

In Memory of

Private

Samuel Skelhorn

49704, 9th Bn., Cheshire Regiment who died on 21 November 1916 Age 23

Son of Elizabeth Skelhorn, of 40, Police St., Altrincham, Cheshire, and the late Henry Skelhorn.

Remembered with Honour

Grandcourt Road Cemetery, Grandcourt



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Private Samuel (Sam) Skelhorn

9th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment

Died: 21st November 1916 Age: 23

How Died: Killed in Action

Country of burial: France

Cemetery or Memorial: Grandcourt Road Cemetery, Somme

Town Memorial: Altrincham

Extra Information:

Born during the June quarter 1893 in the Altrincham R.D. - ref: 8a/197, the sixth son of John Henry & Elizabeth Skelhorn (nee Newbigging).

1901 Census - 40 Police Street, Altrincham. Son - aged: 6 - born: Altrincham. Head of household - Harry Skelhorn - Married - aged: 48 - occ: Bricklayer's Labourer - born: Altrincham, Cheshire. Also - Elizabeth Skelhorn - Wife - aged: 47 - born: Scotland. Plus 7 siblings, including his brothers - Archie & Thomas who were also killed in WWI. His maternal uncle is listed as is a visitor.

1911 Census - No Trace.

Employed by Messrs. Corfield & Gatley, Ashley Road, Hale.

WO363 - Samuel enlisted into the 5th Bn, Cheshire Rgt of Territorials at Hale on the 6th April 1914. He was just 20 years of age and was residing at 40 Police Street, Altrincham. He was 5 feet 3½ inches in height. His chest measurement was 31½ to 33½ inches (fully expanded) and he was of 'Sound' physical development. On the 31st May 1914, he was sent to Rhyl, North Wales for training.

There was no obligation for Territorial's to serve overseas at that time, and most chose to not do so. Samuel literally signed his life away on the 14th September 1914 by agreeing to serve overseas.

He embarked at Southampton on the 14th September 1914, arriving at Rouen the following day where he went into the I.B.D. (Infantry Base Depot) there.

He was posted to the 9th Battalion, Cheshire Rgt on the 25th September 1914. On the 13th August 1915 he was sentenced to 28 days Field Punishment No.1. for not complying with an order (1) Being outside the inner line of defence without permission & (2) For making a fire without permission. These appear to be two quite serious charges, which accounts for the severity of the punishment inflicted (Field Punishment Number 1 consisted of the convicted man being shackled in irons and secured to a fixed object, often a gun wheel or similar. He could only be thus fixed for up to 2 hours in 24, and not for more than 3 days in 4, or for more than 21 days in his sentence. This punishment was often known as 'crucifixion' and due to its humiliating nature was viewed by many Tommie's as unfair).

There is a note on his file dated the 1st March 1916 stating that, "This man was struck off the strength of the Expeditionary Force after his absence of one month from the date on which he should have rejoined off leave". In reply the Battalion HQ states that he is on short leave to England. As the above man will shortly be fit for duty, it would appear that he should still remain on the strength of his Unit. Another document states that he was admitted to the No. 2 Western Hospital, Manchester on the 19th January 1916 whilst on short leave to England, suffering from Rheumatism.. His "Treatment in Quarters" form states that he had Rheumatic pains and never had proper use of his legs since back on walking. His hands and feet are always cold, also his nose. Hands and feet were perspiring. Complains of stiffness in his shoulders, arms and legs. Short of breath when walking less than a mile.

He did not return to France until the 13th September 1916.

MIC - states that he was posted to France on the 14th February 1915 and was awarded the 15 Star, the BWM & the VM. His number was previously - 2059.

On the 26th October 1916, the 9th Bn, Cheshire Rgt went forward and into the front line, (Stuff Trench) Thiepval Sector. Relieved and to Donnet Post on the 30th. In November, they went into the front line (Lucky Way) on the 2nd. Then back again to Donnet Post on the 5th. To camp near Aveluy on the 9th. To the front line again on the 13th. To Marlborough Huts on the 16th. Moved forward to the Zollern Trench at 14.00 hrs on the 18th and assembled for an attack on Desire Trench. They advanced in thick fog at 16.25 hrs, but lost direction after reaching Stuff Trench. The mud was deep and the

men could not get free of it, so the attack swung to the left and was later abandoned.

Officially the "Battle of the Somme" took place between 1st July 1916 and the 18th November 1916, but it was still an unhealthy place to be between then and the new offensives to the Hindenburg Line in the Spring of 1917. Nine men from the 9th Bn, Cheshire Rgt died that one day alone and in total 229 died that day. He was reported as 'Missing' (after operations) in the Field between the 16th and the 21st November 1916. His Memorial Scroll and King's Message was sent to his mother - Elizabeth Skelhorn at Box 163, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, Canada.

Mrs Mostyn who lived at 40 Police St, Altrincham. Archie Skelhorn was her eldest brother. Her husband was serving in the South Lancashire Rgt. Her two other brothers - Private Samuel Skelhorn, Cheshire Rgt and Private Thomas Skelhorn, Canadians had also been killed. Her youngest brother - Private Matthew Skelhorn was a POW. Her brother in Law - Private John Houghton was also serving at the front. See local newspaper report 18/12/1917.

Buried together in a Battlefield Trench burial with Lance Corporal F.V. Jackson from The Queen's Rgt who died on the 18th. M.I. - "His duty nobly done, that's something to remember".

Listed in the Guardian Year Book - Roll of Honour for 1918.

Memorials found on:

St. Margaret's Church, Dunham Massey

Altrincham & District Roll of Honour

Trinity Presbyterian Church



Samuel's Grave in Grandcourt Road Cemetery, Somme, France