



Harry Stapleton Wilford

Harry Stapleton Wilford was born in Corby in 1893. His parents were William Wilford (born 1852 in Great Bowden) and Mary Ann Wilford (nee Stapleton) born 1859 in Harringworth. William and Mary Ann had married on 27th December 1881 in Harringworth.

Harry Stapleton Wilford was baptised in Corby on 9th July 1893, the same day as Harry Percy Patrick of Corby who was also to be killed during the War whilst serving with the Northamptonshire Regiment.

Family

In 1901 the Wilford family were living in Main Street, Corby. William & Mary had five children, Joseph, Annie, Harry, Lily and Daisy.

William was employed as an “ironstone labourer”, with son Joseph employed as a “brickyard labourer”.

By 1911 the couple had another daughter, Grace. The family were now living at Pain’s Cottages, Oakley Road, Corby. Harry was also employed as an “ironstone labourer”; Lily was employed as a domestic servant.

There is reference in the Northampton Mercury of 26th April 1912 to Harry having a brush with the law:-

Harry Wilford, labourer, Corby, was summoned for riding a bicycle without a light at that place on April 13. The case was adjourned for a week.

The final verdict of the magistrates is unknown.

Military Service

Harry Wilford originally enlisted in the Northamptonshire Regiment (22445) before being transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 94th Company (6915).

The 94th Company was formed in Grantham. It moved to France in May 1916 joining the 94th Brigade of the 31st Division. It became the No 31 Bn, Machine Gun Corps on 21st February 1918.

Harry Wilford was promoted to Lance Corporal shortly before he died.

Lance Corporal Harry Wilford died on 15th March 1917.



The Grantham Journal of 31st March 1917 records Harry's death –

“Sad news again reached Corby last weekend. Mrs Mary Wilford receiving a letter notifying the loss of her son, Lance Corporal Harry Wilford. He joined the Army some 16 months ago, and enlisted in the Northants Regiment, but subsequently was transferred to a Machine Gun Company. Only a week previously his mother got a very cheerful letter from him informing her that he had received his first stripe. Deceased was 23 years of age, and was employed by Lloyd's Ironstone Company, Corby.”

Lance Corporal Harry Wilford is buried at the Couin New British Cemetery.

Couin Chateau was used as a divisional headquarters from 1915 to 1918.

The BRITISH CEMETERY was begun in May 1916 by the field ambulances of the 48th (South Midland) Division, and was used by units and field ambulances during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. It was closed at the end of January 1917 because further extension was not possible, and now contains 401 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and three German graves.

The NEW BRITISH CEMETERY was opened across the road and was used by field ambulances from January 1917 (with a long interval in 1917-18) to the end of the war. One grave was moved there after the Armistice from a cemetery at Coigneux. It now contains 360 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and two German war graves.

Both cemeteries were designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.



Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Grantham Journal
Northampton Mercury

Lest We Forget

Harry Wilford
of the Machine Gun Corps

d. 15th March 1917

April 2016 Copy

