

## **Private Leonard Firth©**

**Regimental number: 31615**

**21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers**

**born: 12 April 1890–died: 19 August 1916**

Private Leonard Firth was one of 704,803 soldiers from the British Isles who died in or because of the First World War.<sup>1</sup>

Leonard was born on 12 April 1890 in Heaton Norris,<sup>2</sup> a town on the north bank of the river Mersey in Lancashire, which in 1894 became part of the Stockport district in Cheshire.<sup>3</sup> He was the youngest child of Abraham Owen Firth (1847–1915),<sup>4</sup> and Sarah Elizabeth (née Mather) Firth (1849–1912),<sup>5</sup> who were both born in the area. Abraham and Sarah married on 13 May 1872 at Manchester Cathedral (a.k.a. the Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St. Mary, St. Denys, and St. George) in Manchester. Abraham was employed as a bookkeeper.<sup>6</sup> Sarah did not list an occupation at the time of her marriage, although the 1871 England Census recorded that she was a cotton weaver.<sup>7</sup>

The couple had seven children.<sup>8</sup> Lizzie (1873–1964)<sup>9</sup> was the eldest, followed by Harry (1876–1944),<sup>10</sup> James Percy (1878–1878),<sup>11</sup> James (1880–1895),<sup>12</sup> Cyril (1884–1963),<sup>13</sup> Jessie (1886–1976),<sup>14</sup> and Leonard.

For more than 40 years the Firths lived in Heaton Norris, where Abraham worked for various commercial enterprises.<sup>15</sup> Sarah's widowed mother, Mary Mather, lived with them until her death in 1882.<sup>16</sup> When Leonard was born, the family was living at 58 & 60 Church Street. His older brother Harry was already working as an office boy. James and Cyril attended school. His 17-year-old sister Lizzie assisted his mother with domestic chores and caring for the younger children.<sup>17</sup>

Sadly, in early 1895, 14-year-old James died.<sup>18</sup> A happier occasion followed in 1897, when Lizzie married Francis Joseph Collinson.<sup>19</sup> That year, Leonard was enrolled at the Stockport Sunday School. His sister Jessie was also a student there.<sup>20</sup> The Stockport Sunday School, founded in 1784, provided lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic as well as non-denominational religious instruction.<sup>21</sup> Leonard might have attended other schools as well.

Leonard and his sister Jessie were still students in 1901. His father was a cashier for William Bailey and Sons, a Manchester plumbing firm. The family was living in a five-room house at 92 Lloyd Street. Harry was a school attendance officer and Cyril worked as a railway clerk.<sup>22</sup> Lizzie, her husband Francis Collinson and their children were living nearby at 48 Church Street.<sup>23</sup> Leonard was 13 years old when Harry wed Agnes Hammond on 3 June 1903.<sup>24</sup>

By 1911, Leonard was a clerk at the Royal Insurance Company, Exchange Street, Manchester,<sup>25</sup> and living at 92 Lloyd Street with his parents and two siblings. His father was employed as a builder's clerk and his mother was a provisions dealer. Cyril was working as a railway clerk and Jessie was a shop assistant.<sup>26</sup> Harry, his wife and their child were living nearby at 49 Lloyd Street.<sup>27</sup> Lizzie and her family were living in Stockport.<sup>28</sup> Sadly, the matriarch, Sarah Elizabeth Firth, died in the last quarter of 1912.<sup>29</sup>

When war was declared on 4 August 1914, Leonard was 24 years old. He was still employed "in a position of trust" by the Royal Insurance Company, where he was "greatly liked by his colleagues"

and praised for “his energy and ability.”<sup>30</sup> Also, he was a well-known lacrosse player.<sup>31</sup> He most likely was still living with his father and his siblings Cyril and Jessie at 92 Lloyd Street. His father died during the third quarter of 1915 at that address.<sup>32</sup> On 11 December 1915, Jessie married Frank Ashcroft, a private in the Army Ordnance Corps, in the Anglican church of St. Martin, Norris Bank, Stockport. Cyril and Harry were witnesses. At the time of her marriage, Jessie was living at 1 Norris Avenue, Stockport.<sup>33</sup>



**Private Leonard Firth**

*Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*

8 September 1916 p. 2 (*Findmypast*)

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 24 May 2023)

Leonard was living with Jessie and Cyril at 1 Norris Avenue<sup>34</sup> when he enlisted in the Public School Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (service number 8762) in Manchester around September 1915. He transferred to the 21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, later that year.<sup>35</sup>

The Northumberland Fusiliers was an infantry regiment of the British Army that was originally formed in 1674 as part of the Dutch Anglo-Scots Brigade. After 1881, it was known as the Northumberland Fusiliers. By 1908, it consisted of eight battalions; two Regular, one Special Reserve, four Territorial and a Cyclist. During the First World War, it expanded to 59 battalions, of which 29 served overseas. The increase in strength was done partly by forming duplicates of existing Territorial Force battalions and creating Service battalions.<sup>36</sup>

The 21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, was one of these new battalions, raised on 26 October 1914 in Newcastle. When Leonard transferred, the battalion was training on the Salisbury Plains as part of the 102nd Brigade, 34th Division. On 10 January 1916, its 30 officers and 991 soldiers of other ranks (ORs), which most likely included Private Leonard Firth, travelled by train to Southampton to board two ships, the *SS African Prince* and the *SS Empress Queen*.

The ships docked at Le Havre, France, on 11 January, where the battalion joined the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). The next day, the battalion travelled 250 km to Blendecques, France, and then on 13 January to Campagne-lès-Wardrecques, France, where the men spent 10 days in trench-warfare training. The battalion moved to Steenbecque on 23 January and then to Estaires, France, where it was attached to the 25th Infantry Brigade. By 27 January, the battalion was in the trenches and experienced shell fire for the first time. On 28 January, Private Frederick Johnson (service number 1080), whose leg was broken by shrapnel fire, became the battalion’s first casualty.<sup>37</sup>

On 11 February 1916, the battalion was back with the 102nd Brigade when it was “given the honour” to defend a portion of the BEF fighting line near Steenbecque. The men were cautioned that if they were attacked, withdrawal from the front line was not an option and that “every man must make up his mind to hold to the last.”<sup>38</sup>

The battalion would spend the next seven months in various locations in France. At the end of February, it was in the Armentières area, where it remained until early April. It then moved to Muncq-Nieurlet, about 14 km northwest of Saint Omer. From 10 to 31 May, the battalion received additional training near La Houssoye. One of the exercises was a mock attack on the enemy's trenches near La Boisselle.<sup>39</sup> On 1 June it was assigned to the trenches at Bécourt Chateau, about 2 km east of Albert and 7 km from La Boisselle.

During those months, the battalion followed the routines of trench warfare. Leonard experienced day-to-day shelling, sniper fire, endless noise, horrid stench, and skirmishes followed by rest periods behind the lines. During these rest periods, he and the other men were often assigned to physically demanding work parties.

On 4 June, the 21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion had just moved into a section of the front-line trenches near Albert when the enemy bombarded it, causing considerable damage. At 1:30 a.m., 200 or more enemy troops raided the section but were beaten back, leaving one dead and one injured enemy soldier behind. The cost to the battalion from the bombardment and raid was 5 ORs killed and 1 officer and 26 ORs wounded.<sup>40</sup>

During the month, rotation in and out of the trenches continued. On 18 June, the battalion received Operation Order No. 32, which outlined its role in the attack on the enemy's trenches near the village of La Boisselle, planned for 1 July. It was to lead the attack on the enemy's front line, south of La Boisselle. The 22nd (3rd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion would follow. The men were ordered not to fall out to assist the wounded.<sup>41</sup>

The Battle of La Boisselle (a.k.a. the Battle of Albert, 1–13 July 1916) was the first of 12 battles covering the period 1 July 1916 to 18 November 1916 that became known as the Battle of the Somme.<sup>42</sup> Before the attack, the BEF artillery bombarded the enemy trenches for five days. On 1 July, at 7:28 a.m., the 179th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers, detonated the Lochnagar mine under the German army's trenches just south of La Boisselle. It was a massive explosion creating a huge crater. However, enemy intelligence had discovered the plan and the damage to the enemy's forces was minimized.<sup>43</sup>

On a warm sunny 1 July 1916, the 21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion obeyed orders and went "over the top" at 7:30 a.m., moving forward in four lines at 137-metre intervals, followed by the 22nd (3rd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion. They reached the enemy's second line and occupied a section of the enemy trenches on the northern slope of the "Sausage Valley."<sup>44</sup> The cost to both battalions was high. By 3 July, the 21st (2nd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion had 478 casualties: 11 officers and 161 ORs were killed and 10 officers and 296 ORs were wounded. The 22nd (3rd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion had 539 casualties.<sup>45</sup> In a letter to his family, Leonard related that he had survived, although his helmet had been shot off, but his comrades on both sides of him had been killed.<sup>46</sup>

The battalions were relieved on 4 July and moved to billets at Millencourt, about 7 km from La Boisselle. They were transferred to the 37th Division on 6 July<sup>47</sup> and moved to various locations in France as they were refitted and reorganized. On 26 July, the remnants of the two battalions were united into one battalion, the 1/21st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers. By 27 July, the combined battalion was in the trenches near Villers-au-Bois, France.

Probably during this reorganization process, Leonard was attached to a Durham Light Infantry unit.<sup>48</sup> Sometime around 18 August, he was critically wounded. How, when, and where this occurred was not recorded. He was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCCS) at Bailleul, France. A casualty clearing station was a medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who could not be adequately treated were stabilized before being transported to a military hospital.<sup>49</sup>

Leonard might have been one of three injured men admitted on 18 August or one of 92 admitted on 19 August. He was one of two who died on Saturday, 19 August.<sup>50</sup> His death was recorded by the No. 1 CCCS chaplain.<sup>51</sup> Leonard's death was reported in the local newspapers on 24 and 25 August 1916 and a brief obituary appeared in the *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser* on 1 September.<sup>52</sup>

Private Leonard Firth was buried at Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave/Memorial Reference II. F. 170).<sup>53</sup> Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several casualty clearing stations, including No. 1 CCCS, were quartered there. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918; they occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when soldiers' remains were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.

Leonard was posthumously awarded the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918).<sup>54</sup> As next of kin, Cyril received a memorial plaque and a parchment scroll. On 23 April 1917 he also received Leonard's army savings of £2 9s 2d and on 9 October 1919 a war gratuity of £3.<sup>55</sup> He also was the beneficiary of Leonard's estate, which amounted to £228 19s 2d.<sup>56</sup>

The Firth family's world continued without Leonard. There was more sorrow to endure. **Jessie's** husband Lance Corporal Frank Ashcroft, who was by then in the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 57th Battalion, was killed in action sometime between 9 and 12 April 1918. His body was not recovered and his sacrifice is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Panel 136, France.<sup>57</sup>

During the next decade, Leonard's siblings continued to live relatively near each other in the Stockport, Cheshire, area. By 1921, **Jessie** and **Cyril** were living at 12 Bankfield Avenue, Didsbury Road, Stockport. **Jessie** was a confectioner's assistant for Messrs. Redfern Confectioners and **Cyril** was an audit clerk for the Great Central Railway, Manchester.<sup>58</sup> **Harry**, his wife Agnes and their son were living at 49 Lloyd Street, Heaton Norris. **Harry** was employed as a school attendance officer.<sup>59</sup> **Lizzie**, her husband Francis Collinson and their children were living at 7 Burn Leach Road, Hazel Grove & Bramhall. Francis was a skip manufacturer (cane).<sup>60</sup> Although **Jessie** never remarried, **Cyril** married Hilda Hobson at the Anglican Church of Saint Martin, Norris Bank, on 1 September 1927.<sup>61</sup>

Private Leonard Firth was not forgotten. His sacrifice is commemorated on the Stockport War Memorial and Art Gallery, which was opened in October 1925.<sup>62</sup> More recently, he has been remembered on such websites as the *Scotland National War Memorial Index 1914–1945*,<sup>63</sup> the *Cheshire Roll of Honour More than a Name*<sup>64</sup> and the MLFHS War Memorial Inscription Index.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Some British Army Statistics of the Great War,” *The Long, Long Trail; Researching Soldiers of the British Army in the Great War 1914–1919* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/some-british-army-statistics-of-the-great-war>: accessed 16 May 2023)

<sup>2</sup> “England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 1 February 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Birth date: 12 April 1890, Baptism date: 25 May 1890, Baptism Place: St. Thomas, Heaton Norris, Lancashire, England, Father: Abraham Owen Firth, Mother: Sarah Elizabeth, FHL film number: 2113091, Reference ID: v 4 p 50; “GRO Indexes, 1837–1918 Births,” *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 February 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, GRO Reference: 1890, J Quarter in Stockport, Volume: 8A, Page: 38, Mother’s maiden surname: Mather

<sup>3</sup> “Heaton Norris,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaton\\_Norris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaton_Norris): accessed 23 February 2023); “History of Heaton Norris in Stockport and Lancashire,” *GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth* (<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/661>: accessed 2 March 2023)

<sup>4</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 15 March 2023), entry for Abraham Owen Firth, Registration date: 1847, Quarter of the year: Apr-May-Jun, Registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, England, Volume: 19, Page: 258; “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 2 March 2023), entry for Abraham C [sic] Firth, Age: 65, Estimated birth year: abt 1850, Registration quarter: Jul-Aug-Sep, Death registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, Death date: September 1915, Inferred death place: Cheshire, United Kingdom, Volume: 8a, Page: 93

<sup>5</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 15 March 2023), entry for Sarah Elizabeth Mather, Registration date: 1849, Quarter of the year: Apr-May-Jun, Registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, England, Volume: 19, Page: 377; “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 2 March 2023), entry for Sarah E. Firth, Age: 61, Estimated birth year: abt 1851, Registration quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec, Death registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, Death date: Dec 1912, Inferred death place: Cheshire, United Kingdom, Volume: 8a, Page: 106

<sup>6</sup> “Manchester, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930 (Cathedral),” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Abraham Owen Firth, Birth year: abt 1848, Marriage date: 13 May 1872, Parish: Manchester, St. Mary, St. Denys and St. George, Father’s name: James Firth, Spouse’s name: Sarah Elizabeth Mather, Spouse’s father’s name: James Mather, Archive roll: 739

<sup>7</sup> “1871 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 22 March 2023), entry for Sarah E. Mather, Registration district: Stockport, Sub-registration district: Heaton Norris, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Household schedule number: 54, Piece: 3656, Folio: 60, Page: 11

<sup>8</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 3 March 2023), entry for Abraham Owen Firth, Registration district: Stockport, Registration district number: 443, Sub-registration district: Stockport Third, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 02, Piece: 21403

<sup>9</sup> “GRO Indexes, 1837–1918 Births,” *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Lizzie Firth, GRO Reference: 1873, J Quarter in Stockport, Volume: 08A, Page: 46, Mother’s maiden surname: Mather; “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Lizzie Collinson, Death age: 90, Birth date: abt 1874, Registration date: Apr 1964, Registration quarter: Apr-May-Jun, Registration district: North east Cheshire, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 10A, Page: 372

<sup>10</sup> “GRO Indexes, 1837–1918 Births,” *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Harry Firth, GRO Reference: 1876, J Quarter in Salford, Volume: 08D, Page: 38, Mother’s maiden surname: Mather; “England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Harry Firth, Death date: 14 February 1944, Death place: Lancashire, England, Probate date: 27 April 1944, Probate registry: Manchester, Chester [sic], England

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- <sup>11</sup> "GRO Indexes, 1837–1918 Births," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for James Percy Firth, GRO Reference: 1878, J Quarter in Salford, Volume: 08D, Page: 4, Mother's maiden surname: Mather; "GRO Indexes, 1837–1918 Deaths," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for James Percy Firth, GRO Reference: 1878, D Quarter in Stockport, Volume: 08A Page: 63, Age: 0
- <sup>12</sup> "GRO Indexes 1837–1918 Births," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for James Firth, GRO Reference: 1880, J Quarter in Salford, Volume: 08D, Page: 195, Mother's maiden surname: Mather; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 7 March 2023), entry for James Firth, Age: 14, Estimated birth year: abt 1881, Registration quarter: Jan-Feb-Mar, Death registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, Death date: Mar 1895, Inferred death place: Cheshire, United Kingdom, Volume: 8a, Page: 39
- <sup>13</sup> "GRO Indexes 1837–1918 Births," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Cyril Firth, GRO Reference: 1884, S Quarter in Stockport, Volume: 08A, Page: 36, Mother's maiden surname: Mather; "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Cyril Firth, Death date: 8 March 1963, Death place: Middlesex, England, Probate date: 16 May 1963, Probate registry: London, England
- <sup>14</sup> "GRO Indexes 1837–1918 Births," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp): accessed 4 March 2023), entry for Jessie Firth, GRO Reference: 1886, S Quarter in Stockport, Volume: 08A, Page: 54, Mother's maiden surname: Mather; "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 5 March 2023), entry for Jessie Ashcroft, Death year: 1976, District: Stockport, County: Cheshire, Volume: 39, Page: 1341
- <sup>15</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 September 2022), entry for Abraham C Firths [*sic*], Registration district: Stockport, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 3472, Folio: 8, Page: 8
- <sup>16</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 7 March 2023), entry for Mary Mather, Age: 70, Estimated birth year: abt 1812, Registration quarter: Jan-Feb-Mar, Death registration place: Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, Death date: Mar 1882, Inferred death place: Cheshire, United Kingdom, Volume: 8a, Page: 21
- <sup>17</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 8 March 2023), entry for Abraham O Firth, Registration district: Stockport, Sub-registration district: Heaton Norris, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 2793, Folio: 108, Page: 17
- <sup>18</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 7 March 2023), entry for James Firth
- <sup>19</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 March 2023), entry for Lizzie Firth, Registration year: 1897, Registration quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec, Registration district: Stockport, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 8a, Page: 143, Spouse: Francis Joseph Collinson
- <sup>20</sup> "England, Cheshire School Records, 1782–1950," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 16 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Year: 1897, entry for Jessie Firth, Year: 1893, Town: Stockport, County: Cheshire, School: Stockport Sunday School
- <sup>21</sup> "Stockport Sunday School," *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 November 1899, p. 8, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 20 March 2023)
- <sup>22</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 March 2023), entry for Abraham Owen Firth, Registration district: Stockport, Sub-registration district: Heaton Norris, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 07, Household schedule number: 245, Piece: 3286, Folio: 151, Page: 41; "Returning to be Punished," *Manchester Evening News*, 20 September 1905, p. 4, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 23 March 2023)

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- <sup>23</sup> “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 10 March 2023), entry for Lizzie Collinson, Registration district: Stockport, Sub-registration district: Heaton Norris, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 08, Household schedule number: 57, Piece: 3287, Folio: 10, Page: 11
- <sup>24</sup> “Manchester, England, Non-Conformist Marriages, 1758–1937,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 22 March 2023), entry for Harry Firth, Marriage date: 3 June 1903, Marriage place: Heaton Norris, Lancashire, England, Church: Bethesda Primitive Methodist Chapel, Father name: Abraham Owen Firt [*sic*], Spouse name: Agnes Hammond, Spouse father’s name: William Hammond
- <sup>25</sup> “Roll of Honour,” *The Insurance Record*, 8 September 1916, p. 425, entry for Private L. Firth, *Google Books* ([https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The\\_Insurance\\_Record/4E11AQAAAMAAI?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%22The+Insurance+Record+1916%22&pg=PA426&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Insurance_Record/4E11AQAAAMAAI?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%22The+Insurance+Record+1916%22&pg=PA426&printsec=frontcover): accessed 11 April 2023)
- <sup>26</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 19 March 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Registration district number: 443, Sub-registration district: Stockport Third, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 02, Piece: 21403
- <sup>27</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 19 March 2023), entry for Harry Firth, Registration district number: 443, Sub-registration district: Stockport Third, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 02, Piece: 21403
- <sup>28</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 19 September 2022), entry for Lizzie Collinson, Registration district number: 443, Sub-registration district: Stockport Third, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 12, Piece: 21413
- <sup>29</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 2 March 2023), entry for Sarah E. Firth, op. cit. Age: 61
- <sup>30</sup> “Roll of Honour,” *The Insurance Record*, 8 September 1916, p. 425, entry for Private L. Firth
- <sup>31</sup> “Roll of Honour,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 1 September 1916, p. 2; “Lacrosse,” *Manchester Evening News*, 24 January 1907, p. 3, “Being a good team,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 22 August 1913, p. 10, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 28 March 2023)
- <sup>32</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 2 March 2023), entry for Abraham C [*sic*] Firth, op. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> “Manchester, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 March 2023), entry for Jessie Firth, Birth year: abt 1886, Marriage date: 11 December 1915, Marriage place: Norris Bank, St. Martin, Lancashire, England, Parish as it appears: St. Martin, Norris Bank Father: Abraham Owen Firth (deceased), Spouse: Frank Ashcroft, Reference number: L221, Archive roll: 632
- <sup>34</sup> “The Roll of Honour,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 8 September 1916, p. 2, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 8 March 2023); “Roll of Honour,” *The Insurance Record*, 8 September 1916, p. 425
- <sup>35</sup> “Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914–1919,” *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 March 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Service number: 31615; “War Gratuity Calculator,” (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator>: accessed February 2017); “British Army, Northumberland Fusiliers 1881–1920,” *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 24 March 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Service number: 31615; “Roll of Honour,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 1 September 1916, p. 2. **Note:** Because Leonard’s service record did not survive the 1940 fire at the Army Records Office in Walworth, London, his military career was pieced together using a number of sources.
- <sup>36</sup> “Royal Northumberland Fusiliers,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Northumberland\\_Fusiliers#Reorganisations\\_1900%E2%80%931908](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Northumberland_Fusiliers#Reorganisations_1900%E2%80%931908): accessed 15 May 2023)
- <sup>37</sup> “21 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, War Diaries, 1916 Jan–1918 Jan,” *National Archives, Kew* (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7353905>: accessed 8 April 2023), Reference: WO-95-2462/5; “102 Infantry Brigade: Headquarter, War Diaries, 1915 Jan 1–1916 June 30,” *National Archives, Kew* (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14054912>: accessed 8 April 2023), Reference: WO-95/2459/1. **Note:** Unless otherwise identified, all information about the 21st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers’ movements during this time period comes from these sources.

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- <sup>38</sup> “102 Infantry Brigade: Headquarter, War Diaries, 1915 Jan 1–1916 June 30,” op. cit., Special Operation Order 14 February 1916
- <sup>39</sup> “21 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, War Diaries, 1916 Jan–1918 Jan,” op. cit., entry for 29 May 1916
- <sup>40</sup> “21 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, War Diaries, 1916 Jan–1918 Jan,” op. cit., entry for 4 June 1916
- <sup>41</sup> “102 Infantry Brigade: Headquarter, War Diaries, 1915 Jan 1–1916 June 30,” op. cit., Special Operation Order No. 32, 18 June 1916, p. 25, Item 48 (iv)
- <sup>42</sup> Tony Ball, “The Northumberland Fusiliers and the Somme, 1916: A Case Study in Unit Deployment, Tactical Order and Casualties,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* Vol. 85, No. 344 (Winter 2007), p. 310, *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org>: accessed 20 April 2023)
- <sup>43</sup> *Lochnagar Crater Foundation* (<https://www.lochnagarcrater.org/history/first-day-of-somme>: accessed 2 February 2023)
- <sup>44</sup> John Shakespeare, *The Thirty-Fourth Division 1915–1919. The Story of Its Career from Ripon to the Rhine* (London, England: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1921), p. 40, *Google Books* (<https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&q=Thirty-Fourth+Division>: accessed digital edition 16 April 2023)
- <sup>45</sup> “21 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, War Diaries, 1916 Jan–1918 Jan,” op. cit., entry for 3 July 1916; John Shakespeare, *Google Books*, p. 52
- <sup>46</sup> “Further Local Losses Reported To-day,” *Manchester Evening News*, 24 August 1916, p. 2, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 20 April 2023)
- <sup>47</sup> “21 Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, War Diaries, 1916 Jan–1918 Jan,” op. cit., entry for 22 August 1916. **Note:** The battalion returned to the 34th Division on 22 August 1916.
- <sup>48</sup> “The Roll of Honour,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 8 September 1916, p. 2, *Findmypast*; “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 12 April 2022), entry for Pte L. Firth, Service number: 3165 [sic]. **Note:** The chaplain recorded his regiment as the Durham Light Infantry.
- <sup>49</sup> “Casualty Clearing Station,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 2 April 2023)
- <sup>50</sup> “No.1 Canadian Casualty Clear Station War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2005082&lang=eng>: accessed 3 April 2023), entries for 18 and 19 August 1916
- <sup>51</sup> “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Pte L Firth
- <sup>52</sup> “Further Local Losses Reported To-Day,” *Findmypast*; “For their Country,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 25 August 1916, p. 8; “Roll of Honour,” *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 1 September 1916, p. 2, *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2023). **Note:** Information was not available regarding the date when Leonard was attached to the Durham Light Infantry.
- <sup>53</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/199348/leonard-firth>: accessed 15 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Service number: 31615
- <sup>54</sup> “British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 14 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Regimental number: 31615
- <sup>55</sup> “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers’ Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 8 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Regimental number: 31615
- <sup>56</sup> “England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administration) 1858–1995,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 15 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Death date: 19 Aug 1916, Probate date: 5 Mar 1917, Probate place: Manchester, England
- <sup>57</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/726768/frank-ashcroft>: accessed 16 April 2023), entry for Frank Ashcroft, Service number: 127485
- <sup>58</sup> “1921 Census of England & Wales,” *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2023), entry for Jessie Ashcroft and Cyril Firth, Registration district: Stockport, Registration district number: 443, Sub-district:

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Heaton Norris, Sub-district number: 7, Enumeration district: 7, County: Cheshire, Piece: 16735, Schedule number: 162

<sup>59</sup> "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2023), entry for Harry Firth, Registration district: Stockport, Registration district number: 443, Sub-district: Stockport Third, Sub-district number: 6, Enumeration district: 9, County: Cheshire, Piece: 16716, Schedule number: 264

<sup>60</sup> "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 19 April 2023), entry for Lizzie Collinson, Registration district: Stockport, Registration district number: 443, Sub-district: Hazel Grove, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district: 1, County: Cheshire, Piece: 16607, Schedule number: 181

<sup>61</sup> "Manchester, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 March 2023), entry for Cyril Firth, Birth year: abt 1885, Marriage date: 1 September 1927, Marriage place: Norris Bank, St. Martin, Lancashire, England, Parish as it appears: St. Martin, Norris Bank Father: Abraham Owen Firth (deceased), Spouse: Hilda Hobson, Reference number: L221, Archive roll: 632

<sup>62</sup> "Stockport Memorial Hall and Art Gallery," *Imperial War Museum* (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/2794>: accessed 17 April 2023); "War Memorial Stockport Cheshire," *Carl's Cam* (<http://www.carlscam.com/stockport/warmem.htm>: accessed 17 April 2023). **Note:** L. Firth was listed on the panel entitled, "Other Regiments (1914–1918)."

<sup>63</sup> "Web: Scotland Memorial Index 1914–1945," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 16 April 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Birth place: Stockport, Cheshire, Death date: 19 August 1916, Service number: 31615

<sup>64</sup> *Cheshire Roll of Honour More than a Name* (<https://www.cheshireroll.co.uk/soldier/?i=23731/31615-Private-leonard-firth>: accessed 23 March 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, Service number: 31615

<sup>65</sup> "MLFHS War Memorial Inscriptions," *Manchester Ancestor* (<https://mlfhs.uk/databases/war-memorials/results>: accessed 20 March 2023), entry for Leonard Firth, died 19/8/1916. **Note:** This site indexed the Stockport Memorial.