

Name, Rank & Regiment of Soldier:

**Liley, James**

Private<sup>1</sup>

9<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters

No: 12602



Date of birth	Date KIA	Age
7 <sup>th</sup> April 1890 <sup>2</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1916	26

### Background: James Liley

James' parents were Henry Liley<sup>3</sup> (1849 – 1935), a cottager, and his second wife Sarah (née Harvey) (1858 – 1943) of South End, South Collingham.

James was one of 6 children from the second marriage: Hannah, Lizzie, William, Nellie, James and Ethel Liley. Henry and his first wife, Maria (1849-1876), had four children<sup>4</sup> but only two, Henry and Charles, survived childhood.

In 1911, James, aged 20 and single, was working as a **horseman** on a farm in Halam for Mr William Hazard. It would appear he was a farm labourer on the Welbeck Estate when he enlisted.<sup>5</sup>

James appears to have been close to his family, sending affectionate post-cards to his sisters from the Western Front throughout the war. Many of these can be viewed in Collingham and District Local History Society archives. His brother William also enlisted and survived the war.

<sup>1</sup> CWGC lists Liley as a Private, however, archive no. PR/16,444 in Nottinghamshire Archives, a 1919 handwritten list of soldiers for the St John the Baptist Memorial lists him as a lance corporal.

<sup>2</sup> Exact date from same archive as 1 above.

<sup>3</sup> This Henry not to be confused with his son Henry Liley Jr (1875-1957) who lived on Cottage Lane.

<sup>4</sup> Liley Family tree CDLHS Archives Box EF/AA 2

<sup>5</sup> Nottingham County Council Roll of Honour, John Morse research 2017. Morse also left a wreath on the panel bearing Liley's name on the Thiepval Memorial.



*James in his uniform with his sisters Hannah (1880-1958) at the back Nellie (1887-) on the left and Ethel (1892-) on the right. James' uniform looks new so this photograph was probably taken in 1915 when he was a new recruit.*

*From a postcard in Collingham and District Local History Society Archives: Liley Collection*

## Military History: Private James Liley

James enlisted in the army at Welbeck<sup>6</sup> and served with the battalion in Gallipoli and Egypt. According to his medal index card his first 'theatre of war' was the Balkans prior to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 1915.

### 9th (Service) Battalion Sherwood Foresters:

- Formed at Derby in August 1914 as part of K1 and came under orders of 33rd Brigade in 11th (Northern) Division.
- Moved initially to Grantham for training then on to Frensham Camp in April 1915.
- Sailed from Liverpool in early July 1915 for Gallipoli, landing at Suvla Bay 7 August 1915. Private Liley would have been involved in this disastrous campaign which claimed the life of Captain Percy Browne (6<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire Battalion - see profile).
- Evacuated from Gallipoli December 1915, moved to Egypt via Imbros.
- Moved to France in July 1916 and were on the Western Front (Somme) by 27<sup>th</sup>.



*Left: Medal with Sherwood Foresters' insignia won by James Liley in a battalion Tug-of-War competition dated March 1915, when still training. Sport was used to boost morale and also increase fitness levels. The medal was kindly donated to Collingham and District Local History Society by Mrs Sheila Bellamy (née Liley), of Collingham*

## Historical Context at the time Private Liley was killed-in-action

### Battle of Thiepval (part of The Battle of Somme) 26-28<sup>th</sup> September 1916

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt on the Somme. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack following the bombardment met fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic (almost 60,000 casualties on the first day). At the end of September<sup>7</sup>, **Thiepval** was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions.

**The Battle of the Somme** finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.

<sup>6</sup> Ancestry.co.uk & Morse info on Notts Roll of Honour website.

<sup>7</sup> Thiepval was finally captured on 26<sup>th</sup> Sept, the day Liley was killed. Source: 'Understanding the Somme' by Scotland & Hays.

The Sherwood Forester suffered particularly high losses during September. James Liley's Battalion, the 9<sup>th</sup>, was in the firing line on the 26<sup>th</sup> – see p 6 for the Roll of Honour from that day.

### **Report on James Liley's death in the Newark Advertiser:**

**Sunday 15 October 1916:** Collingham discovered it had lost James Liley, 26, and William Henry Hammond, 19, who went to War early in 1914 and never had a chance to return home.

James's parents Henry and Sarah first heard of his demise on 26 September from a comrade in the Sherwoods, Private R Phillips; the pair had made a pact to carry out the 'melancholy duty' if the worst happened. But they clung to the slim possibility that it might just be a case of mistaken identity. Now official confirmed had snuffed out their final hope. Private 12602 Liley of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwoods is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme**

The Thiepval Memorial bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. **Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916.** The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.<sup>9</sup>



*Photo of the Thiepval Memorial c/o Malcolm Barnard*

**Pte James Liley is remembered on Pier 10 Face 10C 10 D of the Thiepval Memorial**

<sup>8</sup> See Trevor Frecknall's research p 72 'Collingham and District in The Great War.'

<sup>9</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website: Thiepval information

He is also remembered on the St John the Baptist War Memorial Plaque and Roll of Honour, South Collingham, and the Welbeck Estate Chapel (as Lilley (sic)).



Photo (left) of the Welbeck Estate memorial by Roger Capel from Nottinghamshire County Council Roll of Honour website (with permissions)



#### WILLIAM LILEY (1885-1963)

James's older brother, William Liley, also volunteered. A farm labourer, he joined the Royal Field Artillery in 1915. He survived the war and was awarded the Victory Medal. In August 1918 he married Caroline Bunn. When their first child was born in December 1919 he called him James after his brother. William died in Bingham, Notts, in 1963, aged 78.<sup>10</sup>

There is a picture of William on p 8 of 'A Collingham Scrapbook'<sup>11</sup> in CDLHS archives along with other photos of the Liley family. The caption mistakenly calls William 'James'.

Photo left): William Liley in uniform courtesy of Sonia Parsons

<sup>10</sup> Ancestry.co.uk Sonia Parsons family tree

<sup>11</sup> A Collingham Scrapbook' published by Collingham Museum Committee 1985 available from Collingham Library

## Losses of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

<b>Tuesday 26th September 1916</b>	
1st Bn.	Private, 12521, J. Screeton
2/7th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 266936, C. E. Hale
<b><i>9th Battalion involved in the attack on Thiepval, France, during the Battle of the Somme.</i></b>	
9th Bn.	Private, 18452, Thomas Allsop
9th Bn.	Private, 19240, A. Antcliffe
9th Bn.	Private, 23163, John G. Armstrong
9th Bn.	Private, 22789, William Ault
9th Bn.	Private, 19614, P. Bacon
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 19251, Frederick Baker
9th Bn.	Private, 13111, Willie Baker
9th Bn.	Private, 25398, Walter Barlow
9th Bn.	Sergeant, 19756, Geo. W. Bell
9th Bn.	Private, 24265, Henry Bennett
9th Bn.	Private, 13704, A. Berry
9th Bn.	Private, 12472, Benjamin Blakeway
9th Bn.	Private, 12416, Ernest Briggs
9th Bn.	Private, 13419, Sydney Brown
9th Bn.	Private, 22680, J. T. L. Burrows
9th Bn.	Private, 12369, E. Buxton
9th Bn.	Private, 17796, Charles Carter
9th Bn.	Private, 20366, Thomas Causer
9th Bn.	Private, 20892, T. Chambers
9th Bn.	Private, 20698, Walter Cockayne
9th Bn.	Private, 23089, P. C. Colton
9th Bn.	Private, 19789, William Cooper
9th Bn.	Private, 23083, George Croucher
9th Bn.	Private, 10951, Arthur Frederick Daft
9th Bn.	Sergeant, 12770, Fred Ede
9th Bn.	Private, 16826, William Ellis
9th Bn.	Private, 22645, Edwin England
9th Bn.	Private, 23711, George Robert Farby
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 13106, John Forbes
9th Bn.	Private, 19219, Walter Freeman

9th Bn.	Private, 13159, Ernest Fretwell
9th Bn.	Private, 24704, Walter Furness
9th Bn.	Private, 19838, William Henry George
9th Bn.	Private, 3686, Fred Glover
9th Bn.	Private, 25206, James William Gregory
9th Bn.	Private, 23200, John William Hadman
9th Bn.	Private, 18610, T. Hammersley
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 21540, Charles Hartshorn
9th Bn.	Private, 19852, Benjamin Hodson
9th Bn.	Private, 23045, Charles Edward Holmes
9th Bn.	Private, 19869, J. H. Hone
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 6924, Henry Horlock
9th Bn.	Private, 12434, T. Hutchinson
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 19709, Joseph Thomas Ibbett
9th Bn.	Private, 21515, W. Jacques
9th Bn.	Private, 21832, A. Jones
9th Bn.	Private, 6596, W. H. Jones
9th Bn.	Private, 13094, William Herbert Keel
9th Bn.	Private, 24023, Harry Kirkham
9th Bn.	Private, 13846, George Knight
9th Bn.	Private, 12400, H. Leavesley
9th Bn.	Private, 12602, J. Liley
9th Bn.	Private, 19054, John Lloyd
9th Bn.	Private, 15772, Herbert Longdon
9th Bn.	Private, 7046, George Henry Lowe
9th Bn.	Private, 15002, W. Marks
9th Bn.	Private, 21502, George Marsden
9th Bn.	Private, 9192, G. Mears
9th Bn.	Private, 21205, John Page
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 15335, Peter Pearson
9th Bn.	Private, 22908, Ben Perotti
9th Bn.	Private, 24174, Bertram Pierrepont
9th Bn.	Private, 7018, Robert Richardson
9th Bn.	Private, 12404, P. Riley
9th Bn.	Corporal, 11761, W. G. Rimmington
9th Bn.	Private, 4409, Albert Sansom
9th Bn.	Captain, Archibald Alan Schweder
9th Bn.	Private, 21588, Herbert Sewell
9th Bn.	Private, 12485, Arthur Shaw

9th Bn.	Private, 20828, John Shawcroft
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 18579, Joseph Shepherd
9th Bn.	Private, 21789, Charles Shirley
9th Bn.	Private, 25908, Samuel George Smedley
9th Bn.	Private, 23126, Garnet Stenson
9th Bn.	Captain, Alan Stevenson
9th Bn.	Private, 12648, Ernest Straw
9th Bn.	Private, 13328, W. Tarr
9th Bn.	Private, 23046, William Thompson
9th Bn.	Private, 11675, C. Trelfa
9th Bn.	Private, 23340, Joseph Turner
9th Bn.	Private, 9719, William Henry Undy
9th Bn.	Private, 12907, James Parks Wakefield
9th Bn.	Private, 10521, H. Walker
9th Bn.	Private, 27044, Arthur Waplington
9th Bn.	Private, 19549, Joseph Ward
9th Bn.	Private, 15663, E. Wass
9th Bn.	Private, 20012, C. Weaver
9th Bn.	Private, 27786, William Whitehouse
9th Bn.	Sergeant, 13306, John Wilkinson
9th Bn.	Lance Corporal, 13367, William Wilkinson
9th Bn.	Private, 20006, James Worker
9th Bn.	Private, 13122, G. Youson
11th Bn.	Private, 73191, Frederick Arthur Burrell
11th Bn.	Private, 15619, Harry Cooper

Source: The Sherwood Foresters.co.uk website. The website's 'Chronological Order' section brings home how entire battalions could be almost wiped out in a single day. The tally for the month of September 1916 was 564.

Link: <http://www.the-sherwood-foresters.co.uk/day%20by%20day/chrono.html>

*With thanks to Sonia Parsons and Sheila Bellamy for permission to use the Liley family photographs*

