

91: William Williams

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: William Williams

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: Labour Corps 22nd Coy.

Service Number: 204551 Date of Death: 29 September 1917 Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Aeroplane Cemetery, Ypres (Ieper), West Flanders (West-Vlaanderen), Belgium

Additional information given by CWGC: None

The identity of this casualty has not been determined conclusively as there are only scant details of him. The memorial in Neston Parish Church is inscribed WM Williams - presumably an abbreviation for William rather than two initials - to distinguish him from the previous entry, W. Williams [Wallace Williams]. However, the *Memorial Service For Neston Men who have fallen in the War, 1914 – 1918* records him as William.



The 1911 census records only one William Williams who fits the limited profile we have; William Edgar Williams, tinsmith of Park Cottages, Park Street, Neston:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule: 109
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in ink. The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (and Birth day and Year)	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards			BIRTHPLACE of every person		NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	INFIRMITY
			Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced	Children born alive in present Marriage	Children born alive in former Marriage	Children who have died	Personal Occupation	Industry or Service with which worker is connected	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account	Whether Working at Home	(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County and Town or Parish, etc.		
William Edgar Williams	Head	34yrs	Married 11yrs	5	4	1	Tinsmith	67	Ironworks	Worker	Denbighshire Wrexham	453	
Jessie Williams	Wife	35yrs	Married 11yrs	5	4	1					Denbighshire Gwersyllt	1	
Mary Williams	Daughter	8yrs									Denbighshire Brynteg		
Doris Williams	Daughter	3yrs									Flintshire Hope	456	
Bessie Williams	Daughter	3 months									Flintshire Hope	1	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

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

Initials of Enumerator: *W.C.*

Total: Males 1, Females 4, Persons 5

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Dressing, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

4

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

Signature: *William Edgar Williams*
 Postal Address: *Park Cottages Park St Neston*

1911 census (condensed) – Park Cottages, Park Street, Neston

William Edgar Williams	34	tinsmith	born Wrexham
Jessie	35		born Gwersyllt, Denbighshire
Mary	8		born Brynteg, Denbighshire
Doris	3		born Hope, Flintshire
Bessie	3 months		born Hope

William and Jessie had been married for 11 years and four of their five children had survived.

News has been received by Mrs. Williams, of Park-street, Neston, of the death of her husband, Pte. William Williams. He was 40 years of age, and in the Labour Battalion, and was a son of the late Mr. William Williams and of Mrs. Williams, Parkgate. He had been on active service about 12 months, and was killed by an enemy bomb.

Birkenhead News – Saturday 13 October 1917

Clearly, at the time of the 1911 census (2 April) the family cannot have been in Neston very long and so we have no earlier record of them here. The newspaper report of his death, particularly his age and residence, therefore, fit William Edgar Williams.

However..... the only William Edgar Williams found in previous census returns was the son of tailor Robert and Sarah Ann Williams - and the *Birkenhead News* noted that William's father was also named William. In the 1881 census the record shows the family of *Robert Williams* living at 6 Roxburgh Place, Wrexham:

Robert Williams	44	tailor, employing 1 man + 1 boy	born Llanarmon
Anne	34		born Brierley Hill, Staffs.
Henry L.	17	tailor	born Chesham, Bucks.
Sarah J.	15	general servant	born Coedpoeth, Denby.
Frederick Hayes	6	stepson	born Wrexham
Robert A. Williams	5		born Wrexham
William E.	4		born Wrexham
George L.	2		born Wrexham

and the 1891 census (partly illegible) return shows, for the same address:

Robert Williams	54	tailor	born Llanarmon
Sarah Ann	51		born Oakengates, Shropshire
Frederick	16	stepson, tailor	born Tenbury, Worcs.
Robert Arthur	15	slater?	born Wrexham
William Edgar	14	storeman?	born Wrexham
George Longmore Williams	12		born Wrexham
William Charles Rolls	14	stepson	born Llangollen

Family relationships are somewhat confusing although it is known that Robert Williams had been married to Elizabeth before his marriage to Anne who, it appears, had also been previously married. Anne, the mother of William Edgar Williams, also died and Robert married Sarah Ann Rolls (a tailoress) in late 1886. Sarah Ann had been married to coachman Joseph Rolls, but he died, aged 44, in early 1884.

Additionally, it is known (from the Absent Voters' List of Spring 1919) that William Edgar Williams was a Private serving with the Reserve Battalion, Cheshire Regiment (Service Number 243529). Although these lists sometimes included personnel who had, in fact, died the address recorded is 1, Seven Row, Colliery Lane - not Park Street. Until more information is produced, and the details of the 1921 census become available, it may prove impossible to identify Wm. Williams with certainty.

The Royal Warrant of 21 February 1917 (issued as Army Order 85 of 1917) sanctioned the formation of The Labour Corps. from existing Infantry Works Companies. The 22nd Coy. Labour Corps appears to have been created from a section of the 16th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment.

A Labour Corps. was made up of men that had been in the front line and who had been either wounded or taken ill and could not be returned to the front or men who, on enlistment, were found to be too old or did not pass as fit enough to be sent to the front. By the November of 1918 some 400,000 men were serving in the Labour Corps. Being in this body of men did not stop you being killed by enemy action as some 9,000 men were killed. Their duties would have been anything from helping in stores, taking equipment up to the front, repairing roads and such like, (and) helping at rest areas...

[Adapted from: <http://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=185819.0>]

The following two records *may* relate to this same person:

ROLL OF HONOUR.—On Sunday morning, at the parish church, the Vicar, the Rev. C. Brooke-Gwynne, at the close of his sermon made some sympathetic remarks to the mourners and congregation on the death in action just recently of several Nestonians, who had made the supreme sacrifice in France for their King and country, and in a righteous and just cause. Special hymns were rendered, and the National Anthem was sung at close of service. The death toll is rising. The names of those specially mentioned last Sunday were W. Williams (Parkgate), Harold Wilde (Ness) Alf. Jellicoe, Geo. Ashworth and A. Colebath (Neston).

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 20 October 1917

Note: There is no record, either locally or in the CWGC database, of any serviceman with the name 'Colebath' (or similar)



BOWLERS' ROLL OF HONOUR.

NESTON INSTITUTE B.C. (10).

A. Bamford, Lancashire and Cheshire R.G.A.
H. Anyon, 13th Cheshires.
J. Maxwell, 8th Cheshires.
J. Palmer, 8th Cheshires.
L. Walsh, 4th Cheshires.
T. Griffiths, 4th Cheshires.
W. Williams, Cheshire Engineers.
H. Hough, Cheshire Engineers.
T. Bains, R.W.F.
L. Ward, Liverpool Comrades.
* * *



Birkenhead Advertiser – Saturday 29 May 1915

There is no record of any of the other men recorded here as having died in the war.

"ARE WE DOWNHEARTED"? NO!!



WELL at the Front



Just a line, dear one, to say
Your soldier lad is quite **O.K.**

WALTER HOLT - FRANCE 1918