

## Arthur Wynne Williams

*The following notes and photographs were provided by Mr Robert Crawley, Arthur Wynne Williams' nephew, in August 2018. Mr Crawley contacted the Parish Council after finding the cards Jerome Wright<sup>1</sup> had left at Arthur's grave earlier in the year.*



*Above: Mr Robert Crawley at the grave of A. Wynne Williams, Hangard in August 2018 showing J Wright's cards.*

*Photo c/o Mr R Crawley*

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Jerome Wright of Collingham – see 'To Honour Our Heroes' section on Collingham in the Great War website

## ARTHUR WYNNE WILLIAMS

20.01.1893 - 08.08.1918



Arthur Wynne Williams (left) was the fourth and youngest child of Robert and Clementina Williams. His father was a land surveyor and worked as an estate manager and agent for a number of landowners with large estates in Lincolnshire and adjacent counties.

Arthur was born on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1893 at East Barkwith, near Wragby, the youngest of four children. His father was then working for Edmund Turnor Esq at nearby Panton Hall with the family living in Panton House on the estate. He was baptised at St Mary's church, East Barkwith, together with two of his siblings, in June of the same year. His elder brother, Roderic and two sisters, Eira and Elsie, went off to boarding school in Louth and Lincoln respectively but it seems that Arthur was privately educated at home.

In September 1905 Robert Williams (below

with wife Clementina, Elsie and Arthur in 1904) was appointed as his agent by Sir Montague Cholmeley whose seat was at Easton Hall near Grantham and by 1909 he had moved to Lincoln and was working from offices there. Elsie married in 1909 at St Peter's church Eastgate, Lincoln and then moved to Egypt with her husband who was a merchant naval captain based in Alexandria. Roderic also married a year later but then left for Canada in 1911 leaving behind his wife and newly born son. He was joined by Arthur in October 1912 and it seems that the two brothers lived in the Vancouver and Victoria areas of British Columbia until the outbreak of war.



Arthur immediately joined up in August 1914 and was posted to 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry at Valcartier, Quebec before sailing with his unit from Quebec to Plymouth, arriving at Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1914. He remained in England undergoing training until May 1915 when he was transferred to 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry (Canadian Scottish) and arrived in France on 6<sup>th</sup> June to join his new regiment at Ploegsteert, near Ypres.

Unfortunately, his first two years on the Western Front were plagued by frequent bouts of sickness, some requiring extended periods in hospital, so the time he spent with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion was comparatively limited. He was, however, with them during the latter part of 1917 and survived the terrible conditions and carnage of the second battle of Passchendaele in October and November of that year.

It was during 1917 that Arthur's parents, Robert and Clementina, moved to Crescent House<sup>2</sup> in Collingham. The reason for their move from Lincoln is as yet unknown but it is presumed that Robert needed to be closer to the Easton Hall estates which by then had been inherited by Sir Hugh Cholmeley, the son of his original employer. (The hall itself had been taken over by the War Office as an auxiliary hospital in 1915 and Arthur's elder sister, Eira, worked there as a VAD nursing wounded servicemen during 1916 and 1917).

Arthur remained with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion throughout 1918 serving in the front line in the Arras, Vimy and Lens sectors and writing several (surviving) letters to his family in Collingham. Along with the rest of the Canadian Corps he was transferred with great secrecy to the Somme front in August 1918 and was killed near Hangard village on 8<sup>th</sup> August on the first day of the Battle of Amiens. His mother in a letter from Grove House to her daughter Elsie (my grandmother) on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1918 quoted from the letter she had just received from Arthur's platoon commander:

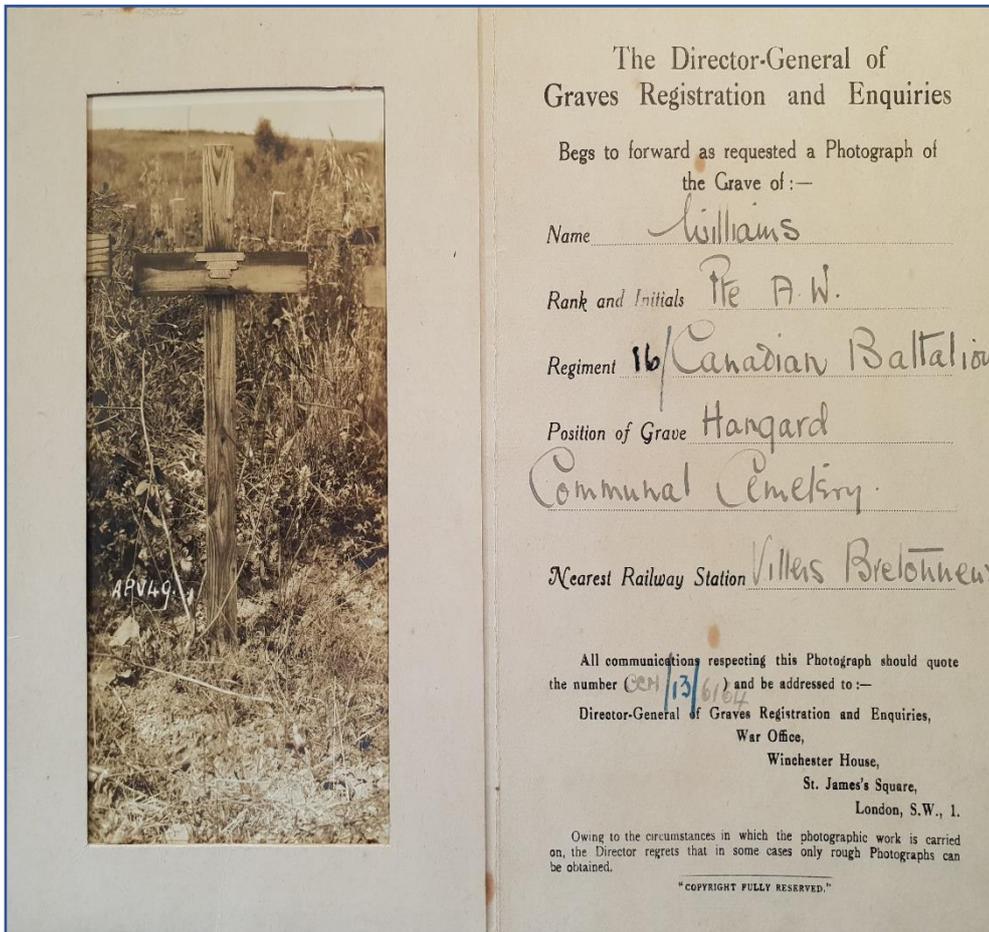
*"Shortly after leaving our jumping off position he was hit with a German machine gun bullet from close range, his wound was dressed at once and in a few minutes he was taken back to a dressing station where he lived, although unconscious, for a short time – he is buried somewhere there. His company commander, his pals and myself all feel his loss very greatly. I have been in command of his platoon for some months now during which time I formed a very pleasant acquaintance with him and I am happy to say that I always found him an excellent soldier and better still a real man".* (Unfortunately, she did not include the officer's name in her letter).

Private Arthur Wynne Williams is buried in Hangard Communal Cemetery Extension near Villers Bretonneux (grave shown on the right) and is remembered on the war memorial at All Saints Church, Collingham. His parents and eldest sister, Eira, attended the unveiling and dedication service at the church on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1919.



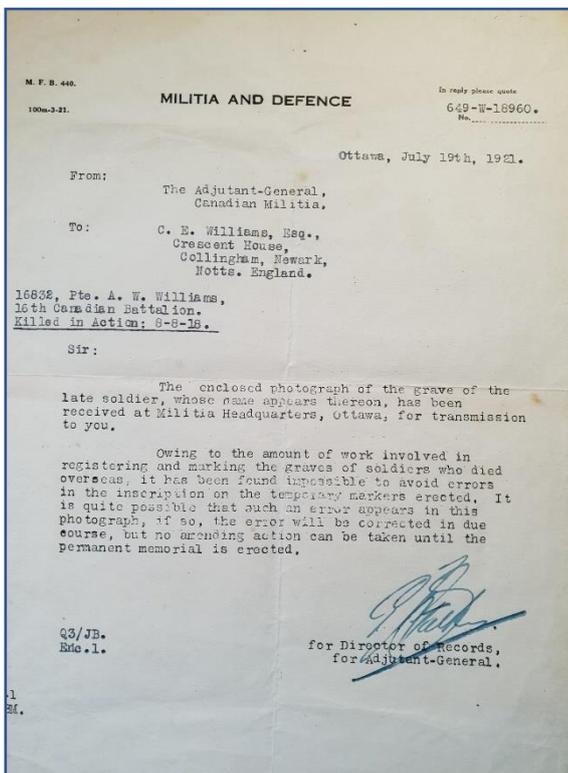
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<sup>2</sup> Crescent House, 153 Low Street, Collingham



Robert and  
Clementina  
Williams continued  
to live at Crescent  
House probably  
until around 1924<sup>3</sup>  
before they moved  
into the Dower  
House in the  
grounds of Easton  
Hall, their home  
until Robert's  
retirement in 1937.  
It was while living  
at Collingham in  
1921 that Robert  
and Clementina  
received the first  
notification of  
Arthur's original  
grave (left) and his  
certificate of death  
from the Canadian  
government

(below).



<sup>3</sup> Trade directories would concur with these dates. R Williams is listed at Crescent House in 1922 but Mr C Sheldon is listed there by 1928

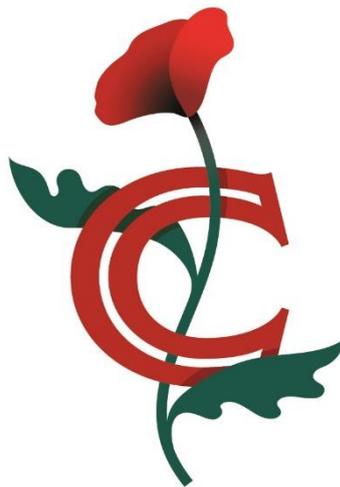
Notes by:

ROBERT CRAWLEY, OBE, JP  
Surrey  
(Arthur Williams' Great Nephew)  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Attached images:

- Arthur Wynne Williams c1912
- Members of the Williams Family at Panton House c1904  
*(From L to R: Robert, Clementina, Elsie (my grandmother) and Arthur with his terrier)*
- Order of Service for the Unveiling and Dedication of the Collingham War Memorial 1921<sup>4</sup>
- Photograph of Arthur Williams' Original Grave and Letter from the Canadian Government 1921
- Arthur's Grave Today at Hangard Communal Cemetery Extension

Collated by HP August 20th 2018



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<sup>4</sup> Copies of this document in CDLHS Archives