

# World War 1 Roll of Honour

## Birmingham City Police

### PC E267 William WOMWELL

#### Guardsman 25791 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion Coldstream Guards

William was born 10<sup>th</sup> September 1890 in Walsworth, Herefordshire and resided at 68 Marlborough Road Bedford Hitchen, Hertfordshire. He was employed by Simkins and sons in Hitchin from when he left school in 1905 to the end of 1911

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1913 William married Florence May Dennis, of Upper Gravenhurst, Birmingham

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1914 William joined Birmingham City Police as a miller, he was issued with warrant number 8490, and posted to the E Division with collar number PC E267

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1914, his son Dennis William WOMWELL was born

10<sup>th</sup> December 1915 William attested to the Coldstream Guards

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1918, William resigned from the police to join HM Forces and served as Guardsman 25791 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion Coldstream Guards and embarked the same day at Southampton and arrived the following day at Le Havre

1<sup>st</sup> January 1919 William was taken from the field to hospital and he returned to his battalion some ten days later

28<sup>th</sup> April 1919 William re-joined Birmingham City Police from HM Forces with a new warrant number of 8969

On 13<sup>th</sup> November 1922 his son Herbert Stanley was born

A police report dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 1928 – William had written from Yardley Road sanatorium having been there since 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1927 suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. He was worried regarding the state of his health and wanted to go to his parents in Bedfordshire for a change of air. However, on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1928, Hubert passed away at the sanatorium and an un named superintendent personally conveyed the news to his widow Florence May at 16 Springfield Avenue, Oldfield Road, Sparkbrook. He also caused William's parents to be informed of the death via Bedfordshire police. His death was not expected so suddenly by the hospital staff.

William's widow was granted a pension of £30 per annum and an allowance of £10 per annum in respect of her two children until they attained the age of 16 years.

24<sup>th</sup> July 1928 William's widow attended the police station and spoke to Superintendent Mountford, she stated she could not procure the necessities of life for her and her two sons Dennis now 13 and Herbert aged 6 and asked if both sons could be taken into Josiah Mason Orphanage where other police orphans were. She was not in good health and could not seek employment but for the sake of the boys she thought they would be better off there.

Many arrangements were made for medicals and Herbert could not be accepted until his tonsillitis was sorted out then he would be accepted, however, on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1929 Mrs Womwell declined the offer of admission of her youngest son owing to a change in her domestic plans.

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1930 correspondence was received that her son Dennis was employed under Birmingham corporation gas department earning 15 shillings per week. Mrs Womwell was now applying for permission to send the youngest son now 7 years old, to the police orphanage at Red Hill in Surrey, and then she could find employment.

The police were aware that he had had an accident on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1929, where her son Herbert had sustained a fractured femur, but due to the mother's neglect, he received no medical treatment until 27<sup>th</sup> November, when he was admitted to the Royal Cripples Hospital in Northfield, Birmingham, and he wasn't discharged until 25<sup>th</sup> March 1930. A chief inspector visited the home where he saw Herbert who was pale, thin and delicate and that his mother looked like she had very little interest in life and her appearance and her home showed she did very little to make herself or her children comfortable. He thought it would be in the interest of the boy and his future if something could be done to get him out of his then current surroundings.

On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1930, a decision was made for the youngest son Herbert to go to the southern provincial police school at Redhill, Surrey, but his mother would not make the necessary arrangements, and said she could not afford the train fare until she had been in touch with her relatives. A collection was arranged by PC E270 Thomas Green, by the division on pay day to pay for the fare, and it raised £7 15s 2d, it was decided that the fare should be taken from this amount and the surplus should be paid to Mrs Womwell at a rate of £1 per week.

HOWEVER, when PS E17 Wilfred Evans attended the home address with the money for the fare, Mrs Womwell said her late husband's parents objected to the young son being sent away to the school. PS Evans said he would keep the money and ask the members of the division where they wanted the money to go.