

2nd Lieutenant Bertrand Leslie Bolt[©]

Regimental number: —

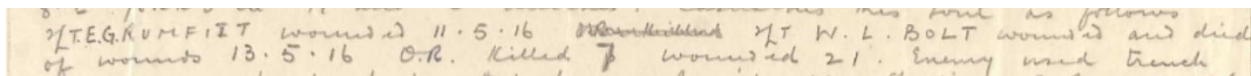
7th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry

born: 1892 – died: 13 May 1916

The Bolt boys did their part in the war effort. There were four sons in the family: Archibald, Bertrand, Harold and Percival.¹ All four served in the Great War, but only Bertrand lost his life.

Archibald William, who was born on 6 May 1891, first joined the Royal Navy on 6 May 1909 (Service number: 238184) and his first posting was to HMS *Impregnable*, a training establishment in Devonport, near Plymouth, Devon. He left the navy on 17 January 1911 as an able seaman when he was at HMS *Vivid I*, the base ship stationed in Devonport. He re-enlisted in 23 November 1916 as an aircraft mechanic (Service number: F24118) and was posted to HMS *President II*, which was a Royal Naval Reserve shore establishment, located on the River Thames in London. He left the navy on 31 March 1918, when he joined the Royal Air Force.² The Royal Naval Air Service combined with the Royal Flying Corps to form the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918.³ Archibald was then at HMS *Daedalus*, the Lee-on-Solent Naval Seaplane Training School, which became an RAF station.

Bertrand Leslie died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 13 May 1916. He was born in 1892 in Neath, Wales,⁴ and enlisted in the Shropshire Light Infantry at about the age of 24, sometime prior to April 1916. He joined the Western Front in France on 23 April 1916.⁵ Sadly, he died less than a month later. He was wounded on 11 May 1916⁶ and died two days later at 11:30 a.m., with compound fractures to both legs and suffering from shock and a hemorrhage.⁷ He was a second lieutenant. He was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot II, Row D, Grave 53)⁸ and his family was notified of his death. The day that Bertrand died, 186 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS and three died.⁹ The same day, Father Knox, one of the Canadian chaplains at the station, was evacuated to the base because he was sick.



Extract of war diaries of 7th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Source: *Ancestry*

Harold, the Bolt's third son, was born on 2 May 1894.¹⁰ He was a lorry driver, aged 21, when he enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force (Regimental number: 131952) in October 1915 in Hereford.¹¹ He served in England until December 1915, when he embarked for Egypt, arriving in Alexandria in January 1916. He joined the 493rd Mechanical Transport (MT) Company of the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC). In September 1917 he was hospitalized with pyrexia and gastritis. Two months later he transferred to the 980th MT Company of the RASC, with which he served until February 1919, when he returned to England for demobilization.

The youngest son, **Percival**, was born 10 August 1895.¹² Like his eldest brother, he first served in the Royal Navy (Service number: F11810). He was a carpenter and joiner when he began his service in February 1916 on HMS *President II*¹³—a "stone frigate," or shore establishment, of the Royal Naval Reserve on the River Thames.¹⁴ He ended his service at the same establishment on 31 March 1918 when he, like his brother, joined the Royal Air Force (Service number: 211810) when it was created on 1 April 1918. He served as Air Mechanic 1st Class.¹⁵

Although the boys' parents were both born in Wales—William Cranfield in Newport, Monmouthshire, in about 1864 and Elizabeth Ann in Aberavon, Glamorganshire, in about 1863¹⁶—Bertrand was their only son born in Wales. William and Elizabeth Ann (nee Jenkins) had married in Newport in 1889¹⁷ but, soon after, they moved to England and in 1891 were living in Dovercourt, Tendring, Essex, where William was a “civilian fireman of works.”¹⁸ Archibald was born there the same year. The following year, Bertrand was born in Neath, Wales—perhaps his mother went back home for the birth of her second son.

In 1901, the family was living on Park Street in Stow on the Wold, Gloucestershire, where William was a builder's manager. Ten years later he was a building contractor and the family had moved to 88 Baysham Street in Hereford, Herefordshire. All the sons were working by then—Archibald had just left the navy and was a builder's carpenter, Bertrand was a clerk in a cider store, Harold was a clerk in the building trade and Percival was a carpenter. Archibald was a member of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners in Hereford.¹⁹

A few years later, Bertrand's brothers Archibald and Harold left for America. They arrived in New York on 24 April 1914 on board the *SS Mauretania*.²⁰ Clearly Archibald intended to stay in the United States because, on 25 November 1914, in Fresno, California, he signed an intention to “renounce allegiance to King George V of Great Britain and Ireland” and to become an American citizen. Harold, on the other hand, returned to Liverpool in September 1914.

After war was declared, Archibald followed his brother and returned to England—perhaps to enlist. He sailed from New York on the *SS Alaunia* and arrived in Plymouth on 7 June 1916.²¹ He re-enlisted in the navy in November of the same year.

After the war, all Bertrand's siblings remained in England. **Archibald** married Violet Gertrude Thomas in 1922.²² In 1939, he was a building contractor and living at 168 White Cross Road in Hereford.²³ He died on 24 March 1948.²⁴

Harold married in 1920²⁵ and, in 1939, he and his wife, the former Lillian M Watts, were living at 136 Ross Road in Hereford. Harold was a master baker.²⁶ He died on 23 March 1977—almost 29 years to the day after his older brother.²⁷ Harold and his wife had a daughter in 1925, named Lesley²⁸—perhaps in memory of her uncle.

Percival married Doris Annie Spooner in 1920—probably a few months after this brother's marriage.²⁹ In 1939, he was a master builder and the family was living at Westwood Hampton Park in Hereford.³⁰ He was probably a very successful builder because, when he died on 6 January 1956, he left a significant estate: £36,480.³¹

Even though, on 13 January 1916, Bertrand's mother filed a petition for divorce from her husband William,³² he was listed as the executor of her estate when she died in Hereford on 28 August 1925.³³ William died 12 years later, on 20 December 1937, and his sons Archibald and Harold were his executors.³⁴

Bertrand was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).³⁵ He is honoured on the White Cross war memorial in Hereford.³⁶

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- ¹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 July 2018), entry for Bertrand L. Bolt, Registration district: Hereford, Registration district number: 337, Sub-registration district: Hereford City, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 288, Piece: 15700
- ² "UK, Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services, 1848–1939," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 July 2018), Achibald [sic] William Bolt, Service Number: F24118
- ³ *Forces War Records* (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/>: accessed 6 June 2018) emtry for A. W. Bolt
- ⁴ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 21 July 2018) entry for Bolt, Bertrand Leslie, Registration district: Neath, Volume 11A, Page 763
- ⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2018), entry for Bertrand Leslie Bolt
- ⁶ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2018), Regiment or Unit: King's Shropshire Light Infantry, Sub Unit: 7th Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Diary Dates: 1915 Sep–1919 May, Piece Description: Piece 1421/4: 7 Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry (1915 Sep–1919 May), Piece Number: 1421
- ⁷ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 21 July 2018), entry for Bolt, B. L.
- ⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 13 August 2018), entry for Bolt, B.L.
- ⁹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIND&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966, 1973–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Harold Bolt
- ¹¹ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Harold Bolt. Unless otherwise stated, all information about Harold's military career comes from this source.
- ¹² "UK, Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services, 1848–1939," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Percival Bolt
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ "HMS President (shore establishment)," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_President_\(shore_establishment\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_President_(shore_establishment)): accessed 25 July 2018)
- ¹⁵ "UK, Royal Air Force Airmen Records, 1918–1940," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Percival Bolt
- ¹⁶ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 July 2018), entry for William E. Bolt, Sub-registration district: Harwich, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 1402, Folio: 25
- ¹⁷ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 31 July 2018), entry for William Cranfield Bolt, District: Newport (Monmouthshire), Country: Wales, Volume: 11A, Page: 330
- ¹⁸ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 July 2018), entry for William E. Bolt
- ¹⁹ "Britain, Trade Union Membership Registers," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Archibald W. Bolt, Archive: Modern Records Centre, Archive reference: MSS.78/ASCJ/2/1/18
- ²⁰ "New York, Passenger Lists, 1820–1957," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Archibald W Bolt [sic]
- ²¹ "UK, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Archibald W Bolt, Official number: 135513
- ²² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Archibald W Bolt, Registration district: Kingston, Inferred county: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 1331

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- ²³ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Archibald Bolt, Ref: RG101/5138A/025/37, Letter code: —
- ²⁴ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 December 2018), entry for Archibald William Bolt
- ²⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Harold Bolt, Registration district: Hereford, Inferred county: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 1517
- ²⁶ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Archibald Bolt, Ref: RG101/5140G/018/4, Letter code: OFBY
- ²⁷ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Harold Bolt
- ²⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Lesley D. Bolt, Registration district: Hereford, Inferred county: Hereford & Worcester, Volume: 6a, Page: 769
- ²⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2018), entry for Percival Bolt, Registration district: Hereford, Inferred county: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 1424
- ³⁰ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 July 2018), entry for Percival Bolt, Ref: RG101/5139H/023/37, Letter code: OFBQ
- ³¹ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Elizabeth Ann Bolt
- ³² "England & Wales, Civil Divorce Records, 1858–1916," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for William Cranfield Bolt
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- ³⁴ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 July 2018), entry for Willim Cranfield Bolt
- ³⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 July 2018), entry for Bertrand Leslie Bolt
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