

## 24: John Devine

Recorded on the plaque in Neston parish church as being Private J. Devine the *Memorial Service For Neston Men who have fallen in the War, 1914 – 1918* records him as *John Devine* but no other details are given.

It has not been possible to identify this individual with certainty; CWGC records 7 individuals with the rank of Private and with *John* as a forename (although one died in 1920 and it is possible to eliminate two others) and a further 12 (although two died in 1919) with just the initial *J*. There is no mention in Liverpool or Chester newspapers of him as a casualty and no one of this name has been located in the local census returns. It does not appear that he was a close relative of Lance Corporal Thomas Devine who, described elsewhere in this account [see [127: Thomas Devine](#)], died on 27 April 1917.

No 'Devine' is recorded in Neston, or with any known connection to the town, in any census returns (although one family, with this surname but no one of appropriate age, was living in Thornton Hough at the time of the 1911 census).

No 'Devine' is recorded in the Absent Voters' List [Spring 1919] for Neston - it was not unusual for soldiers who had died to have been included in these lists.

No 'Devine' is recorded in either Neston Urban District, or Wirral Urban District, in the 1939 Register.

It is *possible* that the name has been corrupted and that it refers to James Devaney – he is considered later in this account - although he was a Lance Corporal when he was killed.



# FALL IN.

**W**HAT will you lack, sonny, what will you lack  
When the girls line up the street,  
Shouting their love to the lads come back  
From the foe they rushed to beat?  
Will you send a strangled cheer to the sky  
And grin till your cheeks are red?  
But what will you lack when your mate goes by  
With a girl who cuts you dead?  
Where will you look, sonny, where will you look  
When your children yet to be  
C'avour to learn of the part you took  
In the War that kept men free?  
Will you say it was nought to you if France  
Stood up to her foe or bunked?  
But where will you look when they give the glance  
That tells you they know you funked?  
How will you fare, sonny, how will you fare  
In the far-off win'er night,  
When you sit by the fire in an old man's chair  
And your neighbours talk of the fight?  
Will you slink away, as it were from a blow,  
Your old head shamed and bent?  
Or say—I was not with the first to go,  
But I went, thank God, I went?  
Why do they call, sonny, why do they call  
For men who are brave and strong?  
Is it naught to you if your country fall,  
And Right is smashed by Wrong?  
Is it football still and the picture show,  
The pub and the betting odds,  
When your brothers stand to the tyrant's blow  
And England's call is God's?

HAROLD BEGBIE.

'Fall In' by Harold Begbie (1871–1929).

Begbie composed the poem at the beginning of the war and it was later set to music by Sir Frederic Cowan. The sheet music could be obtained *at any branch of BOOTS the CHEMISTS, price One Shilling* with the profits going to the Prince of Wales fund. Patriotic cards, often in the form of postcards, flourished during the war and many had verses which attempted to shame young men into joining the military forces.

[Source: <https://www.worldwar1postcards.com/ww1-poetry-and-verse-on-postcards.php>]