

Lance Corporal John Mellor[©]
Regimental number: 252705
2nd/6th Battalion, Manchester Regiment

born: 1890–died: 31 July 1917

Lance Corporal John Mellor was born in 1890 in Macclesfield, Cheshire,¹ the son of James and Mary Hannah (née Atkinson) Mellor.² He came from a very large family. His parents, both silk workers, had married at St James Church in Congleton, Cheshire, on 17 October 1876³ and would have 14 children (five boys and nine girls) between 1877 and 1902—13 of whom survived childhood.⁴ Their first two children were daughters:

- Annie (born on 21 December 1876)⁵
- Lucy (born on 20 July 1878)⁶

Their first son, William, was born in 1880⁷ but died at the age of 3 and was buried at Astbury, Cheshire, on 21 February 1883.⁸ His birth was followed by the birth of five more girls:

- Mary (born in 1881)⁹
- Lily (born on 22 January 1883)¹⁰
- Sophia (born on 17 February 1885)¹¹
- Elizabeth (born on 31 March 1886)¹²
- Ellen (born on 25 March 1888)¹³

Finally, their son John was born in 1890. The last five children were two girls and three boys:

- Maggie (born on 14 March 1892)¹⁴
- William (born in 1894)¹⁵
- Harry (born in 1896)¹⁶
- George (born on 25 August 1898)¹⁷
- Lois (born on 15 June 1902)¹⁸

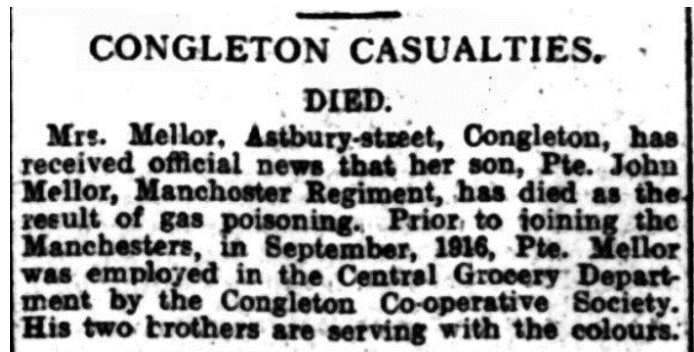
In 1881, John's parents were living with James' mother, a widow, at 78 Astbury Street in Congleton. James, like his mother, was a silk worker.¹⁹ Ten years later the family was at the same address, but had grown to include eight children. The family was still with James' mother, but James' brother John was also living with them.²⁰ After James' mother died in 1899,²¹ the family stayed on at the house on Astbury Street.²²

By 1911, the family had moved to 45 Astbury Street, where the family of 14 occupied a house with six rooms. James was now a school caretaker, and John, age 20, had become a clothier's assistant. A number of the other children were working in the silk industry. Also living with the family were James' brother John and a grandson, Frank, aged 9 months (born 26 June 1910).²³ It is not certain who Frank's parents were, but it appears most likely that his mother was one of John's unmarried sisters.²⁴

John's father died in 1913 at the age of 60.²⁵

John enlisted initially as a private (regimental number 11888) in September 1916 in the Manchester Regiment.²⁶ He probably did not go to the Front until March 1917, when the 2/6th

Battalion of the Manchester Regiment landed in France.²⁷ If so, John's time on the Front was very short. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station²⁸ on 25 July 1917, suffering the effects of gas poisoning. In July 1917,²⁹ John's battalion was stationed near Dunkirk in northern France. On 24 July, the battalion went back into the trenches and marched towards the road between Nieuwpoort and Furnes in Belgium. Gas shells were falling on Nieuwpoort on and off during the day, as the battalion began moving across the Yser River. The whole battalion had crossed the river by the early hours of the following morning, but 12 officers and 182 ORs (other ranks) had been gassed and 18 ORs had been killed or wounded. John was one of them. He died six days after his admission to No. 1 CCCS and was buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery (Plot III, Row A, Grave 3) the same day.³⁰



"Congleton Casualties:

Source: "Newspapers," *Findmypast*

John was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).³¹

Two of John's brothers, Harry and George, also served in the Great War but survived. (A third, **William**, probably did not serve³² and no information was found about William's life after 1911.) **Harry** had signed up for military service before the outbreak of the war.³³ He joined the 1/7th Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment (regimental number 1751) on 6 August 1913 but was discharged and then re-enlisted in the 1st Cheshire Regiment (regimental number 25780) in April 1915 in order to go overseas. He had several hospital stays and came home for a one-week sick furlough in September 1915.³⁴ He was discharged in March 1919, having served about five months overseas. Harry was awarded the same medals as John but also received the 1914–15 Star, for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915.

John's brother **George** served in the Royal Tank Corps (regimental number 32088), enlisting on 31 August 1916.³⁵ No more information was found about his service.

John's family was not only a large one, it was also a close one. In 1921, eight siblings were unmarried and still living at home at 45 Astbury Street with their mother, Mary.³⁶

Harry was a coal loader at Talk o' th' Hill Colliery Co. near Stoke on Trent, but he was out of work at the time. Nothing more could be confirmed about Harry's life after 1921.

- George was a motor mechanic, working for Jackson & Booth motor engineers in Congleton.
- Three of John's sisters were working at Peter Wild & Co., silk manufacturers—Annie was a silk gasser, Mary was a silk cleaner and Ellen was a silk twister. **Mary** died the following year, on 12 September 1922, at the age of 41. She was described as having a "quiet and unassuming disposition."
- His sisters Lucy and Maggie were occupied with home duties.
- John's youngest sister, Lois, was a shirt machinist at J & N Phillips, shirt makers, but she was out of work at the time.
- Frank, Mary's grandson, was still with the family.

Two Mellor siblings married before the Great War. **Sophia** married James Brocklehurst, a labourer, on 8 June 1908 at the parish church of St James in Congleton.³⁷ In 1911 and 1921, she and James were living on the same street as Sophia's family at 10 Astbury.³⁸ By 1921, they had six children. Two more children were present in 1939 and the family had moved to 11 Booth Street, Congleton.³⁹ Sophia died on 23 May 1962 in Northgate Hospital in Great Yarmouth.⁴⁰

Lily married Arthur Horton in 1910.⁴¹ In 1921, they were living at 10 Parson Street in Congleton, where Arthur was a silk dresser, working for Read & Co Ltd., silk spinners. Like her sisters, Lily was working at Peter Wild & Co Ltd.⁴² Just before the Second World War, Lily was living with her son Arthur, still on Parson Street.⁴³ Her husband was not with her—he was a hospital porter at the War Memorial Hospital on Canal Road in Congleton.⁴⁴ Lily died at 10 Parson Street on 11 May 1965.⁴⁵

Between the two wars, four Mellor children married and pursued lives with their own families:

- **Elizabeth** married Henry Farrall in 1916.⁴⁶ In 1921, Henry (then known as Harry) was a chair repairer, and he and Elizabeth had two children.⁴⁷ In 1939, Henry was a general labourer, but Elizabeth was a retired silk winder.⁴⁸ Elizabeth died on 19 August 1967, aged 81, having outlived her husband by 16 years.⁴⁹
- In 1924, **Maggie** married Lucien Gibbons in Congleton⁵⁰ and, in 1939, they were living at 63 West Street, where Lucien was a hardware shopkeeper.⁵¹ Maggie probably died in 1973.⁵²
- **George** married Hannah Machin in 1929,⁵³ and ten years later they were living on Chelford Road in Congleton. George was a blind pensioner but, in the past, had been a poultry keeper.⁵⁴ He probably died in 1981.⁵⁵
- The last of the Mellor siblings, **Lois**, married Samuel Hortin in 1931⁵⁶ and nine years later was living at 2 Heywood Street in Congleton, where she was a silk waste picker.⁵⁷ When she died in 1979, she was living at 44 Astbury Street⁵⁸—very close to the home her family had occupied since at least 1911 and on the same street on which the family had lived for at least 50 years.

Until at least 1939, the three daughters who had not married continued to live with their mother at 45 Astbury Road—**Annie**, a silk gasser, **Ellen**, a silk twister, and **Lucy**, who was incapacitated⁵⁹ and died in 1942.⁶⁰ Annie died in 1948,⁶¹ but no further information was found for Ellen.

Mary Hannah, mother to the 14 children, who was born on 5 November 1856,⁶² died on 9 March 1940 at the age of 83.⁶³ She had outlived her husband by 27 years.

What became of her grandson, **Frank**, who had lived with his grandmother since his birth? In 1939, Frank was a bricklayer's labourer and was still living with the family.⁶⁴ But also living with them was Frank's new wife, Winifred Storer, whom he had married in 1936 in Congleton.⁶⁵ Frank and Winifred probably had two children—Joan, born in 1942,⁶⁶ and Anne, born in 1944.⁶⁷ Frank died on 8 March 1991, at the age of 80.⁶⁸

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³ "Cheshire Diocese of Chester Parish Marriages 1538–1910," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 30 October 2024), entry for James Mellor, Reference item: 5, Page: 215

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- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Mellor, William, Registration district: Congleton, Volume: 08C, Page: 310
- ⁸ "Cheshire, England, Select Bishop's Transcripts, 1576–1933," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for William Mellor, FHL film number: 1647851
- ⁹ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Mellor, Mary, Registration district: Congleton, Volume: 08C, Page: 308
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- ¹² "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Elizabeth Mellor
- ¹³ "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Ellen Mellor
- ¹⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for Maggie Gibbons, Schedule number: 251, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: Lenk, Borough: Congleton, Registration district: 444-2
- ¹⁵ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Mellor, William, Registration district: Congleton, Volume: 08C, Page: 324
- ¹⁶ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 2 August 2024), entry for Mellor, Harry, Registration district: Congleton, Volume: 08C, Page: 319
- ¹⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for George Mellor, Schedule number: 117, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: Lenm [*sic*], Borough: Congleton, Registration district: 444-2
- ¹⁸ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for Lois Horton, Schedule number: 180, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: Lenl [*sic*], Borough: Congleton, Registration district: 444-2
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- ²¹ "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 August 2024), entry for Ann Mellor
- ²² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 June 2024), entry for John Melter [*sic*], Registration district: Congleton, Sub-registration district: Congleton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 3349, Folio: 85, Page: 25, Household schedule number: 152
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- ²⁶ “Congleton Casualties,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for John Mellor, Newspapers, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 18 August 1917
- ²⁷ “2/6th Battalion, Manchester Regiment,” *The National Archives* (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk: accessed 25 June 2024), 1917 March–1918 July, WO 95/3144/8. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about the movements of this battalion come from this source.
- ²⁸ A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not soon die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital. (Casualty Clearing Station,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ²⁹ “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 23 June 2024), entry for Mellor, J., No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station
- ³⁰ Ibid.
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- ³² “Congleton Casualties,” *Findmypast*, entry for John Mellor, Newspapers, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 18 August 1917
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- ³⁴ “On Sick Furlough,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for Harry Mellor, Newspapers, *Macclesfield Times*, 17 September 1915
- ³⁵ “Royal Tank Corps Enlistment Records, 1919–1934,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for George Mellor
- ³⁶ “1921 Census Of England & Wales,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 14 July 2024), entry for Mary Hannah Mellor, Registration district: Congleton, Registration district number: 448, Sub-district: Congleton, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 9, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 16959, Schedule number: 228, District reference: RD 448 RS 2 ED 9
- ³⁷ “Cheshire Diocese of Chester Parish Marriages 1538–1910,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2024), entry for Sophia Mellor, Reference: item: 1, Page: 250
- ³⁸ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2024), entry for John Mellor, Registration district number: 448, Sub-registration district: Congleton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece number: 21729, Schedule: 241; “1921 Census Of England & Wales,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2024), entry for Sophia Brocklehurst, Registration district: Congleton, Registration district number: 448, Sub-district: Congleton, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 9, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 16959, Schedule number: 347, District reference: RD 448 RS 2 ED 9
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- ⁴⁰ “England & Wales Government Probate Death Index 1858–2019,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2024), entry for Sophia Brocklehurst
- ⁴¹ “England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 8 July 2024), entry for Lily Mellor, District: Congleton, County: Cheshire, Volume: 8A, Page: 693
- ⁴² “1921 Census Of England & Wales,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 8 July 2024), entry for Lily Horton, Registration district: Congleton, Registration district number: 448, Sub-district: Congleton, Sub-

district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 9, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 16959, Schedule number: 347, District reference: RD 448 RS 2 ED 9

⁴³ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Lily Horton

⁴⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 July 2024), entry for Arthur Horton, Schedule number: 116, Sub-schedule number: 9, Enumeration district: LENP, Piece number: 4000E, Item number: 13, Line number: 13

⁴⁵ "England & Wales Government Probate Death Index 1858–2019," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2024), entry for Lily Horton

⁴⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Elizabeth Mellor, Registration district: Congleton, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 8a, Page: 602

⁴⁷ "1921 Census Of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Elizabeth Farrall, Registration district: Congleton, Registration district number: 448, Sub-district: Congleton, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 9, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 16958, Schedule number: 120, District reference: RD 448 RS 2 ED 8

⁴⁸ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Elizabeth Furrall [*sic*], Line number: 37, Schedule number: 114, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: Lenh [*sic*], Registration district: 444-2

⁴⁹ "England & Wales Government Probate Death Index 1858–2019," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Elizabeth Farrall; "Mrs E. Farrall," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Elizabeth Farrall, Newspapers, *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel* (Potteries ed.), 1 September 1967

⁵⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 July 2024), entry for Maggie Mellor, Registration district: Congleton, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 8a, Page: 728

⁵¹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Maggie Gibbons

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⁵⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Lois Horton

⁵⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2024), entry for Lois Horton, Registration district: Macclesfield, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 35, Page: 0923

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⁶¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 July 2024), entry for Annie E. Mellor, Registration district: West Cheshire, Inferred county: Cheshire, Volume: 10a, Page: 689

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⁶⁸ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 July 2024), entry for Frank Mellor