

Frederick George Parslow

Lance Corporal 9067, 1st Battalion

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry



Photo: Bucks Examiner

Frederick George Parslow was the second son of John Parslow, a farm labourer, and his wife Annie Jane. He was born in Amersham in the summer of 1890 when his elder brother, Arthur Charles, was 2 years old. The couple had had 7 children by 1911, although one had died: sisters, Bertha, Annie and Lily and another brother, John, completed the family. Frederick wasn't baptised until 5 May 1906.

As a young man, Frederick enjoyed physical activities and in 1908 he won the Chesham one mile cycle race in 2 min. 30 secs. He also had several other prizes to his credit. In 1909 he joined the army as a regular soldier in the 1st Battalion., Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, regimental no. 9067. He served for five and a half years in India. In the 1911 Census the Parslows were living at Chestnut Lane, Quill Hall Road, Amersham Common, but the 20-year old Frederick is recorded as a Private at Wellington, Nilgiris, India, with the Overseas Military. He was employed in the Brigade office in Ahmednagar.

When the First World War commenced, the 1st Btn was engaged in internal security duties in India. It is reported that all ranks fretted to see the war before it ended. On 17 November 1914 they left Ahmednagar and entrained for Bombay. On 20th they sailed from Bombay aboard the *S.S. Thongwa* with sealed orders. On 5 December they disembarked at

Makil. According to Frederick Parslow's Medal Rolls Index card, this was the date he first served in the Asiatic Theatre of War and was now a Lance Corporal. He was absorbed into the Brigade Provost establishment.

On 29 December instructions were received for the Btn to embark at 8.00 a.m for Kurna on *S.S. Blossie Lynch*. They sailed at 10.25 a.m, arriving at Camp Tigris at 4.45 p.m. The object of the expedition was to secure the oilfields following the entry of Turkey into the war on the German side, which was done with ease by advance troops. The government of India chose to extend the operation without appreciating the lack of sufficient resources. In a desolate spot, formerly the legendary site of the Garden of Eden, the Regiment dug earthworks, which were washed away in the February rains. During the evenings, Arabs tried to snipe the camp and murdered and looted indiscriminately. In January the Btn drove back the Turkish forward troops, but were then halted at a large creek due to lack of bridging materials. After the February flooding the hot March weather turned the area into a steam bath.

On 31 May 1915 the 6th Division attacked the Turks about two miles away. The whole of the country was flooded, except the Turkish position. The troops had been trained to man the local boats, known as bellums, which they would punt or paddle along. The boats held about ten men each, plus ammunition, entrenching tools, repairing gear and water. To maintain direction across the water, the line of advance was marked out with flags. The attack was an amphibious operation carried out using the bellums, with both the army and the navy being afloat. The conditions were extremely difficult with intense heat and a blinding glare off the water and there were millions of mosquitoes. Frederick Parslow was employed on the 17th Brigade Provost, and at the end of the first day's advance to Amara they were going to assist in bringing down about 250 Turkish prisoners, who had been captured during the day's operations. The Tigris, normally a very fast flowing river, was like a mill race at flood times. The water was 2ft to 10ft deep, intersected with swift flowing creeks and thick with reeds. Lance-Corporal Parslow left the P2, the large boat carrying stores for the brigade,

which was anchored on the Tigris, and got into a bellum, and tried to work towards the other bellums, which were going for the prisoners, The rushing stream dashed the bellum between the P2 and a large barge tied to her side, which she was towing up. He overbalanced and went straight under the boat, probably banging his head in doing so. He was fully equipped and carrying 150 rounds of ammunition and his chances of survival were hopeless. Men with ropes around their bodies dived under the boat for half an hour, and messages were sent upstream to look for a body, but nothing more was ever seen of him. In the Battalion's *War Diary* on 31 May 1915 it was recorded that 'Lce Cpl Parsloe (sic) accidentally downed at Kurna'. Col.-Sgt. T. Hurley wrote "I was indeed sorry for him, because when he came to India he was posted to my company, and I took an interest in the lad, because he was a well-behaved, clean young fellow. He was a credit to the Regiment."

Name.		Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
PARSLOW		1 st OXF + Bucks LI.	L/Cpl	9067
F. G. Parslow			* Pte	
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	* L/106 B14	2902		
BRITISH	do	do		
15 STAR	L/4 B	303	acc Drowned	
Theatre of War first served in		ASIANATIC		
Date of entry therein		5.12.14		

Frederick was awarded The British War Medal, 1914-18, The Allied Victory Medal and The 1914-15 Star.

Frederick Parslow is remembered with Honour on the Basra Memorial, Iraq (panels 26 and 63).

Sources:

The Long, Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net

Lightbobs: www.lightbobs.com

Buckinghamshire Examiner: 30 April 1915; 18 June 1915; 6 Aug. 1915; 10 Sep. 1915; 15 Dec. 1916

Booth, Philip: *The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (The 43rd/52nd Regiment of Foot)*. London, Lee Cooper Ltd. 1971

War Diaries, 1st Btn, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, TNA ref. WO95/5122