



# Cheshire Bantams: 15th, 16th and 17th Battalions of the Cheshire Regiment

*Stephen McGreal*

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Raised in Birkenhead in 1914 the Bantams were unique as the average height of the volunteers was a mere five foot! Previously denied the opportunity to serve, these men seized this chance to join up. As a result the battalions comprised working class men from all over Britain – Welsh miners, sturdy London dockers, Lancashire mill workers and Merseyside laborers.

As part of 35th (Bantam) Division, the Bantams fought on the Somme. The Bantams' casualties were so severe that by early 1917 the Division effectively ceased to exist. Thereafter reinforcements came from the General Pool. They suffered heavily again at Houlthust Forest.

The 35th Division played a key part in stopping the German 1918 offensive. Some 900 members of these Battalions lost their lives in The Great War.

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