie Bartley, of Heswall, Cheshire.

Arthur Bartley was born in Neston on 24 April 1887, the son of cab driver/groom Owen and Mary Ellen Bartley. He was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 1 July 1887 when Owen was recorded as a labourer.

(Edward) Owen Bartley was the son of Neston labourer William and Jane Bartley and was born in Neston in early 1855 and baptised in Neston on 4 May 1855.

Owen married Mary Ellen Allen in Liverpool in July/September 1882. Mary was the eldest child of lead miner William and Sarah (nee Tomlinson) Allen.

All the children were baptised at Neston Parish Church:

Jane 14 January 1883

Owen was a labourer

Henry 24 July 1885

Owen was a coachman

Arthur 1 July 1887

Owen was a labourer

Fred 31 October 1890

Owen was a cab-driver

At the time of the 1891 census the family was living on Mill Street:

Oscar Bakley	Head	Mr			Sub District Agent	X	unmarried	Gaston	Do
Mary D	Wife	Mrs						Smithson	Dubby Lake
Jane D	Daughter				Schooler			Green	Cherokee
Henry D	Son				Do			Do	Do
Alfred D	Son							Do	Do
Fred D	Son							Do	Do

1891 census (extract) – Mill Street, Neston

Owen Bartley	38	cab driver, groom	born Neston
Mary E.	41		born Matlock, Derbyshire
Jane	8		born Neston
Henry	5		born Neston
Arthur	4		born Neston
Fred	5 months		born Neston

Ten years later, at the time of the 1901 census, the family was still living on Mill Street, Neston, and no further children had been born:

Owen Bartley	Head	M	47	✓	cab driver, groom	Neston Cheshire
Ellen	Wife	M	51	✓		Matlock Derbyshire
Jane	Daughter	F	18	✓		Neston Cheshire
Henry	Son	M	15	✓		Neston
Arthur	Son	M	13	✓		Neston
Fred	Son	M	10	✓		Neston

1901 census (extract) – Mill Street, Neston

Owen Bartley	47	cab driver, groom	born Neston
Ellen	51		born Matlock, Derbyshire
Jane	18		born Neston
Henry	15		born Neston
Arthur	13		born Neston
Fred	10		born Neston

Arthur has not been located in the 1911 census but his parents and brother Frederick were still living on Mill Street, Neston:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.															
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.															
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.															
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every person born in a Foreign Country	INFLUENCY								
Owen Bartley	Head	56	Married 29	General Labourer	Neston Cheshire	British									
Mary Ellen Bartley	Wife	61	Married 29	Painter	Matlock Derbyshire	British									
Frederick Bartley	Son	20		Building Trade	Neston Cheshire	British									

1911 census (condensed) – Mill Street, Neston

Owen Bartley	56	general labourer	born Neston
Mary Ellen	61		born Matlock, Derbyshire
Frederick	20	painter, building trade	born Neston

Owen and Mary had been married for 29 years and all four of their children had survived.

It is possible that Arthur was, at the time of the 1911 census, in Canada - a newspaper report in 1918 noted that he had spent some time there - although no record of him has been found in the 1911 Canadian census.

In 1911 Jane Bartley, Arthur's sister, was a laundress at a steam laundry in High Wycombe. Aged 28 Jane was boarding with piano tuner John and Catherine Birch on

Totteridge Avenue, High Wycombe. It was later in 1911 that Jane married Harvey Thomas Housden of High Wycombe at Neston Parish Church.

Henry Bartley, Arthur's brother, has not been located in the 1911 census.

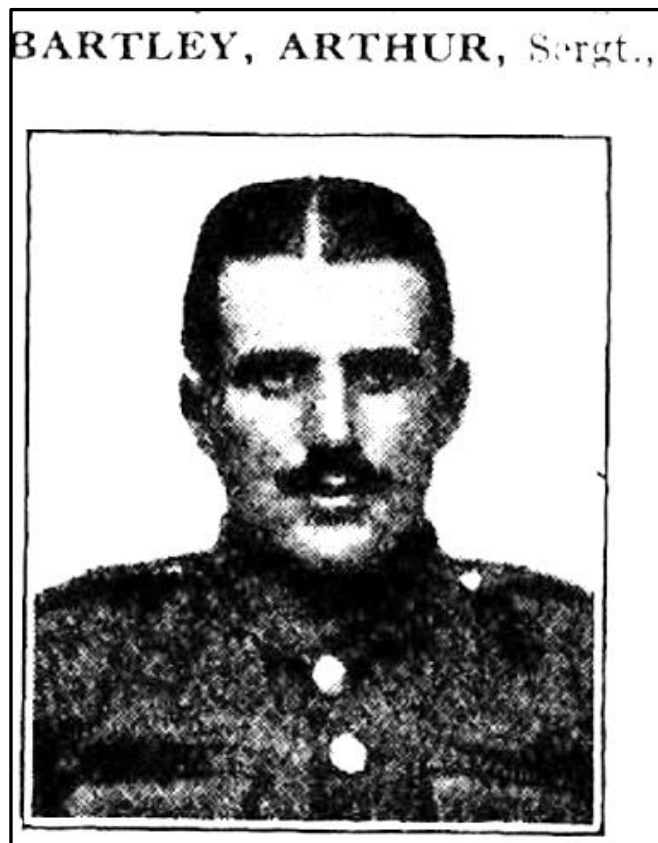
Arthur Bartley's Service Record contains none of the usual military documentation but consists only of a photograph attached to a summary of his life. This states that he was educated at the Neston Church School, was a 'shipyard striker' by trade and enlisted on 22 July 1906. He served one year with the Colours and then joined the Reserve, being called up on the outbreak of war.

Arthur married Annie Clarke at Heswall on 13 April 1914; Annie was the daughter of self-employed plaster Peter and Mary Clarke of Heatherbrae Cottage on Thurstaston Road, Heswall. In the 1911 census Annie, 24, was recorded as a housemaid to the Heywood family (they were not at home) at 1 King's Avenue, Hoylake. It is believed that Arthur and Annie had one child, Edward Arthur, who was born 8 January 1915.

It is reported that, with the Expeditionary Force in France, Arthur entered the war on 25 August 1914 and that he was attached to N^o. 11 General Hospital (although it is understood from other sources that this was not operational until October 1914 - although his Medal Card records him being with this unit). His role with the RAMC is, however, unknown.

Arthur's army record notes that he enlisted in Liverpool and was actually an Acting Sergeant when he died of wounds, aged 31, on 1 June 1918. At some time he joined the 26th General Hospital at Étaples and he was with this unit when the hospital complex was bombed during an aerial attack on 31 May 1918. This was a large site housing a number of hospitals and, because of its strategic position by a main rail route and bridges over the River Canche, was a frequent target of air raids and many staff and patients were killed.

Étaples is a very old fishing town and port, which lies at the mouth of the River Canche in the region of Pas de Calais in Picardy. The Étaples Army Base Camp, the largest of its kind ever established overseas by the British, was built along the railway adjacent to the town. It was served by a network of railways, canals, and roads connecting the camp to the southern and eastern fields of battle in France and to ships carrying troops, supplies, guns, equipment, and thousands of men and women across the English Channel. It was a base for British, Canadian, Scottish and Australian forces.



The camp was a training base, a depot for supplies, a detention centre for prisoners, and a centre for the treatment of the sick and wounded, with almost twenty general hospitals. At its peak, the camp housed over 100,000 people; altogether, its hospitals could treat 22,000 patients. With its vast conglomeration of the wounded, of prisoners, of soldiers training for battle, and of those simply waiting to return to the front, Étaples could appear a dark place. Wilfred Owen [Collected Letters. Oxford University Press] described it as:

A vast, dreadful encampment. It seemed neither France nor England, but a kind of paddock where the beasts are kept a few days before the shambles ... Chiefly I thought of the very strange look on all the faces in that camp; an incomprehensible look, which a man will never see in England; nor can it be seen in any battle, but only in Étaples. It was not despair, or terror, it was more terrible than terror, for it was a blindfold look, and without expression, like a dead rabbit's. [Adapted from: <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/etaples>]



Arthur Bartley - Grave Registration

NESTON AND PARKGATE
VICTIM OF HUN OUTRAGE.—We deeply regret to record the death of Sergt. Arthur Bartley, son of the late Mr Owen Bartley and Mrs. Bartley, Mill-street, which occurred on Friday, last week. Sergt. Bartley, who has spent some time in Canada, joined the R.A.M.C. shortly after the outbreak of war, and was attached to a general hospital, which was attacked by enemy aircraft last Friday. Sergt. Bartley was unfortunately among the killed. The sad information was conveyed in a letter from Capt. Cosgrove, of Neston, who has since been invalided home and who with 18 other officers, 16 nurses and a company of the R.A.M.C. was present at the funeral which took place last Sunday afternoon. Captain Cosgrove writes:—"I was the only one present who knew him. A sergeant going through his belongings came across my address and immediately 'phoned me, and the O.C. very kindly sent me in a car, so I was in time, and his mother will have the consolation of knowing there was one present who knew him and saw the last of him." A wreath was sent by the officers of the hospital in memory of their fallen comrade. Heartfelt sympathy is extended to his widow and mother in their great sorrow.

Cheshire Observer - Saturday 8 June 1918



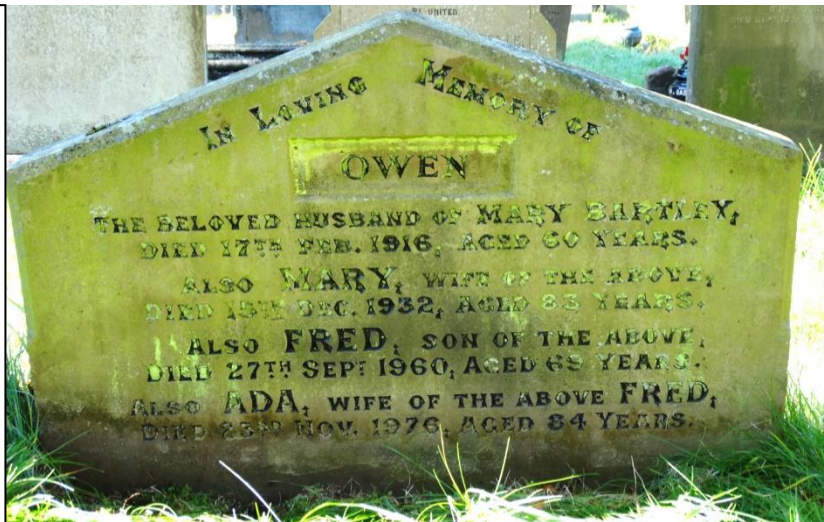
Arthur Bartley's war grave at Etaples Military Cemetery

[Source: <http://www.ramc-ww1.com/>]

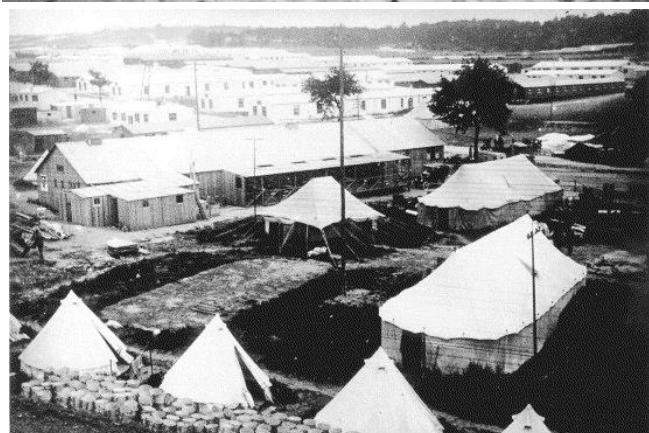
Jane Bartley, Arthur's sister, married Harvey Thomas Housden at Neston Parish Church on 4 November 1911. Jane, 28, gave her address as Mill Street and her father, Owen, was recorded as a labourer. Harvey, 31, was a grocer and his address was recorded as Hughenden Road, High Wycombe.

Although it is known that Fred married an Ada Cottrell sometime between 1911 and 1916, the marriage has not been found in England and Wales; they had three sons.

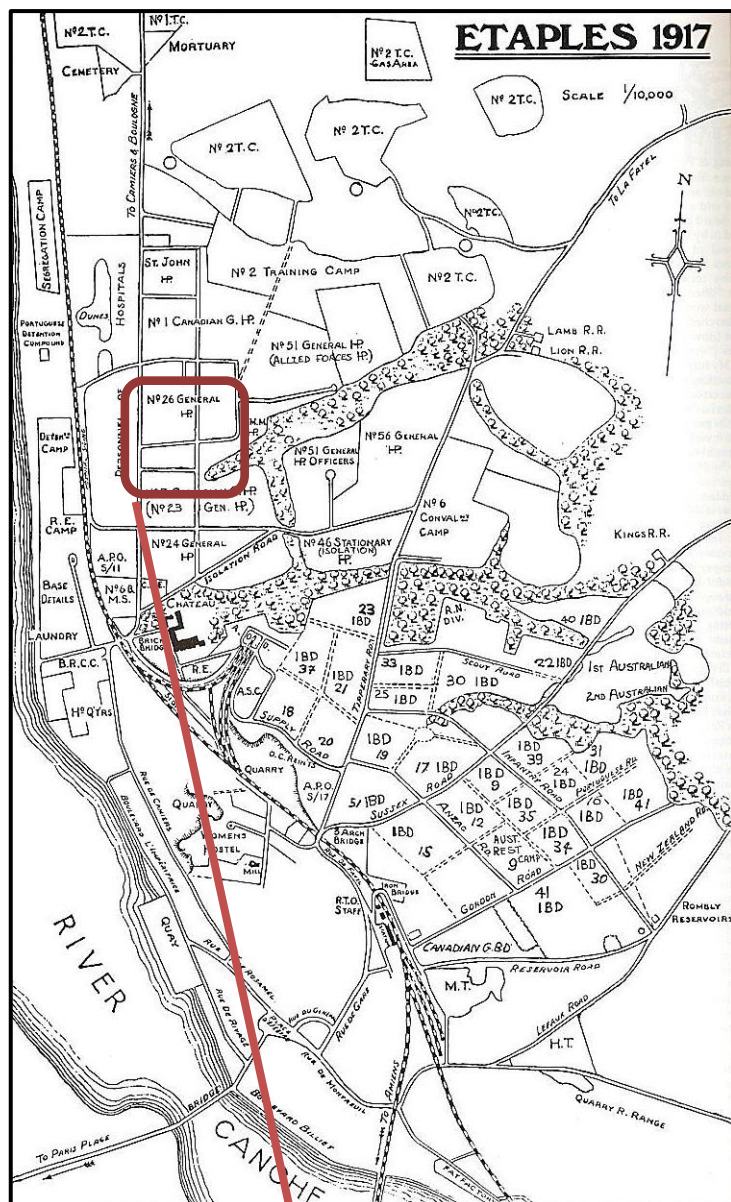
Also Ada, wife of the above Fred,
died 23rd Nov. 1976, aged 84 years.



The Étaples hospital site after an aerial bombardment.



The British Army Base Camp at Étaples showing a hospital section.



The location of No.26 General Hospital on the Étaples hospital site.

Approximately 1 km

Air raid damage at the St John's Ambulance Brigade Hospital at Étaples, May 1918.

[Source: <http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg/World-War1/>]



Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
BARTLEY Arthur	R.A.M.C. 11th Hosp	Plt	466
	X - - -	1/5	- - -

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	X R.A.M.C. 101 851 6211		
BRITISH	do		
14. STAB	R.A.M.C. 15	1	
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein 25-8-16			

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920



The funeral of a Canadian nursing sister, 1918, at Étaples War Cemetery. [Source: http://owen.cholerton.org/p_l_etaples.php]

669037	550094	Bartley Arthur	26th Gen Hosp R.A.M.C.	31-5-19 Missing	21	11	3	4	3	9	m.o.g. 18.26.9.	15. Wed Annie.	4	3	9
			26th Gen Hosp	4-18				14	7	6	info 19/18	4.12.18 Fri. Annie.	14	7	6
			218 Sgt	France											
			466	in Action											
					25										
					GRATUITY.										
					12.26 6535 1919.										
					Regt. paper 21										
					Serial No. 24412										
											2/17/19 Paid to S.L.				
											Annie		25		

A. F. W. 5070 SENT
DATE 13 JUL 1919

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 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.

Arthur Bartley had accrued a credit of £21 11s 3d and this was paid, in two instalments, to his widow, Annie Bartley. Annie received also the £25 War Gratuity. The total payment, £46 11s 3d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £7000 in 2016.

This record shows Arthur's death to have been on 31 May 1915, the day that the 26th General Hospital was attacked by the Germans. However, his 'official' date of death was recorded elsewhere as 1 April, the following day.

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.

According to the 1939 Register of 29 September,

- Arthur's son, Edward Arthur Bartley (single, born 8 January 1915) was a municipal gardener living at 89 Morehall Avenue, Folkestone. It is not known when he died.
- Arthur's brother Fred, and Ada, Bartley were living at May Cottages on Liverpool Road, Neston. Fred (born 12 October 1890) was now a 'seed crushers and animal foods labourer' and Ada (born 23 March 1892) was employed with 'domestic duties, unpaid'. Living with them were two unmarried sons, James O. (born 7 July 1916), also a 'seed crushers and animal foods labourer' and Arthur (born 4 October 1920) who was a 'motor-van driver'. It is known that Fred and Ada had another son, Harry C. who was born in mid-1918. Nothing further is known of him.

As noted previously, Fred died on 27th September 1960, aged 69 and Ada died 23 November 1976, aged 84.

- Jane, Arthur's sister, had married Harvey Thomas Housden in 1911 and in 1939 they were living on Duke Street, High Wycombe. Harvey (born 6 January 1880) was a 'Master Grocer & Provisions Wholesaler and Retailer' and Jane (born 12 December 1882) was recorded as 'unpaid, household duties). With them was Henry Bartley, the brother of Jane and Arthur. Born on 3 July 1885 he was a grocer's storekeeper. Although recorded as being married, Henry's wife was not at that address on that date.

Also living with Jane and Harvey was their unmarried son, George H.. He, born 16 September 1912 in the High Wycombe district, was a grocer's assistant. It is believed that George was their only child and that he married Yvonne I. Sweatman in High Wycombe in mid-1940. It is not known when he died.

Harvey Housden died in the Exeter district in mid-1955 aged 75. It is not known when Jane died. Henry Bartley died in the High Wycombe area, aged 56, in late 1941.

The Étaples Military Hospitals – detailing No. 26 General Hospital

The following has been extracted, with some minor alteration (and omission of large sections) from: *Some Account of the British Military Hospitals of World War I at Etaples, in the orbit of Sir Almroth Wright* by EW Meynell MD J R Army Med. Corps 1996; 142: 43-47 Haven House, St Margaret's Bay, Dover

Summary

A group of British Military Hospitals was established between 1915 and 1918 along the estuary of the River Canche on the northern French coast. Their positions, now obliterated, can be identified from a plan of the time. With the growing realisation of the importance of bacteriology in the treatment of wound infection, the laboratory of Sir Almroth Wright in neighbouring Boulogne-sur-mer had a strong local influence.

Introduction

The German army invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914 and by the autumn was approaching the English Channel. With the first Battle of Ypres in October in which there were nearly 100,000 British casualties, the French port of Boulogne-sur-mer was transformed into an important British military hospital base and by degrees numbers of hospitals were set up in the surrounding country, notably at Étaples and Camiers, along the estuary of the River Canche some 15 miles SW of Boulogne.

The hospitals

The British Base Hospitals at Étaples were established from June 1915 along the road and railway line bordering the estuary of the River Canche. A railway siding at Étaples could accommodate two ambulance trains either arriving with wounded from the Front or leaving for Boulogne with hospital patients to be evacuated to England.

No.26 General Hospital was situated on the eastern, or inland, side of the road. On the side bordering the estuary, between the road and the main railway line to Boulogne, were the quarters for the staff who were continually disturbed by trains passing every 10 minutes or so, day and night. The land is chalk covered with drifted sand and, although the topsoil had been largely stabilised by the planting of grasses after 1750 and of pines after 1830, sand was still able to cause difficulties when it was driven by the prevailing southwest winds into wards and operating theatres. Gardening was important, not only to aid morale but to control the sand, in particular by the making of cinder paths and laying down of turf (whose removal from the site of one hospital to another was strictly regulated). No.26 hospital consisted of a main building of corrugated iron, divided into four surgical wards of 23 beds each, two operating theatres and an X-ray room, with kitchen, administrative block, laboratory, stores, dispensary, latrines and wash houses in outbuildings of similar construction. There were 31 wards of 27 beds in free-standing wooden huts 120ft long with tarred canvas roofs. They were barrack huts only 15ft wide and could accommodate only a single row of 21 beds, the extra 6 being placed lengthwise along the opposite wall. Eight of the wards were for skin conditions and one for mental cases, for No.26 General Hospital had been selected for the reception of skin diseases and the insane. Heating was by stoves, two to a ward. Electricity and a piped water supply came across the river from Paris Plage, with stand-pipes between the lines of huts and taps in the theatre block, kitchens, dispensary and laboratory. The latrines and bath houses were at some distance from the wards. There was no drainage system, solid material was incinerated and liquids, of whatever source, were run through gullies into soak pits driven 7-8ft into the chalk and boarded to keep out the sand. These had constantly to be re-dug.

The end of the Étaples hospitals

The Étaples hospitals were destroyed by German air raids which began on 19 May 1918 and continued until 10 August. There were grave doubts as to the wisdom of having sited large military training camps and hospitals so close together but it was generally believed that the enemy's target was really the railway bridge over the River Canche. This belief was confirmed when a German airman who had been shot down said to his rescuers *if you persist in placing hospitals beside railway lines, they will continue to be bombed*. In the first attack of 19 May, in which 10 or 12 German planes took part, more than 300 patients were killed or wounded and incendiary bombs were dropped on the town of Étaples. Further raids occurred on 27 and 31 May, 28, 29 and 31 June, 1, 25 and 31 July, and 10 August. The hospital gardens were dug up for shelters. The No. 26 General Hospital existed from 21 June 1915 until 17 July 1918.