

## Edgar Richard Chandler

### **Private 4140, 1/15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, London Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles)**

Edgar's parents, Richard Chandler and Ida Jane Agger Chenery came originally from Norfolk and were married at Hounslow in London in 1896 where Richard worked as a wine merchant's clerk. Edgar was born in the same year and a sister, Amy Beulah followed in 1898. The 1911 Census recorded the family as living in the Saracen's Head Inn, Whielden Street, Amersham, Buckinghamshire where Richard was the innkeeper.

Edgar attended Dr Challoner's Grammar School in Amersham and is remembered there on the memorial.

**Edgar Richard Chandler** enlisted in the 15th (Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles)<sup>1</sup> Battalion, the London Regiment, a Territorial unit which had their headquarters at Somerset House, London at the outbreak of war in August 1914. The regiment served as part of 4th London Brigade, 2nd London Division. The division had just arrived for their annual summer camp on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, when war was declared. They were at once recalled to their home base and mobilized for war service.



'Eddie' Chandler, aged about six, with sister Amy.

Photograph courtesy Valerie Glover



The division concentrated in the St Albans area for training, with the 15th Battalion at Bedmond, and then moving to billets at Watford, Hertfordshire, in November 1914. They proceeded to France on 18 March 1915, landing at Le Havre, being only the second Territorial Force division to arrive in theatre. The 5th London Brigade was ordered to Cassel, and the remainder of the division concentrated near Bethune and were joined by 5th London Brigade near the end of the month. They saw action in the Battle of Aubers Ridge, the Battle of Festubert, the Battle of Loos and the subsequent actions of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. In 1916 they fought during the German attack at Vimy Ridge, and on the Somme in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette capturing High Wood.<sup>2</sup>

The "Hell that was High Wood" in the Somme became famous for its horrors and was where Edgar met his end. The action is described almost dispassionately in the battalion's *War Diary*: the first page details the events of 15 September 1916 and the second states the aftermath. Edgar was killed in action on that day. His body was never identified.

<sup>1</sup> For more information see Jill Knight, *The Civil Service Rifles in the Great War: (All Bloody Gentlemen)*, Pen & Sword 2005

<sup>2</sup> © Milverton Associates Limited, *The Long, Long Trail: the British Army in the Great War* and the Wartime Memories Project Website

The following section is transcribed directly from the *War Diaries*<sup>3</sup> of 15 and 16 September 1916:

**"High Wood 15.9.16:** Battalion took part in HIGH WOOD in general attack by IV army. 17<sup>th</sup> London Battalion attacked on left in HIGH WOOD, 7<sup>th</sup> London Battalion on right outside wood. ZERO 5.50 a.m. 'A' Company on right immediately successful and pushed through the Support line. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies were cut up by machine gun fire and were unsuccessful. 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on right entirely unsuccessful on account of machine gun fire.

**11.00 a.m.** Enemy front line bombarded by Stokes Mortars. As a result of this and progress of Divisions on right and left, enemy surrendered and by 12 noon we were in possession of whole of HIGH WOOD and SWITCH LINE. Rest of day spent in consolidating new position in front of SWITCH LINE and in joining up with 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion on left and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on right. Meanwhile 6<sup>th</sup> London Regt. pushed through 7<sup>th</sup> on right and occupied E. half of STARFISH and COUGH DROP.

**6.00 p.m.:** 21<sup>st</sup> London Regt attacked from HIGH WOOD on west half of STARFISH and COUGH DROP. Practically annihilated by Artillery and Machine Gun fire. Casualties - Officers: Killed Capt. Roberts, Capt. Gaze, Capt. Davies, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Hoole. Missing:- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Fletcher. Wounded:- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Fallon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Town, send, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Richardson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Ray, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Roberts, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Houslop, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Barnes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Burr. O.R's (other ranks) - about 250 killed, wounded and missing.

**16.9.16:** Morning quiet. Consolidation proceeded.

**9.00 a.m.** 23<sup>rd</sup> London Regt. Attacked from HIGH WOOD on West portion of STARFISH and COUGH DROP. Practically annihilated by shell and machine gun fire. Day quiet apart from intermittent shelling of HIGH WOOD and SWITCH LINE by heavy Howitzers.

**9.00 p.m.** Battalion moved up to take over DROP ALLEY, leading from COUGH DROP to FLERS LINE, on information that FLERS LINE EAST of DROP ALLEY was held by 6<sup>th</sup> London Regiment. On arrival, found that the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion were not occupying FLERS LINE, but were in COUGH DROP. Battalion accordingly occupied WESTERN half of COUGH DROP and threw back defensive flank towards STARFISH LINE and PRUE TRENCH. Night quiet. Consolidation of COUGH DROP proceeded."

WAR DIARY OF INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY. (These headings not required.)			Army Form G. 2118.
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
HIGH WOOD 15.9.16			<p>Battalion took part in HIGH WOOD in general attack by IV Army. 17<sup>th</sup> London Battalion attacked on left in HIGH WOOD, 7<sup>th</sup> London Regiment on right outside wood. ZERO 5.50 a.m. 'A' Company on right immediately successful and pushed through the Support line. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies were cut up by Machine Gun fire and were unsuccessful. 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on right entirely unsuccessful. 17<sup>th</sup> on left entirely unsuccessful on account of machine gun fire.</p> <p>11.00 a.m. Enemy front line bombarded by Stokes Mortars. As a result of this and progress of Divisions on right and left, enemy surrendered and by 12 noon we were in possession of whole of HIGH WOOD + SWITCH LINE. Rest of day spent in consolidating new position in front of SWITCH LINE and in joining up with 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion on left and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on right. Meanwhile 6<sup>th</sup> London Regt. pushed through 7<sup>th</sup> on right + occupied E half of STARFISH and COUGH DROP.</p> <p>6.00 p.m. 21<sup>st</sup> London Regt attacked from HIGH WOOD on west half of STARFISH and COUGH DROP. Practically annihilated by Artillery + Machine Gun fire.</p>

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. R. Regt. Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. This page will be prepared in summary.

Remarks and references to Appendix

Keep diary at of section and

1917 War Diaries/1916 printed by D.D.A.L. ADSS/Town/C.H.R.

Catalogue Reference: WO/95/2732 Image Reference: 1389

The writer of this section of diary was the Adjutant, Capt W E Ind, M.C., who was to die of wounds in June of the following year (*The Straits Times*, 19 July 1917, The National Library of Singapore).

<sup>3</sup> The *War Diaries* of the 1/15<sup>th</sup> London Regiment. The National Archives ref WO/95/2732



Trench map of the High Wood area <sup>4</sup>

Edgar was awarded The Allied Victory Medal and the British War Medal, 1914-18.

Edgar Richard Chandler is remembered with Honour  
Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier & Face 13C.

For details of the Memorial and the engraving, see the chapter on the Memorials to the Missing.

<sup>4</sup> Trench map taken from 1914-1918.invisionzone.com, attribution unknown.