

171: Harry Wright

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Harry Wright

Rank: Corporal

Battalion / Regiment: 13th Bn. Cheshire Regiment

Service Number: 24253

Date of Death: 07 July 1916

Age at Death: 19

Buried / Commemorated at: Thiepval Memorial, Thiepval, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: None

Harry Wright is included in this account although there is no certainty that he had any association with Neston other than that he is included in a group photograph (back row, encircled) published in the *Cheshire Observer* on 26 December 1914 under a headline that indicates that he was a local man and serving with a local battalion:

NESTON MEN WHO ARE DOING THEIR DUTY



Flashing through the thoroughfares, and mingling with the khaki-clad figures, wounded and on leave, the smart young members of the Wirral Battalion, in their uniforms of blue, relieved with white, are attracting much attention at Neston and Parkgate. These willing recruits command the keenest admiration of the country, and no one appreciates their loyalty more than

Photo by J. Geo. Davies, New Ferry. the wounded heroes from the front. The loyalists of the photograph have been enjoying a brief respite in the locality, and will be readily recognised. Their names are as follows:—Top row: Harry Wright, Thomas Ellis, Ernest Cottrell, Herbert Chimes, Richard Dayas and Edward Johnson. Bottom row: John Tudor, Jack Davidson, Thomas Mealar, Joseph Smith and James Hopley.

Of the 11 men shown in this photograph it is known that, excluding Harry Wright, four died in the war (Thomas Ellis, Henry Edward ('Dick') Dayas, Edward Johnson and Joseph Smith) and accounts of them are given earlier in this work. It appears that this staged photograph was taken in October/November 1914 before the troops had been issued with their standard khaki uniforms and when they were still in initial training in Wiltshire (and possibly at the Codford St. Mary's Army Camp where some tented accommodation, seen in the background of the photo, was in use).

However, no other record linking Harry Wright to Neston has been found and no one of that name or suitable age has been identified locally.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission holds records of 64 individuals named Harry Wright serving with the British army who died in WW1. A further 100 individuals who died had a name which included *Henry* (a name commonly interchanged with *Harry*) and numerous other men are recorded only as H. Wright.

However, of all the potential 'candidates' there is only one named as Harry Wright who served with the Cheshire Regiment and who died (7 July 1916) - and he served with the 13th Battalion, known otherwise and unofficially as the Wirral Pals or Wirral Battalion:

Name	Rank	Service Number	Date of Death	Age	Regiment / Service	Service Country	Grave / Memorial Reference	Cemetery / Memorial Name
WRIGHT, HARRY	Corporal	24253	07/07/1916		Cheshire Regiment	United Kingdom	Pier and Face 3 C and 4 A.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

The conclusion has to be that it is this individual, assuming that the person shown in the photograph died, who offers the 'best fit'.

Nevertheless, because it is not possible to establish a strong link to Neston for this individual, this Harry Wright will be considered here only in outline.

It is believed that Lance Corporal (Acting Corporal) Harry Wright (24253) may have been the son of house painter William and Susan Wright of Altrincham:

1	William Wright	Head	59	Married	38	9	9	0	Painter - House	240	Worke	4	Cher Knutsford	Print
2	William Wright	Son	35	Married	-	-	-	-	Gardener (domestic)	48	Worke	0	do Knutsford	Print
3	Susan Wright	Wife	58	Married	38	9	9	0	-	-	-	-	do Knutsford	Print
4	Henry Wright	Son	24	Single	-	-	-	-	Painter House	240	Worke	4	do Hale	Print
5	Ellie Wright	Daughter	19	Single	-	-	-	-	-	-	at home	-	do Bowdlem	Do
6	Edith Wright	Daughter	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	do Altrincham	Do
7	Ernie Wright	Daughter	10	-	-	-	-	-	School	240	-	0	do Altrincham	Do
8	Alfred Wright	Daughter	3	-	-	-	-	-	School	-	-	-	do Longsight	209
9														

(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 sex column. (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have entered their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary corrections I have stamped all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous. Initials of Enumerator: <i>W.P.</i>			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. 5 Rooms.		
Total	Males	Females	I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature: <i>William Wright</i> Postal Address: <i>106 Moss Lane Altrincham Cheshire</i>		
4	4	8			

1911 census (condensed) - 106 Moss Lane, Altrincham

Harry Wright, single, 24, born Hale, was a house painter. His parents, William (59, house painter, born Knutsford) and Susan (58, born Knutsford) had been married for 38 years and all nine children had survived.

The Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects records that this Harry Wright was married and his widow, Sarah Ann, received his outstanding money. Unfortunately, no record of Harry's marriage has been found.

The 13th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment (known also as the Wirral Pals and the Wirral Battalion) was formed in Port Sunlight on 1 September 1914 as a result of an appeal by Lord Leverhulme to his employees. Arthur Crookenden notes, in his history of the Cheshire Regiment, that

A thousand men at once volunteered for service – a staff of clerks was loaned from the offices of the factory, and medical examinations and attestations were carried out at once. After a heart send-off, the men were taken to Chester by ex-Sergeant-Major E. A. Brandon. They were joined there by 200 men from Wallasey recruited by the late Mr Gershom Stewart, MP for the Wirral. Lord Leverhulme led them through the City to the Castle where they were put under the command of Captain Field.

All original volunteers were distinguished by having a W prefix to their Service Number. As Harry Wright is not named on the Port Sunlight War Memorial it is presumed that he was not a Lever employee and his Service Number does not have the W prefix.

Following recruitment, the troops moved first to Chester and then, in October 1914, to Salisbury Plain to join the 74th Brigade of the 25th Division before being moved to billets in Bournemouth where they over-wintered. In May 1915 the troops moved to Aldershot for final training and on 25 September 1915 were mobilised for war and embarked for France where they concentrated in the area of Nieppe. However, it is suggested that Harry Wright was not amongst the initial draft of the Battalion which sailed to France at this time (personal communication with Peter Threlfall).

Harry Wright died on 7 July 1916 when the 13th Battalion was in action at The Battle of Albert (1 - 13 July), the first two weeks of Anglo-French offensive operations in The Battle of the Somme and it has been recorded that:

British attacks south of the road between Albert and Bapaume began on 2 July, despite congested supply routes to the French XX Corps, British XIII Corps, XV Corps and III Corps. La Boisselle near the road was captured on 4 July, Bernafay and Caterpillar woods were occupied from 3–4 July and then fighting to capture Trônes Wood, Mametz Wood and Contalmaison took place until early on 14 July, when the Battle of Bazentin Ridge (14–17 July) began.

German reinforcements reaching the Somme front, were thrown into the defensive battle as soon as they arrived and had many casualties as did the British attackers. Both sides were reduced to piecemeal operations, which were hurried, poorly organised, sent troops unfamiliar with the ground into action with inadequate reconnaissance.

[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Albert_\(1916\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Albert_(1916))]

On the first day of the battle (1 July) there were around 60 000 British casualties and a further 25 000 were lost before the action was completed on 13 July. In fact, for the Allied forces, Friday 7 July 1916 was a day of significant losses with known fatalities totalling 2232.

Arthur Crookenden, in his history of the Cheshire Regiment in WW1, notes:

