

# **William George Cox**

## **Rifleman 10256, 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps**

**William George Cox** was born in the period January to March 1891 in Amersham. William was the first child of Robert and Matilda Cox. They married in 1890 and had three other children, Stanley Robert (b.1894), Ellen Maud (b.1897) and Annie (b.1900). Stanley Robert was also killed in the First World War. At the time of the 1901 Census the family lived at Norwoods Yard in Amersham, but by the time of the 1911 Census had moved to 12, Broadway, Amersham. The house had 5 living rooms. At the age of 20, in 1911, William was working as a labourer in Weller's, the local brewery. William's father Robert also worked at the brewery.

William enlisted in Amersham into the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC), 13<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion and saw service in France and Flanders. The battalion was formed at Winchester on 7 October 1914 as part of K3 and was attached to 21<sup>st</sup> Division as Army Troops. They moved to Halton Park, going on in November 1914 to billets in Amersham and Great Missenden. In April 1915 they moved to Windmill Hill (Salisbury Plain) and transferred to 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade in the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, landing at Boulogne on 31 July 1915.<sup>1</sup> According to William's Medal Index card, he entered the theatre of war in France on that date.

According to a report in the *Bucks Examiner* dated 8 December 1916, Stanley Robert Cox (Royal Fusiliers) was killed on 18 November 1916 and William George was injured on the same day and received his wounds while waiting in support of the attacking party. As both the Royal Fusiliers and the KRRC were part of the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, William's position on that day can be placed in the **Ancre Valley**, during the final battle of the Somme. The same report states that William was then lying in a hospital in Birmingham. His injuries were to the lower part of the body and must have been quite severe for him to have been sent home to "Blighty". However, these wounds were not the cause of his eventual death. William George Cox must have recovered sufficiently to rejoin his regiment in France, but we do not know when. The KRRC continued to fight in the 37<sup>th</sup> Division and were involved in further battles.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Division was part of the Third Army under General Allenby. They were involved in a number of actions including the **Arras Offensive** between 9 April and 16 June 1917. On 10 April, the units of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division were tasked with taking **Monchy-le-Preux**, an important village on high ground. The 13<sup>th</sup> Btn of the KRRC attacked up a long slope in a courageous and heroic effort and succeeded in taking the village on 12 April.<sup>2</sup> This attack was part of an offensive called the **1<sup>st</sup> Battle of the Scarpe**. (The Scarpe is the name of the river which flows through Arras). The 37<sup>th</sup> Division also took part in the **2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Scarpe** (23-24 April 1917) and the **Battle of Arleux** (28-29 April). At some point in the summer of 1917 Rifleman William Cox must have moved into Flanders, where he received fatal injuries. The *Bucks Examiner* (10 August 1917) reported his death and stated that "he was badly gassed and succumbed despite all attention". He died on 29 July 1917 aged 26. The article expressed sympathy to William's father Mr. Robert Cox on behalf of the townspeople of Amersham, and in particular his fellow employees at Weller's brewery where he was an old and respected employee. Mr Cox also received a letter from the Army Chaplain, Rev. J. Gray, expressing "great regret" at his loss.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: British Army in the First World War, [www.1914-1918.net](http://www.1914-1918.net) 'The Long, Long Trail'

<sup>2</sup> Reed, Paul *"Walking Arras, Guide to the 1917 Arras Battlefields"*, Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2013. Page 152

Campaign:—				(A) Where decoration was earned.	
1914-15.				(B) Present situation.	
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)	
(A) COX	H.R.		R	MEDAL	ROLL PAGE
(B) W.G.	Rif. Co.		10256	VICTORY	M/101/13/23 2909
				BRITISH	-50-50
				15 STAR	M/23 692
Action taken					
D. of Wds.					
THEATRE OF WAR.					
(1) France					
QUALIFYING DATE.					
31-7-15					
(6 34 46) W234—HP5530 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.					

The Medal Index card of Rifleman William George Cox confirms that he died of wounds and that he entered the theatre of war in France on 31 July 1915, thus qualifying him for The 1914-15 Star. He was also awarded The Allied Victory Medal and The British War Medal, 1914-18.

William's name appears on the Roll of Honour in the Amersham Baptist Church, now part of the King's Arms Hotel.

Rifleman William George Cox  
is remembered with Honour and buried in the Pond Farm Cemetery,  
Wulgergem, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. (grave ref. G 1)



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission now provides documentary evidence of headstone inscriptions:

R/10256 Rifleman W.G.Cox  
King's Royal Rifle Corps  
29<sup>th</sup> July 1917, age 26  
CROSS



The Pond Farm cemetery is small and is accessed down a narrow lane. It contains 292 graves.

Rifleman William George Cox was the brother of Cpl Stanley Robert Cox.