

# PHILIP RICHARD RATHBONE

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Philip Richard Rathbone (Rawbones) known to his family and friends as Dick, was born in 1895 in St Pancras, London. He was the son of Philip Richard Rathbone who was born in Mangotsfield, just N.E. of Bristol, Gloucestershire in 1863. His grandfather was Thomas Rawbone, also spelled Rawbones, who later changed the family name to Rathbone. Thomas, born in 1827 was the son of Elizabeth and Samuel Rawbone, born 1791, a coal miner; Thomas owned and ran the Staple Hill Pin Factory in Upper Station Road, Mangotsfield. Thomas Rawbone was first mentioned as a pin manufacturer of Staple Hill in 1870. His wife was Anne Bryant who was born in Mangotsfield in 1831. When Thomas died in June 1896 production ceased at the factory although the family continued to live in the house at the rear of the premises.

Dick's mother was Maria Louisa Mills who was born on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1856 in Blackfriars, London. She was the daughter of David Mills born in Foxley, Wiltshire in 1822. In 1851, before David married Maria's mother Elizabeth (born in 1823 in Shipham, Ryne, Gloucestershire in 1823) he was working as a door porter at Eton College. In 1871, David Mills was working as a market gardener in Kensal Green. His business occupied 14 acres and he employed 4 men full-time. The Mills family lived in Trent Terrace, Strand on the Green, Chiswick.

Maria married Philip Rawbones on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1892 when she was aged 35 and Philip was 30 years old. (The marriage certificate gives Maria's age as 30) Maria's father David was deceased and Maria was living at 27, Droop Street, Kensal Green. Philip was living

at the Police Station at 23 Platt Street St Pancras where he was employed as a police constable.

In 1899, the Rawbones family were renting 4 unfurnished rooms at 62, Glynn Road in Hackney. The first of their 2 children, a daughter Vera was born on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1893 and Dick was born 2 years later in 1895. Vera attended the Glynn Road School from April 1899.

In 1901, the family were using the name Rathbone for the Census Records. They were living at 19, Ashendon Road in Hackney. Philip aged 48 was now a Sergeant in the Metropolitan Police Force. Living with them was Philip's elder sister, Adelaide Olivia Rathbone who was born in Birmingham Warwickshire in 1854. She was aged 46 and working as a National School Teacher.

In 1911, the family had reverted to using the name of Rawbones on the National Census They had moved to 16, Chaucer Road Wanstead Essex. Philip was still a Police Sergeant. Vera now aged 17 was employed as a Telephone Operator. Vera had become a member of Wanstead Congregational Church on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1910. Dick aged 15, was still at school and Philip's sister Adelaide was a School Mistress. Dick became a Church Member on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1913 when he was 18 years old. Six months later, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1913, his mother Maria Rathbone also became a member of the Church.

Dick was 18 years old when war broke out and, given his roots in the East End of London; he enlisted with the 1<sup>st</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> (County of London) Battalion, (Poplar and Stepney Rifles) in October 1914. It was a Territorial unit with their headquarters at 66, Tredegar Road Bow.

Rifleman 3188 Philip Richard Rathbone landed in France on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1915. His regiment fought with the 140<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 47<sup>th</sup> Division and was involved in many of the major battles of the War.

The Poplar and Stepney Rifles fought at the Battle of the Somme (1st July - 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1916) and it was probably whilst fighting in the Ancre Valley that Dick was wounded. He was evacuated and sent to one of the four Casualty Clearing Stations at Lijssenthoek. Dick did not recover and he died of his wounds on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1916 aged 21. Dick was buried in Grave X C 10A at the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Belgium. He was one of many thousands of injured men brought back to the CCS's and Hospitals at Lijssenthoek from the front, men whose injuries were often too great to survive.

Dick earned the War and Victory Medals with the 14/15 Star.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
RATHBONE	14 <sup>th</sup> Lond. R	Pvt.	3188
P.R. Philip			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	T.P. 17/101.B.	16.	D.O.F.W. 19. 11. 16
BRITISH	— do —	do.	
15. STAR	T.P. 19.B.	36	
Theatre of War first served in	(1) France		
Date of entry therein	28. 6. 15.		

K. 1380.

#### *Rifleman Philip Richard Rathbone's Medal Record Card*

Dick had made a will and he left £130 7s 0d to his father Philip Richard Rathbone, a police pensioner of 16, Chaucer Road Wanstead Essex.

He is commemorated on the Great War Memorial inside Wanstead United Reformed Church E11 2HD; on the Leyton Schools Memorial and Book of Remembrance Leyton Library and on the War Memorial in Wanstead High Street.

The Church archives still hold a very moving letter sent by Dick's father to the Church fellowship on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1916. The letter reads:

“Dear Mr Ramsey,

My wife and I tender our most heartfelt thanks to the members of the Congregational Church for their kind message of sympathy in our time of sorrow. It is indeed a source of great pleasure to us to know that our dear boy was loved, and is remembered by so many. Not only in his home but, as it appears from the letters we receive wherever he has been, from your Church Primary Department, Bible Class, his first and last employers, his friends at the Front and from the Chaplain of the Hospital in which he spent the last few days of his life on earth we get the same expression of love and sorrow. This with the knowledge that he is at rest, and that there will be for him no more privation and hardship, such as he has borne (sic) so cheerfully. Also to know that he received his wound doing his duty as he saw it, and to use the words of that good man the Chaplain, was buried with all the honour due to a gallant soldier who died at the Front is a great comfort to us all. Again thanking you all for your assurances of love for our dear Dick and sympathy with ourselves.

I Remain, Yours very sincerely,

P.R.Rathbone “

16. Chaucer Road  
Wanstead, N.E.  
1<sup>st</sup> December, 1916

Dear Mr. Ramsey

My wife and I  
tender our most  
heartfelt thanks to  
the members of the  
Congregational Church  
for their kind message  
of sympathy in our  
time of sorrow.

It is, indeed, a  
source of great  
pleasure to us to know  
that our dear boy was  
loved, and is remembered

by so many.

Not only in his home  
but, as it appears,  
from the letters we receive,  
wherever he has been,  
from you Church Primary  
Department, Bible Class,  
his first and last  
employers, his friends  
at the front, and from  
the Chaplain of the  
Hospital in which  
he spent the last few  
days of his life on  
earth we get the  
same expression of  
love and sorrow

This with the  
knowledge that he  
is at rest, and that  
there will be for him  
no more privation  
and hardship, such  
as he has borne so  
cheerfully, also to  
know that he received  
his wound doing his  
duty as he saw fit,  
and to use the words  
of that good man the  
Chaplain, who buried  
with all the honour  
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Again thanking  
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and sympathy  
with ourselves

J. Remani

Yours Very Sincerely

J. R. Rathbone

A. E. Ramsey Esq

Above The letter from Dick's heartbroken father (Wanstead United Reformed Church Archives)

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*Margaretha Pollitt Brown for Wanstead United Reformed Church.*