

Private John Wood

Regimental number: 10828

6th Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment

born: 1885 - died: 29 September 1918

Private John Wood was born in Fenton, Staffordshire in 1885,¹ and was probably the son of Joseph and Sarah Wood.² His father was born in about 1856, also in Fenton, and his mother, the former Sarah Ann Ash, was born in about 1861 in Hanley, Staffordshire. Joseph and Sarah were married near Stoke upon Trent in 1878.³ They probably had at least five children: Maria (born in April 1880),⁴ John, Joseph (born in about 1888),⁵ Sarah A. (born in 1891)⁶ and Charles (born in 1891).⁷

The family lived in Fenton for many decades. In 1881, the family was living at 5 Bakers Square, where John's father was a potter's flat presser.⁸ Ten years later, it was living at 15 Challinors Square, where his father was now a coal miner.⁹ John's father died nine years later in Stoke upon Trent.¹⁰ The following year, John's mother was living at 17 Meakins Row.¹¹ She was 33 years old and a widow raising five children – the youngest was seven. Like his father, John was now a coal miner. He was working as a horse driver underground.

In 1911, John and his brother, Charles, were living with his sister, Maria, and her husband, Thomas Ward, at 9 Canning Street, Fenton.¹² Maria and Thomas had married in the spring of 1900.¹³ By 1911, they had three children. John was still working underground in a coal mine. There is no evidence of where the other family members were.

The following year, John married Elizabeth Griffiths in Fenton.¹⁴ They married on 26 May 1912 and had two children – Sarah Ann, born on 14 July 1912 in Fenton, and Elizabeth, born in January 1914 in Denaby Main, in Rotherham, Yorkshire.

John enlisted very early in the Great War in Pontefract, Yorkshire.¹⁵ He was living at 62 Firbeck Street, Denaby Main in Rotherham when he enlisted in the 6th (Service) Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment on 19 August 1914. He was 5'5" tall and had a sallow complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair.

He served in England until July 1915. While he was there, he had a number of disciplinary issues – mainly for being absent or overstaying a pass. There were at least six incidents for which he forfeited pay once and was confined to barracks for three to fourteen days each time.

John joined the front in the Balkans on 2 July 1915 and was there until June 1916, when he went to France.

He was appointed as an Acting Corporal in March 1917. A memorandum in his army service file suggests that he may have rejoined his battalion on 12 September 1917 after being held in a prisoner of war camp and relinquished his Acting Corporal appointment from that date. If John was indeed held as a prisoner of war, then it was just a year after he rejoined his unit that he was fatally wounded in northern France.¹⁶ On 27 September 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds that penetrated his shoulder. He died two days later and was buried the following day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 93, Plot 7, Row A) with the Canadian chaplain, W. Fisher, presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁷ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁸ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

John was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).¹⁹

His wife, Elizabeth, was his next-of-kin and she was notified of his death.²⁰ At some point – probably after John's death – his wife and children moved from Rotherham back to Fenton.²¹ They were living at Terrace Buildings, which is where Elizabeth and John were living after their marriage.

His wife moved back to Yorkshire and remarried in 1919, marrying Richard Greaves in Doncaster, Yorkshire.

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¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for John Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 259

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for John Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Sub-registration district: Fenton, ED, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 2178, Folio: 79, Page Number: 4

³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 April 2016), entry for Joseph Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 195

⁴ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for Maria Wood, FHL Film Number: 1470947

⁵ "1891 England Census," entry for John Wood

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for Sarah Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 203

⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for Charles Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 282

⁸ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for Joseph Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Sub-registration district: Fenton, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 2731, Folio: 8, Page Number: 10

⁹ "1891 England Census," entry for John Wood

¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for Joseph Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 183

¹¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for John Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Sub-registration district: Fenton, ED, institution, or vessel: 07, Piece: 2611, Folio: 167, Page Number: 35, Household schedule number: 211

¹² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 April 2016), entry for John Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Registration District Number: 361, Sub-registration district: Fenton, ED, institution, or vessel: 9, Household schedule number: 84, Piece: 16579

¹³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 April 2016), entry for Maria Wood, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 313

¹⁴ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 April 2016), entry for John Wood

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Unless otherwise noted, all information about his military career comes from this source.

¹⁶ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 693

¹⁷ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

¹⁸ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)

¹⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 1 April 2016), entry for John Wood

²⁰ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 693

²¹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for John Wood