

## 35: Edward Hancock

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: E. Hancock

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 20th Bn. The King's Regiment (Liverpool Regiment)

Service Number: 22102

Date of Death: 29 January 1917

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Sainte Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, Departement de la Seine-Maritime, Haute-Normandie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Charles and Jane Hancock of Neston

Edward Hancock was the (probably) twelfth, and last, child of farm labourer Charles and Jane Hancock of Little Neston and he was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 21 June 1889. At this time the eldest child of Charles and Jane was Thomas, aged about 20, and Louisa (who is mentioned later) would be about 4½.

Charles Hancock married Jane Hatton of West Kirby, the daughter of shepherd/farm labourer James and Susanah) at St Bridget's, West Kirby, in late 1868. In 1871, 18 years before Edward was born, they were living in Little Neston with their first son, Thomas:

Charles Hancock	Head	Mar	23	Labourer	Little Neston
Jane Do	Wife	Mar	21		West Kirby, Cheshire
Thomas Do	Son		2	Scholar	Do

### 1871 census (extract) – Little Neston

Charles Hancock	23	labourer	born Little Neston
Jane	21		born West Kirby
Thomas	2		born West Kirby

In the 1881 census the family was still living in Little Neston, close to Town Lane:

Charles Hancock	Head	Mar	34	Ag Lab	Do
Jane Do	Wife	Mar	33		Caldy, Cheshire
Thomas Do	Son	Unm	11	Scholar	Little Neston, Cheshire
Ann Do	Sister		7	Do	Do
John Do	Son		5	Do	Do
James Do	Son		2	Do	Do
Susan Do	Sister		11 mo	Do	Do

### 1881 census (extract) – Little Neston

Charles Hancock	34	agricultural labourer	born Little Neston
Jane	33		born Caldý
Thomas	11		born Little Neston
Ann	7		born Little Neston
John	5		born Little Neston
James	2		born Little Neston
Susan	11 months		born Little Neston

The family continued to live in Little Neston and Charles was always recorded as an agricultural labourer. In 1891 the census records their last children, Sarah and Edward:

64		1	4	Charles Hancock	Head	37	42	Thomas Hancock	1	x	Charles L. Mole
				Jane	Wife	36	41				do West Kirby
				Susan	Daughter	11	16	Schooler			do Little Neston
				Charles	Son	9	14				do do
				Louisa	Daughter	7	12				do do
				Sarah	Daughter	5	10				do do
				Edward	Son	3	8				do do
65	The Bull and Dog	1		Matthew Roberts	Head	37	42	Publication and other papers	x		do do

1891 census (extract) – Bull Hill, Little Neston [next door, or close to, the Bull and Dog public house]

Charles Hancock	43	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Jane	42		born West Kirby
Susan	11		born Little Neston
Charles	9		born Little Neston
Louisa	7		born Little Neston
Sarah	5		born Little Neston
Edward	2		born Little Neston

In some other census returns Jane records that her birthplace was Caldby.

On 26 December 1890 Thomas Hancock, the oldest child of the family, married Eliza Alice Roberts at St Matthew's Church, Toxteth. In the 1891 census Thomas (21) was a dairyman living with Eliza (22) and her mother (Lydia Roberts, widow, 59) at 27 Radstock Road, West Derby. By 1901 Thomas, now 30, was a mineral water manufacturer living at 20 Irlam Road, Bootle, with Eliza, their three children and Eliza's mother. In 1911 Thomas, 42, was again a dairyman and living at 86 Richmond Road, Liverpool. Thomas's mother-in-law, Lydia Roberts (71) was still living with the family. Thomas's eldest child, Lydia (19) was an assistant schoolteacher for Cheshire County Council and son Arthur (17) was a junior clerk with a book publisher's. The youngest child, was Thomas, 12.

In 1891 John Hancock, aged 15, was a servant at the home of his grandmother, Isabella Hancock, in Little Neston. She was 73 and described as a farmer. John has not been located in the 1911 census returns.

In 1901 Edward was with his family in Little Neston, still living on Bull Hill:

106	Little Neston	1	4	Charles Hancock	Head	37	42	Thomas Hancock	1	x	Charles L. Mole
				Jane	Wife	36	41				do West Kirby
				Susan	Daughter	11	16	Schooler			do Little Neston
				Charles	Son	9	14				do do
				Louisa	Daughter	7	12				do do
				Sarah	Daughter	5	10				do do
				Edward	Son	3	8				do do

1901 census (extract) – Bull Hill, Little Neston

Charles Hancock	52	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Jane	53		born West Kirby
John	25	farm labourer	born Little Neston
James	22	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Sarah	14	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Edward	11		born Little Neston

Of the children of Charles and Jane Hancock it is recorded that:

Ann	was baptised at Neston, as Anne, on 7 December 1873
James	was baptised at Neston on 9 May 1878
Susan / Susanna	was baptised at Neston on 14 May 1880
Charles	was baptised at Neston on 11 August 1882
Louisa	was baptised at Neston on 28 January 1887, the same day as Sarah
Sarah	was baptised at Neston on 28 January 1887, the same day as Louisa.
Edward	was baptised at Neston on 21 June 1889

In 1901 Susanna, 21, was a housemaid to solicitor Clement and Annie Tibbits on Old Chester Road, Rock Ferry. On 2 December 1909 Susanna, 29, married Harry Bradbury (34, glycerine maker of New Ferry) at St Nicholas's church, Liverpool.

In both 1901 and 1911 Louisa Hancock was a housemaid working for retired soap manufacturer/managing director John Smith Ferguson and his wife, Jane, at Thornton Lodge, Thornton Hough. Jane was a daughter of James Lever and Eliza and it was Jane's younger brothers, William Hesketh Lever and James Darcy Lever, who founded Lever Brothers in 1885. John Smith Ferguson married Jane on 6 September 1871; in 1871 he was an accountant, in 1881 he was the secretary of Lever Brothers and he then progressed to become the managing director. Louisa Hancock married Samuel Hayes shortly after the 1911 census.

In 1911 the Hancock family was still in Little Neston:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1	Charles Hancock	Head	64	Married	42	12	9	3	Farm Labourer	140	Worker		Little Neston	British	none
2	Jane Hancock	Wife	63	do	42	12	9	3					West Kirby	British	do
3	John Hancock	Son	34	single					Farm Labourer	1			Little Neston	do	do
4	Edward Hancock	Son	21	do					Farm Labourer				do	do	do
5	Sarah Hancock	daughter	25	do					Domestic Servant	(200)			do	do	do

(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.)							
<p>I certify that—</p> <p>(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.</p> <p>(2) I have entered the males and females in Column 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>Initials of Enumerator <i>She</i></p>			<p>Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count outhouse, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.</p> <p><i>3 rooms</i></p>							
<p>Total.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Males</th> <th>Females</th> <th>Persons</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Males	Females	Persons	3	2	5	<p>I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.</p> <p>Signature <i>Charles Hancock</i></p> <p>Postal Address <i>Pritchard Row, Little Neston</i></p>	
Males	Females	Persons								
3	2	5								

1911 census (condensed) - Pritchard's Row, Little Neston [the terraced cottages facing the shops and by the junction with Bull Hill]

Charles Hancock	64	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Jane	63		born West Kirby
John	34	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Edward	21	farm labourer	born Little Neston
Sarah	25	domestic servant	born Little Neston

Charles and Jane had been married for 42 years and nine of their twelve children had survived.

In the 1911 census James, now recorded as 33, is shown as a boarder at Bowling Green Farm (the farm of cowman/shepherd John R. and Annie Sarah Latimer, midway between Neston and Gayton) where he was a waggoner on the farm and Charles was a butcher (shopkeeper) in Tranmere.

Edward enlisted, in Liverpool, in the army on 5 November 1914 when he was recorded as being aged 24 years 180 days. The Service Record notes that he was 5ft 8ins tall, weighed 136lb (9 stone 10lb / 61.8kg), had grey eyes, brown hair, a fresh complexion and a 37-inch expanded chest. His occupation was recorded as, like his father, a farm labourer - it is known that he worked for Robert Scott who farmed Ivy Farm in Little Neston.

First posted to the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn. King's Liverpool Regiment Edward remained in Britain for just over one year, joining the British Expeditionary Force and being posted to France, landing at Boulogne, on 7 November 1915, as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion Liverpool Regiment - this was one of the 'Liverpool Pals' battalions which had been recruited between August and October 1914 by Lord Derby as part of Lord Kitchener's 'New Army'. The 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion had come under the orders of the 89<sup>th</sup> Brigade 30<sup>th</sup> Division on 30 April 1915 when the original Fourth New Army was broken up; Edward was with N<sup>o</sup>. 1 Company. In April the units were moved to concentrate near Grantham but there was a severe shortage of arms, ammunition and much equipment - for example, only one gun carriage was available and that was used only for funerals! It was not until October that the artillery was in a position to commence firing practice, a few weeks after the Division had moved to the area of Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, and the following month they embarked for France after the Division had been inspected by Lord Derby on 4 November. After landing at Boulogne the units concentrated near Ailly le Haut Clocher (near Amiens) by 12 November 1915.

No details of Edward's service, other than his health issues, have survived in his army documents but we know that the Liverpool Pals' first battle came during "The Big Push" on 1 July 1916, on the first day of the Somme Offensive when the 89<sup>th</sup> Brigade was under the command of the Earl of Derby's brother, Brigadier Ferdinand Charles Stanley. After the Somme Offensive ended in November, the Allies began to prepare for a series of combined Allied offensives which would begin in April 1917 although, by then, Edward Hancock had died.

Some detail is known about Edward's medical condition from his Medical Case Sheets. Edward was, it appears, first admitted to the 98<sup>th</sup> RAMC Field Ambulance Hospital on 31 December 1916 where he was diagnosed as suffering from pleurisy. On that date the War Diary notes that the Battalion was based at Berles-au-Bois, around 15km south west of Arras. No mention of Edward is made in the War Diary on or after 31 December but the entry for 30/31 December records:

*Nothing of importance to mention. The New Year was ushered in with the usual compliments from other units in the Brigade, and the Brigadier; but not from the Bosch.*

On 2 January 1917 Edward was moved away from the front line to N<sup>o</sup>. 20 Casualty Clearing Station at Warlencourt where he continued to be treated for pleurisy before, on 5 January, he was taken to N<sup>o</sup>. 3 General Base Hospital at Le Tréport, a small fishing



port and sea-side resort some 21 miles northeast of Dieppe. Here he was found to have bronchitis and acute nephritis (inflammation of the kidneys, which causes impaired kidney function) but it was noted that he did not have pleurisy as diagnosed previously.

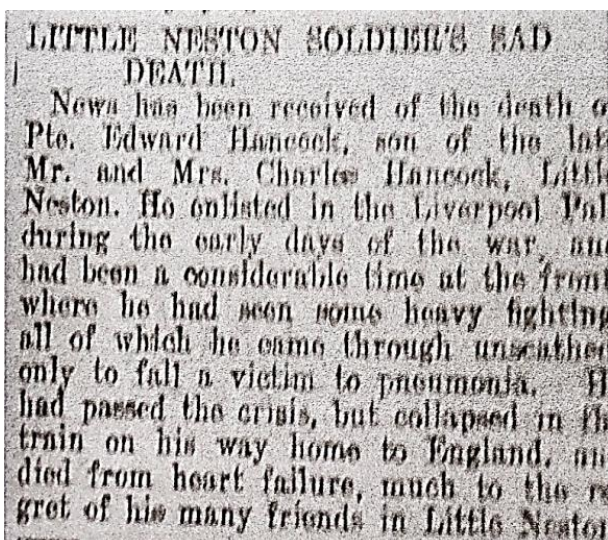
Bacterial investigation showed that Edward had tuberculosis and so he was moved to an appropriate ward and bronchopneumonia, a type of pneumonia - inflammation of the lungs caused by infection from viruses, bacteria, or fungi - was also diagnosed. Recognising that Edward was seriously ill the army contacted the family - not recognising initially that both of Edward's parents had died since he joined the army; Jane died, aged 66, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1914 and Charles died, aged 68, in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1916. However, Edward's eldest sibling, Thomas Hancock, a dairyman still running his own business in Liverpool, was contacted and it seems that it was agreed that their sister, Louisa, would travel to France to visit Edward in the Base Hospital.

Louisa, who in 1917 would have been 33, had married Samuel Hayes, a domestic gardener, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1911 at St George's United Reformed Church in Thornton Hough and, in late 1916 had given birth to Nancy, possibly their first child; they lived at 'The Gardens', Plymyard, Eastham. Although a Travel Warrant was issued for her visit to Edward Louisa decided not to go as she was too ill. Why Thomas, or one of Edward's other siblings, did not travel to see him in France is unknown.

On 28 January 1917, having spent 24 days in N<sup>o</sup>. 3 General Base Hospital, Edward was discharged with his record showing:

*'A very acute and severe case of pulmonary tuberculosis, discharged from the hospital as a transfer to the United Kingdom as he showed no improvement and it was considered advisable to transfer him while it was probable that he could stand the journey'.*

Unfortunately, this was not the case as, having been put on an Ambulance Train to bring him home, he died without leaving France the following day, 29 January.



Birkenhead News –  
Monday 26 February 1917

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

### POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

When a telegram is sent, the sender is liable for its accuracy. If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 1d. being reckoned as 1d.; and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions

Office Stamp.

Charges to pay

Handled in at *8.15.17* Received here at *9.36.17*

*War Office London Offms*

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**TO** { *Attest Preston*

<i>C2 Cas</i>	<i>P45135</i>	<i>ofc</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Gen</i>
<i>H.</i>	<i>Leport</i>	<i>reports</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Jan</i>
<i>22102</i>	<i>Mc</i>	<i>Hancock</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>20/</i>
<i>Lpools</i>	<i>Broncho</i>	<i>pneumonia</i>	<i>formerly seriously</i>	<i>now</i>
<i>dangerously ill may be visited follow usual</i>				
<i>procedure case at public expense Proccas</i>				

He had served in the army for a total of 2 years 86 days, 1 year 84 days having been in France. His body may have been taken to the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital in Le Havre.



# IN MEMORIAM SERVICE.

A memorial service was held at St Michael's Mission Church last Sunday evening, in memory of Private Edward Hancock, of the Liverpool Pals, who recently died from heart failure, following pneumonia, while on his journey home to England. A large congregation was present at the service, which was of an impressive character, and which was conducted by Captain Scholey, C.A. Special hymns were used, which were very well rendered by the choir, and the Dead March in "Saul" was played at the close of the service.

**ROLL OF HONOUR.**—We regret to hear of the death of another of our gallant men at the Front, viz., Pte. Edwin Hancock, son of the late Charles Hancock, of Little Neston. He was 25 years of age and joined the Liverpool Pals when this company was first formed by Lord Derby, and he had been out at the Front about twelve months. It appears he contracted pneumonia and died in transit. Before joining up he worked on the farm for Mr. R. Scott, and was much respected, and will be sadly missed by his relatives and former pals. Both his parents are dead.

*Chester Chronicle* - Saturday 17 February 1917  
The newspaper report of his death in the *Chester Chronicle* states, incorrectly, that he was Edwin Hancock.



*Cheshire Observer* - Saturday 17 February 1917

## NESTON AND PARKGATE. DEATH OF PTE. E. HANCOCK.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Pte. Edward Hancock, who belonged to one of the oldest Little Neston families, he being a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hancock. When Lord Derby was endeavouring to raise battalions of Pals he, with another Little Neston young man, Edward Jones, went to Liverpool and enlisted to assist their country in her hour of need. After being on active service for some time, he contracted a chill, which developed into pneumonia. He was progressing favourably, but unfortunately succumbed to heart failure in the train while on his journey to England. The news has caused much sorrow among his many friends in this district, and a memorial service will be held at St. Michael's Mission Church on Sunday evening.

*Cheshire Observer* - Saturday 17 February 1917

Campaign :—1914-15.		(A) Where decoration was earned.	
		(B) Present situation.	
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.
(A) HANCOCK.	Lt. Col. R. P. 22102		4/2/23/258.
(B) Edward.	---	---	---
Action taken	MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
	VICTORY	4/2/22511	1165
	BRITISH	-20-	-20-
	STAR		
TREATY OF WAR.		0) France.	
QUALIFYING DATE.	4/11/15.		
(6 34 46) W234-HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [Over]			

British Army WWI Medal  
Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

[illegible]

## 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.

At the time of this death Edward Hancock was owed £10 6s 2d by the army and this was paid to his siblings: £1 9s 6d to Thomas Hancock; £1 9s 5d to Susan Bradbury; £1 9s 5d to Louisa Hayes; £5 17s 10d to Louisa Hayes for administration. In addition a War Gratuity of £9 10s was paid to Louisa Hayes for administration. The total payment, £19 16s 2d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £2950 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.

In the 1939 Register (29 September) the only sibling of Edward Hancock who has been found in the Neston area was his older brother James.

James married Mary Ellen Kelly at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in late 1920 and it is believed that they had two daughters, both shown in the Register entry. James, recorded as having been born on 7 April 1880 (although it is known that he was born in 1878) was a horseman on a farm and wife Mary (here shown as Mary H.) was born on 23 May 1885. Their two daughters were

Mary W. born 6 May 1921, a domestic servant. She married Roger D Woolley in North Liverpool in mid-1946. They may have lived in the Wallasey area and had three children. No record of their deaths has been found.

Agnes born 17 July 1922, a domestic servant. No record of her marriage or death has been found.

James Hancock may have died in the Birkenhead district in mid-1963 when his age was given as 83. Mary Ellen Hancock died in the Wallasey area in mid-1980 when her date of birth was recorded as 23 May 1884.

The booklet *Little Neston Methodist Church : Centenary History, 1872 – 1972* records that a Jack Hancock, presumably a member of the church, also died in WW1. This is unlikely to be Edward's brother as, in 1911, that John Hancock was aged 34 and it was possibly he who died, aged 60, in late 1936. Indeed, no evidence for a Jack/John Hancock with a Little Neston connection, and who died in WW1, has been found.



I have a rendezvous with Death  
At some disputed barricade,  
When Spring comes back with rustling shade  
And apple-blossoms fill the air—  
I have a rendezvous with Death  
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand  
And lead me into his dark land  
And close my eyes and quench my breath—  
It may be I shall pass him still.

I have a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
When Spring comes round again this year  
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep  
Pillowed in silk and scented down,  
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,  
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,  
Where hushed awakenings are dear ...

But I've a rendezvous with Death  
At midnight in some flaming town,  
When Spring trips north again this year,  
And I to my pledged word am true,  
I shall not fail that rendezvous.



"I Have a Rendezvous with Death"  
Alan Seeger  
(1888 - 1916)

