

54: William Brooke Kitson

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: William Brooke Kitson

Rank: Gunner

Battalion / Regiment: 284th Siege Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery

Service Number: 161371

Date of Death: 10 April 1918

Age at Death: 32

Buried / Commemorated at: Liverpool (Anfield) Cemetery

Additional information given by CWGC: The husband of Lucy Alice Kitson of 2, Gladstone Road,

William Brook(e) Kitson was born in early 1887 in Windhill, a district of Shipley, Yorkshire; his birth was registered in Bradford.

In the 1891 census the family was living at Poplar View, Windhill, Shipley and consisted of:

John Kitson	58	farmer	born Windhill
Emily	38		born Leeds
Samuel R.	6		born Windhill
William B.	4		born Windhill
Ada O.	1		born Windhill

Neither William nor his family have been traced in the 1901 census but, in the 1911 census, he is shown as being 24, single, a grocer's assistant, born Shipley at 9 King Street, Sheffield. He is listed, together with 3 servants and eight others described as 'grocer's apprentice' as a boarder in premises (possibly a large shop) close to the city centre and where Frank Percival Steel, 23, is recorded as the 'head'.

It is unknown why William Kitson came to Neston, but it is known that he worked at Mann & Crosthwaite, a grocery shop in the town, where he was the manager.

William married Lucy Alice Slater at a Civil Marriage in West Derby, Liverpool, in mid-1915 and a son, Aleck Harvey Kitson, was born on 3 December 1917. Aleck is believed to have been their only child and he died, in the Southport area, in mid-1979.

At the time of the 1939 Register Lucy and Aleck, a chartered accountant's clerk, were living at 2 Raeburn Avenue, Hoylake.

Lucy did not remarry and she died on 7 June 1959 at this same address, 2 Raeburn Avenue, Hoylake.

William enlisted in Birkenhead and he died at the 2nd Western General Hospital in Manchester of wounds.

The notification of his funeral records that he was aged 31, rather than 32 as reported by the CWGC, and that his widow was then living at 99, Hale Road, Walton, Liverpool.

The Service Records for William Kitson have not been located and it has not been possible to find any details of his service or death other than that he served with the

284th Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. Siege Batteries RGA were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6-inch, 8-inch and 9.2-inch howitzers, although some had huge railway- or road-mounted 12-inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege 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.

The 284th Siege Battery RGA joined the 84th Heavy Artillery Group on 5 September 1917, and the batteries moved to positions east of Zillebeke, about one and a half miles south-east of Ypres, by 1 October 1917. They were in action throughout September-November during The Battle of Passchendaele. By March 1918, the 284th Siege Battery was in the 83rd Brigade RGA, XIII Corps. Originally armed with 4 x 8 in howitzer they were rearmed with 4 x 6 in howitzer (26 cwt) on 8 May 1917 and were made up to a 6-gun battery in October.

Joining the 83rd Heavy Artillery Group on 8 November 1917, March 1918 found them positioned near Écurie, immediately north of Arras, on counter battery work consisting of destructive artillery and neutralising fire during the day, and harassing fire at night.

On 16 November, during the early hours of the morning, around 400 rounds of mustard gas were fired on 284th Siege Battery, 'H' position, resulting in numerous casualties and causing severe chemical burns and skin, eye nasal pain and irritation.

The following day three guns of the 284th fired 40 rounds, with aeroplane observation, on suspected gas projectiles behind the enemy lines; this resulted in further enemy retaliation with some damage but no casualties, but leaving the 284th seriously under strength to support allied troops when the main bombardment occurred on 21 November further south.

KITSON—April 10. at Royal Infirmary, Manchester, as the result of wounds received in action, aged 31 years, Gunner WILLIAM KITSON, R.G.A., the dearly-loved husband of Lucy A. Kitson, of 99, Hale-road, Walton. Service in Stanley Park Mission, to-day (Monday), at 2.45 p.m.; interment at Anfield Cemetery at 3.15 p.m. (Friends please accept this—the only—intimation. Inquiries: Thompson's, Ltd., phone 117 Walton.)

Liverpool Echo - Saturday 13 April 1918

Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to identify the location of the 284th Siege Battery around the time when William was wounded (presumed to be early April 1917, although it may have been earlier).

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.


WESTERN. Command.

Name of Cemetery LIVERPOOL (ANFIELD) CEM. Report Number 844
 Parish WALTON-ON-THE-HILL, LIVERPOOL Schedule Number 162
 County LANCASHIRE OFFICER'S Signature [Signature] Category of Graves [Marked]

Certified Correct and Complete.

Unit	Regtl. No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Number or Letter of Grave	Row	Grave	Type of Memorial	Type of Grave	Remarks
LABOUR CORPS	101571	Paulkner.	Pte J.S.	24/10/18	G	U.	2148	H.W.	PR.	
R.G.A.	101571	Kitson.	Cnr W.B.	10/4/18	"	"	1088	P.P.	"	

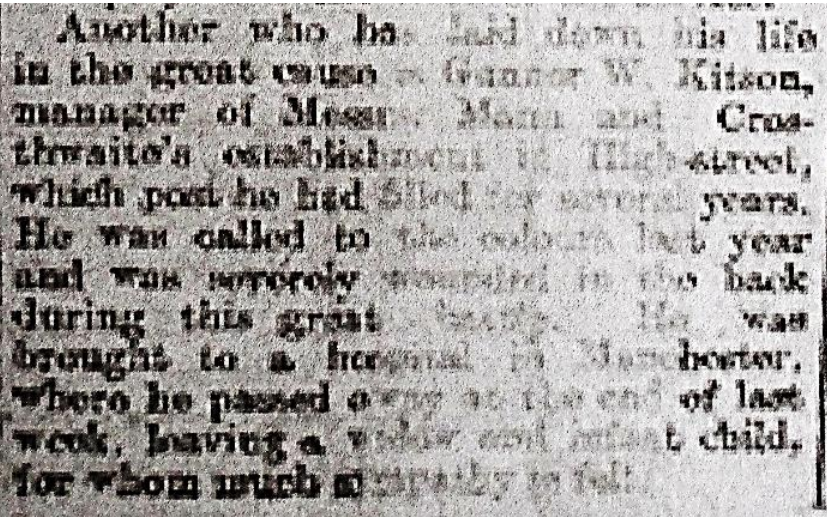
21 FEB 1921
3 OCT 1920



Transcription:

Neston Men Fall in the Fight

Another who has laid down his life in the great cause is Gunner W. Kitson, manager of Messrs Mann and Crosthwaite's* establishment in High-street, which post he had held for several years. He was called to the colours last year and was severely wounded in the back during this great (?). He was brought to a hospital in Manchester, where he passed away at the end of last week, leaving a widow and infant child, for whom much sympathy is felt.



* Mann and Crosthwaite was one of several grocery shops in Neston and it was a subsidiary of a larger establishment at 67 Bold Street, Liverpool.

Mann & Crosthwaite Ltd. (established 1825), tea, coffee & spice, wine & spirit merchants, grocers & italian warehousemen, bakers, confectioners &c. Neston; & at Liverpool. Telephone Nos. 2615 & 2616 Royal Liverpool & 21 Neston; Telegrams, "Manciple, Liverpool;" "Manciple, Neston"

Kelly's Directory, Cheshire, 1910

WANTED. YOUTH, able to drive and make himself generally useful.—Apply Messrs. Mann & Crosthwaite, Neston. 6127

Cheshire Observer – 21 April 1906

GROCERY AND PROVISIONS.—Vacancy for well educated Youth as APPRENTICE.—Apply Mann & Crosthwaite, High-st., Neston.

Cheshire Observer – 20 October 1906



The Liverpool branch of Mann & Crosthwaite

It is likely that William Brooke Kitson died very shortly before his 32nd birthday.

It appears that Lucy Alice Kitson never remarried and that she died in June 1959 in Sheffield, although her residence was West Kirby.

The 1938 Kelly's Directory of Liverpool and suburbs for West Kirby recorded that she was then living at 2 Raeburn Avenue, the address given for her in the Probate Calendar.

KITSON Lucy Alice of 2 Raeburn Avenue West Kirby Cheshire widow died 7 June 1959 at 354 Walkley Bank Road Sheffield 8 Probate Liverpool 5 August to Aleck Harvey Kitson commercial clerk. Effects £2303 1s. 8d.

National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966

Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS			CHARGES			Date of Authority	To whom Authorised	Amount Authorised			No. of List in which advertised
					Account and Date	£	s.	d.	£	s.			d.	Account and Date	£	
670236	540678	Hilton William Brook.	284 S. Bly R.G.A Gen 161371	10-4-18 Dover 2-4-18 2 Western 5-18 Gen 10/13/18 Manchester	✓ 7	5	2	7	11	8	mas/18 19. 2 15 Lucy A.	7	11	8		
											29/11/19 Lucy A.	3	9		17/8/19-20/9/19	

A. F. W. 5070 SENT
DATE 16 JUN 1919

WA G 7
Effects 1301
Transfer 6540
Regd appt 2055
Serial No. 24863

clearance w 2094

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.

Lucy Kitson, William's widow, received a payment from the army of £7 5s 2d (representing unpaid wages) together with 3s 9d (the reason for this is unclear) and a War Gratuity of £3. In total Lucy Kitson received £10 8s 11d, equivalent approximately to *labour earnings* (wages) of £1580 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men, or their relatives, 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. The War Gratuity was paid on a graduated scale; the £3 received by Lucy was at the lower end of the scale.

This document notes also that William died in the 2nd Western General Hospital in Manchester, the largest military hospital in Manchester at the time with a capacity of over 16,000 beds. Until the war this had been the Deansgate Central High School, in Whitworth Street, and is now the site of The Manchester College's Shena Simon Campus.

Name	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
KITSON William	R.G.A	Gen	161371
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	RGA/194 B	9474	
BRITISH	- do -	do	
3-12			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

X. 1380

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920