

Corporal Alfred James Wright©

Regimental number: 326857

58th Battery, 14th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery

born: 12 November 1883 – died: 23 February 1918

Corporal Alfred James Wright was born on 12 November 1883 in East Bergholt, Suffolk, England.¹ He was probably the second child and first son of Robert and Mary Ann (nee Dale) Wright, who married near Samford, Suffolk, in 1882. Both his parents were born in East Bergholt—Robert in about 1861 and Mary Ann a year later.² They had nine children, six of whom survived childhood. The children probably included Agnes Mary (born in about 1882),³ Alfred, Ernest Charley (born in about 1886),⁴ Florence Mabel (born in about 1888 but died in 1909),⁵ Alice Rose (who also appears to be called Rosa) (born in about 1889),⁶ Ada Elizabeth (born in about 1896)⁷ and William Herbert (born in about 1900).⁸ The identities of two other children who probably died in childhood were not found.

In 1891, the family was living at Puttocks, East End Road in East Bergholt, where Alfred's father was an agricultural labourer.⁹ Ten years later they were at Near High Trees, still in East Bergholt, but Robert was now a horseman on a farm.¹⁰ Alfred was admitted to the East Bergholt Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School in East Bergholt in June 1888 and left in July 1897.¹¹ Before that, he had attended Miss Rampling's school. By 1901, Alfred was working as a journey baker.

At some point after that—possibly in 1910—Alfred immigrated to Canada. In 1911 he may have been living in a boarding house in Fredericton and working as a gardener.¹² However, when he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Overseas Force in 1916 he identified himself as a clerk. Alfred enlisted on 17 April 1916, at the age of 32; he was living at the Lorne Hotel in Fredericton, New Brunswick. He was 5' 7½" tall and had a dark complexion and brown eyes and hair.¹³

At the end of February 1918, the 14th Brigade was stationed near Lievin, France, just to the west of Lens.¹⁴ On 22 February the enemy had been fairly quiet, but the brigade's batteries had fired harassing fire and caused a large explosion in the enemy lines. The enemy dropped propaganda from aeroplanes behind the brigade's lines saying that "Canadian Corps will be wiped out in 72 hours!" The response of the author of the war diary was "Perhaps." It was that day that Alfred was wounded. Exceptionally, the war diary notes his death. "Cpl Wright of 58th Bty wounded yesterday died at No 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 2.40 am."

The chaplains' journal from the No 1 CCCS notes that Alfred was admitted on 21 February, but this is likely an error.¹⁵ However, it is probably correct when it identifies that he died of shrapnel wounds to his abdomen on 23 February and was buried the same day in Barlin Cemetery (Plot 3, Row E, Grave 39) with the Canadian Forces chaplain, G. C. d'Easum, presiding.

Barlin is about 11 kilometres southwest of Bethune in northern France. The extension of the military cemetery was begun by French troops in October 1914 and, when the French moved south in March 1916, Commonwealth forces took over the cemetery. Under enemy shelling, the nearby hospital was moved back, but in the spring of 1918, the extension was used again during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth Great War burials.¹⁶

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY of 14th Brigade C.F.A. Army Form
 or
~~14th Brigade C.F.A. Army Form~~
 (Erase heading not required.)

Feb. 1918
 Vol II p. 10

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
LIEVIN	23		Visibility poor with fair intervals during the day. Rpl Wright of 58 th Bty, wounded yesterday died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 2.40am. Enemy fairly quiet a few S.G. on CITE STE PIERRE. Our batteries engaged movement and did harassing fire at night. Period generally quiet. n.p.a.

Record of Corporal Wright's death in the war dairies of the 14th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery
 Source: "War Diaries – 14th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery" Library and Archives Canada

The chaplain wrote to the paymaster of his unit requesting the address of his next of kin. He received the address of his mother and wrote to her on 3 March 1918.

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¹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Alfred James Wright

² "1891 England Census," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 September 2016), entry for Alfred Wright, Registration district: Samford, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 1464, Folio: 15, Page: 15

³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Agnes Mary Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 731

⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Ernest Charley Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 744

⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Florence Mabel Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 801; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Florence Mabel Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 496

⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Alice Rose Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 829

⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for Ada Elizabeth Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 871

⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 September 2016), entry for William Herbert Wright, Registration district: Samford, Inferred county: Suffolk, Volume: 4a, Page: 989

⁹ "1891 England Census," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 September 2016), entry for Alfred Wright

¹⁰ "1901 England Census," Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 September 2016), entry for Alfred J Wright, Registration district: Samford, Sub-registration district: Capel St Mary, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 1771, Folio: 10, Page: 11, Household schedule number: 73

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- ¹¹ "East Bergholt Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School." *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 January 2016), entry for Alfred James Wright, East Bergholt, Suffolk, England, Admissions 1874–1918
- ¹² "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 August 2016), entry for James Wright, Province: New Brunswick, District: York, District number: 36, Sub-district: 35, Sub-district number: 35
- ¹³ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 August 2016), entry for Alfred James Wright
- ¹⁴ "War Diaries – 14th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery" *Library and Archives Canada* (http://collections.canada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=2004767&rec_nbr_list=2004767,2004754,2005954,2004766,2004753,2004751,2004755,2004761,2005955,2004760: accessed 20 September 2014), Microfilm reel: T-10798, Volume 4972 File Part 1=1917/01/22-1918/03/31; 2=1918/04/01-1919/05/31, Former archival reference: RG9-III-D-3
- ¹⁵ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 8 August 2016), entry Wright A. J.
- ¹⁶ "Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 16 August 2016)