

85: William Spence Towert

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: William S. Towert

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 7th Bn. King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Service Number: 24400

Date of Death: 26 November 1916

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: St Mary & St Helen Churchyard, Neston

Additional information given by CWGC: None

William Spence Towert was the second child of Presbyterian Minister John and Eliza Towert of Neston and the only one of their two children to survive infancy.

John Towert was born in Edinburgh on 26 June 1844, the son of John and Maria Towert. John jnr was educated in Edinburgh schools and Edinburgh University and was ordained in 1871 by the Reformed Presbytery in Edinburgh in 1871. In March 1874, aged 29, he came to Neston and, on 2 March 1875, was inducted as the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Neston. John Towert, then unmarried, was the second minister of the church, replacing A M Halket who had been the minister since the inception of the church here in 1857. In fact the Presbyterian Church had established three centres in the district, one in Little Neston, one in Parkgate (the present St Thomas' Church) and in Neston itself. Although the Presbyterian Church in Parkgate Road - now the URC - wasn't built until July 1884 an earlier church existed on the site now occupied by the Neston Royal British Legion on Chester Road. The church also played a significant role in the ministry of the Colliery Mission on Quayside.

In the 1881 census John Towert, 36, was lodging with shoemaker John and Elizabeth Robinson on Parkgate Road; also lodging at the same address was John's brother William H G Towert, 20, a shipping clerk.

On 27 September 1883 John married Eliza Spence in Grantshouse, Berwickshire.

Eliza Spence was a daughter of ordained minister Adam and Agnes Spence of Berwickshire and Eliza was baptised on 6 June 1852 in Coldingham, Berwickshire. Adam Spence was thrown from his horse while returning from pastoral visits on 20 January 1882 and he died three days later in Coldingham, Berwickshire. Agnes Spence died in 1893 in Duns, Berwickshire.

John and Eliza's first child, John, was born in Neston in late 1884 (he was the first child to be baptised in the new church) but he died before the end of the year. William Spence Towert was born in the third quarter of 1889 and in the 1891 census the family, recorded as living in Neston Road (near to Manorial Road, Parkgate), consisted of:

John Towert	46	Presbyterian Minister	born Scotland
Eliza	38		born Scotland
William S	1		born Neston
Esther L Roberts	28	general servant	born Neston

Eliza died in late 1894 (buried 3 November) when she was just 42. It seems that John's unmarried sister-in-law, Mary Spence, and John's unmarried brother, William H G Towert, came to live with John and William at The Manse as they are recorded there in both the 1901 and 1911 census. Although not recorded in a census, it appears that John's father (also John) may also have come to stay with the family in Neston as his death, aged 88, is recorded in Wirral in early 1908; he was buried at Neston 15 February 1908 and his address was recorded as The Manse - this was built in 1900.

Administrative County <i>Cheshire</i>		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the										Page 17	
Civil Parish		Ecclesiastical Parish		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Rural District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Town or Village or Hamlet	
<i>Neston</i>		<i>Neston</i>		<i>Neston</i>		<i>Leighton Ward</i>		<i>Neston</i>		<i>Neston</i>		<i>Neston</i>	
No. of Inhabitants	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Uninhabited	Number of Inhabitants	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame (4) Imbecile, feeble-minded
110	<i>Parkgate Rd.</i>	1			<i>John Towert</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>Minister of Presbyterian Church of England</i>			<i>Edinburgh Scotland</i>	
					<i>Mary M. Spence</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>46</i>				<i>Edinburgh Scotland</i>	
					<i>William Spence Towert</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Nursery Gardener</i>			<i>Neston Cheshire</i>	
					<i>William H. G. Towert</i>	<i>Brother</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Insurance Agent</i>	<i>Own account</i>		<i>Edinburgh Scotland</i>	
					<i>Ada M. Dodd</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>General Servant (domestic)</i>			<i>Little Neston Cheshire</i>	

1901 census (extract) – The Manse, Parkgate Road

John Towert	56	Minister of Presbyterian Church of England	born Scotland
Mary M. Spence	46		born Scotland
William Towert	11	sister-in-law	born Neston
William H. G. Towert	40	brother, insurance broker living on own account	born Edinburgh
Ada Dodd	21	general servant (domestic)	born Lt. Neston

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Profession or Occupation	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	Where Born
1	John Towert	46	M	Married	Minister of Presbyterian Church of England			Edinburgh Scotland
2	Mary M. Spence	46	F	Married				Edinburgh Scotland
3	William Spence Towert	11	M	Single	Nursery Gardener			Neston Cheshire
4	William Henry Goold Towert	40	M	Single	Insurance Agent	Own account		Edinburgh Scotland
5	Ada M. Dodd	21	F	Single	General Servant (domestic)			Little Neston Cheshire

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
 (1) All the names on this Schedule are entered in the proper columns.
 (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have entered their sums with the total number of persons.
 (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on this Schedule which appeared to be definite, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Initials of Enumerator: *EEB*

Total	
Males	Females
5	2

(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 declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *John Towert*

Postal Address: *The Manse, Neston, Cheshire*

1911 census (condensed) – The Manse, Neston (Parkgate Road)

John Towert	66	widower, Minister of Presbyterian C. of E.	born Edinburgh
Mary M. Spence	57	single	born Houndwood, Berwickshire
William Spence Towert	21	nursery gardener (Messrs Bees Ltd)	born Neston
William Henry Goold Towert	50	insurance agent (Messrs S. Taylor, forwarding agent)	born Edinburgh
Ada M. Dodd	31	general servant (domestic)	born Little Neston

Mary Spence never married and died, aged 65 in early 1920.

William Henry Goold Towert married Jessie Cooper at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in late 1914.

William Spence Towert was educated at Calday Grange Grammar School and appears to have been a respectable scholar; in 1906, when just over 16½, he gained a 'credit for excellence' in French in the Higher Alternative examinations and, in September of that year, gained a Cheshire County Scholarship which could be redeemed at either Liverpool or Manchester University. However, there is no evidence that William took up this Scholarship and, in the 1911 census he was recorded as a nursery gardener at Bees Ltd. although it is not clear, at this time, whether he was working in Ness or at the new premises at Sealand.

Bees Nursery was founded in Ness in 1903 by cotton merchant Arthur Kilpin Bulley, selling plants raised from seed sent to him from Europe and Asia. In 1898 Bulley had bought 60 acres of land at Ness to build a house, 'Mickwell Brow', with a large garden and space for a plant nursery. A lifelong socialist and philanthropist (he once stood for Parliament as a Women's Suffrage candidate), he kept part of the garden open all the time for the free enjoyment of villagers. In 1911 Bees moved to the 1000-acre site near Sealand in 1911, and they soon becoming a household name through their cheap packets of seeds. Bulley, meanwhile, continued to improve the garden at Ness; he retired as a cotton merchant in 1922 and died in 1942. The house and gardens at Ness were gifted to the University of Liverpool in 1948 and later renamed as Ness Botanic Gardens.

William Spence Towert is said to have enlisted at Chester but details of his enlistment and army service are unknown. The 7th (Service) Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry was formed at Shrewsbury on 22 September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Third New Army and came under the command of the 76th Brigade, 25th Division. They moved to Codford on the southern side of Salisbury Plain at 4.30am on 26 September and were then billeted in Bournemouth in May 1915, moving to Romsey in May and then, in June, to Aldershot.

On 28 September 1915, at 2.30am, the troops landed at Boulogne and on 15 October the Brigade moved to the 3rd Division and on 19 October 1915 transferred to the 8th Brigade in the same Division. The Battalion served entirely on the Western Front and first saw action in the Ypres Salient in the winter of 1915-16, moving to The Somme in

HIGHER ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATION.

The following are lists of candidates reported as deserving credit for excellence in the higher alternative papers on the several subjects: Literature: Theodora Pitt, Dora K. Royle. History: Robert H. M. Harvev, Mary J. McCormick, Julius B. Sinson. Mathematics: Herbert Addison, John A. Bleakley, Samuel Lees, James A. Thomson. Greek: Percy Kirk. Latin: Charles Dearnley, Agnes Fitzgerald, Ernest Jackson, Percy Kirk. French: Herbert Addison, Frank Chater, Kate M. M. Dowler, Elsie C. Hanson, Cuthbert J. H. Little, Mary J. McCormick, Arthur Ramsden, William S. Towert. Chemistry: Herbert Addison, John A. Bleakley. Mechanics: John A. Bleakley, Frank Hurst, Samuel Lees, Mark A. Richardson.

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser - Tuesday 31 July 1906

CHESHIRE COUNTY SCHOLARSHIPS.

The Cheshire County Council Education Committee have awarded Technological Scholarships, tenable at the Municipal School of Technology, Manchester, for one year, but renewable for a second and third year, to Frederick W. Warburton, of Runcorn, and Henry B. Irving, of Hoole, Chester. Scholarships tenable at the Liverpool and Manchester Universities have been awarded to William J. Fletcher, Cheadle Huime; Gladys Goodacre, Liscard; Lora Roberts, Crewe; Mary L. Rushton, Macclesfield; William S. Towert, Neston; L. Roslyn Whittaker, of Maccles-

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser - Monday 17 September 1906

July 1916, fighting at Bazentin Ridge ¹ and then at Serre on the Ancre later in the year. It seems most probable that William was injured during the later days of The Battle of the Ancre and came home to Britain where, on 26 November 1916, he died of his injuries. He would have been 27, or nearly so, and he is commemorated also on the tablet in Neston URC and on a granite tablet at Lewisham Military Hospital WW1 Memorial where he was being treated at the time of his death.

The actions of the 7th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry from 21 September – December 1916 were described by Major W. de B. Wood:

On the 21st the battalion moved back to Reclinghem for rest. Reclinghem is a pleasant village about fourteen miles south of St. Omer, somewhat remote but surrounded by excellent country for training. The village being very small, two companies were billeted in the adjoining hamlet of Vinchy. Training proceeded as usual during the period of rest. On October 4th Lt.-Colonel Heathcote, commanding the battalion, was sent to the Field Ambulance, and Lt.-Colonel K. H. L. Arnott of the East Lancs. took over command. On October 5th the battalion had orders to move and marched ten miles south to Crépy. On October 7th the march south was continued, the battalion entraining at St. Pol at 4 a.m. on the 8th, and detraining at 11 a.m. at Acheux, a small town about eight miles north-west of Albert. Here Major Smithard, second in command, reformed the bugle band. From Acheux the battalion marched to Mailly, arriving about 4 p.m. At Mailly the battalion was accommodated in huts, the strength being 37 officers and 907 other ranks. The 3rd Division was now concentrated and preparing to take its part in the Battle of the Ancre, the concluding stage of the ever-memorable fighting on the Somme. On October 10th Lieut. Robinson was sent to the Field Ambulance, and on the 15th, 2nd Lieut. A. A. Boucher, attached to the 8th Trench Mortar Battery, was severely wounded, dying on the following day. On October 18th the battalion moved back a couple of miles into camp at Bus. On the 22nd Captain Bowie rejoined and took over the adjutancy again from Lieut. Hetherington. On October 28th the battalion took over the trenches in the Serre sector from the 1st Gordons, and on the following day Lieut. W. A. N Baker was wounded. The battalion was relieved by the 8th E. Yorks on November 1st and proceeded to billets in Courcelles. On November 4th the battalion marched to Louvencourt and remained there, preparing for the attack on Serre, until the 12th.

THE BATTLE OF THE ANCRE, 1916

The attack was planned for 5.45 on the morning of Monday the 13th. Our artillery commenced a heavy bombardment, devoted to the destruction of the enemy wire and front line on the 11th, and kept it up more or

less continuously throughout Sunday the 12th. The 8th Brigade was charged with the capture of the stronghold of Serre, one of the chain of heavily fortified villages—Gommecourt, Serre, Beaumont Hamel and Thiepval—which had checked our advance on July 1st. The 2nd Royal Scots on the right, and the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers on the left, formed the assaulting line. The 8th East Yorks were in support of the Royal Scots and the 7th K.S.L.I. in support of the Royal Scots Fusiliers on the left. Thick fog was spread over the ground and at zero hour (5.45) the morning was black as the darkest midnight. In the pitch darkness, and through deep mud, it was difficult for the best-trained soldiers to keep direction, and the troops all along the 3rd Divisional front lost touch. The heavy state of the ground on the 8th Brigade front made it impossible for the tanks to operate, and they were withdrawn from the attack. About 8 a.m., as it began to get light, a thick fog made conditions no better, and at eleven, when the fog began to clear, it was found that all units had lost direction and were hopelessly mixed. To the southward the 51st (Highland Territorial) Division, and the Naval Division, had met with better fortune. Further south still, on the extreme right of the attack, the 39th Division captured St. Pierre Divion, and advanced a mile beyond the village. Later in the day Beaucourt and Beaumont Hamel were taken, and by the evening of the 14th we were in position well down the eastward slopes of the Thiepval ridge. The German counter-attack of the 15th failed everywhere along the five-mile front of battle and all new positions on the right were held.

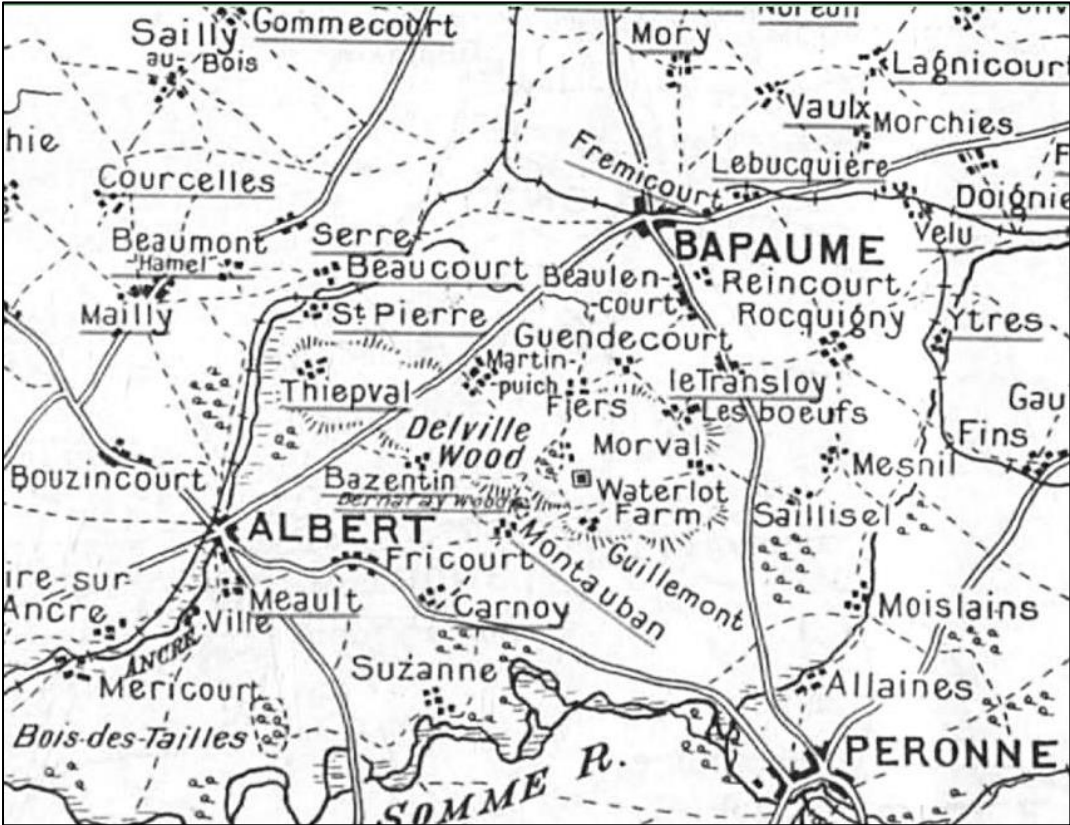
Although on the left of the line the attack of the 8th Brigade on Serre had failed, the enemy first line had everywhere been penetrated in the first assault, but only a small part of the ground gained in the Serre sector could be held. The appalling conditions of the country in front of the 8th Brigade accounted for their failure. So deep was the mud in places that ration parties took over four hours to cover 1,000 yards of the ground. The following casualties occurred during this action. Killed: 2nd Lieuts. A. Price and A. H. S.

¹ At The Battle of Bazentin Ridge (14 - 17 July 1916), within twelve months of arriving in France, the battalion lost a significant number of officers and men - 9 officers were killed together with 163 men, a further 294 being wounded. On 15 July the command of the battalion was taken over by Major R E M. Heathcote.

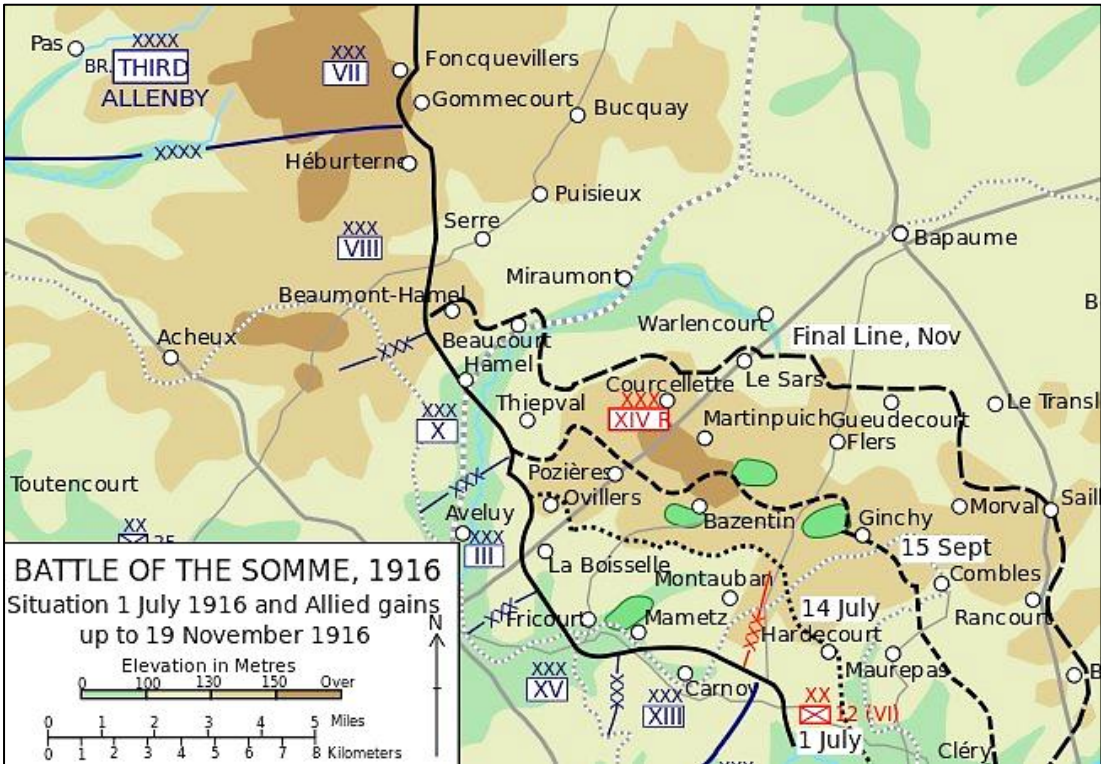
Southwell. Wounded: Captain and Adjutant D. D. Bowie, Capt. V. E. Powell and 2nd Lieuts. E. Geard, C. B. H. Phipps, F. G. Salusbury, T. Tappenden, W. F. Woolf and R. G. Byrt. Amongst other ranks 214 men were reported killed, wounded and missing. Lieut. A. C. Hetherington took over the adjutancy again on November 14th, when the battalion was relieved by the 13th King's Liverpools and marched to Bus, a distance of some seven miles, arriving in the early morning of the 15th. The same evening the battalion marched back to the trenches for

one night, being relieved on the 16th by the 2nd Royal Scots. The battalion was back in the trenches on the 21st. and continued carrying out alternate tours of duty with the Royal Scots in the Serre sector until the end of December. During the month of November a draft of 107 other ranks was received. On December 7th Captain W. L. Lloyd and 2nd Lieut. J. McEvoy were sent to the Field Ambulance. The battalion was relieved in the trenches on Christmas Eve, 1916, and celebrated Christmas Day in the hutted camp at Bus on the 27th.]

The History of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in The Great War, 1914-1918
Major W. de B. Wood The Medici Society Ltd 1925



The sketch map shows, in the western sector, several of the settlements mentioned in the text. The higher land, the Thiepval Ridge, with Thiepval on its crest, is shown by the hatched lines. It was on the eastern flank of this ridge that William Spence Towert was probably wounded.



front line to 19
k/wp/war-wounds-
ne/]

DIED FROM WOUNDS.

TOWERT—November 25, aged 27 years, Private W. S. Towert, only son of the Rev. John Towert, of Neston. Funeral service at Neston Presbyterian Church, on Friday next, at 3 p.m.

Liverpool Echo - Wednesday
29 November 1916

Lewisham Military Hospital WW1 Memorial

In 1919 a memorial consisting of an ornamented stone column on a Cornish granite slab and brickwork base and surmounted by a decorative cross was set up opposite the main gate. It was between 12 and 15 feet in height. Nearly lost when a new boiler house was being constructed, the remaining parts of the memorial were eventually relocated in their present position and the memorial rededicated.

When rededicated in 1998 a granite tablet with names inscribed in lead and stones from the original column were placed within a small garden in the Lewisham High Street frontage of the former Lewisham Library building.

The names on the tablet are arranged in three columns and are ordered by rank and date of death. William S. Towert's name is in the central list, third from the top.

[Source: <http://philevans.org/>]



TOLL OF THE WAR

(See also page 10.)

N.C.O.'S AND MEN.

DIED OF WOUNDS.

Shropshire Light Infantry.—Ball, 26296. A. (Crewe).

WOUNDED.

South Lancashire Regiment.—Stoneley, 31617. A. (Tarporley).

Shropshire Light Infantry.—Harri-on, 26386. W. A. (Chester); Monaghan, 26343, W. (Neston); Parker, 22423, C. (Whitchurch); Towert, 24400, W. S. (Neston); Welch, 22434, W. B. (Whitchurch).

Cheshire Observer - Saturday 16 December 1916

Neston Minister Bereaved.

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of Pte. W. Towert, which occurred on Sunday afternoon at Lewisham Military Hospital, from wounds received in action. He was the only son of the Rev. J. Towert, minister of Neston Presbyterian Church, and had spent nearly the whole of his life in this district. He was educated at Calday Grange Grammar School, where his many amiable qualities won for him a host of friends. Much sympathy is extended to his father in his great sorrow.

Birkenhead News - Saturday 2 December 1916



The Ancre battlefield in November 1916
[<http://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/battalions/10-batt/campaigns/1916-ancr.html>]

The 7th Battalion suffered more casualties than any other King's Shropshire Light Infantry battalion, with 1048 killed in action or died during the war, and they earned more battle honours than any other KSLI battalion.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
TOWERT. William. S.	K. L. L. V	Pte	24400
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	1/1/02 Bg 2414		
BRITISH	- do - do		
WAR			
Theatre of War Area served in			
Date of entry therein			

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920



The Towert family grave in Neston Parish Churchyard

Sacred to the memory of JOHN, infant son of REV JOHN TOWERT BD, who died and was buried Dec. 1884.

Also of ELIZA, mother of the above, who died 1st Nov. 1894, aged 42 years.

Also of JOHN TOWERT, grandfather of the above, who died 12th Feb. 1908, aged 87 years.

Also of WILLIAM SPENCE, son of Rev John Towert, who died in Lewisham Military Hospital of wounds received in France 26th Nov. 1916, aged 27 years.

Also of MARY MARGARET SPENCE, sister of the above Eliza Spence, who died 30th Jan. 1920 aged 65 years.

Also REV JOHN TOWERT BD, husband of the above Eliza Towert, who died 30th Nov. 1923 aged 79 years, minister of Neston Presbyterian Church for 48 years.

410952	8/292986	Towert. William Spence	3 rd Btn Phosphor L. J Pte 24400	26-11-16 Lewisham 1/17 Hptal Wounds	4 18 3	4 18 3	14 18 3	7-3-12	7 th Sole legatee John	4 18 3
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> WAR GRATUITY. 1919 Transfer 21.8.19 Regd. Paper 20.10.19 Serial No. 13015 </div>										
a. 2. 11. 5070 sent 18.6.19.										

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. In July 1919 William's father John, as sole, legatee, received a payment of outstanding wages of £4 18s 3d from the army and a War Gratuity of £3. This, a total value of £17 18s 3d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £2800 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.

On this document 3rd has been pencilled in as the Battalion number but this is believed to be incorrect.

DEATH OF PTE. W. S. TOWERT.—The deepest sympathy was felt with the Rev. J. Towert, of The Manse, Neston, minister for many years of the Presbyterian Church here, when it became known that his only son (Pte. W. S. Towert) died on Sunday afternoon, aged 27 years, from wounds received in action whilst serving with his regiment, the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. He was severely wounded in the head, and was conveyed to the Lewisham Military Hospital, where an operation was performed, but he gradually sank, and passed away on Sunday. He was most popular with the local residents, and the greatest sorrow was felt by all when the news became known. Before enlisting he, whilst following his profession, resided at Torquay, and later at Chester. The funeral takes place at the Neston Presbyterian Church to-day (Friday) at 3 o'clock.

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 2 December 1916

THE LATE PTE. TOWERT.—The funeral took place on Friday of Pte. W. S. Towert, only son of Rev. J. Towert, of the Presbyterian Church, who died from wounds received in action on the Somme on the 24th November. He was well-known and popular in the district, and had for a considerable time acted as organist at the Colliery Mission Hall. He was educated at Caldý Grammar School. He had always taken a keen interest in his father's parochial work, and willingly gave his assistance. The service took place at the Presbyterian Church, and was conducted by the Rev. Norman Frazer, B.D., Moderator of the Presbytery, of Liverpool. The lesson was read by the Rev. J. E. S. Otty, of the Congregational Church; the prayers were read by the Rev. P. Kirkland, of West Kirby; and an address was given by the Rev. J. Vaughan, of Blundellsands. Mr. Bevan presided at the organ, and played several beautiful selections. The special hymns were "The sands of time are sinking," a favourite hymn of the late Mrs. Towert, and "For ever with the Lord." The Dead March in "Saul" was played as they left the church. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and was preceded by the local company of the Boys' Brigade and their officers, Qunt. Coventry, Lieuts. Quayle and Hacking, and Staff Sergt. P. Jones. At the gates of the Parish Church they were met by the vicar of the parish (the Rev. C. Brooke-Gwynne) and they proceeded to the grave, where the last prayers were read by the Rev. Norman Frazer. The

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 9 December 1916

*Chester Chronicle - Saturday 9
December 1916*

FALLEN.—The companions and friends of Mr. W. S. Towert, the only son of the Rev. John Towert, M.A., B.D., Neston, will regret to hear of his death through shrapnel wounds. He passed peacefully away in the presence of his father on Sunday at Lewisham Hospital, where he had been conveyed from France. In his death a most promising career is cut short. He was educated at Caldý Grange Grammar School, he won the first scholarship in Cheshire to enter the Liverpool University, and lately was at Messrs. Dickson's Nursery. He was in the Shropshire Regiment. He was very well-known at Caerwre, as he and his father have spent their holidays here several years, his father occupying the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church. The deepest sympathy is felt with Mr. Towert and Miss Spence, his aunt, his mother having died in his infancy, he being the only child.

Benediction was given by the vicar. Amongst those present were the Rev. J. Towert (father), Mr. and Mrs. W. Towert (uncle and aunt), Dr. Spence, Miss A. Dodd, Miss Lily Jones, maids from "The Manse," Rev. Nicholl Groove, Rev. Craig of Little Sutton; Rev. Mackintosh, of Heswall; Rev. H. Bull, of Thornton Hough; Miss L. Roberts, Miss Lyon, Dr. Grant, Mrs. Pemberton, Mr. Robert Scott and Mr. Smythe (elders), Mr. Harvey, of Heswall (Sunday school supt.), the members of the Girls' Guildry, with Miss Thompson; a number of wounded soldiers from the two local hospitals; Messrs. F. Frost, A. Maycock, J. Birch, J. Basnett, J. Davey, J. G. Lee, D. Wharam, R. L. Price, E. Rooke, J. R. Hughes, E. Williams, J. R. Hughes, C. Leonard, Mr. and Mrs. Senior, G. Jones, Mrs. Scott (Penketh House), Mr. and Mrs. A. Scott, Mr. and Mrs. Watts, Mr. Begg, O. Woodfield, Major J. Grundy, G. Bridson, Mr. Hughes, of Caerwre; Mr. Lloyd, Mrs. Chisholme, Mr. and Mrs. Dudleston, Mrs. Meller, Mrs. T. Jellicoe, Mr. Hugh Jellicoe, etc. Many beautiful floral tributes were sent, including tokens from Presbyterian Church members, Presbyterian Sunday School, officers and boys of the 1st Neston Company Boys' Brigade, the guardians and members of the Girls' Guildry, Neston Council School, friends at Colliery Hall, employees at Dickson's Nurseries, Chester, etc.

OBITUARY.—The funeral of Pte. W. S. Towert, the only son of the Rev. J. Towert, M.A., B.D., Neston, took place on Friday. The deceased died of shell wounds at Lewisham Hospital, and the remains were conveyed home to the "Manse," Neston. The coffin, which was covered by the Union Jack, was taken to the Presbyterian Church, which was crowded. An impressive service was held under the presidency of the Rev. Norman Fraser, M.A., Moderator of the Presbytery, assisted by several other ministers. Afterwards the remains were taken to the parish churchyard and laid to rest in the deceased's mother's grave. The Moderator performed the last rites, and the rector pronounced the Benediction. The cortege was led by the Boys' Brigade carrying a large number of magnificent wreaths. There was also a number of wounded soldiers present from Parkgate Hospital, and their last salute to their fallen comrade was affecting. The deepest sympathy was shown with the bereaved father and family. Mr. H. H. Hughes, J.P., Mr. James Frost, Oakbount, Penyford, and the Rev. Owen Lloyd were present at the funeral from this district.

FUNERAL OF A NESTON SOLDIER.

There was a most impressive gathering in Neston on Friday afternoon, when the remains of Private William Towert were interred in Neston Parish churchyard.

The funeral service was held in the Neston Presbyterian Church, which was crowded to overflowing with friends and sympathisers. The coffin, draped in the folds of the Union Jack, was borne on the shoulders of four bearers from the manse to the church, where the 1st Neston Company, the Boys' Brigade, under the charge of Captain Coventry, and Lieutenants Quayle and Macking, and a detachment of wounded soldiers from the military hospitals was drawn up as a guard of honour. The service in the church was conducted by the Rev. Norman Fraser, R.D., the Moderator of the Presbytery, and the lessons were read by the Rev. J. E. S. Oily, M.A. A most touching address was given by the Rev. J. Vaughan, M.A., who, like the father of the deceased, is mourning a son recently killed at the front. The Rev. J. Mackintosh (Howall), Rev. P. M. Kirkland (West Kirby), Rev. Mr. Craig (Little Sutton), Rev. M. Lloyd (Caerwisle), and Rev. J. Hall (Thornton Hough) were also present.

The hymn "For ever with the Lord," brought the service to a conclusion. The cortege then proceeded to the churchyard, the Boys' Brigade slowly leading the way, each boy bearing a wreath of flowers, of which a large number had been sent. At the graveside the burial service was read by the Rev. Norman Fraser, and the blessing pronounced by the Rev. C. Brooks Gwynne. The chief mourners were the Rev. J. Towert (father), Mr. W. Towert (uncle), and Mrs. Towert, Miss A. Dodd, Miss J. Dodd, Mr. Hughes (Caerwisle), Mr. J. Frost (Caerwisle),

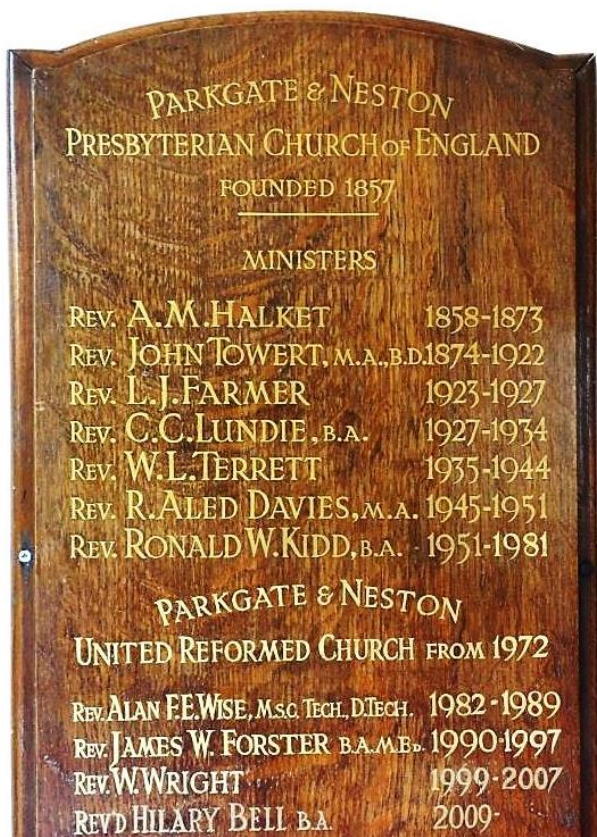
also Mr. J. R. Hughes, Mr. Devan, Mr. Lennard, Mr. R. Scott, Mr. J. Bagg, Mr. G. Jones, Miss Lyon, Miss Roberts, Miss Briscoe, Miss Norman, Mrs. Scott, Miss Nevin, Mr. Harcey, Dr. Grant, Mr. Wharham, Mr. Senior, Mr. H. Norman, Mr. J. Woodward, Major J. Grundy, Mr. J. Birch, Mrs. J. A. Mellor, Miss Jackson, Miss T. Jellicoe, and many others.

Many beautiful floral tributes were sent, these including—"The Household at the Manor", Mrs. Stephen Williamson, Officers and Boys of the 1st Neston Boys' Brigade, "For the love of his country" (hospital); the Girls' Guild, Neston Council Schools, the Colliery Hall, Private J. R. Mellor, the Presbyterian Sunday School, "Auntie Lizzie," Mr. and Mrs. Jellicoe, "Maggie Briscoe and Jessie," Mrs. Bulley, the Misses Cowan, employees of Dickson's Nurseries (Chester), Mr. and Mrs. R. Scott, Mrs. Yeoman, Miss Fox, and Mr. Ashley Cooper, Mr. Jackson and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Larden Williams.

Birkenhead Advertiser - Saturday 9 December 1916



The Reverend John Towert, 1844 - 1923



Wooden plaque of ministers of the Parkgate & Neston Presbyterian Church / United Reformed Church, Parkgate Road, Neston [October 2014]

John Towert, William's father, retired as the Presbyterian Minister for Neston and Parkgate in 1919 and died in Neston, aged 79, in 1923.

I found the letter in a cardboard box,
Unfamous history. I read the words.
The ink was frail and brown, the paper dry
After so many years of being kept.
The letter was a soldier's, from the front-
Conveyed his love and disappointed hope
Of getting leave. It's cancelled now, he wrote.
My luck is at the bottom of the sea.

Outside the sun was hot; the world looked bright;
I heard a radio, and someone laughed.
I did not sing, or laugh, or love the sun,
Within the quiet room I thought of him,
My father killed, and all the other men,
Whose luck was at the bottom of the sea.

"The Son"

Clifford Dymont

(1914 - 1971)

