

# *William Wheatley*

Essex Scottish Regiment Service Number M-37564

*(June 17, 1923 - July 1945)*

Project Researched By Tawni Kjenner, Allie  
Wynnychuk, & Hannah Hahn

William Wheatley was born in Ashington, Northumberland England on June 17, 1923. He was born to John and Isabelle Wheatley as their first child. Soon after William they had three more children, George, John Rogerson, and Anne Norene.

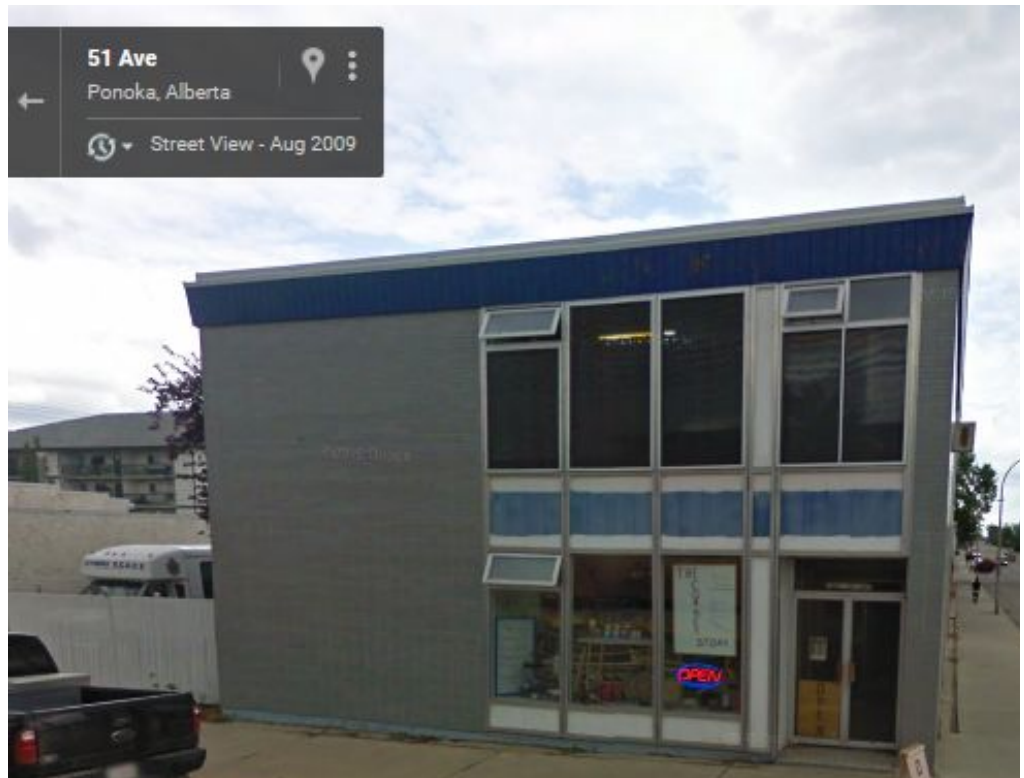
They moved to Calgary, Alberta, Canada where William then attended King George School in Calgary until grade nine. During his childhood William was a Boy Scout for a year and played an average amount of sports. He was a clerk in a small grocery store, a laborer in a Chinese greenhouse during the summer, and worked for Albertan job press for one year.



William's brother **George Wheatley** was born on October 14, 1925 in Morpeth Ashington, England and passed away on April 21, 2009 in Red Deer, Alberta.

George owned George's Music in Ponoka for many years with the address 5002 51 ave Ponoka. Below are a picture of the current

day building where George's Music once was, along with a copy of George's obituary from Ponoka News.



#### **Wheatley, George** Tuesday, 21 Apr 2009

Ponoka News Ponoka

##### George Wheatley

George Wheatley was born on October 14, 1925 in Morpeth Ashington, England and passed away on April 21, 2009 in Red Deer, Alberta. George was a World War II veteran, a farmer and worked in the oil field. He had a passion for music and volunteered his talents at the Central Alberta senior homes, hospitals, and participated with the Foster Parenting program. George owned George's Music in Ponoka for many years and had a special love for his violin although he played many instruments. His generous nature for sharing his talents will be greatly missed. His memory will be cherished by his daughters Georgina and Norman, Barbara and Bob and Paula; his grandchildren Debbie and Brian, Gail and Ken, George, Lyle and Jamie, Breanda and Chris, Keely, Ashley and Cameron, Cedric, Kyle and Andrea; his great-grandchildren Kieran, Petra, Annika, Elliot, Dylan, Jonah, Evan, Kenyin and Kayson; his sister Nancy and Willie and his brother Roger and Betty; his foster children as well as many nieces, nephews other relatives and friends. George was predeceased by his brother William, his son Louis John and his mother and father Isabella and John. A Funeral Service was held on April 28, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Ponoka Funeral Home with Marilyn Kaus officiating. Interment followed at the Forest Home Cemetery. Donations in George's memory are gratefully accepted to the Royal Canadian Legion Ponoka or the Alberta Cancer Foundation.

Arrangements Entrusted To Ponoka Funeral Home

~ A Wombold Family Funeral Home ~



## **Training & Enlistment & During the War**

William Wheatley enrolled into the Scottish Essex Regiment at the age of 20 on February 23, 1943 at #13 D.D. He was 5'8½" and weighed 121 ½ pounds. He had a dark complexion with dark hair and grey eyes. His full chest expansion was 35 ½ inches. He had perfect vision, hearing and strong teeth. His development was poor and he did not have a very large or strong physique. William was born with a deviated septum which caused him to have hypertrophic rhinitis. This means that the bone and cartilage separating his nostrils was off centered or crooked and this caused a permanent thickening of his mucous membrane.

Wheatley attended Basic Training Centre 122 in Prince Albert Saskatchewan on March 12, 1943 after being allocated to the infantry. He then became attached to the Winnipeg grenadiers until he ceased attachment to the Winnipeg grenadiers on attachment to Brockville rifles on June 13, 1943. After having completed four months training he ceased to be attached to the Brockville rifles training and was taken on strength as a member in Long Beach California in July 1943.

He re-enlisted into the Canadian army on March 17, 1944 qualified as a class three driver. He then travelled to the United Kingdom where he stayed from July 12th, 1944 to August 31, 1944. He travelled from England to France Northwest Europe where he stayed from September 1st, 1944 to the date he was found dead, July 8th, 1945. Overall, he was in service 117 days in the western hemisphere and spent 362 days in overseas service, adding to a total of 479 days of service.

## **Disappearance & Death**

Wheatley became absent without leave for a period of 14 days until he was asked to accompany (W.A. Morrison) to the swimming pool in Nijmegen. He was asked there because he was able to identify W.M. Hodge, who was deceased due to drowning. After being asked where he wanted to be taken back, William asked for a place to stay due to him being absent without leave. He was then accompanied to the CMP at Nijmegen which he was then turned over to the Corporal of the Guard Room on June 27, 1945.

Wheatley was under close arrest for six days until July 3, 1945 when he broke out of close arrest. Private Lapointe was on duty in the Guard Room in charge of William. At 2245 Lapointe checked Wheatley's room and found him missing. In the court reports it is stated that Private Wheatley escaped from custody while being held in close arrest between 2235 hours and 2245 hours. Many immediately searched the area, but could not find him. While in custody William received two letters but never opened them, and left them when he escaped. The people watching over him stated him to be a model prisoner, perfectly normal and reasonably happy.

With many witnesses, court reports and investigations the details surrounding Private William Wheatley's death have come together. William was found July 8th, 1945 three miles from Neuenburg in a heavily wooded area off of a narrow road off of the main Neuenburg-Bockhorn road. The reports state he had been deceased for more than two days at this point, leaving it unknown his true date of death. His body was found hanging from a sniper's platform twelve feet from the ground with a ladder leading up. He had tied the signal wire around his neck before ascending the ladder. He stood between a stick and branch and jumped off. It appeared he tried to get back onto the stick as it was found broken, along with boot marks

scraped on the branch. His feet were hanging four feet from the ground when he was found, and there was nothing at the scene to suggest foul play. Wheatley died from asphyxia from hanging. Therefore, his death was ruled as a suicide by all of the witnesses along with the proceedings of the court of inquiry. William Wheatley was not on duty but was found in his uniform with his Essex Scottish badges. In the Commanding Officer's opinion he was guilty of improper conduct.

William's mother and next-of-kin Isabelle Wheatley, received a letter from A.E. Walford stating that they were in deep regret to inform her that her son died while in the service of his country in the Western European Theatre of War. Furthermore, it stated that any additional information will be communicated to her without delay. However, the information that Wheatley's death was in fact a suicide was never shared with his mother, according to our information found.



## Burial

William was buried in Aurieh Cemetery in Wilhelmshaven gave 3, row 2, plot 1 on July 9th 1945. He was then reburied in Holten Canadian Military Cemetery, Holten, Holland on February 7, 1947. He is buried in grave 6, row A, plot 12.

The great majority of those buried in Holten Canadian War Cemetery died during the last stages of the war in Holland, during the advance of the Canadian 2nd Corps into northern Germany, and across the Ems in April and the first days of May 1945. After the end of hostilities the remains of over 1,300 Canadian soldiers were brought together into this cemetery.



Commemorated on Page 575 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance.

INISHTRAHULL

19

45

FASSBERG

MOYLAND

FO Wilk, John Gordon RCAF  
 L/Cpl Wellar, Lloyd Donald RHLI  
 MNI Wellington, William Ernest RCNVR  
 Pte Wellman, Wallace Kent R  
 FS Wells, Albert Eldon RCAF  
 Tpr Wells, James 1 H  
 Air Mech 1 c (A) Wells, James Heber RCNVR  
 LAW Wells, Shirley Isabel RCAF  
 Pte Welsh, John Thomas Lines Weller R  
 Gnr Wemigwans, Felix RCA  
 AC2 Wendland, William Alfred RCAF  
 Spr Werner, George Charles RCE  
 Pte Wernuik, Stanley Seaforth of C  
 LAC Werstine, James Edward RCAF  
 Pte Weshler, Frank RCASC  
 Cfm West, Charles Gary RCME  
 Sgt West, Orville John Essex Scot  
 Pte Westad, John Lake Sup R  
 Pte Westbrook, William George C Scot R  
 Rfn Westman, Cecil Otto RWog R  
 WO1 Weston, Richard Verdun RCAF  
 Lt Westwood, Walter Allan RHC  
 Pte Westwood, Wilfred Seaforth of C  
 PO Wettlaufen, John William RCAF  
 FL Wey, Edward George RCAF  
 FS Whalen, Lorne Elwood RCAF  
 Chap 3 c Whalley, Clement Kynnersley RCN  
 Sgt Wharric, Joseph Richard RHC  
 Gasm Wharton, Cecil Stanley CGG  
 Tpr Wheat, Roland Frederick 1 H  
 FO Wheatecroft, Leslie Raymond RCAF  
 Pte Whately, William Essex Scot  
 FO Wheeler, Charles Torgeson RCAF  
 Rfn Wheeler, James Clinton QOR of C  
 Rfn Wheeler, Lewis Morley QOR of C  
 Maj Wheelwright, Arthur G. RAC  
 SSgt Whetter, Martin Floyd RCDC  
 WO1 Whiskin, Dennis Richard RAF  
 PO White, Charles Henry RCAF  
 AB White, Donald Winchester RCNVR  
 LAC White, George Henry RCAF  
 Sgt White, Harold Edward EdmNFus  
 Pte White, Harry WestNSR

Spr White, John RCE  
 Maj-Gen White, John Burton, CBE DSO, ED CFC  
 Spr White, John Peter RCE  
 Pte White, Joseph Miller and N Short R  
 Capt White, Julian RCAMC  
 Pte White, Maurice Gordon RHLI  
 L/Cpl White, Raymond Arthur C Pro C  
 Rfn White, Walter Samuel QOR of C  
 Pte White, Wilbert Arthur RHLI  
 PO White, William George Stanley RCAF  
 Pte White, William Howard RHLI  
 FO White, William Thomas RCAF  
 Ch (S) Whiteford, Matthew George RCNVR  
 S/Lt Whitehead, Bruce Mansell RCNVR  
 PO Whitehead, John Alfred RCAF  
 WO2 Whitehead, Laurel Melvin RCAF  
 Pte Whitehead, Samuel Mathew Essex Scot  
 FO Whitehouse, Kenneth Frank RCAF  
 Pte Whiteley, Alexander RCASC  
 Sigmn Whiteley, Earl Russell RC Sigs  
 Pte Whitesel, Eldon Grant HLL of C  
 Pte Whiteside, Hugh RCME  
 LAC Whiteside, Roy RCAF  
 Pte Whitlaw, James RHC  
 FO Whitney, Allan Lloyd RCAF  
 WO1 Whitney, Winston Carl RCAF  
 Pte Whittam, Harold Lennert RCASC  
 Pte Whitten, Harold C Scot R  
 FO Whitton, William George RCAF  
 Pte Whitty, John William RHLI  
 Capt Whitty, Valentine E. RAC  
 Spr Whymark, Charles Frederick RCE  
 Sgt Whyte, James Garfield RCASC  
 Cpl Whyte, Lloyd Vincent HLL of C  
 FL Whyte, Stuart Paul RCAF  
 FO Whyte, William Edward RCAF  
 Tpr Wickstrom, Karl John Clifford Salta R  
 Pte Wiegand, Gottlieb Tor Scot R  
 Tpr Wiggins, Donald Nelson 1 H



8-7-45		AWARDS—CANADIAN ARMY (ACTIVE) <b>M</b> 1981		E. G. 500M-1-44 (3467) H.Q. 1772-45-8
WHEATLEY, William		M-37564	Pte.	FILE NO. 405-W-15,184 Essex Scot. Regt.
SURNAME (IN BLOCK LETTERS)	CHRISTIAN NAMES	REG. No.	RANK ON DISCHARGE	C.A.S.F. UNIT
WAR SERVICE BADGE (CLASS)                      NO.                      DATE DESPATCHED:				
ADDRESS:				
CAMPAIGN MEDALS		REGISTRATION NUMBER AND DATE DESPATCHED		
1939-45 Star				
France & Germany Star				
War Medal, 1939-45				
CVSM & Clasp				
		(THE REVERSE TO BE USED FOR ESTATE PURPOSES)		

Pictured below, respectively.




27 Jun 45.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

At approximately 1450 hours a telephone call was received to send an ambulance and a medical officer to the swimming pool in NEUMEN. I accompanied the medical officer, Major J.S. Hazen, to the swimming pool. On arriving, I noticed some soldiers giving artificial respiration to a soldier who had been drowned. I stayed at the swimming pool for approximately 45 minutes when I was instructed by the medical officer to take him to this hospital.

I asked two soldiers to accompany me, one who knew the deceased, and one who saw the deceased in the bottom of the swimming pool. I was instructed to obtain statements from them as to what actually happened. The one soldier, Pte W. WHEATLEY M.3/564 of the ESSEX SCOTTISH REGT gave me a statement and also identified him as being a friend of his. After obtaining this statement, I told him that I could send him back by our transport to his unit. He then asked me if I could possibly give him a bed for the night stating that he had no place to go since he had been absent without leave for a period of 14 days. At the time he also told me that the deceased, W.A. MORRISON, Pte 14441384, "A" Coy 1st Battalion of GLASGOW HIGHLS had been absent without leave from his unit for approximately three months. I then accompanied Pte WHEATLEY to the C.M.P. at NEUMEN and turned him over to the Corporal of the Guard Room.

  
(W.A. Morrison) L/Sgt.  
No. 1 Cdn General Hospital.

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## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Presidents and Members of Courts of Inquiry or Boards of Officers will familiarize themselves with the Overseas Rules dealing with the subject of Courts of Inquiry and Boards of Officers.
2. The rank, name, appointment and unit of the Convening Officer must be given.
3. The unit of all Members of the Court must be indicated.
4. The signature of each officer composing the Court or Board must be affixed at the end of these Proceedings, together with the date and place of the sitting of the Court.
5. Unless otherwise required by the Convening Order, only one copy of these Proceedings will be prepared.

PROCEEDINGS of a COURT of Inquiry

assembled at In the field  
on the 4 July 1945 *at also 41149445-att*  
by order of Major D.W. McIntyre A/Commanding Officer, 1 Bn. The Essex Scottish Regiment, Cdn Army Overseas dated 4 JUL 45  
for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting on the disappearance of M37564 Pte WHEATLEY, W. while being held in close arrest.

## PRESIDENT

Capt J.R. LEARN ESSEX SCOTTISH

## MEMBERS

Lt R.P. CAMERON ESSEX SCOTTISH  
Lt G.H. HOWITT ESSEX SCOTTISH

By direction of the C.O. the evidence is taken on oath.

The COURT, having assembled pursuant to order, proceed to take evidence as follows:

MP 2301  
3/61A (5/7/2/20/1951)

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## COPY

3/SIS/S-1-1

## CANADIAN PROTEST CORPS

Company 3 SIS Formation 3 Cdn Div Cof Corp  
Location Field Date 10 JULY 45

SUBJECT M37564 Pte WHEATLEY, W. 1 Bn The Essex Scottish Regiment  
SUICIDE

8-7-45

1. On the 8 July 45 at approximately 1800 hrs information was received at this office to the effect that a soldier of the Essex Scottish Regiment, was found strangled near NEUMENBURG, Germany.

2. The writer accompanied Sgt Belmont, Interpreter for No 3 SIS, proceeded to HQ 1 Bn The Essex Scottish Regiment where Lieut. MAGGINS, Orderly Officer was contacted, accompanied by him proceeded to the scene where the body of Pte Wheatley was found hanging from a snipers platform built into a tree.

3. Description of the scene was as follows:-  
RR 1734 sheet E34, this area is heavily wooded, with narrow roads leading into the woods off the main NEUMENBURG-BOCKHORN road. In these woods, off one of the narrow roads, approx. three miles from Neumenburg, the deceased was found hanging, from a small platform, approx four feet square and twelve feet off the ground, with a ladder leading up to this platform. About half way up this ladder was a stick approx three inches thick, nailed from the ladder to the tree trunk, approx a quarter of the way around the tree from this stick was a branch about two inches thick. It is the opinion of the writer that the deceased tied the signals wire around his neck before ascending the ladder, then getting onto the stick with one foot and onto the branch with the other, which would place him directly under the platform, and then tied the other end of the wire to a stay on the bottom of the platform then jumped off the stick and the branch. It appeared that the deceased tried to get back onto the stick as it was found freshly broken half way between the ladder and the tree. The branch was also found scraped by boot marks. He was found hanging with his head approx two feet from the bottom of the platform, leaving his feet about four feet off the ground. Nothing of the scene and the surroundings could be found which would reveal foul play. After making close examination of the scene, the body was removed and taken to the RAF HQ 1 Bn The Essex Scottish Regiment for examination by a Medical Officer.

9-7-45

4. At 1000 hrs this date a court of inquiry was held at HQ 1 Bn The Essex Scottish Regiment, Re the captioned noted subject, which was attended by the writer.

5. A copy of the Court of Inquiry is attached hereto for onward transmission.

6. Since the findings of the Court of Inquiry agree with the opinion of the writer, it is considered that this matter should be concluded here.

CONCLUDED.

98 of 582 G.F. Schmidt Opl  
1st Lt G.F.  
No 3 SIS 3 Cdn Div Cof