

**In Memory of those men of Chesham Bois Parish who served and fell in the great war of**

**1914-1918.**

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**Acknowledgements:**

* Buckinghamshire Remembers website: June, Peter and Martin Underwood.
* Chesham Library and the Bucks Examiner.
* Buckinghamshire Records and Local Studies Service, Aylesbury.
* Commonwealth War Graves Commission and National Archives.
* The Long Long Trail.
* One Hundred Years of 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group.

**Introduction.**

The fallen of World War 1 deserve a little more than a name carved into a monument, so with a little research more detail has been added. The Regiment, Battalion, Division, Battle of each individual can be traced to a reasonable conclusion through many sources but with some names there is always a doubt over the date and actual location due to the sheer logistics of the fallen at any one time.

The title of ‘Roll of Honour’ changed in format from those who initially enrolled for duty, to the Roll of Honour for the fallen. There are names that have been missed, that should have been added to the Chesham Bois Memorial and other names that should appear on other memorials, in particular Amersham and Chesham.

The majority of names that appear on Chesham Bois Memorial are from Bois Moor area or Lower Bois as it was known before 1934 when the area below the railway was changed to become part of Chesham Town. Upper Bois was in its first stage of development with many houses being built from the early 1900s to 1915.

The Rev. T.H Fitzpatrick of St. Leonards in 1915 stated that: Bois Moor Road contributed over 50 service men, more than any other road in Chesham. 16 service men were former pupils of the Bois School, Bois Lane and in total 106 service men were from Chesham Bois.

The 1918 Register of Electors adds another 80 to the total of 186 Service men that served in WW1 from the Parish.

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| An attempt has been made to record the following information for each casualty:   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Forenames and Surname | |  | Rank and Service Number | |  | Regiment and Unit | |  | Residence at death | |  | Where enlisted | |  | Age and date of death | |  | How died and in which Theatre of War | |  | Date and place of birth | |  | Date and place of baptism | |  | Grave/Memorial and Reference | |  | Parents’ names and address, and father’s occupation | |  | Wife’s name and address | |  | Medals:  Notes: a field that only appears in the tabulations when something of significance should be displayed. |   The record has tried to be as accurate as possible but there are a significant proportion of records where the identity of individuals is ambiguous and the detail is not easy to interpret. We have tried to draw attention to these uncertainties in the tabulations of findings.  The following paragraphs address some of the difficulties in the interpretation of the evidence.  War memorials sometimes list names which cannot be found in the usual official records. Names appear in official records which do not appear on the expected war memorials. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether men were listed on the memorial of the place where they were living on enlistment, or the place where they were born. On some war memorials, names, ranks and service numbers are given which helps to identify individuals and in some cases misleading. But on other memorials, adopting a policy of equality, only names, without further helpful details, are listed. Without this extra information discovery of individual identities is difficult if the name occurs commonly in the locality. Sometimes memorials list both men who served as well as those who died and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.  Sometimes forenames were transposed – ‘John Arthur’ in one source appeared as ‘Arthur John’ in another, even though all other details were identical. Occasionally, digits in Service Numbers were transposed. Ages were not always precisely identical to the result of subtracting the date of birth from the date of death. |

***Roger Cook*1. The Memorial 1914-18.**

Chesham Bois Parish Council.



On Thursday 27th February 1919 at the Chesham Bois Parish Council meeting led by Mr Robert Beckley Senior, with Mr Thomas Hill, Mr George Wilkinson, Mr William Aris and Mr Frank Morton and the Parish Clerk Mr Thorpe in attendance a letter was read out from a Mr Birch who proposed a War Memorial for the Parish. Mr Hill proposed and Mr Aris seconded that the Council call a meeting to discuss the question at 8:30 pm on Thursday 20th March at the Bois Schoolroom. The clerk is to make all the necessary arrangements (Mr Robert Beckley Senior had lost a son Frederick in the war in 1915 and another son Robert had been demobilised from active service)

Meeting at the Bois schoolroom. Thursday 20th March 1919.

The meeting to discuss the War Memorial was chaired by Mr Robert Beckley Senior. Mr Beckley stated that Mrs Bush of Bois Cottage, Upper Bois apologised for her absence but put forward a scheme that she hoped would be discussed by the committee. Mr Cole proposed the scheme should be adopted and Mr Gaylor seconded the scheme. (The scheme was not explained but a plaque and Roll of Honour naming the fallen also appears in St Leonards Church)

Mr Birch stated ‘that a memorial outside would be preferable’.

Mr Roch stated ‘that the memorial should be for the Bois Parish only as he had heard that the memorial was to be shared with Amersham Common’.

Mr Joseph Gaylor then suggested ‘that if both, an outside and internal memorials were adopted that they should be funded by public subscription’.

Mr Phipps stated ‘that the Parish was in dire need for a hall for all faith denominations and that approved of an outdoor obelisk and that the two proposals should be subscribed for separately’.

Mr T. Hill stated ‘that the community of Lower Bois would appreciate an obelisk placed on the Common’.

Parish Council Meeting at the Bois Schoolroom 15th August 1919.

Mrs Busk the treasurer reported that a surplus of £10:00 was made following the Peace celebrations. The council unanimously agreed to donate the surplus to the Memorial fund now standing at £80:5:0 with expenditure at £70:5:0. The memorial designed by John Harold Kennard is of Portland Stone in the renaissance style and consists of an elliptical base mounted in one step, the base being paneled on front and sides having a laurel wreath and ribbons carved upon the front. The back is broken out from the ellipse to form a support for the panel that continues upwards from the base and is surmounted by an enriched cornice broken into two scrolls over the centre. A fountain in bronze by Messer’s Wilmer and Co of St Mary’s Axe, London has no cup. Mr W.T Robinson of Chesham has executed the design with the carvings by Mr. Arrowsmith of Stockwell, London.

11th November 1920. Memorial Unveiling and Dedication. The service was led by the Rev. T.H Fitzpatrick and attended by the Chesham Boys Scouts troop, Bois School children and teachers, members of the Amersham Free Church, The Parish Council, Miss E.E Porter the secretary and treasurer of the Scouts, Brigadier-General R.J Cooper (Irish Guards) a local parishioner of Clifton Road who played a gallant part in the Gallipoli debacle, members of the St Mary’s Cadet‘s, the Rector and St Leonard’s Church Choir and members of the local Belgium refugees. Brigadier-General R.J Cooper following a few succinct words withdrew the flag disclosing the memorial. The Rector closed the ceremony with the words ‘To the glory of God and in grateful memory of those who gave their lives for King and Country and in a righteous cause I dedicate this memorial’.

22nd December 1920. Parish Meeting. The Parish Council had received a letter from the memorials architect, John Harold Kennard F.R.I.B.A (1883-1926) who in the 1918-1922 Voters Lists lived with his wife Bessie Rosina at ‘Rosemarie’, Hervines Road. At the period of his Bois memorial design he had in a distinguished career also designed in 1919 the National Provincial and Union Bank premises at Oakfield Corner, the Free Church and the store ‘Napiers’ , 2 cottages Bois Common, Amersham for Rural Homes Ltd (1919 Plan 62). He had in 1920 designed houses in Bois Lane. In 1920 he also designed 30 houses in Elm Close for Amersham Public Utility Society (1920 Plan 44). He designed Masonic Hall and bank on Sycamore Road for Carrington Masonic Lodge, (not built) (1920 plan 139). He designed a house at Bois Common, Amersham for S. Fassnidge, designed his own house again ‘Rosemarie’, at Hervines Road. His earlier house in Bois Avenue was also named as was ‘Rosemarie’ in Chiltern Road.

Kennard had advised the Parish Council that they should make an application to the water company for water to the fountain. The clerk stated that a letter had already been sent. Kennard had presented the Parish Council with half a dozen sketches to meet varying circumstances and the accepted design will stand the test of time.

26th January 1921. Parish Meeting. A letter from the Amersham Water Board that they would charge £6:00 per year. The clerk was instructed to write to the Water Board offering 10 shillings per year.

24th February 1921 Parish Meeting. A letter from the Ministry of Health questioning the ability of the Parish Council to pay for the water and a further letter from the Water Board to discuss the matter.

22nd March 1921 Parish Meeting. The clerk reported that the meeting with the Water Board had been cancelled but they had sent a letter stating the supply should be limited for two quarters from the 31st March at the cost of 10 shillings. The clerk was instructed to write to the RDC stating that the Parish Council found the proposal acceptable.

14th April 1921 Parish Meeting. A letter from the Rural District Council stating that they agreed with the Parish and directed the clerk to inform the architect to proceed with the installation of a water fountain as the Parish would be charged for water from the 1st April.

April 1922 The water was turned on to the memorial fountain.

In early 1953 the water fountain was removed after a combination of poor water pressure and damage. **2. The Parish of Chesham Bois ‘Roll of Honour’ of the men who served their King and Country.**



**The original WW1 Memorial designed by John Harold Kennard F.R.I.B.A pictured about 1927.**

**Adler, Cecil George Major Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Dunsets, Clifton Road.**

**Adams, Lemuel The Lodge, New Road.**

**Amies, Edwin Howard Corpl. 3rd Bedfordshire Regt. Gunn’s Terrace Bois Moor Road.**

**Andrews, John William Hicks, Staff Sergeant, 7th Army Service Corps Reserve Park. Woodland View, Long Park.**

**Aris , Harry Corpl. Signalling Corp, RE. Fern Villas, Bois Common.**

**Aris, Arthur Charles. Fern Villas, Bois Common.**

**Auger, Albert Ashantee Villa**

**Austin, Ernest 2 Hill View Cottages, Moor Road.**

**Austin, Frederick George Bois Lane.**

**Axten, Herbert, Warren Cottages**

**Baker, Joseph Sidney, Oakwood**

**Barker, Mark ‘Nyetimber’, Chiltern Road.**

**Barnes, Rupert William 3 Moor Road.**

**Bates, Frederick Ben. Able Seaman. Royal Navy. Bois Moor Road.**

**Bates, Sidney Rifleman. Kings Royal Rifles Corp. Bois Moor Road.**

**Bates, William Royal Army Medical Corp. Bois Moor Road.**

**Batchelor, Harry Military Police. Australian Expeditionary Force. Bois Moor Road.**

**Batchelor, Herbert William Pt. London Rangers. Nr Bois Moor.**

**Batchelor, Percy William Tpr. Royal Bucks Hussars. Nr Bois Moor.**

**Beckley, Robert Frederick Company Sgt Major. Kings Royal Rifles. Bois Moor Road.**

**Beckley, Frederick P Sgt. Bucks Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Bedford, James Stanley Nr Bois Moor Road.**

**Benning, Bert Pte. Bucks Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Benning, Alfred Driver. Army Remount Corps. Bois Moor Road.**

**Benwell, Ernest Edward RE Bois Moor Road.**

**Birch, Frank Bois Moor Road.**

**Blanchard, Henry H Chiltern Road.**

**Blommekoper, Alfred Act Corpl. Royal Fusiliers. Wood End, Copperkins Lane.**

**Braden, Norman Ashley Denehurst, Bois Avenue**

**Bradley, Bertie Harold Rifleman. Kings Royal Rifles Corp. Bois Moor Road.**

**Bradley, Percy Gordon Bois Moor Road.**

**Bradley, William Victor Bois Moor Road.**

**Brett, Douglas Herbert James Pte. HAC ‘Blackwood’ Bois Lane**

**Brown, Alfred James 2 Railway Cottages off Bois Moor Road.**

**Brown, Frank 2 Railway Cottages off Bois Moor Road.**

**Brown, Alfred George Bois Moor Road.**

**Brown, Arthur Pte.** **2/6th Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment. Bois Moor Road.**

**Brown, Berthold Sportsman Reg Chesham Bois.**

**Brown, David Bois Moor Road.**

**Brown, William George Bois Moor Road.**

**Bruce, William Henry V. J L/C. 2nd/1st Oxon and Bucks L I. Chesham Bois.**

**Bush, Hugh Owen Pte. Bedfordshire Rgt. Tyn-Y-Coed Holloway Lane.**

**Bush, Arthur R Pte. Royal West Kent Rgt. Tyn-Y-Coed Holloway Lane.**

**Chance, Frederick Bois Moor**

**Chapman, Vernon James, Long Park**

**Charge, Alfred William Bois Moor Road.**

**Clarke, Cyril J Digby Wood Assist. Q.M Royal Bucks Hussars. Lt. R.A.M.C. (2nd S. Midland Mounted Division). Corona, Bois Avenue.**

**Clarke, A.R Wood Pte. Princess Patricia’s L. I (Canada) c/o Corona, Bois Avenue.**

**Clisby, Alex Pte. Grenadier Guards. Bois Moor Road.**

**Clisby, Archibald Stanley Pte. 2nd Scots Guards. Bois Moor Road.**

**Cole, Sidney Redvers Stanley House, Bois Lane.**

**Cole, William John Francis Stanley House, Bois Lane**

**Collins, Percival James, Long Park**

**Cook, Arthur Middlesex Reg. Bois Moor Road.**

**Cooper, R.J Brigadier-General. CB, CVO, Com 29th Brigade, 10th Irish Division. Beechgrove, Clifton Road.**

**Cox, Leonard 2nd Lt. 6th Bn. Kings Shropshire L.I Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.**

**Coulson, Frederick Albert ‘Woodland View’ Long Park**

**Coulson, George Horace ‘Woodland View’ Long Park**

**Cree, Arthur Thomas Crawford Lt. 7th Durham L I. Anthonys, The Green, Bois Avenue, Chesham Bois.**

**Crovo, Angelo Antonio Pte. Middlesex Reg. ‘Elangeni’ Chestnut Lane, Chesham Bois.**

**Darvell, David Arthur New Road**

**Darvell, Harry New Road**

**Darvell, John New Road**

**Davey, Hugh William ‘Dracot’ Bois Lane.**

**Dell, Stanley Tpr. ‘D’ Squadron Royal Bucks Hussars. Bois Moor Road.**

**Edwards, William Arnold Orchard House, New Road, Chesham Bois.**

**Edwards, William North Sgt. 5th Oxon and Bucks L I. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

**Essex, Horace Bois Moor Road.**

**Essex, Robert James Bois Moor Road.**

**Essex, Sidney Bois Moor Road.**

**Fassnidge, Samuel, Oakway Road.**

**Fenn, Albert G Sgt. 6th Kings Royal Rifles Corp. Bois Moor Road.**

**Forster, Eric Douglas Major. Northumberland Fusiliers.**

**Fountain, Jesse Rifleman. 1st Rifle Brigade. Bois Moor Road.**

**Fowler, C J Pte. Royal Berkshire Rgt.**

**Garrett-Pegge, Wilfred George Lt. Royal Army Service Corps. Bois Manor, New Road.**

**Garthwaite, Frederick Pixton Chestnut Lane, Chesham Bois.**

**Gates, F.G Driver. Royal Field Artillery. Bois Moor Road.**

**Gomm, William James Pte. Bucks Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Gowlett, Bertie 8 Woodlands, Long Park.**

**Graham, William 4 Moorland View, Moor Road.**

**Green, E.A Lt. North Somerset Yeomanry.**

**Green, Ralph Beauchamp ‘Northcott’, Chestnut Lane.**

**Green, R.H 2nd Lt. North Somerset Yeomanry.**

**Grubbe, George Francis Alcock Pte. 21st Lancers. Killaspy, North Road, Chesham Bois.**

**Hall, Albert Henry Holly Bush Nursery**

**Hartley, Albert R.H.A. Bois Moor Road.**

**Harding, G Pte. 2nd Oxon & Bucks L I. Moor Road.**

**Harwood, A Telegraph Section, RE. Long Park.**

**Hazeldine, Herbert Pte. 5th Oxon and Bucks L I.**

**Hearn, Henry Bois Moor Road.**

**Hearn, J.A Pte. 2nd Artists Rifles. Bois Moor Road.**

**Hill, William Royal Bucks Hussars. Moorland View, Bois Moor Road.**

**Hinks, George Pte. 12th Bn. Gloucester Reg. Railway Cottages, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.**

**Hooker,**

**Horne, J. Anthony 2nd Lt. 16 London Reg. Queen’s Westminsters. Greenbank, Bois Lane.**

**Howe, Albert Pte. 6th Bn Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Irvine, Leonard Cockburn Dundas, Surgeon. Royal Navy. Copperkins Lane, Chesham Bois.**

**Jones, Rupert J. A Lt. HMS Sutlej, Royal Navy.**

**Jones, W.G Bombardier. 97th Company, Royal Garrison Artillery. Hill View, Bois Moor Road.**

**Keating, Frederick C Sgt. 1/1 Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Keating, Arthur E Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Keating, Ralph S Pte. 1/1 Bucks ‘C’ Company, Oxon and Bucks L I. Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Keating, Reginald Harry Claude (Snr) L/C Royal Sussex Reg. Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Keen, Alec A London Electrical Engineers, RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Keen, Percy John Corpl. 216th Army Troops Coy, RE. Moorland View, Bois Moor Road.**

**Kemp, George Army Service Corp. League Villas, Bois Moor Road.**

**Kennard, John Harold, Rosemarie, Chiltern Road.**

**Kingham, Albert Rifleman 1st Rifle Brigade. Bois Moor Road.**

**Knowles, Ernest Arnold Clifton Road.**

**Koerber, J. H. Royal Army Medical Corp. Mowbray, Long Park, Chesham Bois.**

**Lockhart, Robert Copperkins Lane.**

**Mc Carthy, John Chief Mech. Engineer. Royal Navy.**

**Mc Laughlin, Reginald William Lych Gate Bois Lane.**

**Matthews, Arthur Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Matthews, Ernest Gnr. 4th Brigade Australian Field Artillery. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road**

**Matthews, Dennis J. C Corpl. 6th Tank Corps. Laurel Bank, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois.**

**Matthews, Frank Pte. Royal Fusiliers. Railway Cottages, Bois Moor Road.**

**Matthews, George Signaling Corps RE. Leighton House, Bois Moor Road.**

**Matthews, James Dennis Laurel Bank, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois.**

**Matthews,** **Sidney RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Mayger, Charles (Snr) Army Service Corps. Moorland View, Moor Road.**

**Mayger, Charles Pte. Oxon and Bucks L I. Moorland View, Moor Road.**

**Mayger, Percy G Army Service Corps. Moorland View, Moor Road.**

**Melville, R Tpr. ‘C’ Squadron Royal Bucks Hussars. The Firs, Bois Moor Road.**

**Merriden, Arthur Rifleman. Rifle Brigade. Broadwater Bridge, Latimer Road.**

**Montaque. Cyril Sapper RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Mortimer, Arthur Edwin RE. League Villas, Bois Moor Road.**

**Mortimer, Frederick George Motor Transport RE. League Villas, Bois Moor Road.**

**Morton, Francis Royal Flying Corps. Bois Lane.**

**Newland, Charles H Pte. 10th City of London Reg. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

**Newman, Abraham E. Sapper RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**North, William Henry Rifleman. King’s Royal Rifles Corps. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

**Olney, Alfred E. J Pte. Oxon and Bucks LI. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

**Olney, Ernest William Pte. 2nd Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.  *Subsequent research shows that E W Olney was actually Emmanuel Olney, the brother of Sydney Olney.***

**Olney, Sidney J. L/Corpl. Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

**Osborn, G Pte. Army Ordnance Corps. Bois Moor Road.**

**Osborn, W Pte. Army Service Corps. Bois Moor Road.**

**Palmer, A.J. G Pte Kings Royal Rifles. Royal Flying Corp. Great Bois Wood of Bois Moor Wood.**

**Palmer, Edward Francis Sgt. Signaling Coy. RE. Great Bois Wood of Bois Moor Wood.**

**Palmer, William John Rifleman. 2nd Rifle Brigade. Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Road.**

**Parsons, Alfred James Pte. Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Common.**

**Patience, Sidney Pte. Oxon and Bucks L I. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

**Peach, Lionel Sunneyholme Bois Lane.**

**Pearson, A RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Pearce, Edward William Pioneer. RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Pearson, F Army Service Corps. Bois Moor Road.**

**Pearson, Jack Sapper. 200th Field Corps RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Pedder, George Henry Holloway Lane.**

**Pell, F.T Royal Army Pay Corps. Long Park.**

**Pell, William Trooper. Royal Bucks Hussars. Long Park.**

**Peto, Albert Henry Pte. 18th Labour Coy. Army Service Corp.**

**Plested, Thomas William Bois Moor Road**

**Pruden, Arthur Edward Pte. Oxon and Bucks LI. Bois Moor Road.**

**Pulsford, Robert Francis Pte, Gloucester Reg. Bois Lane**

**Raine, J. E Corpl. Motor Cycle Section, R E.**

**Rance, Frederick William Pte. Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Redding, F. Trooper Chesham Detachment, Royal Bucks Hussars, Pte. Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Redrup, John Bois Moor Road**

**Robins, Percy George Sgt. 2/4th London Reg. (Royal Fusiliers) Woodcot Bungalow, Stubbs Wood.**

**Rogers, Jack Pte. Army Service Corp. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

**Rose, Sidney Lasenby Rose Pte 3rd Canadian Mounted Rifles, 2nd Lt. Royal Air Force. The Island, Moor Road.**

**Ross, N.J.E 2nd Lt. 1st Wiltshire Reg.**

**Rowe, George Moore Allender Woodlands, Long Park.**

**Sawyer, Bertram Bois Moor Road.**

**Scott, Herbert Kilburn, Northumberland Hussars. Jacutinga, Bois Avenue.**

**Stark, Capt. Dublin Fusiliers**

**Sims, T.G Sapper. RE. Bois Moor Road.**

**Simmons, Albert Bois Moor Road**

**Simmons, Colin Pte. Bedfordshire Rgt. Gravel Dell, Latimer Road.**

**Simmons, H.D Pte. Oxon and Bucks L I. Gravel Dell, Latimer Road.**

**Smith, Daniel William Bois Moor Road.**

**Stronnells, John. Army Ordinance Corps. Bois Moor Road.**

**Teale, J.W RE**

**Thorne, Albert Pte. Northumberland Fusiliers. Bois Moor Road.**

**Thorne, Arthur Pte. 2nd Scots Guards. Bois Moor Road.**

**Thurlow, G.J Army Service Corps. New Terrace, Off Bois Moor Road.**

**Thomas, Clement Horace The Warren, Bois Lane**

**Tichener, Arthur John Chiltern Road.**

**Thurlow, George John Bois Moor Road**

**Tomlin, John Pretoria Cottage, Bois Lane**

**Turvey, F. Gunner, Australian Bn. Bois Moor Road.**

**Upton, Thos Pte. Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Upton, George Pte. Chesham Detachment, Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Upton, W.H L/Corpl. Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

**Waghorn, B Pte. London Scottish. White House, Clifton Road.**

**Waghorn, Herbert Gilmore Capt. 6th North Staffordshire Reg. White House, Clifton Road.**

**Washington, William, Copperkins Lane.**

**Webb, Wilfred Pte. Chesham Detachment, Oxon and Bucks L I. The Rowans, Bois Common.**

**Wellings, C Pte. Army Service Corps (Motor Transport) Greenfield Cottages, Bois Lane.**

**Wellings, R. Pte. Army Service Corps. (Remount). Greenfield Cottages, Bois Lane.**

**Wheeler, P Pte. 14 Gloucester Reg. Bois Moor Road.**

**Wilkins, Alfred Rectory Cottages, North Road.**

**Wilson, F Royal Fusiliers.**

**Wilson, S Pte. Sportsman Royal Fusiliers. Bois Lane.**

**Wilson, T Pte. Sportsman Royal Fusiliers. Bois Lane.**

**Woodcock, Cecil William Napier Lt. 10th Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Sycamore Road, Amersham.**

1. **The Chesham Bois Parish casualties of WW1.**

**1914**

Private George Harding. 2nd Bn. Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. Moor Road.

Private Ernest William Olney. 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane. *Subsequent research shows that E W Olney was actually Emmanuel Olney, the brother of Sydney Olney.*

Rifleman Albert William Kingham. 1st Bn. Rifle Brigade. Bois Moor Road.

**1915**

Sergeant Robert Parmenas Beckley. Bucks B Coy 1st/1st Bn. Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. Bois Moor Road.

Private Archibald Rowland Bush. Queens Own 1st Bn. Royal West Kent Regiment. Tyn-y-Coed, Holloway Lane.

Private Hugh Owen Bush. 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Rgt. Tyn-Y-Coed Holloway Lane.

Private Albert Howe. 6th Bn. Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.

Sergeant William North Edwards. 5th Bn. Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.

Lieutenant Arthur Thomas Crawford Cree. 7th Bn. Durham Light Infantry. Anthonys, Bois Avenue.

L/Cpl. Sidney John Olney. 1st Bn. Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.

Rifleman William Henry North. 8th King’s Royal Rifles Corps. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.

Private Albert Henry Peto. 18th Labour Coy. Army Service Corp.

Private Arthur Thorne. 2nd Bn. Scots Guards. Bois Moor Road.

**1916**

2nd Lt. James Anthony Horne. 16th Bn. London Reg. Queen’s Westminsters. Greenbank House, Bois Lane.

Sergeant Albert George Fenn. 6th Bn. Kings Royal Rifles Corp. Bois Moor Road.

L/Cpl. William Henry Victor James Bruce. 2nd/1st Bn. Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.

Sergeant Frederick C Keating. 1st/1st Bn. Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.

Sapper Jack Pearson. 200th Field Corps RE. Bois Moor Road.

Private (Jack) Cecil H. J Simmons 1st Bn. Bedfordshire Regiment. Gravel Dell, Latimer Road,

**1917**

Sergeant Percy George Robins. 2nd/4th Bn. London Reg. (Royal Fusiliers). Woodcot Bungalow, Stubbs Wood.

Capt. Herbert Gilmore Waghorn. 6th Bn. North Staffordshire Reg. White House, Clifton Road.

Lieutenant Cyril John Digby Wood Clarke. R.A.M.C. (2nd South Midland Mounted Coy). Corona, Bois Avenue.

Private Arthur Brown. 2nd/6th Bn. Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment. Bois Moor Road.

Private Herbert Hazeldine. 5th Bn.Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.

Private Bert Benning. Bucks 1st/1st Bn. Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.

Corpl. Percy John Keen. 216th Army Troops Coy, RE. Moorland View, Bois Moor Road.

Private George Hinks. 12th Bn. Gloucester Reg. Railway Cottages, Bois Moor Road.

**1918**

2nd Lieutenant Leonard Cox. 6th Bn. Kings Shropshire L I. Bois Mill Cottages.

Gunner Ernest Matthews. 4th Brigade Australian Field Artillery. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.

Lieutenant Cecil William Napier Woodcock. 10th Bn. Royal Fusiliers (City of London). Sycamore Road,

2nd Lieutenant Sidney Lasenby Rose. Royal Air Force. The Island, Moor Road.

Corpl. Dennis James Cox Matthews. 6th Tank Corps. Leighton House, Off Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

Rifleman William John Palmer. 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade. Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Road.

Able Seaman Frederick Ben Bates. Royal Navy, HMS Penn. Bois Moor Road.

**1919**

Private Fred William Rance, Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.

1. **WW1 campaign medals?**

Campaign medals were awarded to individuals who served in the First World War, who met the qualifications laid down for each medal. In general all those who saw service overseas were awarded a campaign medal. The qualifications for each campaign medal are:

|  |
| --- |
| **1914 Star**  Instituted in 1917 for service ashore in France and Flanders between 5 August and 22 November 1914. In 1919 a clasp bearing the above dates was authorised and given to those individuals who had actually been under fire between the prescribed dates. |
| **1914/15 Star**  Authorised in 1918, the 1914/15 Star was awarded to those individuals who saw service in France and Flanders from 23 November 1914 to 31 December 1915, and to those individuals who saw service in any other operational theatre from 5 August 1914 to 31 December 1915. |
| **British War Medal**  The British War Medal 1914-1920, authorised in 1919, was awarded to eligible service personnel and civilians. Qualification for the award varied slightly according to service. The basic requirement for army personnel and civilians was that they either entered a theatre of war, or rendered approved service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. Service in Russia in 1919 and 1920 also qualified for the award. |
| **Victory Medal**  The Victory Medal 1914-1919 was also authorised in 1919 and was awarded to all eligible personnel who served on the establishment of a unit in an operational theatre. |
| **Territorial Force Medal**  The Territorial Force War Medal 1914-1919 was awarded to members of the Territorial Force only. To qualify, the recipient had to have been a member of the Territorial Force on or prior to 30 September 1914, and to have served in an operational theatre outside of the United Kingdom between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. |
| **The Silver War Badge**  The Silver War Badge, sometimes erroneously called the Silver Wound Badge, was authorised in September 1916 and takes the form of a circular badge with the legend "For King and Empire-Services Rendered" surrounding the George V cypher. The badge was awarded to all of those military personnel who were discharged as a result of sickness or wounds contracted or received during the war, either at home or overseas. |

1. **TIMELINE OF EVENTS - WESTERN FRONT.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Liege, Battle of, | 1914 |  | Arras, Battle of, | 1917 |
| Mulhouse, Battle of, | 1914 |  | Aisne River, Second Battle of the, | 1917 |
| Namur, Siege of, | 1914 |  | Messines, Battle of, | 1917 |
| Frontiers of France, Battles of, | 1914 |  | Ypres, Third Battle of, | 1917 |
| Le Cateau, Battle of, | 1914 |  | Cambrai, Battle of, | 1917 |
| Manic, Battle of the, | 1914 |  | Somme Offensive, | 1918 |
| Aisne River, First Battle of the, | 1914 |  | Lys Offensive, | 1918 |
| Antwerp, Siege of, | 1914 |  | Aisne River, Third Battle of the, | 1918 |
| Ypres, First Battle of, | 1914 |  | Cantigny, Battle of, | 1918 |
| Champagne, First Battle of, | 1914-15 |  | Belleau Wood, Battle of, | 1918 |
| Neuve-Chapelle, Battle of, | 1915 |  | Noyon-Montdidier Offensive, | 1918 |
| Ypres, Second Battle of, | 1915 |  | Marne, Second Battle of the, | 1918 |
| Artois, Battle of, | 1915 |  | Amiens Offensive, | 1918 |
| Champagne, Second Battle of, | 1915 |  | St-Mihiel Offensive, | 1918 |
| Artois-Loos, Battle of, | 1915 |  | Meuse-Argonne Offensive, | 1918 |
| Verdun, Battle of, | 1916 |  | Cambrai-Saint Quentin Offensive, | 1918 |
| Somme, Battle of the, | 1916 |  |  |  |

1. **Soldiers of WW1 buried at St Leonard’s Church, Chesham Bois.**



**Bronze plaque located in St Leonards.**

The names of the fallen are those repeated on the War Memorial on Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.



**Lieut. Percy Walter Peach Manitoba Reg. and mother Elizabeth Peach. P.W Peach appears on the Amersham Memorial**

**2nd Lieut. S.L Rose RAF**

1. **The 1st Chesham Boy Scouts who gave their lives and served in WW1.**

**In Memoriam.**

Corporal G. Tyrrell: Second

Driver H.W Sweetland: Scout Amersham Memorial.

Lieutenant C.W.N Woodcock Assistant Scout Master Chesham Bois Memorial.

Private R. Wall: Scout Amersham Memorial.

Rifleman W. J Palmer: Scout Chesham Bois Memorial.

Sapper J.C Pearson: Scout Chesham Bois Memorial.

Sergeant F.P Beckley:. Scout Master Chesham Bois Memorial.

Sergeant P.G Robins: Assistant Scout Master Chesham Bois Memorial.

**Scouts that served during WW1.**

Acting SM A.P Sewell

ASM H.G Raine

ASM K. Murphy

ASM R. Corin

Leader A.A Keen

Leader A. Crowhurst

Leader A.E Keating

Leader F. Gates

Leader F. Turvey

Leader J. Head

Leader W.C Brudenell

Leader W.J.E Ross

Scout T. Kellar

Scout A. Bignell

Scout A. Matthews

Scout A. Merridan

Scout A. Pearson

Scout A. Wilkinson

Scout E. Cheney

Scout E.J Simpkins

Scout F. Morten

Scout F. Upton

Scout G. Martin

Scout G. Matthews

Scout H. Pearson

Scout J. Matthews

Scout R. Keating

Scout S. Cole

Scout T. Dickinson

SM A.N Woodcock

SM J.J.N Woodcock

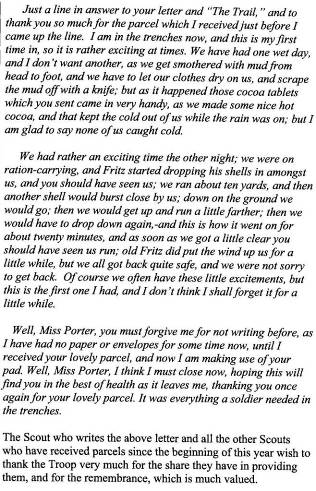
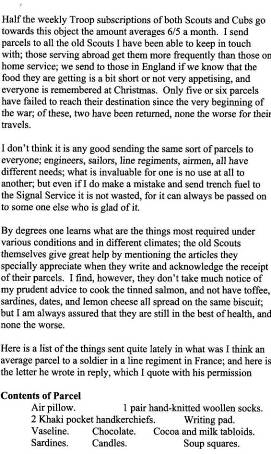
The 1st Chesham Bois Scouts subscribed to a bronze memorial that was located within the Pioneer Hall in 1921. The memorial was inscribed with the names of the fallen in WW1 and dedicated on 16th June 1922. A fire in December 1931 destroyed the Pioneer Hall and badly damaged the memorial. Restored the memorial was rededicated on 16th February 1935 in the new Pioneer Hall.



During WW1 several organizations were formed to help the troops fighting in the front line with extra ‘home’ benefits. The scouts of the 1st Chesham Bois Troop were a special case as they had the benefit of a supportive troop and a keen treasurer and secretary in Miss Elizabeth Sudworth Stansfeld Porter. Born in Warrington in 1866, Miss Porter lived at Meadowlead, Bois Lane from 1909 and into the late 1930’s.From 1910 Miss Porter acted as secretary and treasurer of the 1st Chesham Bois Boy Scouts. During WW1 with the Scout Master away on active service Miss Porter attended every troop meeting and became the focal point in the organization to support the scouts on active duty. A sum of money each week was to be used for parcels to be sent to scouts fighting at the front. From 1917 the scout newsletter ‘The Trail’ was printed and included in every parcel. In return letters, the scouts detailed the problems of everyday living in the trenches.

In recognition of Miss Porter’s service the troop presented her with a rosewood music cabinet and an illuminated address. Meadowland was an open door for the scouts and a meeting place for scouts on leave from the war. Miss Porter was honoured for her outstanding duty by representing the troop at the memorial dedication. For years after, Miss Porter kept in touch with the returning war time scouts until her accidental death in 1940. Miss Porter tripped at the top of her stairs, falling and breaking a collar bone and three ribs that hastened her demise following a long illness.

Miss Porter was a talented musician who organised many concerts and was a women with a flair for the dramatic art. A patient teacher of music, being conversant with music in many phases, in theory and execution she used her knowledge to teach others.

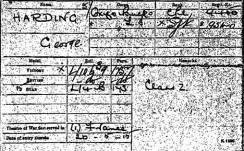


1. **A detailed record of each casualty from the Chesham Bois Parish.**

**1914**

**Private George Harding. 2nd Bn. Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. Moor Road.**

The Harry and Elizabeth Harding family lived at what is now No 20 Moor Road. George had younger three brothers Herbert, Fred and Roberts plus an older sister Annie.



Medal Card

|  |
| --- |
| Name George HARDING  Rank/Number Private / 8896  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 2nd Battalion  Enlisted Oxford - 14/8/ 1914  Age/Date of death 23 / 03 Nov 1914  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders, The Battles of Ypres ("First Ypres")  Residence at death Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois  Cemetery Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, Belgium  Grave Reference Panel 37 & 39  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.  Date/Place of birth 1891 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Harry & Elizabeth Harding / labourer in timber yard  Parents’ Address Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois  Wife  Wife’s Address  Notes CWGC gives age at death as 27. 1901 census gives birth 1892  Medals: Victory, British, 14 Star and clasp. |

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
| **Historical Information:** | The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery. The YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**2nd Battalion**  
August 1914: In Aldershot. **Part of 5th Brigade in 2nd Division**.  
14 August 1914: landed at Boulogne.

**The 2nd Division in 1914-1918.**

**The history of 2nd Division**  
One of the first British formations to move to France, the 2nd Division remained on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in most of the major actions, including:

**1914**  
The Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, including the Affair of Landrecies, the Rearguard affair of Le Grand Fayt and the Rearguard actions of Villers-Cotterets   
The Battle of the Marne  
The Battle of the Aisne including participation in the Actions on the Aisne heights

**First Battle of Ypres**

**5th Brigade**

2nd Bn. Worcestershire Regt left December 1915

**2nd Bn. Ox & Bucks Light Infantry**

2nd Bn. Highland Light Infantry

2nd Bn. Connaught Rangers left November 1914

1/9th Bn. Highland Light Infantry joined November 1914, left January 1916

2nd Bn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers joined January 1915, left July 1915

1st Bn. Queen's joined July 1915, left December 1915

1/7th Bn. King's (Liverpool Regt) joined September 1915, left November 1915

17th Bn. Royal Fusiliers joined December 1915, left February 1918

24th Bn. Royal Fusiliers joined December 1915

5th Machine Gun Company formed on 1 January 1916   
left to move into 2nd MG Battalion 4 March 1918

5th Trench Mortar Battery joined by 11 March 1916

**The Battles of Ypres ("First Ypres")**

**19 October - 22 November 1914**

Elements of the British Expeditionary Force which took part in this engagement:

Phase: the Battle of Langemarck, 21-24 October 1914  
**I Corps (Haig): 1st and 2nd Divisions**  
IV Corps (Rawlinson): 7th and 3rd Cavalry Divisions

**Phase: the Battle of Gheluvelt, 29-31 October 1914**

I Corps (Haig): 1st, 2nd, 7th and 3rd Cavalry Divisions

**Phase: the Battle of Nonne Bosschen, 11 November 1914**

I Corps (Haig): 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions  
7th (less 3rd Worcestershire Regiment) and 9th Brigades (of 3rd Division)  
15th Brigade (less 1st Norfolks and 1st Dorsets) (of 5th Division)  
2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers and 2nd Duke of Wellington's (of 5th Division)  
14th London Regiment (London Scottish)

1st Cavalry Division entered the line on 12 November but did not participate in one of the identifiable battles above.

**Private Ernest William Olney. 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

*Subsequent research shows that E W Olney was actually Emmanuel Olney, the brother of Sydney Olney.*

**Casualty Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** | OLNEY |
| **Initials:** | E.W |
| **Nationality:** | United Kingdom |
| **Rank:** | Private |
| **Regiment/Service:** | Bedfordshire Regiment |
| **Unit Text:** | 2nd Bn. |
| **Date of Death:** | 31/10/1914 |
| **Service No:** | 9975 |
| **Casualty Type:** | Commonwealth War Dead |
| **Grave/Memorial Reference:**  **Medals:** | XVII. A. 7.  British, Victory, 14 Star and Clasp. |
| **Cemetery:** | [**HARLEBEKE NEW BRITISH CEMETERY**](http://www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery_details.aspx?cemetery=55701&mode=1) |

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | HARLEBEKE NEW BRITISH CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Historical Information:** | Harlebeke village was taken on the night of 19-20 October 1918 by the 9th (Scottish) Division. Harlebeke New British Cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields of 1918 and, in 1924-25, from German cemeteries or plots in Belgium. The earlier concentrations are in Plots I and X, and the later in Plots I, II and XI to XIX. In the latter group are many graves of October 1914. In May 1940, The British Expeditionary Force was involved in the later stages of the defence of Belgium following the German invasion, and suffered many casualties in covering the withdrawal to Dunkirk. Commonwealth forces did not return until September 1944. The cemetery now contains 1,116 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 181 of the burials are unidentified and a special memorial is erected to one casualty who is believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of 19 casualties buried by the Germans in other burial grounds whose graves could not be found on concentration. There are also ten burials of the Second World War in the cemetery. |

**The Bedfordshire Regiment**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

1st Battalion  
August 1914 : in Mullingar in Ireland. Part of 15th Brigade, 5th Division.  
Landed in France on 15 August 1914.

**2nd Battalion**  
August 1914 : in Pretoria in South Africa.  
Returned to England and landed at Southampton 19 September 1914.  
**19 September 1914 : attached to 21st Brigade, 7th Division.**  
19 December 1915 : moved with the Brigade to 30th Division, and then transferred to 89th Brigade.  
11 February 1918 : transferred to 90th Brigade, in same Division.  
22 May 1918 : transferred to 54th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division.

**The history of 7th Division**  
  
The 7th Division was formed during September and very early October 1914, by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire. They were assembled in the New Forest in Hampshire before initially moved to Belgium. The Division landed at Zeebrugge in the first week of October 1914, ordered to assist in the defence of Antwerp. However, by the time they arrived the city was already falling and the 7th was instead ordered to hold certain important bridges and other places that would help the westward evacuation of the Belgian army. Once the Belgians were through, the Division was moved westwards, where the infantry entrenched in front of Ypres, the first British troops to occupy that fateful place.



**1914**  
The First Battle of Ypres  
The Division fought the advancing German army to a standstill at Wipers. All units suffered grievous losses, and it was not until the following January/February that it was once more in a complete enough condition to be considered at full fighting strength. After First Ypres, it was often known as the "Immortal Seventh".

**21st Brigade**

Brigade transferred to 30th Division in exchange for 91st Brigade on 19 December 1915

**2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Regt**

2nd Bn.Yorkshire Regt

2nd Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers

2nd Bn. Wiltshire Regt

1/4th Bn. Cameron Highlanders joined April 1915

**The Battles of Ypres ("First Ypres")**

19 October - 22 November 1914

Elements of the British Expeditionary Force which took part in this engagement:

**Phase: the Battle of Langemarck, 21-24 October 1914**  
I Corps (Haig): 1st and 2nd Divisions  
**IV Corps (Rawlinson): 7th and 3rd Cavalry Divisions**

**Phase: the Battle of Gheluvelt, 29-31 October 1914**

I Corps (Haig): 1st, 2nd, 7th and 3rd Cavalry Divisions

**Bedfordshire Regiment War Diary for October 1914.**

War Diary for October 1914

4 Oct 1914 - Southampton LYNDHURST 3 p.m. Verbal order from Staff Captain that 1st Train load to be ready to move 4.30 p.m. LYNDHURST Road STN. 5 p.m. S.P. 1st Train load passed. SOUTHAMPTON Dock Gates. 8.45 pm. 1st Train load arrives. S.S.Winifredian. 11 p.m. 1st Trainload embarkation completed Southampton Dock Gates. 9 p.m. 2nd Trainload arrived, remained in sheds till following morning. For diary of 2nd Train load embarked on S.S. Cornishman see - 2

5 Oct 1915 - S.S. Winifredian 8 A.M.? Left Southampton steamed to Dover [10 P.M.] instructions to proceed towards CALAIS & DUNKIRK. Recalled by wireless off Ostend.

6 Oct 1914 4.30AM. Off DOVER. 6 A.M. Entered DOVER HARBOUR. Took on board 1 days supply for men & horses. 9 p.m. Left Harbour DOVER.

7 Oct 1914 - Ste. Croix near Bruges 3.20AM. Stopped off Zeebrugge. 6.30AM. Entered harbour & disembarked ship’s crew worked badly in getting alongside & delayed greatly unloading wagons. BRUGES 4 p.m. by train. St. CROIX 5 p.m. by march route from STN.BRUGES. Into Billets. men in cavalry granary, officers in houses nearby. Granary not too sanitary. Latrine accommodation scanty. 6 p.m. 2nd Train load arrived. 12.30 AM. Transport arrived by march route.

8 Oct 1914 - Clemskerke 4.30 AM. Stood to Arms. 7 AM. Left St. CROIX. CLEMSKERKE. 6.30 pm. Bn. bivouacked in Bde.

9 Oct 1914 - Assebruck CLEMSKERKE, BRUGES 8.30 AM. Marched with 2 Yorks. Regt. to direct road. Belgian Artillery from ANTWERP & wounded; Household Cav. Bde. seen in Market Square. Also armed motor with Maxim. ASSEBRUCK. 3 p.m. Partly Billets & partly Bivouacs. Heavy rain during night.

10 Oct 1914 - Trois Rois STEENBRUGGE Ry.STN. 3.30 p.m. Marched as right flank guard to column as far as TROIS ROIS Billeted except 1 Coy.

11 Oct 1914 Rested

12 Oct 1914 7.40 AM. to S.P. BEERNEM Ry Stn. 8.5 AM. COOLSCAMP. 3.0 p.m. Billeted in Works of Societ Anonyne la Flandre Pea canning factory. 4.30p.m. "Taube" flew over.

13 Oct 1914 - Roulers-Beuerns Station 6.30 AM. "Taube" reported by Outposts. 2.30 p.m. Commenced march as rear guard. ROULERS - BEUERNS STATION. 9 p.m.-9.30pm. Tedious march. Checks caused by Div. Train & Troops Billeting. Wet. 1 Cos. on Outposts.

14 Oct 1914 - Ypres 7.30AM. BEUERNS STN. Left for S.P. in 8.15 AM. ROULERS 9.30AM. Commenced march. 5.15pm. to Billets S.W. of Town on BAILLEUL ROAD. 8 p.m.

15 Oct 1914 - Menin Road near Zillebeke 11 AM. left Billets under B.M.40 order. on arrival at square near Station. Battn. ordered to take up & entrench a position on line ROAD road [sic] running S.S.W. just W. of 3 Kil. on YPRES-MENIN Rd. to Zillebeke. MENIN Rd. exclusive ZILLEBEKE inclusive. 1 p.m. The Battn. relieved 80 Rgt. (French) on this line. 8 p.m. Battn. continued digging etc. till after dark. 10.50 pm. Battn. ordered to march on.

16 Oct 1914 - Gheluvelt 9.30 AM. Entered village. 11.20 AM. B.M.56 explaining situation. 2.30 PM. Ordered to Billet. 9.10 PM. B.M.64 no move.

17 Oct 1914 No movement. Bn. in Brigade Reserve.

18 Oct 1914 - Menin Road between Gheluvelt and Gheluwe The Battn. formed up on POEZELHOEK-BECELAIRE Road facing S.E. & advanced towards 10 Kilo stone on YPRES-MENIN Road. On nearing the road on coming over a rise we were fired on by rifle fire [*Comment: 1st contact with the Germans*]. Advancing further & astride we came under shrapnel fire. A Company lost [2/Lieut.C.O Bell](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Charles Ockley BELL] killed & Captains F.M.BASSETT [OBE] & Wolff [Cecil Henry WOLFF] & [Lieutenant Horsford](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Thomas Gavin Moor HORSFORD] wounded - other casualties 1 sergeant & 1 man killed 21 other ranks wounded 2 other ranks missing. After this action the Battalion drew back slightly & entrenched a position with its right on 10th Kilo MENIN Road in touch on right side with 20th Bde. on left with R.S.F.

19 Oct 1914 - Gheluvelt Improved trenches. The Division was ordered to attack MENIN. The 22nd Bde. were hard pressed & withdrew. The 21st Bde. covered their withdrawal. The Battalion left the trenches as dusk & returned to GHELUVELT. The Battalion was in Brigade Reserve & billeted in the village. The Bde. held line from 9 Kilo MENIN ROAD through POEZELHOEK to NORDWESTHOEK. Yorkshire R. on the right R.S.F. in centre & Wiltshire Regt. on left.

20 Oct 1914 - near Veldhoek Battalion held trenches of R.S.F.& Wilts R. while these Regiments were supporting the left flank of a Reconnaissance by 20th Bde. Battn. returned to trench in Reserve. The trenches were round & near Track junction between 7 kilo & K. of VELDHOEK. Ref.Map 1/100000. There was heavy firing during the night which was unnecessary.

21 Oct 1914 About 2 p.m. Battalion ordered to move to ZONNEBEKE to reinforce 22nd Brigade. Arrived at level Crossing, reported, stayed about one hour & returned as the German attack had been repulsed. As we were leaving our trenches they were shelled fairly heavily, one platoon of C. Company Lt. Paine [Douglas Mortlake PAINE] being unable to leave its trench. The Battalion was also shelled on the way to ZONNEBEKE.

22 Oct 1914 Early in the morning 2 platoons of D Company which had reinforced R.S.Fusiliers came back & were shelled. [Lieutenant Fernandez](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Dudley Lius de Tavora FERNANDEZ] was killed. Late in the day Battalion started to reinforce 22nd Brigade at ZONNEBEKE, but were met half way by Major Ian Stewart, General Staff, & ordered back as we were not required. On return to Reserve trenches one Company "C" was ordered up on right of Fusiliers. It did not attack but dug a trench during the night.

23 Oct 1914 early in the morning C Company advanced to fill gap between R.S Fusiliers right & Yorkshire R. left. It was allowed to advance nearly to bend in POEZELHOEK Road when it came under heavy rifle & machine gun fire & was not able to maintain its position. [Lieutenant Wright](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [George Drennan Cron WRIGHT] was killed during this advance & there were heavy casualties amongst the men. Later in the day orders were received to fill the gap. B Company was ordered to do this & moving via West end of GHELUVELT under heavy shell fire advanced. Advancing further it came under heavy rifle & machine gun fire but advanced to edge of wood behind Yorkshire R. left & maintained its position. The losses were severe Captain Patron [Alfred Joseph PATRON] and [Lieut. Hopkins](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/1stbn/1stbtnofficersdied.html) [Eric Arthur HOPKINS] being wounded during this operation. During this operation which was well executed by Captain Patron [Alfred Joseph PATRON], the C.O. advanced with Battalion H.Q. through GHELUVELDT to personally interview O.C Yorkshire Regt. in order to ascertain the situation on the Yorkshire Regt. left. After the interview the C.O. moved along BECELAERE Road towards POEZELHOEK until B Company was found in touch with Yorkshire Regts left. The gap was now filled & was consolidated during the night. The following hand sketch shows positions held 23/24 Oct.1914. [not attached]

24 Oct 1914 Improved trenches. Desultory rifle fire all day, several heavy bursts of firing during the night by the Germans which was not replied to.

25 Oct 1914 Battalion ordered to cooperate with an attack on BECELAERE. Attack delayed till late in afternoon. About 5 p.m. the Battalion advanced from its trenches. The movement was practically a wheel to the right. C Company was in touch with Guards on the left but touch was lost between C & D Companies. As the orders strictly enjoined that touch was on no account to be lost with Yorkshire Regt. as soon as B Co. was out if its trenches and at right angles to them, the C.O. gave the order to halt until the situation was cleared up on our left. The enemy fired on B Company twice, the second time inflicted several casualties. The men behaved with great steadiness. It was quite dark during this operation. Orders were eventually received that the attack was suspended & all Companies reoccupied their trenches. There were at least two burning houses (one Battalion H.Q. which had been shelled during the day & set alight) behind us as we advanced.

26 Oct 1914 The Battalion remained holding its trenches as shown in sketch [not attached]. Battalion H.Q. was established in farm near Chateau & moved into C Coys. big trench during the day. 10.30 A.M. [Captain A.G.Hall](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Arthur Gordon HALL] was shot by a sniper. Captain W.E.Wetherall [William Ernest May WETHERALL] took command of the company (D). [Lieut.W.Bastard](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [William BASTARD] was also shot in the same way on this day. During the morning instructions were received that Guards Brigade were to attack BECELAERE. They advanced under heavy shell fire but did not get beyond our line of trenches. The Battalion had orders to advance of the guards right flank after they had gone through our line. D Company did move out of its trenches to the woods behind B Company. But as the advance was held up, late in the afternoon it reoccupied its trenches. [Lieut.W.Bastard](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [William BASTARD] buried by Capt.R.L.Thom [Richard L. THOM] on the N. edge of the wood S. of the road junction at the foot of the BECELAERE hill, in the centre of N edge on W. of road, close to the bend of the road. [Captain A.G.Hall](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Arthur Gordon HALL], probably near the above, to the N.Westwards. Orders were received that the 1st Scots Guards were to relieve the Battalion in the trenches. It was not till early in the morning of 27th that this relief was completed. [Lieut.D.G.C.Thomson](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Donald Godrid Campbell THOMSON] & 20 N.C.O. & men 1st reinforcements arrived.

27 Oct 1914 - between Zandvoorde Chateau and Menin Road The Battalion assembled after the relief & bivouaced at VELDHOEK & at about 9.30 A.M. moved back to bivouac in a wood at HOOGE. At 7 p.m. the Battalion moved up again to take up the left flank of a Brigade line from ZANDEVOORDE [sic] Chateau to 9 Kilo stone on MENIN-YPRES Road. The Battalion relieved the Black Watch & held the line A Company on the right - B Company - C Company - D Company in reserve. A certain amount of digging in was done as the line allotted to the Battalion did not allow sufficient room for the men.

28 Oct 1918 - Zandvoorde-Gheluvelt Road The Battalion remained in position till dusk when it was relieved. The enemy shelled the front line vigorously most of the day & also searched the ground in rear, shelling Battn.H.Q.& reserve company. A Company suffered most, one platoon had their trench, an old redoubt, blown in on it, the men having to be dug out. An attack was expected during the day; to be delivered by the 27 German Reserve Corps on the Cross Roads where our left rested. This attack however was not delivered. After the relief was effected the Battalion moved through GHELUVELT along ZANDEVOORDE Road & took up position, in trenches dug by Royal Welch Fusiliers, on right of our Brigade line. R.S.Fusiliers on our left and 7th Cavalry Bde. on our right. D. Company on battalion right, C Company on left B & A Companies in support.

29 Oct 1914 The night 28/29 was spent in digging support & improving fire trenches. The morning was misty. There was heavy firing on either side of Battalion but no attack from in front. In the afternoon the Battalion was ordered to advance to assist in a counter attack. The Battalion to be on right of Yorkshire Regt. 22nd Brigade on Battalion's right. The Battalion left the trenches & came under heavy shell fire. The latter was particularly annoying & broke up the advance. The Battalion Machine guns under [Captain Botfield](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Charles Sidney GARNETT-BOTFIELD] did excellent work in covering our advance & keeping down the enemy machine gun fire. Further annoyance was caused by the enemy's machine guns as the Battalion advanced as these had apparently been left when the German infantry had been driven back & lay concealed. We were unable to fire back at them as we were told that the Queens R.W. Surrey Regt. were in front of us; these hostile machine guns were as far as could be ascertained between us & the Queens Regt. The Battn. was now somewhat scattered and intermingled with other Regts. During the early part of the night the Battalion was assembled & orders received that it was to go into Brigade Reserve. The trenches held by the Battalion during the day were taken over by the Royal Welch Fusiliers. The night was very wet. The casualties during this day were very severe. [Lieutenant E.E. Punchard](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Edmund Elgood PUNCHARD] killed, Captain W. Wetherall [William Ernest May WETHERALL] wounded. [Lieut. Huntriss](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Harold Edward HUNTRISS] wounded. [Lieut. Kuhn](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Alfred Edgar KUHN] wounded. Lieut. Inskip [Samuel Percival INSKIP] wounded. [Lieut. Whittemore](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/1stbn/1stbtnofficersdied.html) [Frederick WHITTEMORE] wounded Lieut. Small [Edward SMALL] wounded The Battalion took up a position behind a wood in rear of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. 2/Lieut. B.H .Waddy [Bentley Herbert WADDY, MC] Gloucester Regt, & 2 Lt.H. Innes [Edward Henry INNES] Middlesex Regt. joined the Battalion on this date.

30 Oct 1914 - Gheluveldt-Zandvoorde Road The Battalion came under shell fire in the early morning. As trenches had not been dug during the night the Battalion took shelter in ditches and became a little dispersed. 7.30 A.M. the 7 Cavalry Brigade was driven from ZANDEVOORDE this left our right exposed. The Germans occupied ZANDEVOORDE at 10 A.M. a hostile battery came out into the open about 900 yards away from Brigade & farm where Battn. H.Q. had been established & opened fire. This enfiladed the Battalion & a line was formed under facing ZANDEVOORDE [sic]. The hostile battery in the open was quickly silenced. The occupation of ZANDEVOORDE [sic] placed the Germans on the right rear of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, whose trenches were taken. This exposed the right flank of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. At 12.45 p.m. orders were received for the Brigade to retire. The Battalion with the R.S.F. were ordered to cover the retirement. As the R.S.F. drew back in line with the Battalion the S. Lancashire Regt. advanced through the R.S.F. to endeavour to assist to bring back part of the R.S.F. This however they failed to do & returned. A line was taken up at dusk behind the GHELUVELDT-ZANDEVOORDE Road & digging commenced. The Companies were somewhat intermingled. The Battalion was in touch with 22nd Brigade on the Right R.S.F. on the left. Nos.13 & 14 Platoons D.Coy. went forward & eventually were in trenches on left of R.S.F., and between them & R.S.F., The two platoons retired with R.S.F., with part of Captain Whigham's Coy.

31 Oct 1914 - near Inverness Copse Early in the morning about 2.30 A.M. orders were received to occupy a small fir wood about 250 yards in front of our line which was then held by L. North Lancs. R. Captain Lemon [Arthur Buche LEMON] & 2 platoons of C Company were ordered to hold this position. This wood had been subjected to heavy shell fire from two sides during the previous day. Shell fire started as soon as it was light. It soon became evident that the enemy was advancing in force on the left of the wood held by Captain Lemon [Arthur Buche LEMON] & also on the right. The Adjutant went to report the situation to Brigade H.Q.& almost immediately on his return to Battalion H.Q. 2 orderlies arrived with an order from the Brigadier to retire fighting towards MENIN-YPRES Road. Part of the Battalion moved back in compliance of this order. An order was sent to Captain Lemon [Arthur Buche LEMON] to retire from the fir wood upon the Battalion. Part of the Battalion remained in the trenches till late in the afternoon about 4.30 p.m. when they were brought back & established a line which they held till relieved on Nov.5/6. The losses were very severe on this day. The C.O. [Major J.M. Traill](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [John Murray TRAILL] & 2nd in Command [Major R.P. Stares](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Robert Percy STARES] remained in the trenches & were shot at short range. [Lieut.Paterson](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [John Agar PATERSON] was killed in the fir wood. Lieut.Gott [Gilbert Ewart GOTT] was wounded in the Fir wood. Captain A.B. Lemon [Arthur Buche LEMON] was twice wounded in the fir wood & captured. [Captain C.S. Garnet Botfield](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Charles Sidney GARNETT-BOTFIELD] was severely wounded. 2/Lieut. W. Dixon [William DIXON] wounded. [Captain E.H. Lyddon](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Ernest Hugh LYDDON] missing [*Comment; later assumed KIA*]. [Lieut. Anderson](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html) [Wilfred Cruttenden ANDERSON] missing. The Battalion strength on night October 31st-1st November was 4 officers, 350-400 other ranks. 4 officers were [Captain & Adjutant C.C. Foss](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/charlesfossvc.html) [Charles Calverley FOSS, VC, DSO], 2/Lieut. B.H. Waddy [Bentley Herbert WADDY, MC], Lieut. S.D. Mills [Stephen Douglas MILLS, MC], Transport Officer, Captain & Quarter Master H. Cressingham [Hugh CRESSINGHAM]. [Comment; also killed was [Lieutenant Donald Godrid Campbell THOMSON](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/2ndbn/2ndbtnofficersdied.html)] A short line was taken up and entrenched.

**Rifleman Albert William Kingham. 1st Rifle Brigade. Bois Moor Road.**

Born: Amersham 1883. Bert moved to Chalfont St Giles after he married to Jessie Wellings at Amersham 1911. Parents lived at Inkerman Terrace, Chesham. His younger brother Private Frank Kingham also served and died in 1918 and is remembered on the Chesham Memorial.



Medal Card

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| Name Albert William (Bert) KINGHAM  Rank/Number Rifleman / 8644  Regiment/Unit Rifle Brigade / 1st Battalion  Enlisted High Wycombe  Age/Date of death 31 / 20 Dec 1914  How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / Aisne, France  Residence at death Bois Moor Road. Chesham Bois  Cemetery London Rifle Brigade Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium  Grave Reference I.B.7  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1883 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation William & Mary Ann Kingham / bricklayers labourer  Parents’ Address 1901: 279 Waterside, Chesham  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals: Victory, British, 14 Star. |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | LONDON RIFLE BRIGADE CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Comines-Warneton, Hainaut |
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| **Historical Information:** | The commune of Ploegsteert remained under Allied occupation for much of the First World War, but was in German hands from 10 April to 29 September 1918. London Rifle Brigade Cemetery was begun by units of the 4th Division in December 1914, and used by fighting units and field ambulances until March 1918; some German burials were made in April and May. The cemetery owes its name to the 22 burials of the London Rifle Brigade (which then belonged to the 4th Division) in Plot III, made in January, February and March 1915. The cemetery now contains 335 Commonwealth and 18 German burials of the First World War. In June 1927, Lieut.-General Sir H.F.M. Wilson, late G.O.C. 4th Division, unveiled a tablet set in the wall at the north corner of the cemetery, commemorating the dedication of the cemetery by the Bishop of London on Easter Day 1915, and the sacrifice of 91 officers and 1,831 other ranks of the regiment during the war. The cemetery was designed by Charles Holden. |

**The Rifle Brigade**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914: at Colchester. Part of 11th Brigade in 4th Division.  
23 August 1914: landed at Le Havre.

**The 4th Division in 1914-1918**

**The history of 4th Division**  
This Division, initially planned to be part of the original British Expeditionary Force, was at the last minute held back in England to counter any German landing. A decision was soon taken to dispatch it to France and it arrived just in time to play a valuble part at Le Cateau. The 4th Division then remained on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in most of the major actions, including:

***1914***  
The Battle of Le Cateau  
(The Division fought in this action without its Mounted Troops, Heavy Battery, Divisional Ammunition Column, Field Companies RE, Signals Company RE, Field Ambulances RAMC and Divisional Train, which were all still en route from England)  
The Battle of the Marne  
The Battle of the Aisne  
The Battle of Messines 1914

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| **11th Brigade** |  |
| 1st the Somerset Light Infantry |  |
| 1st the East Lancashire Regt | left February 1918 |
| 1st the Hampshire Regt |  |
| 1st the Rifle Brigade |  |
| 1/5th the London Regt (LRB) | joined November 1914, left May 1915 |
| 2nd the Royal Irish Regt | joined July 1915, left May 1916 |
| 11th Machine Gun Company | formed on 23 December 1915  left to move into 4th MG Battalion 26 February 1918 |
| 11th Trench Mortar Battery | formed in June 1916 |

**The Rifle Brigade (1914) by Basil Harvey.**

**‘**The 1st Rifle Brigade, too late for the Battle of Mons, marched into its first action of the Great War on the 25th August 1914, the regimental birthday. Its task, in the 11th Brigade of the 4th Division, at Le Cateau was to act as rearguard in the retreat from Mons after the tail of the 3rd Division had passed through on its way back. After holding back an attack from the North, the Battalion closed upon the main body of the Brigade and in its withdrawal suffered its first casualties. At the end of this miniature rearguard action it was directed into a sunken road which quickly became the front line trench when the other Battalions were driven back. Here the Riflemen gave such a display of rapid fire that it was mistaken by the Germans for machine gun fire.

When the withdrawal of the Brigade on either side had left his forward troops in the Salient with flanks exposed, the Brigadier withdrew his Brigade to a prepared position at Ligny. The 1st Battalion, which had beaten off a determined enemy attack, covered the retirement and gave the Brigadier time to consolidate his troops. The German Infantry pressed forward to the attack when the Battalion had reached Ligny. Twice they attacked; twice they were beaten back, leaving the 11th Brigade in possession. Theleast important part of the achievements of the Rifle Brigade was in covering the withdrawal. Only when they fell back did the enemy take heart in the advance; three Jager Battalions and a Cavalry Brigade had been held at bay by three shattered Companies of the Rifle Brigade.

In the twelve days of the retreat, from the frontiers of Flanders to the outskirts of Paris, the Battalion covered 156 miles, 140 on foot. When Von Gluck over reached himself, exposing his right flank, Joffre’s counter attack drove the Germans back to the Aisne, which the 11th Brigade was the first to cross. Had the whole of the advanced troops acted as promptly as the 11th Brigade in establishing themselves on the high ground above the Aisne, there might have been a shattering German defeat’ but postponement until daylight gave the Germans time to concentrate. The Battle of the Aisne on 14th September was fought a day to late. The 1st Battalion about St. Marguerite settled down to trench warfare gaining its first experience of heavy artillery, patrolling and sniping, protecting its front with spiked sticks, barbed wire entanglements and concealed holes. The war of movement was over, the years of mud, blood and unimaginable sacrifice loomed ahead.

**The Battle of the Aisne**

**7- 10 September 1914**

**Elements of the British Expeditionary Force which took part in this engagement:**

Cavalry Division  
Gough's Command: 3rd and 5th Cavalry Brigades  
I Corps: (Haig): 1st and 2nd Divisions   
II Corps: (Smith-Dorrien): 3rd and 5th Divisions  
III Corps: (Pulteney): 4th Division and 19th Infantry Brigade

This battle includes the tactical incidents:  
> the passage of the Aisne   
> the capture of the Aisne Heights including the Chemin des Dames.

Subsequent to this battle was:  
> the actions on the Aisne Heights, 20 September 1914  
I Corps: (Haig): 1st and 2nd Divisions plus 18th Brigade attached from 6th Division   
II Corps: (Smith-Dorrien): 3rd Division  
> the action of Chivy, 26 September 1914  
I Corps: (Haig): 1st Division

**1915**

**Sergeant Frederick Parmenas Beckley. Bucks B Coy 1st/1st Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. Bois Moor Road.**

Frederick Beckley was the son of watercress grower and grocer Robert and Ellen Beckley. The family lived in 1901, the newly built No 117 Bois Moor Road next to the mineral water spring that fed the extensive Holliman/Beckley Bois Moor watercress beds. William Holliman lived at No 115. The Holliman and Beckley families operated the extensive watercress beds with twenty workers sending the produce to Covent Garden. Earlier in 1891 local Cress Growers were the Dells from Mineral Lane and the Beckley’s from Cress Cottage, Bois Moor Road. His brother Robert, a Company Sergeant Major in the Kings Royal Rifle Corp was awarded the Military Cross.



In 1881 Robert Beckley and Ellen had in their family James (age 8), Laura (5) and Ellener(2).

By 1901 additional children were Frederick, Kathleen and Robert born about 1892. Kathleen lived at 117 Bois Moor Road until the early 1960s.

Robert was a member of Chesham Cricket Club where he played with neighbour Holliman. Frederick showed a great interest in athletics and the Boy Scouts that were founded in 1908 and where he later became the Scout Master. As soon as WWI was inevitable Frederick was one of the first to join on the 30th March 1915 to the Chesham Company of the Bucks Territorial Force where he was made a corporal. When volunteers were sought to fight Frederick was transferred to Chelmsford to join the Battalion of Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry where he was made up to sergeant.

The 1/1st Battalion was amalgamated into the 1/4th Battalion as part of 145th Infantry Brigade embarking at Folkstone for Boulogne where the Battalion were finally trained and marched to Terdeghem. The Battalion were then marched via Bailleul, Armentieres to Le Bizet for trench attachment to the 4th Division.



At Ploegstreert, a village on the Belgium/French border the Germans were in opposing trenches 50 to 150 yards away with crack shot snipers. Trenches were subject to undermining, shell and rifle grenade attacks. The trenches consisted of sandbagged walls, duck board bottoms, large flies and an outrageous smell. The 1/4th Battalion occupied a trench in the right sector known as the ‘Birdcage’ with three divisions in the front line that were under constant attack from snipers and undermining being very close to the German front line. One division was held in reserve situated in a ruined farm. Sergeant Frederick Beckley in the reserve division was working in the open when at 6:30 pm he was badly injured in the stomach from a stray bullet that passed through his body. He was taken to the first aid station at Ploegstreert HQ where he died on the 24th April from his wounds. He was buried along with other 1/4th Oxon and Bucks Battalion soldiers in the cemetery in Ploegstreert Woods, Belgium.

**Scout Parade 1908 entering North Road from Bois Lane. Rev. Holyoake left. Robert Beckley leads the Scouts. Leazefield House in back round.**

The Beckley family received many moving letters, one that quoted Frederick’s last words ’ I have done my duty, better me than a married man, It will break mother’s heart...’. A commemorative service was held at St Leonard’s Church, Chesham Bois on Sunday 2nd May. The church was full to overflowing and attended by the Scouts who wore mourning armbands.

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| Name Frederick Parmenas BECKLEY  Rank/Number Sergeant / 1281  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / B Coy 1/1st Bucks  Enlisted Chesham  Age/Date of death 25 / 24 Apr 1915  How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / France & Flanders, Ploegsteert.  Residence at death  Bois Moor Road  Cemetery Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium  Grave Reference IV.C.2  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1890 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Robert & Ellen A Beckley / watercress grower,grocer.  Parents’ Address Bois Moor, Chesham  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals: Victory, British. 15 Star. |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | PLOEGSTEERT WOOD MILITARY CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Comines-Warneton, Hainaut |
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| **Historical Information:** | Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery was made by the enclosure of a number of small regimental cemeteries. Plot II was originally the SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY CEMETERY, made by the 1st Battalion in December 1914. The 32 graves it contains, as well as ten in Plot I, are from that battalion. Plot IV, the BUCKS CEMETERY, was made by the 1st/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, in April 1915. 11 of the 20 graves it contains are from that battalion. Plot III contains 16 graves of the 1/5th Gloucesters, made between April and May 1915, and in Plots III and I there are 12 graves of the 8th Loyal North Lancs from October to December 1915. However, these plots were known as CANADIAN CEMETERY, STRAND, from the 28 Canadian graves of June to October 1915 in Plot III, and from the trench running nearby. The cemetery as a whole was used sparingly in 1916, and again by the New Zealand Division in July and August 1917. It was in German hands between 10 April and 29 September 1918. Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery contains 164 First World War burials. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the Regular Army.**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force.**

**1/4th Battalion.**

August 1914: in Oxford. Part of South Midland Brigade in South Midland Division.  
30 March 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
15 May 1915: formation became the 145th Brigade in 48th (South Midland) Division.  
November 1917: moved with the Division to Italy.

**1/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion**  
August 1914: in Aylesbury. Record same as 1/4th

**The 48th (South Midland) Division in 1914-1918**

**The history of 48th (South Midland) Division.**

The South Midland Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.

**1914**

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to concentrate in the Chelmsford area by mid August 1914.

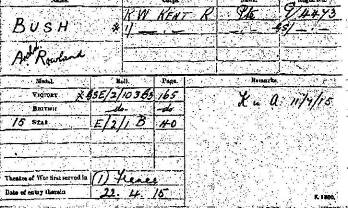
**1915**

On 13 March the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began a week later. Divisional HQ, the Gloucester & Worcester and South Midlland Brigades went via Folkestone-Boulogne while all other units went from Southampton to Le Havre. By 3 April the Division had concentrated near Cassel. The Division then remained in France and Flanders until late 1917.

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| **145th (South Midland) Brigade.** |  |
| 1/5th the Gloucestershire Regiment | left September 1918 |
| 1/4th the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| **1/1st Bucks Bn. Ox & Bucks Light Infantry** |  |
| 1/4th the Royal Berkshire Regiment |  |
| 145th Machine Gun Company | formed 11 January 1916, moved to 48th Bn MGC 22 March 1918 |
| 145th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 14 June 1916 |

**Private Archibald Rowland Bush. Queens Own, 1st Royal West Kent Regiment. Tyn-y-Coed, Holloway Lane.**

Born 1888 Watford. Tyn-y-Coed, Holloway Lane. Son of William M Bush. The brother of Hugh Owen Bush of 2nd Bedfordshire rifles whose body was never found. 1910 survey indicated house about to be built, later called in 1911 Census. Joined Queen’s Own 22-4-1915.Medals Victory, British, 1915 Star.



**Casualty Details**

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| **Name:** | BUSH, ARCHIBALD ROLAND |
| **Initials:** | A R |
| **Nationality:** | United Kingdom |
| **Rank:** | Private |
| **Regiment/Service:** | Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) |
| **Unit Text:** | 1st Bn. |
| **Age:** | 27 |
| **Date of Death:** | 11/07/1915 |
| **Service No:** | G/4473 |
| **Additional information:** | Son of William Michael Bush, of Tyn-Y-Coed, Chesham Bois, Bucks. |
| **Casualty Type:** | Commonwealth War Dead |
| **Grave/Memorial Reference:** | I. C. 6. |
| **Cemetery:** | [**VOORMEZEELE ENCLOSURES No.1 and No.2**](http://www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery_details.aspx?cemetery=10100&mode=1) |

Top of Form

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | VOORMEZEELE ENCLOSURES No.1 and No.2 |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
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| **Historical Information:** | The Voormizeele Enclosures (at one time, there were a total of four, but now reduced to three) were originally regimental groups of graves, begun very early in the First World War and gradually increased until the village and the cemeteries were captured by the Germans after very heavy fighting on 29 April 1918. No.1 and No.2 are now treated as a single cemetery. Enclosure No.1, Plot I of the current cemetery, was begun by the 28th Division in March 1915 and carried on by the 17th, 3rd and other Divisions (and later by the Artillery) until April 1918. A few graves in Row N were added by the Germans, and a few more by Commonwealth forces in September and October 1918. One grave was brought into Row F after the Armistice from a position in the village. Enclosure No.2, now Plot II, was begun in March 1915 and used until April 1917. After the Armistice, 42 graves from Enclosure No.4 were brought into Rows B, C and D. Enclosure No.4 was behind a brewery a little south of Nos.1 and 2. It was begun by the French 3rd Regiment of Zouaves in December 1914 and used by the 4th Rifle Brigade and other Commonwealth units from January to November 1915. There are now 593 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 40 of the burials are unidentified and 19 graves destroyed by shell fire are represented by special memorials. Other special memorials record the names of two casualties buried in Enclosure No.4 whose graves were also destroyed. The cemetery also contains 6 German war graves. |

**The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914: in Dublin. Part of 13th Brigade in 5th Division.  
15 August 1914: landed at Le Havre.  
December 1917: moved with Division to Italy. Returned to France April 1918.

**The history of 7th Division**

The 7th Division was formed during September and very early October 1914, by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire. They were assembled in the New Forest in Hampshire before initially moved to Belgium. The Division landed at Zeebrugge in the first week of October 1914, ordered to assist in the defence of Antwerp. However, by the time they arrived the city was already falling and the 7th was instead ordered to hold certain important bridges and other places that would help the westward evacuation of the Belgian army. Once the Belgians were through, the Division was moved westwards, where the infantry entrenched in front of Ypres, the first British troops to occupy that fateful place.



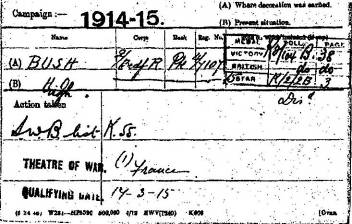
**1915**  
The Battle of Neuve Chapelle  
The Battle of Aubers  
The Battle of Festubert  
The second action of Givenchy   
The Battle of Loos  
The Division took part in the initial assault north of the Vermelles-Hulluch road, facing the Quarries and a series of strong points. Suffering badly from British cloud gas - which was not moved sufficiently by the gentle breeze - and badly cut up by German machine gun fire and artillery, the Division nonetheless seized the Quarries and only failed to penetrate the third German line due to the relative weakness of the numbers of men that got through. The Divisional Commander, Major-General Thompson Capper, died of wounds received during this action.

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| **22nd Brigade.**  2nd Bn. the Queen's | left December 1915 |
| 2nd Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Royal Welsh Fusiliers |  |
| 1st Bn. the South Staffordshire Regt | left December 1915 |
| 1/8th Bn. the Royal Scots | joined November 1914, left August 1915 |
| 1/7th Bn. the King's (Liverpool Regt) | joined November 1915. left January 1916 |
| 20th Bn. the Manchester Regt | joined December 1915, left September 1918 |
| 24th Bn. the Manchester Regt | joined December 1915, left May 1916 |
| 2nd Bn. the Royal Irish Regt | joined May 1916, left October 1916 |
| 2/1st Bn. the Honourable Artillery Company | joined October 1916 |
| 22nd Brigade Machine Gun Company | formed 24 February 1916, left to move into 7th MG Battalion 1 April 1918 |

22nd Brigade relieved the 21st at Givenchy during the night of 17/18 June. The loss of over 1000 officers and men, mostly regulars (many returned from wounds received at Ypres) and ex-regular reservists, was to prove costly both in the effort of assimilating and training new drafts and in subsequent fighting. 21st Brigade had now been over the top three times in four months, following their reconstruction after the devastation of First Ypres only five months before. The burden was falling heavily indeed on the regular army Divisions; the learning curve was proving to be all too expensive.

**Private Hugh Owen Bush. 2nd Bedfordshire Reg. Tyn-Y-Coed Holloway Lane.**

Born: 1890 Watford.Resided atTyn-y-Coed, Holloway Lane. Son of William M. Bush. 1910 survey indicates that the house was about to be built, later named in 1911 Census , the family sold the property in 1922. Joined 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Rifles 14-3-1915. Medals Victory, British, 1915 Star, Silver War Badge. His elder brother, Archibald may have fought with the in the same battle at Festubert but died at a later date in July 1915. The 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire rifles were part of the 7th Division in 1915. Hugh was discharged and died later of his wounds.



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| Name Hugh Owen BUSH  Rank/Number Private / 4/7107  Regiment/Unit Bedfordshire Regiment / 2nd Battalion  Enlisted  Age/Date of death 27 / 20 Apr 1917  How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / Hampstead Hospital.  Residence at death Tyn-Y-Coed, Chesham Bois, Bucks. (Hampstead Hospital?)  Cemetery  Grave Reference  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common,Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1890 / Watford, Herts  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation William Michael & Hannah Bush / clothier  Parents’ Address 1891: 44 Queens Rd, Watford, Herts, 1901, Tyn-Y-Coed, Holloway Lane, Chesham Bois.  Wife  Wife’s Address  Notes Silver War Badge. Discharged. Brother of Archibald Roland Bush. Death registered in Jun qtr 1917 in Hampstead District cert 1a736 |
|  |

**The Bedfordshire Regiment**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**2nd Battalion**  
August 1914: in Pretoria in South Africa.  
Returned to England and landed at Southampton 19 September 1914.  
19 September 1914: attached to 21st Brigade, 7th Division.  
19 December 1915: moved with the Brigade to 30th Division, and then transferred to 89th Brigade.  
11 February 1918: transferred to 90th Brigade, in same Division.  
22 May 1918: transferred to 54th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division.

**The 7th Division in 1914-1918**

**The history of 7th Division**  
  
The 7th Division was formed during September and very early October 1914, by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire. They were assembled in the New Forest in Hampshire before initially moved to Belgium. The Division landed at Zeebrugge in the first week of October 1914, ordered to assist in the defence of Antwerp. However, by the time they arrived the city was already falling and the 7th was instead ordered to hold certain important bridges and other places that would help the westward evacuation of the Belgian army. Once the Belgians were through, the Division was moved westwards, where the infantry entrenched in front of Ypres, the first British troops to occupy that fateful place.



***1914***  
The First Battle of Ypres  
The Division fought the advancing German army to a standstill at Wipers. All units suffered grievous losses, and it was not until the following January/February that it was once more in a complete enough condition to be considered at full fighting strength. After First Ypres, it was often known as the "Immortal Seventh".  
***1915***  
The Battle of Neuve Chapelle  
The Battle of Aubers  
The Battle of Festubert  
The second action of Givenchy   
The Battle of Loos  
The Division took part in the initial assault north of the Vermelles - Hulluch road, facing the Quarries and a series of strong points. Suffering badly from British cloud gas - which was not moved sufficiently by the gentle breeze - and badly cut up by German machine gun fire and artillery, the Division nonetheless seized the Quarries and only failed to penetrate the third German line due to the relative weakness of the numbers of men that got through. The Divisional Commander, Major-General Thompson Capper, died of wounds received during this action.

**The Battle of Festubert (part only).**  
**Inception.**

The battle of Festubert was in effect a second phase of the recently failed [attack on Aubers Ridge](http://www.1914-1918.net/bat11.htm). The strategic context and why this battle took place are explained on that page. Once again, the attack would take the form of a pincer attack with two assault frontages: a northern one along the Rue du Bois near Port Arthur and Richebourg 'Avoue, and a southern one at Festubert.

**The tactical objectives are set.**

"The general plan of the main attack will be as follows: To continue pressing forward towards Violaines and Beau Puits, establish a defensive flank along the La Bassée road on the left and maintaining the right at Givenchy. The line to be established in the first instance if possible on the general line of the road Festubert - La Quinque Rue - La Tourelle crossroads - Port Arthur. The position to be consolidated and the troops reformed and communication established. While this line is being established, a general bombardment on the whole front will continue with a special bombardment of the next objectives, viz: Rue d'Ouvert - Rue du Marais. When ready a fresh advance will be ordered on these objectives"   
First Army Operation Order, 13 May 1915.

**British Order of Battle.**

First Army (Haig)  
I Corps (Monro): 2nd, 7th, 47th (2nd London), 51st (Highland) and 1st Canadian Divisions  
Indian Corps (Willcocks) : 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions.  
51st (Highland) Division switched from I Corps to the Indian Corps on 22 May.

**The battle unfolds.**

**13 May**  
The British bombardment opens with a total of 433 guns and howitzers firing on a 5000 yard front. The 36 six-inch howitzers would fire on the enemy breastwork parapet, to blow gaps through which the infantry could pour; the 54 4.5-inch would hit the German support lines, as would a portion of the field guns. The majority of the 210 eighteen-pounder field guns aimed at the German wire, firing shrapnel which was known to be an ineffective weapon for this task - but there was no High Explosive available. The bombardment was observed in detail: even early on there were reports of a high proportion of dud shells failing to explode - especially the howitzers. Firing day and night, more than 101,000 shells were fired.

**17 May**  
A day of heavy rain, and low cloud. The German units in the area between Ferme du Bois and the Southern Breastwork (opposite Willow Corner) began a systematic withdrawal to a new line, some 1200 yards to the rear. Enough rearguard troops and artillery support were to be provided to enable and hide this action from their assailants.   
*7.30pm*: The 2/Bedfordshire and 1/4/Cameron Highlanders of 21st Brigade attack on the extreme right of the British advanced positions, with the objective of the Southern Breastwork lying some 400 yards away across what appeared to be flat ground. On moving forward, the infantry discover a number of hidden and flooded ditches - and some men drown in the attempt to cross. The Bedfords advance is broken up, but some men of the Camerons get into the Breastwork trenches.

**18 May**

Steady rainfall, clearing around 11.00am.   
3.00am: The 2/Bedfordshire and 1/4/Cameron Highlanders repeat their earlier attack, but it is repulsed. The small party of Camerons in the enemy trench are forced to withdraw due to lack of bombs. Further bombardments and infantry attacks are postponed as visibility is so poor in the mist and rain. Enemy shelling on the newly-won positions along La Quinque Rue continues. First Army gives orders to renew the attack in the afternoon - but ominously the bombardment will have no 4.5-inch howitzer component - ammunition stocks are running dangerously low. The orders reach the infantry with little time for thorough preparation.   
Afternoon: First Army gives orders for relief of 2nd and 7th Divisions; the Canadian and 51st (Highland) would take over with a view to continuing the advance towards Violaines and Chapelle St Roch.

**Casualties.**

More than 16,000 casualties were sustained in the attack at Festubert, in support of the much larger French offensive to the South at Vimy Ridge. French losses there were over 102,000, against German almost 50,000, including those at Festubert.

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| **British casualties in the Battle of Festubert** |
| 2nd Division: 5,284 of which 178 officers (engaged for 6 days) |
| 7th Division: 4,123 of which 167 officers (3) |
| 7th (Meerut) Division: 2,521 of which 102 officers (5) |
| 47th (2nd London) Division: 2,355 of which 166 officers (10) |
| Canadian Division: 2,204 of which 97 officers (8) |

**Private Albert Howe. 6th Bn. Oxon & Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

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| Name Albert HOWE  Rank/Number Private / 22615  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 6th Battalion  Enlisted Chesham  Age/Date of death  27 / 03 Sep 1916  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death  Bois Moor Road ?  Cemetery Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France  Grave Reference Pier & Face 10A & 10D  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.  Date/Place of birth Dec 1889 Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Alfred and Mary/ Britannia Boot Factory/ Grocers Shop.  Parents’ Address  Vale Road, Chesham  Wife  Wife’s Address  **Cemetery Details**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * **Cemetery:** | * THIEPVAL MEMORIAL | | * **Country:** | * France | | * **Locality:** | * Somme | | * **Historical Information:** | * On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1 August 1932 (originally scheduled for 16 May but due to the death of French President Doumer the ceremony was postponed until August). The dead of other Commonwealth countries, who died on the Somme and have no known graves, are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere. | |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**6th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Oxford in September 1914 as part of K2 and attached to 60th Brigade in 20th (Light) Division.  
22 July 1915 ; landed at Boulogne.  
15 February 1918 : disbanded in France, troops going to 2/4th and 5th Bns and 14th Entrenching Battalion.

**The history of 20th (Light) Division**  
  
This Division was established in September 1914 as part of the Army Orders authorising Kitchener's Second New Army, K2. Early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division first assembled in the Aldershot area with brigades at Blackdown, Deepcut and Cowshott. Artillery was particularly hard to come by; 12 old guns arrived from India in February 1915! When in the same month the Division moved to Witley, Godalming and Guildford, the artillery had to go by train as there was insufficient harness for the horses. Another move was made, to Salisbury Plain, in April 1915.

The Division was inspected by King George V at Knighton Down on 24 June 1915, by which time all equipment had arrived and the Division was judged ready for war.

On 26 July 1915 the Division completed concentration in the Saint-Omer area, all units having crossed to France during the preceding few days. Early trench familiarisation and training took place in the Fleurbaix area.

The Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions:

***1916***  
The Battle of Mount Sorrel, a local operation in which the Division recaptured the height with the Canadians   
The Battle of Delville Wood\*   
The Battle of Guillemont\*   
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\*   
The Battle of Morval\*  
The Battle of Le Transloy\*   
*The battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916*

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| **60th Brigade** |  |
| 6th Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry | left February 1918 |
| 6th Bn. the King's Shropshire Light Infantry |  |
| 12th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps |  |
| 12th Bn. the Rifle Brigade |  |
| 60th Machine Gun Company | joined 3 March 1916 left to move into 20th MG Battalion 15 March 1918 |
| 60th Trench Mortar Battery | formed by 16 July 1916 |

**The Battle of the Somme: Battle of Delville Wood, 15 July - 3 September 1916**

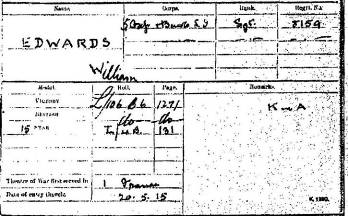
Following the successful dawn attack of 14 July the newly won British line formed a ['salient'](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=48&menu=sub) the right side of which was threatened by [Delville Wood](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=49&menu=sub) and the northern edge by the uncaptured portions of Longueval village. Before any eastward attacks on the German second position could be made it was [vital](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=50&menu=sub) that the whole of Longueval and Delville Wood were captured.

On Saturday 15 July, as the fighting for Longueval continued, the [South African Brigade](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=51&menu=sub) were tasked with securing Delville Wood. Attacking with great determination at 6.15am they rapidly cleared the southern sector, despite the difficulties posed by tangled undergrowth, fallen trees and shell craters; a second advance took them almost to the wood's north-west edge, where they dug in. The Germans retaliated with ceaseless shelling, machine gun fire, and a succession of aggressive counter-attacks. Fighting continued by night and day as renewed South African assaults wore themselves out against German defences. On 18 July heavy rain and German counter-attacks forced critical withdrawals but it was not until the evening of 20 July, after six days of continuous fighting, that the South Africans were [relieved.](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=52&menu=sub)

Vicious fighting for the wood continued for another six weeks, the advantage continuously changing from one side to the other: [27 July](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=53&menu=sub) saw the 2nd Division renew the assault, followed on 4 August by the 17th Division; bloody encounters in mid-August pushed the line forward and an attack by the 14th (Light) Division on 29 August forced out all but a remnant of defiant German defenders. The wood was only completely cleared of Germans following the fall of Ginchy on 9 September 1916.

**Sergeant William North Edwards. 5th Bn. Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

Born 1890 Kensington. Son of William and Emily Edwards. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road. A member of the Joined 5th Battalion Oxon and Bucks LI. 20th May 1915. Chesham Policeman. Medal Card: Victory, British, 1915 Star.



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| **Casualty Details**  Name William North EDWARDS (d)  Rank/Number Sergeant / 8159  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 5th Battalion  Enlisted Thame  Age/Date of death 25 / 28 Jul 1915  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death New Terrace, Chesham Bois  Cemetery Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, Belgium  Grave Reference Panel 37 & 39  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth c1889 / Chilton  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty Bucks Constabulary  Parents/Occupation Mrs John Shipperley (late Edwards) & late Joseph /  Parents’ Address Chilton  Wife Emily Stevens (formerly Edwards)  Wife’s Address 3 St Johns Rd, Aylesbury  Notes mothers first name was Ann |

**Cemetery.**

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| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
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| **Historical Information:** | The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by both side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery. The YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**5th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Oxford in August 1914 as part of K1 and attached to 42nd Brigade in 14th (Light) Division.  
21 May 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
27 April 1918: reduced to cadre strength.  
16 June 1918: transferred to 16th Division.and returned to England.  
20 June 1918: absorbed by 18th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment.

**The history of 14th (Light) Division**  
  
The Division came into existence as a result of Army Order No. 324, issued on 21 August 1914, which authorised the formation of the six new Divisions of K1. It was formed of volunteers. At first it was numbered the 8th (Light) Division, but as more regular army units became available to create a Division, they were given precedence and this was renumbered as the 14th (Light) Division. Initially without equipment or arms of any kind, the recruits were judged to be ready by May 1915, although its move to the fighting front was delayed by lack of rifle and artillery ammunition. The 14th (Light) Division served on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in the following engagements:



**1915**  
The Action of Hooge, in which the Division had the misfortune to be the first to be attacked by flamethrower.  
The Second Attack on Bellewaarde.

**First use of flamethrowers  
30 July 1915**

Units of the German 126th Regiment launched an attack using *flammenwerfer* against the 14th Light) Division holding front-line positions at Hooge in the Ypres salient. This attack, whilst generally expected as the British had successfully attacked and captured ground here a few days before, was launched with great secrecy and achieved surprise. It caused large numbers of casualties to the British defenders, and pushed the enemy line forward. However, although the flamethrower remained a fearsome weapon, British infantry soon learned to deal with the slow-moving men carrying the cumbersome equipment. The British Army did not adopt the weapon.

**The order of battle of the 14th (Light) Division**

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| **42nd Brigade** |  |
| 5th Bn. the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire LI | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 5th Bn. the King's Shropshire Light Infantry | disbanded February 1918 |
| 9th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 9th Bn. the Rifle Brigade | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 42nd Machine Gun Company | joined 24 February 1916  left to move into 14th MG Battalion 1 March 1918 |
| 42nd Trench Mortar Battery | joined 15 April 1916 |
| 6th Bn. the Wiltshire Regt | joined as a cadre June 1918 and rebuilt |
| 16th Bn. the Manchester Regt | joined as a cadre June 1918 and rebuilt |
| 14th Bn. the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders | joined as a cadre June 1918 and rebuilt |

**Lieutenant Arthur Thomas Crawford Cree. 7th Durham Light Infantry. Anthonys, Bois Avenue.**

Arthur was the eldest son of Arthur Walker Cree of Brodsworth, Beckenham originally from Durham. He was born on 28th March 1881 and educated at Shrewsbury School and Magdalen College, Oxford. He was called to the bar as a member of the Inner Temple in 1905 and for a time went on the North Eastern Circuit, but changed to practice on the Chancery side. In 1907 he married Ivy Elizabeth Marion Williams of Queensborough, Leicestershire, a niece of J.G Williams of Pendley Manor, Tring. They had three children and moved to Anthonys, a new house in Bois Avenue. For several years he was a member of Battersea Borough Council. On 4th August 1913 he joined the Inns of Court O.T.C. and obtained a commission with the 7th Battalion Durham Light Infantry stationed in Sunderland under the command of Lt Col E Vaux. He left for France on the 4th May 1915.

The Durham LI landed at Boulogne on the 17th April 1915 moving by train and foot to the front where they became part of the 151st Brigade of the 50th Northumbrian Division.

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| Name Arthur Thomas (Dick) CRAWFORD-CREE  Rank/Number Lieutenant  Regiment/Unit Durham Light Infantry / 7th Battalion  Enlisted  Inns of Court OTC, 4th AUG 1914  Age/Date of death 33 / 12 May 1915  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action /  Residence at death  Anthony's, Chesham Bois  Cemetery Bedford House Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium  Grave Reference Enc No 2 VI.A.47  Location of memorial Chesham Bois  Date/Place of birth 28 May 1881 / Beckenham, Kent  Date/Place of baptism  St Barnabas Church, Beckenham  Occupation of Casualty  Barrister  Parents/Occupation Arthur Walker Cree & Elizabeth (Newby) Cree / solicitor  Parents’ Address 1901: 124 Bromley Rd, Beckenham, Kent  Wife Ivy E M Cree  Wife’s Address Anthony's, Chesham Bois  Notes wooden grave marker at St Barnabas Church, Beckenham  Medals: Victory, British, 15 Star. | |
| **Cemetery:** | BEDFORD HOUSE CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
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|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | Zillebeke village and most of the commune were in the hands of Commonwealth forces for the greater part of the First World War, but the number of cemeteries in the neighbourhood bears witness to the fierce fighting in the vicinity from 1914 to 1918. Bedford House, sometimes known as Woodcote House, were the names given by the Army to the Chateau Rosendal, a country house in a small wooded park with moats. Although it never fell into German hands, the house and the trees were gradually destroyed by shell fire. It was used by field ambulances and as the headquarters of brigades and other fighting units, and charcoal pits was dug there from October 1917. In time, the property became largely covered by small cemeteries; five enclosures existed at the date of the Armistice, but the graves from No.1 were then removed to White House Cemetery, St. Jean, and those from No.5 to Aeroplane Cemetery, Ypres. ENCLOSURE No.2 was begun in December 1915, and used until October 1918. After the Armistice, 437 graves were added, all but four of which came from the Ecole de Bienfaisance and Asylum British Cemeteries, both at Ypres. ENCLOSURE No.3, the smallest, was used from February 1915 to December 1916; the burials made in August-October 1915 were largely carried out by the 17th Division. ENCLOSURE No.4, the largest, was used from June 1916 to February 1918, largely by the 47th (London) Division, and after the Armistice it was enlarged when 3,324 graves were brought in from other burial grounds and from the battlefields of the Ypres Salient. Almost two-thirds of the graves are unidentified. ENCLOSURE No.6 was made in the 1930s from the graves that were continuing to be found on the battlefield of the Ypres Salient. This enclosure also contains Second World War burials, all of them soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force, who died in the defence of the Ypres-Comines canal and railway at the end of May 1940. The canal lies on high ground on the west side of the cemetery. Commonwealth casualties buried in the following smaller cemeteries were either concentrated into Bedford House Cemetery after the war or if lost, are now commemorated in Bedford House Cemetery:- ASYLUM BRITISH CEMETERY, YPRES, was established in the grounds of a mental hospital (the Hospice du Sacre Coeur) a little West of the railway station, between the Poperinghe road and the railway. It was used by Field Ambulances and fighting units from February 1915, to November 1917, and it contained the graves of 265 soldiers from the United Kingdom, nine from Canada, seven from Australia and two of the British West Indies Regiment. BOESINGHE FRENCH CEMETERY No.2, a little South of Bard Cottage, contained the grave of one soldier from the United Kingdom. DROOGENBROODHOEK GERMAN CEMETERY, MOORSLEDE, contained the graves of two United Kingdom soldiers who fell in October 1914. ECOLE DE BIENFAISANCE CEMETERY, YPRES, was on the North side of the Poperinghe road, immediately West of the railway, in the grounds of a school (later rebuilt). It was used by Field Ambulances in 1915-1917, and it contained the graves of 133 soldiers from the United Kingdom, three from Canada, three from Australia and one of the British West Indies Regiment. KERKHOVE CHURCHYARD contained the graves of five United Kingdom soldiers, who fell in October and November 1918, and seven German. POELCAPELLE GERMAN CEMETERY No.4, between Langemarck and the Poelcapelle-St. Julien road, contained the graves of 52 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in 1914 and 1916. ZONNEBEKE BRITISH CEMETERIES No.1 and No.3 were on the South and North sides respectively of the Broodseinde-Zonnebeke road. Zonnebeke was occupied by the Germans on the 22 October 1914, retaken by the French on the following day, and evacuated at the beginning of May 1915; retaken by British troops on the 26 September 1917; evacuated again in April 1918; and retaken by Belgian troops on the 28th September, 1918. Four British Cemeteries were made by the Germans on the Broodseinde-Zonnebeke road; No.1 contained the graves of 31 United Kingdom soldiers (mainly 2nd East Surrey) who fell in April 1915, and No.3 those of 69 who fell in April, and May 1915. In all, 5,139 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War are buried or commemorated in the enclosures of Bedford House Cemetery. 3,011 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate a number of casualties known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials name casualties buried in other cemeteries whose graves could not be found on concentration. Second World War burials number 69 (3 of which are unidentified). There are 2 Germans buried here. |

**The Durham Light Infantry**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**1/7th Battalion**  
August 1914 : at Sunderland. Part of DLI Brigade, Northumbrian Division. Moved to coast defences in mid August, then Ravensworth Park. Was at Newcastle by October.  
17 April 1915 : landed at Boulogne.  
14 May 1915 : became 151st Brigade in 50th (Northumbrian) Division.  
16 November 1915 : left Brigade and converted into Pioneer Battalion for same Division.  
20 June 1918 : transferred to 8th Division.  
3 July 1918 : absorbed the 22nd Bn.

**The history of 50th (Northumbrian) Division**  
  
The Northumbrian Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.

***1914***

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to their allotted positions on the Tyne defences by mid August 1914.

***1915***

In early April the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began on 16 April. By 23 April the Division had concentrated in the area of Steenvoorde. It had arrived just as the German army had attacked at nearby Ypres, using poison gas for the first time, and was rushed into the battle. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:

The Battle of St Julien=  
The Battle of Frezenburg Ridge=  
The Battle of Bellewaarde Ridge=   
*= the battles marked = are* *phases of the Second Battles of Ypres*

The Battle of St Julian.

The village of St. Julien had been comfortably in the rear of the 1st Canadian Division until the poison gas attack of 22 April, whereupon it became the front line. Some of the first fighting in the village involved a hasty defence, which included the stand of [Lance Corporal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lance_Corporal) [Frederick Fisher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Fisher) of the 13th Battalion CEF's machine-gun detachment; who twice went out with a handful of men and a Colt Machine-gun and prevented advancing German troops from passing through St. Julien into the rear of the Canadian front line. Fisher was awarded the VC for his actions on the 22nd, but was killed when he attempted to repeat his actions on the 23; this was the first of 70 Canadian VCs awarded in the First World War.

On the morning of 24 April 1915 the Germans released another cloud of chlorine gas, this time directly towards the re-formed Canadian lines just west of the village of St. Julien. On seeing the approach of the greenish-grey gas cloud, word was passed among the Canadian troops to urinate on their handkerchiefs and place these over their noses and mouths. However, the countermeasures were ineffective and the Canadian lines broke as a result of the attack, allowing German troops to take the village. The following day the York and Durham Brigade units of the 50th Northumberland Division counterattacked failing to secure their objectives but establishing a new line close to the village. The third day the Northumberland Brigade attacked again, briefly taking part of the village but forced back with the loss of more than 1,900 men and 40 officers - two thirds of its strength.

The 2nd [Royal Dublin Fusiliers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Dublin_Fusiliers) Battalion suffered heavily, incurring hundreds of casualties and with no respite took part in the next two subsidiary battles at Frezenberg and Bellewaarde. On 24 May the battalion was subject to a German chlorine gas attack near Saint Julien and effectively disintegrated as a fighting unit.

**L/Cpl. Sidney John Olney. 1st Bedfordshire Reg. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

Born: Hitchen, Beds 1886. Lived at Manor Cottages, Bois Lane. Brother Ernest William Olney (*Subsequent research shows that E W Olney was actually Emmanuel Olney, the brother of Sydney Olney)* born 1888 Hitchen also joined the Bedfordshire Regiment died in 1915. Relation Alfred Edward J Olney born 1875 Amersham son of James and Harriet Olney lived in Green Lane then at Manor Cottages, Bois Lane served with Oxon and Bucks LI in the Boer War was injured in WW1 by shrapnel in 1915.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name Sidney John OLNEY  Rank/Number Lance Corporal / 8475  Regiment/Unit Bedfordshire Regiment / 1st Battalion  Enlisted Waltham Abbey, Essex  Age/Date of death 28 / 29 Jan 1915  How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / France & Flanders  Residence at death Great Missenden  Cemetery Bailleul Communal Cemetery (Nord), France  Grave Reference H.1  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1886 / Ickleford, Herts  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Samuel & Thirza Olney / farm labourer  Parents’ Address 1901: Enfield, Middx  Wife  Wife’s Address  **Cemetery Details**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Cemetery:** | BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY (NORD) | | **Country:** | France | | **Locality:** | Nord | |  |  | | **Historical Information:** | Bailleul was occupied on 14 October 1914 by the 19th Brigade and the 4th Division. It became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre, with the 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 11th, 53rd, 1st Canadian and 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Stations quartered in it for considerable periods. It was a Corps headquarters until July 1917, when it was severely bombed and shelled, and after the Battle of Bailleul (13-15 April 1918), it fell into German hands and was not retaken until 30 August 1918. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made at the east end of the communal cemetery and in April 1915, when the space available had been filled, the extension was opened on the east side of the cemetery. The extension was used until April 1918, and again in September, and after the Armistice graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields. BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY contains 610 Commonwealth burials of the First World War; 17 of the graves were destroyed by shell fire and are represented by special memorials. BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION contains 4,403 Commonwealth burials of the First World War; 11 of the graves made in April 1918 were destroyed by shell fire and are represented by special memorials. There are also 17 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War and 154 German burials from both wars. | |

**The Bedfordshire Regiment**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914 : in Mullingar in Ireland. Part of 15th Brigade, 5th Division.  
Landed in France on 15 August 1914.

**The history of 5th Division**  
  
This Division was part of the original British Expeditionary Force and remained on the Western Front until late 1917 when it moved to Italy. It took part in most of the major actions, including:



***1914***  
The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, including the Action of Elouges   
The Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois   
The Battle of the Marne  
The Battle of the Aisne  
The Battles of La Bassee and Messines 1914  
The First Battle of Ypres   
***1915***  
The Second Battle of Ypres and the Capture of Hill 60  
In late 1915, many units were switched for those of 32nd Division, a newly arrived volunteer formation. The idea was to strengthen ("stiffen" in the jargon of the time) the inexperienced Division buy mixing in some regular army troops; even though by now many of the pre-war regulars had gone and the regular battalions themselves were often largely composed of new recruits.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **15th Brigade** |  |
| *This Brigade was attached to 28th Division between 3 March 1915 and 7 April 1915 in exchange for 83rd Brigade* | |
| 1st Bn. the Norfolk Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Bedfordshire Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Cheshire Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Dorsetshire Regt | left November 1915 |
| 1/6th Bn. the Cheshire Regt | joined December 1914, left March 1915 |
| 1/6th Bn. the King's (Liverpool Regt) | joined February 1915, left November 1915 |
| 16th Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regt | joined December 1915, left October 1918 |
| 15th Brigade Machine Gun Company | formed on 27 December 1915  left to move into 5th MG Battalion 26 April 1918 |
| 15th Trench Mortar Battery | formed April 1916 |
|  |  |

**The 1st Bn's Bedfordshire Regiment service in The Great War.**

The 1st Battalion was a "Regular Army" Battalion, who were at Mullingar, Ireland, at the outbreak of war. On mobilisation they left England as part of 15th Infantry Brigade in the 5th Division and went down in history as one of the Battalions of "Old Contemptibles" who fought against the Kaisers larger armies in the early engagements of the war.

Their Division landed in France on 16th August 1914 as a part of Haig's II Corps and fought in the early engagements of the War. They were engaged at the Battle of Mons in August and fought fiercely during the stand at Le Cateau, where 5 VC's were won by their Division. After service during the battles of the Aisne and the Marne, they were rushed north to Flanders and were also involved in the Battle of La Bassee, followed by the First Battle of Ypres. By the end of November the Division had suffered 5,000 casualties and stayed in a purely defensive role that winter.

Having moved to the Ypres salient early in 1915, the Division were engaged at the Second Battle of Ypres, defending Hill 60, where another 4 VCs were won in one day. In May Private [Edward Warner](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/1stbn/edwardwarnervc.html) of the 1st Bedford’s won his VC defending Hill 60 during the early use of gas as an offensive weapon, but was awarded the honour posthumously as he died of his wounds the following day.

The original soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Battalions were amongst the "Old Contemptibles" - the title proudly adopted by the men of the original British Expeditionary Force (BEF) who saw active service before 22nd November 1914. They were the professional soldiers of the British Army, almost all of whom were regular soldiers or reservists. They took their honourable title from the famous "Order of the Day" given by Kaiser Wilhelm II at his headquarters in Aix-la-Chapelle on the 19th August, 1914 - "*It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English; walk over General French's contemptible little Army*."

They remained on the Western Front throughout the war, serving in all sectors from Ypres to the Somme, except for a brief tour of duty in Italy between December 1917 and April 1918.

**Major Battles**

The Battalion were engaged in the following major battles throughout the war:

In 1914 they were in the original British Expeditionary Force and fought at the battles of Mons and Le Cateau in August, the battles of the Marne and the Aisne in September, at the battle of La Bassee in October and during the Battle of Ypres 1914 (also known as the First Battle of Ypres) in November

In 1915 they were heavily engaged during the Battle of Ypres 1915 (also known as the Second battle of Ypres) in April and May, where they fought at Hill 60.

In 1916 they were involved in several phases of the Battle of the Somme, namely the attacks on High Wood 20th to 25th July, at Longueval 27th July, the Battle of Guillemont and the Battle of Flers-Courcelette in September.

In 1917 they were at the Battle of Arras, specifically at the attack on La Coulotte in April and the Third Battle of the Scarpe in May. They were also involved in the capture of Oppy Wood in June. During the Battles of Ypres 1917 (known as the Third Battle of Ypres or Passchendaele), the battalion were engaged in the Battles of Broodseinde and Poelcapelle in October as well as the Second battle of Passchendaele in October and November, before being moved to help stabilise the front in Italy following the disastrous battle of Caporetto.

In 1918 the battalion were rushed back to the Western Front in response to the German Spring Offensives and fought in the Battle of the Lys, specifically in the Battle of Hazebrouck, during the defence of the Nieppe Forest. Once the Allied army went on the final offensives that would become loosely known as the "100 days" they were engaged in several actions - in the Battle of Albert in August and the Second Battle of Bapaume in September during the Second battles of the Somme 1918, the Battle of the Canal du Nord in September during the Battles for the Hindenburg Line, the Battle of the Selle during the Final Advance in Picardy

**A brief description by Brigadier-General** C**ount Gleichen** **of the ‘Bedfords’ at the front when Sidney Olney lost his life.**

Imagine a bit of rolling country--rather like parts of Leicestershire,--fair-sized fields, separated mostly by straggling fences interspersed with wire (largely barbed), and punctuated by tall trees. Patches of wood in places, spinney size for the most part. Low

hills here and there--Kemmel, Scherpenberg, Ploegsteert Wood,--but all outside our area. For villages, Dranoutre, Neuve Église, Wulverghem, and Lindenhoek, of which the two last were already more than half shot to pieces and almost deserted. Opposite our right was Messines--a mile and a half in front of our line,--its big, square, old church tower still standing; it may have had a spire on the top, but if so it had disappeared before we came. Nearly opposite our extreme left, but out of our jurisdiction and in the sphere of the Division on our left, was Wytschaete (pronounce Wich Khâte), one and a half miles off. The cavalry had held both Messines and Wytschaete at the end of October, but had been overwhelmingly attacked here and driven out of them, so that the two villages formed a hostile bulge into our line. We had been in hopes of driving attacks into the base of the bulge and thus forcing a retirement. But the Germans reinforced the bulge and entrenched it heavily, and instead of our cutting off the bulge, it became flatter and flatter, without giving way at the point, so that we had to retire slightly, on either side, and not they.

Farms, nearly all of them roofless and half-ruined, were dotted about over the country. Small ones for the most part they were, and of the usual type--a liquid and stinking manure-heap surrounded on three sides by a living-house and barns. Of the roads, those from Dranoutre to Lindenhoek, Dranoutre to Neuve Église, and Neuve Église viâ Wulverghem to Messines, were pavé\_i.e, cobble-stones down the centre and mud on both sides. Those joining Lindenhoek to Neuve Église and Wulverghem were also mostly pavé. The remainder were mere field tracks for the most part, rarely metalled, and in wet weather almost impassable for mud.

Oh that mud! We have heard lots about Flanders mud, but the reality transcends imagination, especially in winter. Greasy, slippery,

holding clay, over your toes in most places and over your ankles in all the rest--where it is not over your knees,--it is the most

horrible "going" I know anywhere. Whether you are moving across plough or grass fields, or along lanes, you are perpetually skating about and slipping up on the firmer bits and held fast by the ankles in the softer ones. There is no stone in the district, nothing but rich loamy clay, alias mud. However much you dig, you never come across stone, nothing but sticky mud which clings to your shovel and refuses to be parted from it-mud that has to be scraped off at almost every stroke, mud that absorbs water like a sponge yet refuses to give it up again. Every little puddle and rut, every hoof-depression full of rain, remains like that for weeks; even when the weather is fine the water does not seem to evaporate, but remains on the surface.

And when it rains, as it did all that winter (except when it snowed), the state of the trenches is indescribable. Some were, frankly, so

full of water that they had to be abandoned, and a breastwork erected behind. But a breastwork is slow work, especially if you are less than 100 yards from the enemy. For weeks, indeed, the garrison of one particular trench had to lie out on the mud, or on what waterproofs they could get, behind a shelter two to three feet high—always growing a little, yet never to be made to a real six feet height for reason of conspicuousness and consequent clusters of Black Marias.

Other trenches varied from five inches to five feet deep in mud; in one a Dorset man was literally almost drowned and drawn forth with great difficulty. Many cases occurred of semi-submersion, and as for moving up the communication trenches during the winter, it was generally impossible, for they were either knee-deep in water or in mud that simply refused to be drained. So men preferred the risk of a stray bullet to the certainty of liquid mud to the knees and consequent icy discomfort for twenty-four hours and more. And as for the unfortunate ration-parties and men bringing up heavy trench stores, their task was really one of frightful labour, for, for two men to cross a large and slippery muddy series of fields carrying a 100 lb. box between them was no joke. First one would slide up and skate off in one direction whilst the other did his best to hold on, generally resulting in dropping his end of the box or finding himself on the flat of his back. Then the parts would be reversed, but they always slid up in opposite directions--the mud saw to that,--and they would arrive in the trenches, after their stroll of a mile or less, absolutely exhausted and dripping with sweat. It was difficult enough, over much of the ground, to avoid slipping up even when burdened by nothing more than a walking-stick; that I know from personal experience. Yet for many weeks the men had to do this and suffer, for fascines and bricks, besides sandbags, were only just beginning to make their appearance in December; and floor-boards and gratings and gravel and trench stores and wire-netting, and revetments and planks and iron sheeting and trestles and hurdles of all sorts, did not really materialize in anything like sufficient numbers till March.

The draining of the trenches was heartbreaking. After a heavy day or two of rain the parapets would fall down in hunks into the foot of water or so in the trenches, and would churn up into liquid mud, only to be removed by large spoons, of which we had none, or buckets, of which we had but very few. It was too thick to drain off down the very, very gradual slopes which were the best we could do, and too liquid to be shoveled away; so there it would remain, and our strenuous efforts in rebuilding the parapets (for at this period we had no revetting material) would only result, a night or two later, in still further collapses.

The R.E. companies, both 17th and 59th, worked like heroes, and so particularly did the Norfolks and Bedfords; but it was most

disheartening work. No sooner was one parapet fairly complete than another fell in; and when this was mended the first one would collapse again under the incessant downpour. And all this time wire entanglements had to be put up in front under hostile fire, trenches connected up and drained, support trenches dug, communication trenches improved, loopholes made, defences thickened and strengthened, saps pushed out, all under the fire of an enemy anything from 60 to 200 yards off, and always on rather higher ground than ourselves, worse luck, so that he had the whip-hand.

Soon came the period of hand grenades, in which he had six to one the best of us in numbers; and then in rifle grenades ditto and then in trench mortars, flare-lights, searchlights, and rockets--wherein we followed him feebly and at a great distance; for where he sent up 100 (say) light balls at night, we could only afford five or six; and other things in proportion. Later on came the Minenwerfer, an expanded type of trench mortar, and its bomb, but up to the end of February his efforts in this direction were not very serious, though I allow that he did us more harm thereby than we him. For our trench mortars were in an experimental stage, made locally by the R.E., and constructed of thin gas-pipe iron and home-made jam-pot bombs, whose behaviour was always erratic, and sometimes, I regret to say, fatal to the mortarist. (Poor Rogers, R.E., a capital subaltern, was killed thus, besides others, I fear.)

**Rifleman William Henry North. 8th King’s Royal Rifles Corps. Manor Cottages, Bois Lane.**

Born Dec 1892 Pewsey, Wilts. Lived at No8 (later No6) Manor Cottages, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois with his Aunt Mrs Austin. William had previously boarded with Mrs Gristwood, Lexham Gardens. William was a member of the Cestreham Cycling and Athletic Club where he had won a medal before joining the Kings Royal Rifles. He had worked at Hollybush Nursery, Chesham Bois as a Nurseryman. William went to France on the 16th May 1915. He was killed by a direct hit from a shell while making tea in a ruined farm cottage.He had been at the front for six weeks. Medals: Victory, British, 15 Star.



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| Name William Henry NORTH  Rank/Number Rifleman / A/464  Regiment/Unit Kings Royal Rifle Corps / 8th Battalion  Enlisted London  Age/Date of death 23 / 03 Jul 1915  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death No 8 Manor Cottages, Bois Lane Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium  Grave Reference IV.E.18  Location of memorial Amersham Memorial Gardens.  Date/Place of birth 1892 / Wootton Rivers, Marlborough, Wilts  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty Nurseryman , Hollybush Nursery, Hollybush Lane, Amersham Common.  Parents/Occupation William & Lucy North / carter on farm  Parents’ Address 1 Wootton Rivers, Marlborough, Wilts  Wife  Wife’s Address  Notes Boarding at No 8 (later No6) Manor Cottages Chesham Bois (Miss Lewis) with Aunt Mrs Austin.  1901 boarding with brother in law Frederick Austin with Mrs Griswood, Lexham Gardens |
| **The King's Royal Rifle Corps**  **Battalions of the Territorial Force**  The KKRC did not form any battalions for the TF.  **Battalions of the New Armies**  **8th (Service) Battalion** Formed at Winchester on 21 August 1914 as part of K1 and attached to 41st Brigade in 14th (Light) Division. Moved to Aldershot, going on to Grayshott in November and in February 1915 went to Bordon. Returned to Aldershot in March 1915. May 1915: landed at Boulogne. 27 April 1918: reduced to cadre strength. 16 June 1918: transferred to 34th Division and on 27 June to 39th Division. 3 August 1918: disbanded at Desvres.  **The history of 14th (Light) Division**  The Division came into existence as a result of Army Order No. 324, issued on 21 August 1914, which authorised the formation of the six new Divisions of K1. It was formed of volunteers. At first it was numbered the 8th (Light) Division, but as more regular army units became available to create a Division, they were given precedence and this was renumbered as the 14th (Light) Division. Initially without equipment or arms of any kind, the recruits were judged to be ready by May 1915, although its move to the fighting front was delayed by lack of rifle and artillery ammunition. The 14th (Light) Division served on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in the following engagements: |
| **The King's Royal Rifle Corps**  **1915** The Action of Hooge, in which the Division had the misfortune to be the first to be attacked by flamethrower. The Second Attack on Bellewaarde  **1916** The Battle of Delville Wood\* The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\* The battles marked **\*** are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916  **The Battles of the Somme 1916**  **Phase: the Battle of Delville Wood, 15 July - 3 September 1916**  Fourth Army (Rawlinson) XIII Corps (Congreve) (relieved by XIV Corps at night 16-17 August)  2nd Division 3rd Division  9th (Scottish) Division 24th Division  53rd Brigade of 18th (Eastern) Division. XIV Corps (Cavan) (relieved XIII Corps at night 16-17 August)  20th (Light) Division 24th Division. XV Corps (Watts) 7th Division **14th (Light) Division.**  Private W.H North was killed by the shelling prior to the Battle of Delville Wood.  The Battle of Delville Wood was one of the early engagements in the 1916 [Battle of the Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme) in the [First World War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I). It took place between 14 July and 3 September, between the armies of the [German Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire) and allied [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) and [South African](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Army) forces. Delville Wood[[Note 1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Delville_Wood#cite_note-2) is located to the north east of the town of [Longueval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longueval) in the [department](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9partement_in_France) of the [Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somme) in northern [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France). After the two weeks of carnage from the commencement of the [Somme Offensive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_day_on_the_Somme), it became evident that a breakthrough of either the Allied or German line was most unlikely and the offensive had evolved to the capture of small prominent towns, woods or features which offered either side even the slightest tactical advantage from which to direct artillery fire or to launch further attacks.  Delville Wood was one such feature, making it a critical objective to both German and Allied forces. As part of a large offensive starting on 14 July, General [Douglas Haig](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Haig,_1st_Earl_Haig), Commander of the [Allied Armies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Expeditionary_Force_(World_War_I)) intended to secure the British right [flank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flanking_maneuver), while the centre advanced to capture the higher lying areas of [High Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Wood) in the centre of his line. Delville Wood was a battle to secure this right flank. The battle achieved this objective and is considered a tactical Allied victory. However, it was one of the bloodiest confrontations of the Somme, with both sides incurring large casualties. This tactical victory needs to be measured against the losses sustained as well as the fact that the British advance to the north had made only marginal gains by the end of the battle.  The battle is of particular importance to [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa), as it was the first major engagement entered into by the South African [1st Infantry Brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Brigade_(South_Africa)) on the [Western Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Front_(World_War_I)). The casualties sustained by this Brigade were of catastrophic proportions, equal to—or worse than those encountered by Allied battalions on the [first day of the Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_day_on_the_Somme). On the Western Front, units were normally considered to be incapable of combat if their casualty levels had reached 30% and they were withdrawn once this level had been attained. The South African Brigade suffered losses of 80%, yet they managed to hold the Wood as ordered. This feat has been described as "..the bloodiest battle of hell of 1916.  Today, Delville Wood is known for the well preserved wood with the still visible remains of the original trenches, a museum and [monument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delville_Wood_Commonwealth_War_Graves_Commission_Cemetery) to the fallen South Africans.  **Private Albert Henry Peto. 18th Labour Coy. Army Service Corp.**   |  | | --- | | Name Albert Henry PETO  Rank/Number Private / SS/13253  Regiment/Unit Royal Army Service Corps / 18th Labour Coy  Enlisted London  Age/Date of death 29 / 13 Aug 1915  How died/Theatre of war Died / at sea  Residence at death Great Missenden  Cemetery Helles Memorial, Turkey  Grave Reference Panel 199or233-236&331  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1885 / Guildford  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation  /  Parents’ Address  Wife Mary Jane (Mills) Peto  Wife’s Address Church Street, Great Missenden  Medals: British. | |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | HELLES MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | Turkey |
| **Locality:** | unspecified |
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| **Historical Information:** | The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29th Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as Anzac. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. However, the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance soon led to the stalemate of trench warfare. From the end of August, no further serious action was fought and the lines remained unchanged. The peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916. The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for many of those Commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave. The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. The memorial bears more than 21,000 names. There are four other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli. The Lone Pine, Hill 60, and Chunuk Bair Memorials commemorate Australian and New Zealanders at Anzac. The Twelve Tree Copse Memorial commemorates the New Zealanders at Helles. Naval casualties of the United Kingdom lost or buried at sea are recorded on their respective Memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, in the United Kingdom. |

**Army Service Corps.** The unsung heroes of the British army in the Great War - the ASC, "[Ally Slopper](http://www.chrisharrisproductions.btinternet.co.uk/Pages/allysloper.html)'s Cavalry" - were the men who operated the transport. Soldiers cannot fight without food, equipment and ammunition. In the Great War, the vast majority of this tonnage, supplying a vast army on many fronts, was supplied from England. Using horsed and motor vehicles, railways and waterways, the ASC performed prodigious feats of logistics and were one of the great strengths of organisation by which the war was won.

**Private Arthur Thorne. 2nd Scots Guards. Bois Moor Road.**



Born: March 1892, Amersham. Son of Benjamin (shoe riveter) and Maria Thorn of Gunn’s Terrace ( formally Lilly and Skinners property), Bois Moor Road with four sisters and three brothers. Signed on 07- 10- 1914. Joined 2nd Scots Guards reported missing in Oct 1915 having been twice wounded at Ypres an eye and Neuve Chapelle the head. He was officially declared as a casualty on the 27th-29th September. Medal Card: Victory, British, 1914 star and clasp.Note: 1910 Census lists Thorne as Thorn.

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| Name Arthur THORNE  Rank/Number Private / 8229  Regiment/Unit Scots Guards / 2nd Battalion  Enlisted London  Age/Date of death 23 / 27 Sep 1915  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death Chesham  Cemetery Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France  Grave Reference Panel 8 & 9  Location of memorial Chesham Bois  Date/Place of birth 1892 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Mr Benjamin & Mrs Maria Thorne . Shoe Rivetter  Parents’ Address Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road, Chesham  Wife  Wife’s Address  **Cemetery Details** | |
| **Cemetery:** | LOOS MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
|  |  |
| **Location Information:** | Loos-en-Gohelle is a village 5 kilometres north-west of Lens, and Dud Corner Cemetery is located about 1 kilometre west of the village, to the north-east of the N943, the main Lens to Bethune road. |
| **Historical Information:** | Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the battle. The name "Dud Corner" is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice. The Loos Memorial forms the sides and back of Dud Corner Cemetery, and commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice. |

**Scots Guards.**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914: in Aldershot. Part of 1st (Guards) Brigade, 1st Division.   
25 August 1915: transferred to 2nd Guards Brigade, Guards Division.

**2nd Battalion**   
August 1914: at Tower of London.   
September 1914: attached to 20th Brigade, 7th Division.   
9 August 1915: transferred to 3rd Guards Brigade, Guards Division.

**The history of the Guards Division**  
  
This Division has the distinction of being formed in France in August 1915. The various Guards units that had been with other Divisions were withdrawn to be brought together to create this fine formation. It remained on the Western Front throughout the war and was engaged in the operations listed below.



**1915**  
**The Battle of Loos**  
**25 September - 18 October 1915**

**Summary**

Compared with the small-scale British efforts of spring 1915, this attack of six Divisions was a mighty offensive indeed - so much so that it was referred to at the time as 'The Big Push'. Taking place on ground not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient, the opening of the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy casualties, there was considerable success on the first day in breaking into the deep enemy positions near Loos and Hulluch. But the reserves had been held too far from the battle front to be able to exploit the successes and succeeding days bogged down into attritional warfare for minor gains.

But by 18 September Haig had learned of French's intentions to keep the reserves at Lillers, some 16 miles from the battle front. He protested, citing the experiences of Neuve Chapelle and Festubert, where it was clear that reinforcements were needed within perhaps three hours of start. General Foch advised that 2000 yards would be a more suitable distance. French, since Neuve Chapelle acutely conscious of the threadbare supply of men, munitions and equipment, would not agree. He did, however, give orders that by dawn on the day of assault, the heads of the 21st and 24th Divisions should be at Noeux-les-Mines and Beuvry respectively, with the Guards Division following up.

**The British Order of Battle.**  
British Expeditionary Force (Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir John French)

- First Army (General Sir Douglas Haig)

-- I Corps (Lieutenant-General H. Gough)  
- 2nd Division (Major-General H. Horne)  
- 7th Division (Major-General T. Capper)  
- 9th (Scottish) Division (Major-General G. Thesiger)  
- 28th Division (moved south from Ypres, entering area 27 September) (Major-General E. Bulfin)

-- IV Corps (Lieutenant-General Sir H. Rawlinson)  
--- 3rd Cavalry Division (Major-General C. Briggs)   
--- 1st Division (Major-General A. Holland)   
--- 15th (Scottish) Division (Major-General F. McCracken)  
--- 47th (2nd London) Division TF (Major-General C. Barter)

-- XI Corps (Lieutenant-General R. Haking)  
--- Guards Division (Major-General the Earl of Cavan)  
--- 21st Division (Major-General G. Forestier-Walker)  
--- 24th Division (Major-General Sir J. Ramsay)

-- Indian Corps (entered engagement 29 September 1915) (Lieutenant-General Sir C. Anderson)  
--- 19th (Western) Division (Major-General C. Fasken)   
--- 7th (Meerut) Division (Major-General C. Jacob)

Subsidiary attacks made elsewhere in support of Loos

Indian Corps (at Pietre, 25 September 1915) (Lieutenant-General Sir C. Anderson)  
7th (Meerut) Division (Major-General C. Jacob)

III Corps (at Bois Grenier) (Lieutenant-General Sir W. Pulteney)  
8th Division (Major-General H. Hudson)

V Corps (Second attack at Bellewaarde, 25 September 1915)(Lieutenant-General Sir E. Allenby)  
3rd Division (Major-General J. Haldane)

VI Corps (also Second attack at Bellewaarde, 25 September 1915)(Lieutenant-General Sir J. Keir)  
14th (Light) Division (Major-General V. Couper)

**The Battle: timeline and events:**  
**21 September 1915**  
British bombardment of German positions opens and continues without break until the morning of the assault. Observation of the effect of the shooting was hampered by fine weather and wind throwing up clouds of chalk dust, and on 23rd and 24th by a change to dull weather with mist. Various localised feint attacks were conducted, to persuade the enemy to man the forward trenches during the shelling. These ruses included the use of dummy troops, bayonets showing above the British parapets, bagpipes playing, men shouting hurrahs, etc. Reserves:

The reserve **21st** and **24th Divisions** moved by a night march into the Loos valley. Progress was slow and exhausting (and these units had been on the move constantly for several days already). Staff was unfamiliar with the ground, communication trenches were flooded and packed with men. Roads and tracks were jammed with transport going in both directions. There were few bridges across shattered fore trenches, and wire was still stretched across wide areas. Men were carrying extra supplies, equipment, rations and ammunition. At 1.20am, the Brigadiers of 24th Division met to consider their actions for the next morning. The **Guards Division** suffered similar disruption on moving up, arriving at their billets in Noeux les Mines and Houchin at 8.00pm only to find them already occupied.

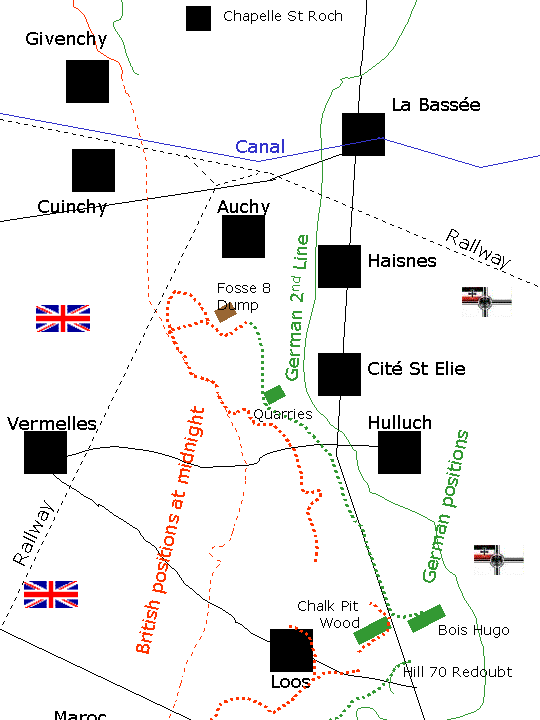
**26 September 1915**  
First Army had issued orders at 11.30pm for a general renewal of the attack at 11.00am on 26th September. Sir John French commented to Sir Douglas Haig about the futility of pushing reserves through a narrow gap in the enemy's defences, but he allowed his Army commander to continue to plan his own tactics. There was mist, low cloud and rain in the air.

Loos area: At 1.10am, the Brigadiers of **24th Division** met to consider their actions for the next morning. The heavy rain had now stopped. Reports were now confirming that Hulluch was still in enemy hands, contrary to earlier messages. The officers decided to continue the general advance across the Lens - La Bassee road and through the second German line, by moonlight. They had no intelligence concerning German strength or defences.   
5.00am: Orders are received by **15th (Scottish) Division**. Reinforced by 21st Division, they are to recapture Hill 70 with an attack at 9.00am. It was proving virtually impossible to move artillery forward to support this attack, and ammunition supplies were dwindling - fresh ones being held up in traffic. The attack would be supported by artilley firing from their original positions, and the second German line would barely be touched. A bombardment of two rounds per gun per minute was ordered. In confusion, some units did not receive an order to withdraw from the most advanced positions, and British shells fell on their own infantry in places. Many infantry units did not receive orders to attack until 7.00am, and in at least one case, 8.00am.   
5.30am: Another heavy German attack against the 7/Royal Scots Fusiliers, on the Eastern side of the Loos Crassier, was repulsed with the assistance of the 11th Motor Machine-Gun Battery.   
8.00am approx.: The units of 21st and 24th Divisions had moved with great difficulty throughout the night, and had reached the advanced positions facing the enemy's second line, around Bois Hugo, Chalk Pit Wood, Chalet Wood and Hill 70 Redoubt. They were informed that a general attack had been ordered for 11.00am. First Army believed they had halted as ordered on the Lens-La Bassee road, and had been resting for some time.   
9.00am: The weakened battalions of 45th Brigade advanced up the slope of Hill 70, just as the mist cleared. They came under immediate fire from the Redoubt at the summit, but parties entered the trenches there and hand to hand fighting took place. After suffering continued losses, and unable to get around the flanks of the Redoubt, the survivors withdrew. 10/Yorkshire and 12/Northumberland Fusiliers of 62nd Brigade, advancing behind them, suffered the same fate. By 10.00am the attack had ended, German counterattacks retaking the entire Redoubt complex.   
11.00am: A heavy German bombardment fell on the forward positions. Without leaders, without food and exhausted, many men fell back into Loos village.   
12.00 noon: First Army orders **6th Cavalry Brigade** to reinforce Loos area. They send 3rd Dragoon Guards and 1st Royal Dragoons forward, dismounted.   
3.30pm: A general retirement from the Hill 70 position took place. This unnecessary act was the result of some confused orders, the origins of which remain uncertain to this day. At the same time, various small units were moving into the Hill 70 positions to reinforce units there! The enemy counterattacked against the Loos Crassier, which was by now consolidated and strongly held by 1/20th Londons.   
8.00pm: The two cavalry regiments, having rallied men of 45th and 46th Brigades who were found retiring from Loos, enter and clear the village and re-establish the position on the lower slopes of Hill 70.   
11.30pm: Remainder of 3rd Cavalry Division moves to Loos, and completes the relief of 15th Division during the night.

Hulluch area:   
Midnight: A heavy German attack against the 1/South Wales Borderers of 3rd Brigade near the Vermelles-Hulluch road was repulsed with very heavy loss to the attackers.   
1.00am: A heavy attack by the German 117th Division was launched against the forward units of 7th and 9th Divisions between the Vermelles-Hulluch road and Fosse 8. It achieved complete surprise, catching wiring parties and isolated sections unawares. On the right, 20th Brigade pulled all advanced units back to the protection of Gun Trench. In the centre, the most forward units were in a shallow trench a hundred yards ahead of the Quarries. Their left had no contact with the 27th Brigade of 9th Division, which was somewhere away on their left. A reorganisation of scattered and mixed-up units was underway - under shellfire that included gas shells - when the German attack hit. The enemy entered the Quarries through the undefended gap to the North, and much confused and hand to hand fighting took place. By 1.30am the British troops had lost the Quarries. Further advance was halted by concentrated fire from the 2/Yorkshire and 1/South Staffordshire. 27th Brigade - who lost their CO, Brig-General Bruce, captured in the Quarries - withdrew from Fosse Alley in good order. A hastily arranged counterattack with the intention of retaking the Quarries was delivered at 6.45am by the dog-tired 9/Norfolks of 24th Division, but it was annihilated by consolidated enemy infantry. At Fosse 8, the enemy infantry cheered as they approached the British positions 100 yards away, and fire from 26th Brigade and 73rd Brigade (placed under orders of 9th Division and just arriving after their night marches) destroyed the attack.   
7.00am: A composite Brigade (consisting of 1/KRRC, 1/Royal Berkshire and 2/Worcestershire, under command of Lt-Col. B. Carter and now called **Carter's Force**) arrives from 2nd Division, with orders to assist a I Corps attack on Cite St Elie. Corps instead sends them to recapture the Quarries. There is much delay in preparing for this attack, during which the Berkshires are detached and sent to assist 9th Division and 73rd Brigade at Fosse 8.   
9.00am: A German counterattack at Bois Hugo is brought to a standstill, but only after much confusion and loss to 63rd Brigade. 10.00am British artillery begin a bombardment preliminary to the renewed attack. Many batteries have by now moved up, and are in the open near Le Rutoire and Lone Tree. German artillery opens and maintains fire on the exposed gunners. Few British shells fall on the German second line, which is complete, reinforced and protected in front by masses of untouched wire.   
10.05am: XI Corps orders **Guards Division** to move to original British trenches astride the Vermelles road, ready to explout the anticipated success of the attack.   
10.30am: The German counterattack continues and men of 63rd Brigade retire in disarray from Chalk Pit Wood. The enemy captures Chalet Wood. 6/Cameron Highlanders make repeated efforts to recapture it.   
10.50am: The attack orders reach the battalions of 21st Division and 24th Division. They included no specific objectives, just an urging to go forward.   
11.00am: The remainder of the attacking units move forward from the Bois Hugo area towards the German second line. They have had little rest, and for many no food or water since yesterday. The various orders to deploy battalions piecemeal, together with the defence against counterattacks, has reduced what was intended to be an attack by 24 battalions to just 6. The four battalions of 72nd Brigade advanced over open ground, starting some 1000 yards West of the La Bassee road, and were in such good order that they had the effect of reinvigorating 63rd Brigade on their right. However, once again men of this Brigade lost direction and moved towards the summit of Hill 70, taking them across direct fire from Chalet Wood and Bois Hugo, both places they should have been approaching frontally. The advance of 72nd Brigade, composed now of 8/Royal West Kents and 9/East Surreys, together with half of 2/Welch, came under severe enfilade and frontal fire which included point-blank artillery. These units also reported British shellfire falling among them. 8/Buffs, 8/Queen's, 11/Essex and 9/Suffolks were all pushed into this murderous area. (The first three named all lost their Commanding Officers, killed in action here). Only a thin line reached the virtually undamaged German wire by about 1.00pm. All attempts to cut the wire failed with heavy casualties, and the remaining men took cover in long grass. At a shouted order to retire, men withdrew - many being hit by machine-gun fire as they did so. Those who did not retire were killed or captured.   
11.00am: Many misunderstandings and miscommunications, together with the heavy losses incurred by the units the day before, lead to a serious problems in the attempted advance of **1st Division**. It made no progress.  
12.20am: The advance of 63rd and what is left of 64th Brigades has been broken, with survivors falling back down Loos valley. The 9/KOYLI and 10/KOYLI take up the advance (although Brigade was frantically trying to get orders to them to stop them doing so), which has the effect of rallying some of the retiring men. They are also swept by fire from Chalet Wood and Bois Hugo, and the survivors retire.   
1.30pm: The retirements of most units of 21st and 24th Divisions mean that there is a mass of men falling back unmolested on the entire front between The Vermelles-Loos and the Vermelles-Hulluch roads. Only isolated groups clung on to the advanced positions in long grass, in the hope of reinforcement. German medical personnel assist in providing first aid to British wounded.   
2.00pm: Bombardment of the Quarries begins again.   
4.00pm: Carter's Force finally makes its attack on the Quarries. Progress is slow, despite the regular units using 'fire and movement' tactics. They reach a position 200 yards short of the Quarries and halt after heavy casualties. They consolidate their position. Major-General Capper, OC 7th Division, receives a fatal wound while close to the advance.   
4.00pm: Staff of XI Corps finally understand from reports that the attack of their Divisions has failed. Gradually the groups of men straggling rearward were brought under control, and placed in the shelter of the old British and German front lines. Coincidentally Sir Douglas Haig is present at Corps HQ. He has already requested Sir John French that the Guards Division be placed under his orders, to restore the situation. Confirmation arrives at 4.02pm. Enemy units move out from Bois Hugo and take up positions along the Lens-La Bassee road. In so doing they surround and capture 500 men of 24th Division who are still lying out in the most forward positions. During the evening and night, the three Brigades of Guards Division moved into the original British trenches between Loos Road redoubt and Le Rutoire. They relieved most of the units of 21st and 24th Divisions.

**26 September 1915: overall situation at nightfall**  
The shattered units of 15th, 21st and 24th Divisions were in process of relief at Loos and Hulluch, with 3rd Cavalry and Guards Divisions taking their place. This area was relatively safe from attack, although the enemy had moved their advanced positions forward from their second line and they remained in possession of Hill 70 and the Quarries. There was concern about the condition of troops holding Fosse 8, and their ability to withstand further enemy attack. Roads behind the lines remained very congested, with many units struggling to move supplies forward. Parties clearing the houses of Loos village were still finding enemy troops in hiding. First Army issued orders at 11.30pm for consolidation of the line, and the creation of a new general reserve from the 9th and 15th Divisions, now being relieved. XI Corps were ordered to examine ways to recapture the dominant Hill 70 position.

**27 September 1915**  
Loos area: At around 4.00pm, 3rd Guards Brigade is caught by a heavy artillery barrage while moving in column of fours along the Vermelles-Loos road near the original front line trenches. They were on their way to attack Hill 70 through Loos. Many casualties are incurred.   
6.00pm: An attack on Hill 70 is made by the Welsh Guards, but it is destroyed by machine-gun fire from the Redoubt at the summit.   
6.00pm: Units of 47th Division attack and capture Chalk Pit Copse.



Hulluch area: At 4.40pm, under cover of a thick smoke screen, 2nd Guards Brigade advanced to Chalk Pit Wood and the Chalk Pit. A further advance to the buildings at Puits 14 bis was halted by machine-gun fire from Bois Hugo.

Auchy area: Heavy enemy shelling of Fosse 8, tracks to the North (Trois Cabarets) and communication trenches leading up to the Hohenzollern Redoubt continues throughout the night.   
2.30am: An attack against Fosse 8 by the 1/Royal Berkshires, detached from Carter's Force, is halted 70 yards from their objective, after crossing half a moonlit mile under fire.   
Dawn: German infantry attacks 21st Brigade in Stone Alley, adjacent to Vermelles-Hulluch road, but is beaten off by 2/Wiltshires. Shortly afterwards, an enemy attack in battalion strength hits 73rd Brigade in Fosse and Slag Alleys. (The men of this Brigade holding the positions east of Fosse 8 are in an exhausted condition, having had no food, water or sleep for 48 hours.) 7/Northamptonshires are forced back to cottages at Corons de Pekin, North of the Fosse 8 Dump. The enemy places a heavy machine-gun on the slopes of the Dump, and brings the area between the Dump and the Hohenzollern Redoubt under fire.   
12.00 noon: Further German troops push against the 12/Royal Fusiliers and Brigade decides to withdraw, to establish a new line along the Eastern face of the Redoubt and a good field of fire against the Dump. At this time Major-General Thesiger, OC 9th Division, is killed while investigating the situation.   
2.00pm: The loss of Fosse 8 is now known at First Army HQ. A proposed attack by Guards Division on Hill 70 was abandoned at the last minute.   
3.00pm: Major-General Bulfin, OC **28th Division** which is on the way to the battle area from Bailleul, arrives to take command of the sector. He receives an order to counter-attack to retake the lost positions, using 26th Brigade. After the heavy fighting of the last days, this Brigade now musters only some 600 men. They suffer further casualties in moving up, but succeed in joining the hard-pressed 73rd Brigade in the Redoubt. At the same time, German grenadiers attack along Fosse Alley, forcing the remnants of the 10/Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and the 9/Scottish Rifles to withdraw. The move to Quarry Trench and Big Willie Trench.

Canal area: **2nd Division** plans to make an attack are cancelled after the commencement of a release of gas, which once again hangs in British positions.

**1-3 October 1915**   
Close fighting is renewed in the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and all but Big Willie Trench is lost to the enemy. 12th (Eastern) Division relieves 1st and 2nd Guards Brigades in area of the Chalk Pit. They are put to work on completing preparations of new trenches, roads and positions in preparation for the assault. Heavy enemy shelling causes many casualties among the working parties. Major-General Wing, OC 12th Division, is among those killed. The renewal of the offensive is delayed until 6th October, to enable preparatory attacks on Fosse 8 and Hill 70 to take place. Following the days loss of the trenches of Hohenzollern Redoubt, this area takes priority. The 12th and Guards Divisions are ordered to capture the Quarries and the Fosse 8 / Hohenzollern respectively, on 9th October.

**13 October 1915: the renewal of the offensive**   
A bright, sunny day with an ideal wind for moving gas towards the enemy. XI Corps orders were to recover the Quarries and Fosse 8; IV Corps were to consolidate the line of the Lens-La Bassée road between Chalk Pit Wood and the Vermelles-Hulluch road. 46th Division only completed its relief of the Guards Division in Big Willie at 6.00am due to congestion of the trenches and the confusion resulting from the enemy's counter-attack. This Division, freshly arrived from Ypres, had no prior knowledge of the ground to be attacked. On first examination CO Major-General Stuart-Wortley wished to attack using bombers, gradually taking the position trench by trench. He was overruled by XI Corps HQ, and told to attack in the same way that 9th Division had on 25th September (which had largely succeeded but at a cost of more than 6,000 men).

Bottom of Form

**1916**

**2nd Lieutenant James Anthony Horne. 16th London Reg. Queen’s Westminsters.**

**Greenbank House, Bois Common.**

James Horne joined the 16th Division London Regiment 14th February 1915. Travelled to France 19th April 1915.

Battle of Gommecourt 1916’their withdrawal was covered by a 2nd Lt. Horne and some Lewis gunners. Horne was killed manning the last gun’.

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| Name James Anthony HORNE  Rank/Number 2nd Lieutenant  Regiment/Unit London Regiment (Queens Westminster Rifles) / 16th Battalion  Enlisted  Age/Date of death 23 / 01 Jul 1916  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action /  Residence at death  Greenbank, Bois Common, Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Gommecourt British Cemetery No 2, Hebuterne, Pas de Calais, France  Grave Reference Sp Mem C.5  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1893 / Islington, N London  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Rev. Joseph White Horne & Katherine Grace / clergyman C of E  Parents’ Address 8 Stradmore Gardens, Kensington, London. Greenbank, Chesham Bois (1914)  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals: British, Victory, 15 Star. |
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**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | GOMMECOURT BRITISH CEMETERY No.2, HEBUTERNE |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
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| **Historical Information:** | Hebuterne village remained in Allied hands from March 1915 to the Armistice, although during the German advances of the summer of 1918, it was practically on the front line. Gommecourt and Gommecourt Wood were attacked by the 56th (London) and 46th (North Midland) Divisions on 1 July 1916 with only temporary success, but the village was occupied by the 31st and 46th Divisions on the night of 27-28 February 1917, remaining in Allied hands until the Armistice. Gommecourt was later "adopted" by the County Borough of Wolverhampton. Gommecourt British Cemeteries No.1, No.2, No.3 and No.4 were made in 1917 when the battlefields were cleared. No.2 originally contained 101 graves of 1 July 1916, almost all of the 56th Division, which form Plot I of the cemetery as it is today. After the Armistice, graves from the neighbouring battlefields were added, plus the following:- GOMMECOURT BRITISH CEMETERY No.1 was 100 metres North-West of No.2. It contained the graves of 107 soldiers from the United Kingdom, mainly of the 56th Division, who fell on the 1st July, 1916. GOMMECOURT BRITISH CEMETERY No.3 was at the South-West corner of the village. It contained the graves of 117 soldiers from the United Kingdom, mainly of the 56th Division, who fell on the 1st July, and the 12th November, 1916. GOMMECOURT BRITISH CEMETERY No.4 was 50 metres South of No.1. It contained the graves of 70 soldiers from the United Kingdom, largely of the 56th Division, who fell on the 1st July and the 12th November, 1916, and at the end of February, 1917. Gommecourt British Cemetery No.2 now contains 1,357 First World War burials and commemorations. 682 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 33 casualties known or believed to be buried among them.  **The London Regiment**  **Battalions of the Territorial Force**  **1/16th (County of London) Battalion (Queen's Westminster Rifles)** August 1914 : at 58 Buckingham Gate. Part of 4th London Brigade, 2nd London Division. Moved on mobilisation to Hemel Hempstead area. 3 November 1914: left the Division and landed at Le Havre. 12 November 1914: came under command of 18th Brigade in 6th Division. 10 February 1916: transferred to 169th Brigade in 56th (London) Division.  **The history of 56th (1st London) Division**  The London Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.  **1914**  The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914. All of the infantry units left the Division during the period September 1914 - April 1915, most being sent independently to France as reinforcements for the BEF.  **1915**  The Divisional artillery was selected for service in France and transferred in September 1915 to [36th (Ulster) Division](http://www.1914-1918.net/36div.htm). **1916**  In January 1916 the War Office authorised the re-formation of the London Division, now to be known as the 56th, in France.  The Division began to concentrate in the Hallencourt area on 5 February and was largely completed by 21 February. It then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:  The diversionary attack at Gommecourt (1 July)\* The Battle of Ginchy (9 September)\*  The Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15 -22 September)\* The Battle of Morval (25-27 September)\* in which the Division captured Combles The Battle of the Transloy Ridges (11 - 9 October)\*  \* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916 |
|  | **Subsidiary: the attack on the Gommecourt salient, 1 July 1916**  Third Army (Allenby)  VII Corps (Snow) 37th Division 46th (North Midland) Division 56th (1st London) Division.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **169th (3rd London) Brigade** | *This Brigade was broken up in April 1915. It reformed at Hallencourt 5-13 February 1916.* | | 1/9th Bn. the London Regiment | left November 1914, rejoined February 1916, left February 1918 | | 1/10th Bn. the London Regiment | left April 1915 | | 1/11th Bn. the London Regiment | left April 1915 | | 1/12th Bn. the London Regiment | left December 1914 | | 1/2nd Bn. the London Regiment | joined February 1916 | | 1/5th Bn. the London Regiment | joined February 1916 | | 1/16th Bn. the London Regiment | joined February 1916 | | 169th Machine Gun Company | formed 17 March 1916, moved to 56th Bn MGC 1 March 1918 | | 169th Trench Mortar Battery | joined 17 June 1916 | |
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**Gommecourt - The Battle**

**'Pro Patria Mori', the part account of the 56th Division's involvement at Gommecourt, was first published in 2006.  A revised edition was published in August 2008.**

**Z** **Day, Saturday, 1st July 1916**

**Weather: Hot, early mist**

**Midnight to 6.25 am**

**56th Division**

**168th Brigade** - The lead battalions, the Rangers and the London Scottish, were in place in the early hours of the morning. Not without casualties, however, as the Rangers front trenches were heavily hit causing many casualties and much confusion. The men were issued with pea soup, instead of the usual rum, which came in large cans reeking of petrol. Both battalions were in place by 4.30 am and they settled down to await the final hurricane bombardment.

**169th Brigade** - The trip to the front line was easier here and the men were mostly in place by 3.00 am. There was nothing to do now but wait.

**6.25 am** **to 7.30 am**

At 6.25 am the final, hurricane bombardment started. The field guns had 11,660 rounds of shrapnel and high explosive to fire in 65 minutes. The heavy guns and howitzers had 7,000 shells to fire in the same time.

At about 7.00 am the German guns started to reply, concentrating solely on the assembly trenches and causing casualties across the both division's fronts.

At 7.20 am, as if the evidence of the bombardment was not enough, the huge mine under Hawthorn Ridge near Beaumont Hamel, was set off early at the request of the VIII Corps' commander, Lt. Gen. Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston. If there was any doubt about whether the 'Big Push' was about to start, this dispelled it. German machine gun teams and rifleman and, behind them, the German guns made ready.

At 7.25 am the 46th and 56th Division's smoke screens started with mortars from the 5th Battalion, Special Brigade (RE) firing smoke bombs into the German lines and men in the front trenches lobbing smoke bombs into No Man's Land and lighting smoke candles in the front line trenches. On the 46th Divisions' front two problems quickly became apparent:

* The wind was unfavourable, blowing the smoke from north to south along No Man's Land (whilst on the 56th Division's front it blew across No Man's Land and into the German trenches);
* The smoke screen was considerably thicker than anything that had been practiced in, especially close to the British trenches where the candles and 'hand smoke' hung thickly in the trenches and British wire obscuring everything. The trench smoke, however, faded more quickly meaning that the men, once through the thick smoke would find themselves in the clear and sitting targets for the German machine guns.

At 7.30 am the British guns lifted off the German front line trenches and started to moved away in predetermined 'lifts' in the expectation that the infantry would follow close behind. On the right, officers waved their men forward (no whistles were used by the 56th Division at Gommecourt) and the men of the London Rifle Brigade, Queen Victoria's Rifles, Rangers and London Scottish disappeared into the smoke screen. On the left, the 6th South and North Staffordshires and 5th and 7th Sherwood Foresters started to scramble put of the muddy trenches and through the narrow gaps in the British wire.

**7.30 am** **to 8.00 am**

**56th Division**

**London Rifle Brigade** - the leading waves of the LRB had been waiting in No Man's Land and they started to move forward, A Company on the left, C in the centre and D on the right. D and C Companies swept over the German front lines and headed for their first objectives. D Company were soon in position in Eck trench near Gommecourt cemetery and C Company occupied the Maze. On the left A Company got into the German front line but were held up by German soldiers firing from the Park.

To their rear, men of the 1/3rd Londons were to have dug a trench across No Man's Land to the corner of Gommecourt Park at Point 94 but heavy machine gun fire from the Park made this impossible.

**8.00 am** **to 8.30 am**

**56th Division**

**London Rifle Brigade** - D and C Company's were now established in their positions and were untroubled except for some rifle fire from the edge of the village. A Company, however, were having a stiff fight on the edge of the park and efforts to establish a strongpoint were taking second place to the need to repel growing attacks from men of 55th Reserve Infantry Regiment.

**8.30 am** **to 12.00 pm**

**46th Division** - By 8.30 am the attack of the 46th Division was all but over. Small groups of men from the Sherwood Foresters had entered the German lines on the extreme left and were pushing forward but, behind them, the reserves had been slow to come forward and now, under terrific enfilade artillery fire from Adinfer Wood to the north, they were unable to make any progress.

Opposite Gommecourt village the men of the 137th Brigade had hardly moved. Some men of the 1/6th North Staffs got into the German lines but were cut off, hunted down and killed or captured. The other battalion, the 1/6th South Staffs, was mainly still in their assembly trenches. By 9.30 am the Germans of the 91st Regiment and 55th Reserve Infantry Regiment were reporting their trenches cleared. As a result, the artillery of the 2nd Guard Reserve Division switched their undivided attention to the 56th Division's front.

**31st Division** - The 31st Division were the northern most division of the main Somme offensive and they were to take the village of Serre set on a slight rise away to the south of Gommecourt. The attack was a disaster. Caught by relentless machine gun fire and an artillery barrage described as like a row of Poplar trees the men left of the division were back in the shambles of their trenches in less than an hour. As a result, the artillery of the 52nd Division switched their undivided attention to the 56th Division's front.

**London Rifle Brigade** - At 8.30 am, German prisoners collected in the first rush were herded back across No Man's Land, many being killed by their own guns' barrage. Counterattacks were now being mounted on A and C Company's fronts with men not being required on the 46th Division's front being rushed to repel the LRB's attack. The German artillery barrage and machine gun fire across No Man's Land was now so severe that an attempt by B Company to reinforce their colleagues collapsed within a few yards of the British front line. The men of the LRB were now running short of hand grenades and frantic searches were made of German dugouts for supplies of German grenades.

**Queen Victoria's Rifles & Queen's Westminster Rifles** - counter attacks by men of the 170th Regiment were now beginning to take shape and reinforcements were rushed up the long communication trenches from Rossignol Wood and Bucquoy. On the left, these battalions were beginning to lose touch with the London Rifle Brigade and on the right, the Rangers attack had melted away leaving the men of the QVR and QWR, with help from men of the 1/5th Cheshires, desperately fighting off attacks from the front and right.

Behind them, attempts by the D Companies of both battalions collapsed in No Man's Land under ferocious German artillery fire.

Further back, furious efforts by the men of the Field artillery batteries to support the men in the German lines was becoming increasingly thwarted by equipment failures. Just as the infantry needed them most, the guns were beginning to fail through over-use.

**12.00 PM to 2.30 PM**

**46th Division** - Division HQ had optimistically announced a renewal of the attack at 12:15 PM such was the chaos in the 464th Division's lines, however, that there was no prospect of this happening. New times were declared and then postponed all afternoon but, on the prospect that a new attack would be mounted, heavy howitzers of the VII Corps artillery were taken off the 56th Division's front to support the 46th Division's advance. The advance never happened.

**London Rifle Brigade** - Detached from the QVR and QWR to their right, the LRB were now coming under intolerable pressure from bombing attacks from the park, the village and through the cemetery. Orders for 2nd Lt Petley's men of D Company in Eck trench to withdraw failed to arrive and they were left on their own as the Germans infiltrated their way around their position using the warren of trenches in this part of the battlefield.

At 12.49 PM SOS signals were seen from the LRB's front lines. The message read 'SOS Bombs'. They had run out and were barely able to defend themselves. Gallant but futile efforts were made by the 1/2nd Londoner’s to reinforce the desperate LRB but the men were mown down by machine gun fire in an advance later likened by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Charles Wakefield, to the Charge of the Light Brigade.

**Queen Victoria's Rifles & Queen's Westminster Rifles** - Attacked from either wing and from the centre, the rapidly thinning ranks of the QVR and QWR were forced to relinquish their hold on the German line and they withdrew, fighting hard, diagonally to their left towards the front line trenches still held by the LRB. Their withdrawal was covered by a 2nd Lt. Horne and some Lewis gunners. Horne was killed manning the last gun.

**2.30 PM** **to 4.30 PM**

**56th Division**

**London Rifle Brigade** - The LRB had now run out of bombs and were being pressed from three sides. At 3.00 PM another forlorn effort by the 1/2nd Londoner’s to reinforce them dissolved in the face of the German barrage.

**Queen Victoria's Rifles & Queen's Westminster Rifles** - Forced back by unrelenting bombing attacks, the few men left of these two battalions retreated into the first German line where they joined up with the remains of the LRB.

**4.30 PM** **to 8.30 PM**

**London Rifle Brigade, Queen Victoria's Rifles & Queen's Westminster Rifles** - 2nd Lt Petley and his detachment in Eck trench now realised they were cut off and set off to try and find a way back to the main body of the LRB. Pursued by parties of German bombers they eventually reached the German front line having taken over an hour to travel about 200 yards. On the way, several of Petley's men were killed.

A small stretch of front line trench was all that was held by British troops now and, as they fought off German bombing parties with whatever means at their disposal, the German brought up some trench mortars to further bombard the 100 or so men still left alive in the German lines. With the two sets of men being so close it was impossible for the British artillery to help the trapped soldiers without risking 'friendly fire' casualties. In addition, there was an air of panic in certain quarters as some officers believed the Germans might take advantage of the chaos in the British lines and launch an attack across No Man's Land and, in consequence, the field artillery was told to conserve shells in case they were needed to repel such an attack.

At about 8.20 PM conditions had become intolerable in the small stretch of German trench which was being defended by about 30 able bodied men. The half a dozen or so officers left from the various units that had attacked agreed it was time to make a break for it and the call of 'Every man for himself' was passed around. Under intense machine gun and rifle fire the men sprinted into No Man's Land. Three of the six officers were killed, one was captured, another made it home (the intrepid 2nd Lt Petley) and the sixth, 2nd Lt Teddy Bovill of the Q.W.R., was shot and killed as he stepped into the British trenches.

Desultory artillery fire continued for an hour or two but now the noises heard were no longer than bang and crash of high explosive or the chatter of machine guns but the groans, shrieks and crying of hundreds of wounded men who littered the ground across which the battle had been fought.

**Midnight**

The attack on Gommecourt was over.

**Sergeant Albert George Fenn. 16th King’s Royal Rifles Corp. Bois Moor Road.**

**Joined Church Lads Brigade at Denham attached to the KRRC as a Private/Rifleman in 1914. Left England for France 16th November 1915.**



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| Name Albert George FENN  Rank/Number Sergeant / 1626  Regiment/Unit Kings Royal Rifle Corps / 16th Battalion (Note: Medal Card and CWWG state 6th Bn.)  Enlisted Chesham  Age/Date of death 26 / 15 Jul 1916  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death  Lockeridge Place, Bois Moor Road  Cemetery Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France  Grave Reference VII.C.39  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 11 Oct 1889 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Harry (Henry) & Phoebe Fenn / brickmaker  Parents’ Address  Lockeridge Place,Bois Moor Rd, Chesham  Wife  Wife’s Address  Notes SDGW gives regimental number as C/626  Medals: British, Victory, 15 Star |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | CATERPILLAR VALLEY CEMETERY, LONGUEVAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
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| **Historical Information:** | Caterpillar Valley was the name given by the army to the long valley which rises eastwards, past "Caterpillar Wood", to the high ground at Guillemont. The ground was captured, after very fierce fighting, in the latter part of July 1916. It was lost in the German advance of March 1918 and recovered by the 38th (Welsh) Division on 28 August 1918, when a little cemetery was made (now Plot 1 of this cemetery) containing 25 graves of the 38th Division and the 6th Dragoon Guards. After the Armistice, this cemetery was hugely increased when the graves of more than 5,500 officers and men were brought in from other small cemeteries, and the battlefields of the Somme. The great majority of these soldiers died in the autumn of 1916 and almost all the rest in August or September 1918. Of the burial grounds from which Commonwealth graves were taken to Caterpillar Valley Cemetery:- CLARK's DUMP CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, was a little West of High Wood, on the road from Bazentin-le-Petit to Flers. It contained the graves o 26 soldiers from the United Kingdom, and two from South Africa, who fell in August-December, 1916. GINCHY GERMAN CEMETERY (500 metres North of the village, between the Flers and Lesboeufs roads), in which two unknown British soldiers were buried. McCORMICK's POST CEMETERY, FLERS, nearly two kilometres West of Flers village. Here were buried 19 soldiers from the United Kingdom, nine from Australia and nine from New Zealand, who fell in September-November, 1916. MARTINPUICH ROAD CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, contained the graves of 41 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in July and August, 1916. SNOWDON CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, in Bazentin-le-Grand village, contained the graves of 24 soldiers of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell in August and September, 1918. WELSH CEMETERY, LONGUEVAL, between Flers village and High Wood, in which were buried 17 soldiers of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell in August and September, 1918. CATERPILLAR VALLEY CEMETERY now contains 5,568 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 3,795 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 32 casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and to three buried in McCormick's Post Cemetery whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. On the 6th November 2004, the remains of an unidentified New Zealand soldier were removed from this cemetery and entrusted to New Zealand at a ceremony held at the Longueval Memorial, France. The remains had been exhumed by staff of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from Plot 14, Row A, Grave 27 and were later laid to rest within the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, at the National War Memorial, Wellington, New Zealand. On the east side of the cemetery is the CATERPILLAR VALLEY (NEW ZEALAND) MEMORIAL, commemorating more than 1,200 officers and men of the New Zealand Division who died in the Battles of the Somme in 1916, and whose graves are not known. This is one of seven memorials in France and Belgium to those New Zealand soldiers who died on the Western Front and whose graves are not known. |

**The King's Royal Rifle Corps.**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**16th (Service) Battalion (Church Lads Brigade)**  
Formed at Denham, Bucks, on 19 September 1914 by Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, Commandant of the Church Lads Brigade, from current and previous members of that organisation. Moved in March 1915 to Rayleigh but returned to Denham in May.  
June 1915: moved to Clipstone Camp and attached to 100th Brigade in 33rd Division. Moved on to Perham Down in August 1915.  
17 November 1915: landed at Le Havre.

**The history of 33rd Division**  
  
On 10 December the War Office authorised the formation of the Fifth New Army. Like the other Kitchener Armies, it comprised six Divisions, in this case numbered 37 to 42. What eventually became 33rd Division was originally numbered 40th. In April 1915, the original Fourth New Army was broken up and its units converted for training and draft-finding purposes. When this took place the Fifth New Army became Fourth New Army and its Divisions were renumbered to 30th - 35th: thus what we remember as 33rd Division was born.



The Division was largely comprised of locally raised units often known as "Pals", with units raised by the public schools, footballers and other sportsmen and the Church Lads Brigade, among others. 33rd Division troops were predominantly from the south of England.

After in most cases commencing training near home, the units were moved in July 1915 to concentrate at Clipstone camp near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. It was not until August that the Division moved for final training and firing practice at Salisbury Plain.

In November 1915 the Division received a warning order to prepare to sail for France, but the original artillery and Train would not accompany it; instead, it would receive the artillery that had been raised for and trained with the 54th (East Anglian) Division. The move began on 12 November and by 21 November all units had reached the concentration area near Morbecque. Soon after arrival the Division was considerably strengthened by the exchange of 98th Brigade for the experienced 19th Brigade from 2nd Division, and other changes.  
The Division then remained on the Western Front for the remainder of the war and took part in the following engagements:

**1916**  
The Battle of Albert\*  
The Battle of Bazentin\*  
The attacks on High Wood\*   
The capture of Boritska and Dewdrop Trenches\*  
\* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

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| **100th Brigade** |  |
| 13th Bn. the Essex Regiment | left 22 December 1915 (West Ham) |
| 16th Bn. the Middlesex Regiment | left 25 February 1916 (Public Schools) |
| 17th Bn. the Middlesex Regiment | left 8 December 1915 (1st Football) |
| 16th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps | (Church Lads Brigade) |
| 1st Bn. the Queen's | joined 15 December 1915, to 19th Bde 14 February 1918 |
| 2nd Bn. the Worcestershire Regiment | joined 20 December 1915 |
| 1/6th Bn. the Cameronians | joined and left February 1916 |
| 100th Machine Gun Company | joined 28 April 1916, moved to 33rd Bn MGC 19 Feb 1918 |
| 1/9th Bn. the Highland Light Infantry | joined 29 May 1916 |
| 100th Trench Mortar Battery | formed by 13 June 1916 |

**Phase: the Battle of Bazentin (or the Bazentin Ridge), 14 - 17 July 1916**

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| By 13 July the British advance had taken it to a point where it was now facing the second German defensive complex. A well planned and novel night attack on 14 July took British troops through that line but they now ran into stiffening enemy defence at Guillemont, Delville Wood and Longueval, High Wood and Pozieres. Attack and counter attack ground relentlessly on as the British edged forward. |

*Fourth Army (Rawlinson)*2nd Indian Cavalry Division *II Corps (Jacobs)*1st Division  
23rd Division  
34th Division.  
*XIII Corps (Congreve)*3rd Division, which captured Longueval   
9th (Scottish) Division, which also captured Longueval on 18 July   
18th (Eastern) Division, which captured Trones Wood on 14 July.  
*XV Corps (Watts)*7th Division  
21st Division  
33rd Division.

Bazentin Ridge

The Battles of the Somme: Battle of Bazentin Ridge, 14-17 July 1916.

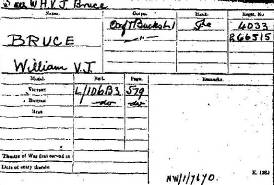
Fourth Army planning for a major breakthrough attack on the German second position in the southern sector of the battlefield began as early as 8 July, when it was agreed that a [dawn assault](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=42&menu=sub) should be made on the line from [Longueval to Bazentin-le-Petit.](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=43&menu=sub)

Artillery bombardments began on 11 July and, based on XV Corps report on wire cutting requirements, the day of attack was set for 14 July. In massive contrast to operations on 1 July, great emphasis was placed on the element of surprise. To this end the assaulting troops (brigades of 9th and 3rd Divisions of XIII Corps, and 7th and 21st Divisions of XV Corps) were to assemble after midnight in the darkness of No Man's Land and form up within 500 yards of the German line. With great skill the undetected deployment of the attacking force was completed by 3am. An intense [bombardment](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=44&menu=sub) began at 3.20 which, precisely five minutes later, lifted as near 22,000 British infantry advanced through the light mist towards the enemy trenches. The German defenders, surprised by the shortness of the bombardment and proximity of the attacking waves, gave way and leading British battalions quickly reached the front line and pressed on beyond.

Yet, on 15 July, the 100th Brigade was told to form up across the valley, facing north with High Wood on their right flank, and advance towards [Martinpuich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martinpuich). Protests to division were ignored and the attack went ahead at 9 a.m. after half an hour of preliminary bombardment. Enfiladed by German machine guns in the wood, the attack got nowhere. One [company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_(military)) of the 16th Battalion, [King's Royal Rifle Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Royal_Rifle_Corps) (the [Church Lads Brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Lads_Brigade) [Pals battalion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pals_battalion)), had been given the task of 'clearing' the wood in support of the advance but of the 200 who went in, only 67 came out.

The operation was a stunning [success](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=45&menu=sub) resulting in the capture of the German second position on a front of 6,000 yards. For a time the important position of [High Wood](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=46&menu=sub) remained open to occupation but delays in getting the cavalry forward meant that this opportunity was lost. Fighting for Longueval village continued after 17 July and was intimately connected with the long struggle for [Delville Wood](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?menuid=4&id=4&menuname=Delville%20Wood&menu=main).

**L/Cpl. William Henry Victor James Bruce. 2nd/1st Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**



Name: William Henry Victor James BRUCE

Rank/Number: Lance Corporal / 266515

Regiment/Unit: Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 2/1st Bucks Battalion

Enlisted: New Court, Middx

Age/Date of death: 18 / 19 Jul 1916

How died/Theatre of war: Killed in action / France & Flanders

Residence at death: Chesham Bois

Cemetery : Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Grave Reference: Panel 83 to 85

Location of memorial: Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane

Date/Place of birth: c1898 / Upton Park, Essex

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation: Margaret & Bruce /

Parents’ Address: 1901: Babel Cottage, Belvidere Villa, Hadleigh, Essex.

Wife

 Wife’s Address

Medals: British, Victory.

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | LOOS MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
| **Visiting Information:** | Wheelchair access to the cemetery is possible, but may be by alternative entrance. For further information regarding wheelchair access, please contact our Enquiries Section on 01628 507200. The Panel Numbers quoted at the end of each entry relate to the panels dedicated to the Regiment served with. In some instances where a casualty is recorded as attached to another Regiment, his name may alternatively appear within their Regimental Panels. Please refer to the on-site Memorial Register Introduction to determine the alternative panel numbers if you do not find the name within the quoted Panels. |
| **Location Information:** | Loos-en-Gohelle is a village 5 kilometres north-west of Lens, and Dud Corner Cemetery is located about 1 kilometre west of the village, to the north-east of the N943, the main Lens to Bethune road. |
| **Historical Information:** | Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the battle. The name "Dud Corner" is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice. The Loos Memorial forms the sides and back of Dud Corner Cemetery, and commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**2/4th Battalion**  
Formed at Oxford in September 1914 as a second line unit.  
January 1915: moved to Northampton and attached to 184th Brigade in 61st (2nd South Midland) Division. Moved to Writtle and quickly on to Broomfield (Essex) in April 1915.  
January 1916: moved to Parkhouse Camp, Salisbury Plain.  
24 May 1916: landed in France.  
March 1919: sailed for Egypt and was still there by the end of that year.

**2/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion**  
Formed at Aylesbury in September 1914 as a second line unit. Record same as 2/4th Bn.  
22 February 1918: disbanded at Germaine, troops going to 25th Entrenching Battalion.

**The history of 48th (South Midland) Division**  
The South Midland Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.

**1914**

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to concentrate in the Chelmsford area by mid August 1914.

**1915**

On 13 March the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began a week later. Divisional HQ, the Gloucester & Worcester and South Midlland Brigades went via Folkestone-Boulogne while all other units went from Southampton to Le Havre. By 3 April the Division had concentrated near Cassel. The Division then remained in France and Flanders until late 1917 and took part in the following engagements:

**1916**

The Battle of Albert\* The Division held the line between the 56th (London) and the 31st Divisions, both of which were heavily engaged at Gommecourt and Serre respectively on 1 July 1916. Two of the Warwickshire battalions of the Division attacked on that day and suffered heavy casualties in assaulting the Quadrilateral (Heidenkopf)).  
The Battle of Bazentin Ridge\* in which the Division captured Ovillers   
The Battle of Pozieres Ridge\*   
The Battle of the Ancre Heights\*   
The Battle of the Ancre\*  
\* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916.

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| **145th (South Midland) Brigade** |  |
| 1/5th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment | left September 1918 |
| 1/4th Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/1st Bucks Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/4th Bn. the Royal Berkshire Regiment |  |
| 145th Machine Gun Company | formed 11 January 1916, moved to 48th Bn MGC 22 March 1918 |
| 145th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 14 June 1916 |

**The story of the 2/4th Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry 1916-1917. Author: G. K. Rose**

CHAPTER I.

LAVENTIE, MAY TO OCTOBER, 1916.

The 61st Division lands in France.--Instruction.--The Laventie sector.--Trench warfare at its height.--Moberly wounded.—B Company's raid.--Front and back areas.--July 19th.--Changes in the Battalion.--A Company's raid.--A projected attack.—Laventie days.—Departure for the Somme.

On May 24, 1916, the 2/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed in France. Members of the Battalion within a day or two were addressing their first field postcards to England. Active service, of which the prospect had swung, now close, now far, for 18 months, had begun.

The 61st Division, to which the Battalion belonged, concentrated in the Merville area. The usual period of 'instruction' followed. The 2/4th Oxfords went to the Fauquissart sector, east of Laventie. Soon the 61st relieved the Welsh Division, to which it had been temporarily apprenticed, and settled down to hold the line.

It was not long before the Battalion received what is usually termed its 'baptism of fire.' Things were waking up along the front in anticipation of the Franco-British attack on the Somme. Raids took place frequently. Fighting patrols scoured No-Man's-Land each night.

In many places at once the enemy's wire was bombarded to shreds. By the end of June an intense feeling of expectancy had developed; activity on both sides reached the highest pitch. The Battalion was not slow in playing its part. One of the early casualties was Lieutenant Moberly, who performed a daring daylight reconnaissance up

to the German wire. He was wounded and with great difficulty and only through remarkable pluck regained our lines.

That same night the Battalion did its first raid, by B Company under Hugh Davenport. The raid was ordered at short notice and was a partial success. If the tangible results were few, B Company was very properly thanked for its bravery on this enterprise, which had to be carried out against uncut wire and unsubdued machine-guns. Zeder, a lieutenant with a South African D.C.M., was mortally wounded on the German wire and taken prisoner. The casualties were numerous. Davenport himself was wounded, but unselfishly refused treatment until his men had been fetched in. It was a night of battle and excitement. To the most hardened troops a barrage directed against crowded breastworks was never pleasant. The Battalion bore itself well and earned recital, albeit with some misdescription, in the English press a few days later.

During July 1916 the Battalion was in and out of the breastworks between Fauquissart and Neuve Chapelle. When the 184th Infantry Brigade went back to rest the Battalion had billets on the outskirts of Merville, a friendly little town, since levelled in ruins; and, when reserve to the Brigade, in Laventie. Brigade Headquarters were at the latter and also the quartermasters' stores and transport of battalions in the line. Some favourite spots were the defensive 'posts,' placed a mile behind the front line and known as Tilleloy, Winchester, Dead End, Picantin. Reserve companies garrisoned these posts. No arduous duties spoilt the days; night work consisted chiefly in pushing trolley-loads of rations to the front line. Of these posts the best remembered would be Winchester, where existed a board bearing the names of Wykhamists, whom chance had led that way. Battalion Headquarters were there for a long time and were comfortable enough with many 'elephant' dug-outs and half a farmhouse for a mess--the latter ludicrously decorated by some predecessors with cuttings from \_La Vie Parisienne\_ and other picture papers.

Though conditions were never quiet in the front line, during the summer of 1916 back area shelling was infrequent. Shells fell near Laventie cross-roads on most days and, when a 12 inch howitzer established itself behind the village, the Germans retaliated upon it with 5.9s, but otherwise shops and estaminets flourished with national nonchalance. The railway, which ran from La Gorgue to Armentières, was used by night as far as Bac St. Maur--an instance of unenterprise on the part of German gunners. Despite official repudiation, on our side the principle of 'live and let live' was still applied to back areas. Trench warfare, which in the words of a 1915 pamphlet 'could and must cease' had managed to survive that pamphlet and the abortive strategy of the battle of Loos. Until trench warfare ended divisional headquarters were not shelled.

Meanwhile the comparative deadlock in the Somme fighting rendered necessary vigorous measures against the enemy elsewhere on the front. A gas attack from the Fauquissart sector was planned but never carried out. Trench mortars and rifle grenades were continuously employed to make life as unpleasant as possible for the enemy, whose trenches soon became, to all appearances, a rubbish heap. All day and much of the night the 'mediums' fell in and about the German trenches and, it must

be confessed, occasionally in our own as well. Whilst endeavouring to annihilate the Wick salient or some such target, one of our heaviest of heavy trench mortars dropped short (perhaps that is too much of a compliment to the particular shot) in our trenches near a company headquarters and almost upon a new concrete refuge, which the R.E. had just completed and not yet shown to the Brigadier. Though sometimes supplied, the co-operation of this arm was never asked for.

This harassing warfare had a crisis in July. The operations of July 19, which were shared with the 61st Division by the 5th Australian holding trenches further north, were designed as a demonstration to assist our attack upon the Somme and to hold opposite to the XI Corps certain German reserves, which, it was feared, would entrain

at Lille and be sent south. That object was achieved, but at the cost of severe casualties to the divisions engaged, which were launched in daylight after artillery preparation, which results proved to have

been inadequate, against a trench-system strongly manned and garrisoned by very numerous machine-guns. The objectives assigned to the 61st Division were not captured, while the Australians further north, after entering the German trenches and taking prisoners, though they held on tenaciously under heavy counter-attacks, were eventually forced to withdraw. 'The staff work,' said the farewell message from the XI Corps to the 61st Division three months later, 'for these operations was excellent.' Men and officers alike did their utmost to make the attack of July 19 a success, and it behoves all to remember the sacrifice of those who fell with appropriate gratitude. It was probably the last occasion on which large parties of storming infantry were sent forward through 'sally ports.' The Battalion was in reserve for the attack. C Company, which formed a carrying party during the fighting, lost rather heavily, but the rest of the Battalion, though moved hither and thither under heavy shelling, suffered few

casualties. When the battle was over, companies relieved part of the line and held the trenches until normal conditions returned.

Soon after these events the Battalion was unlucky to be deprived of Colonel Ames, a leader whose energy and common sense could ill be spared. This was the first change which the Battalion had in its Commanding Officer, and it was much regretted. A change in Adjutant had occurred likewise, Major D. M. Rose having been invalided to England early in July and his place taken by R. F. Cuthbert, formerly commander of D Company. Orderly Room work passed from safe hands into hands equally safe. Soon afterwards I joined the Battalion, having been transferred from the 1/4th, and received command of D Company. The new Commanding Officer, Major R. Bellamy, D.S.O., came from the Royal Sussex Regiment and assumed command early in August. Robinson, an officer from the Middlesex and one of the best the Battalion ever had, Callender and Barton also joined about this time. Brucker, of C Company, became Adjutant of the 61st Divisional School, and command of his company passed to Kenneth Brown, a great fighter and best of comrades, the first member of this Battalion to win the Military Cross. Major Beaman was still Second in Command. Two original officers of the 2/4th, Jack Bennett and Hugh Davenport, commanded A and B Companies respectively. W. A. Hobbs, well known as Mayor of Henley, was Quartermaster, and 'Bob' Abraham the Transport Officer. Regimental Sergeant-Major Douglas and Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant Hedges were the senior warrant officers.

Higher up a new Brigadier in the person of General Dugan arrived and held command for a short while. The General, I regret to say, did not stay long enough for the full benefit of his experience and geniality to accrue, a fragment of a Stokes' mortar shell wounding him at a demonstration near Merville and causing his retirement to

hospital. The new Brigadier, the Hon. R. White, C.M.G., joined us at the beginning of September, 1916, from action on the Somme, and soon made his cheery criticisms felt.

After the operations of July 19 the former methods of trench warfare were resumed. The Division's casualties in the attack had been over 2,000, and time was required to re-organise and make up these losses.

Early in August an unlucky shell deprived the Battalion of one of its best officers. Lieutenant Tiddy had joined the Infantry in a spirit of duty and self-sacrifice, which his service as an officer had proved but to which his death more amply testified. The regrets of friends and comrades measured the Battalion's loss.

At 10 p.m. on August 19 a raid upon the German trenches near the 'Sugar Loaf' was carried out by A Company. The raid was part of an elaborate scheme in which the Australians upon the left and the 2/5th Gloucesters on our own front co-operated. The leading bombing party, which Bennett sent forward under Sergeant Hinton, quickly succeeded in reaching the German parapet and was doing well, when a Mills bomb, dropped or inaccurately thrown, fell amongst the men. The plan was spoilt. A miniature panic ensued, which Bennett and his Sergeant-Major found it difficult to check. As in many raids, a message to retire was passed. The wounded were safely brought in by Bennett, whose control and leadership were worthy of a luckier enterprise.

Footnote 1: A failure of this kind was far less due to any indetermination of the men than to the complex nature of the scheme, which any misadventure was capable of upsetting. On this occasion the 'order to retire' was said to have been of German manufacture, but such explanation deserved a grain of salt. Owing to the danger of its unauthorised use, the word 'retire' was prohibited by Army orders.

The Battalion was not called upon for much fighting activity in September, 1916. Raids and rumours of raids kept many of us busy. An attack by the 184th Brigade upon the Wick salient was planned, but somewhat too openly discussed and practised to deceive, I fancy, even the participating infantry into the belief that it was really to take

place. Upon the demolished German trenches many raids were made. In the course of these raids, the honour of which was generously shared between all battalions in the Brigade, sometimes by means of the

Bangalore Torpedo, sometimes by the easier and more subtle method of just walking into them, the enemy's front line was usually entered; and rarely did a raiding party return without the capture of at least an old bomb, an entrenching tool or even a live German. These 'identification' raids possibly did as much to identify ourselves to

the enemy as to identify him to us, but they proved useful occasions on which to send parties 'over the top' (always an enjoyable treat!) and gave practice to our trench mortars, which fired remarkably well and drew down little retaliation--always the bug-bear of the trenchmortar. The mention of these things may make dull reading to the \_blasé\_ warrior of later battlefields, but, as there are some whose last experience abroad was during Laventie days and who may read these lines, I feel bound to recall our old friend (or enemy) the trench mortar, the rent-free (but not rat-free) dug-out among the sandbags, the smelly cookhouses, whose improvident fires were the scandal of many a red-hatted visitor to the trenches, the mines, with their population of Colonial miners doing mysterious work in their basements of clay and flinging up a welter of slimy blue sandbags--all these deserve mention, if no more, lest they be too soon forgotten. Days, too, in Riez Bailleul, Estaires and Merville will be remembered, days rendered vaguely precious by the subsequent destruction of those villages and by lost comrades. Those of the Battalion who fell in 1916 were mostly buried in Laventie and outside Merville. Though both were being fought over in 1918 and many shells fell among the graves, the crosses were not much damaged; inscriptions, if nearly obliterated, were then renewed when, by the opportunity of chance, the Battalion found itself once more crossing the familiar area, before it helped to establish a line upon the redoubtable Aubers ridge, to gain which so many lives at the old 1915 battles of Neuve Chapelle and Festubert had been expended.

It was a fine autumn. The French civilians were getting in their crops within a mile or two of the trenches, while we did a series of tours in the Moated Grange sector, with rest billets at the little village of Riez Bailleul. And then box respirators were issued. Laventie days are remembered with affection by old members of the Battalion. In October, 1916, however, there were some not sorry to quit an area, which in winter became one of the wettest and most dismal in France. The Somme battle, which for three months had rumbled in the distance like a huge thunderstorm, was a magnet to attract all divisions in turn. The predictions of the French billet-keepers were realised at the end of October, when the 2/4th Oxfords were relieved in the trenches by a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment and prepared to march southwards to the Somme.

THE SOMME BATTLEFIELD,

NOVEMBER, 1916.

Departure from Laventie.--At Robecq.--The march southwards.--

Rest at Neuvillette.--Contay Wood.--Albert.--New trenches.--

Battle conditions.--Relieving the front line.--Desire Trench.--

Regina dug-out.--Mud and darkness.--A heavy barrage.--Fortunes

of Headquarters.--A painful relief.--Martinsart Wood.

At the end of October, 1916, the 61st Division left the XI Corps and

commenced its march southwards to join the British forces on the

Somme. We were among the last battalions to quit the old sector. Our

relief was completed during quite a sharp outburst of shelling and

trench-mortaring by the enemy, whose observers had doubtless spotted the troops moving up to take over.

After one night in the old billets at Riez Bailleul the Battalion marched on October 29 to Robecq, where the rest of the Brigade had already assembled, and took up its quarters in farms and houses along the Robecq-Calonne road. Battalion Headquarters were established at a large farmstead subsequently known as Gloucester Farm, while to reach the billets allotted to them the companies marched through the farmyard and across the two small bridges, since so familiar to some, which spanned the streams Noc and Clarence. My company was furthest south and almost in Robecq itself; my headquarters were in a comfortable house with an artesian well bubbling up in its front garden. When fighting was taking place at Robecq in April, 1918, and I found myself, under very different circumstances, in command of the Battalion, knowledge of the ground obtained eighteen months before, even to the position of garden gates and the width of ditches, proved most useful. I am afraid the Battalion's old billets were soon knocked down, the favourite estaminet in D Company area being among the first houses to go.

On November 2, 1916, the Battalion left Robecq, where it had been well-housed and happy for a week, for Auchel, a populous village in the mining district, and marched the next day to Magnicourt en Comté, an especially dirty village, and thence again through Tinques and Etrée-Wamin to Neuvillette. The civilians in some of the villages passed were not friendly, the billets crowded and often not yet allotted when the Battalion arrived, having covered its 14 kilometres with full pack and perhaps through rain. Nobody grumbled, for the conditions experienced were normal, but this march with its daily moves involved toil and much footsoreness on the part of the men, and for the officers much hard work after the men were in, and many wakings-up in the night to receive belated orders for the morrow.

After reaching Neuvillette, a pretty village four miles north by west of Doullens, a ten days' rest was made. Boots had become very worn in consequence of the march, and great efforts were now made by Hobbs to procure mending leather; unfortunately the motor car seemed to have forgotten its poor relation, the boot, and no leather was forthcoming. During the stay at Neuvillette a demonstration in improvised pack saddlery was arranged at Battalion Headquarters, the latest and most disputed methods of wiring and trench-digging were rehearsed, and two really valuable Brigade field days took place. More than a year afterwards the Battalion was again billeted at Neuvillette, whose inhabitants remembered and warmly welcomed the Red Circle.

On November 16 we marched away to Bonneville and the next day reached Contay, where we climbed up to some unfloored huts in a wood. The weather on this march had been bitterly cold, but fine and sunny. A dusky screen of clouds drifted up from the west the evening of our arrival and the same night snow fell heavily. The cookers were not near the huts and neither stores nor proper fuel existed. There was the usual scramble for the few braziers our generous predecessors had left behind. With snow and wind the Battalion tasted its first hardship.

As in all such situations, things soon took a cheerful turn. When the General came up next morning, the camp was reeking with smoke from braziers and the smell of cookers and the wood alive with sounds of wood chopping and cries of foragers. This change from a bad look-out to a vigorous optimism and will to make the best of things was

characteristic of the British 'Tommy', who, exhausted and 'fed-up' at night, was heard singing and wood chopping the next morning, as if wherever he was were the best place in the world. I shall always remember Contay Woods, the huts with their floors of hard mud reinforced by harder tree-stumps, and the slimy path down to parade

when we left.

On November 19 we reached Albert, whose familiar church needs no description. What struck me principally on arrival was the battered sordidness of the place and the filthy state of the roads, on which the mud was well up to the ankles. Some civilians were living in the town and doing a brisk trade in souvenir postcards of the overhanging

Virgin. Traffic, as always through a main artery supplying the prevalent battlefield, was positively continuous. The first rain of autumn had already fallen and men, horses and vehicles all bore mud stains significant of winters approach. Our arrival--we went into empty, rather shell-damaged houses near the station--coincided with the later stages of the Beaumont Hamel offensive, and German prisoners and, of course, British casualties were passing through the town.

At Albert, Bennett was taken from A Company to act as Second in Command of the Berks. Brown assumed command of his company and Robinson about this time of C Company, Brucker having returned to the 61st Divisional School, which was set up at St. Riquier. Just now much sickness occurred among the officers, John Stockton, Moorat and several others being obliged to go away by attacks of trench fever. From Albert C and D Companies moved forward to some Nissen huts near Ovillers to be employed on working parties. For the same duties A and B Companies soon afterwards were sent to Mouquet Farm, while Battalion Headquarters went to Fabick Trench.

After some rain had fallen, fine autumn weather returned and our guns and aeroplanes were showing the activity typical of the late stages of a great battle, when future movements were uncertain. A string of 30 balloons stretching across the sky in a wide circumference (whose centre, as in all 'pushes,' would have been somewhere behind our old front) industriously watched the enemy's back area. There was probably little comfort for the Germans west of Bapaume, or even in it, for our reluctance to shell towns, villages and (formerly most privileged of targets) churches was rapidly diminishing.

On November 21 the Brigade took over its new sector of the line and with it a somewhat different régime to what it had known before. It was heard said of the 61st Division that it stayed too long in quiet trenches (to be sure, trenches were only really 'quiet' to those who could afford to visit them at quiet periods). Still the Somme 'crater field' presented a complete contrast to the old breastworks with their familiar landmarks and daylight reliefs. Battle conditions remained though the advance had stopped. Our recent capture of Beaumont-Hamel and St. Pierre Divion left local situations, which required clearing up. The fragments of newly-won trenches above Grandcourt, trenches without wire and facing a No-Man's-Land of indeterminate extent, gave their occupants their first genuine tactical problems and altogether more responsibility than before. In some respects the Germans were quicker than ourselves to adapt themselves to conditions approximating to open warfare. The principle of an outpost line and the system of holding our front in depth had been pronounced often as maxims on paper, but had resulted rarely in practice. Subordinate staffs, on whom the blame for local reverses was apt to fall rather heavily, were perhaps reluctant to jeopardise the actual front line by holding it too thinly, while from the nature of the case, the front line was something far more sacred to us than to the enemy. Since the commencement of trench warfare the Germans had held their line on the 'depth' principle, keeping only a minimum of troops, tritely referred to as 'caretakers,' in their front trench of all, while we for long afterwards crammed entire companies, with their headquarters, into the most forward positions.

On the evening of November 25, 1916, Robinson of C Company and myself, taking Hunt and Timms (my runner) and one signaler, left for the front line. This was being held along Desire--my fondness for this trench never warranted that name--with a line of resistance in Regina, a very famous German trench, for which there had recently been heavy fighting. Our reconnaissance, which was completed at dawn, was lucky and satisfactory; moreover--I do not refer to any lack of refreshment by the Berks company commander--I was still dry at its conclusion, having declined all the communication trenches, which were already threatening to become impassable owing to mud.

The next night the Battalion moved up to relieve the Berks, but was conducted, or conducted itself, along the very communication trench which I had studiously avoided using and which was in a shocking state from water and mud. As the result of the journey, D Company reached the front line practically wet-through to a man, and in a very exhausted condition. A proportion of their impedimenta had become future salvage on the way up, while several men and, I fancy, some officers, had compromised themselves for some hours with the mud, which exacted their gumboots as the price of their future progress. I regret that my own faithful servant, Longford, was as exhausted as anybody and suffered a nasty fall at the very gates of paradise (an hyperbole I use to justify the end of such a mud-journey), namely Company Headquarters in Regina, where, like a sort of host, I had been waiting long. Desire Trench, the name by which the front line was known, was a shallow disconnected trough upholstered in mud and possessing four or five unfinished dug-out shafts. These shafts, as was natural, faced the wrong way, but provided all the front line shelter in this sector. At one end, its left, the trench ran into chalk (as well as some chalk and plenty of mud into \_it\_!) and its flank disappeared, by a military conjuring trick, into the air. About 600 yards away, the Germans were supposed to be consolidating, which meant that they were feverishly scraping, digging and fitting timbers in their next lot of dug-outs. To get below earth was their first consideration.

Regina dug-out deserves a paragraph to itself. This unsavoury residence housed two platoons of D Company, Company Headquarters, and Stobie, our doctor, with the Regimental Aid Post. In construction the dug-out, which indeed was typical of many, was a corridor with wings opening off, about 40 feet deep and some 30 yards long, with 4 entrances, on each of which stood double sentries day and night. Garbage and all the putrefying matter which had accumulated underfoot during German occupation and which it did not repay to disturb for fear of a worse thing rendered vile the atmosphere within. Old German socks and shirts, used and half-used beer bottles, sacks of sprouting and rotting onions, vied with mud to cover the floor. A suspicion of other remains was not absent. The four shafts provided a species of ventilation, reminiscent of that encountered in London Tubes, but perpetual smoking, the fumes from the paraffin lamps that did duty for insufficient candles, and our mere breathing more than counterbalanced even the draughts and combined impressions, fit background for post-war nightmares, that time will hardly efface. Regina Trench itself, being on a forward slope and exposed to full view from Loupart Wood, was shelled almost continuously by day and also frequently at night. 'Out and away,' 'In and down' became mottoes for runners and all who inhabited the dug-out or were obliged to make repeated visits to it. Below, one was immune under 40 feet of chalk, and except when an entrance was hit the 5.9s rained down harmlessly and without comment.

During the day I occasionally ploughed my way along Regina Trench to some unshelled vantage point to watch the British shells falling on the yet grassy slopes above Miraumont and south of Puisieux. Baillescourt Farm was a very common target. At this time Miraumont village was comparatively intact and its church, until thrown down by our guns, a conspicuous object. Grandcourt lay hidden in the hollow. Such landscape belonged to the days; real business, when one's orbit was confined to a few hundred yards of cratered surface, claimed the nights. A peculiar degree of darkness characterised these closing days of November, and with rain and mud put an end to active operations. Wiring, the chief labour of which was carrying the coils up to the front and afterwards settling the report to Brigade, occupied the energies of the Battalion after rations had been carried up. In this last respect much foresight and experience were required and arrangements were less good than they soon afterwards became; food that was intended to arrive hot arrived cold, and, having once been hot, received precedence over things originally cold but ultimately more essential. Hot-food containers proved too unwieldy for the forward area.

In making these remarks I want it understood that I am intending at this point no censure of our staff, whose difficulties in the way were even greater than those of the Infantry, nor am I working up to any impeachment of my superiors in narrating those facts, the omission of which would ruin the value of this story.

Although quite a normal circumstance in itself, the extreme darkness at this period was a real obstacle to patrols and to all whose ability to find the way was their passport. Amid these difficulties there was an element of humour. To make one false turn, or to turn without noticing the fact, by night threw the best map-reader or scout off his path and bewildered his calculations. One night about this time a party of us, including Hunt and 'Doctor' Rockall, the medical corporal, who had accompanied me round the front posts, lost its way hopelessly in the dark. Shapes looming up in the distance, I enquired of Hunt as to his readiness for hostile encounter, whereupon the reassuring answer was given that 'his revolver was loaded, but not cocked.' I leave the point (if any) of this story to the mercy of those whose fate it has been to lose their way on a foggy night among shell-holes, broken-down wire and traps of all descriptions. Temporary bewilderment of the calculation destroyed reliance on any putative guides such as 'Verey' lights, shells, rifle fire, &c., which on these occasions appeared to come from all directions, and English and German seemed all alike.

Hunt, who at this time, being my only officer not partially sick, has called for somewhat repeated reference, usually devoted the hours after midnight to taking a patrol to locate a track shown on the map and called Stump Road, his object being to meet another patrol from a neighbouring unit. Success did not crown the work. Stump Road remained undiscovered and passed into the apocrypha of trench warfare.

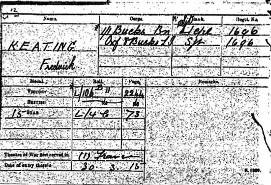
At 5 p.m. on November 29, 1916, the Germans opened a heavy barrage with howitzers on the front line, giving every indication of impending attack. Regina Trench, where were the headquarters of C and D, the companies then holding the line, was also heavily shelled, and telephonic communication with the rear was soon cut. On such occasions it was always difficult to decide whether or not to send up the S.O.S--on the one hand unnecessary appeal to our artillery to fire on S.O.S. lines was deprecated, on the other, no forward commander could afford to guess that a mere demonstration was on foot; for the appearance of attacking infantry followed immediately on a lifting of the barrage, a symptom in itself often difficult to recognise. On this occasion I intended and attempted to send up a coloured rocket, but its stick became stuck between the sides of the dug-out shaft and, by the time the efforts of Sergeant Collett had prepared the rocket for firing, the barrage died down as suddenly as it had started. This very commonplace episode illustrates the routine of this phase of warfare. The trenches were, of course, blown in and some Lewis guns damaged, but, as frequently, few casualties occurred. While speaking of the life furthest forward I do not forget the very similar conditions, allowing for the absence of enemy machine-guns and snipers, which prevailed at Battalion Headquarters. Confined to a dug-out (a smaller replica of Regina) in Hessian Trench, with a continual stream of reports to receive and instructions to send out, and being continually rung up on the telephone, Colonel Bellamy and Cuthbert had their hands full, and opportunities for rest, if not for refreshment, were very limited. Nor do I omit our runners from the fullest share in the dangers and activities of this time. Under battle-conditions life at one remove from the front line was rarely much more agreeable than in the line itself, and was less provided with those compensations which existed for the Infantryman near the enemy. It was necessary to go back to Divisional Headquarters to find any substantial difference or to live an ordered life on a civilised footing; and there, too, responsibility had increased by an even ratio. The Battalion Transport during this time was stationed at Martinsart and its task, along bad roads, in bringing up rations each day was not a light one.

On the night of November 30 the Battalion was relieved by the 2/4th Gloucesters and marched back to huts in Martinsart Wood. This march of eight miles, coming after a four days' tour in wet trenches under conditions of open warfare, proved a trying experience. For four miles the path lay along a single duckboard track, capsized or slanting in many places, and the newly-made Nab Road, to which it led, was hardly better. A number of men fell from exhaustion, while others, their boots having worn completely through before entering the trenches, were in no state to compete with such a distance. After passing Wellington Huts and through Aveluy the going became easier, until at last the area of our big guns was reached and, adjoining it, the 'rest billets.' The latter consisted of unfloored huts built of tarred felt and surrounded by mud only less bad than in the trenches. Our lights and noise scared the rats, which infested the camp. The relief and march occupied until 4 a.m., and were succeeded by mist and frost. The concussion of our neighbours, the 6-inch naval guns, echoed among the trees, heralding the first of December, 1916.

**Sergeant Frederick C Keating. 1st/1st Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Born: 1895 Kensington, Son of Reginald Harry C Keating (Snr), Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane.**

**Brother Arthur Ernest Keating Born 1900 Kensington was leader of the 1st Chesham Bois Scouts and served in WW1 together with his brothers Reginald Harry Keating (Jnr) born 1908 Amersham also a scout with 1st Chesham Bois and brother Ralph Stanley (Oxon and Bucks LI) born 1898 Kensington. Also serving in WW1 was his father Sgt Reginald Keating Snr (Royal Sussex Regiment). Medal card: Victory, British, 1915 Star.**



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| --- |
| Name Frederick C KEATING  Rank/Number Sergeant / 1696  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 1/1st Bucks Battalion  Enlisted Chesham  Age/Date of death 20 / 23 Aug 1916  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death  Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane, Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France  Grave Reference Pier & Face 10A & 10D  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 1896 / Kensington, Middx  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Reginald & Mary Keating / postman  Parents’ Address  Cress Bed Villas, Holloway Lane, Chesham Bois.  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals: British, Victory, 15 Star. |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | THIEPVAL MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
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| **Historical Information:** | On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1 August 1932 (originally scheduled for 16 May but due to the death of French President Doumer the ceremony was postponed until August). The dead of other Commonwealth countries, who died on the Somme and have no known graves, are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914: in Ahmednagar, India. Attached to 17th Indian Brigade of 6th (Poona) Division, Indian Army.  
27 November 1914: moved to Mesopotamia.  
29 April 1916: Bn. captured after surrender of garrison at Kut-el-Amara. A Provisional Bn. was formed from the reinforcements and details that were not captured, which was attached to 28th Indian Brigade, 6th Poona Division. This Provisional Bn. was renamed 1st Bn. on 6 July 1916.  
19 October 1917: transferred to 50th Indian Brigade in 15th Indian Division. Throughout the war remained in Mesopotamia.

**2nd Battalion**  
August 1914: in Aldershot. Part of 5th Brigade in 2nd Division.  
14 August 1914: landed at Boulogne.

**3rd (Reserve) Battalion**  
August 1914: in Oxford. A depot/training unit, it moved to Portsmouth in August 1914 and went on to Dover in October 1917.

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**1/4th Battalion**  
August 1914: in Oxford. Part of South Midland Brigade in South Midland Division.  
30 March 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
15 May 1915: formation became the 145th Brigade in 48th (South Midland) Division.  
November 1917: moved with the Division to Italy.

**1/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion**  
August 1914: in Aylesbury. Record same as 1/4th Bn.

**The history of 48th (South Midland) Division**  
The South Midland Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.

**1914**

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to concentrate in the Chelmsford area by mid August 1914.

**1915**

On 13 March the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began a week later. Divisional HQ, the Gloucester & Worcester and South Midlland Brigades went via Folkestone-Boulogne while all other units went from Southampton to Le Havre. By 3 April the Division had concentrated near Cassel. The Division then remained in France and Flanders until late 1917 and took part in the following engagements:

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| --- | --- |
| **1916**  The Battle of Albert\* The Division held the line between the 56th (London) and the 31st Divisions, both of which were heavily engaged at Gommecourt and Serre respectively on 1 July 1916. Two of the Warwickshire battalions of the Division attacked on that day and suffered heavy casualties in assaulting the Quadrilateral (Heidenkopf)). The Battle of Bazentin Ridge\* in which the Division captured Ovillers  The Battle of Pozieres Ridge\*  The Battle of the Ancre Heights\*  The Battle of the Ancre\* \* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme  **1916**  **145th (South Midland) Brigade** |  |
| 1/5th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment | left September 1918 |
| 1/4th Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/1st Bucks Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/4th Bn. the Royal Berkshire Regiment |  |
| 145th Machine Gun Company | formed 11 January 1916, moved to 48th Bn. MGC 22 March 1918 |
| 145th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 14 June 1916 |

**Phase: the Battle of Pozieres, 23 July - 3 September 1916.**

Fourth Army (Rawlinson)  
III Corps (Pulteney)  
1st Division  
15th (Scottish) Division  
19th (Western) Division  
23rd Division   
34th Division.

Reserve Army (Gough)  
Note: all below except 49th (West Riding) Division took part in fighting for Mouquet Farm   
II Corps (Jacobs)  
12th (Eastern) Division  
25th Division  
48th (South Midland) Division  
49th (West Riding) Division.  
I ANZAC Corps (Birdwood)  
1st Australian Division  
2nd Australian Division  
4th Australian Division.

**Battle of Mouquet Farm.**

The capture of Mouquet Farm would severely destabilize the German hold on the fortress of [Thiepval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thiepval) which had thus far withstood all British assaults. During the battle, the [Australian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) divisions of [I Anzac Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Anzac_Corps) advanced northwest along the [Pozières](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pozi%C3%A8res) ridge towards the [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) strongpoint of Mouquet Farm, with [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) divisions supporting on the left. The approach to the farm, however, was under observation from German artillery spotters who were able to call down barrages on the attackers from three sides of the [salient](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salients,_re-entrants_and_pockets) that had developed in the lines. This resulted in heavy casualties amongst the attackers before they even reached the farm, however, over the course of August and into September, the Australian divisions managed to reach the farm three times, only to be forced back each time. I Anzac Corps suffered approximately 6,300 casualties and was so depleted that they had to be taken off the front for two months. As that battle dragged on, the [Canadian Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Corps) took over from the Australians, who were withdrawn on 5 September. However, by the time the battle concluded in mid-September, the German garrison still held out. The farm was eventually captured on 27 September following the general attack of the [Battle of Thiepval Ridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Thiepval_Ridge).

**Sapper Jack Pearson. 200th Field Corps RE. Bois Moor Road.**

Name: Jack PEARSON

Rank/Number: Sapper / 101617

Regiment/Unit: Royal Engineers / 200th Field Coy

Enlisted: Watford, Herts

Age/Date of death: 20 / 28 Nov 1916

How died/Theatre of war: Died / France & Flanders

Residence at death: Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Rd, Chesham Bois

Cemetery: Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, Pas de Calais, France

Grave Reference:III.G.5

Location of memorial: Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane and Chesham Town.

Date/Place of birth: c1896 / Chesham Bois

Date/Place of baptism :

Occupation of Casualty: brushworks labourer

Parents/Occupation: William & Mary A Pearson / shoe rivetter

Parents’ Address: 1901: Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Rd, Chesham Bois

Wife

Wife’s Address

Medals: British, Victory.

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | WARLINCOURT HALTE BRITISH CEMETERY, SAULTY |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | The site of the cemetery was chosen in May 1916. It was used from June 1916 to May 1917 by the 20th and 43rd Casualty Clearing Stations, in February 1917 by the 1/1st South Midland, and from April to June 1917 by the 32nd. The whole of plots VII, VIII, IX and X were filled in April and May 1917, the months of the Battles of Arras. From June 1917, the cemetery was practically unused until the fighting of May and June 1918, when field ambulances buried in it. After the Armistice the cemetery was increased by graves brought in from the following small military cemeteries:- Gaudiempre Military Cemetery, which contained 33 British graves, and lay on the South-East side of the village of Guadiempre near the road to St. Amand. It was used from June 1916, to April 1918, chiefly by the Field Ambulances of the Divisions in the sector. Couturelle Communal Cemetery Extensions, which contained 10 British graves. It was East of the village, on the South side of the road to Gombremetz. It was used by Field Ambulances and fighting units from April 1916, to February 1917. La Herliere Military Cemetery, which lay between the villages of La Herliere and Larbret. It was used from June 1916 to January 1917, by Field Ambulances and fighting units, and contained 13 British graves. The cemetery now contains 1,266 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. There are also 29 German and two French war graves. |

**The Field Companies RE**

When the British government declared war on Germany, the War Office issued orders for mobilisation of the British Expeditionary Force in accordance with the existing plan. The 13 Field Companies then at home on a peacetime establishment were reorganised to create twelve Field Companies, two for each of the six Divisions of the BEF. Men required to bring these Companies up to war establishment units came from the RE Training Depot at Aldershot (mounted men) and the RE Reserve Battalion and Depot Companies at Chatham (dismounted men):

**Fifth New Army, K5**. As new units continued to be raised, some were allotted to become the third Company in K4 Divisions and other joined K5 Divisions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 200th 'County Palatine' | [**30th Division**](http://www.1914-1918.net/30div.htm) from January 1915 |

**The history of 30th Division**  
  
On 10 December the War Office authorised the formation of the Fifth New Army. Like the other Kitchener Armies, it comprised six Divisions, in this case numbered 37 to 42. What eventually became 30th Division was originally numbered 37th. In April 1915, the original Fourth New Army was broken up and its units converted for training and draft-finding purposes. When this took place the Fifth New Army became Fourth New Army and its Divisions were renumbered to 30th - 35th: thus what we remember as 30th Division was born.



As the Earl of Derby (Lord Stanley) was a driving force behind the raising of many of the units in this Division, when asked he gave permission for his family crest to be used as the Divisional symbol. In fact the symbol used by the Division was a slight variation: the eagle looks down on a swaddled child in the Stanley crest, but here the child is replaced by a cap.

After in most cases commencing training near home, the units were moved to concentrate near Grantham in April 1915. There were severe shortages of arms, ammunition and much equipment - for example there was only one gun carriage available even by mid July and even that was for funerals! It was not until October that the artillery was in a position to commence firing practice, a few weeks after the Division had moved to the area of Larkhill on Salisbury Plain.

On 4 November the Division was inspected by Lord Derby, and entrainment began two days later. The Division sailed to le Havre and Boulogne and all units concentrated near Ailly le Haut Clocher (near Amiens) by 12 November 1915. The 30th Division subsequently remained in France and Flanders and took part in these actions:

**1916**  
The Battle of Albert\* including the Division's capture of Montauban and subsequent fighting in Trones Wood  
The Battle of the Transloy Ridges\*  
\* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916.

**Private Cecil H. J Simmons 1st Bn. Bedfordshire Regiment. Gravel Dell, Latimer Road, Chesham Bois.**



|  |
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| Name Jack Cecil Herbert (John) SIMMONS  Rank/Number Private / 20813  Regiment/Unit Bedfordshire Regiment / 1st Battalion  Enlisted Watford, Herts  Age/Date of death 19 / 28 Aug 1916  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death Chesham Bois  Cemetery Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France  Grave Reference Pier & Face 2C  Location of memorial Chesham  Date/Place of birth 28 Mar 1897 / Wendover  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation Harry & Charlotte Simmons / carter  Parents’ Address 1901: The Hale, Wendover  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals:  British, Victory. |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | THIEPVAL MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
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|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1 August 1932 (originally scheduled for 16 May but due to the death of French President Doumer the ceremony was postponed until August). The dead of other Commonwealth countries, who died on the Somme and have no known graves, are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere. |

**The Bedfordshire Regiment**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**1st Battalion**  
August 1914 : in Mullingar in Ireland. Part of 15th Brigade, 5th Division.  
Landed in France on 15 August 1914.

**The history of 5th Division**  
  
This Division was part of the original British Expeditionary Force and remained on the Western Front until late 1917 when it moved to Italy. It took part in most of the major actions, including:



***1914***  
The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, including the Action of Elouges   
The Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois   
The Battle of the Marne  
The Battle of the Aisne  
The Battles of La Bassee and Messines 1914  
The First Battle of Ypres   
***1915***  
The Second Battle of Ypres and the Capture of Hill 60  
In late 1915, many units were switched for those of 32nd Division, a newly arrived volunteer formation. The idea was to strengthen ("stiffen" in the jargon of the time) the inexperienced Division buy mixing in some regular army troops; even though by now many of the pre-war regulars had gone and the regular battalions themselves were often largely composed of new recruits.

**1916**  
March 1916 saw a move, with 5th Division taking over a section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, in front of Arras. This was a lively time, with many trench raids, sniping and mining activities in the front lines. When the Franco-British offensive opened on the Somme on 1 July 1916, the 5th Division was enjoying a period of rest and re-fit and was in GHQ Reserve. However, this restful time was not destined to last:  
The Attacks on High Wood\*  
The Battle of Guillemont\*  
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\*  
The Battle of Morval\*   
The Battle of Le Transloy\*   
The battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **15th Brigade** |  |
| *This Brigade was attached to 28th Division between 3 March 1915 and 7 April 1915 in exchange for 83rd Brigade* | |
| 1st Bn. the Norfolk Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Bedfordshire Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Cheshire Regt |  |
| 1st Bn. the Dorsetshire Regt | left November 1915 |
| 1/6th Bn. the Cheshire Regt | joined December 1914, left March 1915 |
| 1/6th Bn. the King's (Liverpool Regt) | joined February 1915, left November 1915 |
| 16th Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regt | joined December 1915, left October 1918 |
| 15th Brigade Machine Gun Company | formed on 27 December 1915  left to move into 5th MG Battalion 26 April 1918 |
| 15th Trench Mortar Battery | formed April 1916 |
|  |  |

**The 1st Bn's Bedfordshire Regiment service in The Great War.**

The 1st Battalion were a "Regular Army" Battalion, who were at Mullingar, Ireland, at the outbreak of war. On mobilisation they left England as part of 15th Infantry Brigade in the 5th Division and went down in history as one of the Battalions of "Old Contemptibles" who fought against the Kaisers larger armies in the early engagements of the war.

Their Division landed in France on 16th August 1914 as a part of Haig's II Corps and fought in the early engagements of the War. They were engaged at the Battle of Mons in August and fought fiercely during the stand at Le Cateau, where 5 VC's were won by their Division. After service during the battles of the Aisne and the Marne, they were rushed north to Flanders and were also involved in the Battle of La Bassee, followed by the First Battle of Ypres. By the end of November the Division had suffered 5,000 casualties and stayed in a purely defensive role that winter.

Having moved to the Ypres salient early in 1915, the Division were engaged at the Second Battle of Ypres, defending Hill 60, where another 4 VCs were won in one day. In May Private [Edward Warner](http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/1stbn/edwardwarnervc.html) of the 1st Bedford’s won his VC defending Hill 60 during the early use of gas as an offensive weapon, but was awarded the honour posthumously as he died of his wounds the following day.

The original soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Battalions were amongst the "Old Contemptibles" - the title proudly adopted by the men of the original British Expeditionary Force (BEF) who saw active service before 22nd November 1914. They were the professional soldiers of the British Army, almost all of whom were regular soldiers or reservists. They took their honourable title from the famous "Order of the Day" given by Kaiser Wilhelm II at his headquarters in Aix-la-Chapelle on the 19th August, 1914 - "*It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English; walk over General French's contemptible little Army*."

They remained on the Western Front throughout the war, serving in all sectors from Ypres to the Somme, except for a brief tour of duty in Italy between December 1917 and April 1918.

**Major Battles**

The Battalion were engaged in the following major battles throughout the war:

In 1914 they were in the original British Expeditionary Force and fought at the battles of Mons and Le Cateau in August, the battles of the Marne and the Aisne in September, at the battle of La Bassee in October and during the Battle of Ypres 1914 (also known as the First Battle of Ypres) in November

In 1915 they were heavily engaged during the Battle of Ypres 1915 (also known as the Second battle of Ypres) in April and May, where they fought at Hill 60.

In 1916 they were involved in several phases of the Battle of the Somme, namely the attacks on High Wood 20th to 25th July, at Longueval 27th July, the Battle of Guillemont and the Battle of Flers-Courcelette in September.

In 1917 they were at the Battle of Arras, specifically at the attack on La Coulotte in April and the Third Battle of the Scarpe in May. They were also involved in the capture of Oppy Wood in June. During the Battles of Ypres 1917 (known as the Third Battle of Ypres or Passchendaele), the battalion were engaged in the Battles of Broodseinde and Poelcapelle in October as well as the Second battle of Passchendaele in October and November, before being moved to help stabilise the front in Italy following the disastrous battle of Caporetto.

In 1918 the battalion were rushed back to the Western Front in response to the German Spring Offensives and fought in the Battle of the Lys, specifically in the Battle of Hazebrouck, during the defence of the Nieppe Forest. Once the Allied army went on the final offensives that would become loosely known as the "100 days" they were engaged in several actions - in the Battle of Albert in August and the Second Battle of Bapaume in September during the Second battles of the Somme 1918, the Battle of the Canal du Nord in September during the Battles for the Hindenburg Line, the Battle of the Selle during the Final Advance in Picardy

Guillemont

The Battle of the Somme: the [Battle of Guillemont](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=62&menu=sub), 3-6 September 1916.

Throughout late July and August 1916, [Guillemont](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=63&menu=sub) (in the southern corner of the battlefield, a few hundred yards east of Trônes Wood) defied repeated British attacks. These [bloody encounters](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=64&menu=sub) led only to partial and temporary occupations of shattered ruins as determined German counter-attacks and continuous artillery fire forced later withdrawals.

Another major attack was planned for late August, though heavy rain delayed the operations until 3 September. Preliminary [bombardments](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=65&menu=sub) began on Saturday 2 September and, at 8.50am on Sunday morning, 5th Division advanced towards the protective strongpoint of Falfemont Farm to the south-east of the village. The [main assault](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=66&menu=sub) on Guillemont itself was made by 20th (Light) Division, two battalions of which crept forward before zero hour and took the Germans by surprise. At noon the main line, including a brigade of the 16th (Irish) Division, advanced and after much [difficult fighting](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=67&menu=sub) (especially near the quarry and station) Guillemont was secured and progress made several hundred yards eastwards. Although 5th Division failed to take the Farm, units did break into the German second line position. Next day saw 5th Division attempt advances towards [Leuze Wood](http://www.cwgc.org/somme/content.asp?id=68&menu=sub) including another attack on Falfemont Farm which was not captured until early the following morning allowing contact with French infantry on the right. Later reports of enemy disorganisation prompted renewed attacks on Leuze Wood and eventual occupation of its south-western edge.

The major portion of wood was secured on Wednesday 6 September, but further advances beyond Guillemont were hampered by fierce German fire from Ginchy and a stronghold called the 'Quadrilateral'. It was clear that capture of Ginchy was essential in order to exploit recent hard-won gains.

**1917**

**Sergeant Percy George Robins. 2nd/4th London Reg. (Royal Fusiliers). Woodcot Bungalow, Stubbs Wood.**

Percy was a member of the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group where he was an Assistant Scout Master. At the Free Church memorial service Mr. Alfred Ellis, the church President stated that Sergeant Robins had been sent with his Platoon to a forward position that was being heavily bombarded prior to the enemy attacking and was hit by shrapnel that killed him instantly. His officer had written to his parents stating that Sergeant Robins was splendid in action, quite fearless and kept his men well in hand. I have lost a good man and his Platoon a good sergeant and friend.

Name: Percy George ROBINS

Rank/Number: Sergeant / 282154

Regiment/Unit: London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) / 2/4th Battalion

Enlisted: Liverpool Street

Age/Date of death: 21 / 14 May 1917

How died/Theatre of war: Killed in action / France & Flanders

Residence at death: Woodcot Bungalow, Stubbs Wood, Chesham Bois

Cemetery: Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Grave Reference: Bay 9

Location of memorial: Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane. Scouts Pioneer Hall Memorial, Bois Lane.

Date/Place of birth: 1896 / Harlesden, Middx

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation: Joseph & Emily Robins / PT workers at the Amersham Free Church.

Parents’ Address: Woodcot Bungalow, Stubbs Wood, Chesham Bois

Wife

Wife’s Address

Medals: British, Victory

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | ARRAS MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
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|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | The French handed over Arras to Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels upon which the town is built were used and developed in preparation for the major offensive planned for April 1917. The Commonwealth section of the FAUBOURG D'AMIENS CEMETERY was begun in March 1916, behind the French military cemetery established earlier. It continued to be used by field ambulances and fighting units until November 1918. The cemetery was enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields and from two smaller cemeteries in the vicinity. The cemetery contains 2,651 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. In addition, there are 30 war graves of other nationalities, most of them German. During the Second World War, Arras was occupied by United Kingdom forces headquarters until the town was evacuated on 23 May 1940. Arras then remained in German hands until retaken by Commonwealth and Free French forces on 1 September 1944. The cemetery contains seven Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. The graves in the French military cemetery were removed after the First World War to other burial grounds and the land they had occupied was used for the construction of the Arras Memorial and Arras Flying Services Memorial. The ARRAS MEMORIAL commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918. Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux. A separate memorial remembers those killed in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. The ARRAS FLYING SERVICES MEMORIAL commemorates nearly 1,000 airmen of the Royal Naval Air Service, the Royal Flying Corps, and the Royal Air Force, either by attachment from other arms of the forces of the Commonwealth or by original enlistment, who were killed on the whole Western Front and who have no known grave. Both cemetery and memorial were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, with sculpture by Sir William Reid Dick. The memorial was unveiled by Lord Trenchard, Marshal of the Royal Air Force on the 31 July 1932 (originally it had been scheduled for 15 May, but due to the sudden death of French President Doumer, as a mark of respect, the ceremony was postponed until July). |

**2/4th (City of London) Battalion (Royal Fusiliers)**  
Formed in London in September 1914. By December 1914, had moved to Maidstone and placed under orders of 2/1st London Brigade in 2/1st London Division.  
31 December 1914: left the Division and relieved the 1/4th Bn in Malta.  
25 August 1915: moved to Egypt, before landing on 15 October 1915 at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, joining the 1st Brigade in the Royal Naval Division.  
January 1916: evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt, joining the 53rd (Welsh) Division.  
April 1916: moved independently to France.  
June 1916: disbanded at Rouen, after which 3/4th Bn. was renamed 2/4th Bn.

**58th (2/1st London) Division**

The 2/1st London Division was formed from the Home Service men of the Territorial Force units in the 1st London Division, it was formed in Great Britain in November 1914. Many men volunteered for overseas duties and were drafted to units overseas. The 58th Division was made ready for overseas in December 1916. Arrived in France in January 1917. Served in France and Flanders until the Armistice.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Battles and Engagements | | |
| France and Flanders | | |
| German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. 14 Mar-5 Apr 1917.  Battle of Bullecourt. 3-17 May 1917.  Actions on the Hindenburg line. 20 May-16 Jun 1917.  Battle of the Menin Road. 20-25 Sep 1917.  Battle of Polygon Wood. 26 Sep-3 Oct 1917 .  Second Battle of Passchendaele. 26 Oct-10 Nov 1917. |  | Battle of St. Quentin. 21-23 Mar 1918. Battle of the Avre. 4 Apr 1918. Action of Villers Bretonneux. 24-25 Apr 1918.  Battle of Amiens. 8-11 Aug 1918.  Battle of Albert. 21-23 Aug 1918, including the capture of Chuignes.  Battle of Epehy. 18 Sep 1918. The final advance to Artois. 2 Oct-11 Nov 1918, including the capture of Douai. |

**Flanking operation: the Battle of Bullecourt, 3 - 17 May 1917.**

Fifth Army (Gough)   
V Corps (Fanshawe)  
7th Division  
58th (2/1st London) Division  
62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.  
I ANZAC Corps (Birdwood)  
1st Australian Division  
2nd Australian Division  
5th Australian Division.

**The Second Battle of Bullecourt**

3 - 4 May 1917

Despite the disappointments of the First Battle of Bullecourt, the imperative for the attack on the Hindenburg Line remained on the agenda of the British Fifth Army and BEF GHQ. Therefore, more careful planning went into a second attempt, although important tactical weaknesses went unresolved. This time it was led by the 2nd Australian Division with, once again, the support of the misused British 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division. In preparation for the new attack, much of the area in and around Bullecourt village had been heavily shelled and was all in ruins.

It was accepted that the tanks would support the British 62nd Division, but the Australians insisted that they wanted nothing to do with them.

After sheltering in a sunken road, whilst a preparatory barrage raked the German defences, at 0345 hours 5 and 6 Brigades of the Australian 2nd Division, 'went over the top' towards the eastern edge of what was left of Bullecourt village. The British 62nd Division advanced towards the village itself. A creeping barrage gave the advancing troops cover.

The Australian 5 Brigade advanced as far as the first line of the barbed wire defences when they were hit by heavy machine gun fire from the front and side and brought to an abrupt halt. Thus checked some the troops started to drift back towards their own lines. Others tried to advance up the German trenches with a bit more success. But they were rigorously counter-attacked as the day went on. Obviously the Australian artillery had not destroyed all of the German defences. A second attempt by retiring troops rallied at the start line was similarly repulsed. 5 Brigade had never seriously threatened the German front line

The Australian 6 Brigade had more luck on the left of the 5th. The lie of the land gave them more cover, and they were able to surprise the Germans in their trenches. Some progress was made. The second line of the German defences was reached in some places. By late morning, lacking support on their left or right, 6 Brigade was ultimately forced to pull back by vigorous German counter attacks.

Meanwhile, the British 62nd Division approached the ruins of Bullecourt village from the left flank with mixed results. But the wire defences were penetrated and the far side of the village was reached. However, despite reinforcements, this position could not be held, and the 62nd Division were pushed back through the village having been reduced to only 100 men.

By the end of the day the Australians and British were both grimly hanging on to their limited gains awaiting their replacement. This came in the form of the Australian 1st Division and the British 7th Division.

Attempts at further advances by the new divisions were met by a determined German resistance with heavy machine gun fire from strong defence positions in the ruins of Bullecourt village. A sort of stalemate situation developed as both sides sought a way out of the costly impasse.

7 - 12 May 1917

At 0345 hours on 7 May 1917 the British 7th Division made another attempt, this time successful, to take Bullecourt village but, as usual, the German response was vigorous and the village changed hands several times over the next few days with heavy casualties on both sides.

On 12 May the Australian 5th Division gave the British 7th Division strong support, in particular capturing, or destroying, several troublesome machine gun positions and joining up with them in Bullecourt village, most of which was now in British hands.

13 - 17 May 1917

The British 58th Division took over from the 7th on 13 May 1917 on the left. On the right, the Australian 5th Division installed themselves in the former German positions. Only a small corner in the southwest of the village was in German hands.

Efforts by the Germans to oust the British from Bullecourt village on 15 May 1917 failed. At 0200 hours, on 17 May, the British dislodged the Germans from their final stronghold in the village.

The two month campaign for Bullecourt was over, with the Germans showing no evidence of an interest in a further offensive at this point of the front line. As to the strategic value of the success of the First and Second Battle of Bullecourt, there is little evidence of any great significance.

After the Second Battle of Bullecourt, which cost the Australians a further 7,500 casualties, little had changed in the attitude of the Australians to the venture.

The Australians' deep distrust of the competence of the British commanders of the BEF remained. It was much influenced by the dogged persistence of these commanders in the use of some of the methods in the Second Battle of Bullecourt that had to so clearly failed in the First. Somewhat surprisingly, this blame did not reflect to the same extent on the deficiencies of the Australians' own commanders, Birdwood, White, Walker, Smythe, Holmes and McCay. In particular, their collectively poor deployment of the Australians' own artillery had done much to make a poorly planned and conducted engagement an even greater disaster.

Serious Australian doubts about the efficacy of the tank as a weapon of infantry support were unchanged. This was despite the fact that the tanks attached to the British 62nd Division had succeeded in penetrating the German lines in the Second Battle of Bullecourt.  
The Australians' wish to have the own Commanded-in-Chief became more pressing from both a political and a military viewpoint. But this was not to be realised until the appointment of General John Monash as General Officer Commanding the Australian Corps in July 1918.

**Postscriptum**

Whilst unravelling the facts of this historic and corrosive row between the Australian troops and the British commanders on the Western Front, one can only be struck by the similarities of the Bullecourt situation and the screen plot of a famous Great War motion picture. The 1959 film was by Stanley Kubrick, and entitled *Paths of Glory* (based on the book of the same name written by Humphrey Cobb, published in 1935).

In both scenarios there is the much pressured senior commander (Nivelle = Haig) anxious to maintain 'an offensive spirit' and, faced with a flagging offensive, urging on an ambitious subordinate (Broulard = Gough), who has 'an eye on the big command' (Flanders). Added to this, is the specific promise of that big command if his (Broulard = Gough) troops succeed in the offensive. Also there is the very real anguish of the junior officers and troops who knew, from previous bitter experience, that the enemy was too strong and determined, and the attack would surely fail with almost unlimited casualties.

The scenarios of the film and what took place at Bullecourt are indeed very similar and it is difficult not to take the side of the troops, Australian and British, who were destined to see their comrades perish in this badly bungled operation. Bungled not only in concept, but also in execution, by both the British and Australian commanders, and almost all entirely due to the unwarranted confidence and sad incompetence of some, if not all, of these commanders.

Of course, there was no 'shot at dawn' scenario after Bullecourt as there was in the film. But it is highly unlikely the already angry Australian Government would have permitted it to take place even if there was.

Finally, two VCs were awarded at Bullecourt; both to infantrymen of the AIF:

6 May 1917: Corporal George Julian HOWELL, 1st Battalion, (New South Wales).

12 May 1917: Lieutenant Rupert Vance MOON, 58th Battalion, (Victoria).

**Capt. Herbert Gilmore Waghorn. 6th Bn. North Staffordshire Reg. White House, Clifton Road.**



Alfred George Waghorn and family including Herbert moved to Chesham Bois from Hendon and into the newly built White House, Clifton Road in 1910. Herbert born in June 1892 then at the age of 21 joined the 14th Battalion London Regiment as a private and was then transferred to the 1/6thTF Battalion (Territorial) Prince of Wales North Staffordshire Regiment where he was commissioned on the 12th Dec 1914 and then made the rank as a temporary 2nd Lieutenant on 29th May 1915. Herbert’s 6th Bn. North Staffs changed formation several times ending as part of the 59th (2nd North Midland) Division.

Herbert was promoted from Lieutenant to temporary Captain on 1st June 1916 and with precedence from 2nd Lieutenant to Captain on 8th June1917. *[London Gazette]*

As temporary Captain Herbert was transferred to France on 25 February 1917. Medals: Victory, British.

Name Herbert Gilmore WAGHORN

Rank/Number Captain 2673

**Medal Card**

Regiment/Unit North Staffordshire Regiment / 6th Battalion

Enlisted

Age/Date of death 25 / 26 Apr 1917

How died/Theatre of war: Died of wounds / France/ Flanders

Residence at death: White House, Clifton Road, Chesham Bois

Cemetery: Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France

Grave Reference: I.B.5

Location of memorial: Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.

Date/Place of birth /

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation /

Parents’ Address

Wife

Wife’s Address

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | PERONNE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | Peronne was taken by the German on 24 September 1914. On 18 March 1917, the 40th and 48th Divisions captured the town, but it was recovered by the Germans on the 23rd March 1918. It changed hands for the last time on 1 September 1918, when it was taken by the 2nd Australian Division The cemetery extension was begun by the 48th (South Midland) Division in March 1917, used by the Germans in 1918, and resumed by Australian units in September 1918. At the Armistice it contained 177 graves, now in Plots I and II. It was then enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields north and east of Peronne and from the following small cemeteries in the area:- AIZECOURT-LE-HAUT CHURCHYARD EXTENSION, which contained the graves of 18 soldiers from the United Kingdom and two from South Africa who fell in March 1918. CARTIGNY COMMUNAL CEMETERY AND GERMAN EXTENSION, which contained the graves of 5,250 German soldiers, two from the United Kingdom and one from Australia. COPSE TRENCH CEMETERY, ALLAINES, between Allaines and Moislains. Here were buried 64 soldiers from the United Kingdom (mainly 14th Black Watch and 12th Somerset Light Infantry) who fell in September 1918. DRIENCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY, on the South side of the village, made by the 74th (Yeomanry) Division in September 1918, and contained the graves of 20 soldiers from the United Kingdom. LIERAMONT COMMUNAL CEMETERY GERMAN EXTENSION, in which 63 soldiers from the United Kingdom were buried by the Germans in 1916-1918 and by the 58th (London) Division in September 1918. MADAME MILITARY CEMETERY, Clery-sur-Somme (the origin of this name is uncertain, but the Germans had a "Maidan Trench" opposite), near the road to Bouchavesnes, where 56 soldiers from the United Kingdom (mainly 33rd Division) were buried in January-March 1917 (Three of these were moved to Serre Road Cemetery No.2, Beaumont-Hamel, and 53 to Peronne). MOISLAINS BRITISH CEMETERY, a little South-West of the village, contained the graves of 54 soldiers of the 47th London) Division who fell in September 1918. MOISLAINS CHURCHYARD, which contained the graves of three soldiers from the United Kingdom and one from Canada. MOISLAINS GERMAN HOSPITAL CEMETERY, at the North-East end of the village, contained the graves of 38 soldiers of the Empire, who fell in 1917 and 1918, and 281 Germans. TEMPLEUX-LA-FOSSE GERMAN CEMETERY, on the East side of the village, contained the graves of 34 soldiers from the United Kingdom. Of these 33 were buried by their comrades in September 1918. VAUX WOOD BRITISH CEMETERY, VAUX-SUR-SOMME, within Eastern edge of the wood. Here were buried, in September 1918, 25 soldiers from the United Kingdom (mainly of the London Regiment). There are now 1,579 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the extension. 220 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to seven casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and then buried in other cemeteries whose graves could not be found. The extension also contains five Second World War burials. There are 97 German war graves, 68 being unidentified. The adjoining communal cemetery contains the grave of one airman of the First World War, killed in August 1914. |

**The North Staffordshire Regiment**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**1/5th Battalion**  
August 1914: in Hanley. Part of Staffordshire Brigade in North Midland Division. Moved to Luton area and in November 1914 went on to Bishops Stortford.  
4 March 1915: landed at Le Havre.  
12 May 1915: formation became the 137th Brigade in 46th (North Midland) Division.  
January 1916: moved to Egypt, returning to France next month.  
30 January 1918: transferred to 176th Brigade in 59th (2nd North Midland) Division and absorbed 2/5th Bn..  
9 May 1918: reduced to cadre and transferred to 16th (Irish) Division.  
17 June 1918: transferred to 34th Division.  
27 June 1918: transferred to 117th Brigade in 39th Division.  
12 August 1918: transferred to 116th Brigade in same Division.  
6 November 1918: demobilised near Etaples.

**1/6th Battalion**  
August 1914: in Burton-on-Trent. Record same as 1/5th Bn.. except remained with Brigade in January 1918.  
16 July 1918: absorbed the 2/6th Bn.

**The history of 59th (2nd North Midland) Division**

On 31 August 1914 the War Office issued instructions for all units of the Territorial Force to form a reserve unit. The men who had agreed to serve overseas were separated from the rest. Those left as 'home service only' were formed into 'second line' units, which would be this reserve. They were joined by many new recruits from September 1914 onward.



The 'first line' [**46th (North Midland) Division**](http://www.1914-1918.net/46div.htm) went to France in March 1915.

The units of the 'second line', the 2nd North Midland Division, remained at home for some time. Along with other 'second line' Divisions suffered it greatly from lack of equipment of all sorts, and training was inevitably affected. In early January 1915 the units moved and concentrated in the Luton area. Drafts began to leave for the 'first line' units in June, and their places taken by new recruits In July 1915 the Division moved to St Albans and soon afterward the number 59 was issued and the full title became 59th (2nd North Midland Division).

**1916**

In April 1916 the Division was hurriedly ordered to Ireland to assist in quelling troubles that broke out in Dublin and elsewhere. Severe fighting took place in the battle against the Irish nationalist forces. The Division's first battle casualties were incurred. Once things had settled down the units moved from Dublin to the Curragh. The passing of the Military Service Act in early 1916 deemed all men to have agreed to serve overseas and thus the Division was available to be sent, once it was trained.

**1917**

The Division returned to England in January 1917 and was based at Fovant by the end of the month. (The 65th (2nd Lowland) Division replaced it in Ireland). Orders were received to the effect that it would soon depart for France. Advanced parties left on 2 February: they missed an inspection by King George V that took place on 13 February. The units crossed the Channel from 17 February and completed concentration at Mericourt on 3 March 1917. Reports said that the Division could not be considered properly trained (largely as it had been split up in Ireland) but it did not have any opportunity to add to its training before it was thrown into the front line south of the Somme, near Estrees. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:

*The pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (17-5 April)*  
When the enemy began his strategic withdrawal east from the Somme area, 59th Division was among the formations that followed up in cautious pursuit. The lack of training began to be felt in this difficult tactical situation. Units of the Division captured Jeancourt but met a bloody repluse at Le Verguier. Divisional HQ was established at Bouvincourt in April 1917. Further attacks took place at Villeret and Hargicourt quarries.

May 1917: Division relieved by the cavalry and moved for rest but after a matter of days moved back into the Cambrai front line at Havrincourt and Flesquieres, Divisional HQ being set up at to Equancourt.

June 1917: relieved and moved for rest at Barastre. A lengthy spell here, being "fattened up" for the Flanders offensive. Received orders to move in late August and thence by train from Acheux to Winnezeele, arriving 1st September.

**The order of battle of the 59th (2nd North Midland) Division**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **176th (2/1st Staffordshire) Brigade** |  |
| 2/5th Bn., the South Staffordshire Regiment | disbanded 31 January 1918 |
| 2/6th Bn., the South Staffordshire Regiment | reduced to cadre 9 May 1918, left 30 May 1918 |
| 2/5th Bn., the North Staffordshire Regiment | became 5th Bn. when merged with 1/5th Bn. 30 January 1918, reduced to cadre 9 May 1918, left 2 June 1918 |
| 2/6th Bn., the North Staffordshire Regiment | reduced to cadre 9 May 1918, left 7 June 1918 |
| 174th Machine Gun Company | joined 178th Bde 28 February 1917, moved to 176th Bde 6 March 1917, moved to 59th Bn. MGC 7-8 Mar 1918 |
| 176th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 20 January 1917, disbanded 8 May 1918, reformed 11 July 1918 |
| 6/7th Bn., the Royal Scots Fusiliers | joined as cadre 7-10 May 1918 and left for 176th Bde, left 18 June 1918 |
| 1st Provisional Garrison Guard Bn. | joined 13 May 1918, renamed 17th Garrison Bn., the Worcestershire regiment on 25 May, left 18 June 1918 |
| 2nd Provisional Garrison Guard Bn. | joined 13 May 1918, left for 177th Bde 22 May1918 |
| 3rd Provisional Garrison Guard Bn. | joined 13 May 1918, left for 177th Bde 22 May1918 |
| 4th Provisional Garrison Guard Bn. | joined 13 May 1918, redesignated as 23rd Garrison Bn., the Lancashire Fusiliers 25 May 1918, left 18 June 1918 |
| 4th Garrison Guard Bn., the Royal Welsh Fusiliers | joined 16 May 1918, renamed 26th Bn. 16 July 1918 |
| 25th Garrison Guard Bn., the Kings (Liverpool Regiment) | joined from 177th Bde 16 June 1918, renamed 25th Bn. 16 July 1918 |
| 5th Provisional Garrison Guard, the Royal Sussex Regiment | joined 13 May 1918, renamed 17th Garrison Guard Bn. 25 May 1918 and then 17th Bn. 16 July 1918 |

**The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. 14 March - 5 April 1917**

In March 1917, the German armies on the Somme carried out a strategic withdrawal known as Operation Alberich. They destroyed everything on the ground that they left, flattening villages, poisoning wells, cutting down trees, blowing craters on roads and crossroads, booby-trapping ruins and dugouts. The withdrawal was to an immensely powerful and shorter line, positioned to take every tactical advantage of ground. The construction of this line - or rather, series of lines - had been spotted by British and French aviators in late 1916. British patrols began to detect the withdrawal of German infantry from the Somme in mid February 1917 and a cautious pursuit began, halted only as the Hindenburg Line itself was approached. [The Long Trail]

Fourth Army (Rawlinson)   
5th Cavalry Division   
III Corps (Pulteney)  
1st Division  
48th (South Midland) Division, which occupied Peronne on 18 March   
59th (2nd North Midland) Division.  
IV Corps (Woollcombe)  
32nd Division  
35th Division  
61st (2nd South Midland) Division.  
XIV Corps (Cavan)  
Guards Division  
20th (Light) Division (transferred to XV Corps on 25 March).  
XV Corps (Du Cane)  
8th Division  
20th (Light) Division (transferred from XIV Corps on 25 March)  
40th Division.

**Lieutenant Cyril John Digby Wood Clarke. R.A.M.C. (2nd South Midland Mounted Coy). Corona, Bois Avenue.**

Parents E Wood Clarke of Haddenham, Bucks . Cyril was born in Aylesbury (Whitchurch) in 1885. Died of wounds 15th Sept 1917 received at the third Battle of Ypres 1917. The 2nd South Midland division was involved in the Battle of Langemarck in August followed by the Battle of the Menin Road in September.



Cyril had three brothers in the war, Pt A.R Clarke of Princess Patricia’s Light Infantry who was killed 8 May 1915 and buried ay Ypres Menin Gate memorial and Sgt E. G Clarke Strathcona’s Horse both who had emigrated to Canada.

In 1911 Cyril lived in Amersham before moving to the newly built ‘Corona’ in Bois Avenue, Chesham Bois.

Cyril joined the territorial’s of the Royal Bucks Hussars (Bucks Yeomanry) as a private. On New Year’s Day 1914 he was awarded the TFE medal. The Territorial Force War Medal 1914-1919 was awarded to members of the Territorial Force only. To qualify, the recipient had to have been a member of the Territorial Force on or prior to 30 September 1914, and to have served in an operational theatre outside of the United Kingdom between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918.  
Cyril started as an assistant Quarter Master located at Codmore Cross. The Chesham squadron formed the ‘D’ company of the Royal Bucks Hussars. Cyril was elected Hon. Secretary of the Royal Bucks Hussars Sorts and Social Club. They were moved to Reading and incorporated into 2nd Mounted Brigade, 2nd South Midland Division as part of the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry.

Cyril was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Service Corp, 2nd South Midland Company. August 1914: in Buckingham.

Part of the 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade in the Mounted Division. September 1914: Brigade transferred to 2nd Mounted Division.  
The units of the 'second line', the 2nd South Midland Division, remained at home for some time. Along with other 'second line' Divisions suffered it greatly from lack of equipment of all sorts, and training was inevitably affected. In early January 1915 the units moved and concentrated in the Northampton area. Drafts began to leave for the 'first line' units, and their places taken by new recruits. In April 1915 the Division moved to Chelmsford and soon afterward the number 61 was issued and the full title became 61st (2nd South Midland Division). The units were inspected by Lord Kitchener on 6 August 1915. They served in France from 16th May 1916.

Name: Cyril John Digby Wood CLARKE

Rank/Number Lieutenant

Regiment/Unit: Army Service Corps / South Midland Coy

Enlisted: Chesham, Bucks Hussars

Age/Date of death:  32 / 15 Sep 1917

How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / France/Flanders

Residence at death: Corona, The Green, Bois Avenue , Chesham Bois.

Cemetery: Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium

Grave Reference XII.H.19

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane

Date/Place of birth:  1885 / Aylesbury

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation Mr & Mrs E Wood-Clarke / Bank Manager Lloyds Bank, Chesham.

Parents’ Address: Haddenham, Bucks

Wife: Mabel

Wife’s Address:  Corona, The Green, Bois Avenue , Chesham Bois.

Medals: British, Victory, TFE.

Notes: Brothers Arthur Ronald Wood Clarke of Princess Patricia’s Light Infantry who was killed 8 May 1915 and Sgt E. G Clarke Strathcona’s Horse, both had emigrated to Canada.

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | VLAMERTINGHE NEW MILITARY CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | For much of the First World War, Vlamertinghe (now Vlamertinge) was just outside the normal range of German shell fire and the village was used both by artillery units and field ambulances. Burials were made in the original Military Cemetery until June 1917, when the New Military Cemetery was begun in anticipation of the Allied offensive launched on this part of the front in July. Although the cemetery continued in use until October 1918, most of the burials are from July to December 1917. The cemetery now contains 1,813 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. |

**Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry.** In 1845 [Queen Victoria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Victoria) conferred the title "Royal" on the Regiment this changed the unit's name to The 2nd Royal Bucks Regiment of Yeomanry. Then in 1889 there was another change in name this time to the Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars Yeomanry.

**Army Service Corps.** The unsung heroes of the British army in the Great War - the ASC, "[**Ally Sloper**](http://www.chrisharrisproductions.btinternet.co.uk/Pages/allysloper.html)'s Cavalry" - were the men who operated the transport. Soldiers cannot fight without food, equipment and ammunition. In the Great War, the vast majority of this tonnage, supplying a vast army on many fronts, was supplied from England. Using horsed and motor vehicles, railways and waterways, the ASC performed prodigious feats of logistics and were one of the great strengths of organisation by which the war was won.

The Brothers Regiments.

**Princess Patricia's Light Infantry** (or the 'Princess Pats' as the famous regiment was commonly called) was the only one that consisted almost entirely of trained ex-regular soldiers who had served with the British Army. The regiment was raised by Hamilton Gault and named after the Duke of Connaught's daughter, Patricia. Early in December 1914 Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry regiment left Salisbury Plain and joined the British 27th Division in France. The Regiment was brigaded with the 3rd King's Royal Rifles, 4th King's Royal Rifles, 4th Rifle Brigade and 2nd King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Following the launch of a German offensive on 22 April 1915, the division was involved in the [Second Battle of Ypres](http://www.greatwar.co.uk/westfront/ypsalient/secondypres/index.htm).

**Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)** At the outbreak of the [First World War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), the regiment was mobilized and began its training in England. In 1915, Lord Strathcona's Horse served as infantry in the trenches in France. On 16 February 1916, the Strathcona's were reconstituted as a mounted force and, as an [Imperial Service Regiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Imperial_Service_Regiment&action=edit&redlink=1), served in the [Canadian Cavalry Brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Canadian_Cavalry_Brigade&action=edit&redlink=1) attached to the [2nd Indian Cavalry Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_Indian_Cavalry_Division), which in November 1916 became the [5th Cavalry Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_Cavalry_Division) of the British [4th Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Army). In March 1917, the Regiment saw action as cavalry during the defence of the [Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somme) front. It was during this fighting that Lieutenant [Frederick Harvey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Maurice_Watson_Harvey) won the [Victoria Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Cross) for rushing a German machine gun post and capturing the gun position. By 1918, the regiment and the Canadian Cavalry Brigade as a whole was now attached to [Sir Arthur Currie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Arthur_Currie)'s [Canadian Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Corps). During the last great German offensive, called by the Germans [Operation Michael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Michael), when the Imperial and French armies were on the verge of being split, the regiment earned its third Victoria Cross. On 31 March 1918, in what is known as "the last great cavalry charge" at the [Battle of Moreuil Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Moreuil_Wood), [Gordon Flowerdew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Flowerdew) was posthumously awarded the [Victoria Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Cross) for leading his men in a successful engagement with entrenched German forces.

**The history of 48th (South Midland) Division**  
The South Midland Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime TF.

**1914**

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to concentrate in the Chelmsford area by mid August 1914.

**1915**

On 13 March the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began a week later. Divisional HQ, the Gloucester & Worcester and South Midland Brigades went via Folkestone-Boulogne while all other units went from Southampton to Le Havre. By 3 April the Division had concentrated near Cassel. The Division then remained in France and Flanders until late 1917 and took part in the following engagements:

**1916**

The Battle of Albert\* The Division held the line between the 56th (London) and the 31st Divisions, both of which were heavily engaged at Gommecourt and Serre respectively on 1 July 1916. Two of the Warwickshire battalions of the Division attacked on that day and suffered heavy casualties in assaulting the Quadrilateral (Heidenkopf)).  
The Battle of Bazentin Ridge\* in which the Division captured Ovillers   
The Battle of Pozieres Ridge\*   
The Battle of the Ancre Heights\*   
The Battle of the Ancre\*  
\* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

**1917**

The German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line, in which the Division occupied Peronne   
The Battle of Langemarck\*\*  
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*  
The Battle of Broodseinde\*\*  
The Battle of Poelcapelle\*\*  
\*\* the battles marked \*\* are phases of the Third Battles of the Ypres   
Divisional HQ received orders on 10 November for a move to Italy. Entrainment began on 21 November and all units had detrained around Legnano (Adige) by 1 December. The Division them moved north to the area allotted to XI Corps.

**Phase: the Battle of the Menin Road, 20 - 25 September 1917**

Second Army (Plumer)   
IX Corps (Gordon)  
19th (Western) Division  
37th Division.  
X Corps (Morland)  
23rd Division  
33rd Division  
39th Division  
41st Division.  
I ANZAC Corps (Birdwood)  
1st Australian Division  
2nd Australian Division  
4th Australian Division  
5th Australian Division.

Fifth Army (Gough)   
II Corps (Jacob)  
8th Division  
14th (Light) Division   
24th Division  
56th (1st London) Division  
53rd Brigade of 18th (Eastern) Division.  
XIV Corps (Cavan)  
20th (Light) Division  
29th Division  
38th (Welsh) Division.  
XVIII Corps (Maxse)  
11th (Northern) Division  
48th (South Midland) Division.  
XIX Corps (Watts)  
15th (Scottish) Division  
16th (Irish)  
36th (Ulster) Division   
61st (2nd South Midland) Division

The major operations of the British ‘Flanders Offensive’ began on 31 July 1917 when British forces, with two French divisions, attacked the German defences along a 16-mile front east of Ypres. For fifteen days before that the British artillery, which included Australian batteries, fired more than four million shells from 3,000 guns. The German defence of the area stretched all the way back to the long sickle-shaped ridge between three and ten kilometres from the town. It was a defence in depth; the front was lightly held and beyond it were arrays of deep concrete shelters or ‘pillboxes’ in which soldiers could shelter from bombardment and emerge to mount machine guns to fire at advancing infantry. Barbed wire was carefully positioned to funnel the advancing men into the fields of fire of the machine guns. Well back, out of sight beyond the ridge, were the German artillery and infantry reserves ready to mount counter-attacks.

The British plan was to batter down this formidable defensive position using mainly so-called ‘bite and hold’ tactics. After an opening bombardment the infantry would advance for a prescribed distance behind a ‘creeping’ barrage of shells. This barrage would keep the Germans in their ‘pillboxes’ until British soldiers were almost upon them. The enemy positions would then be captured, consolidated and protected from counter-attack by artillery. Guns would be brought forward and the next ‘bite’ attempted. In this way the British aimed to work their way from their start lines near Ypres to the heights of the ridge ten kilometres away at Passchendaele village. It was thought that by the time Passchendaele would be reached, the German reserves would be used up. A breakthrough could then be made to the enemy’s rear and towards the Belgian coast to the north. General Sir Douglas Haig, the British commander in chief, viewed the ‘Flanders Offensive’ as his war-winning stroke of 1917.

**Private Arthur Brown. 2nd/6th Bn. Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment. Bois Moor Road.**

Name Arthur BROWN

Rank/Number Private / 96080

Regiment/Unit Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment / 2/6th Battalion

Enlisted Aylesbury

Age/Date of death 26 / 02 Dec 1917

How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders

Residence at death Horsham, Sussex

Cemetery Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, Nord, France

Grave Reference Panel 8

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane..

Date/Place of birth c1891 / Wigginton, Herts

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation Charles & Christiana Brown / foreman brickmaker

Parents’ Address Chesham Rd, Wigginton, Tring

Wife Sarah Brown

Wife’s Address Ivy Cottage, High St, Handcross, Sussex

Notes formerly 28875 Gloucestershire Regiment

**Cemetery Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | CAMBRAI MEMORIAL, LOUVERVAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Nord |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | The CAMBRAI MEMORIAL commemorates more than 7,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South Africa who died in the Battle of Cambrai in November and December 1917 and whose graves are not known. Sir Douglas Haig described the object of the Cambrai operations as the gaining of a 'local success by a sudden attack at a point where the enemy did not expect it' and to some extent they succeeded. The proposed method of assault was new, with no preliminary artillery bombardment. Instead, tanks would be used to break through the German wire, with the infantry following under the cover of smoke barrages. The attack began early in the morning of 20 November 1917 and initial advances were remarkable. However, by 22 November, a halt was called for rest and reorganisation, allowing the Germans to reinforce. From 23 to 28 November, the fighting was concentrated almost entirely around Bourlon Wood and by 29 November, it was clear that the Germans were ready for a major counter attack. During the fierce fighting of the next five days, much of the ground gained in the initial days of the attack was lost. For the Allies, the results of the battle were ultimately disappointing but valuable lessons were learnt about new strategies and tactical approaches to fighting. The Germans had also discovered that their fixed lines of defence, no matter how well prepared, were vulnerable. The Cambrai Memorial was designed by Harold Chalton Bradshaw with sculpture by Charles S. Jagger. It was unveiled by Lieut-General Sir Louis Vaughan on 4 August 1930. The memorial stands on a terrace at one end of LOUVERVAL MILITARY CEMETERY. The chateau at Louverval, was taken by the 56th Australian Infantry Battalion at dawn on 2 April 1917. The hamlet stayed in Allied hands until the 51st (Highland) Division was driven from it on 21 March 1918 during the great German advance, and it was retaken in the following September. Parts of Rows B and C of the cemetery were made between April and December 1917 and in 1927, graves were brought in from Louverval Chateau Cemetery, which had been begun by German troops in March 1918 and used by Commonwealth forces in September and October 1918. The cemetery now contains 124 First World War burials. |

**The Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment)**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**2/6th Battalion**  
Formed at Chesterfield on 14 September 1914 as a second line unit. Moved on 2 November to Buxton, with Bn HQ occupying the Empire Hotel.  
Moved to Luton in January 1915 and placed under command of 2nd Notts. & Derby Brigade in the 2nd North Midland Division.  
August 1915: formation became the 176th Brigade, 59th (2nd North Midland) Division. Moved to Watford after a few weeks at Dunstable.  
Moved to Ireland in April 1916 to quell disturbances.  
Moved on 12 January 1917 to Fovant and landed at Boulogne 25 February 1917.  
7 May 1918: reduced to cadre.  
31 July 1918: disbanded in France.

**The history of 59th (2nd North Midland) Division**  
  
On 31 August 1914 the War Office issued instructions for all units of the Territorial Force to form a reserve unit. The men who had agreed to serve overseas were separated from the rest. Those left as 'home service only' were formed into 'second line' units, which would be this reserve. They were joined by many new recruits from September 1914 onward.



The 'first line' [**46th (North Midland) Division**](http://www.1914-1918.net/46div.htm) went to France in March 1915.

The units of the 'second line', the 2nd North Midland Division, remained at home for some time. Along with other 'second line' Divisions suffered it greatly from lack of equipment of all sorts, and training was inevitably affected

In early January 1915 the units moved and concentrated in the Luton area. Drafts began to leave for the 'first line' units in June, and their places taken by new recruits. In July 1915 the Division moved to St Albans and soon afterward the number 59 was issued and the full title became 59th (2nd North Midland Division).

**1916**

In April 1916 the Division was hurriedly ordered to Ireland to assist in quelling troubles that broke out in Dublin and elsewhere. Severe fighting took place in the battle against the Irish nationalist forces. The Division's first battle casualties were incurred. Once things had settled down the units moved from Dublin to the Curragh.

The passing of the Military Service Act in early 1916 deemed all men to have agreed to serve overseas and thus the Division was available to be sent, once it was trained.

**1917**

The Division returned to England in January 1917 and was based at Fovant by the end of the month. (The 65th (2nd Lowland) Division replaced it in Ireland). Orders were received to the effect that it would soon depart for France. Advanced parties left on 2 February: they missed an inspection by King George V that took place on 13 February. The units crossed the Channel from 17 February and completed concentration at Mericourt on 3 March 1917. Reports said that the Division could not be considered properly trained (largely as it had been split up in Ireland) but it did not have any opportunity to add to its training before it was thrown into the front line south of the Somme, near Estrees. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:

The pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (17-5 April)  
When the enemy began his strategic withdrawal east from the Somme area, 59th Division was among the formations that followed up in cautious pursuit. The lack of training began to be felt in this difficult tactical situation. Units of the Division captured Jeancourt but met a bloody repulse at Le Verguier. Divisional HQ was established at Bouvincourt in April 1917. Further attacks took place at Villeret and Hargicourt quarries.

May 1917: Division relieved by the cavalry and moved for rest but after a matter of days moved back into the Cambrai front line at Havrincourt and Flesquieres, Divisional HQ being set up at to Equancourt.

June 1917: relieved and moved for rest at Barastre. A lengthy spell here, being "fattened up" for the Flanders offensive. Received orders to move in late August and then by train from Acheux to Winnezeele, arriving 1st September.   
  
The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge (23-25 September) \*\*  
On 20 September 1917, the Division's role was to relieve the 55th (West Lancashire) Division after it had made an attack in the area of Gravenstafel. The Lancashire’s succeeded in capturing all objectives and the 59th duly moved to relieve them. Assembling around Goldfish Chateau, just outside Ypres, the Division moved up into the salient on the night of 23/24 September and completed the move into battle positions during 25 and 26th. Divisional HQ was set up in a pillbox on the eastern bank of the Ypres Canal.

The Battle of Polygon Wood (26-30 September) \*\*  
The Division attacked as part of the British force that made an assault early on 26 September. Using 177th and 178th Brigades in front, the Division captured all of its objectives and then held on against German counter attack. Divisional HQ, finding its canal position to be very near some heavy artillery, moved back a way to Mersey Camp Wood but were there bombed by enemy aircraft at night. The Division had suffered 2000 casualties while in the salient and was relieved on 29 September by the New Zealand Division.

The battles marked \*\* are phases of the Third Battles of the Ypres

October 1917: relieved 1st Canadian Division in front line in the Lens sector, with Divisional HQ being at Chateau-de-la-Haie. Warned that it would be used to exploit the success expected in the forthcoming attack at Cambrai, the Division was relieved by the Canadians and began to move to Bapaume on 17 November. Divisional HQ set up at Basseux three days later.

The capture of Bourlon Wood (28 November) \*\*  
The German counter attacks (30 November - 3 December) \*\*  
The battles marked \*\* are phases of the Cambrai Operations  
After moving on 23 November to Etricourt, preparatory to taking over the line at Gouzeaucourt, orders were relived for the Division to switch to the northern flank of this operation, to relieve the Guards Division at Bourlon Wood. This took place on 29 November, with Divisional HQ going into huts at Trescault. On 1 December, many casualties were sustained from German shellfire which preceded an enemy infantry counter attack. This was beaten off by the Division. During the day, 470 Field Company RE, which was marching to the area of Gouzeaucourt, found itself caught up in the German advance in that area. Fighting as infantry, it assisted in the defence of the area until the Guards Division counter attacked and retook Gouzeaucourt. 59th Division was ordered to withdraw from Bourlon, which it did successfully, taking up a position at Flesquieres. On 16 December, Divisional HQ moved to Ytres.

23 December: moved out for rest at Le Cauroy, where Christmas and all of January 1918 was spent.

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| **178th (2/1st Sherwood Forester) Brigade** |  |
| 2/5th Bn. the Sherwood Foresters | reduced to cadre 7 May 1918, left 2 June 1918 |
| 2/6th Bn. the Sherwood Foresters | reduced to cadre 7 May 1918, disbanded 31 July 1918 |
| 2/7th Bn. the Sherwood Foresters | became 7th Bn. when merged with 1/7th Bn. 31 January 1918, reduced to cadre 7 May 1918, left 28 May 1918 |
| 2/8th Bn. the Sherwood Foresters | disbanded by 30 January 1918 |
| 174th Machine Gun Company | attached 24 February 1917 to 6 March 1917 |
| 175th Machine Gun Company | joined 13 March 1917, moved to 59th Bn. MGC 7-8 Mar 1918 |
| 178th Trench Mortar Battery |  |
| 36th Garrison Guard Bn. the Northumberland Fusiliers | joined 12 May 1918, renamed 36th Bn. 16 July 1918 |
| 11th Garrison Guard Bn. the Royal Scots Fusiliers | joined 12 May 1918, renamed 11th Bn. 16 July 1918 |
| 2nd Garrison Guard Bn. the Royal Irish Regiment | joined 17 May 1918, designated 8th Garrison Bn. 25 May 1918, left 19 June 1918 |
| 25th Garrison Guard Bn. the Cheshire Regiment | joined 25 May 1918, left 19 June 1918 |
| 13th Garrison Bn. the Duke of Wellington's | Joined from 177th Bde. 16 June 1918, renamed 13th Bn. on 16 July 1918 |

**The Cambrai operations.**

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| **20 November - 30 December 1917** "The Battle of Cambrai ranks as one of the most thrilling episodes of the whole war. Tanks at last came into their kingdom. The notion that the Hindenburg Line was impregnable was exploded".  *Captain Stair Gillon: The Story of the 29th Division: a record of gallant deeds.* |

**Phase: the German counter attack, 30 November - 3 December 1917**

Third Army (Byng)   
III Corps (Pulteney)  
1st Cavalry Division  
2nd Cavalry Division  
4th Cavalry Division  
5th Cavalry Division  
Guards Division  
6th Division  
12th (Eastern) Division  
20th (Light) Division  
29th Division  
36th (Ulster) Division  
61st (2nd South Midland) Division.  
IV Corps (Woolacombe) (relieved by V Corps on 1 December)

2nd Division.   
47th (2nd London) Division  
59th (2nd North Midland) Division.   
V Corps (Fanshawe)  
2nd Division   
47th (2nd London) Division  
51st (Highland) Division (entered into Corps command 3 December)  
VI Corps (Haldane)  
3rd Division  
56th (1st London) Division (relieved by 51st (Highland) Division on 2/3 December).  
VII Corps (Snow)  
21st Division  
55th (West Lancashire) Division.

The German plan was simply to cut off the neck of the salient by attacking on each side, with the strongest blow to come on the southern side. The blow fell at 7.30am on the 30th November, and was devastatingly fast and effective. By 9am, the Germans had penetrated almost 3 miles towards Havrincourt Wood. Byng's Third Army faced disaster, with the real prospect of several divisions being cut off in the trap. The first attack fell on the 55th (West Lancashire) and 12th (Eastern) Division on the south-eastern side of the salient. The Germans climbed the slope to re-take Lateau Wood, pushed up the complex of shallow ravines south of Banteux, moved through Villers Guislain and past Gouzeaucourt. Amongst the troops defending the artillery positions at Gouzeaucourt were the 11th United States Engineer Company. The direction of the assault was across British divisional boundaries, and the command structure rapidly broke down as the troops became mixed up.   
Three German divisions attacked to the north, supported by an intense Phosgene barrage, intending to cut the Bapaume-Cambrai road near Anneux Chapel. They were repulsed by the machine gun barrage of the 47th (London), 2nd and 56th (London) Divisions, who had relieved the 36th and 40th. No Germans reached the road. Fierce fighting continued in the southern area for Gonnelieu, Les Rues Vertes and Masnieres.   
Eventually, on the 3rd December, Haig ordered a retirement 'with the least possible delay from the Bourlon Hill-Marcoing salient to a more retired and shorter line'. The audacious plan had failed and although some ground had been gained, in places the Germans were now on ground formerly occupied by the British. A small salient remained at Flesquieres, which was an exposed position ruthlessly exploited by the German assault in March 1918.

The improvised defence gradually sealed the position and once again an initially promising attack lost momentum. The German attack met a far stronger defence north of the road, but even there, weight of artillery and numbers told, and hard-won positions were reluctantly given up by the British. Once again, the battle resembled the Somme: piecemeal attack and improvised counter attack. The German army suffered from problems familiar to the BEF: heavy losses, chaotic supply, and battlefield command breakdown that did not seize upon and propagate success. By 5 December, the line had re-estabilised. The net result of the Cambrai operation in terms of ground was that north of Gonnelieu the British had gained from their 20 November start line, standing on the Hindenburg Support positions snaking around Flesquieres and Welsh Ridge – while south from Gonnelieu they had been pushed back an average of 3000 yards with the loss of Villers Guislain. Both sides now occupied their respective bulges in an S-shaped double salient.

**Private Herbert Hazeldine. 5th Bn. Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**

Name Herbert HAZELDINE

Rank/Number Private / 22984

Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 5th Battalion

Enlisted Chesham

Age/Date of death: 17 / 10 Dec 1917

How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders

Residence at death:  Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

Cemetery Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West Vlaanderen, Belgium

Grave Reference Panel 96 to 98

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common Bois Lane

Date/Place of birth 1900 / Amersham

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty: wood sawyer?

Parents/Occupation: John & Alice Hazeldine / boot finisher

Parents’ Address 1911: 112 Severalls Ave, Chesham

Wife

Wife’s Address

Medals: British, Victory.

Note: Brothers William C Hazeldine Army Service Corps and Leonard Hazeldine Able Seaman HMS Vengence.

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | TYNE COT MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen |
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| **Historical Information:** | The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by both sides and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery. The TYNE COT MEMORIAL now bears the names of almost 35,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. The memorial, designed by Sir Herbert Baker with sculpture by Joseph Armitage and F.V. Blundstone, was unveiled by Sir Gilbert Dyett on 20 June 1927. The memorial forms the north-eastern boundary of TYNE COT CEMETERY, which was established around a captured German blockhouse or pill-box used as an advanced dressing station. The original battlefield cemetery of 343 graves was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when remains were brought in from the battlefields of Passchendaele and Langemarck, and from a few small burial grounds. It is now the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world in terms of burials. At the suggestion of King George V, who visited the cemetery in 1922, the Cross of Sacrifice was placed on the original large pill-box. There are three other pill-boxes in the cemetery. There are now 11,956 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tyne Cot Cemetery, 8,369 of these are unidentified. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**5th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Oxford in August 1914 as part of K1 and attached to 42nd Brigade in 14th (Light) Division.  
21 May 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
27 April 1918: reduced to cadre strength.  
16 June 1918: transferred to 16th Division.and returned to England.  
20 June 1918: absorbed by 18th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment.

In 1914 the 2nd Ox and Bucks arrived on the Western Front as part of the [5th Infantry Brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_5th_Infantry_Brigade), [2nd Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_2nd_Division_(World_War_I)) – one of the first divisions of the [British Expeditionary Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Expeditionary_Force_(World_War_I)) (BEF) to arrive in France. The battalion took part in the first British battle of the war, at [Mons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mons), where the British defeated the German forces that they had encountered on 23 August. The battalion subsequently took part in the [retreat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retreat_from_Mons) that began the following day, not stopping until just on the outskirts of Paris, then halting the German advance at the [First Battle of the Marne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Battle_of_the_Marne) (5–9 September). The 2nd Ox & Bucks later took part in all the subsidiary battles of the [First Battle of Ypres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Battle_of_Ypres) (19 October – 22 November) that saw the heart ripped out of the old [Regular Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regular_Army), with 54,000 casualties being sustained by the British Army. On 11 November the Germans made another attempt to capture [Ypres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ypres), sending—on the orders of the German [Kaiser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_II_of_Germany)—the élite [Prussian Guard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussian_Guard) against the British forces. The 2nd Battalion counter-attacked them at [Nonne Bosschen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nonne_Bosschen) wood, proceeding to prevent their advance and rout them. First Ypres was the last major battle of 1914.

At the [Battle of Festubert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Festubert) – which was launched in support of the French attack south of [Vimy Ridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vimy_Ridge) – in May 1915 the 2nd Ox and Bucks were part of the second wave of the 5th Brigade attack and, during the course of the battle, sustained just under 400 casualties; the largest the regiment had suffered so far in the war, and the largest it had suffered for over 100 years. Battalions of the regiment also saw action at [Loos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Loos) in September, and the 2nd Ox & Bucks alone took part in the subsequent attack against the [Hohenzollern Redoubt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hohenzollern_Redoubt) in October. The 1/4th Ox & Bucks took part in the [First Day of the Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Day_of_the_Somme) on 1 July 1916, in which the British Army suffered over 60,000 casualties – the largest casualties sustained in a day by the British Army. The battalions of the Ox & Bucks on the Western Front saw extensive service during the [Battle of the Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme) (1 July – 18 November), suffering heavily, including at [Mametz Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mametz_Wood), [Pozières](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Pozi%C3%A8res), and at [Ancre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Ancre) the last major subsidiary battle.

In March 1917 the Germans began the retreat to the [Hindenburg Line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindenburg_Line) and the regiment's battalions saw much involvement in the [Arras Offensive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arras_(1917)) that began on 9 April and ended on 16 May, including at the Battles of [Scarpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Scarpe) and [Arleux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arleux). The battalions of the Ox & Bucks saw further service in many of the subsidiary battles during the [Battle of Passchendaele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Passchendaele) (also known as Third Ypres) that took place between 31st July – 6th November. Some of the battles that the Ox & Bucks took part in included [Menin Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Menin_Road) and [Polygon Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Polygon_Wood) in September and early October. The Ox & Bucks also took part in the [Battle of Cambrai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cambrai_(1917)) (20 November-3 December) that saw the first large-scale use of tanks by the British and was the last major battle 1917. On 21 March 1918 the Germans launched the last-gasp [Spring Offensive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spring_Offensive) ([Operation Michael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Michael)) and the Ox & Bucks suffered yet more heavy casualties as part of the defence of the [Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somme) during the [St. Quentin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_St._Quentin_(1918)) and in subsequent battles that saw the Germans achieve significant gains. After that offensive lost its momentum, the Germans launched [Operation Georgette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Georgette) in April who the Ox & Bucks defended against in the [Battle of the Lys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Lys_(1918)) and subsequent actions. By August the Germans offensives had failed and the Allies had launched a counter-offensive against the Germans. In August the 2nd Ox & Bucks took part in the [Battle of Albert (1918)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Albert_(1918)) and the [Second Battle of Bapaume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Bapaume) while the 2/4th Ox & Bucks and the 2/1st Buckinghamshire’s took part in the advance into [Flanders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flanders), with both offensives seeing the Allies advance to the Hindenburg Line by early September. The 2nd Ox & Bucks took part in the offensive against it that saw the Allies break through the defence, taking part in the [Battle of Havrincourt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Havrincourt), [Battle of the Canal du Nord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Canal_du_Nord) and the Second [Battle of Cambrai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cambrai_(1918)). The Regiment then took part in the last actions of the war, taking part in the [Battle of the Selle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Selle) and the [Battle of Valenciennes](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle_of_Valenciennes&action=edit&redlink=1). The war ended on 11 November 1918 with the signing of the Armistice between the Allies and Germany.

Bottom of Form

# The 14th (Light) Division in 1914-1918

**The history of 14th (Light) Division**  
  
The Division came into existence as a result of Army Order No. 324, issued on 21 August 1914, which authorised the formation of the six new Divisions of K1. It was formed of volunteers. At first it was numbered the 8th (Light) Division, but as more regular army units became available to create a Division, they were given precedence and this was renumbered as the 14th (Light) Division. Initially without equipment or arms of any kind, the recruits were judged to be ready by May 1915, although its move to the fighting front was delayed by lack of rifle and artillery ammunition. The 14th (Light) Division served on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in the following engagements:



**1915**  
The Action of Hooge, in which the Division had the misfortune to be the first to be attacked by flamethrower.  
The Second Attack on Bellewaarde

**1916**  
The Battle of Delville Wood\*  
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\*  
The battles marked **\*** are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

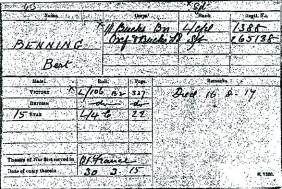
**1917**  
The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line  
The First Battle of the Scarpe\*\*  
The Third Battle of the Scarpe\*\*  
The battles marked **\***\* are phases of the Arras Offensive  
The Battle of Langemark\*\*\*  
The First Battle of Passchendaele\*\*\*  
The Second Battle of Passchendaele\*\*\*  
The battles marked **\***\*\* are phases of the Third Battles of Ypres

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| **The order of battle of the 14th (Light) Division** |  |
| 5th Bn. the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire LI | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 5th Bn. the King's Shropshire Light Infantry | disbanded February 1918 |
| 9th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 9th Bn. the Rifle Brigade | left as a cadre in June 1918 |
| 42nd Machine Gun Company | joined 24 February 1916  left to move into 14th MG Battalion 1 March 1918 |
| 42nd Trench Mortar Battery | joined 15 April 1916 |
| 6th Bn. the Wiltshire Regt | joined as a cadre June 1918 and rebuilt |
| 16th Bn. the Manchester Regt | joined as a cadre June 1918 and rebuilt |

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**Sergeant Bert Benning. Bucks 1st/1st Bn. Oxon & Bucks L I. Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

Born Amersham 1892. Son of Alfred and Jane Benning of Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois. Joined 1st/1st Bucks Battalion as Lance Corporal, promoted to Serjeant Oxon and Bucks L.I. Entered the war in France 30-03-1915. Medals:Victory,British and 1915 Star.



**Medal Card**

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| Name Bert (Bertie) BENNING  Rank/Number Sergeant / 265138  Regiment/Unit Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 1/1st Bucks Battalion  Enlisted Chesham  Age/Date of death 25 / 16 Aug 1917  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death  Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois  Cemetery New Irish Farm Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium  Grave Reference XII.D.8  Location of memorial Chesham Bois  Date/Place of birth 1892 / Amersham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty bootmaker  Parents/Occupation Alfred & Jane Benning / bricklayers labourer  Parents’ Address 1901: Gunn’s Terrace, Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals:  British, Victory, 15 Star. |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | NEW IRISH FARM CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Ieper, West-Vlaanderen |
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| **Historical Information:** | New Irish Farm Cemetery was first used from August to November 1917 and was named after a nearby farm, known to the troops as 'Irish Farm' (originally there was an Irish Farm Cemetery immediately South of the Farm. New Irish Farm Cemetery is about 300 metres North of the Farm at a crossing once known as Hammond's Corner). It was used again in April and May 1918 and at the Armistice it contained just 73 burials - the three irregular rows of Plot I - but was then greatly enlarged when more than 4,500 graves were brought in from the battlefields north-east of Ypres (now Ieper) and from the following smaller cemeteries: ADMIRAL's CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, at the junction of Admiral's Road and Boundary Road, near No Man's Cottage. It was named from a sailor long attached to the 6th Division. It contained the graves of 19 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in 1917 and 1918. CANOPUS TRENCH CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, a little South-West of St. Julien, containing the graves of 12 men of the 1st/5th Gloucesters who fell in August, 1917. COMEDY FARM CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, a little South-East of Langemarck village, near the Steenbeek. It contained the graves of 29 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in July-September, 1917. CROSS ROADS CEMETERY, ST. JEAN, two groups of graves at the cross roads in St. Jean village, containing the graves of 19 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in June and July, 1915. FERDINAND FARM CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, near the Steenbeek, half-way between St. Julien and Langemarck. It contained the graves of 15 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in August-October, 1917. FRANCOIS FARM CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, near a farm 1.6 Kms East of Pilckem, containing the graves of 23 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in July-October, 1917. FUSILIER FARM CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, a little West of the Ypres-Pilckem road, containing the graves of 17 men of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell on 31st July, 1917. FUSILIER FARM ROAD CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, 400 yards North-West of Fusilier Farm Cemetery. It contained the graves of 14 men of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell on 31st July-2nd August, 1917. GLIMPSE COTTAGE CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, 250 metres North-West of Fusilier Farm Road Cemetery, containing the graves of 18 men of the 38th (Welsh) division who fell in July and August, 1917. IRISH FARM CEMETERY, ST. JEAN, immediately South of the Farm. It was begun by the 1st Royal Fusiliers in May, 1915, and used until September, 1915, and, at intervals, until January, 1918. It contained the graves of 54 soldiers from the United Kingdom. LA MITERIE GERMAN CEMETERY, LOMME, a little North of the hamlet of La Miterie, containing the graves of eight soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell early in September, 1918. MANOR ROAD CEMETERY, ZILLEBEKE, at the railway halt 800 metres South-West of Zillebeke village. It contained the graves of 19 men of the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers who fell in August, 1916. MIRFIELD CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, by Mirfield Trench, 300 metres west of Fusilier Farm, containing the graves of 16 soldiers from the United Kingdom (all but one of the 51st (Highland) Division) who fell in June-August, 1917. PARATONNIERS FARM CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, a Belgian Military Cemetery, 800 metres South of Lizerne village, containing the graves of 13 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in December, 1917-March, 1918. PILCKEM ROAD CEMETERY, BOESINGHE, 300 metres North-West of Fusilier Farm, containing the graves of 27 soldiers from the United Kingdom, (18 of the 1st/5th Gordons) who fell in July-August, 1917. ST. JEAN CHURCHYARD, containing the graves of 44 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in May-December, 1915. SPREE FARM CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, 800 metres South-East of St. Julien, containing the graves of 14 soldiers from the United Kingdom and three from New Zealand who fell in August and October, 1917. VANHEULE FARM CEMETERY, LANGEMARCK, 800 metres South-West of St. Julien, containing the graves of 22 soldiers from the United Kingdom and one from New Zealand who fell in August and October, 1917. YORKSHIRE CEMETERY, ZOUAVE VILLA, ST. JEAN, 200 metres East of the Ypres-Pilckem road, containing the graves of 22 men of the 6th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who fell in January and February, 1916, and two of the 6th East Yorks who fell in August, 1917. There are now 4,715 commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 3,267 of the burials are unidentified, but special memorials commemorate four casualties known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of 30 casualties buried in four of the cemeteries removed to New Irish Farm whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. |

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.**

**Battalions of the Territorial Force**

**1/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion**  
August 1914 in Aylesbury. Record same as 1/4th Bn.

**1/4th Battalion**  
August 1914: in Oxford. Part of South Midland Brigade in South Midland Division.  
30 March 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
15 May 1915: formation became the 145th Brigade in 48th (South Midland) Division.  
November 1917: moved with the Division to Italy.

**The Oxon and Bucks L.I 1917**. In March 1917 the Germans began the retreat to the [Hindenburg Line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindenburg_Line) and the regiment's battalions saw much involvement in the [Arras Offensive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arras_(1917)) that began on 9 April and ended on 16 May, including at the Battles of [Scarpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Scarpe) and [Arleux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arleux). The battalions of the Ox & Bucks saw further service in many of the subsidiary battles during the [Battle of Passchendaele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Passchendaele) (also known as Third Ypres) that took place between 31st July - 6th November. Some of the battles that the Oxon & Bucks took part in included [Menin Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Menin_Road) and [Polygon Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Polygon_Wood) in September and early October. The Ox & Bucks also took part in the [Battle of Cambrai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cambrai_(1917)) (20th November-3rd December) that saw the first large-scale use of tanks by the British and was the last major battle 1917.

**The Battles of Ypres 1917 ("Third Ypres")**

**The 48th (South Midland) Division**

**1917**

The German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line, in which the Division occupied Peronne   
The Battle of Langemarck\*\*  
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*  
The Battle of Broodseinde\*\*  
The Battle of Poelcapelle\*\*  
The battles marked \*\* are phases of the Third Battles of the Ypres   
Divisional HQ received orders on 10 November for a move to Italy. Entrainment began on 21 November and all units had detrained around Legnano (Adige) by 1 December. The Division them moved north to the area allotted to XI Corps.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **145th (South Midland) Brigade.**  Section of the Fifth Army under Gough. |  |
| 1/5th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment | left September 1918 |
| 1/4th Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/1st Bucks Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry |  |
| 1/4th Bn. the Royal Berkshire Regiment |  |
| 145th Machine Gun Company | formed 11 January 1916, moved to 48th Bn. MGC 22 March 1918 |
| 145th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 14 June 1916 |

**The plan for the third battle of Ypres.**

Gough intended to use nine divisions of infantry, making about 100,000 men. Fifth Army had 752 heavy guns and 1,442 field guns, while they could also count on support from 300 heavy guns and 240 field guns belonging to the French First Army to the North, and 112 heavy guns and 210 field guns assigned to Second Army to the South. Gough also intended to use 120 [Mark IV tanks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_IV_tank) to support the attack, with another 48 held in reserve. While Gough had five divisions of cavalry at his disposal, only one brigade was planned to be deployed, and that only in the event that the northernmost corps of infantry reached its objectives.

During the preliminary bombardment, the artillery were expected to destroy German strong points and trenches, engage in counter-battery fire to suppress German artillery, and cut the [barbed wire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbed_wire) entanglements in front of the German positions. On the day of the attack, the first wave of infantry would advance under a [creeping barrage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creeping_barrage) advancing 100 yards every 4 minutes. They would be followed up by more infantry advancing not in a wave, but in columns or flexible 'artillery formation'. To prepare for the attack, the infantry trained on a full-scale replica of the German trench system, which had been pieced together from aerial reconnaissance photographs and trench raids. Specialist platoons were given additional training on methods to destroy German pillboxes and blockhouses.

In the event, the attack was delayed from 25 July to 31 July. Some of Gough's heavy artillery had been delayed in arriving, and bad weather was hampering the British program of counter-battery fire.

The assault began at 3.50am on July 31. The attack was meant to commence at dawn but low cloud meant that it was still dark. The attack had most success on the left (north) side of the front, in front of [XIV Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XIV_Corps) and the French First Army. In this section of the front, the entente forces advanced 2,500–3000 yards, up to the line of the Steenbeck River. In the centre of the British attack, XVIII and XIX Corps pushed forward beyond the line of the Steenbeck and attempted to push on to St Julien, an advance of some 4,000 yards.[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Battle_of_Ypres#cite_note-64) In these areas of the front, the preliminary bombardment had succeeded in destroying the front line of the German position and the creeping barrage was effective in supporting the infantry attack at least as far as the first objective. This meant that the infantry, in some cases accompanied by tanks, had the strength to deal with German strong points encountered after the first line had been penetrated and was able to push on towards its further objectives.

The attack by II Corps on the south side of the front, across the Ghelveult Plateau, was less successful. 8 Division advanced towards Westhoek but were enfiladed by machine-gun fire from [Nonne Boschen](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nonne_Boschen&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Glencourse Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Glencourse_Wood&action=edit&redlink=1). These obstacles had been objectives for 30 Division, on 8 Division's right. 30 Division and 24 Division failed to make much ground, because of boggy ground and because German artillery on this section of the front remained substantially intact.

The success of the British advance in the centre of the front was of great concern to the German commanders. While the defensive system was designed to deal with some penetration, it wasn't meant to contain the 4,000-yard advance that XVIII and XIX Corps had achieved. German reserves from the vicinity of Passchendaele were able to launch a counterattack, starting at 11.00 to 11.30am. The British troops facing the counterattack were dispersed and disorganized after the effort of dealing with German strong points earlier in the morning and had no effective method of communicating with their artillery. As a result, the German counterattack was able to drive the British back from key locations to the 'Green Line'.

**Battle of Langemarck: 16–18 August.**

Ground conditions during the whole Ypres-Passchendaele action were bad because the ground was already fought-over and was partially flooded. Continuous shelling had destroyed drainage canals in the area, and unseasonable heavy rain turned areas into a sea of mud and water-filled shell-craters. The troops walked up to the front over paths made of duckboards laid across the mud, often carrying up to one hundred pounds (45 kg) of equipment. It was possible for them to slip off the path into the craters and drown before they could be rescued. The trees were reduced to blunted trunks, the branches and leaves torn away, and the bodies of men buried after previous actions were often uncovered by the rain or later shelling.

**Second phase.** In view of the failure of the [British Fifth Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifth_Army_(United_Kingdom)) to make any appreciable headway, Haig decided to transfer the weight of the offensive towards the south-east along the southern half of Passchendaele Ridge.

**WW1 Record of 16th August 1917.**

On August 16, 1917, in a renewed thrust of the Allied offensive launched at the end of July in the Flanders region of Belgium—known as the Third Battle of Ypres, or simply as Passchendaele, for the village that saw the heaviest fighting—British troops capture the village of Langemarck from the Germans.

The ambitious, meticulously planned offensive, masterminded by the British commander in chief Sir Douglas Haig, began on July 31 with a British and French attack on German positions near the village of Passchendaele, located in Flanders in the much-contested Ypres Salient. After the initial assault met with less success than had been anticipated, heavy rains and thickening mud bogged down the Allied infantry and artillery and prevented them from renewing the offensive until the second week of August. On August 16, at Langemarck, to the west of Passchendaele, four days of fierce fighting resulted in a British victory; the gains were small, however, for the high number of casualties incurred.

Though a German counterattack recovered much of the ground gained at Langemarck, British forces retained the initiative in the region, aided by the use of tanks and by a diversionary attack by the French at Verdun, where more than 5,000 German soldiers were taken prisoner. By the end of September, the British were able to establish control over the ridge of land to the east of Ypres, and Haig pushed his commanders in the region to continue the attacks towards the Passchendaele ridge. As the offensive stretched into October, Allied troops reached near-exhaustion as the Germans reinforced their positions in the region with reserve troops released from the Eastern Front.

After Canadian and British troops finally captured Passchendaele on November 6, 1917, Haig called off the offensive, claiming victory for his men. In sum, a total of some 310,000 British casualties, as opposed to 260,000 on the German side, and a failure to create any substantial breakthrough on the Western Front, made the Third Battle of Ypres one of the most costly and controversial offensives of World War I.

**Corporal Percy John Keen. 216th Army Troops Coy, RE. Moorland View, Bois Moor Road.**

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| Percy Keen was killed by shrapnel instantly when he visited the front line trenches with a working party and a group of Infantry. Percy was in civilian life a carpenter and a keen footballer and cricketer.  Name Percy John KEEN  Rank/Number Corporal / 92777  Regiment/Unit Royal Engineers / 216th Army Troops Coy  Enlisted High Wycombe  Age/Date of death 41 / 04 Jun 1917  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders  Residence at death Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois  Cemetery Westhof Farm Cemetery, Heuvelland, Belgium  Grave Reference II.A.8  Location of memorial Chesham Bois  Date/Place of birth c1876 / Chesham  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty carpenter  Parents/Occupation John & Ann Keen / retired carpenter  Parents’ Address 1901: Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.  Wife Minnie Keen  Wife’s Address 10 Moorland View, Bois Moor Rd, Chesham Bois  Medals:  British, Victory |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | WESTHOF FARM CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Belgium |
| **Locality:** | Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen |
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| **Historical Information:** | Westhof Farm was used by the New Zealand Division as headquarters in May and June 1917. The cemetery was begun in May 1917 and used by fighting units and field ambulances until April 1918, when it passed into German hands for five months. There are now 131 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery, including special memorials to six casualties whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. There are also five German war graves in the cemetery. |

**Private George Hinks. 12th Bn. Gloucester Reg. Bois Common.**

Name George HINKS

Rank/Number Private / 33591

Regiment/Unit Gloucestershire Regiment / 12th Battalion

Enlisted Aylesbury

Age/Date of death 27 / 08 May 1917

How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France & Flanders

Residence at death: 1 Railway Cottages of Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

Cemetery Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Grave Reference Bay 6

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane

Date/Place of birth 30 Apr 1890 / Amersham.

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty  Bootmaker (Hayes of Waterside)

Parents/Occupation Thomas H & Harriet Hinks / blacksmith

Parents’ Address 1901: Bois Common, Chesham Bois

Wife  Bertha (Mead) Hinks

Wife’s Address  1 Railway Cottages off Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

Note: Brother Thomas Henry dedicated on the Chesham Memorial.

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | ARRAS MEMORIAL |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
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| **Historical Information:** | The French handed over Arras to Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels upon which the town is built were used and developed in preparation for the major offensive planned for April 1917. The Commonwealth section of the FAUBOURG D'AMIENS CEMETERY was begun in March 1916, behind the French military cemetery established earlier. It continued to be used by field ambulances and fighting units until November 1918. The cemetery was enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields and from two smaller cemeteries in the vicinity. The cemetery contains 2,651 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. In addition, there are 30 war graves of other nationalities, most of them German. During the Second World War, Arras was occupied by United Kingdom forces headquarters until the town was evacuated on 23 May 1940. Arras then remained in German hands until retaken by Commonwealth and Free French forces on 1 September 1944. The cemetery contains seven Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. The graves in the French military cemetery were removed after the First World War to other burial grounds and the land they had occupied was used for the construction of the Arras Memorial and Arras Flying Services Memorial. The ARRAS MEMORIAL commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918. Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux. A separate memorial remembers those killed in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. The ARRAS FLYING SERVICES MEMORIAL commemorates nearly 1,000 airmen of the Royal Naval Air Service, the Royal Flying Corps, and the Royal Air Force, either by attachment from other arms of the forces of the Commonwealth or by original enlistment, who were killed on the whole Western Front and who have no known grave. Both cemetery and memorial were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, with sculpture by Sir William Reid Dick. The memorial was unveiled by Lord Trenchard, Marshal of the Royal Air Force on the 31 July 1932 (originally it had been scheduled for 15 May, but due to the sudden death of French President Doumer, as a mark of respect, the ceremony was postponed until July). |

**The Gloucestershire Regiment**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**12th (Service) Battalion (Bristol)**  
Formed at Bristol on 30 August 1914 by the Citizens Recruiting Committee.  
June 1915: attached to 95th Brigade in 32nd Division at Wensleydale. Adopted by War Office 23 June 1915. Moved to Salisbury Plain August 1915.  
Landed in France 21 November 1915.  
26 December 1915: transferred with Brigade to 5th Division.  
19 October 1918: disbanded in France.

**The history of 5th Division**  
  
This Division was part of the original British Expeditionary Force and remained on the Western Front until late 1917 when it moved to Italy. It took part in most of the major actions, including:



**1914**  
The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, including the Action of Elouges   
The Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois   
The Battle of the Marne  
The Battle of the Aisne  
The Battles of La Bassee and Messines 1914  
The First Battle of Ypres   
**1915**  
The Second Battle of Ypres and the Capture of Hill 60  
In late 1915, many units were switched for those of 32nd Division, a newly arrived volunteer formation. The idea was to strengthen ("stiffen" in the jargon of the time) the inexperienced Division buy mixing in some regular army troops; even though by now many of the pre-war regulars had gone and the regular battalions themselves were often largely composed of new recruits.

**1916**  
March 1916 saw a move, with 5th Division taking over a section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, in front of Arras. This was a lively time, with many trench raids, sniping and mining activities in the front lines. When the Franco-British offensive opened on the Somme on 1 July 1916, the 5th Division was enjoying a period of rest and re-fit and was in GHQ Reserve. However, this restful time was not destined to last:  
The Attacks on High Wood\*  
The Battle of Guillemont\*  
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\*  
The Battle of Morval\*   
The Battle of Le Transloy\*   
The battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

By 5 October 1916 the Division had left the Somme and was holding a quieter line near Festubert. There was a constant threat from enemy artillery and sniper fire, but in comparison with the Somme it was a relatively tranquil period that lasted until March 1917.  
  
**1917**  
The Battle of Vimy\*\*  
The Attack on La Coulotte\*\*   
The Third Battle of the Scarpe\*\* including the Capture by the Division of Oppy Wood   
The battles marked \*\* are phases of the Battles of Arras 1917

On 7 September 1917 the Division was relieved and moved out of the line for a period, being sent next to join the great offensive in Flanders  
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*\*  
The Battle of Broodseinde\*\*\*   
The Battle of Poelcapelle\*\*\*  
The Second Battle of Passchendaele\*\*\*   
The battles marked \*\*\* are phases of the Third Battle of Ypres

A major change now occurred with 5th Division being one of five British formations selected to be moved to Italy. This was a strategic and political move agreed by the British Government at the request of the Allied Supreme War Council, as an effort to stiffen Italian resistance to enemy attack after a recent disaster at Caporetto. Many diaries at this time, by men who had witnessed slaughter in the floods of Passchendaele, talk of the move and Italy as being "like another world". Much work was done preparing to move into the mountainous area of the Brenta, but eventually the Division was instead moved to the line along the River Piave, taking up positions in late January 1918. Unfortunately this pleasant period was not to last, for the Division was recalled hurriedly to France, once the enemy had made an attack in overwhelming strength on 21 March.

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| **95th Brigade** |  |
| Brigade transferred from 32nd Division on 26 December 1915 | |
| 14th Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regiment | (1st Birmingham City) left for 13th Bde 28 December 1915 |
| 15th Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regiment | (2nd Birmingham City) left for 14th Bde 28 December 1915 |
| 16th Bn. the Royal Warwickshire Regiment | (3rd Birmingham City) left for 15th Bde 26 December 1915 |
| 12th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regt | (Bristol's Own) disbanded October 1918 |
| 1st Bn. the Devonshire Regt | joined from 14th Bde 12 January 1916 |
| 1st Bn. the East Surrey Regt | joined from 14th Bde 12 January 1916 |
| 1st Bn. the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry | joined from 14th Bde 12 January 1916 |
| 95th Brigade Machine Gun Company | formed on 20 December 1915 as 14th Company  left to move into 5th MG Battalion 26 April 1918 |
| 95th Trench Mortar Battery | formed April 1916 |

**Phase: the Third Battle of the Scarpe, 3 - 4 May 1917**

First Army (Horne)   
XIII Corps (Congreve)  
2nd Division  
5th Division  
31st Division.  
Canadian Corps (Byng)  
1st Canadian Division, which captured Fresnoy   
2nd Canadian Division   
3rd Canadian Division.

Third Army (Allenby)   
VI Corps (Haldane)  
3rd Division   
12th (Eastern) Division  
56th (1st London) Division.  
VII Corps (Snow)  
14th (Light) Division  
18th (Eastern) Division  
21st Division.  
XVII Corps (Fergusson)  
4th Division   
9th (Scottish) Division.

**Third Battle of the Scarpe (3–4 May 1917)**

After securing the area around Arleux at the end of April, the British determined to launch another attack east from Monchy to try and breakthrough the Boiry Riegel and reach the Wotanstellung, a major German defensive fortification. This was scheduled to coincide with the Australian attack at Bullecourt in order to present the Germans with a two–pronged assault. British commanders hoped that success in this venture would force the Germans to retreat further to the east. With this objective in mind, the British launched another attack near the [Scarpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Scarpe) on 3 May. However, neither prong was able to make any significant advances therefore the attack was called off the following day, after incurring heavy casualties. Although this battle was a failure, the British learned important lessons about the need for close liaison between tanks, infantry, and artillery, which they would later apply in the [Battle of Cambrai (1917)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cambrai_(1917)).

**1918**

**2nd Lieutenant Leonard Cox. 6th Bn. Kings Shropshire L I. Bois Mill Cottages.**

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| Name Leonard Albert COX  Rank/Number 2nd Lieutenant  Regiment/Unit Kings Shropshire Light Infantry / 6th Battalion  Enlisted  Age/Date of death 28 / 10 Jun 1918  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action / France  Residence at death Bois Mill Cottages, Latimer Road, Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Sucrerie Cemetery, Ablain-St Nazaire, Pas de Calais, France  Grave Reference V.C.1  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane  Date/Place of birth 14 Mar 1890 / Bradfield, Berks  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty printer  Parents/Occupation Edward John Blake Cox & Mary Ann / farm bailiff  Parents’ Address Heron Farm, Pangbourne, Berks  Wife fiancee - Violet. Never married  Wife’s Address  Notes |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | SUCRERIE CEMETERY, ABLAIN-ST. NAZAIRE |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Pas de Calais |
| **Location Information:** | Ablain-St. Nazaire is a village approximately 13 kilometres north of Arras. Take the D937 (Bethune Road) to the village of Souchez. Make a left turn along the D57. The cemetery lies 1 kilometre on the left side of this road. |
| **Historical Information:** | The village and the neighbourhood of Ablain-St. Nazaire were the scene of very severe fighting between the French and the Germans in May and June 1915. Sucrerie Cemetery is named from a sugar factory, which was destroyed in the War and has been replaced by a farm. It was begun in April 1917, next to a French Military Cemetery, now removed, of 1900 graves, and it was used until October 1918. It was called at one time Saskatchewan Cemetery, and, in accordance with the Canadian practice, it was numbered C.D. 43. The village was later "adopted" by the Urban District of Teddington. There are now nearly 400, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. The cemetery covers an area (without the footpath leading to it) of 1,918 square metres and is enclosed by a low brick wall. |

**The King's (Shropshire Light Infantry)**

**Battalions of the New Armies**

**5th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Shrewsbury in August 1914 as part of K1 and attached to 42nd Brigade in 14th (Light) Division. Moved initially to Aldershot and on to Chiddingfold in March 1915, returning to Aldershot.  
20 May 1915: landed at Boulogne.  
4 February 1918: disbanded at Jussy. Troops dispersed to 1st, 1/4th, 6th and 7th Bns.

**6th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Shrewsbury in September 1914 as part of K2 and attached to 60th Brigade in 20th (Light) Division. Moved to Aldershot and then on to Larkhill in April 1915.  
22 July 1915: landed at Boulogne.

**The history of 20th (Light) Division**  
  
This Division was established in September 1914 as part of the Army Orders authorising Kitchener's Second New Army, K2. Early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division first assembled in the Aldershot area with brigades at Blackdown, Deepcut and Cowshott. Artillery was particularly hard to come by; 12 old guns arrived from India in February 1915! When in the same month the Division moved to Witley, Godalming and Guildford, the artillery had to go by train as there was insufficient harness for the horses. Another move was made, to Salisbury Plain, in April 1915.

The Division was inspected by King George V at Knighton Down on 24 June 1915, by which time all equipment had arrived and the Division was judged ready for war.

On 26 July 1915 the Division completed concentration in the Saint-Omer area, all units having crossed to France during the preceding few days. Early trench familiarisation and training took place in the Fleurbaix area.

The Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions:

**1916**  
The Battle of Mount Sorrel, a local operation in which the Division recaptured the height with the Canadians   
The Battle of Delville Wood\*   
The Battle of Guillemont\*   
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette\*   
The Battle of Morval\*  
The Battle of Le Transloy\*   
The battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

**1917**  
The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line  
The Battle of Langemarck\*\*   
The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge\*\*  
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*   
The battles marked **\***\* are phases of the Third Battles of Ypres  
The Cambrai Operations

**1918**  
The Battle of St Quentin+  
The actions at the Somme crossings+  
The Battle of Rosieres+   
The battles marked **+** are phases of the First Battles of the Somme 1918

The Division was withdrawn after the heavy fighting of the Somme battles, moving on 20 April 1918 to an area south west of Amiens. During the summer months it received many new drafts of men.

The Battle of the Selle^^  
The Battle of Valenciennes^^   
The Battle of the Sambre^^ and the passage of the Grand Honelle   
The battles marked **^^** are phases of the Final Advance in Picardy

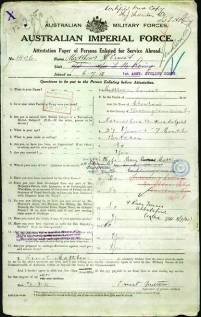
The Division was in the area between Bavay and Maubeuge when the Armistice came into effect at 11am on 11 November. Late in the month the units moved to the Toutencourt-Marieux area. demobilisation began on 7 January 1919 and the final cadres crossed to England on 28 May..

In all the 20th (Light) Division had suffered the loss of 35470 killed, wounded and missing.

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| **60th Brigade** |  |
| 6th Bn. the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry | left February 1918 |
| 6th Bn. the King's Shropshire Light Infantry |  |
| 12th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps |  |
| 12th Bn. the Rifle Brigade |  |
| 60th Machine Gun Company | joined 3 March 1916 left to move into 20th MG Battalion 15 March 1918 |
| 60th Trench Mortar Battery | formed by 16 July 1916 |

**Gunner Ernest Matthews. 4th Brigade Australian Field Artillery. New Terrace, Bois Moor Road.**

Emigrated to Australia after 1901. Lived with his family at 4 New Terrace, Bois Moor Road a tied cottage owned by Lilly and Sinners. Father William and Mother Lily. Brothers Herbert and Charles and Sister Catherine. At the age of 13 years he was a Butchers errand boy. He was married in Australia and signed on in July 1915 to the 1st Australian Cyclist Corp transferring to the Australian Artillery.



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| Name Ernest MATTHEWS  Rank/Number Gunner / 1406  Regiment/Unit Australian Field Artillery / 4th Brigade  Enlisted Australia  Age/Date of death 31 / 22 Aug 1918  How died/Theatre of war  Killed in Action/ France  Residence at death Australia and 4 New Terrace, off Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Somme, France  Grave Reference X.D.10  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Moor  Date/Place of birth 1888 / High Wycombe  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty Butcher  Parents/Occupation William Matthews / jobbing gardener  Parents’ Address 1901: 4 New Terrace, Chesham Bois  Wife Mary Matthews  Wife’s Address 9 River Terrace, Abbotsford, Melbourne . |

**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MILITARY CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
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| **Historical Information:** | Villers-Bretonneux became famous in 1918, when the German advance on Amiens ended in the capture of the village by their tanks and infantry on 23 April. On the following day, the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions, with units of the 8th and 18th Divisions, recaptured the whole of the village and on 8 August 1918, the 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions advanced from its eastern outskirts in the Battle of Amiens. VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MILITARY CEMETERY was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other burial grounds in the area and from the battlefields. Plots I to XX was completed by 1920 and contain mostly Australian graves, almost all from the period March to August 1918. Plots IIIA, VIA, XIIIA and XVIA, and Rows in other Plots lettered AA, were completed by 1925, and contain a much larger proportion of unidentified graves brought from a wider area. Later still, 444 graves were brought in from Dury Hospital Military Cemetery. The following were among the burial grounds from which British graves were taken to Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery. CARD COPSE CEMETERY, MARCELCAVE, on the road to Fouilloy, where 35 Australian soldiers were buried by the 2nd Australian Division in July and August, 1918. DURY HOSPITAL MILITARY, CEMETERY, under the wall of the Asylum near the West side of the Amiens-Dury road. From August, 1918, to January, 1919, this building was used intermittently by British medical units, and a cemetery was made next to an existing French Military Cemetery. The British cemetery contained the graves of 195 Canadian and 185 United Kingdom soldiers and airmen; 63 Australian soldiers; one man of the Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Corps; and one French and one American soldier. HIGH CEMETERY, SAILLY-LE-SEC, on the road to Ville-sur-Ancre, where 18 United Kingdom and eleven Australian soldiers were buried in June-August, 1918. KANGAROO CEMETERY, SAILLY-LE-SEC (on the Ville-sur-Ancre road, but nearer Sailly), where 13 Australian soldiers were buried by the 41st Battalion in March-April, 1918, and 14 of the 58th (London) Division by their comrades in August, 1918. LAMOTTE-EN-SANTERRE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION. The village was captured by Australian troops on the 8th August, 1918, and the Extension contained the graves of 56 Australian and twelve United Kingdom soldiers who fell in August and September. LA NEUVILLE-LES-BRAY COMMUNAL CEMETERY, containing the grave of one Australian soldier who fell in August, 1918. LE HAMELET BRITISH CEMETERY (behind the Church), containing the graves of 25 Australian soldiers who fell in April-July, 1918; and the COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, in which 27 Australian soldiers and one from the United Kingdom were buried in July and August, 1916. MIDWAY CEMETERY, MARCELCAVE, 1,500 yards North-West of Marcelcave Church, made by the Canadian Corps and containing the graves of 53 Canadian and three United Kingdom soldiers who fell in August, 1918. VAUX-SUR-SOMME COMMUNAL CEMETERY, containing three Australian graves of March-April, 1918, and two United Kingdom of 1916 and 1917; and the EXTENSION, made in May-August, 1918, and containing the graves of 130 Australian soldiers and 104 soldiers (mainly 58th Division and Artillery) and one airman from the United Kingdom. WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, in which five Australian soldiers were buried by the 12th Australian Field Ambulance in August, 1918. There are now 2,142 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 609 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to five casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and to 15 buried in other cemeteries whose graves could not be found on concentration. The cemetery also contains the graves of two New Zealand airmen of the Second World War. Within the cemetery stands the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MEMORIAL, the Australian national memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, to their dead, and especially to name those of the dead whose graves are not known. The 10,765 Australian servicemen named on the memorial died in the battlefields of the Somme, Arras, the German advance of 1918 and the Advance to Victory. The memorial was unveiled by King George VI in July 1938. |

**The history of 4th Australian Division**  
  
This Division began to form in Egypt in February 1916, after a decision to essentially duplicate the original AIF which had now withdrawn from Gallipoli. Delays in assembling the artillery meant that the Division could not depart for France before June 1916. It entered the front line near Armentieres late that month:

**1916**  
The Battle of Pozieres including the fighting for Mouquet Farm (a phase of the Battles of the Somme 1916)  
**1917**  
Operations on the Ancre  
The advance to the Hindenburg Line  
The Arras Offensive including the Battle of Bullecourt   
The Battle of Messines   
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*  
The Battle of Broodseinde\*\*  
The First Battle of Passchendaele\*\*  
The battles marked \*\* are phases of the Third Battle of Ypres

**1918**  
The Australian Divisions were not affected by the restructuring of the army to having three brigades per Division, that took place in the British Divisions in February 1918.  
The First Battle of Arras^  
The Battle of the Ancre^  
The actions of Villers-Bretonneux^  
The battles marked as ^ are phases of the First Battles of the Somme 1918  
The Capture of Hamel  
The Battle of Amiens   
The Battle of Albert (a phase of the Second Battles of the Somme 1918)  
The Battle of Epehy (a phase of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line)  
The Division was not selected to advance into Germany. Demobilisation commenced in late 1918 and in March 1919 the Division merged with 1st Australian Division.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **4th Australian Brigade** | joined in Egypt |
| 13th Bn. the Australian Infantry |  |
| 14th Bn. the Australian Infantry |  |
| 15th Bn. the Australian Infantry |  |
| 16th Bn. the Australian Infantry |  |
| 4th Australian Machine Gun Company | left to move into 4th Australian MG Battalion February 1918 |
| 4th Australian Trench Mortar Battery | formed July 1916. |

**4th Brigade History**

The 4th Brigade was originally formed in September 1914 as part of the [Australian Imperial Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Imperial_Force), which was an all-volunteer force that was raised for service during [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) shortly after the outbreak of the war. Under the command of Colonel (later General Sir) [John Monash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Monash), at that time the brigade consisted of four infantry battalions which were raised from all Australian states, the [13th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/13th_Battalion_(Australia)) (NSW), [14th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/14th_Battalion_(Australia)) (Vic), [15th](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=15th_Battalion_(Australia)&action=edit&redlink=1) (Qld/Tas) and [16th Battalions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16th_Battalion_(Australia)) (SA/WA).

Men of the 4th Brigade at Le Verguier, France in 1918.

Following initial training, they embarked for overseas and arrived in [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt) in early 1915. In April 1915, the brigade participated in the [ANZAC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_and_New_Zealand_Army_Corps) landings at [Gallipoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli) and the eight month campaign that followed. In December 1915, the decision was made to evacuate Gallipoli and susbsequently the brigade was transported back to Egypt. In mid July 1916, they were transferred to Europe where they joined the war on the [Western Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Front_(World_War_I)) in [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) as part of the [Australian 4th Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Division_(Australia)). During the period from 1916 to 1918, the brigade fought in nearly every major battle involving that division. Of particular significance were the battles of [Villers-Bretonneux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Villers-Bretonneux) in April 1918 and [Le Hamel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hamel) in July 1918, which were decisive in the Allied offensive campaign and contributed to the hastening of the war's end.

The brigade's liberation of Villers-Bretonneux is of particular note. The liberation was the third anniversary of [ANZAC day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC_day)—25 April 1918. In commemoration of the sacrifices made by Australians, the main street of the town was renamed "Rue de Melbourne", while another was named "Rue de Victoria". The school, which was damaged during the fighting, was rebuilt with donations from Victorian school children and was subsequently called "Victoria School" The tactics used in the battle of Le Hamel on 4 July 1918 were conceived by General [John Monash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Monash) and largely carried out by Australian infantrymen. It was the scene of one of Australia's greatest military victories and it is this brilliantly fought battle that marks the turning point of the war's initiative back to the Allies. So great was this victory that French prime minister [Georges Clemenceau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Clemenceau) came to address the Australian troops in the field: "When the Australians came to France, the French people expected a great deal of you, but we did not know that from the very beginning you would astonish the whole continent".

On 12 August 1918 Monash was knighted on the field by King George V. He is the last person to have been knighted in the field.

**The Battle.**

The battle began in dense [fog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fog) at 4:20 a.m. on 8 August 1918. Under Rawlinson's Fourth Army, the British III Corps attacked north of the Somme, the Australian Corps to the south of the river in the centre of Fourth Army's front, and the Canadian Corps to the south of the Australians. The French 1st Army under General Debeney opened its preliminary bombardment at the same time, and began its advance 45 minutes later, supported by a battalion of 72 [Whippet tanks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whippet_Mk_A). Although German forces were on the alert, this was largely in anticipation of possible retaliation for their incursion on the 6th and not because they had learned of the preplanned Allied attack. Although the two forces were within 500 yards (460 m) of one another, [gas bombardment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_warfare) was very low, as the bulk of the Allied presence was unknown to the Germans. The attack was so unexpected that German forces only began to return fire after five minutes, and even then at the positions where the Allied forces had assembled at the start of the battle and had long since left.

In the first phase, seven divisions attacked: the British [18th (Eastern)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_18th_(Eastern)_Division) and [58th (2/1st London)](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=British_58th_(2/1st_London)_Division&action=edit&redlink=1), the Australian [2nd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_2nd_Division_(World_War_I)) and [3rd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_3rd_Division_(World_War_I)), and the Canadian [1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Canadian_Division), [2nd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_Canadian_Division) and [3rd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd_Canadian_Division). The Canadian and Australian attackers were supported by eight battalions of the Royal Tank Corps, with a paper strength of 216 [Mark V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_I_tank#Mark_V) and 72 [Mark V\*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_I_tank#Mark_V.2A) tanks, with 48 unarmed tanks used as supply-carrying tractors. Parts of the American 33rd Division supported the British attackers north of the Somme.

The attackers captured the first German position, advancing about 4,000 yards (3,700 m) by about 7:30 a.m. In the centre, supporting units following the leading divisions attacked the second objective a further two miles (3 km) distant. Australian units reached their first objectives by 7:10 a.m., and by 8:20 a.m., the Australian [4th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_4th_Division_(World_War_I)) and [5th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_5th_Division_(World_War_I)) and the Canadian [4th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Canadian_Division) divisions passed through the initial hole in the German line. The third phase of the attack was assigned to infantry-carrying [Mark V\*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_V_(tank)#Mark_V.2A) tanks. However, the infantry was able to carry out this final step unaided. The Allies penetrated well to the rear of the German defences and cavalry now continued the advance, one [brigade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigade) in the Australian sector and two cavalry divisions in the Canadian sector. [RAF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Air_Force) and [armoured car](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armored_car_(military)) fire kept the retreating Germans from rallying.

The Canadian and Australian forces in the center advanced quickly, pushing the line 3 miles (4.8 km) forward from its starting point by 11:00 a.m. The speed of their advance was such that a party of German officers and some divisional staff were captured while eating breakfast. A gap 15 miles (24 km) long was punched in the German line south of the Somme by the end of the day. There was less success north of the river, where the British III Corps had only a single tank battalion in support, the terrain was rougher and the German incursion of 6 August had disrupted some of the preparations. Although the attackers gained their first objectives, they were held up short of the [Chipilly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chipilly) spur, a steep wooded ridge.

The British Fourth Army took 13,000 prisoners while the French captured a further 3,000. Total German losses were estimated to be 30,000 on 8 August. The Fourth Army's casualties, British, Australian and Canadian infantry, were approximately 8,800, exclusive of tank and air losses and their French allies.

German Army [Chief of Staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_of_staff_(military)) [Paul von Hindenburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_von_Hindenburg) noted the Allies' use of surprise and that Allied destruction of German lines of communication had hampered potential German counter-attacks by isolating command positions. The German general [Erich Ludendorff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Ludendorff) described the first day of Amiens as [the "Schwarzer Tag des deutschen Heeres"](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schwarzer_Tag_des_deutschen_Heeres) ("the black day of the German Army"), not because of the ground lost to the advancing Allies, but because the [morale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morale) of the German troops had sunk to the point where large numbers of troops began to capitulate. He recounted instances of retreating troops shouting "You're prolonging the war!" at officers who tried to rally them, and "[Blackleg!](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strikebreaker)" at reserves moving up. Five German divisions had effectively been engulfed. Allied forces pushed, on average, 7 miles (11 km) into enemy territory by the end of the day.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Amiens_(1918)#cite_note-kearsey2-5) The Canadians gained 8 miles (13 km), Australians 7 miles (11 km), British 2 miles (3.2 km), and the French 5 miles (8.0 km).

**Lieutenant Cecil William Napier Woodcock. 10th Bn. Royal Fusiliers (City of London). Sycamore Road.**

Born 1891 Hampstead. Joined HAC as private in the Infantry, commissioned to Royal Fusiliers as 2nd Lt. Assistant Scout Master 1st Chesham Bois. The Woodcock’s ran Napier’s Ltd (Drapers) in Sycamore Road. The family had moved to The Sycamores, Sycamore Road.Regiment travelled to France 27th November 1916.

|  |
| --- |
| Name Cecil William Napier WOODCOCK  Rank/Number Lieutenant  Regiment/Unit Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) / 10th Battalion  Enlisted  Age/Date of death 26 / 14 Sep 1918  How died/Theatre of war Killed in action /  Residence at death The Sycamores, Sycamore Road, Amersham.  Cemetery Lebucquiere Communal Cemetery Extension, Bapaume, Pas de Calais, France  Grave Reference I.G.21  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane, St Leonards Church and Pioneer Scout Hall, Chesham Bois  Date/Place of birth 1892 / Hampstead, London  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty  Parents/Occupation William & Elizabeth Woodcock / draper  Parents’ Address 1901: 47 Park Ave, Willesden,  The Sycamores, Sycamore Road, Amersham.  Wife  Wife’s Address  Medals: British, Victory. |
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**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | LEBUCQUIERE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION |
| **Country:** | France |
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| **Historical Information:** | Lebucquiere village was occupied by Commonwealth forces on 19 March 1917, following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. It was recaptured by the Germans on 23 March 1918, after fierce resistance by the 19th (Western) Division, and was finally reoccupied by the 5th Division on 3 September 1918. The communal cemetery extension was begun on 24 March 1917 and was used by the 1st Australian Division and other units for almost a year. After the reoccupation of the village in September 1918, it was used again for a fortnight. At the Armistice, the cemetery contained 150 burials, but it was then greatly enlarged when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields. The extension now contains 774 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 266 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials 20 casualties known or believed to be buried among them and to one soldier buried in Bertincourt German Military Cemetery, whose remains could not be found on concentration. The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker. |

**The Royal Fusiliers.**

**10th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed in City of London in August 1914 as part of K2, although it was a locally raised Battalion, not under the control of the War Office - and had the unofficial title of the Stockbrokers.  
September 1914 : attached to 54th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division.  
October 1914 : left Brigade and became Army Troops in same Division.  
March 1915 : transferred to 111th Brigade, 37th Division.  
Landed at Boulogne 30 July 1915.

**The history of 37th Division**  
  
Raised for the Sixth New Army, 37th Division began to form in March 1915. It was originally known as 44th Division. A War Office decision to convert the Fourth New Army into training units and to replace 16th (Irish) Division in Second New Army led to it being "promoted". It now became 37th Division and was in Second New Army, and a Divisional HQ was established at Andover on 12 April 1915. Many units that had been formed for a while came into its command.

In April 1915 the Division concentrated at Cholderton on Salisbury Plain and on 25 June the units were inspected by king George V at Sidbury Hill. On 22 July 1915 the Division began to cross the English Channel and by 2 August all units were concentrated near Tilques.   
The Division then remained on the Western Front for the remainder of the war and took part in the following engagements:



**1916**  
The Battle of the Ancre\*  
\* the battles marked \* are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

**1917**  
The First Battle of the Scarpe, including the capture of Monchy-le-Preux+  
The Second Battle of the Scarpe+  
The Battle of Arleux+  
+ the battles marked + are phases of the Arras Offensive   
The Battle of Pilkem Ridge\*\*  
The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge\*\*  
The Battle of Polygon Wood\*\*  
The Battle of Broodseinde\*\*  
The Battle of Poelcapelle\*\*  
The First Battle of Passchendaele\*\*  
\*\* the battles marked \*\* are phases of the Third Battles of Ypres 1917   
**1918**  
The Battle of the Ancre, a phase of the First Battles of the Somme 1918  
The Battle of the Albert, a phase of the Second Battles of the Somme 1918  
The Battle of Havrincourt++  
The Battle of the Canal du Nord++  
The Battle of Cambrai++  
The pursuit to the Selle++  
++ the battles marked ++ are phases of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line   
The Battle of the Selle^  
The Battle of the Sambre^  
^ the battles marked ^ are phases of the Final Advance in Picardy

At the Armistice on 11 November 1918 the Division was in the area of Le Quesnoy. After moving back to the Bethencourt - Caudry area, it moved forward on 1 December 1918 to Charleroi. By 20 December, units were billeted between Charleroi and the Maubeuge-Nivelles road. Demobilisation began on Boxing Day and by 25 March 1919 the Division ceased to exist.  
The Great War cost 37th Division 29969 men killed, wounded or missing.

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| **111th Brigade** |  |
| This brigade was attached to 34th Division between 6 July and 22 August 1916 | |
| 10th Bn. the Royal Fusiliers |  |
| 13th Bn. the Royal Fusiliers | moved to 112th Bde 4 February 1918 |
| 13th Bn. the King's Royal Rifle Corps |  |
| 13th Bn. the Rifle Brigade |  |
| 111th Machine Gun Company | joined 4 March 1916, moved to 37th Bn MGC 4 March 1918 |
| 111th Trench Mortar Battery | formed 2 July 1916 from two sections that joined in May |

**The Battles of the Hindenburg Line**

**12 September - 12 October 1918**  
**Phase: the Battle of Havrincourt, 12 September 1918**

Third Army (Byng)   
IV Corps (Harper)  
37th Division  
New Zealand Division.  
V Corps (Shute)  
17th (Northern) Division  
38th (Welsh) Division.  
VI Corps (Haldane)  
Guards Division  
2nd Division  
62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

**The Battle of Havrincourt, 12 September 1918**

Though British advances (notably of Third and Fourth Armies) in the period 3–10 September conformed to a recommended policy of [due caution](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=164&menu=subsub), a more confident [General Byng](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=165&menu=subsub) was keen not to allow the [retreating enemy](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=166&menu=subsub) to settle and attempt any form of recovery. He thus sought to drive his Third Army as rapidly as possible through the outer ‘approach defences’ of the Hindenburg Line to obtain better positions for observation and preparation for the crucial attack on the main Hindenburg Line system itself.

The [objectives](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=167&menu=subsub) of Third Army’s action at Havrincourt were to capture the high ground of the Trescault and Havrincourt spurs and advance the line to within assault distance of the Hindenburg Position proper. Three Divisions were tasked with the forward move on a near five mile front from Gouzeaucourt Wood in the south to the Canal du Nord in the north.

At 5.25am on Thursday [12 September](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=168&menu=subsub), following a considerable overnight bombardment of enemy positions, infantry brigades from the [New Zealand Division](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=169&menu=subsub), [37th Division](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=170&menu=subsub) and [62nd (2nd West Riding) Division](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=171&menu=subsub) attacked. The pattern of assault was one of good early progress followed by a gradual slowing of momentum as German resistance intensified. The day saw fierce close-quarter fighting and a series of energetic German counter-attacks disproved any notion that enemy morale had as yet been broken. On the right the New Zealanders, encountering severe defensive fire, made least progress but 37th Division captured Trescault, and Havrincourt, taken by the 62nd Division, was resolutely held against a determined early evening German [counter-attack](http://www.cwgc.org/victory1918/content.asp?id=172&menu=subsub).



The assault advanced Third Army’s line on average nearly one mile; but only around Havrincourt did the 62nd Division manage to pierce the Hindenburg front system. Though generally satisfactory, the results of the attack did not, as yet, represent a strategic breakthrough.

**2nd Lieutenant Sidney Lasenby Rose. Royal Air Force. The Island, Moor Road.**

The Rose family had been established in Chesham Bois for many years.



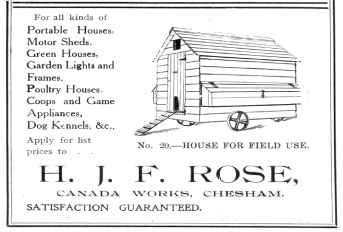
In 1851 the Amy Mill house was occupied by George Rose and the cottage by Susannah Rose. In 1861 the Bennett family, sheep dealers and Charlotte Fox the Lord’s Mill widower lived in the cottage.

In 1867 Amy Mill house, the cress beds and garden were owned by John Garrett and occupied by George Rose Jnr.

In 1867 George Rose Jnr owned and ran the Amy Steam Corn Mill. George Rose Jnr and wife Jane lived at the Laurels in 1896 possibly from the date when the house was built around 1890. They continued the family business of buying parcels of land around Chesham, Bellingdon and Chesham Bois.

Following the death of George Rose Snr, Henry and Thomas Rose also joined the business and by 1851 ran the ‘Bois Steam Mill’ as a Corn Mill on the opposite corner of the road to Amy Mill. Bois Steam Mill was known as Bois Mill or Rose’s Mill and later Canada Works. This was to distinguish it from the other Bois Mill (Paper Mill) located in Latimer Road. George Rose Jnr, a trained mechanical engineer, took over the occupancy of the mill house and was described as a Corn Miller in 1853. About ten years later he with his brothers Henry, an ironworker and Thomas added Lord’s Mill to their business. Henry ran Lord’s Mill changed the name to Canada Works following a visit to Canada. Amy Mill ceased to be used as a mill in 1880.

Sidney born in Canada had arrived back to Chesham as a Private in the 3rd Canadian Mounted Rifle Brigade but later with his mechanical engineering and business experience had a commission to the Royal Air Force.



Name Sidney Lasenby ROSE

Rank/Number 2nd Lieutenant

Regiment/Unit Royal Air Force /

Enlisted

Age/Date of death 31 / 12 Sep 1918

How died/Theatre of war Died / Home

Residence at death 1911: The Island, Checham Bois

Cemetery Chesham Bois (St Leonard) Churchyard, Bucks

Grave Reference NE corner

Location of memorial: Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.

Date/Place of birth 29 May 1887 / Manitoba, Canada

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty: Mechanical Engineer.

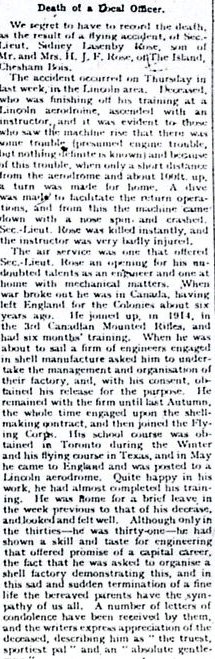
Parents/Occupation: Henry John Fox & Constance Scarlin Rose / milling engineer & manufacturer of woodenware.

Parents’ Address: 1911: The Island, Chesham Bois

Wife

Wife’s Address

Notes killed in flying accident at Scampton, Lincs. Photo seen on website which does not now seem to be available http://jrose.dynip.com/family/galleries/



**The Laurels, The Island, Chesham Moor 1910.**

**Corpl. Dennis James Cox Matthews. 6th Tank Corps. , Leighton House, Off Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.**



Born and Married in Amersham to Mabel Collins in 1914 who finally lived in the newly built (after 1915) Laurel Bank, Bois Lane. The family James and Sarah and Brothers William, Alfred and George and Sister Sarah lived in Leighton House off Bois Moor Road, since demolished.

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| --- |
| Name Dennis (James Dennis Cox) MATTHEWS  Rank/Number Corporal / 201188  Regiment/Unit Tank Corps / 6th Battalion  Enlisted Amersham  Age/Date of death 35 / 11 Aug 1918  How died/Theatre of war Died of wounds / France & Flanders  Residence at death  Leighton House, Off Bois Moor Road (Woodley Hill) Chesham Bois Chesham Bois.  Cemetery Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Somme, France  Grave Reference V.BB.9  Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane.  Date/Place of birth 13 Jul 1883 / Amersham.  Date/Place of baptism  Occupation of Casualty Builder  Parents/Occupation James & Sarah Matthews / artist (painter)  Parents’ Address 1910 Leighton House Off Bois Moor Road (Woodley Hill) Chesham Bois  Wife Mabel Annie (Collins) Matthews  Wife’s Address Laurel Bank, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois  Medals:  British, Victory  Notes SDGW gives regimental number as 291188 |
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**Cemetery Details**

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| **Cemetery:** | VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MILITARY CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | France |
| **Locality:** | Somme |
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| **Historical Information:** | Villers-Bretonneux became famous in 1918, when the German advance on Amiens ended in the capture of the village by their tanks and infantry on 23 April. On the following day, the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions, with units of the 8th and 18th Divisions, recaptured the whole of the village and on 8 August 1918, the 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions advanced from its eastern outskirts in the Battle of Amiens. VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MILITARY CEMETERY was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other burial grounds in the area and from the battlefields. Plots I to XX were completed by 1920 and contain mostly Australian graves, almost all from the period March to August 1918. Plots IIIA, VIA, XIIIA and XVIA, and Rows in other Plots lettered AA, were completed by 1925, and contain a much larger proportion of unidentified graves brought from a wider area. Later still, 444 graves were brought in from Dury Hospital Military Cemetery. The following were among the burial grounds from which British graves were taken to Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery. CARD COPSE CEMETERY, MARCELCAVE, on the road to Fouilloy, where 35 Australian soldiers were buried by the 2nd Australian Division in July and August, 1918. DURY HOSPITAL MILITARY, CEMETERY, under the wall of the Asylum near the West side of the Amiens-Dury road. From August, 1918, to January, 1919, this building was used intermittently by British medical units, and a cemetery was made next to an existing French Military Cemetery. The British cemetery contained the graves of 195 Canadian and 185 United Kingdom soldiers and airmen; 63 Australian soldiers; one man of the Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Corps; and one French and one American soldier. HIGH CEMETERY, SAILLY-LE-SEC, on the road to Ville-sur-Ancre, where 18 United Kingdom and eleven Australian soldiers were buried in June-August, 1918. KANGAROO CEMETERY, SAILLY-LE-SEC (on the Ville-sur-Ancre road, but nearer Sailly), where 13 Australian soldiers were buried by the 41st Battalion in March-April, 1918, and 14 of the 58th (London) Division by their comrades in August, 1918. LAMOTTE-EN-SANTERRE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION. The village was captured by Australian troops on the 8th August, 1918, and the Extension contained the graves of 56 Australian and twelve United Kingdom soldiers who fell in August and September. LA NEUVILLE-LES-BRAY COMMUNAL CEMETERY, containing the grave of one Australian soldier who fell in August, 1918. LE HAMELET BRITISH CEMETERY (behind the Church), containing the graves of 25 Australian soldiers who fell in April-July, 1918; and the COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, in which 27 Australian soldiers and one from the United Kingdom were buried in July and August, 1916. MIDWAY CEMETERY, MARCELCAVE, 1,500 yards North-West of Marcelcave Church, made by the Canadian Corps and containing the graves of 53 Canadian and three United Kingdom soldiers who fell in August, 1918. VAUX-SUR-SOMME COMMUNAL CEMETERY, containing three Australian graves of March-April, 1918, and two United Kingdom of 1916 and 1917; and the EXTENSION, made in May-August, 1918, and containing the graves of 130 Australian soldiers and 104 soldiers (mainly 58th Division and Artillery) and one airman from the United Kingdom. WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, in which five Australian soldiers were buried by the 12th Australian Field Ambulance in August, 1918. There are now 2,142 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 609 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to five casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and to 15 buried in other cemeteries whose graves could not be found on concentration. The cemetery also contains the graves of two New Zealand airmen of the Second World War. Within the cemetery stands the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MEMORIAL, the Australian national memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, to their dead, and especially to name those of the dead whose graves are not known. The 10,765 Australian servicemen named on the memorial died in the battlefields of the Somme, Arras, the German advance of 1918 and the Advance to Victory. The memorial was unveiled by King George VI in July 1938. Both cemetery and memorial were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. |

The Royal Tank Regiment's formation followed the invention of the [tank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank). Tanks were first used at [Flers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Flers-Courcelette) in September 1916 during the [Battle of the Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme_(1916)) in [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I). At that time the six tank companies were grouped as the Heavy Branch of the [Machine Gun Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machine_Gun_Corps) (MGC).

In November 1916 the eight companies then in existence were each expanded to form battalions still lettered A through H; another seven battalions, I through O, were formed by January 1918, when they all were converted to numbered units. On 28 July 1917 the Heavy Branch was by [Royal Warrant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Warrant) separated from the rest of the MGC and given official status as the Tank Corps, meaning that by the beginning of 1918 the fifteen units were changed from letters to numbers as 1st Battalion to 15th Battalion, Tank Corps. More battalions continued to be formed, and by December 1918, 26 had been created. (At this time there were only 25 tank battalions, however the 17th had converted to using armoured cars in April 1918). The first commander of the Tank Corps was [Hugh Elles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Elles).

The Corps saw heavy action through 1917 and 1918, with special note being given to the [Battle of Cambrai (1917)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cambrai_(1917)), which the regiment continues to commemorate annually. During the war, four members of the Corps were awarded the [Victoria Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Cross). However, heavy losses and recurrent mechanical difficulties reduced the effectiveness of the Corps, leading the Bovington Tank School to adopt a doctrine that emphasised caution and high standards of maintenance in equal measure.

**The history of 6th Division**

This peacetime Division of the pre-war army was quartered in Ireland and England at the outbreak of war, and was ordered on mobilisation to concentrate near Cambridge. By early September it was fully equipped and trained. On the 10 September 1914 it landed at St Nazaire and proceeded to the Western Front, where it remained throughout the war. The Division arrived in time to reinforce the hard-pressed BEF on the Aisne, before the whole army was moved north into Flanders:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **71st Brigade** |  |
| Brigade transferred to 24th Division in exchange for 17th Brigade on 11 October 1915 | |
| 9th Bn. the Norfolk Regt |  |
| 9th Bn. the Suffolk Regt | disbanded February 1918 |
| 8th Bn. the Bedfordshire Regt | left November 1915 |
| 11th Bn. the Essex Regt | left October 1915 |
| 2nd Bn. the Sherwood Foresters | joined October 1915 |
| 1st Bn. the Leicestershire Regt | joined November 1915 |
| 71st Machine Gun Company | formed 14 March 1916  left to move into 6th MG Battalion 1 March 1918 |
| 71st Trench Mortar Battery | formed April 1916 |
| **Divisional Troops** |  |
| 11th Bn. the Leicestershire Regt | joined as Divisional Pioneer Battalion in April 1916 |
| 192nd Company, the Machine Gun Corps | joined 15 December 1916  left to move into 6th MG Battalion 1 March191 8 |
| No 6 Battalion, the Machine Gun Corps | formed 1 March 1918 |

History of the 6TH DIVISION June- August 1918.

YPRES SALIENT.

On the 27th June the Division passed to the XIX Corps (Lt.-Gen. Sir H.E Watts) and relieved the 46th French Division {Chasseurs) in the Dickebusch sector. This was in a very unpleasant front, where the dominating position of the enemy on Kemmel Hill made movement, even in the rear lines, impossible by day, and practically all work, of which there was plenty, had to be done by night. The chief incidents of the tour of the Division in this sector were the successful attack on Ridgewood, the 1st The Buffs daylight raid on the Brasserie, the sixteen prisoner night-raid of the 2nd D.L.I. on the Zillebeke front, and the co-operation of the 18th Infantry Brigade with the operations of the 41st Division on our right. The situation created by the enemy's attack on Ridgewood on the 28th May had never been satisfactory restored, in spite of repeated attempts on the part of the 46th (French) Division. The 6th Division took over with the determination to put this right on the first opportunity, profiting by the lessons learnt in the successive attacks made by the French Chasseurs, which their Division had placed most unreservedly at our disposal. After careful reconnaissance the 18th Infantry Brigade, assisted by two companies of the 1st Middlesex Regiment of the 33rd Division, attacked the enemy at 6 a.m. on the 14th July. The attack delivered by the 1st West Yorkshire Regiment and the 2nd D.L.I. and the two above-mentioned companies was a complete success. The enemy, taken entirely by surprise, only offered any resistance in one or two isolated cases, and the dash and prompt initiative of the attacking troops soon dealt with these. All objectives were gained, Ridgewood and

Elzenwalle retaken, and 7 officers, 341 other ranks, 25 machine-guns, and 3 trench-mortars captured at small cost to the attackers. Large quantities of trench-mortar ammunition, round dumped close up to the front line, demonstrated the correctness of the view that the enemy had in contemplation a resumption of his offensive on this front. For this the Division received congratulations

from the Commander in Chief, the G.O.C., Second Army (General Sir Herbert Plumer) and G.O.C., XIX Corps.

The raid of the 1st The Buffs was carried out on the 2nd August. The objective was the Brasserie and neighboring farms. The raid, which was by day and on a fairly extensive scale, was very successful. On the 8th August the 41st Division carried out a small operation, in co-operation with which the 18th Infantry Brigade undertook two minor operations. That by a company of the 1st West Yorkshire Regiment on the Vierstraat Road was unsuccessful, through no fault of the attacking infantry, who were held up by machine guns sited so far forward that they had escaped our barrage. On the right a company of the 2nd D.L.I. operating in direct touch with the left of the 41st Division, was completely successful in carrying out its task. In connection with operations on this front the Division sustained a severe loss in Major R. W. Barnett, K.R.R., G.S.O.2, who was killed by a sniper while reconnoitering on 12th August.

During July and August the Divisional Artillery was exceptionally busy. An immense amount of effort was put into the preparation of forward positions for a large number of batteries to be employed in a contemplated later offensive. Vast quantities of gun ammunition were carted nightly, and dumped therein in readiness. During the month of August the Division had the pleasure of close association with our American Allies, part of the 27th American, a New York Division, doing their attachment and apprenticeship to trench warfare with us. On the 21st to the 24th August the Americans relieved the Division in the line, and it was withdrawn for rest and training to the Wizernes area. On leaving the XIX Corps the Corps Commander sent the Division his "warmest thanks for and appreciation of the excellent service rendered" while under his command.

**Rifleman William John Palmer. 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade. Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Road.**

Rifleman Palmer was wounded in the arm and taken prisoner and placed in the Hamburg Camp in 1915.



Name William John PALMER

Rank/Number Rifleman / S/6434

Regiment/Unit Rifle Brigade / 2nd Battalion

Enlisted Watford, Herts

Age/Date of death 23 / 08 Nov 1918

How died/Theatre of war Died / France & Flanders

Residence at death 6 Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Rd,

Cemetery Hamburg Cemetery, Hamburg,

Grave Reference I.F.16

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common,

Date/Place of birth 1895 / Amersham

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty

Parents/Occupation Alfred & Elizabeth Ann Palmer / watercress gatherer

Parents’ Address 6 Bois Cottages, Bois Moor Rd,

Wife

Wife’s Address

**Cemetery Details**

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| --- | --- |
| **Cemetery:** | HAMBURG CEMETERY |
| **Country:** | Germany |
| **Locality:** | Hamburg, Hamburg |
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|  |  |
| **Historical Information:** | During the First World War, Hamburg Cemetery was used for the burial of over 300 Allied servicemen who died as prisoners of war. In 1923, it was decided that the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died all over Germany should be brought together into four permanent cemeteries. Hamburg was one of those chosen, and burials were brought into the cemetery from 120 burial grounds\* in Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg, Oldenburg, Hanover, Saxony, Brunswick and Westphalia. The majority died as prisoners, but a few were sailors whose bodies were washed ashore on the Frisian Islands. There are now 708 First World War servicemen buried or commemorated in the Commonwealth plot at Hamburg. This total includes special memorials to three casualties buried in Parchim Prisoners of War Cemetery whose graves could not be found, and 25 unidentified sailors whose remains were recovered from HM Submarine E24, which was sunk by a mine off Heligoland in March 1916, when the vessel was raised in July 1974. The Commonwealth section of the cemetery also contains 1,466 Second World War burials, mostly of servicemen who died with the occupying forces, or airmen lost in bombing raids over Germany. There are also 378 post Second World War graves and 14 war graves of other nationalities. \* The following cemeteries are among those from which graves were brought to Hamburg: GUSTROW PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Mecklenburg-Schwerin. 59 burials of 1914-1918. Gustrow was one of the main camps in which prisoners in Germany were registered. HANNOVER (LIMMER) MILITARY CEMETERY, Hannover. 31 burials of 1914-1918. HELIGOLAND CHURCHYARD, Helgoland. one burial of 1916. MINDERHEIDE PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Westphalia. 55 burials of 1916-1918. MUNSTER CAMP PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Hannover. 130 burials of 1917-1919. PARCHIM PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Mecklenburg Schwerin. 83 burials of 1917-1919. SOLTAU PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Hannover. 25 burials of 1916-1918. VERDEN GARRISON CEMETERY, Hannover. 29 burials of 1916-1918. |

**The Rifle Brigade**

**Battalions of the Regular Army**

**2nd Battalion**  
August 1914: at Kuldana in India. Sailed from Bombay on 20 September, landing at Liverpool on 22 October 1914. Moved to Hursley Park and came under orders of 25th Brigade in 8th Division.  
6 November 1914: landed at Le Havre.

**The history of 8th Division**  
  
The 8th Division was formed during October 1914 by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire. The Division moved to France in November 1914, a badly-needed reinforcement to the BEF. It remained on the Western Front throughout the rest of the war, taking part in the following actions:



**1915**  
The Battle of Neuve Chapelle  
The Battle of Aubers  
The action of Bois Grenier (a diversionary attack coinciding with the Battle of Loos)  
**25th Brigade**

2nd Bn. the Lincolnshire Regt left February 1918

2nd Bn. the Royal Berkshire Regt

1st Bn. the Royal Irish Rifles left February 1918

2nd Bn. the Rifle Brigade

1/13th Bn. the London Regt joined November 1914, left May 1915

1/1st Bn. the London Regt joined May 1915, left February 1916

1/8th Bn. the Middlesex Regt joined August 1915, left October 1915

2nd Bn. the East Lancashire Regt joined February 1918

25th Brigade Machine Gun Company formed 10 January 1916   
left to move into 8th MG Battalion 20 January 1918

25th Trench Mortar Battery formed February 1916

**Able Seaman Frederick Ben Bates. Royal Navy, HMS Penn. Bois Moor Road.**

HMS Penn was a WW1 ‘Moon’ Class destroyer that was broken up in May 1921.Frederick Bates died from ‘pneumonia’? along with other ships crew. Navy records suggest that the deaths may have caused by Spanish Flu. Married Emily Payne whose family lived in Bois Moor Road. Frederick lived with the family when signing on for the Navy. (Frederick may have remarried in 1919 to Norah Scanlon when Emily died early in the year and lived in Brentford. This would explain his burial in Chiswick Old Cemetry)

**Casualty Details**

Name Bates, Frederick Ben

Rank/Number Able Seaman (Quarter Master Sergeant.)

Regiment/Unit Royal Navy: HMS Penn/235015

Enlisted  1912?

Age/Date of death 30 / 1st Oct 1918

How died/Theatre of war Died / at sea Hospital Ship, HMHS Karapara operating in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Residence at death: Bois Moor Road or Brentford, Middlesex ?

Cemetery Chiswick Old Cemetery

Grave Reference Screen Wall: Q.C.66

Location of memorial

Date/Place of birth 1888 / Aylesbury

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty  Royal Navy joined as boy.

Parents/Occupation:  F.B Bates

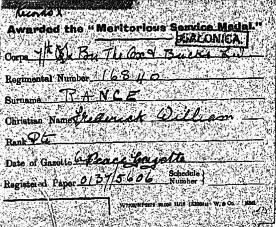
Parents’ Address  Cannon Mill, Chesham Bois

Wife: Emily (Payne) Bates

Wife’s Address  Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

**1919**

**Private Fred William Rance, Bucks Oxon and Bucks L I. Bois Moor Road.**



Name Fred William RANCE

Rank/Number Private / 16840

Regiment/Unit: Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry / 7th Bn.

Enlisted

Age/Date of death 34 / 19 Jul 1919

How died/Theatre of war Died of Wounds / Salonika,

Residence at death:  Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois.

Cemetery Chesham Burial Ground, Bucks

Grave Reference D.1025

Location of memorial Chesham Bois Common, Bois Lane

Date/Place of birth 1885 /  Berkhamsted

Date/Place of baptism

Occupation of Casualty hay binders assistant

Parents/Occupation Joseph & Mary Rance / bricklayer

Parents’ Address Hempsted Road, Chesham (now White Hill)

Wife Selina Rance

Wife’s Address Bois Moor Road, Chesham Bois

Medals: Meritorious Service Medal.

**Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M.)**

Instituted in 1845 (British Army), in 1849 (the Royal Marines), in 1918 (the Royal Air Force) and in 1919 (the Royal Navy).

The criteria for eligibility was different for each of the Services and the number of medals issued was also restricted within each of the Services.

**The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry**

**Battalions of the New Armies.**

**7th (Service) Battalion**  
Formed at Oxford in September 1914 as part of K3 and attached to 78th Brigade in 26th Division.  
21 September 1915: landed at Boulogne but moved to Salonika 13-26 November 1915.

**The history of 26th Division**  
This Division was established in September 1914 as part of Army Order 388 authorising Kitchener's Third New Army, K3. The units began to to assemble in the Salisbury Plain area from September 1914. Khaki uniform and equipment were not made available until February-April 1915 and in the meantime everything was improvised.

Embarkation for France began in September 1915 and the concentration of units at Guignemicourt (west of Amiens) was completed before the end of the month. However, the Division was not destined to remain on the Western Front, because in November 1915 it moved to Salonika where it then remained.

On 2 November, the Division concentrated at Flesselles and moved to Salonika via embarkation at Marseilles. On 26 December 1915, units began to move from Lembet to Happy Valley Camp and all units were in place there by 8 February 1916. The 26th Division remained in the Salonika theatre for the rest of the war, taking part in the following operations:

**1916**  
10-18 August 1916: the Battle of Horseshoe Hill  
**1917**  
24-25 April and 8-9 May 1917: the Battles of Doiran  
**1918**  
The Division lost a number of units in mid 1918; they were transferred to France   
18-19 September 1918: the Battle of Doiran  
22-30 September 1918: the Pursuit to the Strumica Valley.  
Forward units crossed the Serbian-Bulgarian boundary on 25 September 1918. Hostilities with Bulgaria ceased two days later. The Division advanced towards Adrianople (as the war with Turkey was still underway) but this also soon ceased. 26th Division successively became part of the Army of the Danube and then of the Occupation of Bulgaria. Demobilisation began in February 1919, with Italian troops arriving to replace the dwindling British presence. By 10 May 1919, the Division ceased to exist.   
The 26th Division had suffered casualties of 8,022 killed, wounded and missing during the war but vastly larger numbers sick with malaria, dysentery and other diseases rife in the Salonika theatre.

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| **78th Brigade** |  |
| 9th Bn. the Gloucestershire Regiment | left 4 July 1918 |
| 11th Bn. the Worcestershire Regiment |  |
| 7th Bn. the Ox & Bucks. Light Infantry |  |
| 7th Bn. the Royal Berkshire Regiment |  |
| 78th Machine Gun Company | joined 22 July 1916 |
| 78th SAA Section Ammunition Column | joined 27 July 1916 |
| 78th Trench Mortar Battery | joined 12 November 1916 |

1918

The Capture of the Roche Noir Salient (1- 2 September)

The Second Battle of Doiran (18-19 September)

The Passage of the Vardar and the Pursuit to the Strumica Valley (20-30 September)

Armistice (30 September 1918)

At the beginning of 1918 the Allied troops in Salonika were prepared for a major offensive intended to end the war in the Balkans. The Greek Army had been reorganised and joined the Allied force. The offensive began in July 1918 but the British contingent did not play a significant part until early September. Then the British attacked a series of fortified hills. The final assault began along the whole front on 15 September 1918; the British being engaged in the Lake Doiran area. This battle was really on the 18 and 19 September 1918 and was a disaster for the British Divisions. They had to frontally assault 'Pip Ridge' which was a 2000 foot high heavily defended mountain ridge with fortresses built on some of the higher mountains, notably Grand Couronne. (This was what the Bulgarians had been working on in the first months of 1916 and early 1917.) They sustained very heavy casualties.

The following report from one involved gives some idea of what the men went through. By 'An Unprofessional Soldier' on the Staff of 28th Division. He entitled his paper: “I saw the Futile Massacre at Doiran". It is from Issue 46 of " I Was There" published 1938/9 " The Battle of Doiran is now a forgotten episode of the Great War, overshadowed by the doings of Haig in France and Allenby in Palestine. There was no full contemporary account of the Battle in any British Newspaper. Sir George Milne's dispatch was not published and did not appear in the Times until January 23rd 1919, and then only in truncated form. The very name of the battle is unknown to most. Yet, in singularity of horror and in tragedy of defeated heroism, it is unique among the records of British arms. The real work of the assault was entrusted to the men of the 22nd and 26th Divisions, who were to attack the Doiran hills, co-operating with the Cretan Division of the Greek Army and a regiment of unreliable Zouaves. In the early light of an almost unclouded morning the British and Greek forces advanced in order of battle. The noise of our guns had abruptly ceased before daybreak, and there came that awful pause in which defenders and attackers are braced up to face the ordeal, with fear or desperation, with cool courage or with blazing ardour. Slowly the pale grey smoke lifted in layers of thin film above the ridges, blue shadows deep in every fold or hollow and a dim golden glow on scrub, rock and heather. No one could tell what had been the effect of our gunfire upon those fortified hills. The infantry soldier relies upon the guns behind him, trusting in their power to smash a way for his advance by killing or demoralizing the enemy and cutting up his defences. In this case, if he had any hopes or illusions, the infantry soldier was quickly undeceived.

Our attack on ' Pip Ridge' was led by 12th Cheshires. The battle opened with a crash of machine-gun fire, and a cloud of dusty smoke began to blur the outline of the hills, almost immediately the advancing battalion was overwhelmed in a deadly steam of bullets which came whipping and whistling down the open slopes. Those who survived were followed by a battalion of Lancashire men, and a remnant of this undaunted infantry fought its way over the first and second lines of trenches - if indeed the term “line " can be applied to a highly complicated and irregular system of defence, taking full advantage of every fold or contortion of the ground. In its turn, a Shropshire battalion ascended the fatal ridge. By this time the battle of the " Pips" was a mere confusion of massacre, noise and futile bravery. Nearly all the men of the first two battalions were lying dead or wounded on the hillside. Colonel Clegg and Colonel Bishop were killed; the few surviving troops were toiling and fighting in what appeared to be inevitable and immediate death. The attack was ending in a bloody disaster. No orders could reach the isolated cluster of men who were still trying to advance on the ridge. Contact aeroplanes came roaring down through the yellow haze of dust and smoke, hardly able to see what was going on, and even flying below the levels of the Ridge and Grand Couronne. There was only one possible ending to the assault. Our troops in the military phrase of their commander, " fell back to their original positions" Of this falling back I will say nothing. There are times when even desperate heroism has to acknowledge defeat.

While the 60th Brigade was thus repulsed on the ridge, a Greek regiment was thrown into disorder by a counter attack on the right. At the same time the Welsh Brigade was advancing towards Grand Couronne. No feat of arms can ever surpass the glorious bravery of those Welshmen. There was lingering gas in the Jumeaux Ravine ( probably ours!) and some of the men had to fight in respirators. Imagine, if you can, what it means to fight up a hillside under a deadly fire, wearing a hot mask over your face, dimly staring through a pair of clouded goggles, and sucking the end of a rubber nozzle in your mouth. At the same time heat is pouring down on you from a brazen sky. In this plight you are called on to endure the blast of machine-gun fire, the pointed steel or bursting shell of the enemy. Nor are you called on to endure alone you must vigorously fire back, and vigorously assail with your own bayonet. It is as much like hell as anything you can think of. Welsh Fusiliers got as far as the Hilt, only half a mile below the central fortress, before being driven back by a fierce Bulgarian charge. Every officer was killed or wounded. Following these came the 11th Welsh, who were also compelled to retire, fighting. For a time, however, a few of the enemy's trenches, full of dead or dying men, remained in our possession. A third Welsh battalion was offered up, to perish, on that awful day. The 7th South Wales Borderers nobly stormed up through the haze of battle until they had come near the hills of The Tassel and The Knot, Then, all at once, the haze lifted, and they were left exposed in the open to a sweeping and overwhelming fire. Melting away as they charged, a party of Welshmen ran up the slopes of Grand Couronne itself and fell dead among the rocks. Of the whole battalion, only one officer and eighteen men were alive at the end of the day.

All night, unheard in the tumult of a new bombardment, wounded men were crying on the hillsides or down in the long ravines. Whatever Sir George Milne now thought of his own plans, he must have been gratified by the behaviour of his own troops. Those troops had been flung against positions no infantry in the world could ever have taken by a frontal attack, and they had proved themselves to be good soldiers. Two entire Brigades had been practically annihilated. Only on the right was there a temporary gain of ground by two Hellenic regiments in the neighbourhood of Doiran Town. My own troops (if I may speak of 28th Division) were in support of the Cretans under the Krusha hills east of the Lake. These people were intended to make a " surprise " attack on the high positions to the north, though I do not see how anyone can be surprised by an attack which has to be launched over three or four miles of perfectly open country - unless he is surprised at the futility of such a thing. The Cretans had lined up during the night along a railway embankment, which is immediately below the hills. At dawn they advanced over the plain of Akindzali, breaking through the enemy's outpost line. Our artillery, owing to a failure in co-ordination, did not properly support the advance, and our guns were eventually withdrawn under a heavy Bulgarian fire. There were casualties in the neighbourhood of Akindzali village (the scene of unmentionable Greek atrocities in the war of 1913). The attack rapidly collapsed, and by evening the Cretans were back at the railway line from which they had started. At nightfall the 28th Division took up a purely defensive attitude, overlooking the plain. It may well be asked why this Division was never given the chance of throwing its full weight into the battle. The enemy himself, as we afterwards learnt, was very much astonished by the absence or concealment of so large a body of troops. One of the first questions put to a captured British airman near Petrich was "can you tell us what has become of your 28th Division?" A fresh and equally futile massacre on the Doiran hills was arranged for the following day, in spite of the total breakdown of the general scheme. It was now the turn of the Scotsmen - Fusiliers, Rifles and Highlanders of the 77th Brigade, undismayed by the dreadful evidence of havoc, ran forward among the Welsh and Bulgarian dead. Artillery demoralised the regiment of Zouaves on their left. A storm of machine-gun fire blew away the Greeks on their right, in uncontrolled disorder. Fighting on into a maze of enemy entanglements, the Scotsmen were being annihilated, their flanks withering under a terrible enfilade. A fine battalion of East Lancashires attempted to move up in support. The 65th Brigade launched another forlorn attack on the Pip Ridge. The broken remains of two Brigades were presently in retreat, leaving behind more than half their number, killed, wounded or missing. We had now sustained 3,871 casualties in the Doiran battle. Our troops were incapable of any further effort. A terrible high proportion had been lost or disabled. We gained only the unimportant ruins of Doiran Town and a cluster of small hills immediately above it, never of any value to the enemy or strongly defended. The fortress of Grand Couronne was unshaken, with crumpled bodies of men and a litter of awful wreckage below it. No one can view the result of the operation as anything but a tactical defeat. Had it been an isolated engagement, there would have been every prospect of disaster. The whole plan of the battle and its conduct are open to devastating criticism; but so are the plans and the conduct of a great majority of battles. (The Cheshires, South Wales Borderers and the Argylls were awarded the French Croix de Guerre for their part - the Royal Scots Fusiliers lost 358, the Argylls 299 and the Scottish Rifles 228 men) Luckily, the Franco-Serbian advance was being continued with extraordinary vigour. Elsewhere, before long the Bulgarian Army was cut in two and a general withdrawal began to take place along the entire front. Our Doiran battle was now regarded as a contribution to victory for had we not been effective in pinning down the enemy reserves? British commanders are wonderfully philosophic after all. In other words a waste of lives. The Franco - Serbian Armies were also attacking in better conditions further to the east and, In spite of desperate fighting by the Bulgarians and their Austrian allies, a gap was opened in the Bulgarian line and the Serbian, French and British cavalry followed up the Bulgarian retreat and captured Kosturino and Strumitsa. Following the breakthrough the Bulgarians sued for peace. To add to the tragedy the battle honour 'Doiran 1918' was awarded to one yeomanry regiment and 22 infantry regiments. The campaign honour 'Macedonia 1915 - 1918' was awarded to 10 British yeomanry, 59 British infantry regiments and 4 Indian infantry regiments. Sir George Milne was never asked about these events but was hailed a victor. The following is also taken from the same issue of " I Was There" A description of life in Macedonia during the final phase of the campaign suggests that discomfort rather than danger was the chief menace to the troops. The tragic battle of Doiran was an unhappy exception. Mr F.A.W.Nash served with the RAMC and the King's Shropshire Light Infantry from summer 1917 to the Armistice. He became a schoolteacher after the War and wrote a book of fairy tales ' The Enchanted Spectacles'. The Infantry Training Base at Summer Hill cast us forth upon a cold, hard world after a tabloid training of six weeks. NCOs shepherded us, our putteed legs carried us, and motor lorries decanted us, upon the wide margins of the Struma Plain. Before us lay the winding Struma, silvery in the winter sunshine, and in the distance the bluest hills I have ever seen. To our left lay the famous Rupell Pass, an impregnable defile commanded completely by German guns. An occasional shell screamed across the plain and burst at the foot of the hills where Johnny Bulgar lived and moved and had his being. How well I remember the villages scattered over the plain, each with its trivial happening on that stagnant front! There was Orljak where we slept under canvas in a blizzard, and the tent pole, round which our rifles were lashed, fell upon my legs. I kicked myself free, lifted a flap of the fallen canvas, saw the snow and snuggled down cosily again. We lived in redoubts in comfortable little iron tunnels, and had Greek infantrymen to share our guard with us. Once we were marched to the ' crumped' village of Yenekoi, where we dug ourselves in. We were acting as a sort of infantry screen to a flying battery. There was no attack through the hot and thirsty night. We drank all our water and then lay and endured till dawn. One enterprising lad tried to assuage his thirst with a tin of sweetened condensed milk! This was an act, that would have caused a shock of revulsion even to the Ancient Mariner! But apart from battalion manoeuvres at Four Tree Hill and a rush from thence to the Plain again, when a false alarm of mutiny amongst the Bulgars was spread, we were bedded fast in slab and thick monotony like flies in treacle. We had kit inspections; we scrubbed our shorts and helmets with the wonderful sandy Struma mud, and went out on patrol looking for Bulgars. On these patrols we actually carried stretchers. We hacked down the lush green grass, which might harbour malarial mosquitoes, and poured cresol in pools to kill the larvae. The night patrols had a ritual of their own. Each man anointed his face and neck with almond-smelling mixture of the appearance of floor polish. This was to make us unpleasant to the mosquitoes. Then we put on a muslin veil and tucked the loose ends into our tunics. The tout ensemble was surmounted by the good old tin hat, and off we went like the female portion of an Eastern Bridal Party. One of our patrols, actually, made contact with the Bulgars. A corporal ' discharged his piece ' at them. One of the Bulgars replied and, honour satisfied both sides went home to supper. A terrific bombardment over the Rupell Pass one morning held our momentary interest, and the news that a section of The Rifle Brigade had been wiped out near Prosnik. Then we settled down to the eternal sameness. But a change was to come over the dream of the plain dwellers. Mosquito strafing, O.Ps and comic opera patrols were to be no more. We ' proceeded' - in the majestic language of the War Office - to the Vardar front. This was a very different pair of shoes. Behold us then, marching up a camouflaged road leading to a Turkish village called Myadagh. Greenery and wire netting against the vulture eyes of Fokkers had screened the road. "L'artillerie, ce n'est pas merchante!" our French guide informed us. He would go to Ceres with his battalion - but yes - and dorme.. He folded expressive hands simulating sleep. Which would he rather fight, Johnny Bulgar or Le Boche? "O - le Bulgare! Le Bulgare" He left us in the courtyard of a ruined house in Myadagh. We eased our equipment and ate our plentiful rations. Pipes and cigarettes came out. The floor was littered with our mess tins. The fig tree in the middle of the court sustained our reclining forms. In one corner, potsherds and stacks of litter, which might have graced the rubbish dump of Haroun al Rashid, were piled upon three timber joists, making a sort of smelly Aladdin's cave. A little Turkish boy and girl ate jam from a tin with their fingers, whilst we tried to talk to them in scraps of French. Suddenly a gun boomed and a sound like the shuffling of a giant across the sky in slippers filled with boulders grew to a fearful crescendo. The little sultana dived like a rabbit into the magic cavern, simultaneously with the oldest sweat in the party. I seized the little boy and dragged him into the doubtful shelter of the doorway.

The crescendo rose to a high demoniac shriek, as a high explosive shell burst thirty yard up the road and demolished a house in a fan of black smoke, flying bricks, dust and rubble. Our platoon sergeant strolled up unconcernedly, grinning at our perturbation. Although the artillery wasn't too bad on the Vardar, it was nevertheless worrying. There would be sporadic bursts of shelling when fatigue parties were in the open and on the move. We were shelled as we bore ammunition to the trenches, when we filled our waterbottles at the great stone Bulgar fountains, or when we made sand-bag emplacements for Lewis guns. One nearly had me at a fountain, and before breakfast too! Here we were awakened soon after dawn by a Taube overhead. She signalled the German battery across the river. Then came the ominous boom, followed by the rattling scream of a shell. Gloucesters and Hants bathing in the Vardar by the pontoon scattered wet and naked as the high-explosive shells raked the railway line and ravine. I viewed the bombardment with a sergeant of the Royal Engineers from behind a mass of rock. The Taube sheered off for Brigade Headquarters and the bellowing echoes died away further up the line. After lunch the wretched machine came back. This time I posed. I snatched up my tin hat and Palgrave's Golden Treasury (of verse) and dashed off amidst a crowd of Gloucesters and Hants. It would be a good thing to tell 'em at home that I'd read poetry under shellfire. I remember that as we crouched under the shadow of a boulder that one of the Gloucesters had come without his tin hat. He was bald and pink on the top and tied a spotted handkerchief pirate-wise round his pate, more for protection from the sun than high-explosives and shrapnel. Soon our position became untenable and we fled again, the Gloucesters to an arch in the railway and I to the RAMC hut round the corner. The echoes up and down the dump were simply infernal and one shell landed amongst a group of mules feeding by the railway line. I saw a brave fellow going to get one of them in with stuff dropping all around him. A pale man in the RAMC hut pushed back his topee, removed an unsteady cigarette, and observed " If it was your fate, you'd go that way" I read Palgrave but can't remember which part. At length the hideous noises ceased and the Taube departed. There were no more bombardments, though had the Germans shelled the steep road leading to 67 Kilo, when it was choked with lorries, mules and limbers, I dread to think what would have happened. 67 Kilo was important because it was here, returning from the YMCA, I used to come across the Gloucesters and Hants manoeuvring, or gathered round a relief map made of clay, of the positions they were to attack in a long projected “stunt". They went into action in the late summer of 1918 with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Fate and the Higher Command decreed that I should witness only a part of the battle. I was extremely obliged to Fate and the Higher Command. I saw the terrible bombardment under which our fellows attacked the Bulgar trenches outside Gevgeli. A land torpedo was placed under their wire and our men took the trenches with bomb and bayonet. But our losses were terrible. A friend of mine in W Company helped bury the dead. He said that under the light of flares and a heavy shell-fire they buried our poor fellows with their equipment still on and wondered if the graves they dug would be their own. The Middlesex Regiment Pioneers dug a communication trench from our old positions to the captured Bulgar ones. To these trenches a man of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, whom we were relieving, led us. We came at long last to our fire bays, for he led us round and round, always missing the turning at the side, which led to our temporary home. Part of the parapet had been blown in a few yards to our left and a gaunt iron stake was alone left standing, but our own dugout was deep in the chalk. There was a puddle at the bottom, and here we tried to brew tea over the flame of three candles. Never have I tasted such a horrid concoction of lukewarm, smoky water and floating logs. We had two hours on and four off, all through a night of intermittent bombardment. A few nights later the sky was red with flames from the Bulgar positions, and the air was alive with the pop of the ammunition they were burning. The next day we were walking about on top of the parapets under which we had so recently cowered. The Bulgars had at last broken under the strain. We chased them up through the Rupell Pass and into Serbia. The line of their retreat was strewn with shreds of clothing, dead horses, wrecked machine-guns, ammunition, rifles broken across the small of the butt and bayonets with the locking ring torn off. The Germans had laid out the part of Serbia they had occupied with little chilli and tomato gardens, and had built Swiss looking chalets on the sides of the ravines. At one place they had built a bath over a natural hot spring. We had a swim! The conduct of our fellows was exemplary but not so some of our allies. We soon came upon grim evidence of this, in the shape of blackened Bulgar corpses at an abandoned hospital. All of them were sitting up in their beds and rotting. Someone had got there before we did. We had to burn the whole hospital, including a German medical marquee with cases of beautiful surgical instruments. (The Serbian Army was ahead of them) We were informed by our Colonel we were going to Sofia. Our route took us across a plain as flat as a draughtboard. We changed direction towards the Danube but we never arrived there. We saw the poor old disbanded Bulgars with the toes hanging out of their boots returning to their homes. They gratefully accepted bully beef and cigarettes from us. Strange how we try to slaughter poor fellows who have no real enmity towards us and whose only fault is obeying their leaders. So back we came to Macedonia, even unto Sarigal, where we bivvied among the mule lines in the mud. Here, on a certain November night , the Greeks on our left sent up rockets and flares and a bugle quavered a call we had never heard before. Our sergeant, coming back from the canteen and his potations said “Don’t you know the Cease Fire when you 'ear it!"