

# Private Ernest Harrison

Ernest Harrison, the son of Thomas Cope Harrison and Mary Ann Chadwick was born about the end of 1895 in Thorpe, near Ashbourne. His father, Thomas (1869-1946) married Mary Ann Chadwick (1866-1895) on 7 February 1893.

Ernest had 2 older siblings from this marriage: Percy (possible registered as William born 1893) and Hannah (born 1894). Sadly his mother died at the end of 1895 and as Ernest's birth does not appear to have been registered, this may have coincided with his mother's death in child birth. This is not confirmed, but the dates do link this possibility.

Following Mary's death, John went on to marry Emma Chadwick (1871-1927) at the end of 1896. They had 11 children, all half siblings to Ernest; Thomas (born 1897), Arthur (born 1898), Harry (born 1900), Alice (born 1902), Emma (born 1903), George (born 1905), Edith (born 1907), Frank (born 1909), Ada (born 1909), Walter (born 1910) and Fred (born 1910)

Census records for 1901, finds the family living in Thorpe, with John recorded as a general labourer.

Administrative County <i>DR</i>		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the <i>Parish of Thorpe</i>													Page 6	
Civil Parish <i>of Thorpe</i>		Ecclesiastical Parish <i>St. Peter &amp; Paul of Thorpe (Part 2)</i>		County Borough/Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Rural District		Parliamentary Borough		Town or Village or Hamlet				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Col.	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	Uninhabited	In Habitation	Part of House of more than one Tenement	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Sex	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic (4) Inebriate, feeble-minded			
34	<i>Willage</i>	1			<i>John Harrison</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>General Labourer</i>	<i>Other</i>		<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Emma - his wife</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>30</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Percy - his son</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>5</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>William - his son</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>5</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Emma - his daughter</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>5</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Thomas - his son</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>4</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Alice - his daughter</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>3</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				
					<i>Harry - his son</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>1</i>				<i>Thorpe</i>				

(1)

Moving forward 10 years to 1911, Ernest had moved from the area and was a groom on the estate of Francis William Forester at Saxelbye Park, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. The census shows details all the grooms on this estate. His father and younger family had moved to Alstonefield by this time.

GENUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.													
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.													
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.													
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE last birthday and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.					PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
			For Males write the age in months as - "years," or "months," or "years," or "months," or "years."	Write "Single," "Married," "Widowed," or "Never married," as appropriate to the person's status.	For Females write the age in months as - "years," or "months," or "years," or "months," or "years."	Write "Single," "Married," "Widowed," or "Never married," as appropriate to the person's status.	Children born alive to persons married, (if an child born alive write "Born" in Column 7.)	Children born alive to persons never married.	Children born alive to persons never married.	Children born alive to persons never married.			
Edward Jones	Servant	26	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
Edmund Roberts	Servant	23	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
Edward King	Servant	22	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
William Parker	Servant	24	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
John Smith	Servant	19	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
Robert Brown	Servant	18	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	
Samuel Taylor	Servant	16	Single						Groom	Leicester	Leicester	Althorp, Leicestershire	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

Sex	Males	Females	Total
Spent	7		7
Present			
Present			

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this dwelling (Kitchen, Parlor, or Apartment), Count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature *Edward Jones*

Postal Address *Saxelbye Park, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire*

Ernest enlisted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment. His medal card does not give any detail of when he listed or any theatre of war. He was awarded the Victory medal and the British War medal but not the 1915 Star. This award was made to officers and men who served in any theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915. This would imply the Ernest may not have enlisted until at least 1916.

(3)

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
HARRISON	R Ir Regt	Pte	8247
Ernest			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	F/0/136	9/7	
BRITISH	"	"	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

R. 1380

Ernest was killed in action on 21 March 1918. This was the first day of the German Spring Offensive; however, the offensive was a failure and marked the beginning of the end of the War.

Below is an extract from the battalion diary for that day:

In March 1918, the 2nd Battalion served with the 49th Infantry Brigade in the 16th Division. The Division was responsible for defending the northern side of the Cologne Valley north of St. Quentin and was deployed along a ridge centred on Ronssoy. The 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment was in the forward sector of defence, based on the neighbouring village of Lempire. To their front was a network of machine gun emplacements. On the morning of March 21st 1918, when the German offensive began, there was a thick mist and the machine guns were ineffective. A heavy artillery bombardment caused severe losses on the right flank of 49 Brigade, exposing that flank when the enemy infantry advanced at about 9 a.m. Within an hour and a half, the 49th Brigade had been virtually destroyed. The 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment recorded 78 men killed outright and by March 30th 1918, the Battalion had been reduced to 1 officer and 31 other ranks.

On the morning of the 21st March, as the right flank collapsed, the 2nd Battalion was exposed with the enemy surrounding them on three sides. Led by a Major Harrison, they refused to give up and fought from defensive position to defensive position until their ammunition ran out. They fought their way out to safety in the evening when the 6th Battalion Connaught Rangers counter-attacked.

(4)

Ernest is remembered at the Pozieres Memorial, France



Source of information

1. Census 1901 © Ancestry.co.uk
2. Census 1911 © Ancestry.co.uk
3. Medal card © Ancestry.co.uk
4. Battalion diary © The National Archives