

Corporal George Arthur Woolley



Displayed Courtesy The Ripley & Heanor News.

THE RIPLEY & HEANOR NEWS
17th AUGUST 1917
BRAVE CODNOR SOLDIER FALLS
A LIFE SACRIFICED FOR HIS COMRADES
CORPL. GEORGE A WOOLLEY ROYAL ENGINEERS.

Whose death we are called upon to record as a result of the recent severe fighting on the western front, is the third member of the Woolley family to fall in this great conflict.

A soldier of fine physique, brave and fearless, he had for two years faced the enemy. And engaged in all the horrors and privations of war, and it is placed on record that the closing act of his exemplary life was a noble and gallant attempt to render help to comrades in distress.

The sad news of Corpl. Woolley's death and noble conduct was conveyed in the following letter to his wife forwarded by the Adjutant, and received on Monday week last, and subsequently confirmed by an official notification from the war office on Monday last:-

Dear Mrs Woolley

You will be surprised to see a letter from a stranger, and I will at once explain the reason. In these times we have to be prepared for so many things and for all sorts of news and I deeply regret to say that I have sad news to tell you.

Things have been very active here lately, and yesterday morning early particularly so.

Your husband was in what was considered a very safe dug-out, when some gas shells burst near the stairway entrance and caused a great deal of confusion, and many men were over-powered. Your husband at once went to try and help others who were rendered helpless, and in so doing lost his own life.

I can do no more than offer you my sincere sympathy in your loss, which I fear will be a great shock and grief to you. I further have, unfortunately, to tell you that it has been impossible to recover his body and bury him in a cemetery. You see after the gas shell had burst some other shells dropped and wrecked the whole place and the men were buried in the fall of ground. They worked hard to get the men out, but all their efforts proved failures. I am sorry if I have told you all this too bluntly, but I am terribly busy.

Yours very truly

G.L.Gardner Lieut.
Adjutant,
177th Company, R.E.

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Corpl. Woolley was 42 years of age. He was a native of Codnor, in which district his mother and other members of the family still reside.

His home was at Bagthorpe, near Jacksdale and he leaves a widow and six children, for whom the deepest sympathy will be felt. Prior to the war Corpl. Woolley worked Pinxtton Colliery, and enlisted in October 1914 in the Sherwood's. In February of the following year he transferred to the Royal Engineers to meet an immediate demand for sappers and proceeded to France. He was seriously wounded on May 11th, but recovered and was sent back to France in September, following five days leave at home. In December he was gassed but recovered in hospital at Rouen, and in April of last year he came home on leave for ten days.

Since returning to the fighting zone Corpl. Woolley has figured in the most severe fighting of the campaign, chiefly on the Somme and in Ypres sector, and he was expected home for a second and well deserved furlough last weekend. He received his first promotion after the battle of hill 60, and his second about ten days before being killed on July 23rd.

Mrs Woolley has also received a letter of condolence from Sergt. Martin of Ilkeston, in which he gives personnel testimony to the deceased soldier's sterling qualities as a soldier and his loyalty and devotion to duty.

Two nephews of Corpl. Woolley have fallen in the war, one being the son of Mr S.J. Woolley, formally of Eastwood and now of Mansfield and the other a son of Mr Wm. Woolley of Langley Mill, and now residing at Doncaster.

Name:	George Arthur Woolley
Birth Place:	Langley Mill, Notts
Parents:	The late John & Dorothy Woolley of Codnor
Wife:	Martha Hemstock Woolley
Residence (1911):	Alma, Selston, Notts.
Death Date:	22nd July 1917
Death Location:	Railway Wood, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.
Enlistment Location:	Nottingham
Rank:	A/Corporal
Regiment:	177th Tunnelling Com, Royal Engineers
Number:	86601
Comments:	Formerly 17538, Notts & Derby Regt.

Many thanks to www.rootschat.com member PollDoll for restoring the above image of George Woolley, which was of very poor quality.