



World War One

The Forefathers of Steve Monk

Their parts in the War to end all Wars



The war stories and history of the Great Grandfathers and Great Step Grandfather of Steve Monk

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Compiled by Steve Monk 2018 – 2023 – (Version XXVII)

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Preface

This document has been compiled in memory of my family members who fought or were injured or died in World War I plus one family member who was involved in the Egypt & Sudan Victorian conflict in the late 1800s.

For many years I knew that some of my relatives had been involved in World War I but had never really thought too much about it. After Mum died in 1999 her previous research on her Grandad George Brown was passed on to me. She had planned to one day go and find her Grandads war grave; she had even planned the route through France and Belgium, but sadly was too ill to make the journey herself.

Again for a few years her research had sat tucked away until one day I thought I would get it out and read it. This sparked my interest and I started to use something my Mum did not have access to, the internet. As you know, once you are on it you get sucked in and I dug as deep as I could get.



Many records of past conflicts have been destroyed either during the bombing of London during World War II or destroyed by government departments so some information is lost forever.

However I have researched and written to various people and departments and gleamed what I can. Sometime in the future more may become available.

So I dedicate this work in the memory of my Mum, Olive Jean Monk (Nee Brown) and thank her for giving me the initial interest to pursue what she started and go beyond including completing the journey she had planned to find George Browns War grave in 2018.

I have since been back several times and plan to return again.

In the beginning:

My Mother (Olive Monk, Nee Brown) original correspondence or more accurately the replies she received after her initial enquiries are below along with the details of a poppy that I (Steve Monk) purchased and had displayed in Ashford for the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War 1 in his honour.

Her initial line of enquiry was with the CWGC on 1st July 1997.



Commonwealth War Graves Commission

2 MARLOW ROAD MAIDENHEAD BERKS SL6 7DX

Telephone 01628 34221 Telex 847526 Comgra G Facsimile 01628 771208

www.open.gov.uk/cwgc/cwgchome.htm

*1 hr - 1 1/2 hr
calais.*

Mrs O Monk
10 Sparkeswood Close
Rowenden
Kent
TN17 4NA

JG 7 97

7 July 1997

Dear Mrs Monk

Thank you for your letter of 1 July 1997.

Further to your enquiry we record the following:

Casualty:	Private G BROWN, L/7824
Served With:	1st Bn. The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Died:	7th June 1915
Commemorated:	PERTH CEMETERY (CHINA WALL)
	Belgium
	Plot III. Row A. Grave 12.

Ypres

Perth Cemetery (China Wall) is located 3 Km east of Ieper town centre, on the *Menin*. Maaldestedestraat a road leading from the Meenseweg (N8), connecting Ieper to Menen. From Ieper town centre the Meenseweg is located via Torhoutstraat and right onto Basculestraat. Basculestraat ends at a main cross roads, directly over which begins the Meenseweg. 1.7 Km along the Meenseweg at a major roundabout lies the right hand turning onto the Maaldestedestraat. The cemetery itself is located 1 Km along the Maaldestedestraat on the left hand side of the road.

I must explain that the Commission does not provide a general photographic service. However, as it is sometimes not possible for an individual to obtain a photograph of a name on a memorial or a headstone through their own resources, the Commission is prepared to undertake to carry out this task for you.

In such circumstances we ask a member of our supervisory staff to take a photograph when visiting the cemetery. You should be aware, however, that the next visit may not be for many months. I must also point out that the photograph will not be of professional quality and, of course there may be poor weather or light conditions when it is taken.

Bearing in mind the above, if you are unable to obtain a photograph through any other means and wish us to attempt to obtain one, please complete and return the top copy of the enclosed form. You will note that we will require a payment of £5.00 upon receipt of the photograph; this payment is intended to cover all charges, including staff costs, incurred in obtaining this photograph.

We do not record the circumstances or place of death of a casualty. I give below the address of the Regimental Association for the regiment to which he belonged. I should point out that they are unlikely to hold much information about an individual, but will probably know what action his battalion was engaged in at the time of his death.

Regimental Headquarters
The Queen's Association of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Howe Barracks
Canterbury
Kent CT1 1JY

I hope that the above information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

J Griffiths

J Griffiths (Mrs)
Enquiries Section

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WAR GRAVES PILGRIMAGES

Please quote:

Royal British Legion Village
Aylesford
Kent ME20 7NX

Brochure

RECEIPT

Received from ~~Mr~~/Mrs/Miss *Blank* the sum of £ *5.00p*

representing: (a) *Donation with thanks*

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

in connection with Pilgrimage to _____ period _____

Date: *6/8/97*



Signed: _____

[Signature]
pp Piers Storie-Pugh
Head of Pilgrimage Dept

(The Royal British Legion is a Registered Charity No. 219279)

We have to remember that back in 1997 the internet was not as widespread, popular, or indeed affordable to many people and the content was a lot less than today.

Letter writing and phone calls if you had a landline were the main forms of communication.

	<p>From: Major (Retd) W D Marshall - Secretary The Regimental Association of The Queen's Own Buffs (PWRR)</p> <p>REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT (QUEEN'S AND ROYAL HAMPSHIRE) Howe Barracks Canterbury Kent CT1 1JY Telephone: Military - Canterbury (728) 4252 Civil - Canterbury (01227) 818052</p>	
		Fax: Ext 4257
<p>Mrs O J Monk 10 Sparkeswood Close Rolvenden Kent TN17 4NA</p>		<p>Your Reference</p> <p>Our Reference</p> <p>Date <u>17th</u> July 1997</p>
<p>RHQ/PWRR/702</p>		
<p>Dear Mrs Monk</p> <p>Thank you for your letter dated 12 July 1997 seeking information about your late grandfather Private George Brown (L/7824) who was killed in action on 7 June 1915 while serving with the 1st Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). My work at this Headquarters is mainly of a benevolence nature and we do not hold any records of individual soldiers here. The enclosed is an extract copied from the Regimental History which records the action his Battalion was involved in at around the time of his death.</p> <p>You may be able to obtain details of his service from the following:</p> <p>Public Record Office Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TN9 4DU</p> <p><i>I hope you find the above helpful.</i></p> <p>Yours sincerely <i>Bill Marshall</i></p>		
<p>Encl.</p>		

Now as I type this in 2023, many official records and information are widely available both via official websites and paid for research sites. Mum never had access to the vast array of information which I now enjoy, which is one of the reasons I have continued what she started for future generations.

She never saw a photograph of her Grandads grave let alone visited and stood by it. I hope somewhere, somehow, she knows I have completed her initial enquiry with enormous pride.

THE CENTENARY OF THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

ASHFORD'S POPPY TRIBUTE

BATTLE'S OVER: A NATION'S TRIBUTE

11 November 2018, North Park, Ashford

Your poppy has been part of a display of 3,000 poppies, in North Park, Ashford, planted for 11 November 2018 to commemorate light returning across the country at the end of the First World War. A donation from the poppy sales has been made to the Kent branch of SSAFA, the charity which provides lifelong support to the Armed Forces and their families.

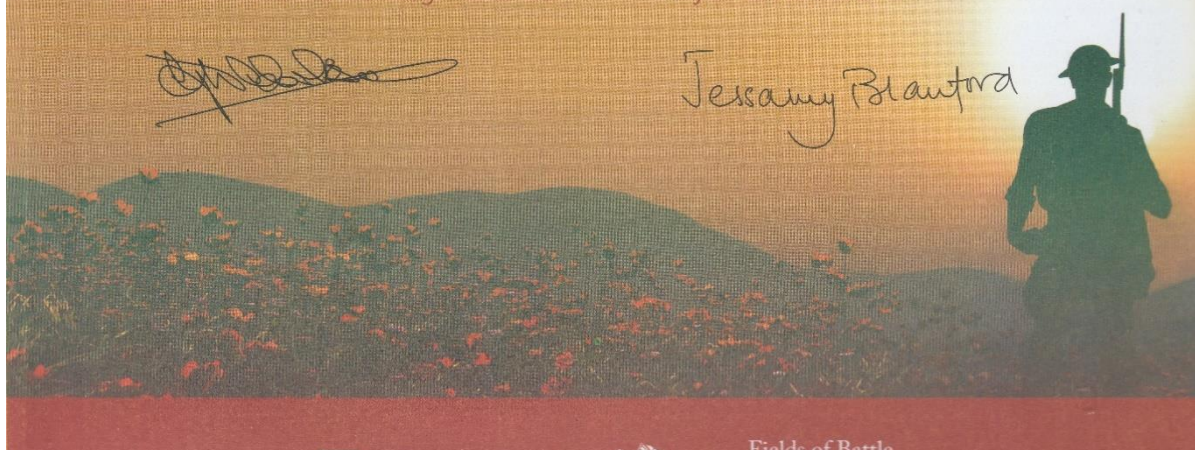
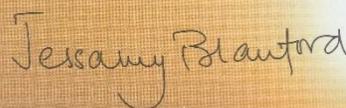
Thank you for being part of this special occasion; please accept this copy of *'Tribute to the Millions'*, the official poem of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice.

With warm regards

Cllr Gerry Clarkson CBE, QFSM
Leader of Ashford Borough Council

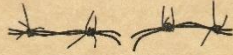


Cllr Mrs. Jessamy Blanford
Mayor of Ashford



Fields of Battle

BATTLE'S OVER



A NATION'S TRIBUTE

11TH NOVEMBER 2018

100 YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

Tribute to the Millions

Let us remember those who so selflessly gave their
lives at home and abroad, whose
sacrifice enables us to enjoy the
peace and freedom we have today.

Let us remember those who came home
wounded, physically and mentally, and
the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned to
restore their relationships and rebuild
their working lives after years of dreadful
conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost
husbands, sons and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen, merchant
seamen, miners, brave civilians and others from
Commonwealth and Allied countries -
who fought, suffered and died during
four years of war.

Let us remember those in reserved occupation
and the brave people who
kept us safe on the home front - the
doctors and nurses who cared for the wounded,
the women and men who toiled in the
fields, those who worked in the factories,
who all played such a vital role
in the war effort at home.



Steve - Sky

From: noreply@ashford.gov.uk
To: monk-steve@sky.com
Subject: Thank you for your Poppy purchase



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dear Customer

Thank you for your Poppy purchase. Details of your order can be found below.

- Please tick this box to accept the terms and conditions as listed above. - I accept
- Select 'Poppy' from the Product list, and the quantity required (max 5) -

No	Product	Price	Quantity	Description	Remarks	Total Tax
1	Poppy (1 Poppy)	6	1	Poppy	Private George Brown	5 1
Total tax						1
Grand total						6

- Title - Mr.
- First Name - Steve
- Surname - Monk
- Telephone - [REDACTED]
- Mobile Tel. - [REDACTED]
- Email Address (required if you would like a confirmation email) - monk-steve@sky.com
- House No/Name - [REDACTED]
- Street - [REDACTED]
- Town - Ashford Kent
- Postcode - [REDACTED]
- Select Preferred Collection Date/Time - Thursday 15th Nov (AM)
- Make Payment -

Please keep this email for your records.

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Now for the rest of the story of Pte George Brown and other relatives, read on.

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World War 1 - 1914 to 1918

Travels and Information on the relatives of Steve Monk

L/7824 Private George Brown – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)
(Possibly “C” Company 9th Platoon)

53655 Private Robert J Bliss – Canadian Expeditionary Force
18th Battalion “C” Company

4764 / 65894 Private Thomas Alfred Coveney - East Kent Regiment
(The Buffs) & North Staffs Regiment.

T/207401 Sergeant Arthur Monk – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) &
The Queens – 4th Res (Royal West Surry Regiment).



Contents:

Private George Brown (My Great Grandfather, Grandad Browns Father- Killed in Action)

1st Battalion – 16th Infantry Brigade – 6th Division – III Corps - East - Kent Regiment (The Buffs)

- Life Synopsis
- Military Service, Evidence & Medals
- Burial Documentation
- Belongings & War Payment
- Day's Events (Captain Wilfrid Saxby Barham's Diary)
- Cemetery Map
- Commemorations & War Memorial
- WW1 Travels & Maps

Private Robert J Bliss (Gran Browns Brother - Survived)

18th battalion - 4th Brigade - 2nd Division - Canadian Expeditionary Force

- Life Synopsis
- Military Evidence
- Battle of St Eloi & Pictures
- The Bluff
- Medals
- Photos

Private Thomas Alfred Coveney (Grandad Browns Stepfather after WW1)

2nd Battalion - 85th Infantry Brigade - 28th Division – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)

- Life Synopsis
- Military Service
- Military Evidence
- Medals

Sargent Arthur Monk (My Great Grandfather, My Fathers Grandfather - Survived)

3/4th Battalion - 62nd Brigade - 21st Division – The Queens (West Surrey Regiment)

- Life Synopsis
- The West Kent Yeomanry
- Territorial Force
- Military Service
- Military Evidence
- Medals

Appendices:

Medal descriptions (World War 1)

Robert James Bliss 20th Hussars in Sudan 1884 (Great Grandad Bliss, Gran Browns Father) including his admission into and death in St Augustine's and his Post-mortem.

My recollections of them. Our visits to Ypres in 2018 & 2019 to find the sites they fought in.



L/7824 Private George Brown – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)

1st Battalion – 16th Infantry Brigade – 6th Division – III Corps - East - Kent Regiment (The Buffs)

(Possibly “C” Company 9th Platoon)



Men of the 1st Battalion, The Buffs at Bois-Grenier, winter 1914

Great Grandad Brown

This is the result of much research and trawling the Internet, Military Records
Visits to Ypres (Ieper) and searching anything to do with the:

1st Battalion of the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in World War 1



George Brown

Life synopsis

Born in Rolvenden / Rolvenden lane on 11th February 1884.

Baptised in St Mary's Church Rolvenden on 20th July 1884.

1891 Census 5th April living in 2 Halden Place Cottages Rolvenden and a Scholar.

1901 Census 31st March has him living in Dwellings, 8, High Road Rolvenden as an Agricultural Labourer. (8 Dwellings were in Rolvenden Layne, now demolished)

On 31st December 1904 he signed up to the Army in Tenterden – Regiment: Buffs (East Kent Regiment); Rank: Private; Service number: L/7824

Previously in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the East Kent Regiment.

On 21st November 1908 he married Kate Bryant in St Mary's Church Rolvenden aged 24.

On 6th September 1909 he became a father to Thomas George Brown (My Grandad)

On 30th July 1914 WW1 Mobilisation begins.

On 8th September 1914 he sailed to Saint Nazaire France on SS Minneapolis.

War Diary would suggest he was wounded during a shelling period October - November in or around Grande Flamengrie Farm France.

He was listed as "Wounded" on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from 30th November 1914.

On 7th June 1915 he was killed in Action around Brielen near Ypres Belgium.

On 6th August 1919 he was re-buried and commemorated in the Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Ypres.



...man completes his 3 years' service at home, with all convenient speed, for

ATTESTATION OF

Corps The Buffs
• Applies only to Cavalry of the Line

...put to the Recruit before enlistment.

1. In the Parish of St. Martin in or near the Town of London in the County of London

2. 18 Years 2 Months

3. 18 Years 2 Months

4. 18 Years 2 Months

5. 18 Years 2 Months

6. 18 Years 2 Months

7. 18 Years 2 Months

8. 18 Years 2 Months

9. 18 Years 2 Months

10. 18 Years 2 Months

11. 18 Years 2 Months

12. 18 Years 2 Months

13. 18 Years 2 Months

14. 18 Years 2 Months

15. 18 Years 2 Months

16. 18 Years 2 Months

17. 18 Years 2 Months

18. 18 Years 2 Months

...do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
George Brown
 Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, George Brown, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly explained to him, and that he has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me.

at St. Martin on this 18 day of February 1902

Signature of the Justice
John Smith

If any alteration is required on this page of the Attestation, a Justice of the Peace should be requested to make it and initial the altered part.

Attestation form of George Brown. Damaged in bombing of London WW2.

Apparent Age 18 years 2 months.
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)

Height 5 feet 6 inches.

Weight 134 lbs.

Chest measurement { Minimum 34 inches.
Maximum expansion 36 inches.

Complexion Fair

Eyes Brown

Hair Light Brown

Religious denomination { Church of England No
Presbyterian
Wesleyan
Other Protestants (Denomination to be stated)
Roman Catholic
Jews

Certificate of Medical Examination.

I have examined the above-named recruit and find that he does not present any of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any kind.

I consider him * fit for the Army.

Date sent 2^d Jan^y 1904

Place Sandhurst

* Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness :—

Certificate of Primary Military Examination.

I hereby certify that the above-named recruit was inspected by me, and I consider him * Fit for service in the † 3rd Regt Dist. and that due care has been exercised in his enlistment.

Date 2^d January 1904

Place Sandhurst

* Insert here "fit" or "unfit." † Insert the "Regiment" or "Corps."

*** Certificate of Approving Officer.**

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the required forms appear to have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the † 3rd Regt Dist.

If enlisted by special authority, Army Form B. 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to the original attestation.

Date 2^d January 1904

Place Sandhurst

* The signature of the Approving Officer is to be affixed in the presence of the Recruit.
† Here insert the "Corps" for which the Recruit has been enlisted.

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L/7824 Pte George Brown WW1

August to December 1914 – The Early Months

The battle of Armentieres

Bois Grenier Sector – Radinghem – Chateau De Flandres - Grand Flamengrie Farm

The outbreak of war in August 1914 brought an influx of recruits to Canterbury which together with more than 500 reservists were shipped over to Fermoy to join the 1st Battalion.

In an attempt to try to piece together Great Grandad George Browns early movements as part of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914 and due to the thought that they would all be home for Christmas there doesn't seem to be that much written about the early months of the war. There are of course the war diaries, but even those are sometimes sparse in their detail.

I am aware that Pte 7824 George Brown was injured late 1914 but was patched up and carried on, it is this thread that got me researching deeper into the first few months, trying to find out where and what were the circumstances which led to his injury. According to records he was Listed as "Wounded" on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from 30th November 1914.

I seem to have so far drawn a blank but have pulled together a few reports from other sources in particular the 1st Battalion East Kent Regiment to which he was assigned.



Grand Flamengrie Farm today

Some accounts of this battle and the previous battles at Radinghem and Chateau De Flandres, Beaucamps-Ligny in October 1914 before they retreated back to Grande Flamengrie Farm.

The 1st Battalion was in the Radinghem area on the 21st October 1914, it was holding the line near Great Flamengrie Farm. The battle of Armentieres continued for the next few weeks and the 1st Battalion Buffs at Radinghem were in the thick of it.

The Germans attacked along the Maisnil-Radinghem Road.

On 21st of October the battalion was at Grand Flamengrie Farm.



This is looking across the road from Grand Flamengrie Farm where The East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) 1st Battalion were in battle for periods during the winter of 1914 and spring of 1915.

BUFFS (EAST KENT REGIMENT)

"Aisne, 1914" "Armentieres, 1914"

1ST BATTALION

AUGUST

Fermoy, Ireland. Part of 16th Brigade, 6th Division. Left Ireland for England (12th), arriving Cambridge (19th). Billeted at Christ's College.

SEPTEMBER

To Southampton (7th) and embarked SS Minneapolis. Sailed for France (8th). Arrived St. Nazaire (9th) and to rest camp. Entrained (11th) and to Montcerf. Began move forward (12th), marching via Crecy, Jouarres, Rocourt, Buzancy, Mont Notre Dame and arriving Courcelles (20th). Relieved 1st Northumberland Fusiliers and 4th Royal Fusiliers in front line trenches north-east of Vailly.

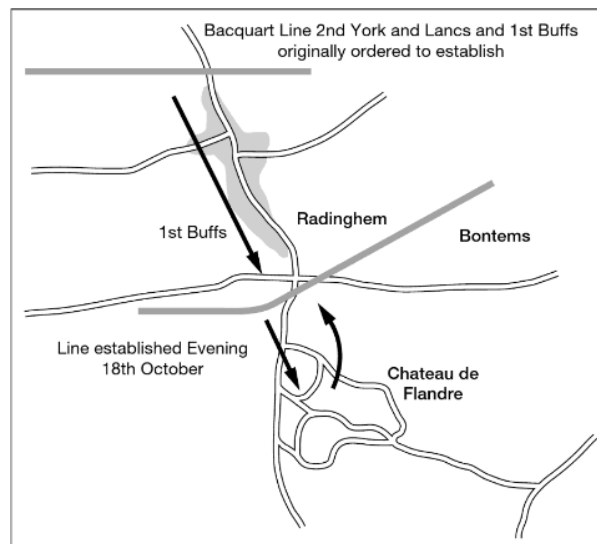
OCTOBER

Relieved by French troops (12th) and to Bazoches. Entrained for Cassel (13th). Moved forward (17th) and took over Divisional Reserve positions at Bois Grenier. Later held line Croix Maréchal — Rue de Bois.

On 17th October 1914 the 6th Division encountered little opposition, the Germans retiring before it; and at noon it was ordered to occupy a position Rouge de Bout — Bois Grenier — Chapelle d' Armentieres. Its left thus resting on Armentieres. This it carried out putting its three infantry brigades there. On the 17th, the 1st Buffs is positioned at Bois Grenier, from October 18 to 23 they try to advance on Radinghem.

On Sunday, 18 October 1914, the Division's 16th Infantry Brigade (commanded by Brigadier General Ingouville-Williams) was instructed to make a reconnaissance in force.

Two battalions of the Brigade - the 2nd York and Lancasters and the 1st Buffs (East Kent Regiment) - were ordered forward; this move was to take place in a southerly direction on either side of the Bois-Grenier to Beaucamps-Ligny road. The 2nd York and Lancasters were on the right, and the 1st Buffs on the left. Initially their forward movement met only light resistance and, complying with new orders, the advance continued with the capture of the village of Radinghem. It was then intended to take the high ground south of Radinghem, including the woods in which stood the Chateau de Flandres (this being three-quarters of a mile south of Radinghem, and less than a half a mile north of Beaucamps Ligny village centre).



The war diary of the 2nd York and Lancasters tells the story. The night of 17/18 October had been spent in billets on the Rue du Bois, South of Fleurbaix:

18 October 1914. 8 AM. Battalion paraded and marched to Touquet [a hamlet half a mile south of Bois-Grenier] and there received verbal orders from Brigadier General. Battalion to make a reconnaissance in force in conjunction with the Buffs... French cavalry to act dismounted on our right and companies to be extended on a line running SW from Bridoux, 1 mile SE of Touquet.

'A' and 'C' Companies extended accordingly - 'A' on the left with its left resting on the main road. 'B' Company in support to 'C' Company.

Having reached the line Hau de Bas with little resistance, [the battalion] received verbal orders... to advance and take the village of Radinghem and having done this push on and take high ground on the approach to Chateau de Flandres.

[By early afternoon,] Village [i.e. Radinghem] taken without difficulty by 'A' Company. Line held up for short time by shelling of French and our guns. Centre of line on reaching high ground East of Radinghem came under heavy shell fire from southerly direction but continued the advance with the remainder of the line across the Radinghem - Fromelles Road. Right of line coming under heavy crossfire of machine guns and shrapnel in the open, was forced to return to the road. At the same time the remaining companies, having got into the woods of Chateau de Flandres tried three times to advance but were each time driven back by crossfire of machine guns, situated at southern boundary of the wood, and shrapnel and rifle fire. They eventually took up positions on the Radinghem - Fromelles Road, in conjunction with the Buffs.

(5.10 PM) General line of above road taken up and entrenched with rear line of defence of 1 Company (this company was formed of men who had been rallied by Major Clemson to form a 2nd defensive line) in our right rear. Occasional shrapnel fire from enemy, but machine gun fire and rifle fire had ceased.

(6 PM) Order received to hold on to the ground gained. Remainder of night occupied in entrenching and reforming companies. During the night, French cavalry who were in position on our right withdrew.

An additional snippet comes from Marden's History of the 6th Division:

...the situation was saved by Major Bayley's company of the 2nd York and Lancasters, which had worked round on the left and threatened the flank of the [German] counterattack which thereon withdrew.

The Buffs had moved on 3rd November to the entrenchments at Grande Flamengrie Farm in stark snow-laden winter conditions. Earlier, during October (18th and 20th, in particular), 1st Battalion the Buffs had suffered significant losses at Radinghem and desperately needed drafts of new men as they moved into the Bois-Grenier sector.

Part of the fighting, which also caused a few hundred deaths, took place at the "Château des Flandres" in Radinghem (Beaucamps-Ligny side). And the other part, here between the street of Jerusalem, the Whitewoods and the great Flamengrie. From October 18th to 23rd.



Chateau de Flandres before WW1



French newspaper impression of the English taking of Chateau de Flandres.

The Date on the paper is Sunday 14th March 1915, some months after the event.



The ruins of Chateau de Flandres after the battle.

Colonel Moody records, with severe hand-to-hand fighting." Fell back to wood south side of Radinghem after German counterattack. Enemy attacked throughout day (20th) forcing withdrawal through Radinghem to Grande Flamengrie Farm during night.

Account (Edited) of the same period from www.lynsted-society.co.uk

In the period October-November 1914 there were four simultaneous battles in the region of Ypres ("the First Battle of Ypres"). These battles had to be won by the Allied forces if the Channel was to be secured (to permit the flow of troops and material) and the German forces brought to a halt.

Against superior German forces in their sector, the Buffs formed part of the Estaires-Fournes Line often referred to as the "Battle of Armentieres" that stretched from 13th October to 2nd November. Attacks and counterattacks settled into trench warfare and the pattern was set for the subsequent grinding years of attrition on land.

In this battle, the 1st Battalion lost 24 men on 18th October and 50 on the 20th October, which explains the importance of the flow of new recruits.

On 18th October, the 3rd Corps (containing the 16th Brigade in which sat the 6th Division, of which the 1st Battalion, the Buffs was a part) was instructed to secure Perenchies Ridge. To achieve this, the Allies had to dislodge the German entrenchments on the low ridge between Lille and Armentieres marked by Fournes -Radinghem - La Valee – Perenchies - Verlinghem.

General Keir sent the Buffs forward to probe German strength around a collection of houses in front of Radinghem and, by noon, they met no opposition (unlike their comrades on the same sector). That afternoon, after 14.30pm, the 16th Division moved to take part in a set-piece flanking movement, to wheel north-east from Radinghem and turn the enemy's flank from the south.

Both the Buffs and the York & Lancaster troops were met by machine-gun and rifle fire that took a toll but ultimately the Allies succeeded in taking control of Radinghem.

Conscious of the closeness of German reserves beyond a belt of woods and in the Chateau de Flandres (½ mile S.E. of the village) British troops were told to entrench. At first the Buffs were told to hand over to the French 1st Cavalry Corps but when only 150 men French troops arrived, the Buffs remained on station. The casualties fell mostly to the Buffs that day.

The next day saw no changes for the Buffs as reserves were moved up on both sides of a new front of 35 miles length.

The weather was dull making aeroplane work and artillery observation difficult. But behind the scenes, the German forces were reorganised to be ready for an attack on British forces along the entire new front. On the morning of the 20th October, the British 3rd Corps found itself opposite nearly the whole of both the 19th and 13th German Corps. An unequal balance of forces.

20th October saw a clash and sustained fighting all along the line. In the 6th Division, holding the line Radinghem - Ennetières - Premesques - Epinette, all three infantry brigades were attached. Between 7 and 8am the British trenches were heavily shelled by gun and howitzers of all calibres up to 8 inches, and then the German infantry began to advance by bounds covered by machine gun fire the firing opening at 800 to 1000 yards.

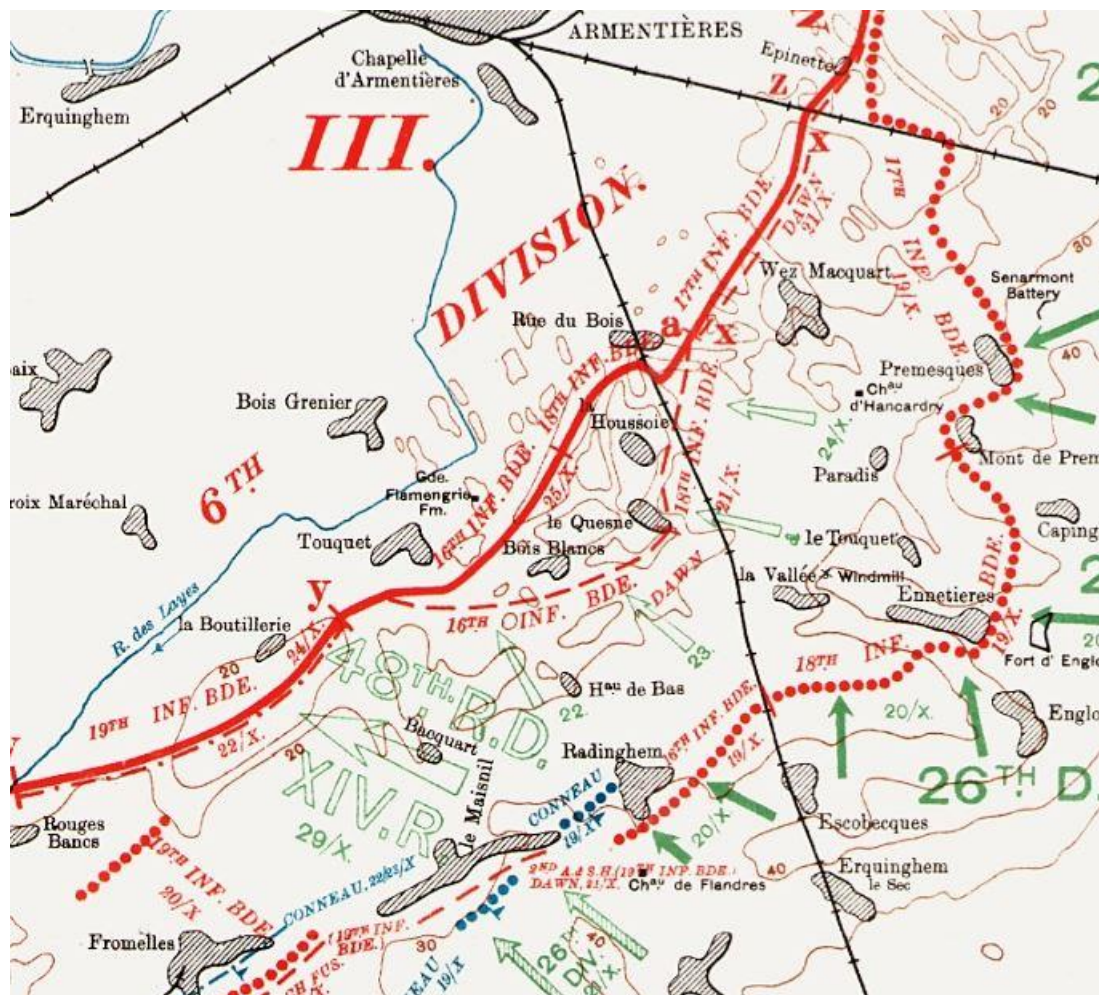
The 1st Buffs held the front-line east of Radinghem despite shelling and a determined assault about 1pm The Buffs held their own.

Some accounts of this fight of 21 October 14.

The 1st Battalion was in the Radinghem area on the 21st October 1914, it was holding the line near Great Flamengrie Farm. The battle of Armentieres continued for the next few weeks and the 1st Battalion Buffs at Radinghem were in the thick of it.

The Germans attacked along the Maisnil-Radinghem Road. On the 21st of October, the battalion was at Grand Flamengrie Farm. The battalion had lost 90 men killed and a further 57 wounded.

Casualties — Lieutenants J.D. Phillips, R. McDougall, R.S. Glyn and Second-Lieutenant M. Noott killed, Commanding Officer — Colonel J. Hasler and 3 other officers wounded, 17 other ranks killed, 57 wounded, 62 missing. The latter all believed killed. "A" and "C" Companies in action (23rd), engaged in hand-to-hand fighting during enemy counterattack in front of Brigade line. Withdrew to line just south of the Le Touquet - La Boutillerie road (25th). "C" Company came under attack. Captain E.B. Chichester mortally wounded. "D" Company engaged enemy during evening. Casualties — Second-Lieutenant H.R. Stock and 5 other ranks killed, 2 officers, 20 other ranks wounded, 2 missing. Colonel Moody now records — "a long spell of comparative quite" in the trenches. Casualties averaging out to 2 killed, 5 wounded per day.

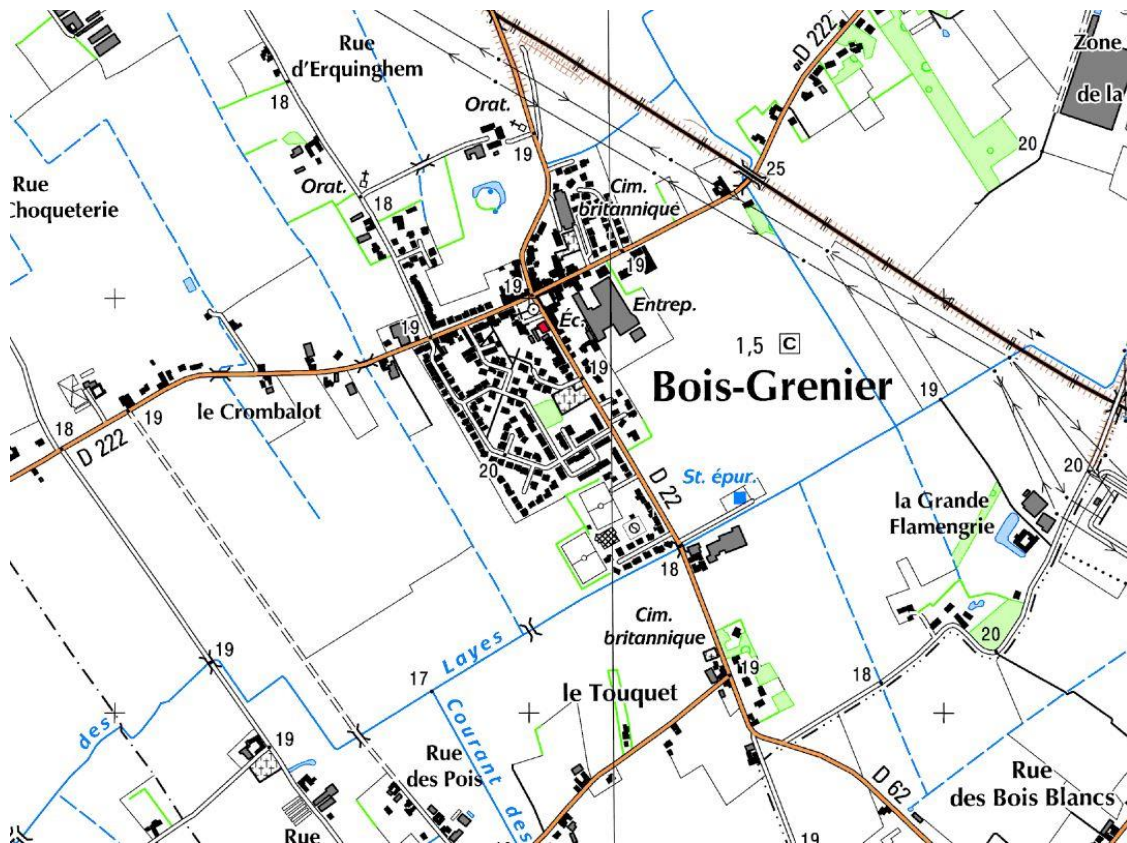


The map above shows the advance and retreat positions of the British forces along this part of the front line between October 19th and November 2nd 1914.

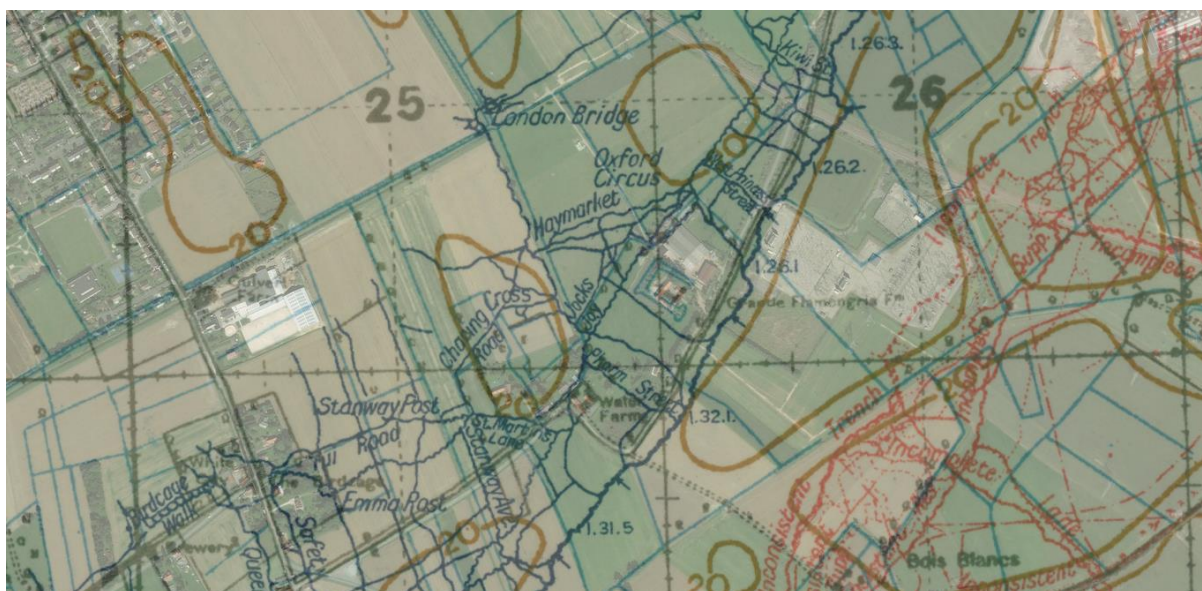
L/7824 Private George Brown would have been involved in this and at some point, injured although details are hard to come by. He is reported as being wounded and appears as "Wounded" on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from 30th November 1914. Bearing in mind that names didn't appear on casualty list for a while after the event due to next of kin being informed and the time it took to get information back in WW1 it is possible that he received this injury during October / early November in the Radinghem – La Grande Flamengrie Farm area. He was then patched up and continued his war.

George Brown Record showing his first injury "Listed as wounded" 30th November 1914

First Name:	George
Surname:	Brown
Report Date:	30/11/1914
Information:	Listed as "Wounded" on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from 30th November 1914
Further Information:	This man was entitled to wear a "Wound Stripe" as authorised under Army Order 204 of 6th July 1916. The terms of this award being met by their naming in this list.
Rank:	Private
Service Number:	7824
Duty Location:	France and Flanders
Archive Reference:	DT14011915



Bois Grenier – La Grande Flamengrie Farm area, this was a low-lying area with rivers and streams, digging trenches was often tough going with a high water table, they often filled with water and froze during the 1914/15 winter which according to reports was pretty harsh.



The image above shows the official trench map of 1914 in the area superimposed on today's landscape. You can pick out La Grande Flamengrie Farm and the British trenches around the area (Blue) and the German trenches not far away (Red).

The next five pages are transcribed from the official way diary of 1st Battalion East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) for the month of October.

War Diary transcript October 1914

1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) 16th Infantry Brigade, 6th Division.

Place	Date	Summary of Events and Information
VAILLY	1 October 1914	<p>6:30 AM. The trenches were inspected by Major General H. HAMILTON Commanding 3rd Division.</p> <p>10:00 AM. Commanding Officer, Adjutant and Captain RAINES met General I. WILLIAMS and inspected buildings and walls north of SAINT PRECORD and VAILLY with a view of placing them in a state of defence. This work was carried out by 'D' Company.</p> <p>6:00 PM. 'D' Company relieved a Company of 5th Northumberland Fusiliers on our left.</p> <p>CASUALTIES One man accidentally shot himself in the foot.</p>
VAILLY	2 October 1914	<p>6:30 AM. General I. WILLIAMS accompanied by Commanding Officer and Adjutant inspected trenches of two Companies of 7th Royal Fusiliers with a view of relieving them by 'A' and 'C' Companies.</p> <p>8:15 AM. The following message was received from 3rd Division through 16th Infantry Brigade.</p> <p>BUFFS – The Major General was extremely pleased with the fire trenches and communication trenches constructed by your Battalion; both as regards those he saw yesterday and this morning and recognised the hard work performed by your Battalion in their construction. He asked the Brigadier General to convey his appreciation of the work performed (signed) 16th Infantry Brigade.</p> <p>4:00 PM. 'B' Company returned to Headquarters and took the place of 'C' Company – Lieutenant HAMILTON's platoon taking the place of Lieutenant HOMAN's platoon.</p> <p>6:15 PM. 'B' Company relieved by a Company of York & Lancaster Regiment. 'A' and 'C' Companies relieved two Companies of the 7th Royal Fusiliers. The position now being York & Lancaster Regiment on our right - from right to left - 'D', 'A', 'C' Companies with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry on our left.</p> <p>One platoon of 'B' Company in rear of Leicestershire Regiment (on the right of York & Lancaster Regiment). 'B' Company - less one platoon – in support to Brigade under orders of Officer Commanding Buffs. 9967 Corporal RANDALL showed great pluck in attending Private HAMILTON (who was killed) although he himself was wounded at the time.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 1 man killed and 2 wounded.</p>
VAILLY	3 October 1914	<p>CASUALTIES 2 men wounded.</p>
VAILLY	6 October 1914	<p>CASUALTIES 1 man wounded.</p>
VAILLY	7 October 1914	<p>CASUALTIES 1 man wounded.</p>

VAILLY	8 October 1914	CASUALTIES 2 men killed and 5 men wounded.
VAILLY	9 October 1914	10:00 AM. Enemy opened heavy infantry fire. 10:30 AM. Whole line heavily shelled including Headquarters, support and VAILLY. Acting Sergeant WILSON and 3 transport men were wounded and 10 Horses killed near church in VAILLY. Sergeant WALL and 4 men of 'C' Company wounded in trench. 'C' Company stretcher bearers worked very well – especially Private MEDWAY. CASUALTIES 5 non-commissioned officers and men wounded, and 10 horses killed.
VAILLY	10 October 1914	6:00 PM. 'B' Company relieved 'C' Company.
VAILLY	12 October 1914	3:00 AM. 'A' Company relieved 'B' Company. 10:00 PM. Relieved by the French – Division General NERANO, Brigadier General DITTE and Lieutenant Colonel LE DUC – 287 Regiment.
VAILLY	13 October 1914	1:00 AM. Marched to BAROCHES (arriving 7:00 AM.). Billeted.
BAROCHES	13 October 1914	5:00 PM. Marched to FISMES.
FISMES	13 October 1914	6:30 PM. Started to entrain – 9:25 PM left by train via PARIS – AMIENS – ÉTAPLES. Arriving CASSEL 12:15 AM – 15 October 1914.
CASSEL	15 October 1914	10:15 AM. Marched to OUTERSTEENE arriving 4:30 PM.
OUTTERSTEENE	16 October 1914	6:15 AM. Marched to LE CRUSOBEAU (about 2 miles northwest of SAILLYSUR-LA-LYS). (17th Infantry Brigade at STEENWERCK – 18th Infantry Brigade at LE PETIT MORTIER) in Corps Reserve.
LE CRUSOBEAU	17 October 1914	9:00 AM. Marched to CROIX MARÉCHAL Battalion advanced to Brigade.
CROIX MARÉCHAL	18 October 1914	10:00 AM. Marched to GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM. Ordered to clean up situation but not to become seriously engaged with the enemy. Line HAU DE BAS – VALLÉE. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies in firing line. 'A' in support. 2:20 PM. Very heavy fire – the line was secured at 2:20 PM. Verbal orders received to attack along the line RADINGHEM – ESCOBECQUES. No resistance until RADINGHEM was secured when a sharp fire was met from direction of CHATEAU DE FLANDRES supported by York & Lancaster Regiment the line of wood north of CHATEAU DE FLANDRES was taken.

RADINGHEM	18 October 1914	<p>Position at end of day. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies in front line - 'A' Company in support with York & Lancaster Regiment on our right. 'A' Company placed south end of RADINGHEM in state of defence.</p> <p>Lieutenant THORNHILL's platoon reinforced firing line. Stretcher bearer Lance Corporal LUCY showed great gallantry in attending wounded under fire (2nd time).</p> <p>CASUALTIES</p> <p>Officers wounded – Captain M. BEEVOR, 2nd Lieutenants H. W. JACKSON and R. BAYARD.</p> <p>Rank and file killed 18, wounded 55 and missing 5.</p>
RADINGHEM	19 October 1914	<p>8:00 PM. Brigadier General and York & Lancaster Regiment went back in direction of ARMENTIERES leaving The Buffs to hold the whole line astride the RADINGHEM – BEAUCHAMPS ROAD about CHATEAU DE FLANDRES – BAS CHAMPS RAILWAY. Battalion to Point 29.</p> <p>'D' Company on right of road – 'B' Company on left. Lieutenant MERCER's Platoon 'C' Company thrown back of 'B' Companies left. 2 ½ platoons of 'C' Company under Captain CHICHESTER at BAS CHAMPS holding railway crossing 400 northeast of Point 29. 'A' and ½ platoon of 'C' Company holding perimeter of town.</p> <p>11:30 PM. Stood to arms till 12:30 AM. Enemy attacking 18th Infantry Brigade on our left – French Cavalry on our right.</p>
RADINGHEM	20 October 1914	<p>2:00 AM. Stood to arms till 3:30 AM.</p> <p>7:40 AM. Enemy's artillery opened very heavy fire on our trenches. Their guns keeping it up most of the day.</p> <p>About 11:30 AM Colonel HASLER Commanding front line was wounded.</p> <p>About 2:00 PM the enemy attacked very vigorously on our front, right and left.</p> <p>2:35 PM. 12th French Army Brigade reported enemy advancing on our right.</p> <p>3:30 PM. Sent message to Major McDONALL (Commanding front line) to guard his left flank as 'C' Company was being heavily attacked.</p> <p>3:35 PM. Major McDONALL reported – "Situation very serious. Am holding on. No officers left, but RICE. Machine guns knocked out."</p> <p>4:00 PM. Major McDONALL reported – "Great difficulty in holding on. Enemy captured trench on our left held by 'C' Company. Am in tight corner."</p> <p>3:45 PM. Received verbal message that 'C' Company was being cut off. Orders sent to Major McDONALL to retire Company by Company.</p> <p>4:10 PM. Major McDONALL replied "Very difficult but will do the best we can." Reported to 16th Infantry Brigade – 18th Infantry Brigade – 12th French Army Brigade that Buffs were retiring slowly.</p> <p>4:50 PM. Received order from 16th Infantry Brigade to hold on at any cost promising support of 2 Companies York & Lancaster Regiment – Reported to 16th Infantry Brigade that we were holding south perimeter of town.</p> <p>6:25 PM. Received order from 16th Infantry Brigade to retake and hold line – RADINGHEM – BEAUCHAMP – RAILWAY CROSSING W M 29.</p> <p>7:00 PM. Major CLEMSON with 2 Companies York & Lancaster Regiment arrived to our support.</p> <p>7:30 PM. Brigadier General arrived. Started digging in again with 2 Companies York & Lancaster Regiment.</p> <p>About 10:00 PM. Received orders to retire Company by Company on GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM.</p>

RADINGHEM	21 October 1914	<p>4:15 AM. Arrived FARM. 12th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, supported us exceedingly well during the whole day.</p> <p>CASUALTIES Officers killed, Lieutenants PHILIPS, McDOUGALL, NOOTT, GLYN. Officers wounded, Colonel HASLER, Lieutenants HAMILTON, STANFIELD, ORWIN. Rank and file – Killed 17, wounded 57 and missing 62. Horses killed 8 and bicycles damaged beyond repair 3.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	21 October 1914	<p>8:00 AM. Commanding Officer and Adjutant went round line of trenches to be held by Battalion.</p> <p>Reported to Brigadier General – who told Commanding Officer that the Divisional General was very pleased with the stand The Buffs had made at RADINGHEM.</p> <p>Battalion dug itself in. In support to Brigade.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	22 October 1914	<p>Battalion in support. Heavily shelled at various intervals during the day. Transport (at BOIS-GRENIER) shelled and had to move back - 1 horse killed.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 1 man killed, 9 wounded and 1 missing.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	23 October 1914	<p>9:00 AM. 'A' Company sent to Brigade Headquarters in support of York & Lancaster Regiment. THORNHILL's platoon sent up with Major CLEMSON, York & Lancaster Regiment, to reconnoitre situation created by York & Lancaster Regiment's trench being carried by enemy. Party ambushed with machine gun at 15 yards.</p> <p>THORNHILL and 5 men left wounded. Former on parapet of captured trench. 7 others wounded. About 10 of party only returned. Private PEARCE very gallantly dragged back Private BULL who was wounded and brought him in but could not reach Lieutenant THORNHILL.</p> <p>About 8:00 PM Nos.1 and 3 platoons cleaned up situation in front of Leicestershire Regiment. 'C' and 'D' Companies went in support of King's Shropshire Light Infantry and Leicestershire Regiment about BOIS BLANCS. 'C' Company drove the enemy back with the bayonet in front of King's Shropshire Light Infantry. 'A' Company did same in front of Leicestershire Regiment.</p> <p>CASUALTIES Officers killed – Lieutenant THORNHILL, wounded 2nd Lieutenant RICE. Men – killed 1, wounded 13 and missing 9.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	24 October 1914	<p>Enemy attacked Leicestershire Regiment on our left, who slightly retired their line.</p> <p>'D' Company – 2 platoons – reinforced King's Shropshire Light Infantry. The other two platoons sent to our left to retake some trenches which was done without loss. Sergeant STOCK was highly complimented by the officer in charge of attack.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 6 men wounded.</p>

GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	25 October 1914	<p>6:00 AM. 'A' Company went forward and filled in break in the Leicestershire Regiment's line. Company Sergeant Major STONE was complimented by Brigadier General on the way he commanded his right flank guard. Corporal MARSH did very good reconnoitring work.</p> <p>11:00 AM. 'C' Company were attacked and again at 1:00 PM. The enemy succeeded in getting within 70 yards of our trenches. Captain CHICHESTER showed great gallantry in going along the trenches cheering his men. When the enemy retired, he took a German rifle and used it against the enemy. Unfortunately, he was shot in the head and died some hours after from his wounds. At least a hundred dead Germans were left in front of 'C' Companies trench. 'D' Company repulsed two German attacks one at 8:00 PM and one at 9:00 PM and withdrew and prepared position in rear.</p> <p>CASUALTIES Captain CHICHESTER and 2nd Lieutenant STOCK killed. Lieutenant HOMAN and Lieutenant CHILD wounded. Killed 5, wounded 20 and missing 2.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	26 October 1914	<p>'A' Company relieved by York & Lancaster Regiment re-joined Brigade.</p> <p>Headquarters on right of line later re-joined Battalion on line southeast of GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 3 wounded.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	27 October 1914	<p>Lieutenant CATTLEY took command of 'C' Company. Company Sergeant Majors NESBIT and STONE, Sergeants CORRAL, STOCK and ORWIN promoted 2nd Lieutenants. Enemy attacked about 11:00 PM and were repulsed.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 9 wounded and 1 missing.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	28 October 1914	<p>2nd Lieutenant ASPREY and 69 non-commissioned officers and men arrived to reinforce the Battalion. Germans seen digging in our front. Enemy attacked about 11:00 PM repulsed. Lieutenant CHAPMAN sent out on patrol duty just before dawn.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 8 men wounded.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	29 October 1914	<p>Enemy fired nearly all day – gun and rifle fire – stood to arms 2:30 AM and 4:30 AM. Corporal MARSH, Privates BELL and SISLEY did good scouting. Very cold and wet night.</p>
GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	30 October 1914	<p>Quiet day except for occasional enemy's artillery firing and some sniping.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 1 killed and 4 wounded.</p>

GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM 1½ MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOIS-GRENIER	31 October 1914	Quiet day. 2nd Lieutenants DAVIES joined Battalion and posted to 'D' Company.
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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Ap
NOVEMBER 1914.		
3 GRANDE FLAMENGRIE FARM.	2 nd Lieut HOLMES (supplementary list) QUEENS REGT. joined the Regt. - posted to B. Coy.	115
11	Very heavily shelled throughout the day & night from 8 AM to 10 PM. 1 man killed & 5 men wounded.	
12	2 nd Lieut HOLMES killed - (shot through the head by a sniper)	
15	Lieut TERRY and 100 other ranks joined the Batt ⁿ . (3 rd re-inforcements) Lieut TERRY posted to B. Coy. - Lt. Col. H. C. M. HILL. Sent home sick. Major R. McDONALL took over command of the Batt ⁿ .	
16	Very cold - snow, which lasted for a week. Capt H. S. HARDY and 146 other ranks joined the Batt ⁿ . (4 th re-inforcements) Capt HARDY posted to B. Coy.	
21	56 other ranks joined the Batt ⁿ .	
24	Relieved by H. S. L. (after being in same trenches for 4 weeks and 6 days) went into divisional reserve (billets) at FLEURBAIX. There started at 10 AM. Last Coy in at 7 PM.	
30	Relieved by Y. L. went into brigade reserve at ERIS-POT. There lasted from 7 AM to 1.30 PM. Capt R. S. I. FRIEND joined Batt ⁿ . Took over command of C. Coy.	

War diary entries for 1st Battalion East Kent Regiment for November 1914.

Transcription of November 11th entry:

"Very heavily shelled throughout the day & night from 8am to 10pm 1 man killed, and 5 men wounded".

The only action I can see where soldiers were injured in on the 11th November 1914.

His record shows he was listed as wounded, the report date was 30th November but it may have taken a few days for it to filter through or it may be just the way the reporting works.

They had been in the same trenches for four weeks and six days and were relieved and sent back to billets on 24th November.

I cannot yet find what George's injury was or where he was taken, or for how long he may or may not have been in hospital for, it seems that generally soldiers were hospitalised for a few days and then sent back to re-join their battalion.

NOVEMBER

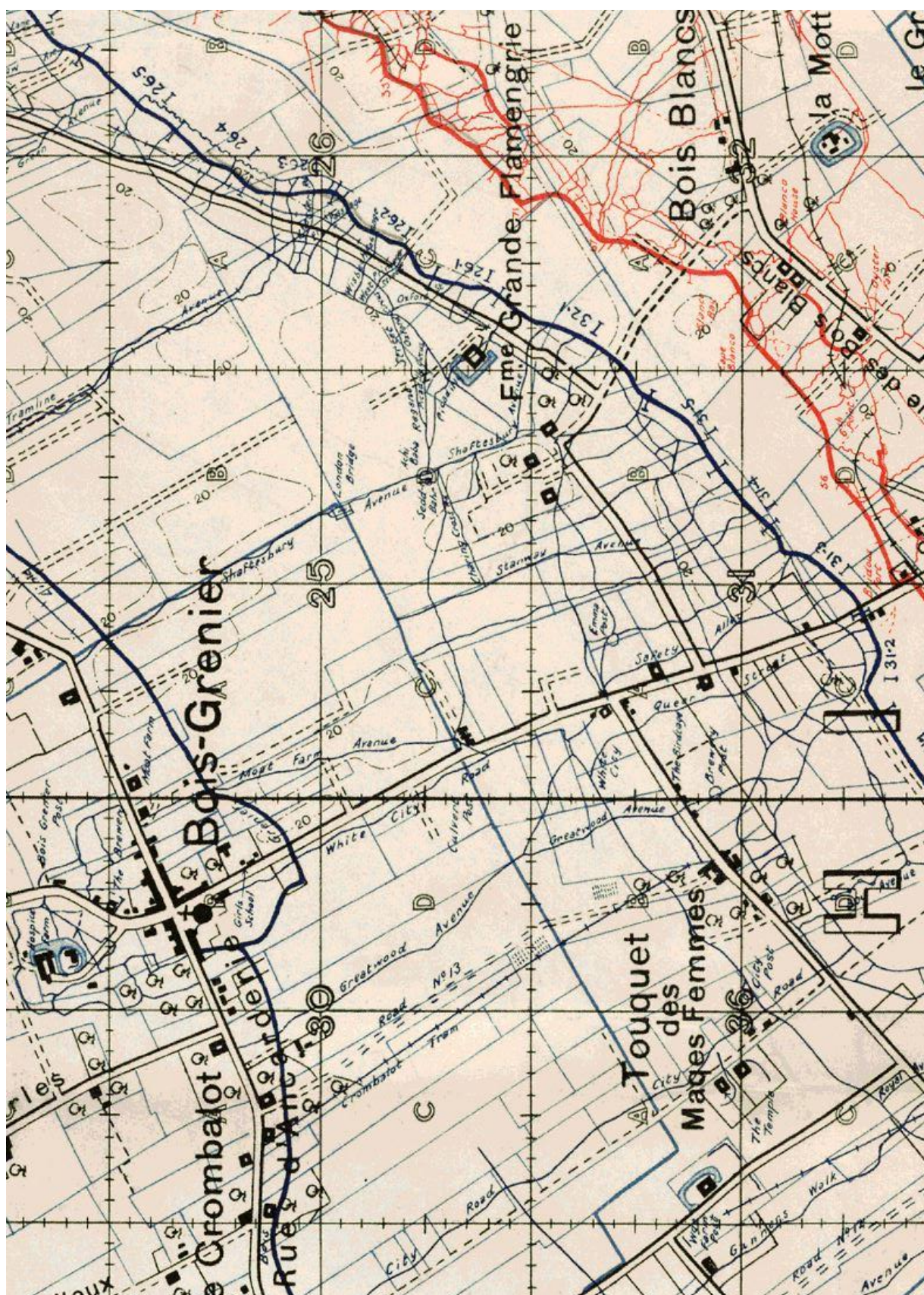
The Buffs had moved on 3rd November to the entrenchments at **Grande Flamengrie Farm** in stark snow-laden winter conditions. Earlier, during October (18th and 20th, in particular), 1st Battalion the Buffs had suffered significant losses at **Radinghem** and desperately needed drafts of new men as they moved into the Bois-Grenier sector. The 1st Battalion, The Buffs took part in a violent and costly battle. Thereafter, trench warfare became the norm.

Between the 11th and the 21st November, the Battalion was strengthened by reinforcements and continued in the trenches until they were relieved by 1st King's Shropshire Light Infantry after 4 weeks and six days in them. They then went into divisional reserve (billets) at Fleurbaix possibly Rue De L' Estree; spelt Rue De Lettree in the war diaries, but after asking on a Great War Forum, I was advised it was actually Rue De L' Estree, which makes sense as it's in the area.

30th November they were relieved by the York & Leicester's and went Brigade Reserve at Gris Pot just north of Bois Grenier (Billets).

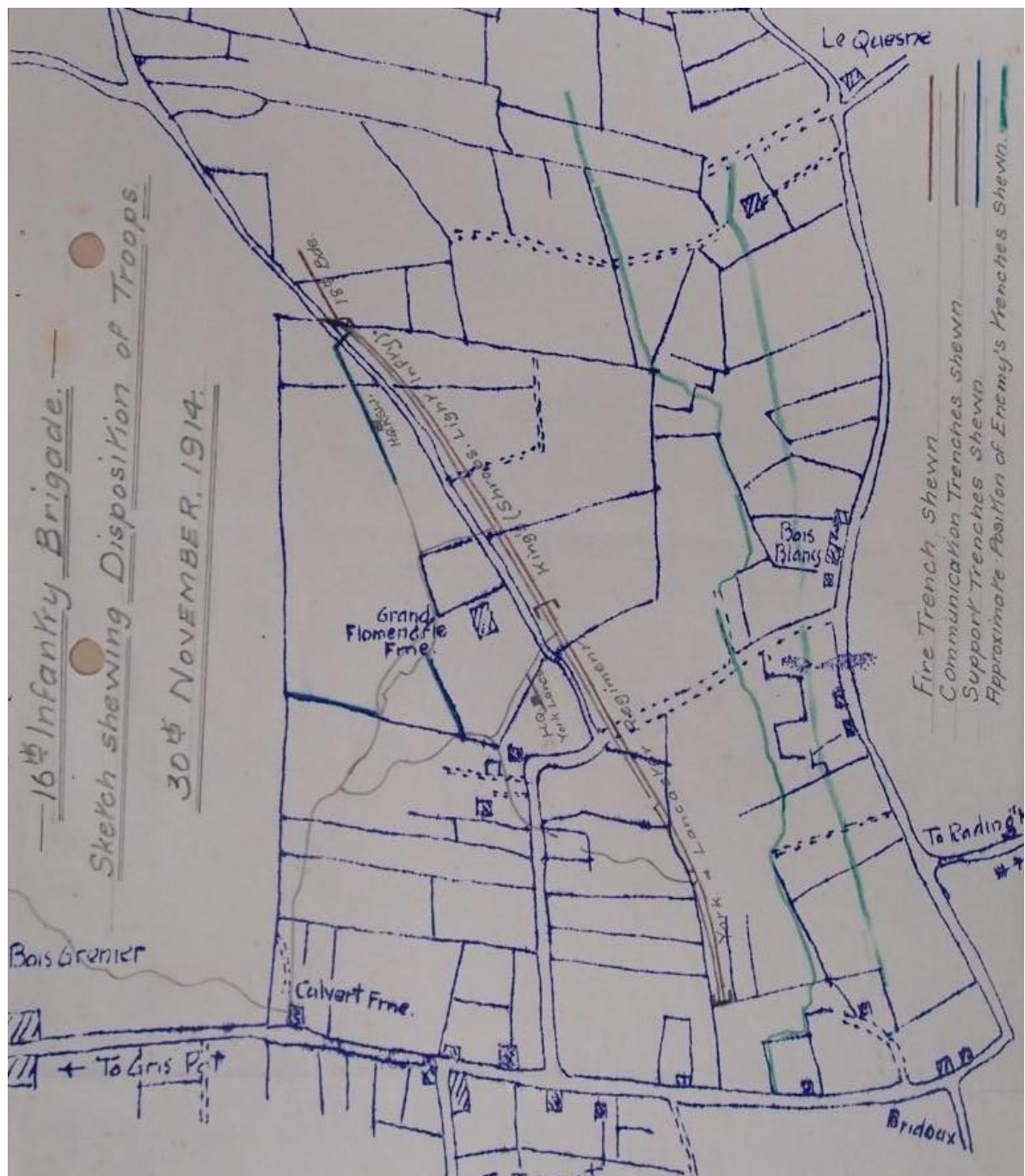


Looking out from the top of Grande Flamengrie Farm over the British Trenches & Iron Works.
Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.



Trench Map of the Grand Flamengrie Farm and Bois Grenier area British in Blue & German in Red

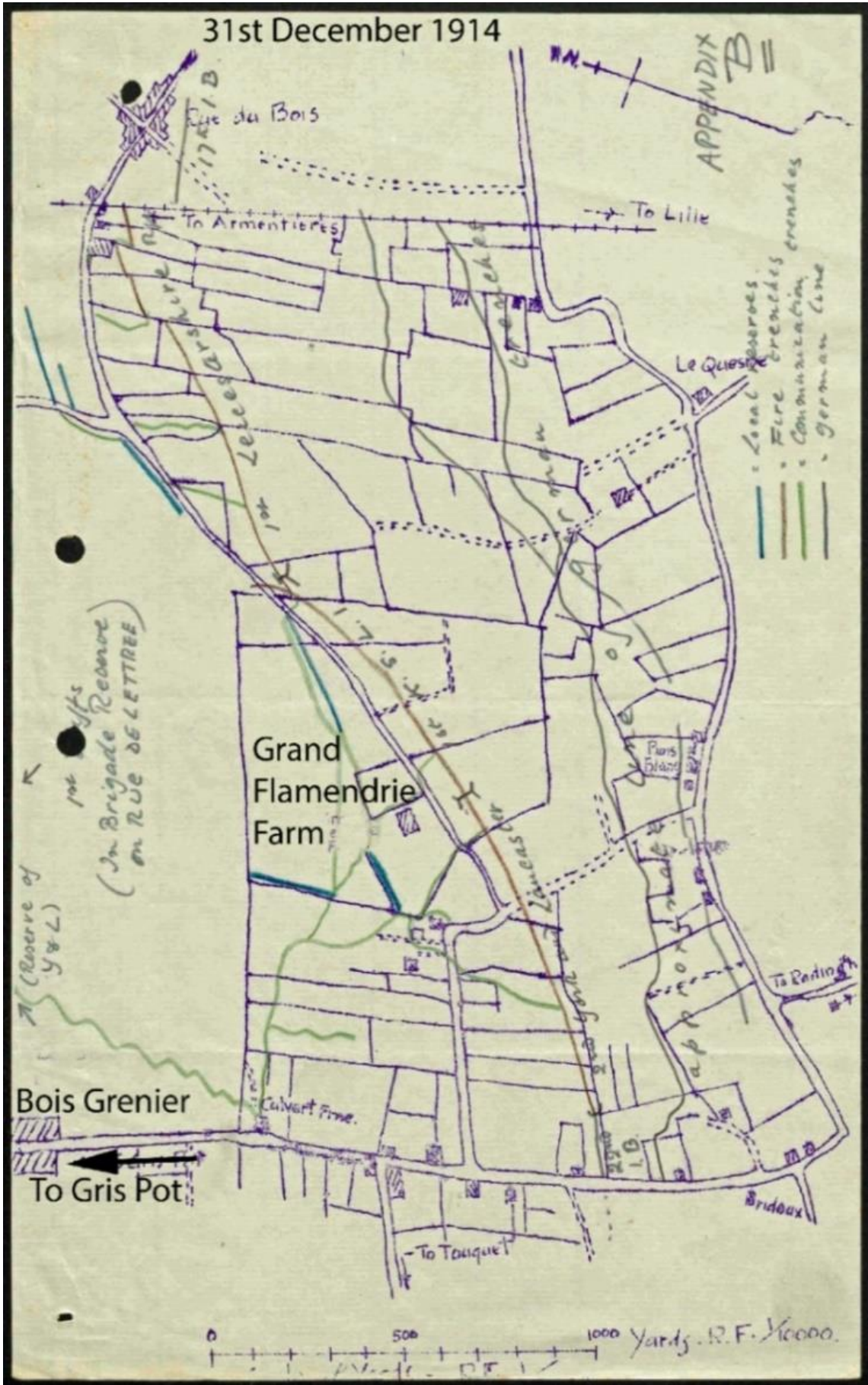
The sketch below shows the Battalions in the trenches 30th November 1914



The trenches occupied by the Kings (Shropshire Light Infantry) are the trenches the 1st Battalion The Buffs occupied previously for four weeks six days at Grand Flamengrie Farm.

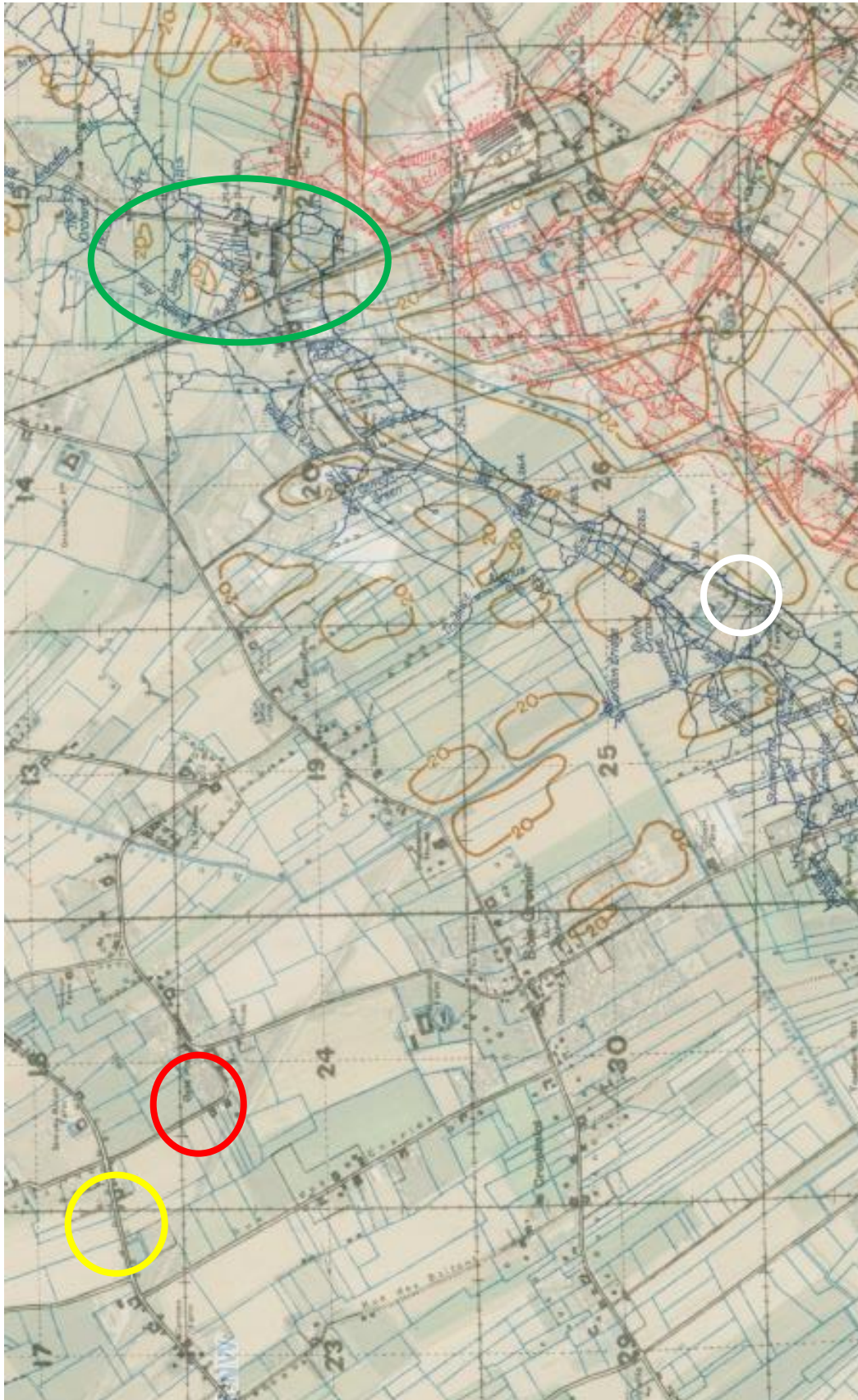
The sketch below shows the Battalions in the trenches 31st Dec 1914

when the 1st Buffs were again in Rue De L' Estree





The Bois Grenier area today Somewhere in this area is the place George Brown wrote his last card home.
 Just above Bois Grenier was Gris Pot (Red Circle)
 The Road marked D228 is Rue De L' Estree (Yellow Circle)
 Over to the right of Bois Grenier is Rue Du Bois (Green Circle)



The Bois Grenier area today with the trench map overlaid on it. Blue Trenches -British, Red German.
 Just above Bois Grenier was Gris Pot (Red Circle)
 The Road Rue De L' Estree (Yellow Circle)
 Over to the right of Bois Grenier is Rue Du Bois (Green Circle)
 Grande Flamengrie Farm (White Circle)



Grand Flamengrie farm with the drainage ditch showing how high the water table was.

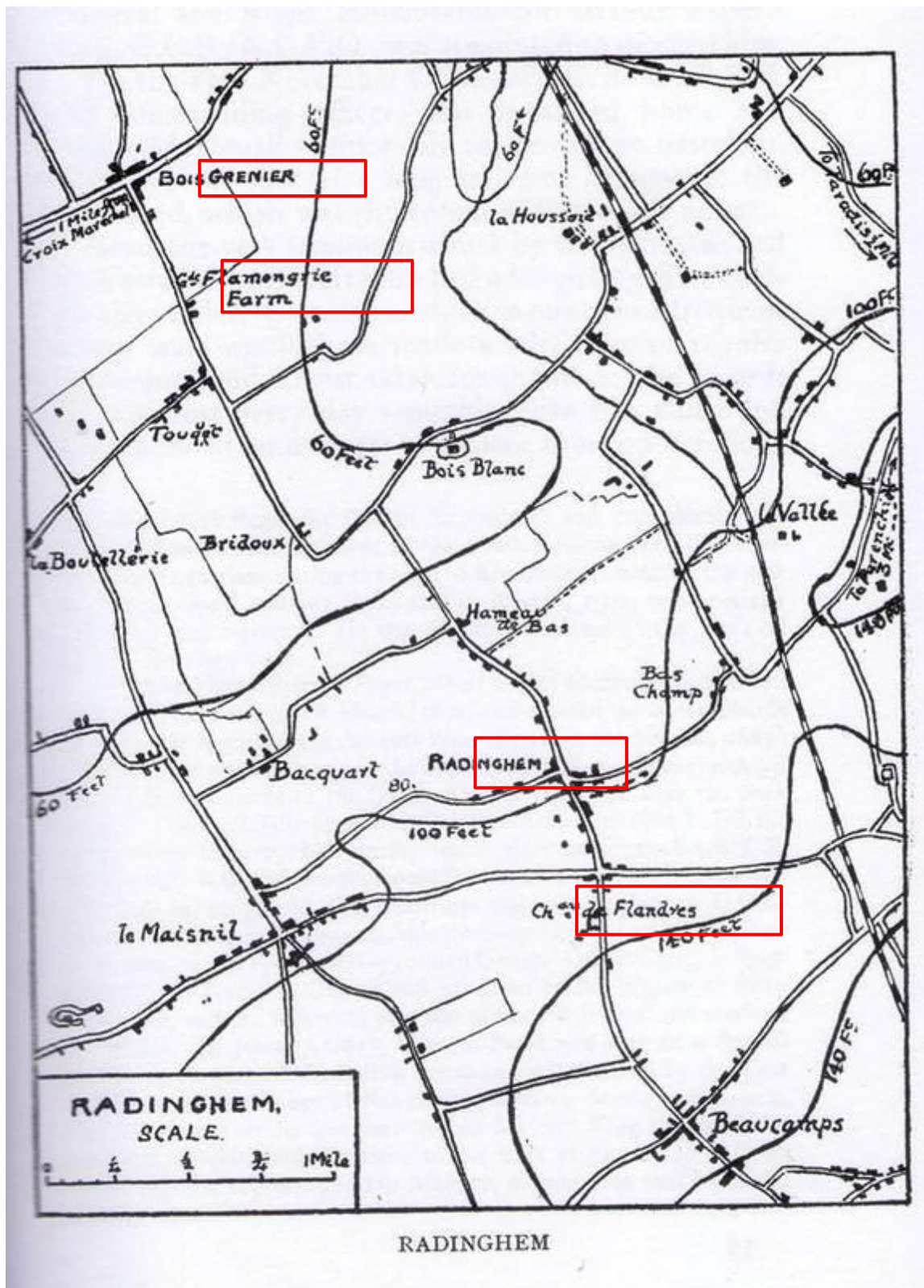


Trenches around Grand Flamengrie Farm



Ruins of Grand Flamengrie Farm

General Map of the area showing the key points mentioned.



Map of the area showing the positions of Bois Grenier, Grand Flamengrie Farm, Radinghem and Chateau de Flandres.

DECEMBER

Relieved 1st King's Shropshire Light Infantry (9th), relieved by 1st King's Shropshire Light Infantry (26th).

December 1914 is poorly recorded in the Battalion War Diary. Thankfully, the 16th Infantry Brigade HQ War Diary is more revealing:

Note: what is called Rue De Lettree in the diaries is Rue De L'Estree on modern maps.

1st: RUE DE LETTREE: Situation unchanged

2nd: H.M. King visited Divisional H.Q. The Leicestershire Regiment, 2 Companies Buffs, and 8 men and 1 officer from K.S.L.I., and Y&L (from the trenches) were drawn up to the roadside and H.M. inspected them. The Brigadier General and members of his staff had the honour of an introduction.

3rd: Two companies of the Artists Rifles were brought into the line for the night. One Company was in reserve and the other in the firing line. This plan was continued for the following three nights. On the 5th night the whole battalion came up and took position in part of the line occupied by K.S.L.I. The idea of this was to give the battalion experience. During the operations one man was very slightly wounded.

During the night, water appeared in the dikes leading through the right company of the Y&L and caused some flooding of trenches. This is being dealt with by dams and bridges.

5th: Some heavy rain. Many "dug outs" fell in and there was a certain amount of land slipping in the trenches.

7th: 3 officer and 35 men Buffs re-enforcements arrived. (The Rt Hon Winston Churchill arrived and was taken round the trenches by the Brigadier General.)

9th: The K.S.L.I. were relieved in the trenches by the Buffs and went into Divisional Reserve. Leicester's moved into Brigade Reserve. One officer and 20 men re-enforcements arrived for the Buffs.

11th: The Leicester's went into the trenches on left of the Buffs, relieving the West Yorks (18th Inf. Brigade). The line of the 16th I.B. is thus extended to the railway line at RUE DU BOIS. The relief was timed to take place at 7p.m. but at 5p.m. the 18th I.B. wired to say that West Yorks reported that their trenches on left of their line had been flooded by the enemy. The Leicester's went down as arranged in pouring rain and inky darkness and occupied the line. New trenches were dug behind those which had been flooded out.

13th: In compliance with instructions received from the Division, the enemy's barbed wire and trenches were bombarded for a short time and heavy sniping took place at intervals. This was in connection with operations being carried on to the North.

14th: Same procedure as yesterday. Leicester's claim to have killed 3 Germans. These were seen running across the open, possibly as result of their trenches being flooded.

15th: Captain Wilfred Saxby Barham joined the 1st Battalion East Kent (The Buffs)

18th: French pressed attacks about ARRAS. The 7th Division on our right attacked German trenches. The Brigade kept Germans occupied by maintaining constant rifle fire against their line.

19th: Same procedure as yesterday. Some heavy rain. This has caused many land slips in the trenches and increased our troubles with water, which are being coped with as well as possible.

21st: Some experiments were made by R.F.A. with view of breaking down enemy's wire entanglements by shrapnel. No apparent result. More rain.

23rd: Y&L relieved K.S.K.I. in trenches. Some sleet and rain.

24th: Germans appeared to be very jovial in their trenches. Two came over to our lines and were made prisoners. They belonged to the 179th Regiment of XIX Saxon Corps. Several bombs were thrown in Y&L Lines.

25th: Christmas celebrated as far as practicable. The receipt of the Xmas card from the King and Queen gave great pleasure to the troops.

According to Captain Bahram's diary although there were some quiet times on Christmas night in their trenches there were no meetings between the two sides just carols and banter. The day was frosty and foggy. One British soldier did make a move towards the German trenches but was shot by them and a soldier that went to recover his body from no man's land was also shot.

26th: The K.S.L.I. relieved the Buffs in the trenches. At about midnight a report was received (through a deserter who came into 8th Division) that a general attack was expected all along the line. All necessary measures were taken but nothing happened.

28th: Very heavy rain during night.

29th: Trenches are in a bad way as result of rain and flooding of trenches. In many places (on the right of line especially) men are standing in water. Almost every communication trench is impassable from mud and slush.

30th: The water troubles on right of line are serious and 3 platoons evacuated the line for the night to rest in the "Water Farm" just behind the line.

31st: Brigadier General Injoinville-Williams left at 4 a.m. for a short leave in England. Colonel Hasler of the Buffs assumed temporary command of the Brigade. Some rain.



Grand Flamengrie Trenches during winter 1914 – 15

Remains found in the Chateau Du Flandres area (Daily Mail 2010)

Today it is hauntingly quiet in Beaucamps-Ligny. But back then the air was filled with the rattle of machine guns and the screams of the dying.

This is where the remains of Private John Brameld and his York and Lancaster Regiment comrades have been uncovered.

Guy Behorel, 60, a lifelong village resident, was here when the bodies were found during building work. And he tells me how the legend of the Tommies' bravery has been passed down through five generations.

"They were terrified, sheltering in a cave because houses were being shelled". There was a horrific battle for the Chateau de Flandres on October 18, 1914.

"What happened to the British men was appalling. They were trapped and couldn't escape the German bombardment. They buried the dead on the spot. During the excavation, they found horse remains as well. They paid these men no respect".

"This village was occupied by the Germans for the four years of the war. We have always known these men would be buried somewhere near here, but we never knew the exact place. We are all extremely happy they will have a dignified burial at last. They tried to save our village."

Private Brameld, a 30-year-old steel worker and father of two from Sheffield, is one of 10 British soldiers identified following the mass grave's discovery in 2010.

Every year around 60 bodies of First World War soldiers are unearthed across the countryside of the Western Front, which runs through Belgium and northern France. Most happen by accident during building work.

In Beaucamps, a digger driver who was making a hole for sewage works for council housing struck a skull. Local police were alerted, and they in turn contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Over the following days tons of earth were dug up to reveal ammunition, scraps of webbing, regimental buttons, and the human remains.

One skeleton was found clasping a water bottle with a pipe close to the other hand. Coins, clasp knives and toothbrushes were also found.

This is the first-time soldiers have been successfully matched with their families by DNA testing. Private Brameld was an Army reservist mobilised like thousands of others when Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914.

He was part of the British Expeditionary Force – the men called up in the first few months who tracked the advancing Germans as they moved west. After embarking for the port of St Nazaire in September, they were caught up in the March to the Sea when British forces stopped the capture of key French ports.

Marching alongside The Buffs – the Royal East Kent Regiment – the York and Lancaster infantry captured Radinghem, a mile away without much opposition.

They advanced across a small plateau, 300 yards wide, towards the woods where the Chateau de Flandres used to stand. There they came under a heavy crossfire of machine guns and shrapnel, suffering terrible casualties.



An Artillery shell lies at the opening of a bunker near Beaucamps-Ligny, France. Fifteen British WWI soldiers were re-buried at nearby Y Farm Commonwealth cemetery in Bois-Grenier, France on Oct 22, 2014, nearly a century after they died in battle.

The soldiers, who served with the 2nd Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment, who were fighting alongside "The Buffs" East Kent Regiment. were discovered in a 2010 in Beaucamps-Ligny and identified through a variety of means, including DNA.



German dead waiting to be buried in the village of Beaucamps-Ligny where they died in a battle with the British for the Chateau Flandres.

Newspaper reports of L/7824 Pte George Brown

The Times Newspaper 14th January 1915

KILLED.	
Clarke, 9917 R., Buffs (E. Kent Regiment).	
Hodges, 9630 H., Buffs (E. Kent Regiment).	
Stevens, 9899 H., Buffs (E. Kent Regiment).	
DIED OF WOUNDS.	
Eaves, 10151 E., Royal Fusiliers.	
Manning, 11248 P., Royal Irish Fusiliers.	
WOUNDED.	
THE BUFFS (EAST KENT REGIMENT).	
Bing, 7923 S.	Manning, 6838 E.
Brown, 7824 C.	Marsh, 9603 Cpl. A.
Busby, 7025 W.	Page, 9934 T.
Davis, 7111 W.	Poole, 9405 Lce.-Cpl. J.
Drury, 8015 A.	Reed, 8278 G.
Hayes, 8200 C.	Stevens, 8819 A.
Hill, 9990 C.	Wall, 7039 J.
Jarvis, 6977 A.	Webster, 9911 C.
Kenley, 5764 Lce.-Corpl. J.	Wood, 6050 W.
ROYAL WEST SURREY REGIMENT.	
Aitkenhead, 7024 A.	Nightingale, 10132 A.
Bisset, 5594 H.	Norris, 8457 J.
Butterfield, 10462 J.	Pearce, 3381 W.
Cobbett, 9301 C.	People, 8047 W.

Although it says C. Brown it is G. Brown the Service number and Regiment are correct and I have taken this up with the source but as they just transcribe from the originals and it was originally written as C not G there is little I can do, but it has been acknowledged.

The Times Newspaper – 7th July 1915

described :—	
KILLED.	
R. FIELD ARTILLERY.—Sinclair, 67489 Act. Bmbdr. J.	
R.F.A., 3RD W. RIDING BATTY. (T.F.).—Benton, 1487 Gnr.	
G. C. ; Sowden, 890 Gnr. H.	
R.E. (NORTHUMBRIAN, NEWCASTLE) DIVL. SIGNAL	
CO.—Brodie, 1830 Drvr. A.	
SCOTS GUARDS, 2ND BN.—Foulds, 7955 L.-Cpl. L. S. J.	
ROYAL SCOTS, 1ST BN.—Beaton, 15587 K.	
ROYAL SCOTS, 2ND BN.—Belcher, 9781 W. ; Foy, 3205 D. ;	
Gray, 13788 P. ; Inglis, 3105 G. ; Kane, 2908 M. ; Lockridge,	
2566 J. ; McGuichan, 7606 Cpl. K. ; Perry, 6277 A.	
ROYAL SCOTS, 8TH BN. (T.F.).—McDonald, 4547 G. ; Smith,	
634 W.	
BUFFS (E. KENT REGT.), 1ST BN.—Brown, 7824 G.	
R. LANCASTER REGT., 1ST BN.—Duckworth, 8835 A.	
W. YORKS REGT., 1ST BN.—Twigg, 8488 A.	
BEDFORD REGT., 2ND BN.—Hardingham, 13033 J. ; Sell,	
14142 P.	
YORKS REGT., 5TH BN. (T.F.).—Hotham, 1451 C.	
R. WELSH FUSILIERS, 2ND BN.—Edwin, 6240 Sgt. T.	
R. WELSH FUSILIERS, 4TH BN. (T.F.).—Davies, 4936 D. ;	
Nadan, 7480 L.-Cpl. B.	
E. LANCS. REGT., 1ST BN.—Brennand, 6114 T. ; Mason,	
18349 R.	
DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LI., 2ND BN.—Chidgey, 20406 L.-	
Cpl. A. ; Evans, 13889 T.	
DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LI., 6TH BN.—Hunter, 11485 W.	
BORDER REGT., 5TH BN. (T.F.).—Brackley, 2002 J. ; Clark,	
2174 D. ; Wilson, 661 R.	

The Times Newspaper reports his death.

January to May 1915

January 1915:

1st Rue De Lettree In billets

2nd – 8th Battalion went into Divisional Reserve, the war diary says Blanchisserie La Haie.

"One of the most important sanitary considerations was the supervision of the divisional baths and laundry and disinfecting plant established at Pont, de Nieppe in a disused bleach works on the banks of the Lys facing Armentieres and just north of the bridge. For the use of the bleach works the British Army paid a rental, and the plant was very suitable for the purposes both of baths and laundry: the huge vats used pre-war for bleaching linen yarn with Eau de Javel, (Bleach) the substantial hydraulic presses and the copious supply of hot water from the large boilers were appliances adequate to all purposes. The Pont de Nieppe baths were well known on the English front as the first large institution of the kind to be established—by the 6th Division who were quartered in Armentieres in the winter of 1914-1915. The large vats made surprising tubs for the men to bathe in; the hydro-extractors, rotary driers, the hydraulic presses and the extensive drying rooms, all used in the linen industry, were quite suited to the purposes of a laundry, so that several of these "blanchisseries" became operable as laundries at various points on the Lys in 1915.

The rest of January was spent between the trenches in Rue Du Bois and New Hospital Armentieres, I have yet to find where that was. They were relieved by the 1st Leicestershire regiment (swapping between the two).

February 1915:

February was much like January rotating between Armentieres in billets when relieved by the 1st Leicestershire Regiment and Ru Du Bois in the trenches.

During the Great War Armentieres was an important town in the British lines in Artois: a main route to and from the trenches where units were billeted, a depot for support and Lines of Communication troops, Divisional headquarters for the neighbouring sectors, the site of many artillery gun sites and a forward rail head for this part of the front.

March 1915:

As February Rotating with the 1st Leicestershire Regiment between Armentieres billets and the trenches at Rue Du Bois, with the exception of March 14th as below.

Armentieres sector. Part of 16th Brigade, 6th Division. Moved by train to Vlamertinge in support of 27th Division 14th March but returned to Armentieres next day.

24th March Lt W.F.Taylor joined the regiment (Lt Taylor was killed along with George Brown in the same shelling incident in June 1915)

April 1915:

April again was spent between Armentieres and Rue Du Bois, several incidents and exchanges were taking place with the enemy and casualties sustained. More men were being trained and joining the Battalion to strengthen it after many losses.

The general pattern seems to be Six days in e trenches then Six days in Billets give or take a day or two. No major battles but continuous periods of shelling, mortar fire and heavy rifle fire.

May 1915:

As April, one notable difference was the training in using flannels and goggles as respirators due to the Germans use of gas N.E of Ypres, as yet not used in the Armentieres area.

Continued exchanges between the British and the Germans, some deaths and injuries.

The usual rotations between Armentieres and Rue Du Bois with the Leicester Regiment up until May 30th when the 1st Buffs were relieved (according to the war diary) by 1st Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (91st Regiment)

Overnight 30th – 31st May the 1st Battalion East Kent Regiment marched to billets in Bailleul arriving at 4am

31st May the 16th Infantry Brigade were inspected by the Prime Minister Mr H. H. Asquith after which they billeted in Bailleul 31st – 1st June.

June 1915:

1st June at 5am in the morning they marched to Wittenhoek about a mile north of Westouter, 4 miles south of Poperinge and bivouacked (made camp).

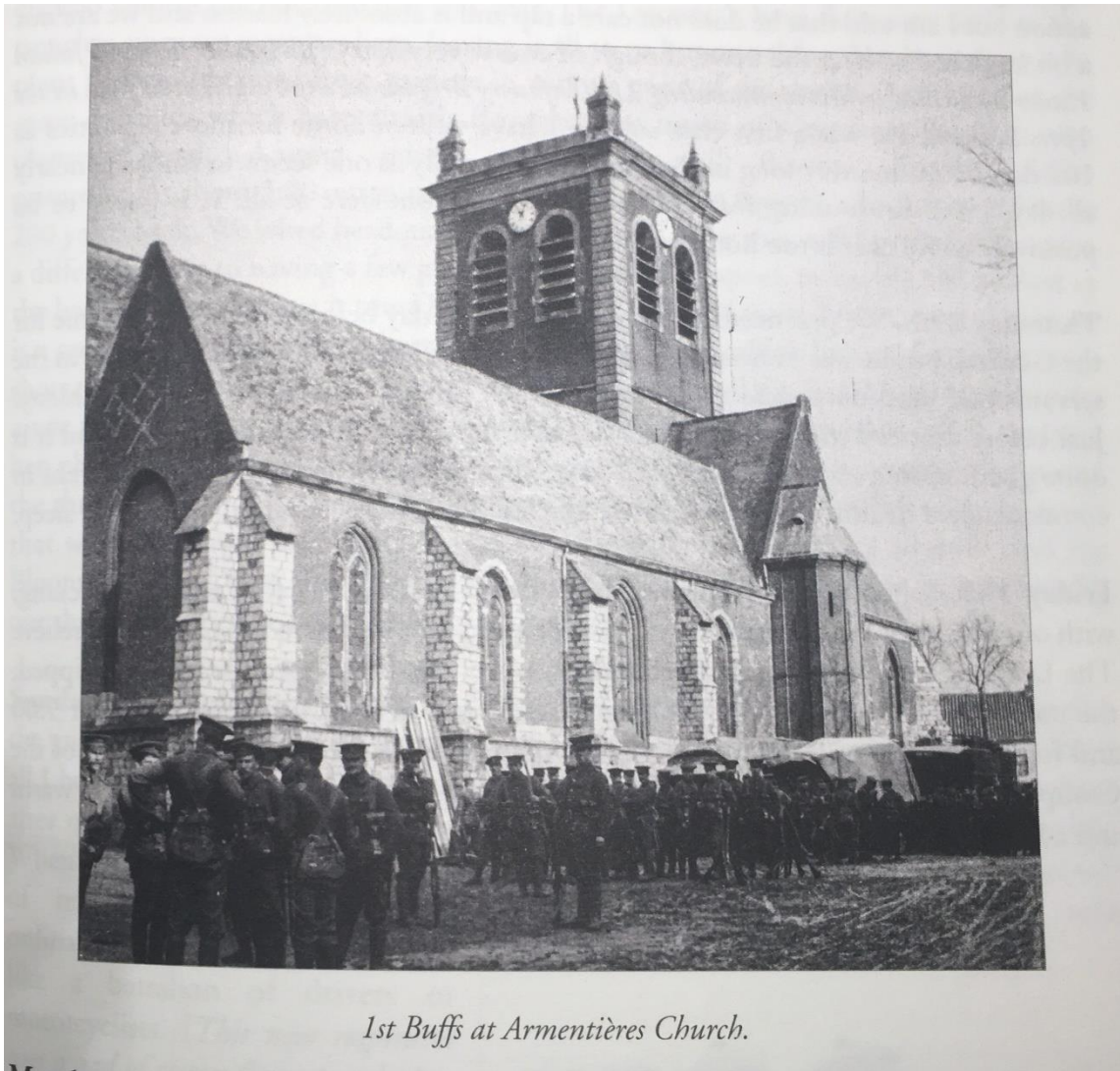
2nd June The 2nd Battalion East Kent Regiment (Great Step Grandad Coveney was in this battalion although he wasn't Great Step Grandad at the time) marched from Poperinge to Wittenhoek to pay a visit to the 1st Battalion. They had not met up since 1904.

3rd June the Battalion marched to billets, some huts, North East of Vlamertinge.

The area was shelled heavily for two days, the rest is documented elsewhere in this document.



One of the bridges over the river Lys joining Armentieres and Nieppe.



1st Buffs at Armentières Church.

Picture taken from Captain Wilfred Barham's war diary of the 1st Battalion East Kent Regiment "The Buffs" outside Armentieres Church. Thought to have been taken in April 1915.

The square was one of the main routes through the town, and all troops in this sector knew it as "Eleven o'clock square" as the original of the clock tower was struck by a shell in 1914 and thereafter the hands stuck on **eleven o'clock**. Note the clock on the picture above.

Armentieres was badly damaged by years of shelling, and all but levelled by German guns during the Lys battle in April 1918. It was rebuilt in the 1920s.

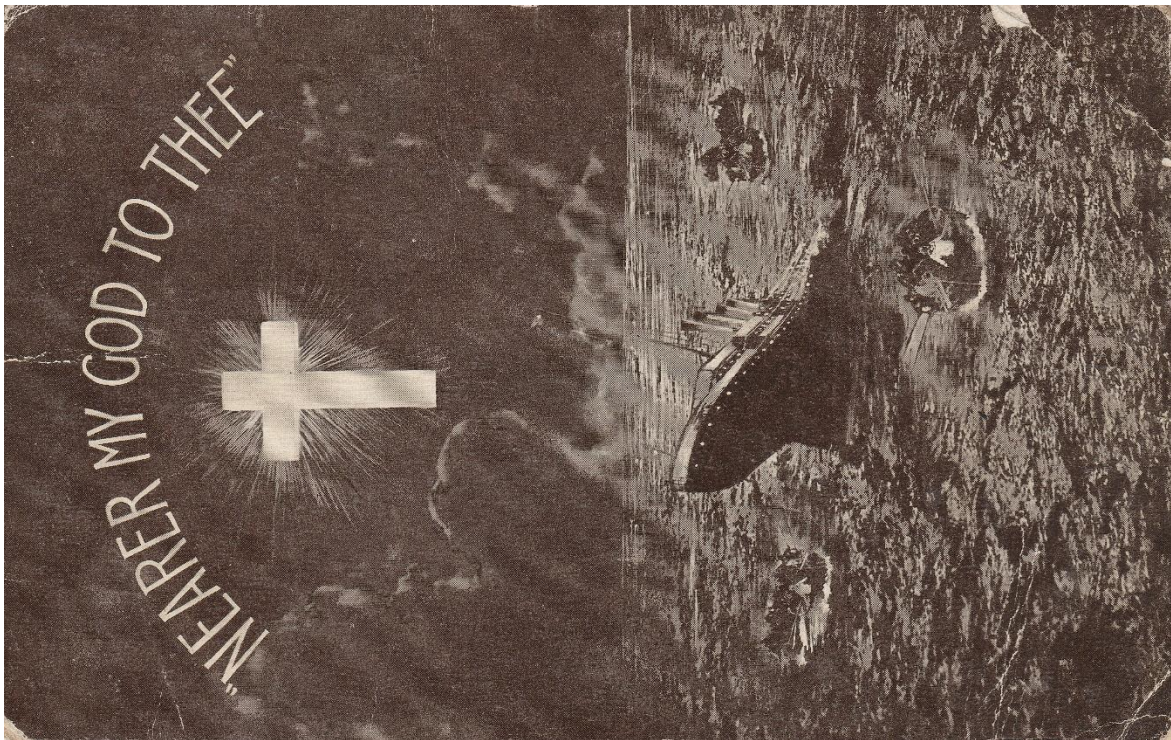
Final Correspondence Home.

I have recently found what can only be described as an absolute Gem. While searching through some old postcards and photographs that have been passed down from Grandparents and have finally reached me, I found what I believe to be the last postcard my Grandad received from his father Pte George Brown.

It was written on May 10th 1915 and was posted on May 11th the cancellation mark suggests it was in a French Field Post Office and Censor stamped. By the postmark is the name Taylor, I believe this to be the officer who would have censored it, he was a Lieutenant who coincidentally was killed at the same time as Pte George Brown.

On the next page are both the front and rear of the card and a transcript of its contents.

The front of the postcard is a picture of the sinking titanic and lifeboats surrounding it.



The rear of the card below.



It says:

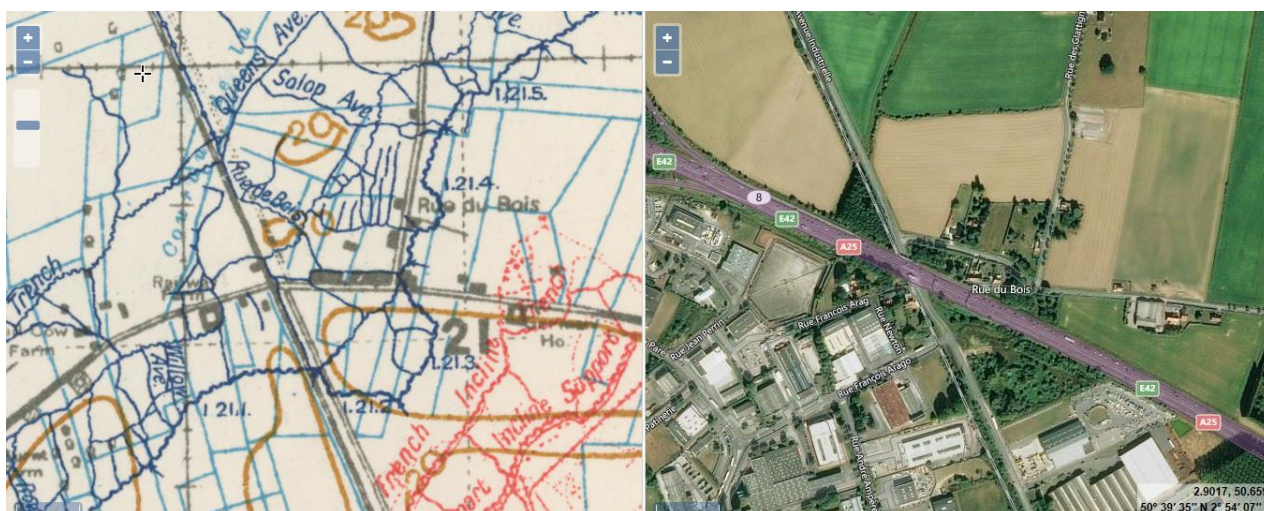
Dear Son I now sit down to write you a few lines hopen they will find you in the best of health as it leaves me the same at present and I thank you for the pages you sent me so I must close this with best of love to you from your ever loven father xxx for you son.

Where the card was written

Further research on where the postcard was written shows that according to the war diary for that day George Brown was away from the front line as shown below on the extract for that period.

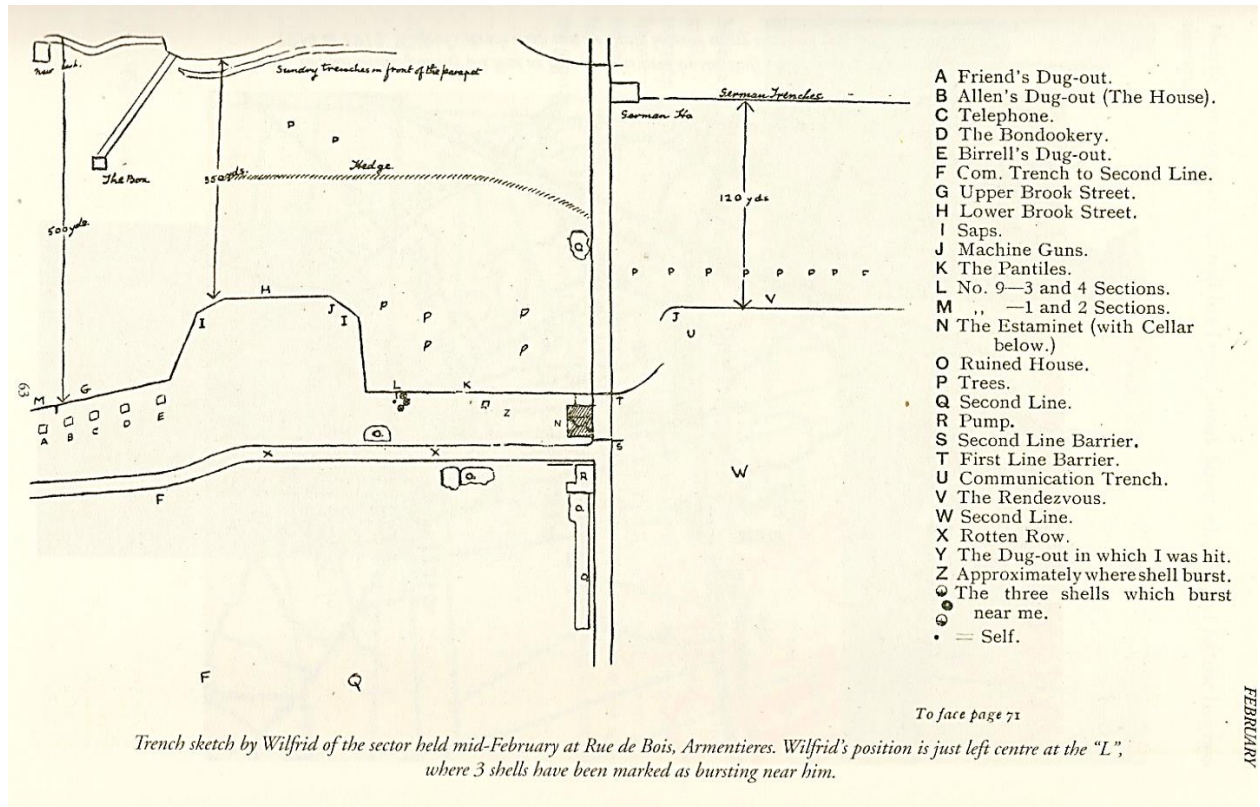
WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.		11 Buffs
(Erase heading not required.)		
Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 1 st RUE DU BOIS		
May 3 rd — do —		
May 6 th — do —		
May 7 th — do —		
24 m. May 13 th ARMENTIERES		
May 14 th RUE DU BOIS		
May 15 th — do —		
May 20 th — do —		
<p><u>MAY = 1915</u></p> <p>Sgt Mitchell and one man of D. Company were killed by Snipers Shot through a loophole.</p> <p>Owing to the Germans using Asphyxiating Gas, all men were issued with Flameless respirators and goggles, soaked in a solution of G. carbonate of soda to withstand the fumes. No attempt was made on our portion of the line, but great losses were experienced NE of YPRE'S.</p> <p>The Germans opened a heavy bombardment of ARMENTIERES and bombarded the neighbouring BONGARDS; our trenches were left alone about 1500 shells, mostly French munitions, were fired into the town.</p> <p>Leicesters relieved the Battalion from the trenches.</p> <p>Battalion was called out on heavy rifle and Artillery fire commenced S. of the RUE DU BOIS. However it apparently was a demonstration by another Division.</p> <p>Relieved Leicesters in trenches.</p> <p>One man wounded (died of wounds)</p> <p>Relieved by Leicesters. Had a very quiet time in the trenches during this stay, only one casualty.</p> <p>Lieut Aspery 3rd Batta (attached) sent to Hospital.</p>		

As above between May 7th and May 14th the 1st Buffs had been relieved from the trenches by the Leicester's but were in the Rue Du Bois area. Looking at the trench map there were many trenches in a network behind the line which is possibly where they were holed up. But their billets were in Armentieres and up to present I have not been able to nail down exactly where in Armentieres they were.



There was quite a network roughly in the area of the light-coloured field in the aerial picture on the right which corresponds with the trench map on the left.

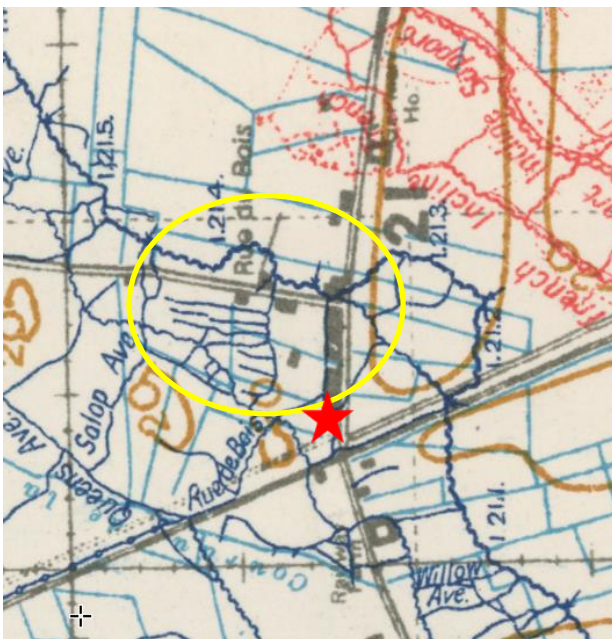
Sketch scanned from Captain Wilfred Barham's Diary.



Captain Wilfred Saxby Bahram's sketch on the Rue Du Bois area above.

Below on the left is the same place on the trench map.

Below right is an aerial shot of the same place in modern times.



Photographs taken by Steve Monk on 30th September 2022



These two photos were taken from the position of the red star on the maps on the previous page, looking on to the field where the trenches were in 1914 – 15 and where Pte George Brown would have spent some time.

Where George Brown was killed.



The approximate area where he was killed in Action on 7th June 1915.

British Army map reference H.5.a.2.9 as found on the Concentration of Graves Exhumation and Re-Burials return. This is where his body was buried by his comrades, the grave marked and later exhumed and buried in Perth Cemetery (China Wall). He and his colleagues are buried side by side as they fell.

At the time according to the official War Diaries his Battalion had just moved into Belgium after several months fighting in France (See War Travels). They were resting up in huts in this area and were bombarded for three hours by German shells.

He along with 10 others were killed.



The location of this spot today (As photograph) is just off the main road in Brielen between Brielenstraat and Adriaansensweg roads.

Military Evidence

**CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES.
(EXHUMATION AND RE-BURIALS).
BURIAL RETURN.**

NAME OF CEMETERY OF RE-BURIAL. PERTH CHINA WALL CEMETERY. Sheet, 28, I.16, d.2, 7. 6/8/19.

Plot	Row	Grave	Approximate map reference where body found	Was cross found on grave	Particulars on cross found on grave Regimental Particulars	Means of Identification. Remarks	Were any effects forwarded to the Base.
1	G	1	D.26, a.1, 6.	Yes	In Memory of 9 R. Bn Cpl. Sandrich or Sandrich 24/6/17.	Pisc 32174 Sandrich, L. 11/11/17. C.E. 6/3/18. Yes.	Yes.
3	A	11	H.5, a.2, 9.	Yes	8936 L/Cpl R. Brook, 1/Buffs. Killed in action 7/6/15.		No
3	A	12	do	Yes	403 Pte. G. Brown, 1/Buffs. Killed in action 7/6/15.		No
3	A	13	do	Yes	Lieut. W.F. Taylor, 1/Buffs. Killed in action 7/6/15.		No
3	A	14	do	Yes	10276 L/Cpl. T. Perren, 1/Buffs. Killed in action 7/6/15.		No
3	A	15	B.30, b.3, 4.	Yes	Driver M.A. Comes, 2/Canadian Battery R.F.A. Killed in action 25/4/15.		No
3	A	16	H.4, b.9, 9.	Yes	R.I.P. 77129 Dr. G. Buttle, 365 Bty. R.F.A. Killed in action 8/5/15.		No
3	A	17	do	Yes	9565 Gnr. J.E. Wilkins R.F.A. Killed in action 8/5/15.		No

This form to be rendered in duplicate, one copy being handed to the Registration Officer and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

Printed in France by A.P. & S.S. Press 5-B465-173-379-000.

Concentration of Graves shows the plot number of the grave Plot 3, Row A, Grave 12, the next column shows where the body was originally found on the Army map Sheet 28 H.5.a.2.9

WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Army

(Erase heading not required.)

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references
June 3 rd	The Battalion marched to huts in some huts N.E. of FLAMERTINGE. Major E.H. Ford, Hatter having returned took command of Battalion - Lt. Batten remained in reserve.	
4 th	Captain Hart transferred to 2 nd Bn Buffs. Lt. Morley to hospital, with hand damaged by explosion of own a demolition.	
5 th	The huts were heavily shelled with shrapnel - no casualties - 28 other ranks joined.	
7 th	The huts were heavily shelled for 3 hours. Lieut Taylor + 10 men killed, 3 wounded.	
8 th	The Battalion marched back some 4 miles to a wood where we built anti-bunker. Lieut. Hottel returned from England.	
9	Capt. Catley returned from hospital - took command of C. Coy.	
10	C.S.M. Bannan, Sgt. W. Walter. L. Cpl. Lucy award D.C. Medal.	
11		
12		
13		
14		
15	Lt. Morley to hospital.	
16	Capt. Rames to "	
17	Batt. took over trenches from 1 st W. York Regt. in the sector of YPRES.	
18	Lt. Morley rejoined - 1 man killed, 2 wounded.	

Official war diary entry for East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) 1st Battalion June 7th 1915 is marked with a yellow line. Killed along with Lieutenant Taylor who is buried next to him in the cemetery.

The entry says, "The huts were heavily shelled for three hours Lieut Taylor + 10 men killed, 3 wounded".

Military Evidence

IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

SCHEME "A" PAGE 25

No. of Contract.....dated.....

Name and address of firm.....

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF HEADSTONE INSCRIPTIONS

to this report is attached

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE TEXTS

PERTH CEM. CHINA WALL "B"

..... (those headstones to be inscribed with texts are underlined)

and

TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layout to be used are quoted on the badge design.)

To be stencilled at foot of headstone below ground level abbreviated thus:-
PTH.C.CH.WL.

Badge Design No. and Layout No.	1st line	2nd line	3rd line	4th line	Centre of Stone	To be stencilled on foot of headstones below ground level.
	Number and Rank	Initials, NAME and Honours.	Regiment	Date of Death <small>In any instance where the entry "NONE" appears in Col. 6. the Age will be omitted from the Headstone and the Date of Death centred laterally.</small>	Age Relig. Embl.	Plot Row Grave P R G No. of Stone
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1186/2B	70672 A/BOMBARDIER	J. PAGET	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	13TH MAY 1915	AGE 21 CROSS	3 A 3 861
1030/2E	200710 PRIVATE	J.A. PENDLEBURY	LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS	6TH JUNE 1917	AGE 22 CROSS	3 A 4 862
1078/1A	T4/111118 DRIVER	G.G. WALLOND	ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS	6TH JUNE 1917	AGE 27 CROSS	3 A 5 863
1047/1A	6642 RIFLEMAN	F. CHAPMAN	THE RIFLE BRIGADE	25TH APRIL 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 6 864
1028/1A	S/8074 PRIVATE	S. DAY	ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT	25TH MAY 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 7 865
1027/1A	S/8453 LANCE CPL.	T. WHITE	E.KENT REGT.(THE BUFFS)	7TH JUNE 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 8 866
1186/2A	43742 GUNNER	G. TWIGG	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	29TH APRIL 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 9 867
1186/2A	656182 DRIVER	G.S. RINTOUL	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	5TH JUNE 1917	NONE CROSS	3 A 10 868
1027/1B	L/8936 LANCE CPL.	R.E. BROOK	E.KENT REGT.(THE BUFFS)	7TH JUNE 1915	AGE 22 CROSS	3 A 11 869
1027/1A	L/7824 PRIVATE	G. BROWN	E.KENT REGT.(THE BUFFS)	7TH JUNE 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 12 870
1027/1E	LIEUTENANT	W.F. TAYLOR	E.KENT REGT.(THE BUFFS)	7TH JUNE 1915	AGE 23 CROSS	3 A 13 871
1027/1A	S/10278 LANCE CPL.	S.W. FERREM	E.KENT REGT.(THE BUFFS)	7TH JUNE 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 14 872
1202/1A	40530 GUNNER	M.A. GOMES	CANADIAN FIELD ARTILLERY	26TH APRIL 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 15 873
1186/2A	77127 DRIVER	G.W. BUTTLE	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	8TH MAY 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 16 874
1186/2A	9565 GUNNER	T.E. WILKIN	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	8TH MAY 1915	NONE CROSS	3 A 17 875

Proof Checked.....

Final Check No.1.....

Office copy prepared.....

Final Check No.2.....

Imperial War graves Commission Headstone Instruction.

Military Evidence

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.
GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM

D.A.D.G.R.E., Cent. S-District No. 5 District.
REPORT No. 50. SCHEDULE No. 58/c

Central S.D. District
Army Form W. 3372.
No. 5 District
6/22/20

Comment - ZILLEBEKE.
This Report Schedules 1/C to 56/C, cancels Zillebeke Report No. 1/C to 5/C and all preliminary reports.

PLACE OF BURIAL PERTH (CHINA WALL) MILITARY CEMETERY.
All Documents Certified Correct & Complete.

Map Reference Sh. 29. I. 16. H. 85. 70.
Major, J. F. Smith
D.A.D.G.R. & E., Cent. S-District No. 5 District.

The following are buried here:—

14 SEP 1920

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
PLOT 3.						
					all crosses erected	ROW A.
2 Scots Gds.	5569	ROBERTSON	PTE. S.	10-3-16		1. ✓
1 Buffs	106--	BURKE	J.	7-6-15		2. ✓
37 R.F.A.	76872	PAGE T. T.	BDR. J.	13-5-15	RA/34218 RA/25/6100	3. ✓
Lanc Fus.	200710	PENDLEBURY	PTE. J.			4. ✓
2 55 DIV. TRAIN. TUL	111112	WALLOND	DVR. G. G.	4-6-17		5. ✓
4 Rifle Bde.	6642	CHAPMAN	CPL. F. H.	25-4-15	RU/24358	6. ✓
R. West Kent	8074	DAY	PTE. S.	25-5-15		7. ✓
1 Buffs	8453	WHITE	L/C. T.	7-6-15		8. ✓
75 R.F.A.	43742	TWIGG	DVR. G. GNR. O.	29-5-15		9. ✓
C 276 R.F.A.	56182	RINTOUL	DVR. G. S.			10. ✓
1 Buffs	8936	BROOK	L/C. R.	7-6-15		11. ✓
-do-	403	BROWN	PTE. G.	"		12. ✓
-do-		TAYLOR	LT. W. F.	"		13. ✓
-do-	10278	PERREM	DVR. T.	"		14. ✓
2 Can. F.A.		COMES	DVR. M. A.	25-4-15		15. ✓

ENTERED 18. 10. 20
SLIPS CHECKED E.S. 16/11/20

(6 31 5) W3160—P2723 100,000 9/19 HWV P1024) Forms/W3372/3

Graves Registration Form

Military Evidence

Effects—Form 118A.

5 DEC 1915

Infantry Records,
Hounslow.

WAR OFFICE,
PARK BUILDINGS,
ST. JAMES'S PARK,
LONDON, S.W.,
15th November, 1915.

7777 / 1. (Accounts 4.)

Will you please note that any articles of personal property now in your possession belonging to the late No. 7824 Private George Brown, 1st Bn. East Kent Regiment, should be despatched to:—

Mrs G. Brown,
Lambland Cottages,
Rohenden,
Cranbrook.

Any medals granted to the deceased that are now in your possession or that may hereafter reach you should be forwarded to:—

The same person.

Chambers
Assistant Financial Secretary.

191037	6/9/1919	Brown George	Lt. Br. Cavalry 1916 7284 7824	7-6-15 L.A. Action	5 / 6	5	1	6	M.O. %hs.	15-11-15	Wid. Rate	5	1	6	Self & children
											5-7-19	Wid. Rate	5	-	-

WAR GRATUITY

Transf. 14/6/1919

Regd. Paper 1967-1919

Serial No. 2111

A.W. Woodcock

6 MAY 1919

Send belongings to – Address is Great Gran Brown his wife at Lambsland Cottages Rolvenden Lane.
Below that is the financial war settlement of Five pounds, one shilling and Sixpence.

Military Evidence

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

THE BUFFS (2627 REGT) REGIMENT OR CORPS.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 301, of 1919.

On 11/11/19 or on becoming non-effective		NAME	Unit previously served with. Regt. No. and Rank in same on entry into theatre of war	Theatre of war in which served								Clasp awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations (a) Presented (b) Despatched by Post (c) Taken into Stock	REMARKS	
Regt. No.	Rank			From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To				
1/7624	Pte.	REYN, George	1/7624.1 Pte. E. Kent												
1/7625	SP4	COLLINS, Harry	1/7625.1 Pte. E. Kent												
1/7626	Pte.	NEAVE, James	1/7626.1 Pte. E. Kent												
1/7627	Pte.	FRANKIE, Harry	1/7627.1 Pte. E. Kent												

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place: 21 JUN 1920 Date: 21 JUN 1920

Signature and rank of Officer certifying: Alvin Jones Lieut. for

Signature and rank of Officer certifying: Alvin Jones Lieut. for

Official entry in the log showing entitlement to British & Victory Medals

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

The Buffs East Kent Regiment or Corps when Decoration was earned.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Decoration granted under Army Order 350 of 1917.

Original

To be left blank.	On Date of Disembarkation.		NAME	Date of Disembarkation.	REMARKS	Record of disposal of decorations (a) Presented (b) Despatched by Post (c) Taken into Stock	To be left Blank for use in War Office.
	Regt. No.	Rank					
	1/7406	Pte.	BILLINGHAM, AA	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7417	Pte.	BALDWIN, J.H.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7434	Pte.	BRATTLE, F.W.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7435	Pte.	BODMAN, W.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7444	Pte.	BURGESS, W.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7451	Pte.	BROAD, G.A.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7452	Pte.	BROWN, G.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7453	Pte.	BINGHAM, F.L.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7454	Pte.	BOUGHTON, A.N.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7455	Pte.	BULL, L.F.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7456	Pte.	BING, S.C.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	
	1/7457	Pte.	BAKER, H.	7-9-14	Discharged medically	B 4-6-19	

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Decoration as detailed above.

Place: 23 SEP 1918 Date: 23 SEP 1918

Signature and rank of Officer certifying: Alvin Jones Lieut. for

Signature and rank of Officer certifying: Alvin Jones Lieut. for

Official entry in the logbook showing entitlement for the 1914 Star.



AWARDED TO

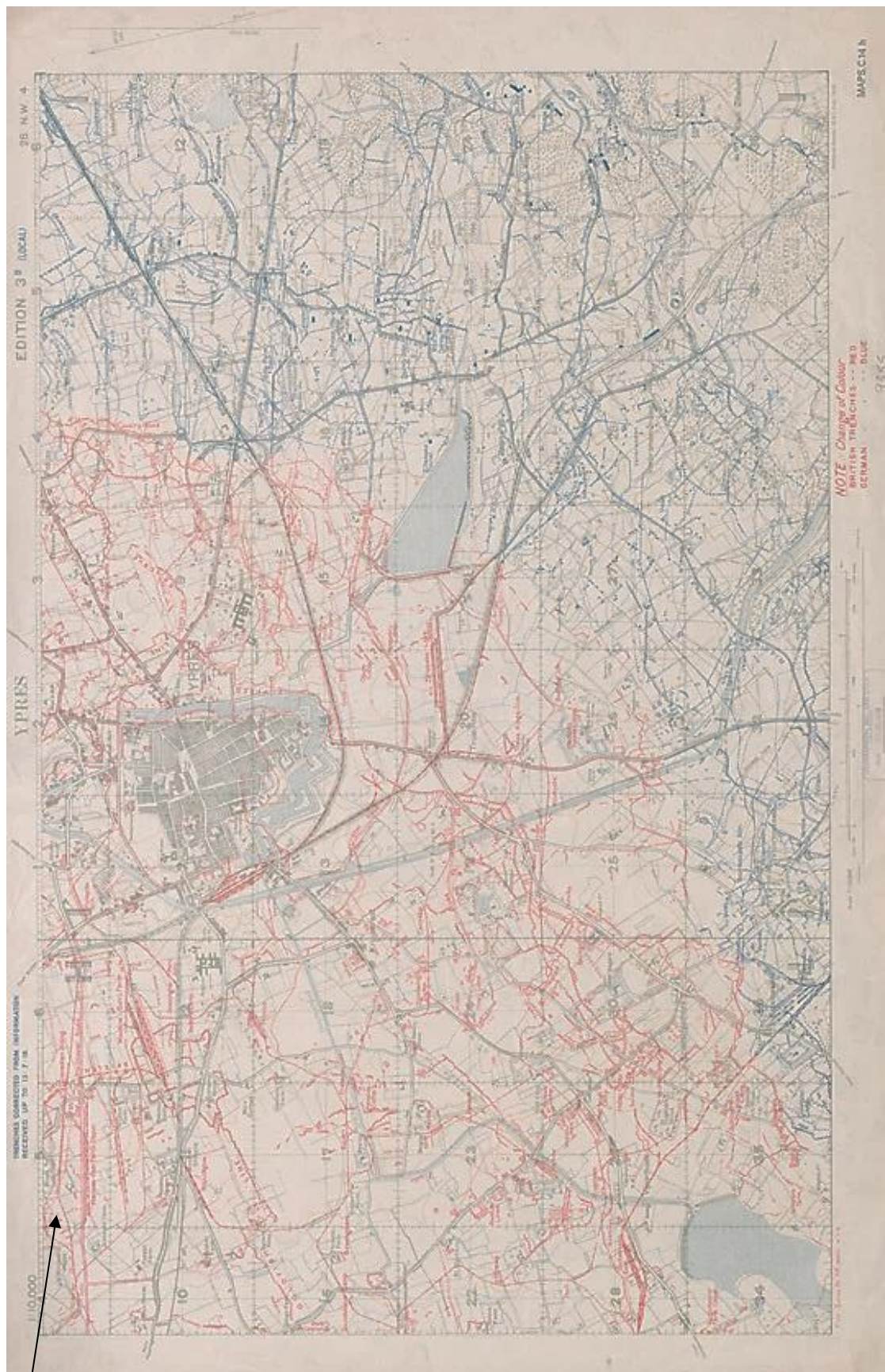
Private. L/7824

G Brown

Bufs (East Kent Regiment)

3			
Name,	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
BROWN	E. Kent R.	Pte	L/7824
George.	"	"	"
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	E/2/102 B. 13. 2006.		W. in A. 4-6-15
BRITISH	do - do.		
14 STAR	E/2/3	8	
Classified 2/26/6			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein 7-9-14			
K 1380.			

L/7824 Pte George Browns Official Medal Card



- British Army Trench Map – Red trenches are British forces Blue trenches are German
 Map reference H.5.a.2.9 where George was killed is around here.

Monday 7th. It is awfully hot again; we paraded in shirt sleeves. I have to sit outside to avoid melting altogether. We got through our tea before the evening "hate", but it came soon after 6:00. They sent over about 30 shells; the artillery said they were 8", mostly too far to the right but one went into a shelter trench and killed 11 and wounded two,

What appears to be slightly misfortunate shelling in which Pte George Brown was killed.

JUNE

including Taylor.

[The 11 members of the Battalion who were killed by the shell landing on their trench were almost certainly

Lt William Frederick Taylor aged 23, son of William Marion Taylor of "Harrow"

Cowes, Isle of Wight

L8163 Pte A Mantle

L8163 L/Cpl James George Fuller

L8936 L/Cpl Robert Edward Brook

L7824 Pte G Brown

S9160 Pte James Burke

S244 Pte J Gowler

5903 Pte W Hills

S10278 L/Cpl SW Perrem

S8453 L/Cpl T White

S108 Pte John Hughes

All were privately buried by the regiment in a plot that Wilfrid returned to see on 6th October, four months later. After the war their graves were moved to Perth Cemetery (China Wall) where they remain, united as they fell with the exception of Fuller and Hughes whose graves were lost and are remembered with more than 54,000 others with no known grave on the Menin Gate, Ypres, and Mantle who is buried nearby in White House Cemetery, St Jean-Les Ypres.]

As soon as they stopped, my platoon paraded to dig behind the firing line. We went right past the orchard where the shells had been falling. You never saw such holes, 10ft deep and the same across. More shells came along and some of the men got into the ditch but I cursed them roundly that that would not do when they were not even shelling us. With several pauses for shelling, we went through the north part of Ypres; it was very badly knocked about. A guide took us forward and we dug a communication trench from the 2nd to the 1st line. It was fairly quiet where we were, except for one rattle of machine guns when we all lay down. In the hurry to get away I had left my water bottle behind. I had some dried figs which made a sort of meal.

October 6th entry when Captain Barham returned to their graves in Brielen.

After tea we went to find the graves of the 11 men who were killed when we were shelled in the huts when first here. [See entry for 7th June]. We found them but they can do with a little tidying up.

In Memory of

Private

G Brown

L/7824, 1st Bn., The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) who died on 07 June 1915

Remembered with Honour
Perth Cemetery (China Wall)



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Commemorative Memorial issued by Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Commemorative plaque in Rolvenden Church (Up by the Altar left hand side)



Rolvenden War Memorial

George Brown WW1 Travels

L/7824 Private George Brown

1st Battalion – 16th Infantry Brigade – 6th Division – III Corps

30th July 1914 Mobilisation begun

8th Sept 1914 Sailed from Southampton on SS Minneapolis

9th Sept 1914 Disembarked St Nazaire

9th Sept 1914 Marched to Rest Camp at Grand Marais

11th Sept 1914 Train to Montcerf via Angers – Tours – Vendome

12th Sept 1914 Marched to Billets at Maison Celles Nr Crecy La Chapelle billeted at Chateau Rouge.

13th Sept 1914 Jouarre

14th Sept 1914 Marched to Citry and billeted.

15th Sept 1914 Marched via Chateau Thierry to Rocourt

16th Sept 1914 Marched to and billeted at Rozieres.

17th Sept 1914 Marched to and biv'd in woods west of Mesmin.

19th Sept 1914 Marched to Billets at Mont Notre Dame

20th Sept 1914 (Afternoon) Marched to Courcelles

20th Sept 1914 (Night) Marched to English position North of Vailly.

13th Oct 1914 Marched to Bazoches – Fismes

13th Oct 1914 Train to Cassel via Paris, Amiens, E'taples. Arrived at 12:15am 15th Oct.

15th Oct 1914 Marched to Outtersteene

15th Oct 1914 to May 1915 Actions in and around Armentieres area.

Oct - Nov 1914 wounded around the area of Grande Flamengrie Farm

31st May 1915 Marched to Bailleul to billets.

Visited by Prime Minister Asquith on 31st May.

1st June 1915 Marched to Wittehoek 4 miles south of Poperinge.

3rd June 1915 Marched to billets, some huts north east of Vlamertinge.

6th June 1915 the huts were heavily shelled with shrapnel but no casualties.

7th June 1915 the huts were heavily shelled for three hours. Private George Brown was killed along with 10 others.

(The above dates & notes are taken from the official East Kent Regiment 1st Battalion diary)

Maps of George Browns WW1 Travels

30th July 1914 Mobilisation begun

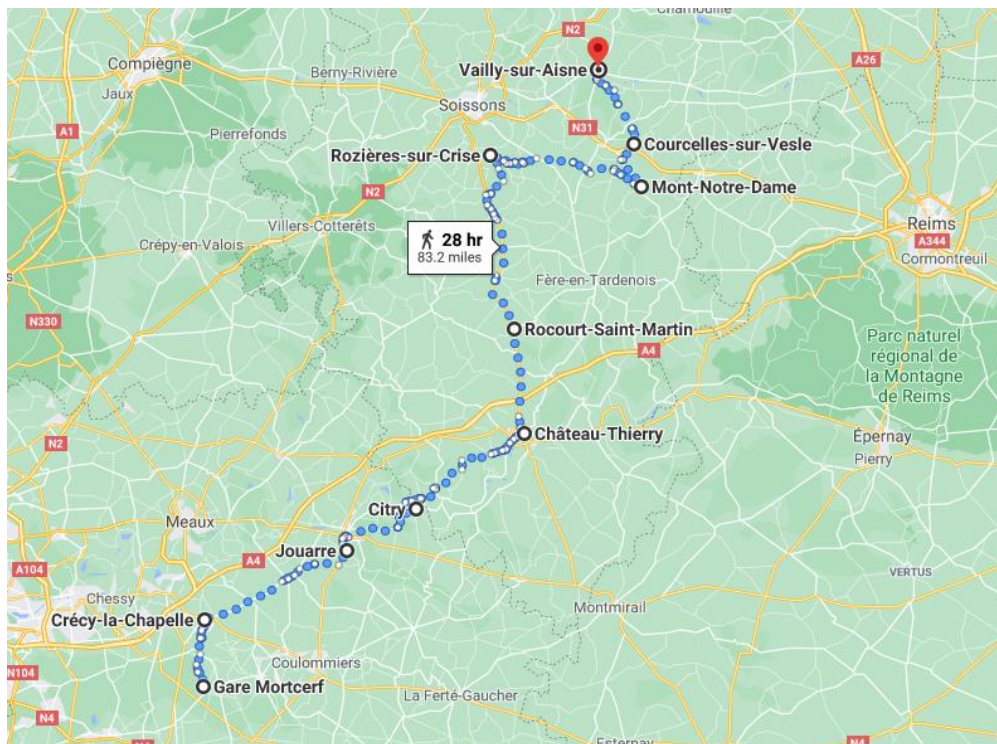
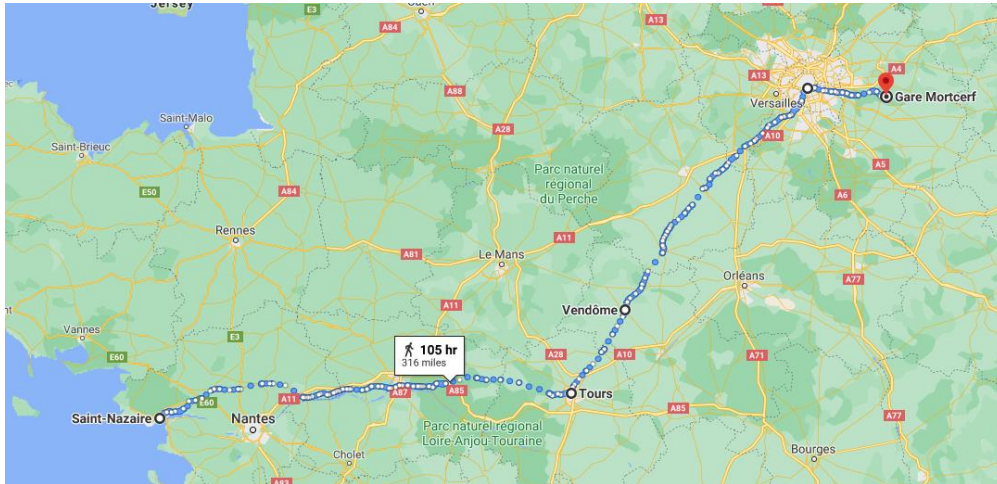
8th Sept 1914 Sailed from Southampton on SS Minneapolis

9th Sept 1914 Disembarked St Nazaire

9th Sept 1914 Marched to Rest Camp at Grand Marais

11th Sept 1914 Train to Montcerf, via Angers – Tours – Vendome

12th Sept 1914 Marched to Billets at Maison Celles Nr Crecy La Chapelle billeted at Chateau Rouge.



13th Sept 1914 Marched to Jouarre

14th Sept 1914 Marched to Citry and billeted.

15th Sept 1914 Marched via Chateau Thierry to Rocourt, shelter in cowsheds with Belgian refugees.

16th Sept 1914 Marched to and billeted at Rozières in a desolate farm with refugees.

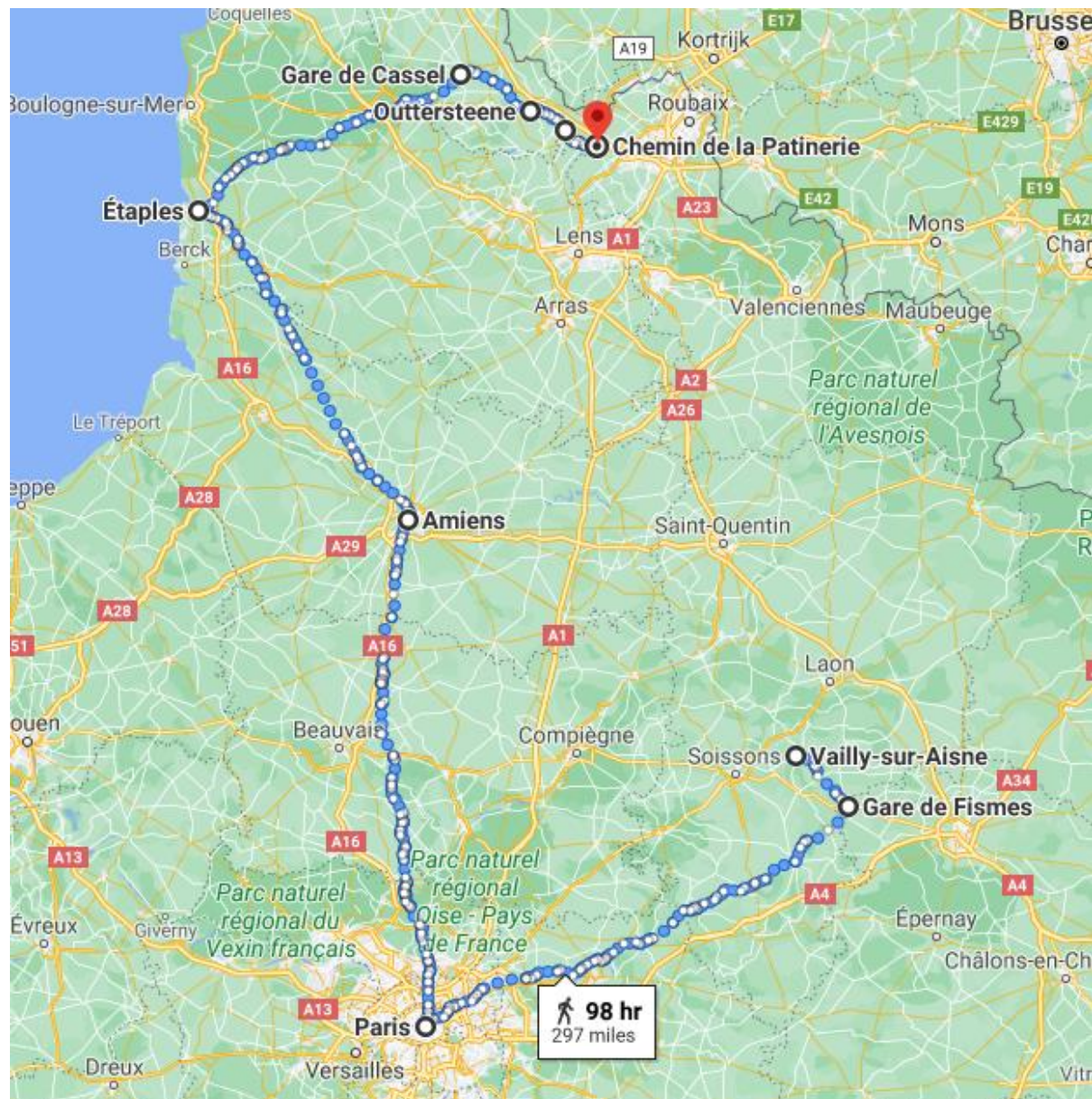
17th Sept 1914 Marched to and bivi'd in wood (made huts) west of Mesmin.

19th Sept 1914 Marched to Billets at Mont Notre Dame

20th Sept 1914 (Afternoon) Marched to Courcelles

20th Sept 1914 (Night) Marched to English position North of Vailly-Sur-Aisne.

The period from 20th September through to 13th October was spent in the Vailly-sur-Aisne area.



13th Oct 1914 Marched to Bazoches – Fismes

13th Oct 1914 Train to Cassel via Paris, Amiens, Étaples. Arrived at 12:15am 15th Oct.

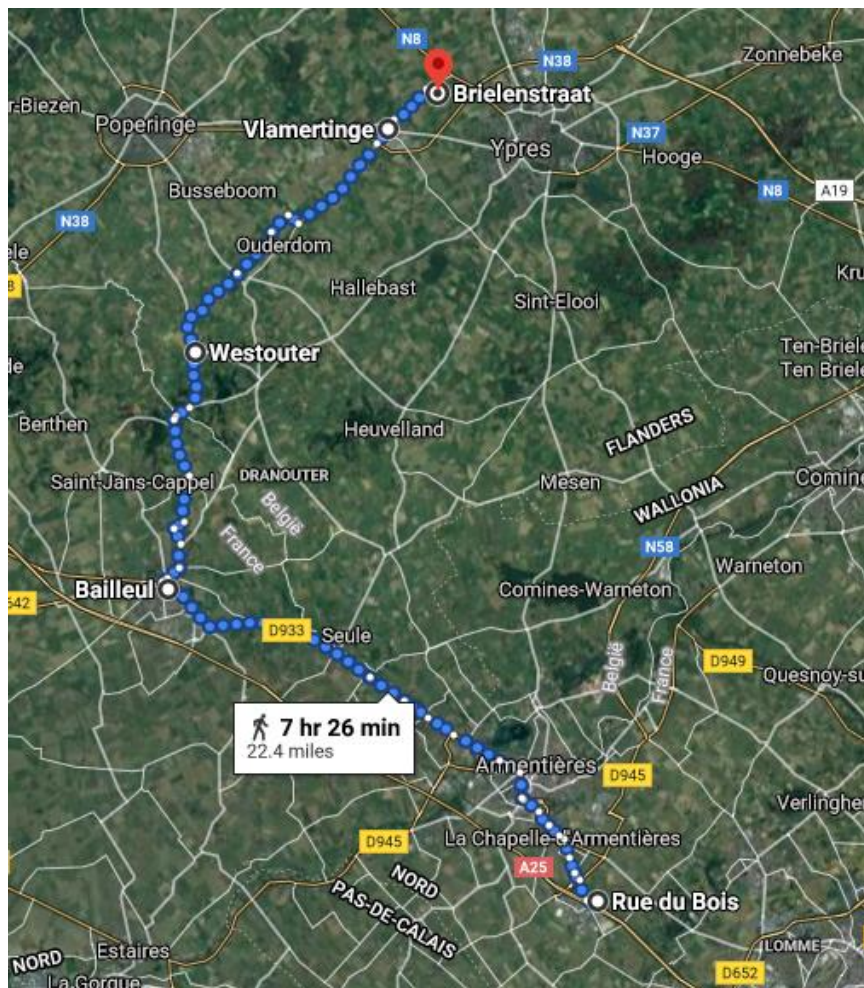
15th Oct 1914 Marched to Outtersteene

15th Oct 1914 to May 1915 Actions in and around Armentieres France

Oct - Nov 1914 listed as wounded around the area of Grande Flamengrie Farm in the area of Bois Grenier south of Armentieres France. Actions around Armentieres area until the end of May 1915.

10th May 1915 Wrote what turned out to be his final card to his Son Tom.

31st May 1915 Visited by Prime Minister Asquith.



31st May 1915 Marched to Bailleul to billets.

1st June 1915 Marched to Wittenhoek (Westouter) or Wippenhoek 4 miles south of Poperinge.

3rd June 1915 Marched to billets, some huts north east of Vlamertinge.

6th June 1915 the huts were heavily shelled but no casualties.

7th June 1915 the huts were heavily shelled for three hours.



1st Battalion East Kent Regiment in Ypres area 1915



A Shell Hole near Brielen May 1915 (Above)

Banns of Marriage between

George Brown Bachelor } Both
of this Parish.

and Kate Bryant Spinster

1st Time, Sunday, Oct. 11 by P. B. Drabble

2nd Time, Sunday, 18 by P. B. Drabble

3rd Time, Sunday, 25 by P. B. Drabble

George Brown & Kate Bryant Marriage Banns above. Registration below.

1908. Marriage solemnized at St Mary's Church in the Parish of Rotenden in the County of Kent

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
66	<u>Nov^r 21st 1908</u>	<u>George Brown</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>Bachelor</u>	<u>Labourer</u>	<u>Rotenden</u>	<u>George Brown</u>	<u>Roadman</u>
		<u>Kate Bryant</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>Spinster</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>Rotenden</u>	<u>Thomas Bryant</u>	<u>Labourer.</u>

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by P. B. Drabble or after Banns by me, P. B. Drabble Vicar.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { George Brown } in the Presence of us, { Arthur Bryant }
 { Kate Bryant } { Mary Monk }

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 10963411-1



1908. Marriage solemnized at S. Mary's Church in the Parish of Robenden in the County of Kent

Column No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
66.	Nov ^r 21 st 1908	George Brown	23.	Bachelor	Labourer	Robenden.	George Brown	Roadman
		Kate Bryant.	23.	Spinster.	—	Robenden	Thomas Bryant.	Labourer

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by Arthur Bryant. or after Banns by me, George Brown Kate Bryant. In the presence of us, Mary Monk.

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Tenterden
Given at the General Register Office, under the Seal of the said Office, the

17th day of July 2020

MXH 897471



SJS

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

825239 04/19 AN/A/187

SAW 042457

CERTIFIED COPY OF



ENTRY OF DEATH

Application Number 10963411-2

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Special Provisions) Act 1957

Return of Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of Killed in Action or who have died whilst on Service Abroad in the War of 1914 to 1921							
Rgtl. or Army number	Rank	Name in Full (Surname First)	Age	Country of Birth	Date of Death	Place of Death	Cause of Death
L/7824	Pte 1	BROWN George	29	England	7.6.1915	British Expeditionary Force France	Killed in Action
An Entry relating to the death of George Brown							

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of the *certified copy of** an entry in a Service Departments Register.

Given at the General Register office, under the seal of the said Office, the

5th day of August 2020



**If the certificate is given from the original Register the words "the certified copy of" are struck out.*

Section 3(2) of the above mentioned Act provides that "The enactments relating to the registration of births and deaths and marriages in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (which contain provisions authorising the admission in evidence of, and of extracts from, certified copies of registers and duplicate registers) shall have effect as if the Service Departments Registers were certified copies or duplicate registers transmitted to the Registrar General in accordance with those enactments."

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © Crown Copyright

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53655 Private Robert J Bliss – Canadian Expeditionary Force
4th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division
18th Battalion “C” Company



Robert J Bliss (Post WW1)

Great Uncle Bob

This is the result of much research and trawling the Internet, Military Records Visits to Ypres (Ieper) and searching anything to do with the 18th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War 1



Robert J Bliss

Life Synopsis

The Extraordinary Life of Robert J Bliss



1st May 1893 Born in Dover Road Folkestone

To parents Robert James & Eliza Bliss (nee Poile born in Rolvenden 1865)

[Eliza Poile was living in Rolvenden in Alma cottages in the 1871 census & was a domestic servant in Merrington house Rolvenden in the 1881 census. Then moved to Folkestone but returned to Rolvenden as she appears in the 1939 census and lived with my Gran & Grandad Brown for a while.]

31st March 1901 (Census) he was living at 15 Darlington Street Folkestone. Aged 8

(His mother could not afford to keep him & his brothers, so they were sent away to orphanages and she kept Gran Brown (Doris) and her sister Lilian).

8th April 1910 He sailed to Canada on the Empress of Ireland. Aged 17

14th April 1910 He was placed in a Fegan home for boys 295 George Street Toronto Canada.

22nd March 1911 He was living with a Mr & Mrs Hill and working on their farm Ontario Canada.

2nd November 1914 He signed up for 18th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force.

18th April 1915 Sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada to England on SS Grampian.

29th April 1915 Arrived at West Sandling Army Camp Folkestone.

30th April 1915 started training.

15th September 1915 sailed to Boulogne, Pays de la Loire in France with CEF.

8th April 1916 Voormezele, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Crater 3, Gunshot wound to right arm.

10th April 1916 No 8 Stationary Hospital Wimereux, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France for above.

3rd July 1916 Injured around the Bluff trenches area Gunshot or Shell back injury.

3rd July 1916 NO 25 General Hospital Hardelot-Plage, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France Gunshot or Shell wound to Spine and stomach troubles & pyrexia.

18th August 1916 Due to medical issues he was sent back to England where he trained and was shunted around the reserves in various places including Hastings & Bramshott Hampshire.

6th March 1917 He was attached to 4th Reserves Battalion in Bramshott.

25th November 1918 Sent to Canadian Discharge Depot in Buxton Derbyshire.

7th December 1918 He sailed back to Canada on the RMS Olympic

18th January 1919 Discharged from The Canadian Army Medically unfit. His records say "Insane".

12th March 1920 Sailed back to England to find his mother on Empress of France.

He next appears on the 1939 Census as an inmate at St Augustine Hospital where he died in 1966 and buried in St Mary's Church yard in Rolvenden.

All through his Army career he had most of his money sent to his mother at various addresses in Rolvenden.

ATTESTATION PAPER.

53650

Folio. 5

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

(ANSWERS)

1. What is your name?..... Robert Bliss
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born?..... Folkestone Eng
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin?..... (Mother) Eliza Bliss
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin?..... Folkestone Eng
5. What is the date of your birth?..... May 1897
6. What is your Trade or Calling?..... Laborer
7. Are you married?..... single
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?..... yes
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?..... no
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force?..... no
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?..... yes
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE?..... yes

Robert Bliss (Signature of Man).
W. J. Green (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Robert Bliss, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Robert Bliss (Signature of Recruit)

Date Nov 2 1914. W. J. Green (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Robert Bliss, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Robert Bliss (Signature of Recruit)

Date Nov 2 1914. W. J. Green (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at St Thomas this 2d day of Nov 1914.

Edwidge (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

W. J. Green (Approving Officer)

8 SE
300 M-8-14
H.Q. 1773-1-14

Robert j Bliss – Signing up to the Canadian Army November 2nd 1914

Description of Robt Bliss on Enlistment.

<p>Apparent Age <u>22</u> years _____ months.</p> <p>(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)</p>		<p>Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.</p> <p>Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless he can substantiate to any previous service, attach a slip to this effect, for the information of the approving Officer.</p>
<p>Height <u>5 ft. 7 in.</u></p>		
<p>Birth when fully expanded <u>67 in.</u></p> <p>Range of expansion <u>9 in.</u></p>		
<p>Complexion <u>Brown</u></p>		
<p>Eyes <u>Grey</u></p>		
<p>Hair <u>Brown</u></p>		
<p>Religious denominations.</p>	<p>Church of England _____</p>	
	<p>Presbyterian _____</p>	
	<p>Wesleyan _____</p>	
	<p>Baptist or Congregationalist _____</p>	
	<p>Other Protestants <u>✓</u> (Specimen to be named) _____</p>	
	<p>Roman Catholic _____</p>	
<p>Jewish _____</p>		

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for the Canadian Over-Sea Expeditionary Force.

Date Nov 2 1914.

Place St. Louis

Medical Officer.

*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been selected, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness.

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Robert Bliss having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

Date Nov. 28th 1914. W. H. H. H. (Signature of Officer)

Robert J Bliss – Army Medical November 28th 1914

Original
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs. Part II
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages
will be prepared in manuscript.

Apr 29-1915
May 31-1915

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required.)

18th Bn. C.E.F.
4th Inf Bde C.E.F.

Army Form C-2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AVONMOUTH.	29-4-1915	6.00 A.M.	Arrived on R.M.S. GRAMIAN.	
W. Sandling Camp:	"	3.00 P.M.	Arrived at WEST SANDLING CAMP. and Allotted Quarters.	
"	4-5-15		32 other Ranks detailed to attend course in Physical Training and Bayonet Fighting at NAHEIR BARRACKS, SHORNOLIFFE.	
"	7-5-15		CAPTS. HALLAM, FERRY, SHUTTLEWORTH, and LOGHRIN, and 17 other Ranks to report to O.C. 17th. Batt. for Course as above. LIEUT. W. J. FORBES-MITCHELL, LIEUT. RISPIN, and 6 other Ranks detailed for Course in M. G. ROSS BARRACKS, SHORNOLIFFE.	
"	8-5-15		2 more other Ranks added to above Course.	
"			MAJORS L.E. JONES, A.C. FRINCH, R. BARNERTON, O.E. SALE,; LIEUTS. C.F. LAING, J.S. BELL, W.S. MCKEBOUGH, J.A. McINTOSH and 16 other Ranks detailed for Course in Musketry, to report to O.C. 30th. Batt. DIBGATE.	
"	10-5-15		Transport Detachments 19th. and 20th. Batts. (LIEUT HATCH and 33 other Ranks) attached for Duty and discipline.	
"	26-5-15		Detail of 8-5-15 Returned from Course at DIBGATE.	
"	27-5-15		19th and 20th. Detachments ceased to be attached. MAJOR J.T.F. MURPHY, CAPT. MCKETHORNIE, and CAPT. ROSS, A.M.C. attached to Officers Mess 18th. Batt.	Training syllabus Appendix 'A' Training Syllabus Appendix B.

127 W. 1000/1715 50000 1/15 D.O.A.L. A.D.S.S. (Form) C. 2118

CM 18th Bn C.E.F.

Diary entry for arrival at West Sandling training camp

15th Canadian Battalion
WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C-2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	6th		Position at yesterday. 5.30 AM Batt ⁿ moved to. 7.30 AM Batt ⁿ moved up through VOORMEEZELE in reserve at CONVENT LANE. Front line held by 31st Bn B ⁿ . Enemy artillery very active all day. This shelling was heavy on the reserves and supports. CAPT. MCKEBOUGH, CAPT. HADLEY and LIEUT. J. BARTER returned from leave.	
	7th		Have B coys withdrawn to Camp H. C.D. remained in reserve. Situation quiet. Leave cancelled. 6 AM wounded, 1 AM returned from hospital. Post II orders show - 2 AM died of wounds and 9 AM evacuated to ENGLAND and showed off strength.	
	8th		18th Batt ⁿ now in support at VOORMEEZELE. Orders received from 1st Bn. Inf. Brigade for Brigade to attack craters No 2 and 3. 18th Batt ⁿ in conjunction with 19th Bn B ⁿ to attack craters No 3. 2 AM killed in action. 10 AM wounded. 1 AM returned from hospital.	Copy of operation order attached.
	9th		For position see <u>Laundary</u> . The Army commandant writes to say how pleased he is with the work done last night which has materially improved our position. He wishes General Remus and the troops concerned informed. Every effort must now be concentrated on establishing communication from our front line to the craters and in organized bombing attacks. Further comment by G.O. H ^q . The Commandant Orders...	Report of operations attached.

First Injury Crater No3 at St Eloi just south of Voormezeele

Original Confidential
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs. Part II
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages
will be prepared in manuscript.

19th Canadian Battalion
WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required.)

July 1916

Army Form C-2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Front Line	1st		Battalion in trenches at <u>BLUFF</u> INTERNATIONAL TRENCH, BERN and POLLOCK. 2 AM Wounded, 2 AM sick, admitted to hospital.	
	2nd		Position as yesterday. enemy artillery active 3 AM. Killed in action. 6 AM Wounded. 1 AM sick admitted to hospital. 2 AM returned from hospital. LIEUT. W.K. FRASER admitted to hospital (sick). LIEUT. W.H. WILLIAMS, W.O. BROWN, W.F. HUYCKE, arrived as reinforcements.	
	3rd		Position as yesterday. 1 AM Killed in action. 2 AM Sick, 1 AM Wounded admitted to hospital.	
	4th		Battalion relieved by 31st Bn B ⁿ . 18th Battalion in reserve at QUEBEC CAMP. Nothing unusual.	
QUEBEC CAMP	5th		6 AM Pay parade and Routine. 3 AM returned from Base hospitals. 2 AM (sick) admitted to hospital. 2 AM returned from hospital.	
QUEBEC CAMP	6th		Pay parade. Post II orders # 26 shows 41 AM showed off strength of Battalion	

Second Injury in "The Bluff" trenches Front line just east of Voormezeele

Account of the battle of St Eloi Craters.

The Battle of St. Eloi Craters was fought from 27th March to 16th April 1916 during the First World War. The attack over the soggy terrain of Belgium was the first major engagement for the 2nd Canadian Division. It was a disaster for Canada and its Allies.

Mine Warfare

By late 1915, armies on both sides of the First World War were using extensive mining as a part of trench warfare. Sappers dug tunnels across the battlefield to plant explosives under enemy positions and would then retreat and blow them up. The fields near the Belgian village of St. Eloi, located five kilometres south of Ypres, were pockmarked with craters from repeated underground explosions.

In the spring of 1916, the Canadian Corps' 2nd Division was sent to fight Germans on the front line at St. Eloi. The Canadians were rushed to the battlefield, leaving no time to prepare for the attack. The plan was for the seasoned British troops to strike and then for the Canadians to take over and hold the line.

The fighting started at 4:15 a.m. on 27th March with heavy gun fire. Six British mines were set off one after the other, shaking the earth "like the sudden outburst of a volcano" and filling the sky with yellow smoke and debris, according to the Canadian Expeditionary Force's war record. The explosion was heard in England. German trenches collapsed.

Fighting from Craters

The mines created huge craters in no man's land. The British soldiers rose from their positions in the cold mud and attacked, quickly capturing three craters and the third German line. For several days, British soldiers fought hand-to-hand with Germans, advancing until 3rd April.

The British soldiers grew confused as to where they were as the mines had reshaped the landscape. Four mines blew up so close to each other that the craters formed an impassable lake that was 15 m deep and 55 m across. (It later became a recreational fishing lake for a summer cottage).

British troops fought from inside the craters, crouching in mud or standing in waist-deep water, unable to sit. High winds, sleet and mud created nightmarish conditions. Hundreds of men were killed on either side in a week of chaotic shooting and shelling. The exhausted British were relieved by the Canadians at 3 a.m. on 4th April.

Canadians Enter Fray

The excited Canadians were eager for their first taste of battle. Arriving at St. Eloi, however, they found a shortage of steel helmets, machine guns and defensive positions. They had only a vague idea where they were and where the Germans were. The 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion improved the defences and attempted to drain the trenches of water. At the same time the entire front line came under constant bombardment on 4th and 5th April, and hundreds more men were killed.

Canadian Private Donald Fraser, a 34-year-old bank clerk from Calgary, described the scene: "When day broke, the sights that met our gaze were so horrible and ghastly that they beggar description. Heads, arms and legs were protruding from the mud at every yard and who knows how many bodies the earth swallowed. Thirty corpses were at least showing in the crater and beneath its clayey waters other victims must be lying killed and drowned. A young, tall, slim English lieutenant lay stretched in death with a pleasant, peaceful look on his boyish face. Some mother's son, gone to glory."

"Walking on Dead"

Frank Maheux, another Canadian, wrote to his wife that "we were walking on dead soldiers" as they tried to advance. Wounded and traumatized men streamed back to the medical officers. Some had been fighting standing in cold water and mud for 48 straight hours, and officers had been awake for 100 hours.

At 3:30 a.m. on 6th April, two German battalions attacked down the ruins of the main road. The confused Canadian troops often lost communication with each other and were quickly pushed back. As the sun rose over the muddy wasteland, the Germans had recaptured all of the ground taken from them at the start of the battle.

The Canadians fought back with bombs but could not advance in the heavy rain. Troops attempting to recapture two craters got stuck in the mud and were shot dead before they could throw their grenades. A group of Canadians recaptured Craters 6 and 7, but thought they were in Craters 4 and 5. In the confusion they were cut off and left open to the German onslaught.

Canadians Driven Back

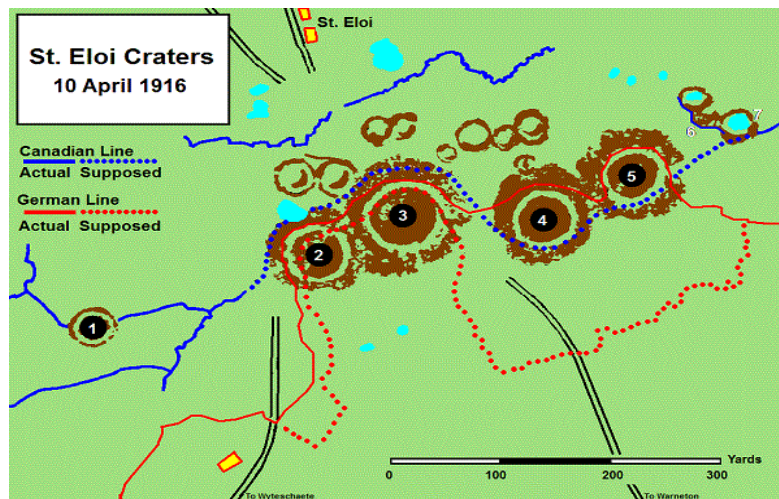
As night fell on 8th April, the Canadians again attacked but were stopped by German rifles and machine guns. Incessant rain made porridge of the battlefield. Germans attacked the next day but were likewise repelled. The Canadian leadership had little idea which craters they held and which were held by Germans. The leadership did not know what was happening at the front, as disoriented Canadians pinned down by artillery shells could not relay messages. Even the pigeons used to carry messages were dead.

Both sides shot at each other in the miserable conditions of the craters for another two weeks. More than 1,370 Canadians were killed or wounded, along with about 480 Germans. Aerial photography on 16 April finally showed the Canadians that they were in a terrible position, and the divisional headquarters ordered the battle stopped.

Still, the German attack continued with tear gas; the exhausted Canadians fought off the enemy again on 17th April. A German night raid through pounding rain drove the Canadians back further. Mud stopped Canadians guns from firing. Half of the remaining men in the craters surrendered to the Germans, and half crawled away.

The Battle of St. Eloi's Craters ended with the Germans in control of the battlefield, as they had been at its start.

Source: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/battle-of-st-eloi-craters>



Crater No 3 was where Robert J Bliss was injured.



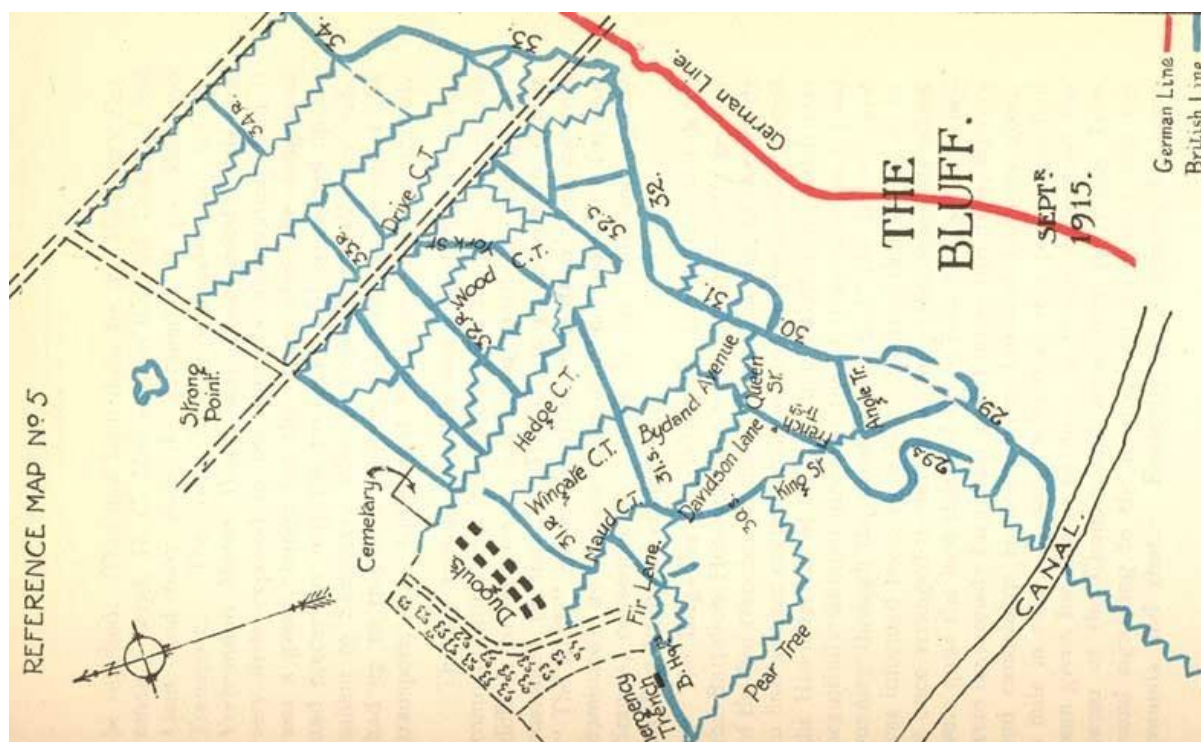
After the mines had detonated

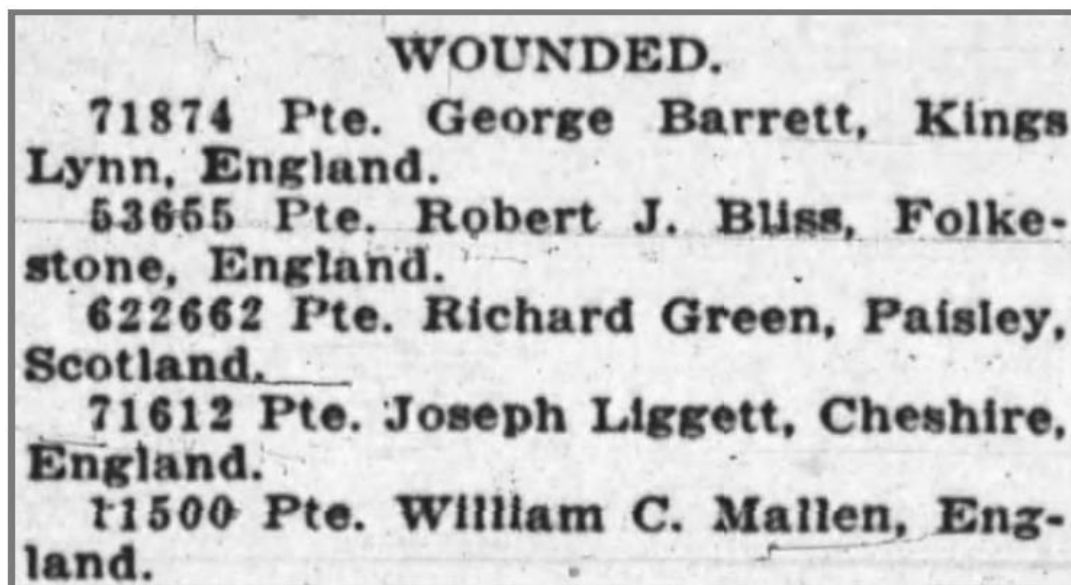


Ariel View of St Eloi Craters WW1



The Bluff Trenches C Company were in Trench 31 – Robert J Bliss 2nd Injury.





The Ottawa Journal (Ottawa Ontario Canada) 13th July 1916



Robert J Bliss is one of the boys in this photo (We don't know which one)
It was taken by Fegan Homes of the 1910 emigration party before they were sent to Canada.
Unfortunately they don't have a list of names and are unable to point out which one he is.

(I believe it could be the lad second row back, sixth from the left)

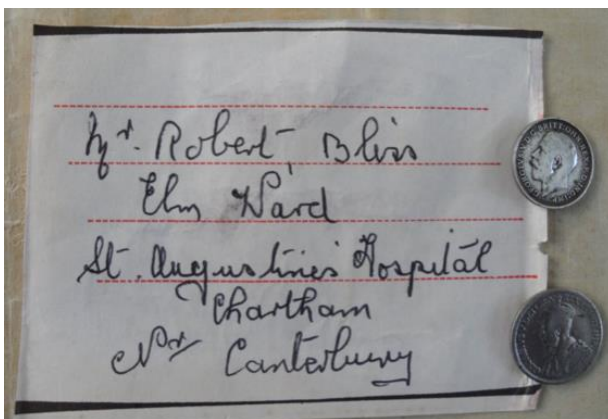
Robert J Bliss - His actual Medals



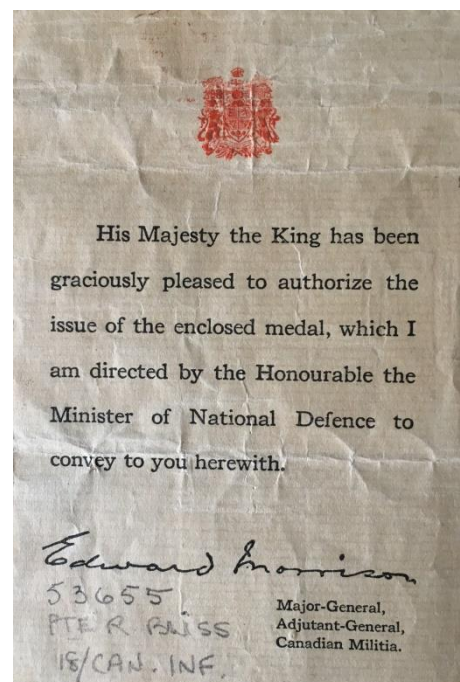
1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal.



Engraving on the 1914-15 Star.



Gran Browns handwriting on the address label of the medals, sent to him in St Augustine's.



The original certificate that came with the medals

The British War & Victory Medals have his name engraved around the edge of both medals.

Note: I have been trying to find out the significance of the two coins that Gran Brown sent with the medals, a British Silver threepenny piece and a Canadian 10 Cents piece, but as yet cannot find any reason for it except maybe friendship.

Robert J Bliss – Chartham Asylum

Information received from the Kent Archives in Maidstone who hold the records for St Augustine's Asylum Chartham on file of Robert J Bliss (Jnr)

MH/T3/Mk1: Medical Register (1907-1923)

Date of admission: 3rd August 1920
No. in civil register: 9760
Name: Robert J. Bliss
Civil state: Single
Occupation: Bootmaker, ex-soldier
Occupation schedule symbols: T a 5¹
Age:
On present admission: 26
At onset of present attack: 26
Attack: First attack
Duration of present attack: 3 months
Aetiological factors:
Principal: Insane heredity [A1]
Contributory: War stress [F2 – prolonged mental stress]
Bodily state on admission:
General health: Poor
Name of bodily disease: Tachycardia
Form of mental disorder: Confusional insanity [II ii 5]
Deemed suicidal by Medical Officer: No

Notes sent from researcher Dr Helen Wicker Senior researcher there.

The Chartham Asylum Registers of Patients record that Robert James Bliss junior was admitted to the Asylum on 3 August 1920 as a Service Patient. The subsequent Registers of Patients do not record that he was ever temporarily discharged from the Hospital, although he was reclassified as a voluntary (rather than certified) patient on 19 July 1957.

I searched the Case Notes volume covering patients admitted between 1914-1923 [MH/T3/Mc55] but could not find Robert listed. This is not unusual, however. After 1914, the Hospital arranged its patient case notes by date of admission, discharge, or death in separate volumes.

However, the notes for long-term patients were frequently extracted and compiled in (presumably) separate case files. Although patient case files from the Hospital are available for the period 1925-1948, they only relate to patients who were discharged or died within this period, so unfortunately there are no surviving detailed notes for Robert junior.

¹ I have been unable to find a key for these occupation classifications.



Robert J Bliss in Folkestone barracks. He is the one sitting holding the cards in the centre of the picture with the tilted cap.



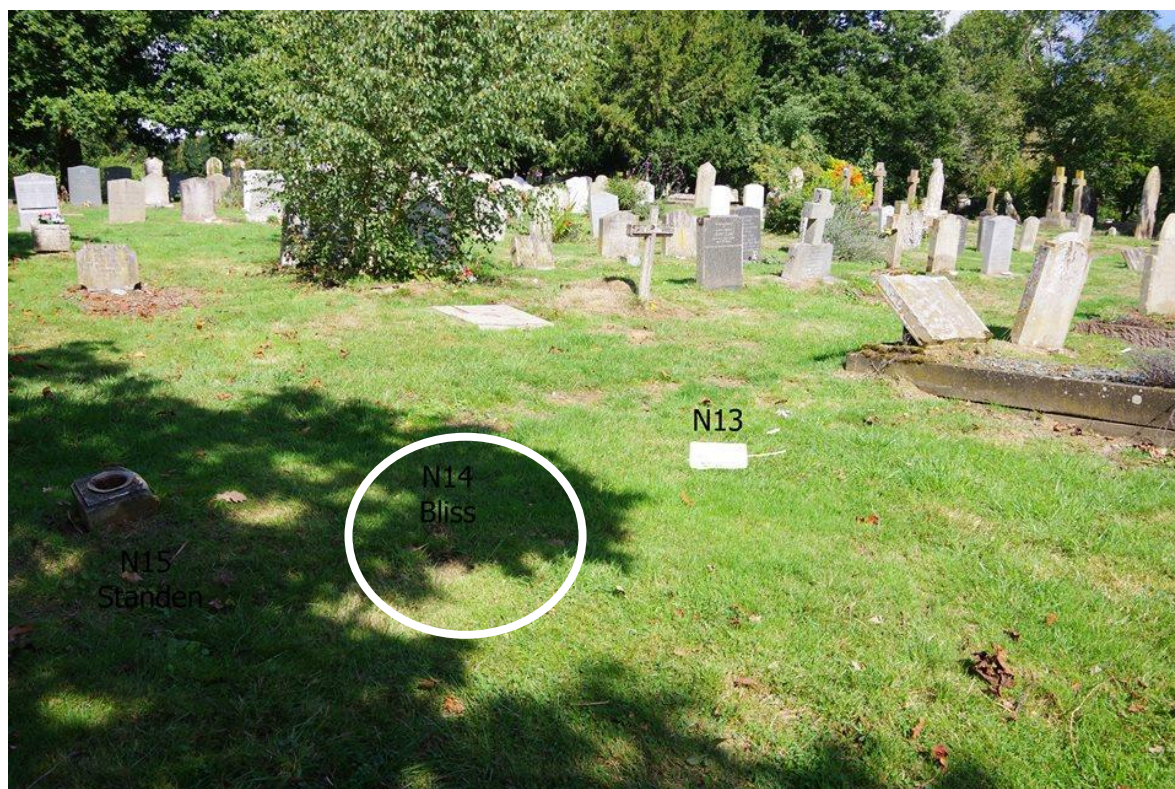
Robert J Bliss in Folkestone barracks, in this photo he is in the middle of the three in the doorway again with tilted cap.



Picture found on the 18th Battalion Facebook group.

Robert J Bliss died in November 1966 aged 73 and was buried in St Mary's Church yard in Rolvenden on 24th November 1966. His grave is marked in this picture as N14.

His funeral was attended by just four people, Gran & Grandad Brown and My Mum & Dad.



Robert J Bliss's Grave, Rolvenden Church Yard (Circled)

We think he spent more time, around 40 years in St Augustine's Hospital than he did anywhere else, I have been told that Gran Brown (His Sister) did try and have him out for a while, but the story goes that he couldn't cope in the outside world.

Having been institutionalised for so long and suffering from shell shock and extreme nervousness it seems that sadly St Augustine's was the best place for him. I can only hope that he was happy there after all his whole life was one of sadness, misfortune and upsetting.

I remember as a child sitting outside of the asylum in Chartham in Grandads car with a bag of sweets and some pop while my Gran went in to see her brother, for obvious reasons a young lad was not allowed in the building. Below is a recently placed marker I made for his grave.



Appendix 1



A Typical Field Ambulance in WW1

Background Information

Organized in November 1914 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel R. P. Campbell.

Authorization published in General Order 36 of 15 March 1915.

Mobilized at Montreal.

Recruited in Military District No. 4.

Left Halifax 18 April 1915 aboard NORTHLAND.

Arrived in England 29 April 1915.

Strength: 11 officers, 259 other ranks.

Arrived in France 16 September 1915.

2nd Canadian Division.

Demobilized at Montreal in May 1919.

Disbanded by General Order 211 of 15 November 1920.

Specific details of No: 6 Canadian Field Ambulance.

Background Information

Organized in November 1914 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel G. D. Farmer.

Authorization published in General Order 36 of 15 March 1915.

Mobilized at Toronto and Hamilton.

Recruited in Military District No. 2.

Left Halifax 18 April 1915 aboard NORTHLAND.

Arrived in England 29 April 1915.

Strength: 11 officers, 248 other ranks.

Arrived in France 16 September 1915.

2nd Canadian Division. 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade until 16 August 1915: 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade thereafter.

Demobilized at Toronto in May 1919.

Disbanded by General Order 211 of 15 November 1920.

Specific details of No: 5 Canadian Field Ambulance.

**A shortened snapshot transcribed from Robert J Bliss' Military Service Record.
His full service record is available via the Canadian Army website for free.**

[Search: Personnel Records of the First World War - Library and Archives Canada \(bac-lac.gc.ca\)](https://bac-lac.gc.ca)

Date	Event	Remarks
Nov 2, 1914	Enlisted	Enlisted at St. Thomas. He was a labourer and listed his mother Eliza, residing at Folkestone, England, as his next of kin. Standing 5'9" tall, with a chest of 34" with a 3" expansion, this 22-year-old man had no prior military experience.
Nov 11, 1914	Inoculated	Typhoid inoculations.
Nov 22, 1914	Inoculated	Typhoid inoculations.
Dec 18, 1914	Vaccinated	
Apr 1, 1915	Assigned Pay	On this date Pte. Bliss, of "C" Company, assigns \$15.00 per month to his mother. She is shown to reside at 4 Wellington Mews, Folkestone, Kent, England.
Apr 29, 1915	Arrive England	The Battalion arrives at Avonmouth, England and proceeds by train to West Sandling.
Jun 7, 1915	Absent Without Leave	Forfeits 1-day's pay for being AWL.
Jun 21, 1915	Absent Without Leave	Forfeits 1-day's pay for being AWL.
Sep 1, 1915	Absent Without Leave	Forfeits 1-day's pay for being AWL.
Sep 14, 1915	Embarks Overseas	Embarks with the 18 th Battalion for service in Belgium. Arriving at Boulogne, France, the Battalion moves to the front.
Apr 9, 1916	Wounded	The War Diary relates on this day 1 other rank killed in action and 25 other ranks wounded. Private Bliss was most likely wounded on this day.

Apr 10, 1916	Wounded	With his wounding Private Bliss proceeded first to No. 6 Canadian Field Ambulance. Then to No. 10 Casualty Clearing Station. From there he embarks on No. 23 Hospital Train. Received at No. 8 Stationary Hospital, Wimereux. GSW to right arm.
Apr 15, 1916	Transferred	Transferred to No. 5 Convalescent Depot.
May 2, 1916	Discharged to Base	Discharged to Canadian Base Depot.
May 2 to 7 1916	Base Hospital	GSW right arm. Returns to unit.
May 9, 1916	Arrives with Unit	After a short convalesce Private Bliss returns to the 18 th Battalion.
Jul 3, 1916	Wounded/Ill	Contused back due to shell and pyrexia. Admitted to No. 5 CFA. Then transferred to No. 25 General Hospital. Another card shows this wound as a GSW to spine.
Jul 5, 1916	Transferred	Transferred to Canadian Base Depot.
Aug 18, 1916	Transferred	Designated Class "C" and sent to CCAC.
Aug 20, 1916	Arrives CCAC	Arrives Canadian Casualty Assembly Centre at Folkestone.
Aug 21, 1916	Medical Board	Indicates that he has been nervous and shaky for 3-months and there is no organic cause.
Jan 31, 1917	Taken on Strength	Taken on strength from CCD to 4 th Reserve Battalion, West Sandling.
Feb 14, 1917	Medical Board	Proceedings of a Medical board on this date indicate "Slight Tachycardia. Recruit exhibits signs of extreme nervousness." The Board recommends a status of B2.
Mar 6, 1917	On Transfer	On transfer from CCAC to 4 th Reserve Battalion, Bramshott. On command.
May 4, 1917	On Command	Detached 4 th Reserve Battalion to Western Ontario Regimental Depot (WORD). On command with WORD at Mytchett Camp near Aldershot.

Nov 19, 1918	Attached	Attached Depot Company, Witley Camp, Surrey England.
Nov 25, 1918	Attached	Canadian Discharge Depot Buxton Derbyshire for return to Canada
Dec 7 1918	Detached	Detached from CDD Buxton and sailed for Canada.
Dec 12, 1918	Granted Furlough	Granted furlough and subsistence pay until January 8, 1919.
Jan 6, 1919	Dental Exam	Dentist Captain J.D. Campbell notes that tooth no. 18 was extracted.
Jan 18, 1919	Account Opened	Post Discharge Pay Office records an account open and Private Bliss' address is 93 Centre Street, St. Thomas, Ontario.
Jan 18, 1919	Discharged	According to this Discharge Certificate, Private Bliss was released from his service at London, Ontario (Military District 1) as medically unfit due to a GSW to his right arm. His last pay certificate shows his mother living at Church Terrace, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent, England.
Jan 27, 1919	Granted Permission	Granted permission to wear 4 blue chevrons showing four years of service.



Witley Camp, Surrey England 1917-18



4764 / 65894 Private Thomas Alfred Coveney - East Kent Regiment
(The Buffs) & North Staffs Regiment.

2nd Battalion - 85th Infantry Brigade - 28th Division – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)



Rear of Bedford House used as a rest house for British troops

Great Step Grandad Coveney

This is the result of much research and trawling the Internet, Military Records Visits to Ypres (Ieper) and searching anything to do with the
2nd Battalion of the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in World War 1



Thomas Alfred Coveney

Life Synopsis

Born in Rolvenden / Rolvenden Lane on 24th April 1886.

Baptised in St Mary's Church Rolvenden on 16th Jul 1886.

1891 Census on 5th April has him at Freezingham Lane Rolvenden Lane.

1901 Census on 31st March has him at Thornden Lane Rolvenden Lane as a General Labourer.

1911 Census on 2nd April has him as a wagoner of a farm in Rolvenden.

On 23rd October 1914 he signed up to the Army East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in Faversham.

17th January 1915 Marched from Winchester to Southampton sailed to Le Havre in France.

14th May 1915 Admitted to No. 3 Casualty Clearing Station located in either Poperinge (Apr 15th – May 15th) or Bailleul (May 15th 1915 to March 31st 1918) and then on the No.10 Ambulance Train. According to his records he was transferred to Wimeraux Hospital France with Neurasthenia.

21st May 1915 listed as injured in a shell explosion, according to his records "Wasted leg & shell shock".

Transferred to Lewisham hospital at some point and then Shoreham for convalescence.

Transferred to 3rd (Reserve) Battalion North Staffs Regiment on home duties.

In August 1922 he married Kate Brown (George Brown's Widow) in Rolvenden.

1939 Census on 29th September has him in Thornden Lane Rolvenden Lane as a Farm Labourer.

Died in May 1964 in Rolvenden aged 78.



WW1 Ambulance train.



AWARDED TO

Private 4764 / 65894

Thomas Alfred Coveney

East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) & Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)

Name.		Corps.		Rank.	Regtl. No.
COVENEY.		E. KENT R N. STAFF R		Pte	4764 65894
T.A.					
Medal.	Serial.	Page:	Remarks.		
VICTORY	* F/104 B/6.	2033			
BRITISH	-d-	-d-			
15 STAR	F/10 C	65			
Theatre of War first served in		(1)			
Date of entry therein		1-5-15			

K 1380.

Thomas Alfred Coveney – Military Service - East Kent Regiment

2nd Battalion – 85th Infantry Brigade – 28th Division

The 85th Brigade was a formation of the British Army. It was originally formed from regular army battalions serving away from home in the British Empire. It was assigned to the 28th Division and served on the Western Front during the First World War.

The 2nd Buffs had been in India since Jan 1913 but came back to England and then on to France where they were directed to the Ypres sector on 6th Feb 1915. They were at once thrown into an attack in freezing conditions, thick mud and pitch dark, with shells dropping around them, and across ground they had never seen. Three battalions were decimated and only 70 Buffs reached their objective. Two months later, on 22nd April a gap formed in the line when French troops retreated from a gas attack. This gap left the Canadians' flank exposed and Lt-Col Geddes of the Buffs was ordered to plug the gap. He had at his disposal the remnants of his own and 3 other battalions, known as the Geddes Detachment. On 23rd April they advanced in daylight by platoon bounds under heavy fire and gained some trenches alongside the Canadians. On the 24th, B Company was placed under Canadian command but after a prolonged resistance was overwhelmed by the Germans. The Geddes Detachment accomplished the task allotted to them but Gussie Geddes was killed by a chance shell.

Later in the battle of Ypres the 2nd Buffs were back in the 85th Brigade. They lost another company during the heavy bombardment and intense pressure from the enemy offensive. There was a reinforcement of new recruits at the end of April which were thrown straight in without being distributed amongst the companies. On 4th May 1915 they were relieved by another battalion after having suffered the loss of 719 men in the battle. They were to lose another 373 men on 27th Sep in front of the Hohenzollern Redoubt fighting with bayonet and grenade. In the 8 months that they had been fighting in France and Flanders they had lost 1,868 men.

(Credit: www.britishempire.co.uk)

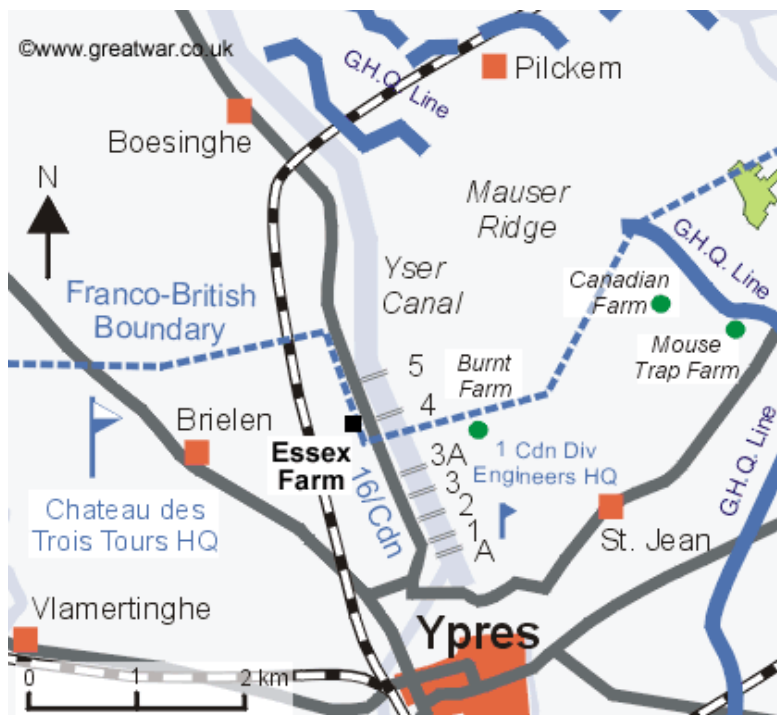
It would appear that after his wounding which I cannot find a record of at the moment, the one in this document is for the condition “neurasthenia,” or weakness of the nerves—in laymen’s terms, a nervous breakdown precipitated by the dreadful stress of war, but according to his Army discharge papers later in this document; he suffered “*A wasted left leg about May 1915 was buried through shell explosion in enemy action and shock through same*” This appears to have happened on May 21st 1915 just after they had returned to the trenches just north of Menin Road.

Movements:

Move to France – 15/01/1915 – Southampton to Le Havre

Division concentrated between Bailleul and Hazebrouck by 22nd January 1915.

Battles of Ypres – Battle of Gravenstafel Ridge – 22/04/1915 – half of the battalion took up a position at the St. Jean crossroads, the other half went to Brielen Bridge (Bridge No.4) to secure both banks of the Ypres Canal.



Map of the Ypres (Yser) canal shows the location east of Brielen and on the western canal bank in April 1915. Army bridges are across the canal from A to 5.



Thomas Alfred Coveney post World War One

Battles Of Ypres – Battle Of St. Julien – 24/04/1915 – Location: Fortuinhoek.

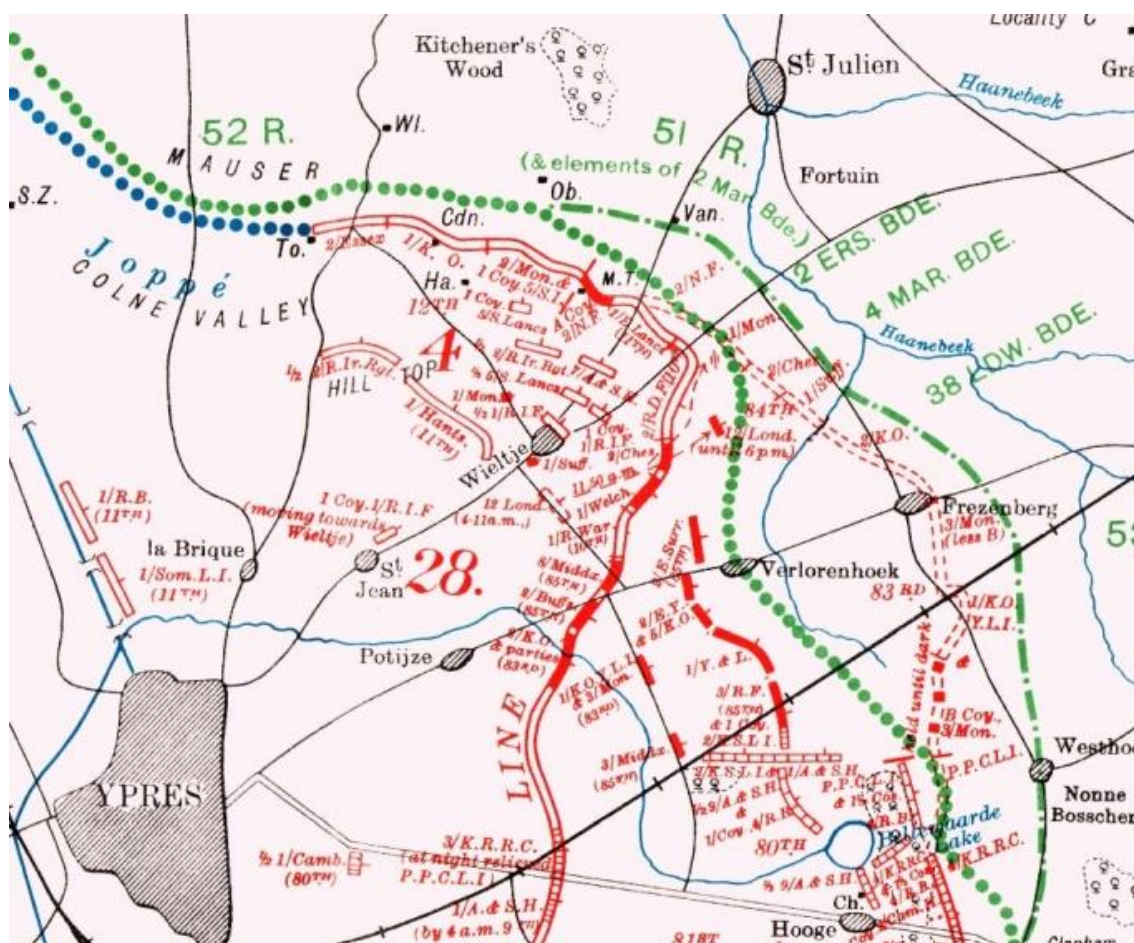
Inconclusive/Stalemate, perhaps a German tactical victory. Allies pushed back but Ypres did not fall.

On 26th April 1915, the German Army launched an offensive (including the use of poisonous gas) against the Ypres Salient, driving its perimeter back and creating a break in the line over 4 miles long. Canadian troops (the closest) created a series of defensive posts to secure the line, which, although briefly held, broke and St Julien fell to the Germans.

At the request of the French, British and Commonwealth troops staged counterattacks but were forced to withdraw, until on 3rd May the Allied lines were only 3 miles from Ypres. The bitter conflict continued with the Germans taking Frezenberg Ridge, although Allied counterattacks carried on for several more days, incurring heavy casualties.

On 24th April, three battalions of 84th Infantry Brigade, 28th Division in V Corps, 1st Suffolk Regiment, 12th London Regiment (The Rangers) and 1st Monmouthshire Regiment, were sent to assist the Canadians and made an advance towards Fortuinhoek, holding this advanced position until relieved on 28th April.

On 3rd May, a further German attack put pressure on the front of 85th Infantry Brigade and 4th Division on their left, 1st York and Lancaster Regiment, 2nd The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) 3rd Royal Fusiliers, 2nd King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) and 2nd East Yorkshire Regiment being deployed to assist in defending the line.



Position of the 2nd Battalion East Kent Regiment, 85th Infantry Brigade, 28th Division

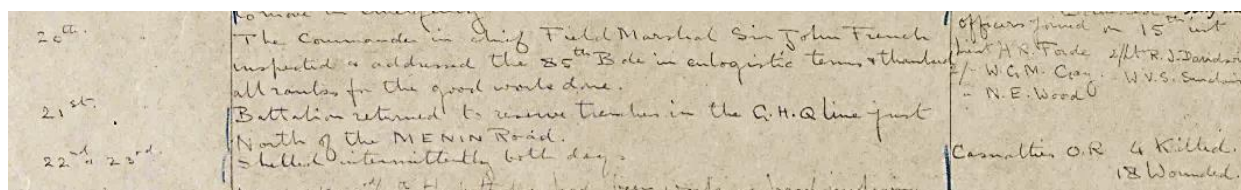
Battles of Ypres – Battle of Frezenberg Ridge – 08/05/1915

Location: Frezenberg. Inconclusive/Stalemate. Possibly a German tactical victory, but also an Allied defensive victory.

Further heavy British casualties, pre-war regular British Army almost annihilated. In the early hours of 24th May a heavy German bombardment, supplemented by a chlorine gas discharge, on the area held by V Corps was followed by a mass German infantry attack.

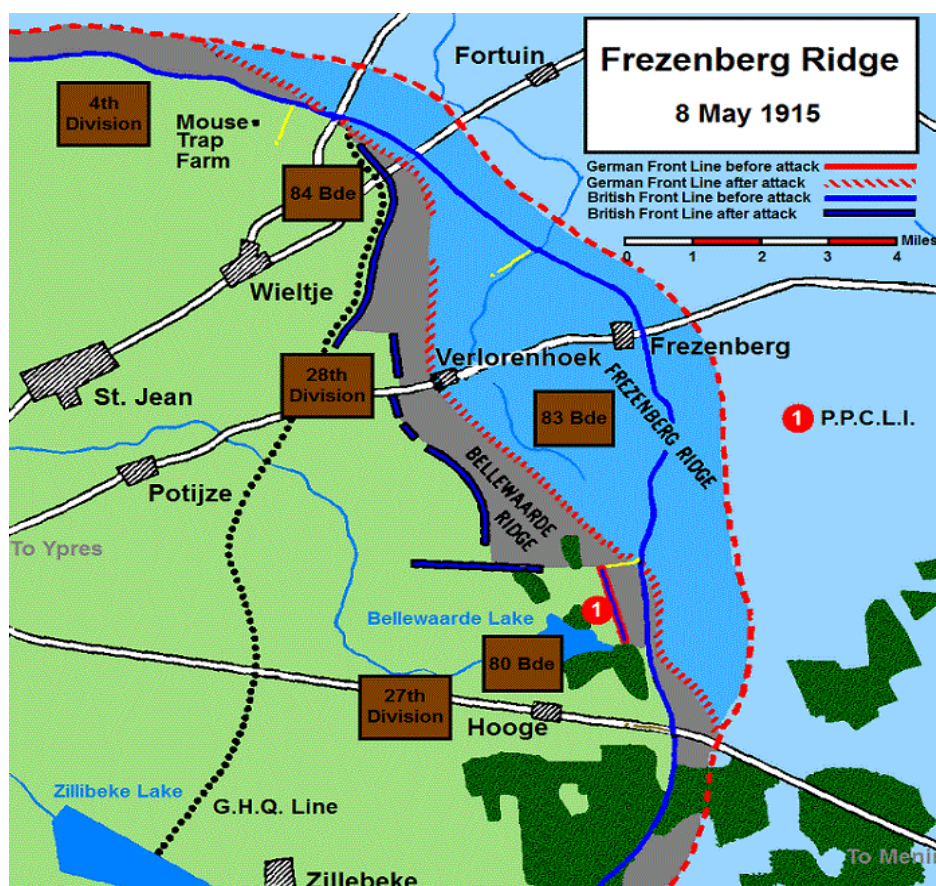
Weather conditions favoured the use of chemicals, so the defenders were not surprised but many suffered the effects of being gassed. Rapid British small arms fire repulsed the attack and the centre of the line held, although the German attack broke through in the north and south.

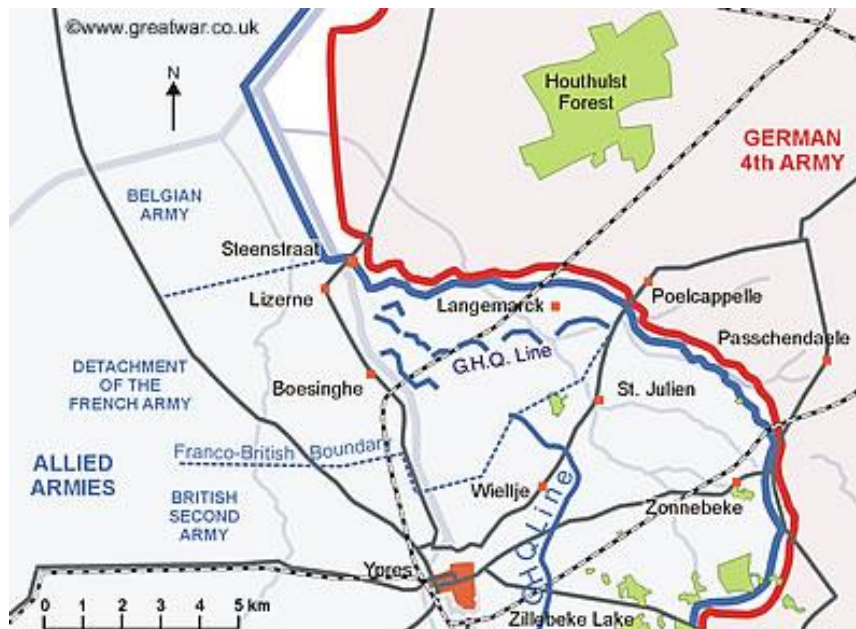
Reserve troops arrived to retake Bellewaarde Ridge and the front line moved to a more defensible position. When the German attack on V Corps began, 28th Division were holding a sector of the front-line east of Frezenberg, to the south-east of Wieltje.



Official War Diary entries for 20th to 22nd May 1915 – Listed as wounded from 21st May 1915

Listed as “Wounded” on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from the 21st May 1915.

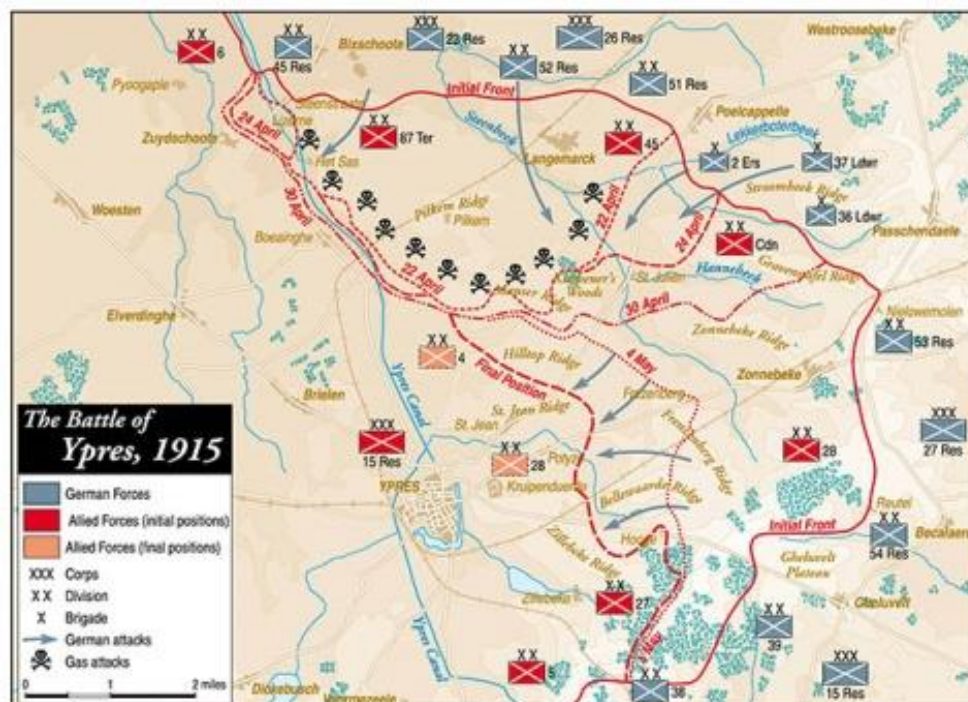




On maps this line was originally called the “General Headquarters (GHQ) 2nd Line”. But as there was no “GHQ 1st Line” it became known simply as the “GHQ Line”.

It was a well-sited defensive line constructed originally by the French Army running from Zillebeke Lake (2½ kilometres behind the Allied front line) to almost a kilometre east of Wieltje (5 kilometres behind the Allied front line). At Wieltje it continued in a north-westerly direction to take in Boesinghe village and its railway bridge.

The GHQ Line was well-sited to provide a good field of fire. It was not made up of continuous trenches. Rather it was constructed out of a series of well-built redoubts, at a distance of 350-450 metres apart. The redoubts were joined together by a thick band of barbed wire entanglements some 5 metres wide with openings only for roads and tracks. A garrison of about 50 men would hold the position of each redoubt.



Thomas Alfred Coveney WW1 Travels

17th January 1915 Marched from Winchester to Southampton sailed to Le Havre in France.

18th January 1915 Marched to Graville camp

19th January 1915 Marched to Gare des Marchandises boarded train 9:30pm

20th January 1915 Arrived at Hazebrouck at 10:30pm

21st January 1915 De-trained at 3am Marched at 6am to Croix Rouge arriving at 8am. Close Billets.

2nd February 1915 Marched to Billets at Ouderdom Belgium

4th February 1915 Marched to Infantry Barracks at Ypres.

5th February 1915 Marched back to Ouderdom.

6th February 1915 Marched back to Ypres Infantry Barracks

7th to 9th February Trenches in Ferme Chapelle

10th February 1915 Chateau Rosendal (Now Bedford House Cemetery) Rest house.

10th to 16th February actions around Canal Bank, Trenches and Chateau Rosendale

16th February 1915 6am returned to Ypres Infantry Barracks

16th February 1915 2pm moved to billets between Vlamertinge and Ouderdom.

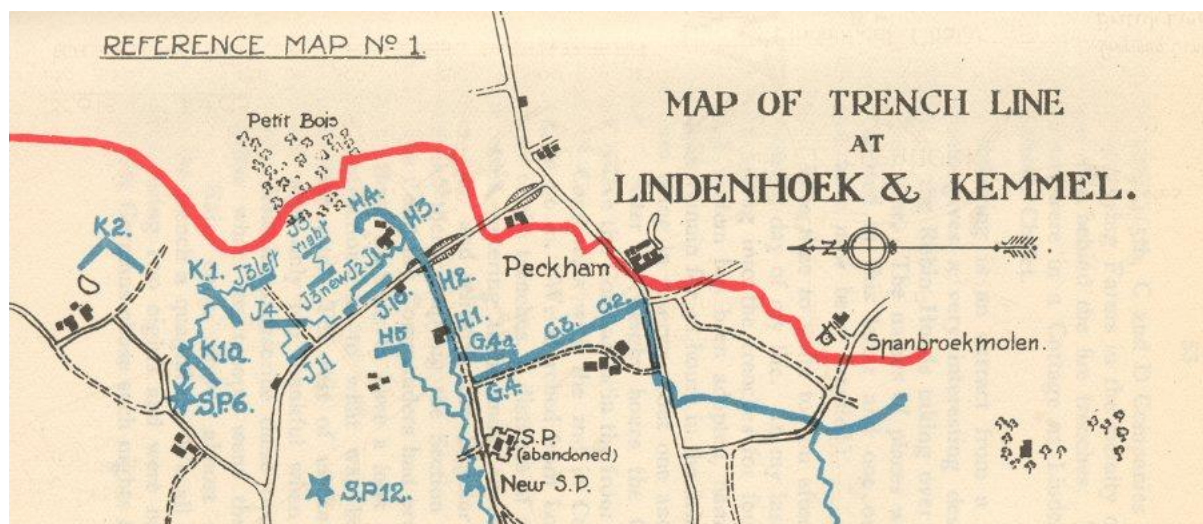
17th February 1915 moved back to Ypres then on to Chateau Rosendale.

18th February 1915 returned to Ouderdom.

19th February 1915 Billeted at Loker (Locre)

20th February 1915 Marched to Westouter to Bath and clothes change.

22nd February 1915 Moved to trenches in Kemmel G2, G3, G4 & S4



27th February 1915 returned to billets at Loker (Locre)

28th February 1915 Marched to Ouderdom for Baths and clothes change.

4th March 1915 Moved to Kemmel Trenches

Military Evidence

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT OR CORPS when Decoration was earned. G.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Decoration granted under Army Order 20 of 1910. No 657

To be left blank.	On Date of Disembarkation.		NAME.	Date of Disembarkation.	REMARKS.	Record of disposal of decoration.	To be left blank for use in War Office.
	Regt. No.	Rank.					
4/	2/K.R.Rif.C.	2694	Rfm.	CHESTER.	G.	9/2/15	(1) 57258 Pte. 2/8/10.
12	19/Liv.A.C.O.	6510	Pte.	CONNOR.	W.	17/7/15	(1) 57172 Pte. 2/8/10.
37	13/Midd.x.R.	7441	Pte.	COOK.	B. J. F.	4/10/15	(1) 57128 Pte. 2/8/10.
7/	1/Kent.R.	4784	Pte.	COVENEY.	T. A.	1/5/15	(1) 55894 Pte. 2/8/10.
12	12/Glouce.R.	14281	Pte.	CROSS.	E.	21/11/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
4/	1/Linc.R.	13727	Pte.	CRUMP.	F.	5/8/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
2/	Lowland Div. A.S.G.	1878	Dvr.	CUNNINGHAM.	J.	21/3/15	(1) 50758 Pte. 2/8/10.
11	North'd.F.	15847	Pte.	CURTIS.	T.	25/3/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
2/	Can. Fus.	2204	Pte.	DANIELS.	T.	3/8/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
1/	8/Lan.R.	17567	Pte.	DARBYSHIRE.	J.W.	31/7/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
8/	10/Worc.R.	9504	Pte.	DAVIS.	R.	18/7/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.
9/	London Div.	17804	Dvr.	DAWKINS.	G. F.	15/3/15	(1) 57185 Pte. 2/8/10.

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Decoration as detailed above.

Place LICHFIELD.

Date 15/1/20.

Signature and rank of Officer certifying.

Official entry in the logbook showing entitlement for the 1914-15 Star.

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT OR CORPS.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 286 & 301. of 1919. No. 2,033. B.

Regt. No.	Rank.	NAME	Unit (as originally awarded)	Theatre of war in which served								Clips awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations	REMARKS
				From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To			
55870	Pte.	HARKWOOD, Harry.	11577.1/K.R.Rif.C.											
55878	Pte.	WHITE, Richard.	14558.3/Roy.Fus.											
55880	Pte.	MAH, Guy	9099.7/Morr. R.											
55882	Pte.	LEWIS, Morgan	472.11/Midd.x. R.											
55884	Pte.	COVENEY, Thomas	4784.2/Kent.R.											
55888	Pte.	JENNINGS, Richard	100. A.W.C.											
55899	Pte.	LAMBERT, Archie	2049. A.W.C.											
55900	Pte.	DE'PENNING, Harry	55900. N.Staff.R.											
55906	Lt/Pl	LEE, James	109.1/Kent. R.											
55913	Sgt.	HUSSEY, Charles	9577.1/Glouce. R.											

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place LICHFIELD

Date 19/11/20.

Signature and rank of Officer certifying.

Official entry in the logbook showing entitlement to British & Victory Medals



T/207401 Sergeant Arthur Monk – East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) &
The Queens – 4th Res (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

3/4th Battalion - 62nd Brigade - 21st Division – The Queens (West Surrey Regiment)



Steve at Polygon Wood Ypres 2019

Great Grandad Monk

This is the result of much research and trawling the Internet, Military
Records Visits to Ypres (Ieper) and searching anything to do with the

3/4th Battalion - 62nd Brigade - 21st Division – The Queens
(West Surrey Regiment)



Arthur Monk

Life Synopsis

Born in Rolvenden / Rolvenden Layne on 22nd March 1879.

Baptised in St Mary's Church Rolvenden on 22nd June 1879.

1881 Census on 3rd April has him living at Wassall in Rolvenden.

1891 Census on 5th April has him living at Wassall in Rolvenden.

He Married Eliza Vine on 24th Feb 1900 in Rolvenden.

1901 Census on 31st March has him at High Road Rolvenden as a Farm Labourer.

Pre 1908 he was in the West Kent Yeomanry / Artillery / Militia

1908 East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) Territorial Force (Imperial Service)

1911 Census on 2nd April has him at The Lane Rolvenden as a Farm Labourer.

1916 September saw him sent out to France WW1.

1917 5th October Blown up by a shell east of Polygon Wood in the Third Battle of Ypres

Died 11th January 1971 aged 91 in Rolvenden.

JAN 1918

Sergeant Arthur Monk, of the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, who is at present in hospital near Manchester suffering from wounds, is a native of Rolvenden, and although only thirty-eight, has served for a longer period than any other Rolvenden volunteer at present serving with the colours. Previous to the war he served in the Territorials and was with them in camp at the outbreak of war. In September of last year he went to France and on the 5th of October was blown up by a shell, from the result of which he is still in hospital. He has a wife and seven children, their home being at Rolvenden Layne. His eldest son, Private Alfred Monk, of the Buffs, is serving in the machine gun section on home service.



Newspaper cutting & photograph of Arthur Monk around that time.

There is an error in this newspaper report (nothing new there) Arthurs eldest son was Frederick Monk not Alfred and as far as I can find out Frederick was in the Royal Artillery and signed up in 1924, but he may have been in the Buffs volunteers before signing up to the RA. I am still working on that one.

Arthur Monk – West Kent Yeomanry



Arthur Monk on his horse in the West Kent Yeomanry



Cap Badge



Shoulder Patch

The picture above would indicate that Arthur Monk was in the West Kent Yeomanry

West Kent Yeomanry (Queen's Own)

The regiment was formed on the creation of the Territorial Force in April 1908 and placed under orders of the South Eastern Mounted Brigade. It was headquartered in Maidstone with the squadrons being headquartered as follows:

A Squadron: Bromley (and drill stations at Catford and Woolwich)

B Squadron: Dartford (Rochester, Gravesend, Sevenoaks and Woolwich)

C Squadron: Tunbridge Wells (Tonbridge and Hawkhurst)

D Squadron: Maidstone (West Malling, Westminster and Woolwich)

Military Service – Arthur Monk in the Territorial Reserves.



Imperial Service Badge on Breast showing he signed up for overseas service.



Bufs Cap Badge

See next page for stars on right sleeve these are efficiency stars.

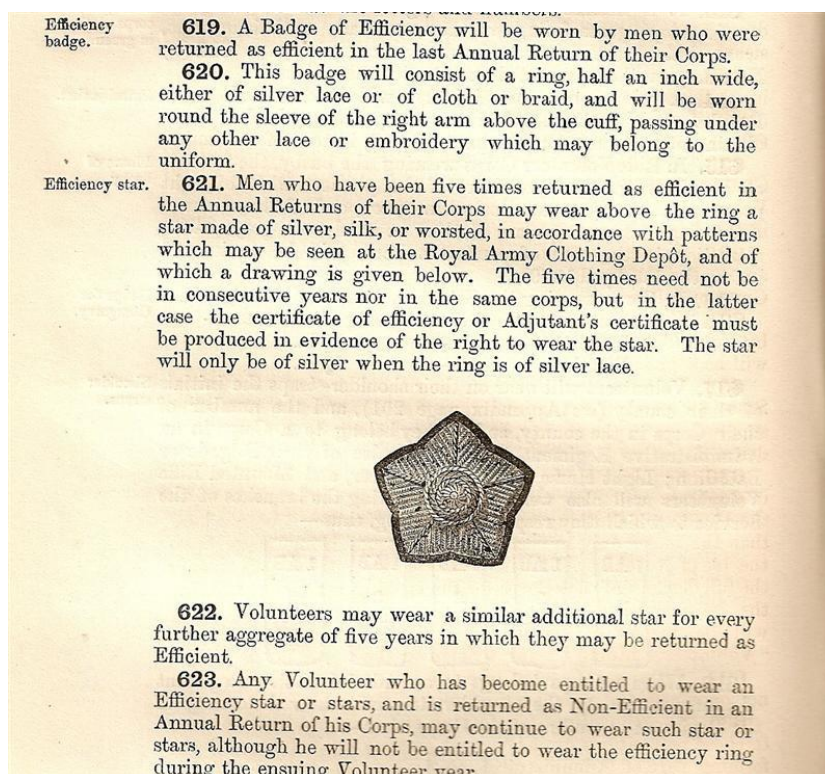
The picture above of Arthur Monk in his East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) uniform would have been pre-World War One as there are no medal bars on his left breast, on the right breast is the Imperial Service badge, sergeant stripes on his sleeves and the efficiency stars on his right cuff.

The Territorial Force Imperial Service Badge was a short-lived decoration of the United Kingdom awarded to those members of the Territorial Force (TF) who were prepared to serve outside the United Kingdom in defence of the Empire, in the event of national emergency. The conditions of enlistment for the TF laid down at their creation in 1908 did not allow for soldiers to be sent for service overseas against their will, as the TF was intended for home defence. However, any man could volunteer for the Imperial Service Section and serve abroad in times of war, which entitled him to wear this badge.

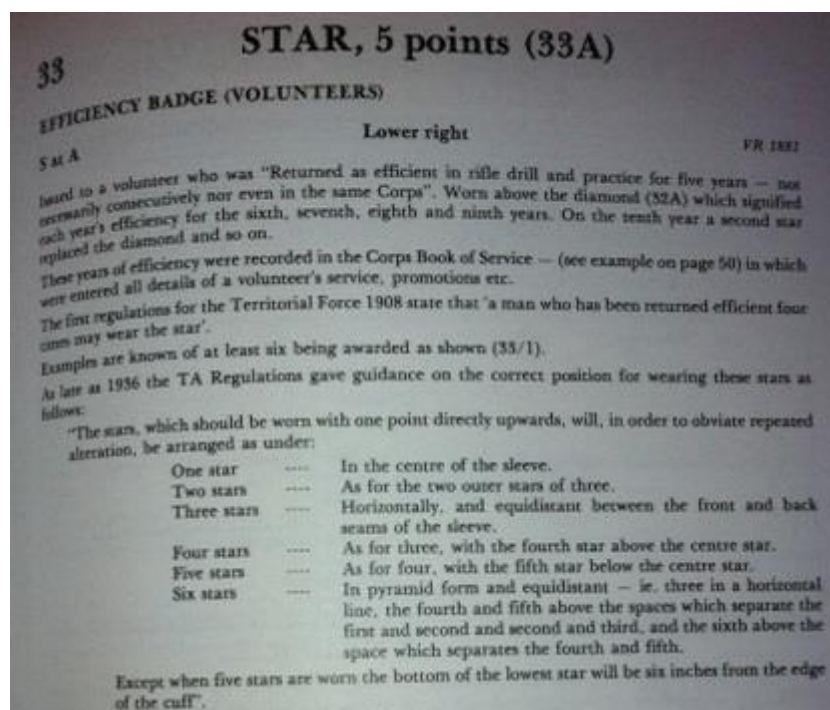
The badge was worn on the right breast of the uniform. It was not compulsory for the badge to be worn.

This badge became obsolete when the Territorial Force was elevated to become the Territorial Army.

Arthur Monk – Efficiency Stars. (Right cuff on previous page)



Description (above)



Sergeant Arthur Monk had 4 Stars showing 20 years of efficiency.



The Territorial Force War Medal was a campaign medal awarded to members of the British Territorial Force and Territorial Force Nursing Service who served overseas in World War I. It is the rarest of the five British Great War medals.

The medal was established in April 1920 for award to members of the Territorial Force and Territorial Force Nursing Service who volunteered for service overseas on or before 30th September 1914 and served overseas. They had to:

Have been serving with the Force on 4 August 1914; or

Have completed four years' service with the Force before 4 August 1914 and re-joined on or before 30 September 1914.

In addition, provided they:

Undertook, either verbally or by written agreement on or before 30 September 1914 to serve outside the United Kingdom, such agreement being operative after 4 August 1914,

and

Have served outside the United Kingdom between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918 (both dates inclusive; the last date was in 1918 although the years on the reverse said 1914-19) and

Did not qualify for the 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star.

A total of 33,944 Territorial Force War Medals were awarded.

As Arthur Monk was not awarded the 1914-15 Star it is probable, he was awarded this medal.

Arthur Monk Medals



AWARDED TO

Sgt. T/207401

Arthur Monk

Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
MONK	The Queens R	Sgt T/207401	
Arthur.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	E/1/1015244627		
BRITISH	do do		
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1380

Military Evidence



T/207401 Sgt Arthur Monk Discharge Notice

(Note the "S" on the end of his name, it is Arthur Monk, the Rank and service number is right)

ORIGINAL

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the "WAR BADGE."

ROYAL WEST SURREY REGIMENT.

16 AUG 1918
D12112

Regtl. No.	Rank	Name (full)	Unit discharged from	No. of Badge and Certificate (To be completed at War Office)	Date of:— Enlistment	Discharge	Cause of Discharge (Wounds or Sickness and para. of R.R.)	Whether served Overseas (Yes or No)
66649	A/L/C	MURRAY.	A. 16th Bn.	443 573	18.5.15	10.7.18	2.B. 23.5	Yes.
G/4775	Pte	FROST. DUNGATE.	F. London R.D.	443 574	17.2.15	18.10.17	2(a)(11) 17.11	No.
22302	L/C	ROBERTS	G. Depot	443 575	20.11.15	29.8.18	*2.B. 39.6	Yes.
207401	Sgt	MONKS.	A. 4th Res.	443 576	2.5.08	9.8.18	.. 39.4	..
205393	L/C	JACKSON.	A. ..	443 577	11.12.15	29.8.18	.. 36.	..
G/5911	Pte	BROWN.	W. Depot	443 578	31.5.15	22.8.18	.. 33.2	..
G/4997	..	SALTER.	H. ..	443 579	2.3.15	30.8.18	.. 24.5	..
400	Cpl	PRESTON.	W. ..	443 580	5.9.14	31.8.18	.. 42.6	..
18125	Pte	DREW.	T.R. 3rd Bn.	443 581	12.12.15	31.8.18	.. 28.10	..
G/12664	..	MANNING.	G. Depot	443 582	7.7.16	31.8.18	.. 23.1	..
60045	..	YEOMANS.	E. 3rd Bn.	443 583	12.12.15	31.8.18	.. 38.2	..
G/14305	L/C	RISLEY.	T. Depot	443 584	9.12.15	31.8.18	.. 24.5	..

No longer physically fit for War Service.
Para 392 (VII) R.R.

I certify that the particulars furnished hereon are correct.

Place Hounslow. Date 17.8.18

I.V. 1697 date 23 AUG 1918

L. Angel Captain for Colonel i/c No. 1. Records.
Signature and Rank of Officer certifying Claimants' service.

I certify that Badges and Certificates, numbered as above, have been issued to the individuals concerned.

Place _____ Date _____

Signature and Rank of Officer certifying issue.

W8548—H2222 100,000 10/16 HWV(RIS) H14/1206
93—H2225 100,000 4/17

Sgt Arthur Monk – Silver Badge Roll

Arthur Monk was awarded the Silver War Badge was issued in the United Kingdom and the British Empire to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness from military service in World War I.

The badge, sometimes known as the "Discharge Badge", the "Wound Badge" or "Services Rendered Badge", was first issued in September 1916, along with an official certificate of entitlement on previous page.



Each badge was uniquely numbered on the reverse. Arthurs was No: 443576

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

"QUEEN" ROYAL WEST SURREY REGIMENT. REGIMENT OR CORPS. 4627

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 301 & 266, of 1919.

On 1/11/18 or on becoming non-effective		NAME	Unit previously served with. Regt. No. and Rank in same on entry into theatre of war	Theatres of war in which served								Clasp awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations (a) Presented (b) Despatched by Post (c) Taken into Stock	REMARKS
Regt. No.	Rank			From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To			
T/207318	Cpl	FARMON REGINALD	1/7th Middx Regt. 4453 S.I.											
T/207319	Cpl	YOUNG HENRY	7th Middx Regt. 3148 Cpl											
		CHARLES	1st BNS. T/207319											
T/207320	Pte	COOK FRED	1st BNS. T/207320 Pte											
T/207321	Pte	VEYSKI HARRY	2nd BNS. T/207321 Pte											
		ROBERT												
T/207401	Sgt	MONK ARTHUR	3/4th BNS. T/207401 Sgt											

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place Hounslow.
Date 28.10.1920.

Signature and rank of Officer certifying. *W. J. Jones* for Colonel,
Infantry Record Office.

Official entry in the log showing entitlement to British & Victory Medals.

Arthur Monk Military Timeline (Guestimate)

Kent Yeomanry or Kent Artillery Volunteers – Evidence – Horse photo, Cap Badge, Shoulder patch

History:

The Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that reformed the auxiliary forces of the British Army by transferring existing Volunteer and Yeomanry units into a new Territorial Force (TF); and disbanding the Militia to form a new Special Reserve of the Regular Army.

In accordance with the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 the TF was intended to be a home defence force for service during wartime and members could not be compelled to serve outside the country. However, on the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914, many members volunteered for ***Imperial Service***. (Arthur Monk was one of them, see badge on uniform)

Therefore, TF units were split in August and September 1914 into 1st Line (liable for overseas service) and 2nd Line (home service for those unable or unwilling to serve overseas) units.

East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) Territorial

Evidence – Photo of him in Sergeant Uniform, Buffs Cap Badge and Stars on sleeve.

Under the Military Service Act 1916, which introduced conscription, the provisions of the Act which prevented a Territorial soldier from being transferred to a different corps, or a regular unit, without his consent were suspended. This could explain the move to the Queens (West Surrey regiment)

In January 1916, the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker.

A second Act passed in May 1916 extended conscription to married men.

It is therefore an educated guess that Arthur Monk was in the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in the Territorial Force until May 1916 when he would have been transferred to the Queens (West Surrey Regiment) as being conscripted at that time you could not choose which regiment you joined but were placed where needed. He then went overseas with the Queens.

The Queens (West Surrey Regiment)

Evidence – Medal Card, Newspaper cutting and discharge certificate.

The ¾th Battalion was formed at Windsor in June 1915.

The battalion disembarked at Le Havre on 1 June 1917, it was first attached to the 1st South African Brigade in 9th (Scottish) Division until 23 July, then with 12th (Eastern) Division, finally joining 62nd Brigade in 21st Division on 9 August.

21st Division was engaged in the Battle of Polygon Wood on 29 September, but the inexperienced ¾th Queen's did not make its first attack until the Battle of Broodseinde on 4th October.

Despite the general success of the limited attack the battalion lost nearly half its strength.

The division was then sent in as reinforcements to try to stem the devastating series of German counterattacks that ended the Battle of Cambrai on 2nd-3rd December 1917.

On 11th February 1918 ¾th Queen's was disbanded.

AWARDED THE "T.F.E. MEDAL."

Corps 57. East Kent Regt.

Regimental Number 230.

Surname MONK.

Christian Name A.

Rank Pte

Date of Army Order 274. 1/10/09

Registered Paper _____ Schedule) _____
Number }

W4860—H17274 30,000 2/20 HWV(P505) K1444



Territorial Efficiency Medal

Established in 1908, the medal superseded the Volunteer Long Service Medal and the Imperial Yeomanry Long Service Medal when the Territorial Force was formed on 1 April 1908. This followed the enactment of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907, (7 Edw.7, c.9) which instigated a major re-organisation of the old Volunteer Force and the remaining units of Militia and Yeomanry.

The Militia were transferred to the Special Reserve rather than the Territorial Force and were therefore eligible for the Special Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

The medal was superseded by the Territorial Efficiency Medal when the Territorial Force was elevated to become the Territorial Army in 1921.

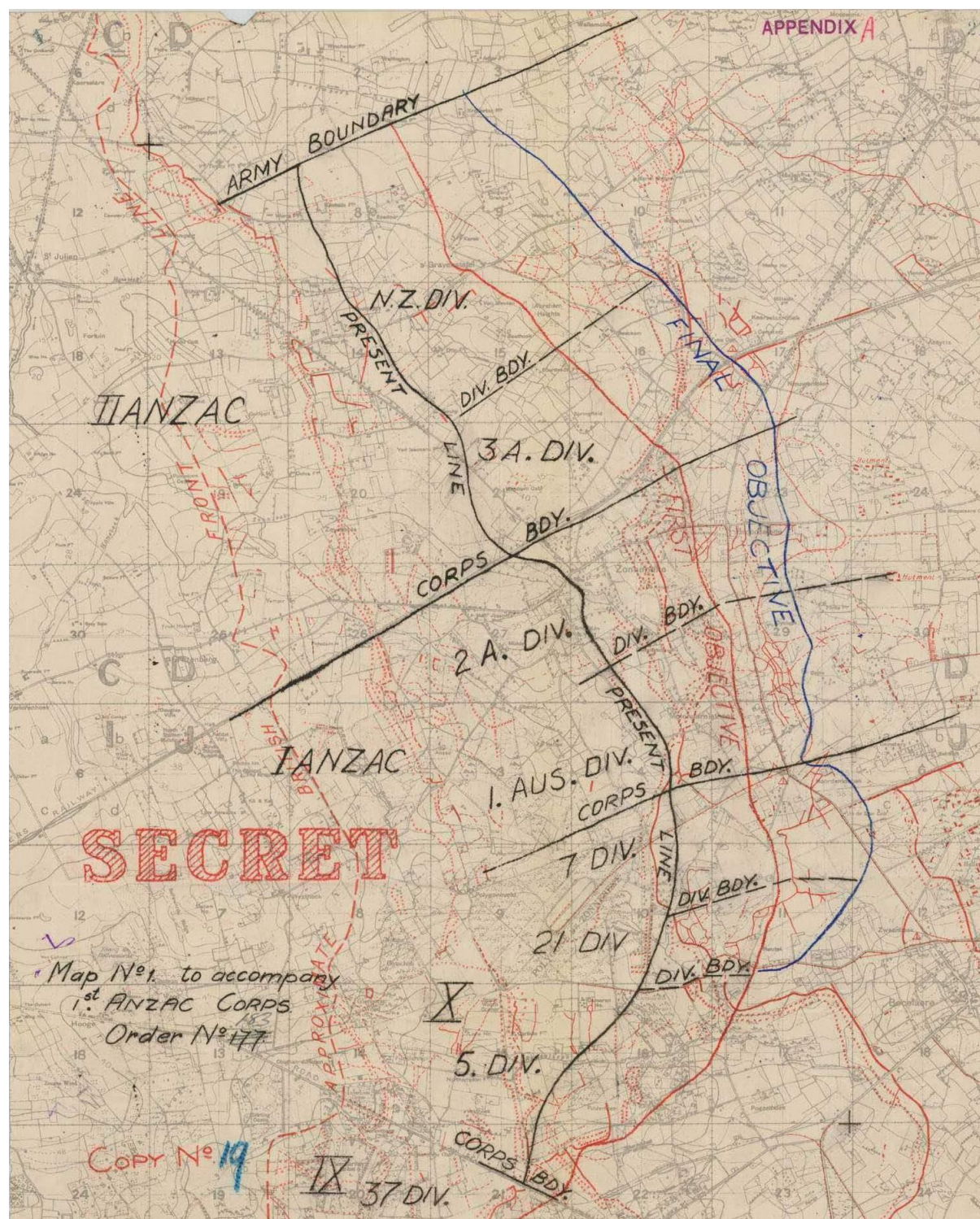
The Territorial Force Efficiency Medal was awarded to non-commissioned officers and men for a minimum of 12 years' service in the Territorial Force, providing they attended 12 annual training camps. Previous service in other part-time forces including the Volunteer Force could count, while war service counted double. Bars were awarded for further periods of 12 years.

The award above may explain Artur Monks path to becoming a Sergeant, 12 years' service, attendance of annual camps and his proficiency history. He was promoted to Sergeant in the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) and was a sergeant when transferred to the Queens – 4th Res (Royal West Surry Regiment).

Arthur Monk in France & Flanders WW1.

The 3rd battalion of The Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment) was a territorial battalion that was formed in 1915 and went overseas in June 1917, joining the 62nd Brigade, 21st Division, in August. Although the battalion spent some time in the line, the battle of Broodseinde on October 4th 1917 was to be its first action.

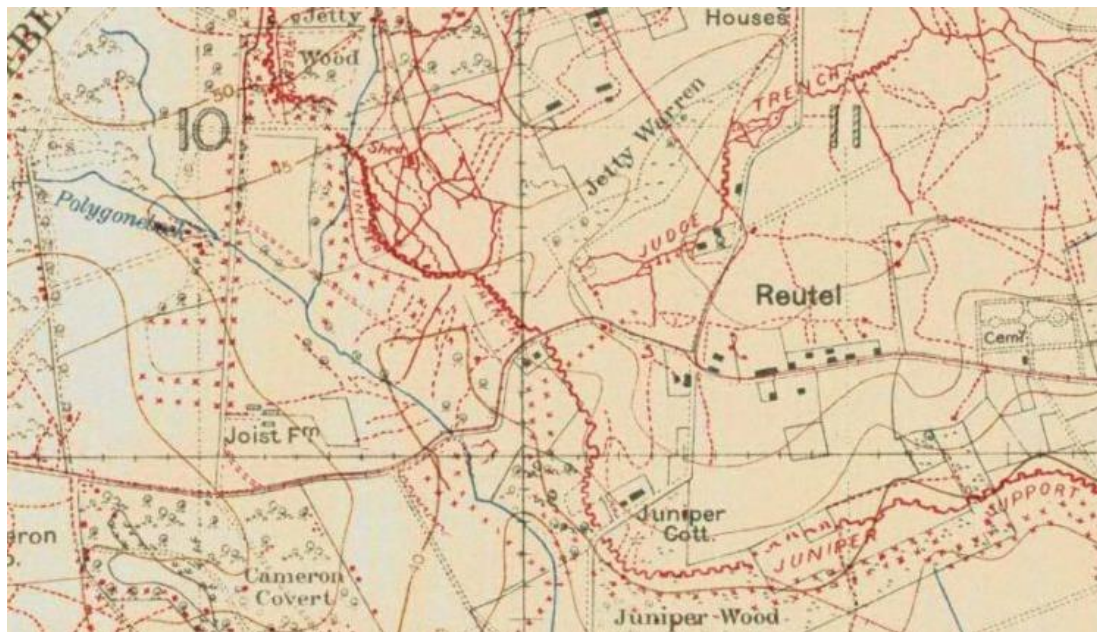
On the night of 2nd & 3rd October the 62nd Brigade relieved the 110th in the front line to the east of Polygon Wood. On the 3rd the men tried to carry out reconnaissance of the area but it was made difficult owing to the Germans occupying the nearby high ground.



Plan of attack for the Battle of Broodseinde (Arthur Monk 21st Division)

The action of 4th October was the third of General Plumer's "bite and hold" attacks, carried out to try and consolidate on the recent advances made and take the Broodseinde Ridge, thereby protecting the southern flank of the British line before the drive to take Passendale Ridge. The 21st Division was to advance east and take the village of Reutel and the high ground overlooking it.

At 3am on the 4th the Queen's assembled with three companies in the front line, each with a frontage of about 85 yards. The strength of the battalion was 982 men.



The Battalion was attacking German positions on higher ground, so the Germans held the advantage and had a good view of the attacking troops. Between the Battalion and its objectives were three "beeks" or streams, and because of the shelling the ground was completely churned up, the war diary calling it an "impenetrable morass".

The rising ground towards the German positions was covered by barbed wire and there were "mebus" (blockhouses/pillboxes) at the top of the high ground. These would hold 20-30 men, with machine guns and trench mortars covering the approaches.



The area attacked by the Battalion the Polygon "beek" can clearly be seen.



This image is a WW1 trench map imposed onto today's terrain. The black oval marks the approximate area where the 4th Queens assembled ahead of the attack (Moving right towards the German Juniper trench in red) you can also see the "beeks" or streams in Blue and the barbed wired obstacles denoted by crosses in front of the enemy lines.



The area today looking down from the top of the map (Red Star) above.

Zero hour was 6am. And as soon as the British barrage commenced the men moved up behind it. However, negotiating a line of barbed wire caused delays and the men came under machine gun fire from the right flank. It also proved difficult negotiating the Polygon Beek and the marshy ground surrounding it, despite the use of mud mats and a few trench boards. Despite the confusion Jupiter trench was reached and successfully assaulted. Many Germans were seen emerging, but in the dark it was impossible to tell if they meant to surrender or fight, and they were killed.

A German blockhouse was then encountered; a bombing party led by Lieutenant Arthur Byfield Frost attacked the structure and set it on fire with phosphorous bombs, an act for which Frost was awarded the Military Cross. The rest of this portion of the line was captured and the battalion consolidated its position and established Lewis Gun posts.

The Brigade war diary provides a detailed account of the action.

"The bayonet was freely used and large numbers of the fleeing enemy were shot with the rifle... One mebus was apparently set on fire by a phosphorous bomb and burnt furiously, the whole garrison being shot as they fled or burnt to death before they could emerge".....

A gross case of treachery occurred during the attack near a mebus in Jupiter trench. A German officer surrendered and put his hands up. As Lieutenant Cooper of the ¾th Queens went forward to take his surrender the German officer whipped out his revolver and shot Lieutenant Cooper dead. Before he could do more harm the German's body was riddled with bullets from the rifles of the men who witnessed the treacherous shot.

On account of an inner compartment of a mebus reopening fire after the outer garrison had surrendered it was necessary to kill all the Germans in the post.

Bayonet work was impossible on many Germans who fled to the rear as they ran without arms or equipment but they offered good targets to the riflemen.

The battalion had captured 200 prisoners, 15 machine guns and 10 mortars. However, losses had also been heavy: three officers and at least 84 men killed or died of wounds, and 250 wounded; of these 17 were officers including the Lieutenant Colonel, the Medical Officer and the Padre. Total casualties amounted to a third of the battalion's strength prior to the battle. Nearly 90% of those killed have no known grave and are commemorated on Tyne Cot memorial.



The area today showing the starting point and the blockhouse bombed by Lieutenant Frost.

APPENDIX 7.

B/4th Bn. "The Queen's" (RWS) Regt.

A. Narrative of Operations on October 4th,
East of POLYGON WOOD.

At 3.0 a.m. the Battalion commenced to assemble prior to the attack; the night was fairly dark and showery, whilst the hostile artillery was quiet. No difficulty whatever was experienced in concentrating the Battalion: the 2 white tapes which had been previously laid on the flanks of each Company frontage were found of inestimable value.

The dispositions of the regiment were as follows:-

"A" Company on the right.
"B" " in the centre.
"D" " on the left.

They were drawn up in a line from J.10.b.1.0 to J.10.d.1.7, and each Company had a frontage of 85x and a depth of 30x, and were disposed in the normal formation of attack, viz. each Company on a one Platoon frontage.

"C" Company were in close support, and were formed up in one line of half platoons in file at x interval, their centre being directly behind the left of "B" Company.

2 reserve Lewis Gun Teams moved with "C" Company. There was one subsection of 62nd M.G.Co. on each flank of the Support Company, whilst 2 guns of the 62nd Trench Mortar Battery followed closely in rear of the centre.

The total depth of the battalion was 60x, and the process of assembly was finished by 4.30 a.m.

At 5.30 a.m. the enemy put down a barrage over the assembly positions, to which our artillery retaliated; this continued until Zero hour, but the Battalion suffered no casualties.

At ZERO (6.0 a.m.) our barrage came down 150x in front of our position, the assaulting Troops immediately advancing up to it; they found the "going" rather heavy, but could keep up to the barrage.



Polygon Wood after the battle in 1917 in which Arthur Monk was involved & injured

The first obstacle encountered was a line of concertina and barbed wire along the whole front, which patrols had been unable to entirely clear away, in addition the advance came under heavy enemy Machine Gun fire from the right at this juncture; both these obstructions were successfully negotiated with few casualties.

The POLYGON BARRAGE was then encountered, and proved a serious impediment to the advance, the Companies only possessing 4 mud mats and a few trench boards manufactured from the beds in enemy concrete "pill boxes", and these were found to be insufficient; the marsh and stream were crossed with some difficulty, but the barrage was lost for the time being, and some confusion resulted.

JUNIPER TRENCH was then assaulted, the wire in front forming no serious obstacle; many of the enemy emerged from its shelter, but owing to the darkness it was impossible to tell their intentions, and the majority were killed.

A hostile concrete fortress at J.10.d.8.8 put up some show of resistance, which was overcome by a party of bombers led by Lieut. A. B. Frost, and the structure set on fire probably by 'P' Bombs.

The remaining portion of this German line of defence fell into our hands with no great difficulty.

The Battle of Broodseinde was fought on 4 October 1917 near Ypres in Belgium, at the east end of the Gheluvelt plateau, by the British Second and Fifth armies against the German 4th Army.

The battle was the most successful Allied attack of the Third Battle of Ypres. Using “bite-and-hold” tactics, with objectives limited to what could be held against German counter-attacks, the British devastated the German defence, which prompted a crisis among the German commanders and caused a severe loss of morale in the 4th Army.

Preparations were made by the Germans for local withdrawals and planning began for a greater withdrawal, which would entail the abandonment by the Germans of the Belgian coast, one of the strategic aims of the British offensive.



Battle of Broodseinde 4 Oct 1917

Men huddled in funk holes with corpses in front of them in a railway cutting at Broodseinde.

Having spoken to other family members Sgt Arthur Monk was injured by a shell explosion on 5th October 1917 during this battle. He had shrapnel enter his body on his buttocks and leave his body through his shoulder, lucky to be alive.

He also had a big leather belt which the tale goes he removed “looted” from a dead German soldier by the supply railway line near the theatre of action in this battle.

I vaguely remember him; we used to go down to his house in Rolvenden Layne when I was a child.

Despite his war wounds he lived to the good age of 92 or 93 depending on which documents you read. My memories of him are that he was as strong as an Ox even in his old age.

For some reason or another he was always known within the family as Jessie, I still do not know why.



Arthur Monk in later years.

APPENDIX 2.

3/4th Bn. "THE QUEEN'S" (R.W.S.) REGT.

Summary of Operations Oct.1st to Oct.10th,1917.

CASUALTIES. A. Officers.

Oct.2.	Capt.A.E.Mackenzie,R.A.M.C.	
	att.3/4 "Queen's"	Wounded.
" 3.	Lieut.L.H.Dakin.	do.
	Capt.M.Frou,A.C. C.V. att.	
	3/4th "Queen's"	Wounded (at duty).
" 4	Lieut.J.J.Brooke	Killed.
	Lieut.A.H.A.Cooper	do.
	Lieut.A.H.Barrow	do.
	Capt.P.M.Sepworth	Wounded.
	Capt.V.F. Samuelson	Wounded (at duty).
	Capt.O.G. Moss.	Wounded.
	Lieut.A.B. Frost	Wounded (at duty).
	Lieut.A.H.Lovell	Wounded.
	Lieut.D.E.J.O'Connor	Wounded.
	2nd Lt.J.Ost	Wounded.
	2nd Lt.J.C.Davis	do.
	Capt.L.J.C.Vidler	Wounded (at duty).
	Lieut.B.J.Mason	do. do.
" 5	Lt.Col.K.A.Oswald	Wounded.
	2nd Lt.O.A.Freestone	do.
" 6	Lieut.P.A.Curtis	do.
" 8	Lieut.G.A.Shaw.	do.

TOTAL:- 3 Killed, 17 Wounded (5 at duty).

B. Other Ranks.

Oct.1.	1 Killed.	
" 2.		4 Wounded.
" 3	1 do.	10 do.
" 4	49 do.	184 do. 19 missing.
" 5	1 do.	80 do. 1 do.
" 6	2 do.	8 do.
" 7	3 do.	12 do. 1 do.
" 10	4 do.	3 do.

TOTAL:- 61 Killed, 341 Wounded (6 at duty) 21 Missing

PRISONERS.

200 German Officers,B.C.Os.and men were captured by the battalion.

MATERIAL.

8 Heavy Machine Guns.
7 Light do. do.
3 Trench Mortars.
5 Grenade throwers, were captured and destroyed by the battalion.

General WW1 Medal Descriptions



This award was sanctioned in 1917 for members of the British Expeditionary Force for services during the first phase of the war. It was issued to those who served in France and Belgium between 5th August 1914 and 22nd November 1914. Most of the 378,000 recipients were military personnel belonging to the Regular Army or Territorial Force, although some naval units who served ashore received the award. In addition, a very small number of Australian and Canadian recipients were entitled to the award. The star is of bronze and has three points, the fourth ending in a crown and the suspension ring. There are two crossed swords incorporated in the design between these points. The obverse contains a scroll and the date '1914' in the centre, with 'Aug' above and 'Nov' below, the above all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse is plain and contains the recipient's number, rank, name and regiment in three lines of small impressed capitals. Recipients of this star who were under fire during the period were entitled to wear a bar, sanctioned in 1919, which was sewn onto the ribbon; this bar simply had the relevant qualifying dates on it. This award is incomplete without the British War Medal and Victory Medal, as these two awards were automatically issued to those with the star. The ribbon is of watered red, white and blue.

1914 Star & Bar sometimes referred to as “The Mons Star” (Above)



This award is identical to the 1914 Star, except for the obverse centre, which has the date '1914-15' instead of '1914', and the two months are omitted. In all other respects the two awards are the same. The 1914-15 award was issued to all those who served in a theatre of war between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915, except those who already qualified for the 1914 Star by virtue of their service with the BEF. Thus a naval rating who was killed at sea in 1914 would receive the 1914-15 Star. The star was issued for services in France, the Dardanelles, East and West Africa, New Guinea, and several other small theatres of war. Due to the large number issued - 2,350,000 - the star is very common. It was issued to the three British services, various Commonwealth and Imperial forces, and various other recipients such as civilians attached to the forces. The ribbon is identical to that of the 1914 Star.

1914 – 15 Star (Above)



The British War Medal, issued in both silver and bronze, was issued for services during the First World War.

The basic qualification for the award was service in any of the three armed services, any Commonwealth or Imperial formation, or in certain recognised voluntary organisations. No clasps were issued, the medal applying to all theatres of war, including some categories of service in the United Kingdom.

This award is usually found with the Victory Medal of 1914-18, but can be awarded singly. In all, some 6.5 million were issued in silver, with some 110,000 in bronze to natives in various labour corps. The medal was issued for some operations after the 1918 Armistice, mainly for services in Russia and minesweeping operations.

The obverse shows the coinage head of George V with an inscription, while the reverse depicts the mounted figure of St. George trampling the shield of the Central Powers. The dates '1914' and '1918' also appear.

The suspension is straight and non-swiveling. All awards have impressed naming in small, block capitals of varying types; the regiment or corps is omitted from the naming on awards to Army officers.

This is the most common silver medal in the British series, and as such its value is unfortunately dominated by the price of scrap silver. The ribbon is of a wide central orange stripe with narrow stripes of white, black and blue at each edge.



The British War Medal (Above)



The Victory Medal in bronze was issued for services during the First World War. It was awarded to all those who received the 1914 or 1914-15 Star and to most of those who received the British War Medal of 1914-20; it could not be awarded alone.

The main qualification for the award was any service in a theatre of war between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918. Most recipients were service personnel, including those from Commonwealth and Imperial services, although some civilians working in recognised voluntary organisations also received the award.

Those who were mentioned in dispatches between August 1914 and August 1920 wore a bronze oak leaf on the ribbon.

Some 5,750,000 medals were issued in all. The obverse depicts the winged figure of Victory holding a palm branch, whilst the reverse contains an inscription inside a wreath; those awards to South African recipients have this inscription in both English and Afrikaans.

The naming is always impressed in one of several styles, the regimental details being omitted on those awards to Army officers. The suspension is by a loop attached to the medal and a ring, while the ribbon is of a double rainbow pattern of red, green, blue and violet.



The Victory Medal (Above)



2049 Pte Robert James Bliss (Senior)

20th Hussars 1882 - 1894



Robert James Bliss in later life

Great Grandad Bliss

This is the result of much research and trawling the Internet, Military Records and searching anything to do with the

20th Hussars in Sudan 1884



Pre-World War 1

2049 Private Robert James Bliss – 20th Hussars (Gran Browns Father)



20th Hussars Cap Badge



Camel Cavalry Uniform

Life Synopsis:

October 1862 Born in Folkestone

2nd November 1862 Baptised in St Mary and St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone

2nd April 1871 Census he was living at 15 Darlington Street aged 9 years.

3rd April 1881 Census he was a general labourer living at 15 Darlington Street aged 18.

4th September 1882 Medical at Canterbury for Army Service.

8th September 1882 signed up to Regiment: 20th Hussars in Cahir Ireland.

10th September 1884 stationed at Aldershot.

14th March 1885 Suakin (Sudan)

13th September 1886 Cairo Egypt

18th November 1887 returned to the UK.

22nd March 1894 released from the army after 12 years of service.

During his almost 3 years in Africa, he spent 187 Days Sick – 56 Days in military prison.

1901 he had a boot shop at 12a Foord Road Folkestone and lived at 15 Darlington Street Folkestone. At some point after this but before 1908 he was committed to the Kent Asylum in Chartham and died in 1909 aged 47 years.

British involvement in Egypt deepened after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, many British officers being seconded to the Khedive's Army. When the army mutinied in 1892 and triggered off a general anti-European uprising, an Anglo-French expedition was mounted. Subsequently the French withdrew before a landing was effected. Trouble erupted in the Sudan (under Anglo-Egyptian administration) in 1884 where General Gordon was besieged at Khartoum. Further campaigns aimed at the overthrow of the Mahdi and the re-conquest of the Sudan. These prolonged operations created immense logistical problems. Nile transportation in particular was a matter resolved only when Canadian Voyagers were recruited to handle the riverboats.

20th Hussars returned home from India late in 1872 and were then in England till they departed for Cahir, Tipperary in 1879. In 1884 they moved back to Aldershot briefly before being deployed on active service in Egypt and Sudan till 1887. 1887-95 they were back home in England.

SHORT SERVICE.

Army Form B. 265.

ATTESTATION OF

No. 2049 Name Robert James BlissCorps 20th HussarsJoined at Wahiton 8 Sept 1882

Duplicate

A. Mice



Questions to be put to the Recruit before enlistment.

1. What is your Name? Robert James Bliss
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? Folkestone Kent
3. What is your Age? 20 Years 6 Months.
4. What is your Trade or Calling? Labourer
5. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? if so, where? No
6. Have you resided out of your Father's house for three years continuously in the same place, or occupied a house or land of the yearly value of £10 for one year, and paid rates for the same, and, in either case, if so, state where? No
7. Are you Married? No
8. Have you ever been discharged from any part of Her Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of conviction of felony, or of a sentence of penal servitude, or have you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? And you are warned that there is a special provision in the Army Act which renders you liable to Penal Servitude if you make a false answer to this question. No
9. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, Her Majesty's Army? No
10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, the Marines? No
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, the Militia, or Militia Reserve? No
12. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, the Royal Navy? No
13. Do you now belong to the Volunteers, or to the Naval Artillery Volunteers? or to the Royal Naval Reserve Force? No
14. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous Service? Yes
15. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for Her Majesty's Service? No
16. For what Corps are you willing to be enlisted, or are you willing to be enlisted for General Service? 20th Hussars
17. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning? Yes
18. Who gave you the Notice? John Lawrence Surge
19. Are you willing to serve for the term of twelve Years, provided Her Majesty should so long require your services, for the first seven years in Army Service, and for the remaining five years in the 1st Class of the Army Reserve, or if, at the termination of such period of Army Service, you are serving beyond the seas, then for the first eight years in Army Service, and for the remaining four years in the 1st Class of the Army Reserve? Yes
20. Are you aware that if, at the expiration of the above-mentioned terms of Army Service, whether of seven or eight years, a state of war exists, you will be liable, if so directed by the competent Military Authority, to serve in Army Service for a further term not exceeding 12 months? Yes
21. Are you aware that if, at the expiration of the above-mentioned terms of Army Service, you are so required by a proclamation from Her Majesty in case of imminent national danger or great emergency, you may be required to serve in Army Service so as to complete your term of 12 years, and for a further period not exceeding 12 months? Yes
22. Are you aware that, if the above-mentioned term of 12 years expires while you are on service with the Regular Forces beyond the seas, or while a state of war exists with a Foreign Power, or while soldiers in the Reserves are required by proclamation to continue in or re-enter upon Army Service, you will be liable to serve for a further period not exceeding twelve months? Yes

I, Robert James Bliss do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement made.

Signature of Recruit. Robert James Bliss Signature of Witness. John Lawrence Surge

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, Robert James Bliss do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and of the General and Officers commanding me. So help me God.

Witness my hand.

Signature of Recruit.

Signature of Witness.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said recruit has made and signed the declaration and oath before me at Canterbury on this 4th day of September 1882.

Signature of the Justice

The Recruit should, if he require it, receive a copy of the Declaration on Army Form B. 292.

Description of Robert James Bliss on Enlistment.

Age apparently 20 years _____ months.
 Age physically } 20 years _____ months.
 equivalent to }
 Height 5 feet 6½ inches.
 Weight† 142 lbs.
 Chest Measurement 37 inches.
 Complexion Fresh
 Eyes Blue
 Hair Brown
 Religious denomination Ch of England

*Distinctive Mark.
Has been previously served
Tattooed - Anchor, Shield
and 5 Star on back of
left forearm, and hand

NOTE.—Civilian Medical Practitioners on making the primary examination of a recruit are to enter the above particulars in pencil only.
 * If the recruit is above the physical equivalent of 19, enter here "above 19."
 † A Civilian Medical Practitioner is not required to fill this in.
 ‡ Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will (unless the man acknowledges to any previous service) make a note to that effect in the column for distinctive marks.

CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY MEDICAL EXAMINATION—(by a Civilian Medical Practitioner.)

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz.:—
 Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing;
 hernia; hamorrhoids; varicose veins beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle;
 inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked with
 the letters D., or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical
 defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see at the required distance with either eye, his heart and lungs are healthy, he has the free use of his
 joints and limbs, and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for service in the Army.

I have filled up the above "Description" in pencil.

Date _____

Place _____

Civil Medical
Practitioner.

NOTE.—This Certificate should be left blank when the Recruit is examined in the first instance by an Approving Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF FINAL MEDICAL EXAMINATION—(by an Approving Medical Officer.)

Examined by me in accordance with above Certificate, I consider him fit & Approve him

I have completed the above Description in ink.

Date 4th Sept 1882

Place Canterbury

* Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

Surgeon
Robinson
Surgeon
 Surgeon, Approving
Medical Officer.

NOTE.—Should the Approving Medical Officer consider the recruit unfit, he will state here briefly the cause of unfitness.

Certificate of Primary Military Examination.

I hereby certify that the above-named recruit was inspected by me, and I consider him
fit for Her Majesty's Service, and that I have examined this Attestation and find it properly
 filled up.

Date 4th September 1882

Place Canterbury

* NOTE.—Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

Al Jackson
Adjutant, 3rd Regimental District
 Captain
Recruiting
Officer.

Certificate of Approving Field Officer.

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named recruit is correct, and that the required forms appear to have been
 complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to 20th Hussars.

If enlisted by special authority, number and date to be here quoted

Date 4th September 1882

Place Canterbury

Stewart
Commanding, 3rd Regimental District
 Colonel
Approving
Field Officer.

Name _____

Name _____

Forfeits 1st G.L. Pay 25th Dec^r 1886
Restored 1st G.L. Pay 19 Feby 1888
Passed to the Army Reserve
per auth. A.G.'s letter 89:109/Gen
11/12/46. d. 4. March 1888

Lettified count
Munroe Linsell
Linn 49 2056

1st Cl. AR Transferred 17th 22nd Mar 88 3-9-94 6/66 — — —

The discharge of the above named
man is hereby confirmed

Canterbury }
3. 9. 94 } M. R. R. Colonel
Comm'd Cavalry Depot

Total Service as above
------------------------	-----	-----

I have examined the above details, and find them in every respect correct.

the above details, and find them in every respect correct.

H. Miller Lt. Col. S. A. Paymaster,
or Officer Commanding.

Further Service from the _____ to the _____ when }
finally discharged

Total Service allowed to reckon to the day of final discharge

12 - 5 1435 199

12 - 5 143 5 194

MILITARY HISTORY SHEET.

1.—Service at Home and Abroad (including former service of re-enlisted men, when allowed to reckon towards G. C. Pay or Pension).

COUNTRY	FROM	TO	YEARS	DAYS	
Home	4. 10. 82	19. Feb 85	2	169	
Spadah	20. Feb 85	18. 11. 87	2	272	
Home	19. 11. 87	21. 3. 88	-	123	
"	22. 3. 88	3. 9. 94	6	166	
			12		

N.B.—The Country only to be shown—it is not necessary to show separately the service in the different stations of same country. England, Scotland, and Ireland to be shown under the general term "Home."

For mode of computing Foreign Service, see Sec. XIX, para. 142, Queen's Regulations, 1881.

2. Next of Kin ... Father Harry; Mother, Mary; 15 Downington Rd. Folkestone
 Brother John, Abraham, Richard
 Sister Sarah, London, Elizabeth, Caroline

8. Campaigns ... Sudan 1885, Egyptian F.F. Force 1885-6
 Battle of Ginn

4. Wounded ...

5. Effects of Wounds ...

6. Special instances of gallant conduct ...

7. Medals, decorations, and annuities ... Egyptian medal & clasp Sudan 85
 Khedive's Star 1884-6

8. Injuries in or by the Service ...

9. Married ... To whom
 Place and Date

10. Passed Classes of Instruction ...

11. Certificates of Education ...

12. Character on being passed to Reserve ... Good, is in possession of one (1) Good Conduct badge

13. Character on being Discharged ...

14. Place of Discharge ...

15. Cause of Discharge ...

16. Pension awarded ...

17. Died ...

18. Notes ...

Initials of Officer making the Entry.

Note.—These entries are to be made from time to time as they occur, and initialed by the Officer making the entry.

The Campaign Robert James Bliss was involved in.

Gordon Relief Expedition 1884-5

The expedition under Sir Garnet Wolseley was split into two main subdivisions, the River Column and the Desert Column. The latter column was made up of camel mounted troops which were divided into 3 regiments made up from detachments from various units. The Light Camel Regiment consisted of men from the 3rd, 4th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 18th, 20th and 21st Hussars. The 20th supplied 2 officers and 43 men, but they and the other hussar detachments must have been hugely disappointed when they were informed that they had to remain at Korti to guard the supplies. Thus, the Light Camel Regiment took no part in the desert crossing and the battle at Abu Klea.

Suakin, March 1885

In February 1885, two squadrons of the 20th Hussars embarked at Portsmouth and landed at Suakin in March. The force being gathered there, under the command of General Sir Gerald Graham, consisted of British, Indian, Australian and Egyptian troops. There was a reconnaissance in force which took them out into the desert, but nothing was found, and they returned to Suakin. Another recce led by the 20th went out with the objective of establishing the prospects for building a railway from Suakin to Berber on the Nile. But the hinterland was dominated by the Hadendowa Beja tribesmen led by the slave trader Osman Digna. It was decided to break his control and on 20th March Sir Gerald went out to Hasheen, 10 miles west of the port, with the Suakin Field Force in square formation. A series of fierce battles were fought in which the tribesmen suffered heavy casualties, but the results were inconclusive. The Empire troops suffered 45 casualties, and when they returned, the 20th embarked for Cairo to join the rest of the regiment.

Ginnis, 30 December 1885

Having concentrated at Cairo, the 20th Hussars moved up the Nile to Wadi Halfa to join General Sir Frederick Stephenson's Frontier Field Force of British and Egyptian troops. The Dervishes, led by the Mahdi's successor, Khalifa Abdullahi ibn Muhammad, were preparing for an invasion of Egypt so in December the Field Force marched out to do battle. The confrontation occurred at Ginnis which is a battle famous in British history for being the last time troops fought in red uniforms, although this only applied to some of the units. The main fighting was carried out by the infantry in the streets of the town and in the Dervish camp but when the enemy retreated to the Atab Defile the cavalry under Colonel Benjamin Blake, CO of the 20th, attacked and pursued them. One detachment of 50 men and one officer chased them for 50 miles upstream as far as Absarat. The 20th were dressed in khaki for this battle.

Medals awarded to Robert James Bliss



Suakin 85 Medal



Khedive's Star 1884-6



Battle of Tofrek 20th Hussars.

Form F. Army Form B. 178
(late W.O. Form 1143)

MEDICAL HISTORY of

Surname Bliss Christian Name Robert James

Enlisted { on 4th day of Sept. 1882
at of antebury

Birthplace { Parish 70 Westone
County Kent

Age, (last birthday) 20

Former Trade Labourer

Height 66½ Inches.

Weight 142 lbs.

Chest Measurement 37 Inches.

Physical Development Good

Small Pox Marks None

Vaccination Marks { Arm Left
Number One

When Vaccinated Infancy

Marks on body, congenital or otherwise. Indistinct
Two Marks - One on Right
Shoulder & Star on back of left
Forearm & hand.

Finally approved by Wm. Robinson
Surgeon Major

Examined for re-engagement,
day of _____ 18____

* Considered _____
Surgeon _____

* If unfit, state disability. _____

Re-vaccinated on 20th day of October 1882

Arm Right Number 3
Result perfect
W. M. Kelly Surgeon Major

On Enlistment Joined	CORPS.	REGTL. NUMBER.	DATE.
...	<u>30th Hussars</u>	<u>2049</u>	<u>Sep 1882</u>
Transferred to			

APPEARED BEFORE A MEDICAL BOARD.			
Station	Date	Disease	Result

General remarks as to habits, conduct, &c. Regular. Good Temper.
W. M. Kelly Surgeon Major
21.3.88 Surgeon Major

N.B.—This sheet to be disposed of in accordance with instructions in G. O. 11. 1877. on the man becoming non-effective; the date and cause being stated at foot of next page.

F & T 49,000 9—80 Forms
B. 178

Robert James Bliss – Signing Up Medical

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Patient's Name.

Robert James Bliss

Date of Admission.	Age on Admission.	Married, Single, or Widowed.	Weight and Height.	No. of Attacks.	Previously in Public or Private Asylum.	Profession or Occupation.	CAUSE OF INSANITY.		FORM OF MENTAL			
							Predisposing.	Exciting.	Mania A. C. R.	Melancholia A. C. R.	Primary	Secondary
Aug 17 1908	44 1/2	M.	5 ft 6 in 10-8	1 st	No	Boat-maker	Syphilis.					



3/9/08

Eliza Bliss (wife)

Address of Relatives 11 Skellins Street, Wollstone

Brought by P. Hemaley, R.L.

The Medical Certificate states: Has great ideas of his powers of fishing, says he has a net of 37 fathoms & capable of catching 2 tons of fish, which he can put into his little pleasure boat, sends his boat with pieces of walrus. Says that at the judgment day all Jews will be left on the earth.

History No notice taken of P.M. paragraph.

Paral attack commenced 3 months ago, with change of speech, loss of memory, & sleeplessness. Has started fishing & taking his children out for hours at a time - has had to be rescued from drowning three times. History of syphilis (from statement). Brother consumptive.

Mentally. He is fairly well nourished. Has dark brown hair, eyes grey, pupils unequal R much larger than L. They do not react to light stimulus. Tongue moist, furrowed with marked furrows. Speech a little slurring. Pulse regular, soft. Heart & lungs appear to be healthy. No traces. Has granulating sore on left shin the size of a florin, also small sore on L. shin.

Temp. 97.4.

Urine

Mentally. He at once commences to talk in a boastful way of his great fishing powers, says he gave up bootmaking a short time ago & bought a boat for 50 s. to go fishing in, but then filled & sank under him, the same fate happened to a second boat, he has now a third which he says will hold 3 tons of fish which he can catch in one haul in his net, which is, he says, 37 fathoms

deep & he is going to buy some more netting half a mile long, says he will soon make his fortune & that Christ will help him.

August 22nd Copy of statement.

He is suffering from Dementia with General Paralysis, has some exaltation, says that he has cured 100 people with his ointment, that he three times saved his regiment from disaster. He is in moderate health.

Aug. 29th. Is restless & does not occupy himself. Talks in a rambling way about the enormous quantity of fish he would catch etc. Clean.

Sept. 6th. Is excited and delirious, ramble in conversation. Is quiet & gives no trouble. Health poor.

Sept. 13th. Is excited & boastful with delusions of grandeur. Unemployed, still under treatment.

Oct. 13th. Says his wife has just been left several hundred pounds - memory weak, does not know how long he has been here. Quiet. Health poor.

Nov. 14th. Is delirious about large sums of money. His poor memory. Is excited & talkative. Speech more hurried. Health moderate.

1909. January. Remains in much the same condition health poor.

18 April. Baffled and grandiose delusions persist constantly, asks how his wife is: speech has become more indistinct, marked latent tremor. Is more feeble on his legs, takes some daily rest.

July 19. Speech indistinct. Grandiose delusions disappearing. Shaky on legs. Demented. Destructive & dirty.

22 JUL 1909 Copy of letter Sept 10

He is suffering from General Paralysis. Is demented. Cannot command active life. Has no memory.

Health poor.

18 Oct 1909. Demented. Speech very indistinct. Very feeble - confined to bed. Sinking.

20 Oct 1909. Died tonight at 7.35 P.M. in presence of att. Wise.

21 Oct 1909. P.M. today vide Reg E vol. 118.

Cause of Death as Certified:
General Paralysis of Insane.

B. Duncan.

Mental Disease.

*General Paralysis.*Union. *Elham.*

DISEASE.		Suffering from Epilepsy.	Suffering from General Paralysis.	Having Suicidal Propensity.	Whether Dangerous to others.	Having Pathological Family History.	Having Family History of Intemperance.	Habits.	Religious Persuasion.	Time Insane.			Continuation Reference.	RESULT.
Congenital Insanity, including Idiots, &c.	Delusional Insanity.									Y.	M.	D.		
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>C. & Brethren.</i>		<i>S</i>				<i>Died</i> <i>20 Oct 1909</i>

LUNACY ACT, 1890.—KENT COUNTY ASYLUM, CHARTHAM.—NOTICE OF DEATH.

Date of Reception Order—the *17th* day of *August* 190*8*
 I HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE that *Robert James Bliss*
 a *Pauper* Patient received into this Asylum on the *17th* day of *August* 190*8*,
 died therein on the *20th* day of *October* 190*9*
 (Signed) *William H. Sibley* Clerk to the Asylum.
 Dated the *22nd* day of *October*, 190*9*.

To the Coroner for East Kent.

STATEMENT RESPECTING THE ABOVE-NAMED PATIENT.

Name *Robert James Bliss*
 Sex and Age *Sex: Male Age: 45 years*
 Married, Single, or Widowed *Married*
 Profession or Occupation *Bootmaker*
 Previous place of Abode *No 11 Shellons Street Folkestone Kent*
 Apparent Cause of Death *General Paralysis of Insane*
 Post Mortem or Not *Yes*
 Time, and any unusual circumstances attending Death, or any Injuries known to exist or found on body after Death *4.55 PM None*
 Mental Condition at Death *Dementia*
 Duration of Disease of which Patient died *6 1/2 months*
 Name and Description of Persons present at Death *Attendant Walter Wise*
 Whether Mechanical Restraint was applied within 7 days of Death: if so, character and duration *No*

I hereby certify that the particulars contained in the above statement are true.

W. Sibley
 Medical Officer of the Asylum.

Robert James Bliss – Post-mortem (Not gruesome)

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NAME. Robert James Bliss.

Regd. No.	Case Book reference.	Age.	Sex.	Occupation.	Admitted.	Died.	Post-Mortem Examination.	Mental State on Admission.	Mental State at Death.
	O 165.	45	M.	Bootmaker	17 Aug 1908	20 Oct 1909	21 Oct 1909	G. P. I.	G. P. I. Dement.

Condition of Body and external appearances, and whether or not bed-sores present.

P.M. 17 hours after death.
Body poorly nourished. P.M. rigidity present. No bed-sores.

HEAD.

Dura Mater shows some haemorrhage over R parieto-occipital region. Very slight excess of cerebro spinal fluid. Pia was a little adherent at parts. Cerebral vessels were very congested. Vessels at base appeared normal. Frontal convolutions showed slight wasting.

THORAX.

(Describe Condition of Ribs.)

Ribs intact.
Lungs: R lung was congested at base
L lung healthy.
Heart: appeared healthy.

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UNION. *Elham.*

Heart.		R. Lung.		L. Lung.		Liver.		Spleen.		R. Kidney.		L. Kidney.		Other Organs.	
lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.
6 1/2	9 1/2	25	19 1/4	56 1/2	6 1/4	7 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2

Brain: some congestion. all hall stones.

Spleen: congested.

Kidneys: R shows small white infarct in one small cyst. L. appeared normal.

General Paralysis of Insane

(Signed) G. H. Spencer

Microscopic appearances at any special notes

Date of death

Information provided by Dr Helen Wicker senior researcher at Kent Archives.

The Chartham Asylum Registers of Patients record that Robert James Bliss senior was admitted to the Asylum on 17 August 1908. Using this information, I was able to locate his case notes within volume ref. MH/T3/Mc48 f.165. His notes cover two pages, plus the notice of death recording that he died on 20 October 1909. A photograph of Robert, dated 3 September 1908, is also included.

Robert's case notes record that he was suffering from General Paralysis of the Insane upon admission, which means that he had been infected by syphilis. In the latter stages of this illness there are acute psychological symptoms, including delusions and later dementia. When Robert was admitted, his medical certificate recorded that he was already suffering from delusions: 'Has great ideas of his powers of fishing, says he has a net 37 fathoms & capable of catching 2 tons of fish, which he can put into his little pleasure boat, mends his boat with pieces of leather. Says that at the Judgment Day all Jews will be left on the earth'...'Present attack commenced 3 months ago, with change of speech, loss of memory, & sleeplessness. Has started fishing & taking his children out for hours at a time – has had to be rescued from drowning three times'. Although his trade is given as a bootmaker, Robert told doctors that he had given up his trade recently to take up fishing – although given his mental state, it is unclear how truthful this statement was.



Whilst searching through some old boxes in a cupboard in my Dads house, I stumbled across this photo. It is Robert James Bliss (Snr) outside his Shoe shop in Folkestone; it was the only photo my Gran Brown had of her father as far as I can find. He is the one on the right, someone, probably my Gran put a cross above his head so we would know which one he was. The photo is circa 1901.

Between 1901 and 1908 he was committed to the Kent Asylum which may have been part of the reason his wife Eliza Bliss put the three boys into foster homes and kept the two girls.

Robert J Bliss (Jnr) as earlier in this document was put in Fegan Homes and sent to Canada.

Frederick Bliss was put into Dr Barnardo's and sent to Canada, he planned to come back to the UK and find his Sister (My Gran) but died in 1961 before getting here although his wife Auntie Edna and their daughter Norma Bliss did come over in the mid-sixties.

The third son Henry was also put into Dr Barnardo's and sent to Canada failed the military examination for sign up for WW1 and basically disappeared, no-one heard any more from him. Gran did try to find him but without success. The Salvation Army told Gran he had got into some sort of trouble and it would be best if she did not pursue it any further. I cannot find out much about him either, only his very brief military Attestation and medical documents where he was refused due to an inguinal hernia.

I have just discovered (Dec 2020) that they had another son, Clarence Charles Bliss who was born around November 1894, Christened, and died in September 1895.

Personal Memories

My vague memories of these people.

George Brown

For obvious reasons I never met my Great Grandad Brown as he was killed 41 years before I was born, however when I visited his war grave in Ypres I felt something, a bond, deep respect and love for a man I descended from but never met, but there was a blood connection.

Grandad used to speak of him and on many occasions showed me his name on the Rolvenden War memorial, but at the time I guess I was too young to really understand.

Robert J Bliss

Again, I never met Uncle Bob, but as a kid I remember sitting outside Chartham Asylum (St Augustine's) where he spent over 40 years after World War One suffering with mental issues brought on by his experiences during the war. I remember being given a bag of sweets or crisps to keep me happy whilst my Gran went in to visit her brother. He died in 1966 when I was 10 years old.

Always felt close to him even though I never met him, probably because he meant so much to my Gran, I have his war medals including the label written by my Gran when she posted them to him in St Augustine's Chartham.

Thomas Alfred Coveney

I remember Great Grandad Coveney; He married my Great Grandmother (Kate) several years after the war after she was widowed. I never really know what my Grandad thought of him but have since found out that he respected him having had him as a stepfather since he was about 12 years old. I met him once or twice when I was a kid when Grandad took me down to Rolvenden Layne to visit them. All I can remember is he had a bit of a stoop and a limp too I think this was a war wound as he was buried by a shell explosion in 1915.

I remember him dying; I was at Primary School at the time.

I can remember my Grandad saying to Great Gran Coveney, "Mother get your head out of that fire" she used to have her hair tied in a loose bun and toast her bread on the open fire and as she bent down to toast her bread her hair would flop around. Grandad was worried she would catch her hair alight.

Arthur Monk

He was known by most as Jessie Monk, don't know why. I remember him from my childhood we used to go and visit him; I remember walking down there with Brian Booker (my cousin) we walked to Rolvenden Layne to visit him. I cannot remember much else about him though.

Ypres 2018

How to go on a roller coaster trip without leaving the ground.

Weeks of planning:

To get this right I planned it like a meticulous brigadier, I knew that I had to go, but like most things in life if you don't get pushed, they tend to get pushed back to the back burner.

I had planned to go in 2015, 100 years since Private George Brown's death, but as above it came and went without me going.

I came up with a cunning plan, if I stated on my radio show that I was going and when, there was no way I was going to not go. So, I did just that, mid-afternoon I said on air that this year I am going to Ypres to find my Great Grandfather and I'm going in October.

Now I had to do it, no excuses. This is the story.

Friday 19th October – The outward Journey

We planned to sail on the 12-noon sailing from Dover to Dunkirk; left home at around 10am drove down the M20 and arrived in good time.

The process of getting through border and passport control at Dover was slow due to someone in a vehicle ahead of us had more occupants than were on their ticket.

We eventually got through and drove round to check in (DFDS) which was a smooth operation. Boarding card hung up in the window we drove to our allotted lane, sat and waited.

We saw the ship we were to board come in and dock and disembark its previous occupants.

Lane by lane we entered the belly of the ship, parked up and went into the public decks.

As we neared the Port of Dunkirk, I was getting edgy, partly due to the prospect of driving on the right and making a journey I had not driven before, even with today's modern technology I was still edgy.

I had been thinking about what I would do, say and how I would feel when I saw the field Private George Brown was killed in and when finally, I came face to face with his grave.

The ship docked on time at 15:00 (Continental time) and we went down to get back in the car to disembark and start the real adventure.

Slowly we moved off the ship and all I could think of was driving on the right and getting to see my Great Grandfather, I had it all planned for that Friday afternoon. The route we would take was A16/E40 into Belgium then the N8 down to Brielen where I believe he was killed then to the Perth Cemetery (China Wall) where he was laid to rest.

At this point I should add that I had travelled the route on google earth many times in the hope that when I actually got to drive it, I would know and recognise villages, junctions, and churches etc.

It Worked! Like a dream we travelled and eventually, quicker than I thought, we drove into Brielen and easily found the field where his life was taken along with around 10 of his colleagues on 7th June 1915. British Army Grid reference Map 28.H.5.a.2.9

It was a sobering moment, taking several minutes to sink in and I still do not think is has fully, but there we were standing in a field that 103 years ago was a battlefield where lives were lost. In fact, all around us in the whole area were killing fields.

We were getting a few stares from locals, possibly wondering what two Brits were doing wandering around a field taking photographs. All they had to do was ask, but they did not.

We spend a fair few minutes there, I wasn't sure what my emotions were going to be, but they held up thankfully.

Next came the navigation around Ieper itself, again I had done dummy runs on google earth many times, so much so I almost knew the colours of the doors near where we had to make a turn. Within minutes we were approaching Hellfire corner and within 500 yards of the cemetery Gulp!

When we arrived at the Cemetery, we both needed a toilet; we had been looking on the journey down but did not see one. Once parked up there was an orchard next door, so we took it in turn to guard and go! That was a relief and more comfortable.

My heart was beginning to speed up as we walked through the cemetery gate, I wanted to read the engravings on the gate but my heart took over and I made a beeline to where I knew his grave was after much research into the cemetery layout.

I was expecting to feel emotional, break down, after all I had shed many tears researching and planning, but it did not happen which made me feel a little guilty, I should have been crying.

By this time, the sun was getting low in the sky, I had only planned to visit the cemetery just the once so wanted to get some photos of his gravestone and of me standing by him, Sue took some pictures of me there.

I had prepared a little speech to read to him just letting him know we hadn't forgotten him and all that made the sacrifice, also to tell him about his family.

I asked Sue if I could have a little time on my own with him and I read my speech to him, again expecting to break down, but again it didn't happen, what was wrong with me?

The message reads:

Hello Private George Brown.

You don't know me, but I am your great Grandson Steve.

Your Son, Thomas George Brown, who was around six years old when you were killed, grew into a fine Man, he married a lady called Doris May Bliss and they had one Daughter called Olive Jean Brown, My Mother who married Dennis Monk the Grandson of Arthur (Jessie) Monk who was out here with you somewhere, but he returned and lived to 93 years old. Your Son Thomas was a very highly regarded man in Rolvenden, but he sadly died in 1983, his wife, Doris, my Gran died in 1994 and my Mother Olive, your Granddaughter Died in 1999.

Thomas, your son, told me bits and pieces about you but it wasn't until recently that I realised just what you must have gone through.

Olive, my Mum, your granddaughter did a lot of research into you but sadly died before coming out here to find you. This is part of the reason I'm here, to complete all the work she had done and to find my Great Grandad.

It is such an honour to be here today, I want to tell you that we all still think of and thank all of you that made the sacrifice so that we could live freely today.

I have shed bucket loads of tears researching and planning to come and find you, but sitting here now I feel it was so worthwhile.

The World is still a screwed-up place, we haven't learnt, the world is still full of idiots' hell bent on power.

I'm just going to sit in silence for a few moments and think of you.

Thank you and although I have never met you, I feel a lot of love for you, for what you did, for what you are, and for giving me the best Grandad ever and the best Mum ever.

God Bless you and may you rest in peace Sir.

I left a laminated copy there on a small stake in front of his grave.

After standing, looking, and thinking for a while I said to Sue, come on, let's go and find the B&B we had booked, she then said to me we can come back again tomorrow if you want, that was just what I wanted to hear, "Yes" I said, I'd love to. Still not having broken down and got it out of my system I thought coming back would be a great plan, I had so much bottled up I needed to let it out.

As we walked out of the cemetery, I felt the emotions a little, I felt I didn't want to leave him there, but calmed down and we got in the car and drove into Ypres town centre. We had planned to go to Hill 60 but the road was closed so we didn't get there.

We had a little rest in our B&B then went out for the evening, found a little bar just down the road from our base, Bar 32 and went in for a pint. It was just a few yards from the Menin Gate which we intended to go to for the 8pm Last Post service.

On leaving the bar and heading towards the Menin gate I thought we might be the only ones there; how wrong can one be? It was crowded all around and, on both sides, I really was stunned at the amount of people there, it is like this every night apparently. Having again been emotionally moved at the last post service at the Menin gate, and it really is emotional, we went for a wander to a public house, and The Old Bill was our first port of call.

After a drink there we decided to go for something to eat. Being a fussy so and so with food the Ypres Burger Bar looked like the place to be, and as a bonus they also sold beer. We then went back to the Menin gate as crowds had dispersed and had a drink in the public house called Ypra Inn right opposite, a nice place to have a pub, then went back to the Guest house.

Saturday 20th October

Having got a good night's sleep, well sort of, we set off towards Hill 62 a museum and trenches. The farmer and his family that own the land have preserved these trenches since the end of WW1. I felt that visiting this place would give us some sort of idea as to what our brave soldiers would have seen and experienced. It didn't disappoint.

We pulled up outside and parked; straight away you are confronted with some original hardware, not sure what type of field guns they are but I wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of them.

Walking inside, you come to a Café and a payment desk, you pay your money, 8 Euro's each and immediately you are confronted with a huge collection of bits and pieces of authentic World War One "Stuff" as far as I am aware all found in and around the area.

It is in no particular format, you may be excused for thinking you have walked into a jumble sale.

Warning, there are some pretty gruesome picture too, all manner of bits and bobs, from bullets to lighters, medical kits, guns, everything you can think of and more. It's hanging from the walls and in display cabinets.

Moving on to the next room, there are uniforms of all descriptions, more weaponry, medals, and some rather nice trench art.

You then get to go outside to the trenches....

Just before you get to the woodland and its trenches there is an array of larger artefacts just outside the door, shells, more shells, and much iron work little is recognisable but all bits of WW1 militaria.

So, to the trenches, well not quite yet we decided to walk through to the edge of the woods first, walking past tree trunks still there, sheared, split and shattered by the ravages of war left there as a reminder that it's not just humans that were culled, some have been used as shrines with photographs of soldiers and crosses affixed to them and some with bullets and shrapnel embedded in them.

OK, now the trenches, the first thing you notice when going down into them is the smell, musty damp and woody, but then I guess they would. They stretch for quite a way weaving in and out. It wasn't until I did a bit of research that I found out why they were not straight, they were zig zagged so that when a shell landed nearby the shock wouldn't travel down the trench killing or wounding more soldiers.

There are many shell craters in these woods, some right next to the trenches, it's a pretty safe bet men lost their lives right here.

Along with the recognisable trenches there are tunnels used for communications between the frontline, second line and backup trenches, barbed wire and quite a few hazards, take care, but it's well worth a visit.

We then went for a short walk up to the Canadian Memorial (Mount Sorrel) as we were so close; a peaceful tranquil setting on a slight hill and from here you can look over the fields to Ypres town.

From here we went back to revisit Private George Brown in the Perth Cemetery, another heart tugging visit and again I couldn't seem to get my emotions out, once again we took some pictures as the Sun was in a different place as it was morning, yesterday it was late afternoon when we visited.

We spent quite a while here again and again I didn't want to leave him there, but then Sue put it a little straighter in my head by saying to me "He probably wouldn't thank you for taking him away from his colleagues" that sort of helped a little, although as soon as we had walked away I wanted to turn back and say goodbye again.

This visit I saw there was a visitor's book by the gate, so I signed it and left a message, quite simply,

"I came to talk to my Great Grandfather"

We got back into the car and went back into Ypres town.

On our list of things to do was the Flanders Fields Museum, St Martins Church, and wander around the town of Ieper (Ypres) and that's what we did.

St Martins Church was first as it was on our way back to the centre from the car park, free entry too. Like most RC Churches it is dripping with bling, not my scene really but I always show respect and I must admit to feeling "Something" when I enter these establishments. It was Sue's wish to walk around and she wanted to light a candle for an uncle she had recently lost, so I lit one too for my Great Grandad I had just found.

We went to the Cloth Hall; very impressive building and all of this area was flattened by the end of the war and has all been rebuilt and a grand job has been done too.

The Flanders Museum was OK, again I'm not one for museums that are full of modern Audio-visual displays, I prefer to look at real stuff, authentic real tactile stuff that has a story to tell.

Although mainly Audio visual there are a few good displays of authentic bits of kit here. You end up in the Café, we walked through it.

For 2 euros extra you can take a walk up to the top of the Bell Tower all 231 steps of it, we bought two tickets and started the ascent. About two thirds of the way up the type of staircase changes from an closed in stone wall spiral staircase that you would expect in a Church steeple to a more open modern meccano style spiral staircase up through the actual bell chamber and beyond.

It was at this point Sue decided she'd had enough so she sat it out at this level and I went on determined to get to the top, (personal challenge having COPD) so I got there and the view was worth the climb.

You can see all round the town but for me the best view was down towards The Menin Gate and beyond to where the battlefields would have been and wondering about all those brave men who must have walked that walk.

After all the walking it was time to eat and drink, so we wandered around the square and planted ourselves in a small outside area of the Old Tom Hotel, ate and drank.

From there we went up on the Big Wheel that has been planted in the square, for me it spoilt the wonderful square, but I guess it's there for the tourists, so we did it.

Then we wandered back down to the Menin gate and went for a walk along the Ramparts a lovely walk through a park down to the Lille gate and another small cemetery in a beautiful riverside location Ramparts Cemetery Lille gate.

We then walked back up to the Town square and sat outside a Spar shop that had a bar; well, it had to be done! From there we went back to our B&B for a nap before the last evening jaunt.

Again, in the evening we headed towards the Menin gate for the Last Post ceremony at 8pm, again huge crowds and I would say more than on the Friday evening. We got chatting to another couple from England who had been many times, you just can't help but feel emotional at this place and it was building in me again, I still hadn't got visiting my Great grandfather out of my system.

We had a drink in the nearby Ypra Inn and sat outside in the street along with many others. After the ceremony I saw the three Buglers and the Piper and thanked them for what they do. By the time we left here time was getting on so we found a restaurant called Vauban had something to eat, last beer at Bar 32 then went back to our room as tomorrow we had to travel home.

Sunday 21st October.

Our booked sailing from Dunkirk was Midday and we needed to be there at least 45 minutes before, and it was an hour's drive away. So we decided to leave around 9am that gave us plenty of time. Sue did say we could visit Great Grandfather again before we left, I decided not to, as much as I wanted to, I really didn't want to drive back with tears in my eye's instead I settled for knowing that we would come back again another time in the future. It really was a tough decision.

We had a steady drive back, uneventful except where the N8 meets the E40, the European junctions are a strange can of worms, but we found the correct route back, luckily the roads were not busy at all.

Arriving back at the DFDS Dunkirk dock, we got a drink and a bite to eat, well as much as you can get from vending machines drove back on the boat and came back to blighty.

This trip has changed my life, I Worshipped my Grandad Brown and although I met his mother when I was a young child, I was so young on can't remember much about her, but I remember my Grandad crying when she died, I can't imagine how he must have felt at the age of Six when he learnt that his Dad had been killed in the war.

My Mum, before she died did a lot of research into her Grandad but in those days it was letter writing and phone calls if you had a phone. I was the very first of George Browns family to go, that makes me proud and moves me. However, I will go back!



Menin Gate at Night & Ypra Inn



Ypres Square, Cloth Hall & Cathedral



View from top of tower across the square showing Menin gate to the battlefields beyond



Trenches at Hill 62

Ypres 2019

One Year on and armed with more information.

Here we are then, a year after our first foray onto the continent in a car, more information on more relatives that fought in Flanders Fields in World War One.

Again after many hours of studying trench maps, articles and war diaries and coming up with a tight schedule to fit in as much as we can in a couple of days not forgoing trying the Belgian beer and visiting a chocolate shop, both of which were a given.

Friday October 4th

Off we went, we planned to catch an earlier sailing from Dover to Dunkirk than last year to give us an extra two hours on the Friday to fit more in. We got to Dover on time but got called in to customs for a search, all fine and off we went. The sailing was on time and uneventful as was the journey down to Ypres, so we'll start the story at the first stop.

St Eloi Crater No:3 where Great Uncle Bob, my Gran Browns Brother (Robert J Bliss of the Canadian Army 18th Battalion was injured)

We had to be there before 4pm as the electronic gate lock locks access then, I had previously got the entry code from the Ypres Tourist office. These craters were a result of troops tunnelling under the German front line, planting explosives and blowing them up. These sets of explosions were so big that they were heard here in the UK when they were blown at 4:15 a.m. on 27 March 1916.

Fighting then ensued for several days and weeks. Robert J Bliss received gunshot wounds to his arm on or around 9th April 1916.

Also just behind the crater is an old bunker, if only it could talk. We then popped over the road to see Crater No: 4.



St Eloi Crater No:3 where Robert J Bliss was injured 9th April 1916



Bunker at St Eloi Crater No:3



St Eloi Crater No: 4

Our next stop was about 10 minutes away although it took us more like 20 minutes due to road closures, something the Belgians do and they last for months even years in some cases. So we wound our way through narrow lanes occasionally coming across civilisation until we found the site of the Christmas Truce 1914. Although none of my relatives were there, we felt it would be an interesting place to visit. There are two main sites here the official field where on Christmas day the English and German Armies held a truce and exchanged food & cigarettes and there is an official monument which is further up the road next to a cemetery, one of the hundreds dotted around in Belgium.

The only disappointment here was the field was full of crops, maze I think, and we couldn't see over the top of it, you'll see in the picture below.



The site of the Christmas Truce 1914

Stop number three was what is now known as Bedford House Cemetery but back in WW1 it was not a cemetery it was a mansion known as Chateau Rosendael and it was here that Great Step Grandad Coveney (Who's unit 2nd Battalion East Kent Regiment were moved frequently to where troops were needed) Rested and fought for a week from 10th to 16th February 1915.

It is now one of the biggest cemeteries in the area and the Chateau was flattened by the German shelling of the whole of the Ypres area. One or two old relics of the original estate are still there but not much.



The site of Chateau Rosendael

First visit of 2019 to Great Grandad George Brown was the next stop. Perth Cemetery (China Wall). Sue said to me “can you remember where he is?” oh yes, I said and made a beeline straight for his grave. Once there I was a little overcome to find that the message, I had left there last year was still there, I had expected it to have been removed, but no, it was still there. I was a little chuffed to say the least.

We spent a little while there, took more photos and said a few words to him. We would return tomorrow to see him again.



Me by George Browns grave 2019

Day one done we headed back to Ypres to find our B&B the Gatsby Guesthouse.

Friday Evening, we had a wander around the town centre and its wonderful array of bars starting in what I called the German Bar had a drink and a bite to eat. Then down to the Menin gate for the Last Post ceremony and a drink in the Ypre Inn. There was a small marching band there on Friday night.

We then left the Menin Gate and walked back towards the Market Square and went into the Old Bill Bar where we met up with my friend Roel Jacobus of the Belgian Band BEUK, great to see him and share a beer in his homeland.

From here we went back to our B&B. Tomorrow was going to be a busy day.

Saturday October 5th

With a busy day ahead, we called in a baker to get some munch, had a cup of coffee and went and found the car.

First call this morning was a field just east of Potijze – Zonnebeekseweg (Sun Brook Road) it was here where (Great Step Grandad) Thomas Alfred Coveney and the 2nd Battalion East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) fought in the front line around the 10th to 21st April 1915.



The trenches ran across this field & the road, it is where the 2nd Battalion of the East Kent Regiment (Great Grandad Coveney) were in April 1915.

Next, we headed towards the Polygon Wood area which is where Sgt Arthur Monk was on October 4th 1917 in The Battle of Broodseinde and in this battle received serious shrapnel wounds which ended his war. I had found two angles to view this from, the south and the north. Pictures below show the different views.

One of the wonderful things about Flanders fields is that you are never more than a few yards from a hero's story. A few yards up the road whilst we were on the south side was a memorial to Sgt Henry James Nicholas VC MM and a few yards in the other direction was a memorial to Captain Clement Robinson VC who was also involved in the Polygon Wood Battle of Broodseinde.

From here we went around some more country lanes to the north side of Polygon Wood and looked down the hill towards the area where Sgt Arthur Monk and his comrades fought, and just about where I stood to take the pictures was where the trench ran through the countryside.



From the south looking north just east of Polygon wood where Sgt Arthur Monk would have been in action, this path is probably where a supplies railway line ran.



From the north looking south, Polygon wood on the right, this is the area the Royal West Surrey Regiment (Sgt Arthur Monk) was assembled prior to the attack against the enemy. Trenches ran down this field.

Whilst standing there a local stopped his car and approached me and asked why I was in this particular area, we struck up a conversation and I explained to him why, he was very interested. The conversation got around to where I was from, Ashford Kent I said to which he replied "Oh yes on the road to London, I come over every year as I am a Forrest Supporter and go once a year to a game in the UK" after a few more chats he wished us well and drove off.

Again, whilst looking around this area we came across the Buttes New British Cemetery in Polygon wood, another very impressive Cemetery, they are everywhere.

We then drove around the perimeter of Polygon Wood making our way to the Hooze Crater Museum, but on the way stopped off to admire Black Watch Corner another memorial this time to the 1st Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) who halted the Prussian forces near here in 1914 the First battle of Ypres.

On to the Hooze Crater Museum then, more cross-country lanes toward the Menin road, once here I knew where we were again, always nice to get on a big road with signposts.

Hooze Crater Museum.

We didn't visit this one last year, opting for Hill 62 Museum instead so we thought we would have a look around here this year, it didn't disappoint.

A very nicely kept museum with a vast array of military hardware, in fact almost everything you could imagine, medical bits & bobs, bullets, shells, tools, uniforms, cap badges, you name it they seem to have it here, including a Model T Ford field ambulance similar to one in which three of my four ancestors would have probably taken a ride during their time out here.



Hooze Crater Museum

This place is genuinely nice; we also had a coffee and a bite to eat here before walking 100 yards down the road to the Hooze Crater and more WW1 stuff lying around it.

You have to look hard for this place although there is a large sign saying it's there you have to walk into the grounds of a hotel & tearoom to access it, so we did.

There is an honesty box on the gate, you pay your 1 Euro per person and go in to what is the Hooge Crater area, the Crater itself is Huge and now full of water. Around it piles of hardware placed in piles and a couple of old bunkers, it is worth a look although you can tell it has been cosmetically arranged for visitor effect this is still a major place of history and gives an insight into what went on here, well worth the 1 Euro entry price.



Hooge Crater as it is today.



Just some of the old metal work lying around Hooge Crater.



Sue looking into a bunker at Hooge Crater.

The next place to visit was Hill 60 was in the line from St Eloi to Hill 62 which was where the Canadians were for a lot of the time, so Great Uncle Bob (Robert J Bliss) may well have passed through this area; anyway, we went to have a look.

We walked through one side of the area; it is split by a railway line. It is left almost as was because it is still the graves of hundreds of men buried beneath the shell cratered parkland. There is a wooden walkway to walk through there if you are wary of walking on graves. Once out the other side we walked over the railway bridge and into the other side of the woods to find Caterpillar crater another huge hole in the ground.



The Caterpillar Crater was formed by the detonation of a massive mine by the Allies that had been laid directly under the German trenches in June 1917.

It has been said that the blast of the mines going off was so powerful that it could be heard in London. The mines signalled the start of the Third Battle of Ypres, more commonly known as Passchendaele.

My first reaction when we saw this crater was Wow! It is that big, you have to see it first-hand to be able to see just how big and deep it actually is.



Back to Perth Cemetery to see Great Grandad Brown again then so back into Ypres and out to Hellfire corner, turn right and back to the cemetery to revisit the person all this adventure started with last year.

We decided we would have to come back again next year as the message I left by his grave last year, although still there was looking a little weather beaten, Good reason to come back! So I can replace it.

No speeches this year, more of a light-hearted chat firstly apologising for disturbing his peace again, but there were still some serious thoughts and words, again I left a message in the visitors' book.

I felt I couldn't say any more than I said last year that would increase my utter respect for him and all that fought in the Great War and for our freedom.



After spending some time here again, we went back to Ypres centre and I got to drive through the Menin Gate, something I had up to present avoided as you enter the Ypres one-way system but today I did it!

Sue went into St Martins Cathedral to light a candle for her brother David who we lost earlier this year and for Twix the Cat.

We went and bought some lovely Belgian Chocolates (Don't ask how much we spent) had a drink and went back to the B&B for a clean-up and change ready for the Menin Gate again in the evening.

Again, we made our way via a bar or two across the Market Square to the Menin Gate area for the Last Post Ceremony at 8pm, tonight we were in for a real treat. On the way through the square, we saw a few Pipers just mulling around, to be honest it's not unusual to see Military band members and people dressed in uniforms around the square, they seem to perform Ad-Hoc around there.

We placed ourselves in one of the bars halfway down Menenstraat (Menin Road) towards the Menin Gate, the Ypra Inn right opposite the gate was packed, which it normally is around 7:30pm but it is almost empty at 8pm as most go outside.

So we were sitting in the street outside the bar when I heard some Bagpipes, looked up towards the square and there was a parade coming down towards the Menin Gate, I hastily got my camcorder out to film it, not seen this before.

It added so much more emotion to what is a very moving moment at the Menin Gate an absolutely wonderful moment which left me wondering what this area must be like in November, but to be frank you'd probably see more on the TV at home on Remembrance Sunday.

As mentioned above, the Ypra Inn empties around 8pm, so we went in there and sat in the warmth and watched the Last Post from inside for a change, soft maybe, but we had stood out and watched it three times before it was nice to be sat down, although I stood up during the Bugle part, didn't feel right not to.



The Beautiful Ypres Market Square

After this we went to a nice little restaurant for a meal, well Chips for me but Sue had something a bit more substantial. Then back towards the square aiming for the B&B. Just around the corner from where we were staying was another little restaurant/bar so we popped in for a nightcap then went to bed.

Sunday October 6th

The journey back to blighty was not so straight forward, firstly heavy rain as we drove back up the N8 towards Veurne, then on to the E40/A16 towards Dunkirk, it did brighten up a bit once we got to the port, well, the weather did.

We don't know what the problem was at the port but it was chaos, we got in the queue to check in, waited for ages, they then closed our lane, we had to merge in to another which took ages. After check in we went through the French border control.

That was as far as we got for about 30 minutes. Still needing to get through the British Border control and customs at Dunkirk we were going nowhere in a hurry. A while later two French land rovers came down the lane next to us loaded with what looked like troops or police, they tried to get through and eventually did.

Shortly after this the queue started moving, eventually we got to the British Border control and a very nice British border guard who spoke to us and smiled, unlike his French counterpart earlier.

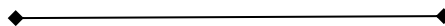
By this time, we thought the ferry would be loading. We moved through to the customs area where again they wanted to look in the boot and on we went to the queueing lane for the ferry.

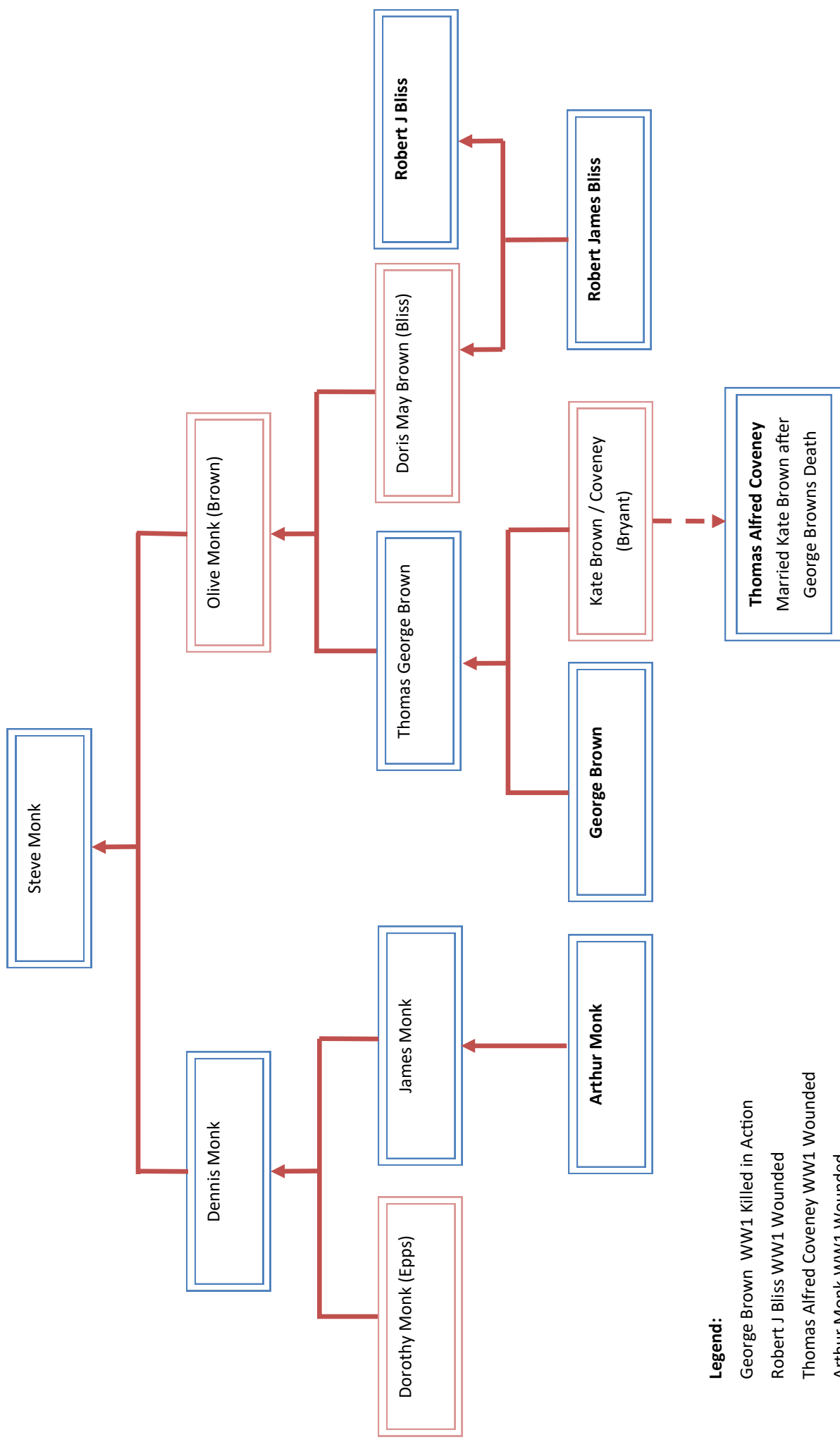
Lined up, Sue decided to visit the ladies' room before we drove on to the boat, by this time boarding was imminent but off she went, came back and reported that those French Army/Police were in the terminal building guns pointed and searching for someone. There must have been an incident in there which was causing the holdup earlier. It was a little frightening for her but she got out alive and we drove onto the ferry which left port half an hour late.

Back to Dover and disembarkation and the drive home went just fine.

The planned trip in October 2020 was booked and the itinerary planned but due to the Covid-19 pandemic we had to cancel it.

We eventually went back to Ypres in 2022.





Legend:

- George Brown WW1 Killed in Action
- Robert J Bliss WW1 Wounded
- Thomas Alfred Coveney WW1 Wounded
- Arthur Monk WW1 Wounded
- Robert James Bliss Egypt & Sudan Victorian Wars
- Names in **BOLD** are those researched

A very much cut down family tree showing descendency