

11: Joseph Patrick Cavanagh

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Joseph Cavanagh

Rank: Gunner

Battalion / Regiment: 131st Heavy Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery

Service Number: 363003

Date of Death: 21 March 1918

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Arras Memorial, Arras, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: None

Joseph Cavanagh was the fourth son - one of at least ten children - of Thomas and Mary Cavanagh of Birkenhead. He was born in the second quarter of 1886 and recorded as Joseph Patrick Cavanagh.

Thomas Cavanagh married Mary Casey in Birkenhead (it was a Civil marriage) in July / September 1873 and their first child, Margaret, was born one year later.

By the time of the 1881 census, before Joseph was born, the family was living at Back St Anne Street, Birkenhead (between Price Street and Conway Street):

Thomas Cavanagh	Head	28	Labourer	Do
Mary Do	Wife	28		Ireland
Margaret Cavanagh	Daughter	6		Birkenhead
Andrew Do	Son	5		Do
Mary J. Do	Daughter	3		Do
James Do	Son	12 mo		Do

1881 census (extract) – Back St Anne Street, Birkenhead

Thomas Cavanagh	28	labourer	born Birkenhead
Mary	28		born Ireland
Margaret	6		born Birkenhead
Andrew	5		born Birkenhead
Mary J.	3		born Birkenhead
James	12 months		born Birkenhead

Ten years later the enlarged family was living on the same street, probably in the same house, and Thomas was recorded as working in an iron works.

William Laird had established the Birkenhead Iron Works in 1824 but this had been succeeded by the firm of Messrs. Laird Brothers in 1862 when Henry Hyndman Laird was admitted into the expanding company dominated by William Laird (1831-1899) and John Laird (1834 - 1898), of which William Laird was the senior partner. Nevertheless, it is most probable that Thomas was working for the Lairds at this time.

Thomas Cavanagh	40	holder-up in iron works	born Birkenhead
Mary	39		born Birkenhead
Andrew	15		born Birkenhead
James	11		born Birkenhead
Annie	9		born Birkenhead
Thomas	7		born Birkenhead
Joseph	5		born Birkenhead
Elizabeth	3		born Birkenhead
Edward	1		born Birkenhead

1891 census (extract) – 42 Back St Anne Street, Birkenhead

Thomas Cavanagh	40	holder-up in iron works	born Birkenhead
Mary	39		born Birkenhead
Andrew	15		born Birkenhead
James	11		born Birkenhead
Annie	9		born Birkenhead
Thomas	7		born Birkenhead
Joseph	5		born Birkenhead
Elizabeth	3		born Birkenhead
Edward	1		born Birkenhead

Although in the 1891 census Mary was recorded as having been born in Birkenhead, it is known that she originated from Ireland.

Thomas Cavanagh died in early 1897 aged 44 and in 1901 it was recorded that the family had moved the short distance to Wye Street (it no longer exists), a short distance south of the Cammell Laird shipyards in Birkenhead. Esther, their last child, was born April / June 1892 and, as her birthplace is recorded as Tranmere, it appears the family had moved by this date.

Civil Parish	Ecclesiastical Parish	County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District	Ward of Municipal Borough or Urban District	Rural District	Parliamentary Borough or Division	Town or Village									
of <i>Birkenhead.</i>	of <i>St. Paul</i>	of <i>Birkenhead.</i>	of <i>Clifton</i>		of <i>Birkenhead.</i>	of									
Coln.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No. of Substrate	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	In Inhabited	HOUSES		Building	Number of Houses occupied more than 2 yrs	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition of Marriage	Age last Birthday of		PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN
			In Cottage time	Not in Cottage time						Males	Females				
244	17 Wye St	1					Harry Cavanagh	Head	Mar	25					Ireland
							Mary J do	Wife	S	22		Laundress Wash.	Worker		Birkenhead
							James do	Son	S	21		General Labourer	do		do
							Annie do	Daughter	S	19		Laundress Wash	do		do
							Thomas do	Son	S	17		Shop Boy Port	do		do
							Joseph do	Son	S	15		Shop Boy	do		do
							Edward do	Son	S	10					do
							Esther do	Daughter	S	5					Tranmere
							Edward Casey	Cousin	S	21		Carter Cart	do		Birkenhead

1901 census (extract) - 17 Wye Street, Birkenhead

Mary Cavanagh	48	widow	born Ireland
Mary J.	22	laundress	born Birkenhead
James	21	general labourer	born Birkenhead
Annie	19	laundress	born Birkenhead
Thomas	17	shop boy	born Birkenhead
Joseph	15	shop boy	born Birkenhead
Edward	10		born Birkenhead
Esther	8		born Tranmere
Edward Casey	21	cousin, carter	born Birkenhead

Joseph Patrick Cavanagh married Sarah Fewtrell of Neston on 25 July 1904 at the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas, Liverpool. Sarah, 20, was the youngest child of labourer (recorded as fisherman in 1901 and at Sarah's marriage) George and Elizabeth Fewtrell of Pykes Weint and she was baptised at Neston 18 March 1881. In the 1901 census Sarah is recorded as a general servant working for widower James Mannings at 21 Well Lane, Tranmere; James was an iron merchant's manager and Well Lane was close to where the Cavanaghs lived on Wye Street. Joseph was a labourer, 19, when he married and was living at 79 Ormond Street, in the city and north of Tithebarn Street. Sarah, whose profession was not recorded, gave her address as 42 Union Street - this is very close to Ormond Street where Joseph lived. Joseph recorded that his father, Thomas, was deceased and that he had been a boilermaker.

After their marriage it appears that Joseph and Sarah first lived in Rock Ferry but they had moved to Neston by July / September when Andrew was born:

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 Person aged ten years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.	
<p>of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who</p> <p>(1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight, or</p> <p>(2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere.</p> <p>No one else must be included.</p> <p>(For order of entering names see Examples on back of Schedule.)</p>														
<p>State whether "Head," or "Wife," or "Son," or "Daughter," or other Relative, "Visitor," "Boarder," or "Servant."</p> <p>For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.</p> <p>Write "Single," "Married," "Widowed," or "Widow," opposite the name of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.</p> <p>Complete years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one."</p> <p>State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—</p> <p>Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)</p> <p>Children born alive write "None" in Column 7.</p> <p>Total Children born alive.</p> <p>Children who have died.</p> <p>Children still living.</p> <p>The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c.</p> <p>If engaged in any Trade or Manufacture, the particular kind of work done, and the Article made or Material worked or dealt in should be clearly indicated.</p> <p>(See Instructions 1 to 8 and Examples on back of Schedule.)</p> <p>This question should generally be answered by stating the business carried on by the employer. If this is clearly shown in Col. 10 the question need not be answered here.</p> <p>No entry needed for Domestic Service in private employment. If employed by a public body (Government, Municipal, &c.) state what body. (See Instruction 9 and Examples on back of Schedule.)</p> <p>Write opposite the name of each person engaged in any Trade or Industry, (1) "Employer" that is employing persons other than domestic servants, or (2) "Worker" that is working for an employer, or (3) "Own Account" that is neither employing others nor working for a trade employer.</p> <p>Write the words "At Home" opposite the name of each person carrying on Trade or Industry at home.</p> <p>(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish.</p> <p>(2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, etc., and of the Province or State.</p> <p>(3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country.</p> <p>(4) If born at sea, write "At Sea."</p> <p>NOTE.—In the case of persons born elsewhere than in England or Wales, state whether "Resident" or "Visitor" in this Country.</p> <p>State whether— (1) "British subject by parentage," (2) "Naturalized British subject" giving year of naturalization. Or (3) If of foreign nationality state whether "French," "German," "Italian," "Russian," etc.</p> <p>If any person included in this Schedule is— (1) "Totally Blind" or "Deaf and Dumb," (2) "Totally Blind," (3) "Totally Deaf and Dumb," (4) "Lunatic," or "Feeble-minded," state this infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.</p>														
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Joseph Cavanagh	Head	26	Married	6					Shop Assistant	Fish & Game Dealer	Worker	At Home	Birkenhead	121
Sarah Cavanagh	Wife	28	Married	6		3	3						Neston	
Joseph Cavanagh	Son	5											Rock Ferry	121
Andrew Cavanagh	Son	2											Neston	
Mary E. Cavanagh	Daughter	3 months											Neston	
Joseph Downs	Boarder	20	Single						Contractors Labourer	Building Trade	Worker	At Home	Neston	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that— (1) All the names on this Schedule are entered in the proper columns. (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Initials of Enumerator: *WJS*

Total.	
Males	Females
4	2
Persons 6	

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

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.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *Joseph Cavanagh*

Postal Address: *Rock Cottages Neston*

1911 census (condensed) - Rock Cottages, Bridge Street, Neston

Joseph Cavanagh	26	shop assistant, fish & game dealer	born Birkenhead
Sarah	28		born Neston
Joseph	5		born Rock Ferry
Andrew	2		born Neston
Mary E.	2 months		born Neston
Joseph Downs	20	boarder, single, contractor's labourer	born Neston

Joseph and Sarah had been married for 6 years and, at this date, all three children had survived.

After 1911 three further children were born; interestingly, unlike the first four children, the two youngest (the youngest child was born three days after Joseph was killed) were baptised as Roman Catholics. The known details of Joseph and Sarah's children are:

Joseph may have been born on 28 September 1905 and it is believed that he married Mary M. Murray in early 1929 and that they had two children, Joseph W. (born late 1929) and Thomas G. (born early 1935). Joseph snr may have died in early 1976 on Wirral ¹.

Andrew was born on 20 August 1908 and baptised (as *Kavanagh*) at Neston Parish Church on 11 September 1908. His father, Joseph, was recorded as being a shop assistant. Andrew married Evelyn G Coleman in mid-1935 and it is believed that they had one child. Andrew died in late 1977.

Annie died in infancy, aged 7 days, and she was buried at Neston on 20 February 1913.

Mary Elizabeth was born in early 1911 but she died, aged 7, and was buried at Neston on 21 February 1918 (exactly one month before her father was killed and



2 Cottage Close in April 2016

almost exactly five years after her sister Annie) when the family was recorded as living at 2 Cottage Close, Little Neston.

Thomas George was born on 23 October 1914 and was baptised at St Winefride's Roman Catholic Church in Little Neston on 24 November. In mid-1939 he married Freda Alice H. Farndell (born 14 September 1916); it is believed that they had three children. Thomas's date of death is uncertain but Freda died on Wirral in mid-1973 aged 57.

Sarah Winifred was born on 24 March 1918, three days after her father was killed. Sarah was baptised at St Winefride's Roman Catholic Church in Little Neston on 24 November. She married Albert E. Jones in mid-1938.

Joseph P Cavanagh, then of Bridge Street, enlisted in Birkenhead in November 1914, joining the Cheshire Field Company, Royal Engineers.

On the outbreak of war the War Office issued orders for mobilisation of the British Expeditionary Force, the 13 Field Companies then at home on a peacetime establishment being reorganised to create 12 Field Companies, two for each of the six Divisions of the BEF.

In September 1914 an urgent recommendation was received from GHQ in France that the needs of war required a third Field Company per Division. This had been recommended in 1912 but not implemented. Arrangements were made for eight Territorial Field Companies to fill these places in the first eight Divisions. The Companies were given numbers in February 1917 and it is presumed that Joseph joined

¹ There is some uncertainty as a Joseph Patrick Cavanagh was born in Birkenhead on 24 March 1904 – he died on Wirral in early 1972.

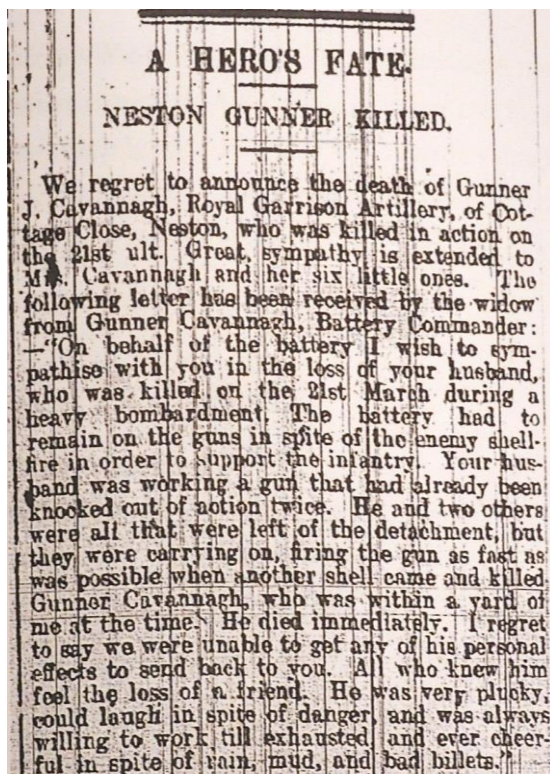
the 438th 1st (Cheshire) Field Company Royal Engineers TF which was allocated to the 3rd Division. His Service No. was then 446445 ².

At some time during his training Joseph transferred to the 131st Heavy Battery Royal Garrison Artillery and his Service Number changed to 363003. His unit arrived in France in March 1918 and he was killed less than 2 months later after his gun battery, supporting an infantry attack and under heavy bombardment from the enemy, suffered a direct shell impact.

The 131st Heavy Battery had gone to France on 9 March 1916 and, as with the other heavy batteries, they were equipped with heavy guns, sending large calibre high explosive shells in fairly flat trajectory fire. The usual armaments were 60 pounder (5-inch) guns, although some had batteries obsolescent 5-inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Heavy Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines.

[<http://www.1914-1918.net/heavy-battery-index.htm>]

Killed at the age of 32 on 21 March 1918 Joseph Cavanagh left a wife, Sarah, and four children.



Birkenhead Advertiser (date uncertain)

A HERO'S FATE NESTON GUNNER KILLED

We regret to announce the death of Gunner J. Cavannagh, Royal Garrison Artillery, of Cottage Close, Neston, who was killed in action on the 21st ult. Great sympathy is extended to Mrs Cavannagh and her six little ones. The following letter has been received from Gunner Cavannagh's Battery Commander:

On behalf of the battery I wish to sympathise with you in the loss of your husband, who was killed on the 21st March during a heavy bombardment. The battery had to remain on the guns in spite of the enemy shell-fire in order to support the infantry. Your husband was working a gun that had already been knocked out of action twice. He and two others were all that were left of the detachment, but they were carrying on, firing the gun as fast as was possible when another shell came and killed Gunner Cavannagh, who was within a yard of me at the time. He died immediately. I regret to say we were unable to get any of his personal effects to send back to you. All who knew him feel the loss of a friend. He was very plucky, could laugh in spite of danger, and was always willing to work till exhausted and ever cheerful in spite of rain, mud and bad billets.

² It is not certain when Joseph Cavanagh enlisted although it may have been early 1915. If this date is correct, Joseph could not have enlisted with the 1st / 1st Cheshire Field Company (they had been in France since December 1914) or the 2nd / 1st Cheshire Field Company (they were completing their training or had gone to Gallipoli) but he may have enlisted initially with the 3/1st (Reserve) or 4/1st (Reserve) Cheshire Field Company. It is unclear as to why, if he did enlist in early 1915, he was not sent overseas until three years later.

The *Birkenhead Advertiser* states that there were 'six little ones' although it is known that Sarah had four small children still living at this date. In fact, it is believed that Sarah was, at this time, also looking after two small children of a close relative.

It is worth restating that, in February/March 1918, Sarah

- lost her daughter, Mary Elizabeth (aged 7) - she was buried on 21 February, exactly one month before Joseph was killed.
- lost her husband, Joseph, who was killed in France on 21 March.
- gave birth to a daughter, Sarah Winifred, on 24 March, three days after Joseph was killed.



Joseph Cavanagh with, probably, son Thomas who was born in October 1914.

FALLEN IN ACTION.—Mrs. Cavanagh, of Cottage Close, BuBrton-road, has received word from the War Office that her husband, Gunner G. P. Cavanagh, has been killed in action. 33 years of age, he joined the army in 1915, and was drafted to France. Prior to enlisting he was employed by Mr. S. Mealor, of Neston. He was exceedingly popular, and made many friends. He leaves a wife and four young children.

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 13 April 1918

NESTON SOLDIER FALLS.

The news of the death of Gunner J. P. Cavanagh has been received with much regret in Neston district, where he was so well known. He was every inch a soldier, but although he has been in the Army since the outbreak of war, it is only about two months ago that he went abroad with the heavy artillery, and on the 21st of last month he was killed in action. Mrs. Cavanagh received the official intimation last Sunday morning, and deep sympathy is felt for her and her four young children in their great bereavement.

Birkenhead News – Saturday 13 April 1918

Whilst there is no confirmation, it is most probable that Joseph Cavanagh was killed on the opening day of the German attack on the Allied Front, The Second Battle of Picardy³ (21 March - 5 April 1918), the beginning of the German Spring Offensive:

In the spring of 1918, Ludendorff⁴ ordered a massive German attack on the Western Front. The Spring Offensive was Germany's attempt to end World War One. With 500,000 troops added to Germany's strength from the Russian Front, Ludendorff was confident of success:

³ Officially known as The First Battles of the Somme, 1918.

⁴ Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff was a German general, the victor of the Battle of Liège and the Battle of Tannenberg. From August 1916, his appointment as Quartermaster general made him the leader of the German war efforts during World War I [Wikipedia]

"We must strike at the earliest moment before the Americans can throw strong forces into the scale. We must beat the British".

By the spring of 1918, the Allies knew that there would be a major German attack – they just did not know where it would come. The British reinforced their positions near the coast while the French strengthened their positions to the south of the British. However, this left a weakness in the British line to the west of Cambrai. Here the British trench system had not been completed and those that had been dug were inadequate. Sir Hubert Gough, who commanded the Fifth Army in this area, was well aware of his predicament and more conscious of the fact that he had few reserves to call on if the Germans did attack the sector where the Fifth Army was stationed. German reconnaissance had made them aware that the area was less well defended.

On March 21st 1918, Ludendorff launched the offensive. In just five hours, the Germans fired one million artillery shells at the British lines held by the Fifth Army – over 3000 shells fired every minute. The artillery bombardment was followed by an attack by elite storm troopers. These soldiers travelled lightly and were skilled in fast, hard-hitting attacks before moving on to their next target. Unlike soldiers burdened with weighty kit etc, the storm troopers carried little except weaponry (such as flame throwers) that could cause much panic, as proved to be the case in this attack.

By the end of the first day of the attack, 21,000 British soldiers had been taken prisoner and the Germans had made great advances through the lines of the Fifth Army. Senior British military commanders lost control of the situation. They had spent three years used to static warfare and suddenly they had to cope with a German onslaught. Gough ordered the Fifth Army to withdraw. The German attack was the biggest breakthrough in three years of warfare on the Western Front. Ironically, the British gave up to the Germans the Somme region – where so many British and German soldiers had been killed in the battle of 1916.

The German advance also put Paris in the firing line. The Germans had built the world's largest artillery gun. Three Krupps cannons were moved to the front line and used to shell Paris. Paris was 120 kilometres from the front line but a shell from the huge guns only took just over 200 seconds to reach the city and 183 huge shells landed on the capital of France causing many Parisians to leave the city.

The first few days of the attack were such an overwhelming success, that William II declared March 24th to be a national holiday. Many in Germany assumed that the war was all but over.

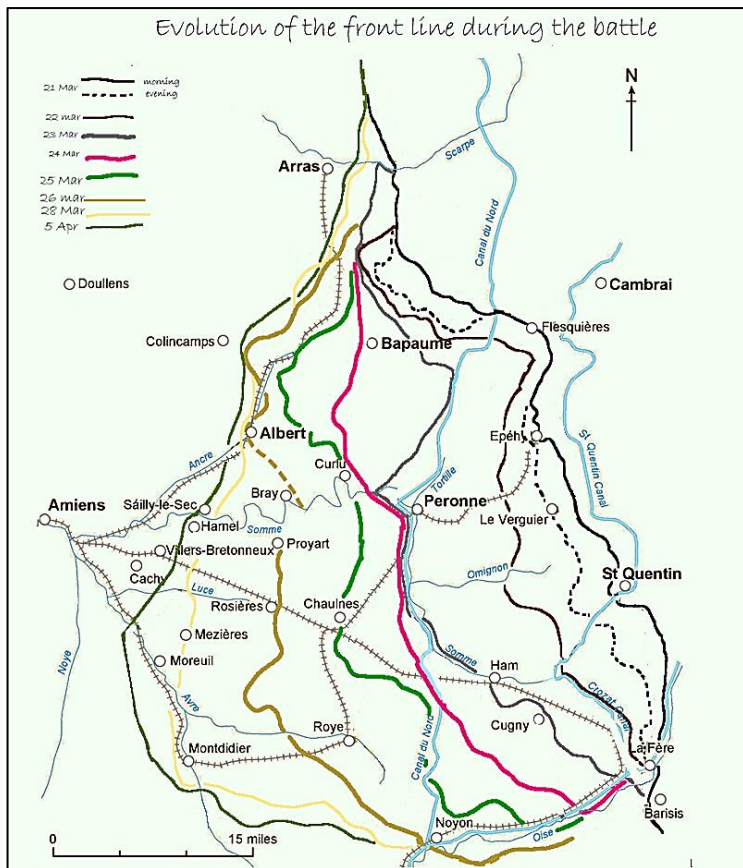
However, the Germans experienced one major problem. Their advance had been a major success. But their troops deliberately carried few things except weapons to assist their mobility. The speed of their advance put their supply lines under huge strain. The supply units of the storm troopers simply could not keep up with them and those leading the attack became short of vital supplies that were stuck well back from their positions.

*[From, with minor amendment, *The German Spring Offensive of 1918**

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/battles-of-world-war-one/the-german-spring-offensive-of-1918/>]

The first part of the German Spring Offensive, commencing on 21 March 1918 - the day on which Gunner Joseph Cavanagh was killed - was known as Operation Michael and was launched from the Hindenburg Line, in the vicinity of Saint-Quentin, France. Its

Evolution of the front line during the battle



goal was to break through the Allied lines and advance in a north-westerly direction to seize the Channel ports from which the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) obtained its supplies. It is quite possible, therefore that Joseph Cavanagh was to the west of St Quentin when he died.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Michael#/media/File:Somme-1918_battlefield_copy.jpg



German troops moving westwards, 21 March 1918

<https://deanoinamerica.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/operation-michael-german-offensive-march-21-1918.jpg>

German Troops advance 21 March 1918.



http://pierreswesternfront.punt.nl/_files/2008-02-26/sommeaustralpart1-image008.jpg

In mid-1922 Sarah Cavanagh married stonemason Robert Oxtan of Little Neston. Sarah (born 5 March 1881) would have been aged 41 and Robert (born 13 November 1877) would have been 43. Robert Oxtan was a son of

stonemason Joseph and Mary Oxtan of Little Neston; in the 1911 census (labourer to a bricksetter, aged 34) Robert was single and living

with his widowed mother; it is believed that he had not been married before marrying Sarah.

In early 1923 Sarah Oxtan gave birth to a son, Robert (believed to be the only child of Robert and Sarah) but Bobby died in early 1935 after he was involved in a cycle accident at Neston Cross.

CERTIFIED COPY OF ENTRY OF DEATH
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Special Provisions) Act 1957

SAW 034791
Application Number 23427621

Return of Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the Lancashire and Cheshire Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) Killed in Action or who have died whilst on Service Abroad in the War of 1914 to 1921

Regt. or Army number	Rank	Name in Full (Surname First)	Age	Country of Birth	Date of Death	Place of Death	Cause of Death
363003	Gunner	CAVANAGH, Joseph.	31	England	21.3.1918.	France or Belgium	Killed in Action.

An Entry relating to the death of Joseph Cavanagh.

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of the certified copy of an entry in a Service Departments Register.
Given at the General Register office, under the seal of the said Office, the 9th day of June 2010

Section 3(2) of the above mentioned Act provides that "The enactments relating to the registration of births and deaths and marriages in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which contain provisions authorising the admission in evidence of, and of extracts from, certified copies of registers and duplicate registers shall have effect as if the Service Departments Registers were certified copies or duplicate registers transmitted to the Registrar General in accordance with those enactments."

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © Crown Copyright

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY



A copy of Joseph Cavanagh's death certificate

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs Pat Wood of Little Neston for this certificate, and other information; Joseph Cavanagh was her grandfather and she is the daughter of Andrew Cavanagh, the second son of Joseph and Sarah.



60pdr BL Mk1 Field Gun

The 60pdr B(reech) L(ading) Field Gun was designed as the successor to the 4.7" Field Gun and was introduced in August 1904. They could fire a 60pdr high explosive or shrapnel shell a maximum distance of 12,300 yards. Source: <http://www.gommecourt.co.uk/weapons.htm>

670393 327995 Cavanagh, Joseph. 13/11/1919. 3. 18. Dover. R. G. A. - actions 5-18. 6 18 5. 6 18 5 m.a. 8/15.20. 7. 15. wid Sarah. 6 18 5 children

9m. France. 363003. Belgium

A. F. W. 6070 SENT
DATE 6 JUL 1919

WAR GRATUITY.
19/20 2/10/19
Transfer 21
Regd. Paper 112055
Serial No. 31571 8143

14 = =

22.11.19 for Sarah 14

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.

Joseph Cavanagh had accrued a credit of £6 18s 5d and Sarah, his widow, received this together with the £14 War Gratuity. The total payment, £20 18s 5d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £3200 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.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
CAVANAGH.	R 40	Gunner	362003
Joseph	R 40		446445

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY (FE)	R 40 / 132	129	
BRITISH	R 40		
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1380

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

This card is rather faded but it shows Joseph's previous Service Number - 446445 - and his later number (363003), although incorrectly recorded as 362003. The card records his rank as Gunner.

The 1939 Register (29 September) records that Joseph jnr (born 28 September 1905), Joseph's son, was a patient in the Neston & District War Memorial Cottage Hospital where he was recorded as a 'builder's labourer, heavy worker'. His wife, Mary (born 16 October 1906) was at 20 Burton Road.

Joseph's son, Andrew (born 20 August 1908) was an assistant grocer living at 38 Moorfield Drive, Parkgate. With him was his wife, Evelyn G (born 11 July 1910).

Nothing is known of the whereabouts of Joseph's other son, Thomas George Cavanagh although, in 1939, his wife Freda A Cavanagh (born 14 September 1916) was living at 14 Forest Road, Heswall. Freda died in the July / September quarter of 1973.

In 1939 Sarah Oxtan, Joseph's widow (born 5 March 1881) was living with stonemason husband Robert (born 13 November 1877) at 2, Cottage Close. With them was Sarah's son-in-law Albert Jones (born 12 December 1915, motor van driver); it is probable that Sarah Winifred (his wife and Sarah's daughter) was with them in the household although this line of the Register has been redacted and is 'officially closed' (as at February 2018).

Robert Oxtan snr died in mid-1959 aged 81 and Sarah died, (her age was recorded as 83) in April / June 1964.