

Ernest MILLER

- Born:** 1885, Torquay, Devon
- Occupation:** Brake fitter at tram works
- Enlisted:** Porth, South Wales: 1916 (Conscripted)
- Unit:** 2nd Battalion, The Welsh Regt.
- Rank/number:** Private: No.34662
- Death:** Died, 31st August 1918
- Detail:** Very little is known about Ernest's death, but it appears it was by natural causes or as the result of an accident. The most probable cause, however, is Spanish Flu. During the later part of 1918 the pandemic had begun to sweep the Western Front and it is highly likely Ernest died of the disease at a military hospital in Rouen and was buried at the city's St Sever Cemetery Extension.
- Age at death:** 33
- Military info:** Ernest was 29 at the outbreak of war and was probably conscripted into the 2nd Battalion, The Welsh Regiment, in 1916-17. He attested near his home in the Rhondda town of Porth, in Glamorgan, South Wales. The battalion, a regular army unit, were part of the original British Expeditionary Force that was rushed to France in the opening weeks of the Great War. The Battalion arrived at Le Harve on 13th August 1914 as part of 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, and took part in most of the major actions of the next four years, including Mons, the Marne, First Ypres, the Somme offensive, and Passchendaele. In 1918 they were heavily engaged during the battles that followed the German Spring Offensive, fighting at Lys, Estaires, Hazebrouck and Bethune. When the Allies counter-attacked the 2nd Welsh fought at the 2nd Battle of Arras, from 26th August to 3rd September, during the course of which Ernest died. Spanish Flu was rife in both Allied and German armies at this time and it had begun to seriously hamper military operations. Ernest is highly likely to have fallen victim. Many of the sick soldiers ended up in one of the many military hospitals in Rouen, which is where Ernest finally died on 31st August 1918.
- Grave/memorial:** Ernest was buried St Sever Cemetery Extension in Rouen, and he is also commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: Frederick Miller, born Torquay, Devon in 1845. Occupation, saddler. Mother: Mary Ann Selley, born Cheddar, Somerset in 1843. Dressmaker. The couple married in 1863 and had five sons and two daughters. Frederick later lived in Winnipeg, Canada. Wife: Ada Chapman, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1884. Her father was William Chapman, a sailmaker, from Church Lane, Padstow. In 1906 Ernest and Ada married and lived in South Wales where Ernest worked at the Rhondda Tramway Company.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

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