

Name, Rank & Regiment of Soldier: **Starr, Arthur**

Rifleman

King's Royal Rifle Corps 7th Battalion

No: R/8011



Date of birth	Date KIA	Age
23 rd Feb 1889	Sept 27 th 1915	26

Background: **Arthur Starr**

Arthur Starr was born in Collingham and baptised in Collingham (All Saints) on 13th December 1890.

Father: John Starr, maltster's labourer (1848-1928) buried North Collingham

Mother: Mary Ann Starr (1858 - 1935) buried North Collingham

Arthur was one of 10 children (9 surviving). The family lived on Low Street, near the Infants' School which many of them attended¹.

By the 1911 census, Arthur was 22 and a boarder at 48 Gibbons St, Old Lenton, in Nottingham. He was single and working as a 'gardening domestic' for widow Ann Purser. In 1914 he was married to Mary Askew, a tucking machinist in a blouse factory. At the time of enlistment, he was 25yrs and 10 months & his address is 46 Gibbons Street; he is still a gardener. Interestingly, Mary's forwarding address c 1920 when Arthur's body was reburied in the Bedford House Cemetery is c/o Melbourne, Australia.

¹ Source: The North Collingham Infants' School Admissions Register held by Nottinghamshire Archives

Dora and Jenny Starr

Two of Arthur's younger sisters, Dora (born 1893) and Jenny (born 1896), are pictured here (right) at the Collingham Girls' & Infants' School, c. 1904. They would have moved up from the Infants' School on Low Street.

Dora is 2nd from the right on the middle row
and Jenny is second from the right on the front row.

Dora went on to marry John Beech, a military saddler² from Staffordshire, in December 1924.



postcard c/o Collingham and District Local History Society Archives

Military History: Rifleman Arthur Starr

The Kings' Royal Rifle Corps was raised in 1755/56. However, the 7th Battalion King's Royal Rifles was part of the 'new' Kitchener army. These service battalions attached to existing regiments were made up entirely of civilian volunteers who heeded Kitchener's call to serve their country.

Formed at Winchester on 19 August 1914, the 7th came under orders of 41st Brigade in 14th (Light) Division. According to his Casualty Record Sheet³ Arthur Starr enlisted on 5th December 1914. After training, the corps embarked for the Western Front on 18th June, 1915. Arthur was wounded on the 4th July, leaving him with 'abrasions to the face'. He returned to the front on August 15th and was killed six weeks later at Bellewarde.

The Second Attack on Bellewarde Farm September 25th 1915⁴

The 7th Kings' Royal Rifle were under the command of Lieut-Col G.A.P. Rennie, DSO. At the time Arthur was killed, the Battle of Loos (Ypres) had just begun. It was infamous for being the launch of the first gas attack by the British (the Germans had been using poison gas since April). Wind direction and inept handling meant many British troops were gassed as well as the enemy. Casualties on both sides were high. Overall the Battle of Loos cost the British more than 40,000 casualties - of which some were their finest

² East Trent Genealogy website

³ See page 3

⁴ An excellent account of the battle here: https://rugbyremembers.wordpress.com/2015/09/25/second-battle-of-bellewaarde-farm-25th-sep-1915/#_ftn2

troops (and included 3 major-generals) - with gas casualties of around 2,600, and 7 gas related deaths. The total German losses were only around 20,000, with estimates of 600 deaths due to gassing.⁵

However, Arthur Starr was not involved in the gas attack. The 7th, 8th and 9th Battalions of the Kings' Royal Rifle Corps were deployed in another area at the time, near Bellewaarde. The 2nd Attack on Bellewaarde Farm took place on 25th September in an attempt to distract the Germans from Loos. The attack was successful with the area around the farm being held⁶. Arthur Starr, whose battalion was being 'held in readiness' was killed by a shell two days later.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 7th (S) Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Regimental No. R 8011 Rank _____ Name Arthur Starr

Enlisted (a) 5/12/14 Terms of Service (a) Duration of War Service reckons from (a) 5/12/14

Date of promotion to present rank _____ Date of appointment to lance rank _____ Numerical position on roll of N.C.Os. _____

Extended _____ Re-engaged _____ Qualification (b) _____

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 33, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
		EMBARYTT		10-6-15	
<u>5⁷/₁₅</u>	<u>O.C. Bn.</u>	<u>Wounded in Action.</u>		<u>14.7.15</u>	<u>B 213</u>
<u>7⁷/₁₅</u>	<u>H.Q. F.A.</u>	<u>Adm & Trans. to 14 Div. P.S. (Abrasion)</u>		<u>14.7.15</u>	<u>By A. 36 E.D. 10.</u>
<u>21⁸/₁₅</u>	<u>O.C. Bn.</u>	<u>Re joined.</u>		<u>15.8.15</u>	<u>B 213</u>
<u>27⁹/₁₅</u>	<u>O.C. Bn.</u>	<u>Killed in Action.</u>		<u>27.9.15</u>	<u>no 44 CR</u>

Above: Arthur's Casualty Form – Active Service showing his dates of enlistment and service history (sourced from Claire Cookson, with thanks)

Newark Advertiser report of Rifleman Starr's death

'Friday 8 October 1915: Labourer John Starr and his wife Mary Ann – whose 37-year marriage had produced ten children – received two letters at home in Low Street, North Collingham, informing them of the death of their third son, Arthur (born 1889, North Collingham) a rifleman in the 7th King's Royal Rifle Corps.

⁵ <http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-on-land/61-battlefields/312-poi-gas-loos.html>

⁶ Source: <http://www.krrcassociation.com/index.php/history/13-first-world-war/37-western-front-1915?start=3>

Ernest Starr

Arthur's younger brother, Ernest, also volunteered (21 July 1915 – six months after Arthur) and also served with the King's Royal Rifles (R/3745). His medal roll shows he earned all 3 medals (Victory, British and Star):

From T Frecknall:

'Saturday 16 February 1918: Rifleman Ernest Starr (1891-1963) of Collingham was a prisoner of war in Germany. The 25-year-old went into domestic service from school; the 1911 census found him as a footman among seven servants of the Mewburn family at Hawkhill Place, Pembury, Kent. After the war Ernest, then 34 and a 'Man Servant' married Eveline Boot of Arnold (June 24 1924)'



Ernest Starr on the left with Eveline next to him at his son's wedding in 1949 with kind permission of Claire Cookson (Ernest and Eveline's grand-daughter)

Ernest and Evelyn ran Sunnyclyff Hotel, Blackpool and handed it over to their son David on retirement. Ernest died in Blackpool aged 72

Sources (in addition to those in the footnotes):

Websites:

- Ancestry.co.uk
- Notts County Council Roll of Honour website
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- East Trent Genealogy database (c/o Christine Hasman)

Book: Frecknall, T: Collingham in the Great War pub. 2015 £9.99

Archives:

Collingham and District Local History Society Archives, Jubilee Room, Collingham (postcard of Girls' School)
Nottinghamshire Archives (information from Infants' School Admission Book)

Thanks to: Ms Claire Cookson of Manitoba, Canada, Murray Biddle of Notts C C Roll of Honour website and Dan Baker at British Military Badges co.uk for use of the Rifles' cap badge image

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