

Frederick Hubert Warren

Private 9018, 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment

Frederick Hubert Warren was born on 22 September 1887 in Welford, Northamptonshire, the fifth child of Thomas and Hannah Maria (née Evans) Warren. At that time Thomas's occupation was recorded as being a gardener, whilst Hannah was looking after the family at home. Thomas was born in Naseby, Northamptonshire, and married Hannah, from Tenby, Pembrokeshire, in Sept. 1878. They lived there for several years before moving from Pembrokeshire to Fleetwood, Lancashire and then to Welford, living in Back Street, Welford, Northamptonshire.

Sadly for the family tragedy struck in March 1889, when Hannah died, leaving Thomas to look after five children, William b.1879, John b.1880, Elizabeth b.1884, Thomas b.1886 and Frederick Hubert, which he did with the help of a housekeeper, Susannah Lee (1891 Census).

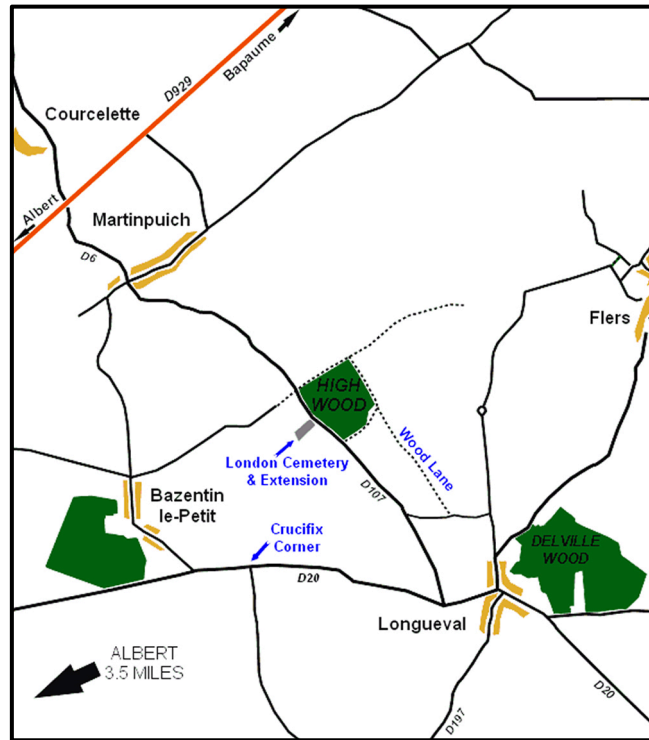
After schooling, Frederick Hubert started working as an agricultural labourer (1901 Census), but obviously found, or saw, little hope in this for the future. He enlisted in 1906 as a reservist, and in 1909 as a regular soldier with the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Following training the battalion was posted to Malta (1911 Census) where they served for a period, before they were posted to Alexandria, Egypt in 1914, only to be recalled to England in October 1914 following the outbreak of war. Billeted at Hursley Park, near Winchester, Hampshire for a short time they then sailed for Le Havre as part of the British Expeditionary Force, landing on 5 Nov 1914. Frederick Hubert and the battalion served an initial five months in France before returning to England in March 1915.

It is during this time, before going back to France, that Frederick Hubert married Edith Elizabeth Chapman, the youngest daughter of the late James Chapman of Chalfont St. Giles. The marriage took place on 7 June 1915 at St Leonard's Parish Church, Chesham Bois. At this time they listed their residence as Newholme, White Lion Road, Amersham Common, which was the home of her brother George. How or where they met is unknown, maybe through Edith's occupation, as in the 1901 Census, she is a domestic nurse living with a family in Hampstead, London. Possibly when war broke out she enrolled in the nursing profession. Unfortunately, they only spent a short time together before Frederick was posted back to France in December 1915, where he served for 10 months before his tragic death,

Following various actions, in September 1916 the regiment was engaged in the **Battle for High Wood**, which is situated on the commanding Bazentin Ridge approx. 3.5 miles N.E. of Albert. The battle initially started on 14 July 1916 and should have resulted in the capture of this area but, due to confusion and hesitation, the British did not attempt to occupy it immediately until the 15th, when two cavalry regiments gained a foothold and had to withdraw through lack of reinforcements. By the time the next attempt was made the Germans had reoccupied the wood in numbers, and so more lives were lost in retaking it eventually on the 15 September.

On 9 and 10 September the Northamptonshire Regiment was in the forefront of the attack, together with the Black Watch Regiment. The *War Diary* details the attacks, counter-attacks and the blowing up of a crater, which the troops had to race forward and occupy. However, this was severely hindered as it states that a number of men were injured through the falling debris from the explosion. Lack of artillery support hampered the attacks, and use of limited Stokes mortars, stated as "ineffective", could not stem the German counter-attack, which drove the troops back from the areas gained, resulting in the majority of the men being killed, wounded or missing.



Map of High Wood Location
 Courtesy: ww1battlefields.co.uk 2004-2014

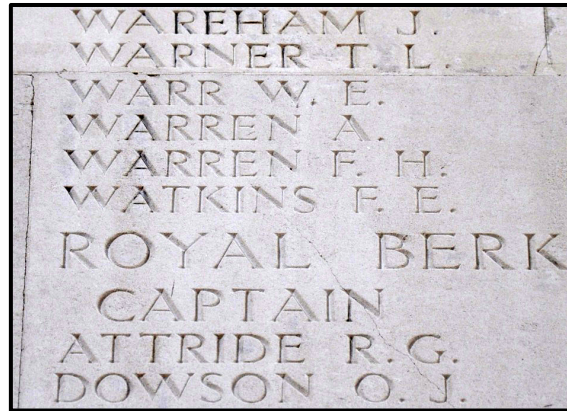
On the 11 September the Battalion was relieved and marched to Becourt Wood, and the following day to Baizieux Wood (east of Albert) finally arriving at Bresle on the 13th. For the next few days the battalion was in billets, resting and cleaning their equipment, from where they received news that High Wood had been taken on the 15th. The weather at this time was described as very wet and extremely nasty and having not bathed for several days the battalion was to proceed to Baisieuz, but on the 17th orders were changed due to the water supply there breaking down. As stated, unwashed and unbathed, on the 18th the 1st and 2nd Battalions were ordered to move up and starting from Henecourt marched via Albert, Becourt, Lozenge Wood to Mametz arriving in the evening of the 19th to find the ground very wet and the dugout shelters waterlogged, and the troops were forced to make bivouacs with waterproof sheets. The following morning, waking to find more rain, the troops were ordered to move back to Albert to billet. This proved to be a very long and arduous operation due to transport congestion, blocking roads in both directions as lorries were stuck in the deep mud. In Albert on 21 September, the troops spent their time in the billets again cleaning their arms and kit and during the day reinforcements joined the battalion. The following day it is reported that the Commanding Officer inspected the unit and presented medal ribbons, plus a Military Cross to one Captain and Military Medals to 8 other troops. The remainder of the time was spent quietly, until orders were received on the 25th to move up to the reserve trenches located south of High Wood. Here the next day all men were employed in digging out and reinforcing the defences.

On the 27 September units moved up to the Flers line, where they were ordered to attack across open ground. This action was supported by the King's Royal Rifles and by bombers, who made a bombing raid on the enemy. There being ineffective artillery preparation, the German trenches were unaffected. They were strongly defended and the attack was unsuccessful. It resulted in the death of one officer and 30 ordinary ranks killed or wounded.

The battle continued the next day with further bombing, but the objective was not reached. The *War Diary* reports on this day the sighting of a Zeppelin seen east of their position. On the 29 September the battalion was relieved and returned to billets in Albert.

Frederick Hubert Warren was killed in action on 27 September 1916 aged 24. His body was never identified. He was awarded The Allied Victory Medal, The British War Medal, 1914-18 and The 1914 Star with clasp.

Frederick Hubert Warren is remembered with Honour on the
Thiepval Memorial, pier & face 11A & 11D



Sources:

The National Archives – War Office Records

WO 95/1271 - *War Diary – Northamptonshire Regiment*

WO 373 - *British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards 1914 – 1920*

Bucks Examiner Archive Records

The Long, Long Trail (www.1914-1918.net) N.B. A query exists as to whether Frederick Hubert Warren was posted with the 1st or 2nd Bn. Northamptonshire Regiment.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Buckinghamshire Remembers quote 1st Bn.

The National Archives – War Office Records – British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index quote 2nd Bn.

1911 Census lists Frederick with the 2nd Battalion in Malta, and according to regimental records the 1st Bn. did not serve in Malta.

War Diaries show that in September 1916, both Battalions were together at the Battle of High Wood.

Different articles in the *Bucks Examiner* at the time of his marriage and death vary between 1st and 2nd Battalions.