

Aldershot and Passchendaele (Third Battle of Ypres, 31 July - 10 November 1917)

Compiled by Paul H Vickers, Friends of the Aldershot Military Museum, April 2017

Introduction

“Passchendaele” is the popular name for what is more properly called the Third Battle of Ypres. As with the Battle of the Somme the year before, Third Ypres was not a single battle but is a collective name for a series of battles fought in the Ypres salient during the period from 31 July to 10 November 1917. The main actions were:

Battle of Pilkem Ridge (31 July - 2 August)

Capture of Westhoek (10 August)

Battle of Langemarck (16-18 August)

Battle of the Menin Ridge Road (20-25 September)

Battle of Polygon Wood (26 September - 3 October)

Battle of Broodseinde (4 October)

Battle of Poelcappelle (9 October)

First Battle of Passchendaele (12 October)

Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October - 10 November)

As this was to be an offensive battle, Haig initially put General Sir Hubert Gough in command as he was known for his aggressive style. The initial attacks made some reasonable progress, but German artillery and counter-attacks by specially trained divisions halted the advance. Exceptionally bad weather turned much of the ground to mud which further hindered British attacks, and the Battle of Langemarck was a significant defeat. Haig now replaced Gough with the more methodical General Sir Herbert Plumer, whose plan was for limited “bite and hold” attacks, for which he instituted a three-week period of intensive training. In the next major offensive, the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, the objectives were limited to what was within the capabilities of the attacking forces, after which they dug in to hold off the inevitable German counter-attacks. This battle and its new tactics were a success which restored much of the Army’s morale. The Battle of Polygon Wood was launched in hot, dry conditions and was another notable success, and it was even believed that a breakthrough may be possible. However, on 4 October the weather broke again, with persistent heavy rain making the ground very difficult and all movement became an ordeal in the mud. As a result the Battle of Poelcappelle was only a partial success, and in the battles for Passchendaele hardly any ground was gained for severe loss of life, and eventually the actions ground to a halt.

Casualties for 31 July - 10 November were:

British: 238,313 (of which: 35,831 killed, 172,994 wounded, 29,488 missing)

German: Approximately 230,000

(Source: Evans, Martin Marix: “Passchendaele: the hollow victory”, p.158)

Aldershot Divisions at Passchendaele

44 British Divisions fought at Passchendaele over the duration of the battle, plus 4 Canadian, 5 Australian and 1 New Zealand Divisions. Of the British Divisions, 14 had been either raised or trained in Aldershot (32% of the total British). These were:

1st Division

9th (Scottish) Division

14th (Light) Division

15th (Scottish) Division

16th (Irish) Division

20th (Light) Division

21st Division

23rd Division

24th Division

25th Division

36th (Ulster) Division

39th Division

41st Division

57th (2nd West Lancashire) Division

Awards for Bravery to soldiers from Aldershot for actions during the battle of Passchendaele

(Note: This is not full list of awards made to local men but are some which are known, and which stand as examples of the contributions made by Aldershot soldiers in the battle. All three of these men survived the war.)

Military Cross: Second Lieutenant A Maurice Toye (Middlesex Regiment)

Alfred Maurice Toye (who preferred to be known as Maurice) was born on 7 April 1897 in Stanhope Lines, and educated at the Aldershot Garrison School. At the start of the First World War, Toye was serving with the Royal Engineers, until commissioned into the Middlesex Regiment on 15 February 1917.

At the time of Passchendaele, Toye was serving in the 2nd Battalion, Middlesex Regiment (23rd Brigade, 8th Division), who were in the initial attacks of 31 July. The 8th Division area of attack was a line from the eastern edge of Zouave Wood to the north-west corner of Railway Wood, immediately south of the Ypres-Roulers railway; 24 Brigade was on the right and 23 Brigade on the left. Their objective was the "Black Line", to be attacked by the 2nd Scottish Rifles on the right and 2nd Middlesex on the left. Zero hour was 03.50, 2nd Middlesex crossed the German front line at 04.20 and continued on to the Black Line, taken by 05.45, which they began to consolidate. Up to this point enemy resistance had not been strong, but from 08.00 the Germans began heavy shelling of the Middlesex positions, followed by several counter-attacks. However, the Middlesex held on until relieved on 1 August, after suffering losses of 3 officers killed, 1 officer died of wounds, 7 officers wounded; 28 other ranks killed, 201 wounded and 38 missing.

For his actions during this attack, 2/Lt Toye was awarded the Military Cross, published in the *Supplement to the London Gazette, issue 30308, 25 September 1917, p. 9980*. On the same date, the *Supplement to the London Gazette, issue 30310*, announced that 2/Lt A M Toye would now be Acting Captain. The full medal citation was published in the *Supplement to the London Gazette, issue 30466, 8 January 1918, p.648*:

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When in charge of communications Toye went to a most forward position and carried out his duties under heavy and continuous fire of every description with great ability and fearlessness, and it was due to him that the situation was cleared up and communication maintained."

The next year Captain Toye was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery during the German Spring offensive of 1918.

Distinguished Conduct Medal: Sergeant Frederick J Tanner (Manchester Regiment)

Frederick Tanner was a local man whose parents lived at 141 Holly Road, Aldershot. Frederick was one of four brothers who all served in the war. He was an 'Old Contemptible', having served in France and Flanders since 30 August 1914. His DCM citation was published in the *Supplement to the London Gazette, 14 September 1917, Issue 30287, Page 9600*, and read:

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in charge of a torpedo party. He was of invaluable assistance to his officer, inserting and firing the torpedo under close range revolver and rifle fire. He afterwards remained out and assisted the raiding party through our own wire, though twice wounded during the operations. He displayed great gallantry and fearlessness under very trying conditions."

Military Medal: Sergeant Bernard W Ensor (Gloucestershire Regiment)

Bernard Walter Ensor was a resident of Aldershot who lived at 75 York Road. He served with the Gloucestershire Regiment and went to France in January 1917. Sgt Ensor was awarded the Military Medal for taking command after all his superiors were put out of action in August 1917. He took charge of two sections and managed to hold a position for 48 hours before being relieved. His award was published in the *Supplement to the London Gazette, Issue 30364, 2 November 1917, Page 11332*, and he was presented with his medal during a ceremony in Reading on 22 January 1918.

Citizens of Aldershot and Farnborough who fell at Passchendaele

In the following list are 39 names of residents of Aldershot and Farnborough who died in the battles of Passchendaele between 31 July and 10 November 1917. The largest number, as would be expected, are from the Hampshire Regiment (7 names) and the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment (3 names). In all, 20 different regiments and corps are represented, including 2 men fighting with the Royal Marines Light Infantry in the Naval Division. Nearly half of the men, 18 names, are remembered at Tyne Cot Cemetery, 4 are buried there while 14 are remembered on the memorial. Another 5 are remembered on the Menin Gate.

The main list is grouped by regiment, an alphabetical list by soldier's name follows.

Coldstream Guards

4th Battalion (Pioneers, Guards Division)

Thomas, Edwin

Lance Serjeant. 4th Bn. Coldstream Guards. Died 11 October 1917. Age 35. Edwin's widow, Annie, lived at 44 Victoria Road in Aldershot.

The Guards Division had been in a major attack on 9 October as part of the Battle of Poelcapelle. The 4th Battalion, as Pioneers, were engaged during and after this action ensuring that the roads were serviceable behind the line and in the land which had been gained. They were also used as anti-aircraft defence using their Lewis guns. It is likely that Serjeant Thomas was wounded while carrying out these duties under enemy fire. He is buried at Ruisseau Farm Cemetery. (Ruisseau Farm was taken by the Guards Division, fighting alongside French troops, on 8 October 1917 and the cemetery was begun by the divisional burial officer when the fighting was over.)

Devonshire Regiment

1st Battalion (95th Brigade, 5th Division)

Rix, Ernest Alfred

Private. 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment. Died 6 November 1917. Age 38. Ernest was a skilled sanitary pipe layer and his employer had appealed for him to be exempted from conscription on the grounds his skills were needed in camp. Exemption was refused, tribunal member Cllr. Calvert remarked that, as Ernest was a short man, "the German bullets will miss him".

On 6 November the 1st Devonshire were part of a brigade attack which immediately came under heavy fire from German machine guns at the Polderhoek Chateau. The attack broke down into small parties. These came under a heavy artillery barrage which lasted for two hours, after which the units were pulled back. Private Rix was killed by a bullet in the throat, presumably during this attack. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial. Ernest's widow, Annie, lived at 92 Queen's Road in Aldershot with their four children.

8th Battalion (20th Brigade, 7th Division)

Palmer, Samuel Francis

Private. 8th Bn. Devonshire Regiment. Died 26 October 1917. Samuel was an Aldershot resident but enlisted in Winchester. He was killed in action and is buried at Tyne Cot. He is remembered on the war memorial at St Michael's church, Aldershot.

9th Battalion (20th Brigade, 7th Division)

Driver, Richard

Private. 9th Bn. Devonshire Regiment. Died 26 October 1917. Age 22. Richard's parents, Charles and Minnie, lived at 127 Victoria Road in Aldershot. Richard was posted missing for a long time, confirmation of his death arrived after the war had ended. An old West End School pupil, he had worked at Farmer Boot Co. in Aldershot before enlisting in 1916. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial and on Holy Trinity and St Michael's church war memorials in Aldershot.

At 05.40 on 26 October, 7th Division launched a major attack. 20th Brigade advanced along the Menin Road, with 9th Devonshire as one of the lead units. Despite heavy enemy fire, they reached the village of Gheluvelt where the 8th Devonshire, who had been in reserve, became mixed up with their comrades in the 9th Battalion. At 10.00 the Germans launched a counter-attack, forced all the British troops out of the village and back almost to their starting line. It is highly likely that both Private Driver and Private Palmer were killed during the 20th Brigade attack.

Gloucestershire Regiment

1st/6th Battalion (144th Brigade, 48th Division)

Herrington, Joseph Percy

Private. 1st/6th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment. Died 9 October 1917. Joseph Percy Herrington, aged 35, appears on the 1911 Census boarding at 13 Cambridge Road, Aldershot. He was born in Stourton, Wiltshire and was a grocer's shop assistant.

As part of the opening actions of the Battle of Poelcapelle, 144th Brigade attacked at 05.20. The 1st/6th Gloucesters took Vacher Farm, but attacks on the more distant Inch Farm were unsuccessful. In the afternoon the Germans counter-attacked, but the Gloucesters were protected by a British artillery barrage. It is highly likely that Private Herrington was killed during this attack. He appears on the war memorial at St Michael's in Aldershot and he is also remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

2nd/6th Battalion (183rd Brigade, 61st (2nd South Midland) Division)

Fisher, George

Lance Corporal. 2nd/6th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment. Died 19 August 1917. Age 28. George's parents, William and Annie, lived at 253 High Street in Aldershot.

The 2nd/6th Gloucesters were not involved in any major actions around this time, so it is not possible to say how L/Cpl Fisher may have been killed, presumably he was a victim of the day-to-day hazards of trench warfare. He is buried in Oxford Road Cemetery, north-east of Ypres, and appears on St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot. George had been a bell ringer in the church and his fellow ringers also erected a stand-alone memorial to him. The bells were rung half muffled in his honour when it was unveiled. He was also remembered on the war memorial at the now demolished East End School and appears in the Change Ringers Society Roll of Honour.

8th Battalion (57th Brigade, 19th (Western) Division)

Bisco, Frederick

Private. 8th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment. Died 31 July 1917. F Bisco appears on the war memorial at St Augustine's church in North Town. This is presumably the Frederick Biscoe who also appeared on the war memorial at East End School. It is believed to be the man from the 8th

Bn. as he is buried at Aldershot Civil Cemetery. Frederick George Bisco lived at 1 Wellington Terrace in Aldershot in 1911 together with his parents, a brother and sister, when he was a 14 year old errand boy.

Although the opening attacks of Passchendaele were on the morning of 31 July, and the 56th Brigade of 19th Division took part, there is no record of either 57th Brigade or 8th Gloucesters being included in these actions, so it is not known how Private Bisco may have been killed.

Hampshire Regiment

2nd Battalion (88th Brigade, 29th Division)

Brown, Arthur

Private. 2nd Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 26 September 1917. Age 29. Born and resident in Cove, Arthur enlisted in Woolwich. Henry, his father, lived at 1 Myrtle Cottage, Holly Road in Cove. Walter, his older brother, also died. Arthur enlisted in 1915 alongside another Cove man, Harry Cooper, and they were sent to Gallipoli where they arrived on 1st December 1915. A year later he was back in the UK recovering from gunshot wounds.

2nd Hampshires had been in action during the Battle of Langemarck (16-18 August), after which they had been withdrawn until returning to the line in the middle of September. On 26 September there was much enemy activity, occasioned by the start of the Battle of Polygon Wood to the right of the Hampshire's position. A patrol from the 2nd Hampshires was sent out to locate a German strongpoint, but 9 were killed and 23 wounded, many affected by poison gas with which the enemy had drenched the area. It is likely that Private Brown was one of those killed in this action. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot memorial and appears on the memorials at Devereux House and St John's.

Goddard, William James

Lance Corporal. 2nd Hampshire Regiment. Died 9 October 1917. Age 20. Born in Frimley, William enlisted in Aldershot. His mother lived at 2 Abbey View Cottages, Union Street, Aldershot. William went to the front in 1914 but returned home to Farnborough in 1915 with frost bitten feet. He subsequently served in Gallipoli and Egypt, where he caught gastric fever and dysentery. In 1916 he was in France and was wounded in a shell blast which damaged his left leg and right arm. On two other occasions he was buried alive by shell explosions, leading to shell shock.

At 08.50 on the morning of 9 October, 2nd Hampshires had advanced at the start of the Battle of Poelcappelle. Despite heavy shelling they took their first and second objectives, and held their position overnight despite German artillery fire and the loss of several casualties to snipers. It is likely that L/Cpl Goddard was killed during these actions. He is buried at Cement House Cemetery in Langemarck and is remembered on the war memorial at St Peter's church and at Devereux House.

Knight, Charlie

Private. 2nd Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 15 August 1917. Age 31. Born and resident in Cove, Charlie enlisted in Winchester. His parents, William and Elizabeth, lived at Glencoe Villas, Fleet Road in Cove. Jeanette, his widow, and their children lived at 1 Heatherbank, Hawley Road in Cove. Charlie, a house painter, was called up in early 1917.

Private Knight was killed in fighting at Langemark and is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial. He is presumably also the Charles Knight who is listed on the Devreux House war memorial, and he is on the St John's church war memorial. His brother Thomas also died.

14th Battalion (116th Brigade, 39th Division)

Marsh, Percy

Private. 14th Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 20 September 1917. Born in Alton, Percy enlisted in Winchester but lived at Aldershot.

The 14th Hampshires had been one of the units in the first actions of 31 July, as part of the Battle of Pilckem. 116th Brigade took the village of St Julien but were forced to give it up by enemy artillery fire and vigorous counter-attacks. However, 14th Hampshires managed to hold on to their positions outside the village, until relieved on 4 August. They were then withdrawn from the line, until returning to take part in an offensive on 26 September. Private Marsh is recorded as having died of wounds, so it is likely that he was one of the casualties of the fighting of 31 July - 4 August and died of his injuries a few weeks later. He is buried at Larch Wood cemetery, to the south-east of Ypres, and was remembered on the war memorial at the now demolished East End School.

Terry, Sidney George

Private. 14th Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 7 November 1917. Age 22. His widow, Martha, lived at 19 Stone Street in Aldershot.

From 15 October the 14th Hampshires had been back in positions across the Menin Road by the village of Gheluvelt. Conditions in this sector were very bad, described by the regimental history as "a sea of mud" and "pestilential". On 5 November an attempt to capture a troublesome German pill-box failed, with five men killed and nine wounded. Whether Private Terry was one of these, and died of his wounds two days later, or whether he was killed by German artillery or aerial bombing, both of which were features of life in the trenches at this time in this sector, it is impossible to say. Private Terry is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial and on the St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot.

15th Battalion (122nd Brigade, 41st Division)

Lemon, Henry

Private. 15th Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 20 September 1917. Born and resident in Aldershot, Henry enlisted at Winchester. He was killed in action and is buried at Tyne Cot. At the time of his death his mother was living at 10 Lysons Road, Aldershot. He is remembered on the war memorial at Holy Trinity church in Aldershot. His death plaque is in the Aldershot Military Museum.

Portlock, Percival, M.M.

Private. 15th Bn. Hampshire Regiment. Died 20 September 1917. Born in Worthing, Percival enlisted in Hartley Wintney but lived in Aldershot. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot memorial. He was also listed on a war memorial at the now demolished Christ Church Boys' school in Worthing. The war memorial was privately purchased from a scrap dealer for £5 a few years ago to prevent it being melted down.

On 20 September the Second Army began its offensive known as the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, which continued until 25 September. 15th Hampshire were in the first attacks, starting at 05.40 on 20 September, and they succeeded in taking their first objective by 06.15. Through the rest of the day there was fierce fighting, with many casualties from the "Tower Hamlets", a group of German pillboxes and dug-outs. Late in the afternoon the 15th Hampshires, now down to only 130 men, made another attempt to take their objective, the "Green Line" trenches, which they took at 18.40, consolidated their position and held out against German counter-attacks. Private Lemon and Private Portlock were among the many casualties suffered in this day's fighting.

Lincolnshire Regiment

8th Battalion (63rd Brigade, 37th Division)

Bennett, Edgar George

Private. 8th Bn. Lincolnshire Regiment. Died 31 July 1917. Edgar was born in Somerset but enlisted at Hartley Wintney and SDGW lists him as an Aldershot resident.

8th Lincolnshire were part of the first attacks in the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, going into action at 03.50 on 31 July. The first attacks were unsuccessful and they were forced back to their lines. At 07.50 a second attack was launched, which had more success although it stalled in the face of counter-attacks. Private Bennet was among those killed in action, and he was buried at Voormezele Cemetery, south-west of Ypres.

Manchester Regiment

12th Battalion (52nd Brigade, 17th (Northern) Division)

Gleeson, Thomas

Private. 12th Bn. Manchester Regiment. Died 10 November 1917. Age 18. Born and resident in Aldershot, Thomas enlisted in London and died of wounds. He is buried at Dozinghem Cemetery.

The 12th Manchester are listed in the Order of Battle for Passchendaele, but they are not shown in the sources as having taken part in any major actions. Private Thomas is listed as having died of wounds, and Dozinghem Cemetery, north-west of Poperinge, was used by the 4th, 47th and 61st Casualty Clearing Stations, so it is quite probable that he was wounded at Passchendaele in the normal routine of trench warfare, brought back to one of the casualty clearing stations and died of his wounds there. However, it is impossible to be any more certain of the cause of his death.

23rd Battalion (104th Brigade, 35th Division)

Bishop, William

Lance Corporal. 23rd Bn. Manchester Regiment. Died 22 October 1917. Age 31. Born and resident in Aldershot although he enlisted at Winchester. His parents, George and Mary, lived at 6 Alfred Street in Aldershot.

At 05.35 on the morning of 22 October, 35th Division launched an attack with two brigades, including 104th Brigade containing the 23rd Manchester. Having gained their first objective with comparative ease, they pushed on to their second objective but now came under severe enemy machine-gun fire. A party from the 23rd Manchester attacked a German pill-box but were unsuccessful. Reduced to only 50 men, the battalion was forced to pull back to its original line. L/Cpl Bishop almost certainly was among the many casualties from this attack. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

Middlesex Regiment

1st Battalion (98th Brigade, 33rd Division)

Stokes, Henry (Harry)

Private. 1st Bn. Middlesex Regiment. Died 28 September 1917. Age 25. Harry enlisted in Tottenham but was resident in Aldershot at the time of his death from wounds. His parents lived at 14 Alexandra Road.

On 24 September, 1st Middlesex began moving into position in the line north of the Menin Road, taking over from a battalion of the Yorks and Lancs Regiment, and in preparation for the attack planned for 26 September (the start of the battle of Polygon Wood). However, on 25 September the Germans launched a fierce attack on this position, beginning with a heavy artillery bombardment of gas and shrapnel from 05.30, followed by an infantry assault from 06.30. The Germans managed to push back the Middlesex from their front line to the support line, but with heavy fighting and severe casualties on both sides, the Middlesex managed to consolidate their position and stopped the German advance. They held on until dawn on 26 September, when they were relieved. The 1st Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment had suffered casualties of 4 officers killed, 3 wounded and 2 missing; 37 other ranks killed, 69 wounded, 131 missing and 12 believed captured, a total of 9 officers and 249 other ranks. They were withdrawn and were not again engaged at Passchendaele, so it is highly likely that Private Stokes was one of the many casualties of the fighting of 25-26 September and that he died a few days later from wounds received. He is buried in Ljissenthoek Military Cemetery, and is remembered on the war memorial at Holy Trinity church in Aldershot under his formal name.

4th Battalion (63rd Brigade, 37th Division)

Upton, William George

Lance Corporal. 4th Bn. Middlesex Regiment. Died 31 July 1917. Born in Kensington, William enlisted in Sussex but was resident in Aldershot at the time of his death.

In the opening moves of the battle, the 4th Middlesex were involved in attacks in an area south of Hollebeke. They moved off at 03.50, aiming for Rifle Farm and July Farm in the German lines. By 04.30 they had taken Rifle Farm, but were subjected to heavy machine-gun fire followed by a German counter-attack which resulted in fierce close-quarter fighting. The battalion held on to its position until relieved on 2 August, but its losses were severe: 5 officers killed and 2 wounded; 15 other ranks killed, 97 wounded, 23 missing believed killed, and 69 missing believed wounded, a total of 8 officers and 203 other ranks. L/Cpl Upton was almost certainly one of those lost in the hard fighting on this first day of the battle. He is remembered on the Menin Gate.

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

2nd/1st Battalion (184th Brigade, 61st Division)

Oak, John Park

Private. 2nd/1st Bn. Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. Died 22 August 1917. Age 41. In the 1911 Census John Park was a 34 year old compositor living at 87, St George's Road, Aldershot.

On 22 August, 2nd/1st Ox and Bucks Light Infantry were part of an attack by 184th Brigade aimed at the Winnipeg-Kansas cross roads, half a mile north of Zonnebeke. After some initial success the attack was halted by heavy enemy fire. Private Oak presumably fell in this assault. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot memorial and on the memorial at St Michael's church in Aldershot.

5th Battalion (42nd Brigade, 14th (Light) Division)

Sales, Charles Walter

Serjeant. 5th Bn. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Died 25 September 1917. Born and resident in Aldershot, his parents lived at 80 Ash Road, Aldershot. Charles departed from England with the 2nd Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, on 12th August 1914 but was soon wounded. On recovery he switched to the 3rd Bn. before returning to his home town and joining the 5th Bn. He was wounded again in June 1915 before returning to the front.

Serjeant Sales is recorded as being killed in action. 14th Division relieved 30th Division on 3 September and was in turn relieved by 33rd Division on 8 October, but the sources do not show it being involved in any major offensives during this period, so it is likely that Serjeant Sales was a victim of one of the many small actions of trench warfare. He is remembered on the Menin gate and on the St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot. His entry at St Michael's is clearly a later addition to the memorial.

Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment

1st Battalion (100th Brigade, 33rd Division)

Godfrey, Albert Andaman

Private. 1st Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Died 25 September 1917. Born in the Andaman Islands, Albert enlisted in Guildford but was resident in Aldershot. He appears in the 1911 Census living at 14 Western Road in Aldershot with his father, two sisters, a brother and a niece, working as a general labourer.

While the 23rd Division was being relieved by the 33rd Division on 25 September, near Gheluvelt, the Germans attacked along the whole divisional front. Around 07.30 the 1st Queen's and Highland Light Infantry of 100th Brigade were driven back and the Germans occupied their positions. At 09.00 the 1st Queen's and HLI moved forward to re-take their lines, and by 10.00 the Queen's had reached their support lines. Fighting continued through the day until dark, when it was decided that no further attempt should be made to re-take the positions until the next day, for which a major assault was planned (the start of the battle of Polygon Wood). Private Godfrey was presumably killed during the fighting against the German attack of 25 September. He is buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery.

8th Battalion (72nd Brigade, 24th Division)

Watts, Thomas

Private. 8th Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Died 1 August 1917. Age 34. Born in Holyborne, Thomas enlisted and lived in Aldershot.

8th Queen's were part of the forces in the first attacks at 03.50 on the morning of 31 July. They took their first objective at Bodmin Copse and pressed on towards their second objective of the "Black Line" of German positions. However, a combination of heavy enemy fire and poor weather conditions prevented them reaching this. Through the night and into the next day, 1 August, the battalion was subjected to enemy shelling, the rain continued and the trenches filled with mud and water. 8th Queen's were relieved during the night of 1 August having suffered casualties of 3 officers and 92 other ranks killed, 9 officers and 156 other ranks wounded, and 105 missing. Private Watts was killed in action during this fighting and is remembered at the Menin Gate.

10th Battalion (124th Brigade, 41st Division)

Taylor, Charles Albert

Lance Corporal. 10th Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Died 31 July 1917. Age 33. Charles was born and lived in Aldershot. His widow, Sarah, lived at 43 Upper Elms Road.

Although L/Cpl Taylor died on the first day of the battle of Passchendaele, the 10th Queen's were not directly involved in that day's attacks, being ordered forward the next day, 1 August. As a result it is not known how L/Cpl Taylor was killed. He is buried at Voormezeele Enclosures.

Rifle Brigade

1st Battalion (11th Brigade, 4th Division)

Waters, George William

Lance Corporal. 1st Bn. Rifle Brigade. Died 3 October 1917. George was born in Aldershot at 32 Church Road, and in the 1911 Census he is living at that address with his father, sister and four brothers.

The 1st Rifle Brigade had been out of the line during September, but was moved forward at the beginning of October ready to take part in a major offensive planned for 4 October. On 1 October the battalion took over positions north-east of Langemarck and overnight on 3 October moved to Candle Trench, east of Pilckem. L/Cpl Waters is recorded as being killed in action on 3 October, so presumably must have fallen to an enemy shell or bullet during these movements. He is buried at Bard Cottage Cemetery, and is remembered on the St Michael's Church war memorial in Aldershot and on the war memorial for old boys of St Joseph's School, located in St Joseph's Church in Aldershot.

10th Battalion (59th Brigade, 20th (Light) Division)

Burnell, William Robert

Lance Serjeant. 10th Bn. Rifle Brigade. Died 14 August 1917. Age 35. His widow, Nellie, lived at Church Cottage in Cove.

The 10th and 11th Battalions of the Rifle Brigade attacked across the Steenbeek river at 04.00 on 14 August. Unfortunately they had difficulty crossing the river as the bridges they had brought up with them were too short, and there were many casualties to enemy shell and machine-gun fire. Once across the river they suffered from enemy fire from various strong points, especially a blockhouse at Au Bon Gite and various concrete dug-outs, so the remainder of the day was spent in consolidating their positions. The two battalions remained in the line until the main attack of the battle of Langemarck passed through them on 16 August. Lance Serjeant Burnell was most likely killed during the crossing of the Steenbeek, and he is remembered on the Menin Gate memorial.

Royal Berkshire Regiment

6th Battalion (53rd Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division)

Hankins, James

Private. 6th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment. Died 12 October 1917. Born and resident in Aldershot, James enlisted in Reading.

12 October was the first day of what was officially the First Battle of Passchendaele. 18th Division attacked towards Poelcappelle, 55th Brigade leading with 53rd Brigade supporting. The 6th Royal Berkshire started moving to their start positions at 01.00 on 12 October, but the ground was almost impassable as it had rained all the previous day and into this morning, so they only reached their forming up point at 05.30, five minutes after the British barrage had started. They advanced to the Steenbeek river, where they were fired on with gas shells, progress was slow and more casualties were caused by machine-guns and snipers. Around mid-day they were ordered to consolidate their positions. They held on until next morning, when they were told to withdraw. This began at 08.00 on 13 October but, owing to the difficulties with their position and enemy action, the withdrawal could only be done in small groups and it was not until 16.30 that the last man was back in British lines. Private Hankin was killed in action in the fighting on 12 October, and is remembered on St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot.

Royal Fusiliers

7th Battalion (190th Brigade, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division)

Gregory, Arthur Frederick

Private. 7th Bn. Royal Fusiliers. Died 30 October 1917. Age 27. Arthur's widow, Annie, lived at Guildown Cottage, Connaught Road in Aldershot. His parents lived in Guildford.

The 190th Brigade began an attack on 30 October, starting from a position about 1,000 yards west of the Paddebeek river. The advance began at 05.50 but ground conditions were very poor and the soldiers struggled to make progress through the mud, suffering heavy casualties from German artillery. The right of the line got to the Paddebeek, but the right was held up by machine-gun and rifle from a German strongpoint. They could make no progress against the mud and enemy fire, but held on to their positions until 19.30 the next day when they were relieved. Private Gregory probably died during the failed attack on the 30th, and he is buried at Poelcappelle British Cemetery.

Royal Irish Fusiliers

7th/8th Battalion (49th Brigade, 16th (Irish) Division)

Bone, Frank James

Private. 7th/8th Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers. Died 10 August 1917. Age 19. Private Bone's widowed mother, Annie, lived at 34 Alexandra Road in Aldershot. Frank was born in Aldershot and in the 1911 Census appears as a 13 year old scholar living with his step parents and younger brother at the Alexandra Road address.

16th Division moved into the line on 3 August, taking over from 15th Division. The 7th/8th Royal Irish Fusiliers were scheduled to be part of the major attack planned for 16 August, but in the days of 7 - 11 August they suffered four days of shelling and bombing by aircraft, in which 1 officer and 17 men were killed, 6 officers and 66 men were wounded, and 18 were posted as missing. Private Bone almost certainly lost his life in this bombardment. He is buried at Dadizeele New British Cemetery and appears on the Holy Trinity war memorial in Aldershot.

Royal Warwickshire Regiment

15th Battalion (13th Brigade, 5th Division)

Mills, Wilfred Hiram

Private. 15th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Died 26 October 1917. Age 23. Wilfred was born in Alton and in 1911 was a grocery clerk living at Stanhope Lines with his family. At the end of the war his mother, Mrs. Ethel Mills, was living at 115 Grosvenor Road. Wilfred worked at Gale and Polden prior to enlisting early in 1915. He joined the Army Service Corps at Hartley Wintney, later transferring to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

The offensive of 26 October was the opening of the Second Battle of Passchendaele. The 15th Warwicks were part of the 5th Division attack north of Gheluvelt, which began at 05.40. The attack initially went well, until they were held up by heavy German machine-gun fire from fortified positions around Polderhoek Chateau. The Chateau was eventually taken by a combined effort of the 14th and 15th Warwicks, but the Germans immediately began an artillery barrage on the position and preparing for a counter-attack. Owing to the terrible ground conditions, the Warwicks' rifles and machine-guns were choked with mud and unable to fire, and the men were finding movement difficult, in some places sinking up to their waists in mud. As a result they had no option other than

to retire, the Germans re-occupied the chateau, and by 11.30 the Warwicks were back in their starting positions. Private Mills was killed in action, was buried at Tyne Cot, and appears on the war memorial at Holy Trinity church in Aldershot. He is also remembered on the headstone of his father's grave in the Aldershot Military Cemetery, along with his two brothers who were also killed in the First World War.

Noakes, Edward Charles

Private. 15th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Died 9 October 1917. Age 24. His widow lived at 132 Grosvenor Road in Aldershot.

As part of the battle of Poelcappelle, 5th Division launched an attack towards the fortified Polderhoek Chateau. Although they did not take part in the attack, which was carried out by 15th Brigade, 13th Brigade (including the 15th Warwicks) were in the line, so Private Noakes was probably killed by enemy fire resulting from this action. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial and at the old Wesleyan Church in Aldershot.

Royal Field Artillery

Roskilly, Ptolemy (Tolemy)

Gunner. 168th Bde. Royal Field Artillery. Died 9 November 1917. Age 38. Tolemy was born at Milborne Port in Somerset and his parents lived in Dorset. However, in the 1911 census Ptolemy was a Correspondence Clerk boarding at 2 Upper Elms Road, Aldershot. His widow, Barbara, lived at 59 St Michael's Road in Aldershot. Tolemy enlisted at Aldershot in January 1917, he died of wounds and is buried at Wimereux Communal Cemetery. Tolemy appears on the Bath war memorial and is listed in the Somerset County Roll of Honour.

Honourable Artillery Company

Chaffey, Henry Percival

2nd Lieutenant. 2nd Bn. Honourable Artillery Company. Died 10 August 1917. Age 22. Henry's mother, Eliza, is lived at 73 Waterloo Road in Aldershot. Henry was admitted to the H.A.C., in the ranks, on 18 January 1915 and first went overseas on 22 February 1917, he was promoted to Sergeant and then commissioned.

2/Lt Chaffey was attached to the 11th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, who attacked at 04.35 on 10 August as part of 54th Brigade, 18th Division, aiming to capture Westhoek. They reached the "Black Line" of German trenches, but a German counter-attack at 17.00 forced them back to within 200 yards of the British lines, where they consolidated their position and held off a further two counter-attacks. It is likely that 2/Lt Chaffey was killed during this fierce fighting. He is remembered on the Menin Gate and on St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot. He was also remembered on the war memorial at the now demolished East End School.

Hunt, Reginald Arthur James

Serjeant. 2nd Bn. Honourable Artillery Company. Died 9 October 1917. Age 23. Reginald had previously been a Lieutenant in the Hampshire Cadet Corps. His parents, William and Annie, lived at Glen Parva, South Farnborough, although in 1911 they were at Pretoria, Osborne Road in South Farnborough. He is the brother of Albert Hunt, both were born in the town.

In the battle of Poelcappelle the 2nd HAC were with 22nd Brigade, 7th Division, and at 05.20 on 9 October they launched an attack against the village of Reutel. They cleared the eastern part of the village before being held up by heavy machine-gun fire. Serjeant Hunt was killed in action in the

attack on Reutel. He is remembered in the Lady Chapel and on the old Church Hall war memorial at St Mark's church, at Devereux House in Farnborough, and on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

Machine Gun Corps

Siggery, Percy Harold

Private. 169th Coy, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). Died 16 August 1917. Age 22/23. Born and resident at Cove, the 1911 census shows him working as a carman for a local coal merchant and living at West Heath in Cove with his parents. Percy was called up into the Hampshire Regiment in November 1916, transferring to the Machine Gun Corps early in 1917.

Private Siggery died on the first day of the Battle of Langemarck. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, at Devereux House and St John's church in Farnborough.

Royal Army Medical Corps

Cooper, Arthur James

Private. 107th Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps. Died 22 October 1917. Age 22. James had been born in Aldershot and his parents, James and Emily, lived at 1 Havelock Villas, Coleman Road in Aldershot.

Private Cooper is remembered on St Michael's church war memorial in Aldershot.

Army Service Corps

Cox, Thomas Omar Vincent (Tommy)

Serjeant. 372nd Coy, Army Service Corps. Died 2 September 1917. Age 20. Tommy's parents, Omar and Ellen, lived at Arnold House, 71 Crimea Road in Aldershot. He enlisted in Bulford when just 16 and served alongside his brother.

Serjeant Cox is buried at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery and is remembered on St Michael's church war memorial. He was also remembered on the war memorial at the now demolished East End School.

Royal Marines Light Infantry

1st Battalion (188th Brigade, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division)

Beal, Augustus Herbert

Lance Corporal. 1st Bn. Royal Marines Light Infantry. Died 26 October 1917. Emma, his widow, lived at 7 Fir Place, Union Street, in Farnborough. In 1911 the couple were living at 2 Myrtle Cottages in Union Street, Augustus was then 27 and a domestic gardener.

2nd Battalion (188th Brigade, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division)

Silver, Charles Henry

Private. 2nd Bn. Royal Marines Light Infantry. Died 26 October 1917. Age 40. Whilst his parents lived at Godalming, Charles' widow, Elizabeth, lived at 1 Bridge Cottage, Bridge Road in Cove. They married in 1900 and had one son and adopted a second son. Called up in March 1917, he was sent to France in June.

On the first day of the Second Battle of Passchendaele, 188th Brigade, including the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the RMLI, attacked south-east of Poelcappelle. The attack began at 05.40, and by around 08.00 they had gained their first objectives, but the advance was held up by enemy fire and the two RMLI battalions became intermingled. Although forced back a little way they consolidated their positions and by nightfall were still in possession of their first objectives, which they held until relieved next day. It is highly likely that both L/Cpl Beal and Private Silver were killed in these attacks. L/Cpl Beal is remembered on the Tyne Cot memorial and the Devereux House memorial, although his name was clearly added to this memorial later. Private Silver is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, at St John's church and at Devereux House in Farnborough.

Alphabetical List

Name	Rank	Regiment / Corps	Date of death
Beal, Augus Herbert	Lance Corporal	1 st Bn. Royal Marines Light Infantry	26 Oct 1917
Bennett, Edgar George	Private	8 th Bn. Lincolnshire Regiment	31 Jul 1917
Bisco, Frederick	Private	8 th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment	31 Jul 1917
Bishop, William	Lance Corporal	23 rd Bn. Manchester Regiment	22 Oct 1917
Bone, Frank James	Private	7 th /8 th Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers	10 Aug 1917
Brown, Arthur	Private	2 nd Bn. Hampshire Regiment	26 Sep 1917
Burnell, William Robert	Lance Serjeant	10 th Bn. Rifle Brigade	14 Aug 1917
Chaffey, Henry Percival	2nd Lieutenant	2 nd Bn. Honourable Artillery Company	10 Aug 1917
Cooper, Arthur James	Private	107 th Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps	22 Oct 1917
Cox, Thomas Omar Vincent	Serjeant	372 nd Coy, Army Service Corps	2 Sep 1917
Driver, Richard	Private	9 th Bn. Devonshire Regiment	26 Oct 1917
Fisher, George	Lance Corporal	2 nd /6 th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment	19 Aug 1917
Gleeson, Thomas	Private	12 th Bn. Manchester Regiment	10 Nov 1917
Goddard, William James	Lance Corporal	2 nd Hampshire Regiment	9 Oct 1917
Godfrey, Albert Andaman	Private	1 st Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	25 Sep 1917
Gregory, Arthur Frederick	Private	7 th Bn. Royal Fusiliers	30 Oct 1917
Hankins, James	Private	6 th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment	12 Oct 1917
Herrington, Joseph Percy	Private	1 st /6 th Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment	9 Oct 1917
Hunt, Reginald Arthur James	Serjeant	2 nd Bn. Honourable Artillery Company	9 Oct 1917
Knight, Charlie	Private	2 nd Bn. Hampshire Regiment	15 Aug 1917
Lemon, Henry	Private	15 th Bn. Hampshire Regiment	20 Sep 1917
Marsh, Percy	Private	14 th Bn. Hampshire Regiment	20 Sep 1917
Mills, Wilfred Hiram	Private	15 th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment	26 Oct 1917

Noakes, Edward Charles	Private	15 th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment	9 Oct 1917
Oak, John Park	Private	2 nd /1 st Bn. Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry	22 Aug 1917
Palmer, Samuel Francis	Private	8 th Bn. Devonshire Regiment	26 Oct 1917
Portlock, Percival	Private	15 th Bn. Hampshire Regiment	20 Sep 1917
Rix, Ernest Alfred	Private	1 st Bn. Devonshire Regiment	6 Nov 1917
Roskilly, Ptolemy	Gunner	168 th Bde. Royal Field Artillery	9 Nov 1917
Sales, Charles Walter	Serjeant	5 th Bn. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry	25 Sep 1917
Siggery, Percy Harold	Private	169 th Coy, Machine Gun Corps	16 Aug 1917
Silver, Charles Henry	Private	2 nd Bn. Royal Marines Light Infantry	26 Oct 1917
Stokes, Henry	Private	1 st Bn. Middlesex Regiment	28 Sep 1917
Taylor, Charles Albert	Lance Corporal	10 th Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	31 Jul 1917
Terry, Sidney George	Private	14 th Bn. Hampshire Regiment	7 Nov 1917
Thomas, Edwin	Lance Serjeant	4 th Bn. Coldstream Guards	11 Oct 1917
Upton, William George	Lance Corporal	4 th Bn. Middlesex Regiment	31 Jul 1917
Waters, George William	Lance Corporal	1 st Bn. Rifle Brigade	3 Oct 1917
Watts, Thomas	Private	8 th Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	1 Aug 1917

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