

James Henry Bright MILLAR



- Born:** 1st April 1898, Trevone, Cornwall
- Occupation:** Schoolboy
- Enlisted:** London: 16th March 1915 (Volunteer)
- Unit:** 24th Royal Fusiliers (2nd Sportsmens)
- Rank/number:** Lance Corporal: SP/3310
- Death:** Killed in action 29th April 1917
- Detail:** Bright, as he was always know, died when a shell burst close to him during a British attack on a German strong-point at Oppy Wood on the Hindenburg Line during the Battle of Arras. A trained sniper, he had reached the battalion's objective in a sunken road and had been firing at enemy positions for several hours when a shell-burst killing him instantly.
- Age at death:** 19
- Military info:** Bright enlisted in the 2nd Sportsmens, a privately-raised battalion, on 16th March 1915, aged 16 years and 4 months - nearly 2 years underage. Bright's battalion was redesignated the 24th Royal Fusiliers (City of London Rgt.) and arrived in France on 15th November 1915 as part of the 99th Brigade, 33rd Division. A month later they transferred to 5th Brigade, 2nd Division and spent the winter in trenches near Annequin battling the enemy, the rats and the weather. In early July the battalion headed south to join the Somme offensive and on the 29th took over trenches at Waterlot Farm. The next day they attacked Guillemont, but were beaten back. Shelling never stopped and when relieved 6 days later the 24th RF had suffered 313 casualties. Bright was one of 102 listed as missing. He later turned up safely and writing home admitted they had been through "rather a rough time." The 24th RF stayed on the Somme until April 1917 when they headed north to the Battle of Arras where Bright was killed. He had been at the front 18 months without one day's leave.
- Grave/memorial:** Bright's body was never found. He is honoured on Arras Memorial, at St Petroc's Church, Padstow, at Trevone War Memorial and on the Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: James Henry Millar, born St John's Wood, London in 1864. An artist who specialised in waterscapes in oils. One of his works is reputedly owned by the Queen and hung in Osborne House. Mother: Mabel Key, born Trevone in Padstow, Cornwall in 1873, the youngest of 10 children raised by Padstow farmer James Key and his wife Mary Biddick.
- Additional info:** Bright's great-grandfather was the well-known water-colourist Henry Bright, a member of the Norwich School after whom he took his name. Henry's daughter, Fanny, Bright's grandmother, lived at Trevone with the Millars.



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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