

## 167: George Robert Ward

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: G. R. Ward

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: Canadian Infantry

Service Number: 419020

Date of Death: 12 January 1916

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: R.E. Farm Cemetery, Heuvelland, Arrondissement Ieper, West Flanders, Belgium

Additional information given by CWGC: None

George Robert Ward was the third child of tugboat-owner George Henry and Sarah Ward and he was born in Neston. Although it is believed that he was born in Neston in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1891 he is not recorded as being baptised here.

George was the younger brother of Walter Arthur Ward who also died in WW1 [See [168: Walter Arthur Ward](#), below and for additional details of the family].

In 1891 the family had moved to Wood Park, Little Neston, in the vicinity of the Chester High Road and they were still there in 1901.

George H. Ward	Head	M	41		Tug Owner	Shropshire
Sarah	Wife	W	46			Madeley
William H.	Son	M	5			Liscard
Walter A.	Son	M	3			Liscard
George R.	Son	M	1 month			Neston
Arene Cowan	Widow	W	76		Maid	Shropshire
John	Son	M	13		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	11		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	9		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	7		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	5		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	3		Engineer	Liscard
John	Son	M	1 month		Engineer	Liscard

1891 census (extract) – Wood Park, Little Neston

George H. Ward	41	tug owner	born Liverpool
Sarah	46		born Madeley, Shropshire
William H.	5		born Liscard
Walter A.	3		born Liscard
George R.	1 month		born Neston

Six other persons, visitors, were in the household.

Wood Park is the area of Little Neston adjacent to Neston High Road (A540), to the south of the Hinderton Arms (previously Shrewsbury Arms) public House.

Although, at the time of the 1901 census, George and Sarah were still living in Little Neston, George was recorded as 10, boarding with widow Arene Cowan (and her schoolmistress daughters Jane and Louisa) in Parkgate. George's brother Walter (13,

Woodpark	1	George Hy Ward	50	Steam Tug	Owner	Liverpool
		Sarah	50			Madeley, Shrop.
		Lilla Evans	29			Redwater, Denb.
		Ellen Owen	23			Newtown, Mont.

1901 census (extract) – Woodpark, Little Neston

George Hy. Ward	50	steam tug owner (barge)	born Liverpool
Sarah	50		born Madeley, Shrop.
Lilla Evans	29	domestic servant	born Redwater, Denb.
Ellen Owen	23	domestic servant	born Newtown, Mont.

born Egremont) was also boarding in the same house. It appears most probable that the two brothers were being schooled in Parkgate. William Henry Ward (15, born Egremont) was recorded as a boarder at 8, Kingsmead Road North, Birkenhead, the home of schoolmaster Harry Locke. William has not been located in the 1911 census or in subsequent records.

In this same year, 1901, George and brother Walter transferred to Birkenhead School where they remained until 1903. In 1911 George Henry Ward (60, refrigeration engineer's fitter) and Sarah (60) were living were living at 34 Milton Road, Waterloo, Liverpool; they had been married for 26 years and all three children were still alive although none of the children was with them at the time of the census.



THE NEW TURBINE ARRANGING SS VICTORIAN

The SS *Victorian* and her sister ship, the *Virginian* were the first triple screw North Atlantic liners. They had 3 steam turbines delivering 15 000 shaft horse power, giving them a speed of 18 knots. They had a steel hull, 3 decks, and passenger accommodation for 346 passengers first class, 286 second class and 1000 passengers steerage.

Launched in August 1904 for the Allan Line of Liverpool the *Victorian* became a Merchant Auxiliary Cruiser in 1914 before being taken over by the Canadian Pacific Line in 1917.

On their transatlantic voyage in 1912 (less than three months after the sinking of the *Titanic*), George and Sarah Ward were just two of 866 passengers.

On the ship's papers it was noted that George and Sarah had not previously been to Canada and that they were emigrating to be with their sons. George noted that he wished to find work as an engineer

It seems that George Robert Ward and his brother Walter had moved to Montreal by the time of the 1911 census and it is recorded that George snr and Sarah Ward followed Walter to Montreal on the SS *Victorian* which left Liverpool on 5 July 1912 and arrived in Quebec at midnight on 12 July 1912. They were both then aged 62 and they may have remained in Canada for the rest of their lives. It was recorded that George snr was living at 2515 Hutchinson Street, Montreal in January 1915 when Walter Arthur Ward enlisted.

George Robert was serving with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Royal (Canadian) Highlanders when he died on 12 January 1916 (or possibly on 11 January) just over three months after his brother Walter was killed.

**ATTESTATION PAPER<sup>D</sup>**  
**CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE**

No. A19020  
 Folio. 134

DESCRIPTION OF George Robert Ward ON ENLISTMENT.

**QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.**

1. What is your name? George Robert Ward
2. In what Town, Township, or Parish, and in what Country were you born? Parish of Neston Breckinridge County
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? George Perry Ward Father
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? 1916 St. Urbain St. Montreal
5. What is the date of your birth? March 19-1891
6. What is your trade or calling? Foreman Welder
7. Are you married? No
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? No
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? No
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? Yes
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? Yes

**DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

I, George Robert Ward, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Date May 25 1915 George Robert Ward (Signature of Recruit.)  
W. J. Jones (Signature of Witness.)

**OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

I, George Robert Ward, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Date May 25 1915 George Robert Ward (Signature of Recruit.)  
W. J. Jones (Signature of Witness.)

**CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.**

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence. I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at MONTREAL this MAY 26 1915 day of MAY 1915.

W. J. Jones (Signature of Justice.)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.  
W. J. Jones (Approving Officer.)

Apparent Age 24 years 2 months.

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.

Height 5 ft. 9 1/4 ins.

3 Scar marks  
Left arm

Chest measure (Girth when fully expanded) 37 ins.  
 Range of expansion 4 ins.

Complexion Fair

Eyes Blue

Hair Dark Brown

Religious Denominations  
 Church of England ✓  
 Presbyterian ✓  
 Methodist ✓  
 Baptist or Congregationalist ✓  
 Other Protestants (Denomination to be stated.) ✓  
 Roman Catholic ✓  
 Jewish ✓

**CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.**

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date May 25 1915  
 Place Montreal A. A. Mackay Medical Officer.

**CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT**

George Robert Ward having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

W. J. Jones (Signature of Officer.)  
 Date May 26 1915

George Ward's Attestation Paper for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), May 1915  
<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/item.aspx?ldNumber=300726>

George attested for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion in Montreal on 26 May 1915 when his father's address was recorded as 1916 St. Urbain St., Montreal, an area which has since been redeveloped. George gave his date of birth as 19 March 1891 and his occupation as foreman welder; it was noted that he had no previous military service. At attestation his age was 24 years 2 months and his height was 5ft 9¼ins and he had a 37-inch expanded chest. His complexion was fair with blue eyes and dark brown hair.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada), Canadian Expeditionary Force, was an infantry battalion which was authorised on 7 November 1914 and embarked for Britain on 10 June 1915. It disembarked in France on 9 October 1915, where it fought as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division in France and Flanders until the end of the war. George, however, saw nothing of the principal actions in which his Battalion was engaged as he died just three months after his arrival in France.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion War Diary (1915-1919) for January 1916 records that:  
*L/Sgt Pritchard and four men, who had been selected from a total of 47 examined, were sent back to the Base as Munition Workers on 7<sup>th</sup> Jany.*



The 42<sup>nd</sup> Bn. moved on 7<sup>th</sup> January from billets near METEREN into Divisional Reserve relieving the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Battalion at DRANOUTRE, this being an incident of the relief of the 1<sup>st</sup> Can. Infantry Brigade by the 7<sup>th</sup> Can. Infantry Brigade for three weeks.

On 8<sup>th</sup> Jany. we took over from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Can. Bn. front line trenches D-3 and E-4 inclusive. During this and two subsequent tours in these trenches we had the 6<sup>th</sup> Can. Infantry Brigade on our left and the Royal Can. Regt. on our right.

The weather throughout our four days tour was fine and mild and we had practically no sickness. The enemy's attitude was quiet and at night work could be heard proceeding in his trenches. Sniping was active, however.

No minor operations were undertaken; enemy working parties were continually fired on and dispersed. An unfortunate experience with rifle grenades on 11<sup>th</sup> January can best be described by quoting our official report to Brigade Headquarters:

"Shortly before eight o'clock this morning, the enemy opened rifle grenade fire of twelve or fifteen rifle rounds on trenches 14-A and 15-A. The officer in charge of the latter asked O.C. Mortar Battery to reply and 8 rounds were fired with apparent effect a breach being noticed in front line German trench.

"After an interval of about twenty five minutes rifle grenade fire was resumed on our right sector. One fell outside dugout in the right of D-4 where the parapet is revetted with corrugated iron which threw the charge into the dugout and the 6 men sleeping there were all wounded. The other men were wounded at various points along D-4 including some of the men carrying out the wounded at the top of communication trench D-4. In all, 2 men were killed and nineteen wounded, four of the latter seriously. Owing to the congestion of telephone line there was some delay in getting artillery retaliation. The battery responded promptly as soon as communication was obtained and only 2 or 3 rifle grenades were fired after the battery opened.

Our rifle grenades fired about 70 rounds. The enemy's fire activity extended over a period of about 35" including the lapse of 25 minutes referred to."

On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> January the Battalion moved out of the trenches going into Brigade Reserve.

During our four days in Brigade Reserve 20 men received a two days course in bombing; five men were detailed for a two weeks course in machine guns.

[Source: <https://archive.org/stream/42ndInfantryBattalionWarDiary1915-1919/FinalVersion-42ndCanadianInfantryBattalionWarDiary#page/n5/mode/2up>]



The location of Dranoutre (now Dranouter), indicated by the red circle, between Bailleul and Ypres.

[Source of base map: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Messines\\_\(1914\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Messines_(1914))]

The efforts of the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade during their three weeks in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade area earned the following letter from Major General Currie, C.B., Commanding 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division (the death of George Ward is noted on the penultimate line):

"It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform you that during the stay of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade area, they behaved at all times most gallantly. Besides, they did a great deal of very necessary and useful work.

"At the time they took over the line, the trenches, owing to the very bad weather, were not in the best of shape but your fellows have made a great difference. I went over the line last Saturday morning and was delighted with what I saw had been done and so expressed myself to Brigadier General MacDonell. I asked him to convey my thanks to all ranks of his Brigade: I know he will, but I want you to know as well how I have appreciated them. They were active in their patrolling, did a lot of wiring, greatly improved the front trenches, worked hard on supporting points and were aggressive always. While I deeply regret their casualties I do not think they were excessive.

"Brigadier General Hughes has written me in warm terms of praise of what has been accomplished by MacDonell's Brigade."

7<sup>th</sup> Brigade total casualties during the three weeks were 13 O.R. killed, 2 Officers 69 O.R. wounded, of these 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion total casualties were 3 O.R. killed (Ptes Matthews, E., Turner, G. and Ward G.) 39 O.R. wounded of whom 3 O.R. died of wounds (Ptes Wells, W.B., Belhumeur, J., McKillop, A.).

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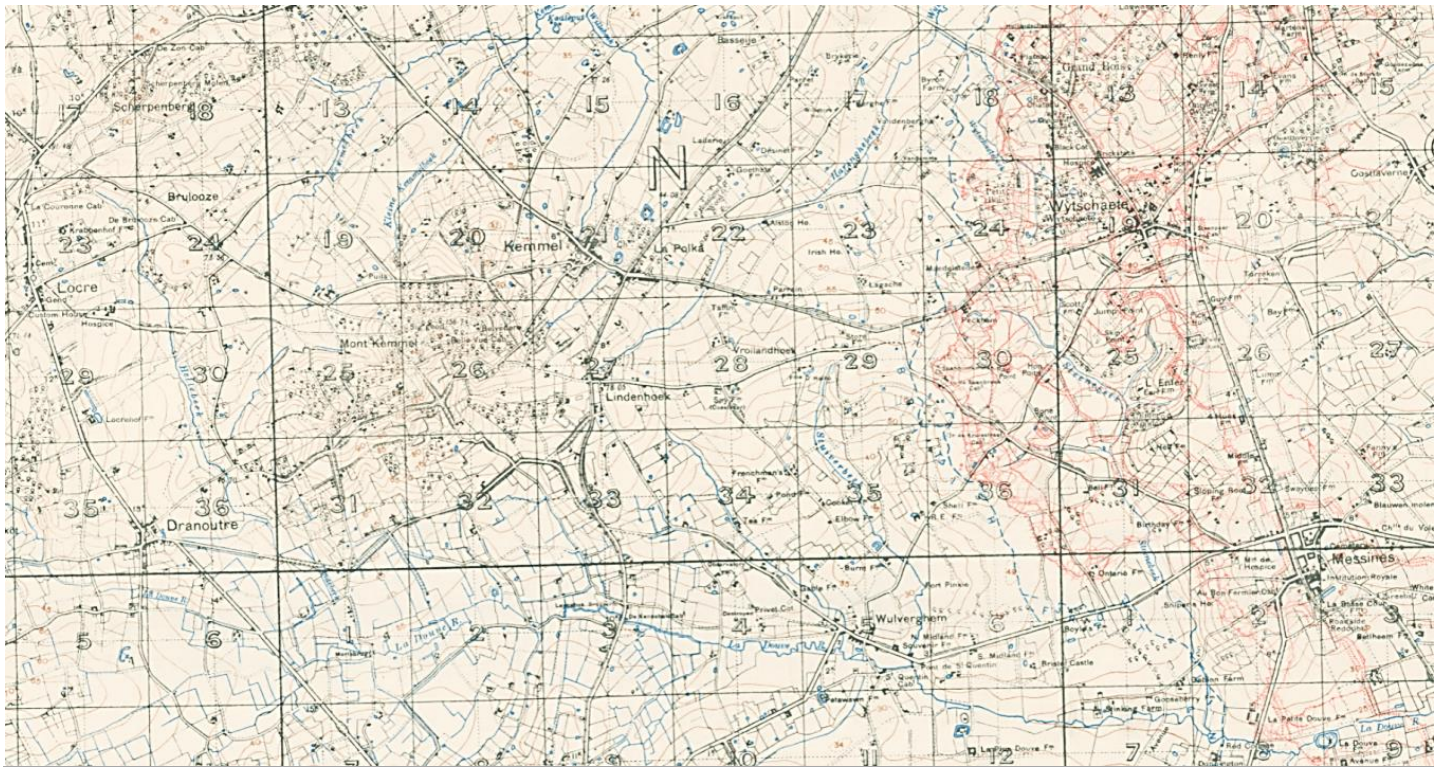
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George Robert Ward was one of six soldiers whose deaths were recorded in the War Diary of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion for January 1916.

The Birkenhead School Memorial Book records that George was working as an engineer in Canada before he enlisted and, as with his brother, his death is recorded one day sooner than the 'official' date noted by the CWGC.





1 mile

The region to the east of Dranoutre (west side of map) on 22 June 1916, some five months after George Robert Ward was killed near the town. German trenches and fortifications are shown in red; the front line was now around 4 miles to the east of Dranoutre.

[Source:

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/print.cfm#zoom=14&lat=50.7776&lon=2.8400&layers=101464939&b=1>]

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT Army Form W. 3372.  
**GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.**  
 D.A.D.G.R. SOUTH SUB DISTRICT.  
 NO. DISTRICT. REPORT No. 1  
 Serial No: 1453  
 COMMUNE : WYTSCHAETE.  
 PLACE OF BURIAL R.E.FARM CEMETERY No. 1.  
 SCHEDULE No. E.4P  
 SOUTH SUB-AREA,  
 No. 6 AREA,  
 1156  
 CERTIFIED CORRECT & COMPLETE  
 Date: 8/7/20  
 MAJOR: D.A.D.G.R. & E. SOUTH.  
 NO: 5 DISTRICT.  
 Map Reference Sheet 28.N.35.d.95.65.  
 This report cancels all previous reports.  
 The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G.R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
<b>PLOT 3.</b>						<b>ROW "A".</b>
4/ att 1/ N.Staffs	8284	HARVEY ✓	Pte J.	5.4.16.	BY 1/18/24	1 ✓
1/ N.Staffs	7005	CALLIMORE ✓	Pte E.	4.2.16.	BY 1/18/24	2 ✓
do	9101	DRAKEFORD ✓	Pte W.	4.4.16.		3 ✓
2/ Canadians	417017	GOLLIN X ✓	Pte C.	21.3.16.	BY 1/18/24	4 ✓
HQS 1/ Can Inf	406276	GRAIGIE X ✓	Pte A.	3.8.16.		5 ✓
do	416617	AYOTTE X ✓	Pte A.O.	3.2.16.		6 ✓
19/ Canadians	55831	DURRANT ✓	Pte C.W.	3.10.15.		7 ✓
3/ Can Par Etn	414874	MEMERY ✓	Pte J.W.	18.3.16.	CROSSES 9/15/38	8 ✓
do	414788	MILBURN ✓	Pte W.R.	do	comps 8/22/38	9 ✓
do	415082	MACDONALD ✓	Pte D.	do	5/15/38	10 ✓
42/ Canadians	419020	WARD ✓	Pte G.R.	12.1.16.		11 ✓
do	47986	TURNER ✓	Pte G.	do	ERECTED	12 ✓
do	418254	MATTHEWS ✓	Pte E.	11.1.16.		13 ✓
1/ Canadians	18454	MACDONALD ✓	Sgt J.A.	5.11.15.		14 ✓
2/ do	400955	CLARK X ✓	Pte J.	12.2.16.		15 ✓
2/ do	18816	JOHNSON X ✓	Pte J.N.	20.2.16.		16 ✓
2/ do	402365	MAXWELL ✓	Pte J.W.	23.2.16.		17 ✓
2/ do	400537	MACDONALD ✓	Pte H.G.	2.3.16.		18 ✓
2/ do	413129	STEINBERG ✓	Pte J.S.	3.3.16.		19 ✓
2/ do	19086	JEFFREY ✓	Pte W.	do	G.R.'s'd.	20 ✓
2/ do	8361	RICHARDSON ✓	Pte F.	13.3.16.		21 ✓
2/ do	43832	SMITH ✓	Pte F.G.	1.3.16.		22 ✓

INTERED 14-5-20  
 SLIPS CHECKED M.F. 50.94



George Robert Ward's war grave at R.E. Farm Cemetery, West Flanders, Belgium [Source: CWGC]



**PRIVATE G. R. WARD,  
42ND ROYAL (CANADIAN) HIGHLANDERS.**



GEORGE ROBERT WARD, third son of George Henry Ward, late of Neston, Cheshire, was born in 1891, and was killed in the trenches in France on January 11, 1916.

He entered the School in 1901 and left in 1903, though then still quite young. This was due to the fact that his parents left the neighbourhood of Birkenhead, taking him with them.

When war broke out he was engineering in Canada, but very soon joined the Canadian Highland Regiment, and crossed with them to France in 1915. After only a few months of active service he was killed.

[issuu.com/birkenheadschooldocs/ww1\\_memorial\\_book?e=8039437/...](http://www.issuu.com/birkenheadschooldocs/ww1_memorial_book?e=8039437/...)

Pte	Ward, Ernest Alfred.	7 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Ward, George Barker.	9 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Ward, George Robert.	42 <sup>nd</sup> Bn.
Pte.	Ward, Graham Stuart.	16 <sup>th</sup> Bn.



<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/books/page?page=178&book>  
Canadian Virtual War Memorial Book

George Ward was buried at R.E. Farm Cemetery around 9.5 km south of Ieper town centre and 7.5 km south-west of Wijtschate.

*Wyschaete (now Wijtschate) was in Allied hands until 1 November 1914, from June 1917 to April 1918, and from 28 September 1918 onwards. It was the scene of exceptionally severe fighting in November 1914 and April 1918. "R.E. Farm" was the military name given to the Ferme des douze Bonniers. This building remained in Allied hands until April 1918. In December 1914 the 1<sup>st</sup> Dorsets began a cemetery (N<sup>o</sup> 1) on the east side of the farm, which was used by fighting units and field ambulances until April 1916, and occasionally in 1917. In January 1915, the same battalion began another cemetery (N<sup>o</sup> 2) on the west side of the farm. This cemetery was little used and after the Armistice, the 23 graves it contained were moved into N<sup>o</sup> 1, which was then renamed. R.E. Farm Cemetery contains 179 First World War burials, 11 of them unidentified. [CWGC]*

Out of the sparkling sea  
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay  
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,  
Basking, and watching lazily  
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn  
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through,  
Till every particle glowed clean and new  
And slowly seemed to turn  
To lucent amber in a world of blue . . .

I felt a sudden wrench-  
A trickle of warm blood-  
And found that I was sprawling in the mud  
Among the dead men in the trench.



"Hit"  
Wilfrid Wilson Gibson  
(1878 - 1962)

