

# Connected to Durrington



*Lest we Forget*

## World War 1



16896 PRIVATE

**L. C. HARDY**

BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT

15TH SEPTEMBER, 1916 AGE 21

## Leonard Charles HARDY

Leonard Charles Hardy was born at Collingbourne, Wiltshire to parents Charles William & Fanny Rawlins Cooper Hardy (nee Cooper). Leonard's birth was registered in the district of Pewsey, Wiltshire in the March quarter of 1895. Leonard's parents had married at All Saints Church, Durrington, Wiltshire in 1886.

The 1901 Census recorded Leonard Hardy as a 6 year old, living with his family at Mill Field Cottage, Cranfield, Bedfordshire. His parents were recorded as Charles Hardy (Bricklayer & Plasterer, aged 37, born Tidworth, Wiltshire) & Fanny Hardy (aged 35, born Durrington, Wiltshire). The children listed in this Census were – Harriet (aged 13, born Tidworth), Cecil (aged 11, born Tidworth), then Leonard & Walter (aged 4, born Collingbourne),

The 1911 Census recorded Leonard Charles Hardy as a 16 year old Bricklayer's labourer, living with his family in a 3 roomed dwelling at Waresley, Sandy, Bedfordshire. His parents were listed as Charles William Hardy (Bricklayer, aged 46) & Fanny Rawlins Hardy (aged 44). Charles & Fanny Hardy had been married for 24 years & had 5 children, one having since died. There were 3 children listed on this Census – Cecil William (Gardener, aged 21), then Leonard & Reginald (aged 6, born Cranfield, Bedfordshire).

Leonard Charles Hardy enlisted at Waresley, Bedfordshire with the Bedfordshire Regiment. He was living at Cranfield, Bedfordshire at the time of enlistment. According to UK Soldiers Died in the Great War his place of birth was Durrington, Wiltshire. He was given the rank of Private & a service number of 16896.

According to the Medal Index card for Pte Leonard C. Hardy, he first entered a Theatre of War in France on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1915.

Pte Leonard Charles Hardy was killed in action (according to UK Soldiers Died in the Great War) on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1916, aged 21 years. He was attached to 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment at the time of his death. The UK Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects records Pte Leonard Charles Hardy of 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Beds Regt as having died "on or since 15-9-16 Death Presumed." The Medal Index card for Pte Leonard C. Hardy lists "D of W" – Died of wounds as the cause of death.

Pte Leonard Charles Hardy is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, France – Panel – Pier & Face 2C as he has no known grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The CWGC lists Pte Leonard Charles Hardy, 16896, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn., Bedfordshire Regiment as the son of Charles William and Fanny Rawlins Hardy, of Cranfield, Bletchley.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment

The 8th Battalion was a "Service" battalion that was formed specifically for the duration of the war. It was raised at Bedford in October 1914, as part of 'K3' - Lord Kitchener's 3rd 'call to arms' for another 100,000 men to leave their civilian lives and enlist into the expanding British Army. That month, the enlisted men of the 8th Battalion, in the Third New Army were attached to the 71st Brigade of the 24th Division and remained there for a year.

The enlisted men from all over the county mustered at their local train stations and were transported en-masse to the Regimental HQ at Bedford to be mobilised into the 8th Battalion of the Regiment. Other than a brief spell in Brighton, most of their training was undertaken in Surrey, with almost seven months being spent in the sprawling New Army training area around Woking.

Finally, the increasingly restless men of the '*Hungry 8th*' (a nickname used in a letter home from Private 19861 Leslie Worboys) received orders to mobilize and prepared to ship out. At 11pm on the 28th August 1915, the Battalion boarded the troop trains at Chobham Station and left for Dover. After transferring straight onto troop ships, they arrived at Boulogne early on the 30th August 1915.

Six weeks after landing in France, on the 11th October 1915, the entire 71st Brigade was transferred with the to the 6th Division, who were a veteran Regular Army Division that had been serving in France since 1914. During

another reorganisation on 17th November 1915, the battalion were transferred to the 16th Brigade of the 6th Division.

The 8th battalion served entirely in France and Flanders during the war and fought in every major battle during the battalion's active service, gaining a reliable reputation within a professional, Regular Division and winning many gallantry medals.

During their service in the Great War, the Battalion was engaged during the following battles:

In 1915 they were one of the few 'New Army' units to be committed to The Battle of Loos in September. They were also in the line when the army experienced the first German use of Phosgene gas in December, losing hundreds of men in the attack.

In 1916 they lost heavily during a massed bombardment and raid on their lines in April and were engaged in The Battles of the Somme 1916, specifically at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette and the Battle of Morval in September, as well as the Battle of Le Transloy in October.

### **WAR DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER 1916**

*1 Sep 1916 - Naours In billets. Coys training in the attack and practising on the Rifle Range*

*2 Sep 1916 In billets. Coys training in the attack and practising on the Rifle Range Battalion practice at communication with aeroplanes in the field and marking position held by flares and flashing of periscopes.*

*3 Sep 1916 In billets. Open-air church service. Battn bathed and issued with clean underclothing.*

*4 Sep 1916 In billets. Route marching by Companies.*

*5 Sep 1916 In billets. Brigade exercise in the attack and formation of a defensive flank.*

*6 Sep 1916 - Villers-Bocage In billets. Marched to VILLERS BOCASE [sic] in the forenoon. Battalion inspected by C.O. in trench fighting order.*

*7 Sep 1916 - Corbie In billets. Marched to CORBIE via RAINNEVILLE - CORVONETTE [sic] - QUERREUX[sic].*

*8 Sep 1916 - Bois des Tailles In billets. Marched to BOIS DES TAILLES via MORLANDCOURT [sic]. Battalion in Camp on edge of wood.*

*9 Sep 1916 In billets. Battalion training in the attack on trenches, moving closely under the artillery barrage.*

*10 Sep 1916 In billets. Battalion training in the attack in open warfare - moving over the open in extended lines, thickening the front line under cover of Stokes Mortar barrage, and then pressing home the assault.*

*11 Sep 1916 - Germans Wood, Maricourt In billets. Marched to MARICOURT. Completed issue of fighting stores and bivouacked for night just east of GERMANS WOOD [Ref Maricourt Map]*

*12 Sep 1916 - Leuze Wood trenches Battalion rested during day and moved into trenches N.E. of LEUZE WOOD [Ref Longueval C21] in relief of 8th Middlesex Regiment.*

*13 Sep 1916 - trenches near Guillemont Capt. Steyne [Pierre STEYNE, DSO] with B Coy co-operated with 18th Brigade in an attack at 6 a.m. on QUADRILATERAL [ Ref Longueval T.15.c]. Attack unsuccessful although B Coy bombed their way about 100 yds along German trench causing considerable casualties to the enemy. The attack was repeated at 6 p.m. with two platoons of C Coy. assisting the 18th. Brigade in the frontal attack. Enemy driven in from his advanced posts but QUADRILATERAL not taken.*

*14 Sep 1916 Battalion in trenches making all preparations for part in 4th Army offensive on 15th September.*

*15 Sep 1916 [Comment: The Battle of the Somme 1916 - The Battle of Flers-Courcelette] Battalion ordered to take QUADRILATERAL assisted by the Heavy Section of the M.G. Corps with "TANKS" advance about 500 yds NE abd dig in.*

*Battn was in a position for attack about 4.30 a.m. ZERO hour 6.20 a.m. Three wavs were supplied by D, D [sic] and A Coys under Capt Hatch [Robert Bernard Lawson HATCH, MC], 2/Lt Hodges [Archibald Gordon HODGES] and Lt Draisey [Edwin Roland Watts DRAISEY] respectively to attack the QUADRILATERAL, which was on our left flank, whilst B Coy co-operated by bombing down trench leading to it. At 6.0 a.m. heavy artillery opened slow barrage on Line MORVAL - LES BOEUFS. At ZERO hour (6.20 a.m.) intense artillery barrage opened and unluckily was cut short where our 3 companies were drawn up for the attack in shell holes. This mistake caused many casualties. Our attacking companies pushed forward and though supported by 1/The Buffs and later re-enforced by the 2/York & Lancaster Regt failed to take the position. "TANKS" did not arrive to assist and the position was not heavily shelled previous to the attack. Brigade ordered original trenches to be held and await orders. As battalion had suffered very severely in casualties, 6 Officers killed and 7 wounded we were relieved by 2/Y & L at 6.0.p.m. and put in brigade reserve in trenches S.E. of GUILLEMONT.*

*(Information on 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment from [The Bedfordshire Regiment in the Great War](#))*

Pte Leonard Charles Hardy was entitled to the 1915 Star, British War & Victory Medals.



Leonard Charles Hardy & his brother Cecil William Hardy are both remembered on the War Memorial located in Churchyard of St. James, Waresley, Cambridgshire.



**Waresley War Memorial**



Leonard Charles Hardy & his brother Cecil William Hardy are both remembered on the Cranfield War Memorial, Bedfordshire.



Cranfield War Memorial (Photo by Bikeboy)



## Thiepval Memorial, France

The Thiepval Memorial will be found on the D73, next to the village of Thiepval, off the main Bapaume to Albert road (D929).

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.

In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

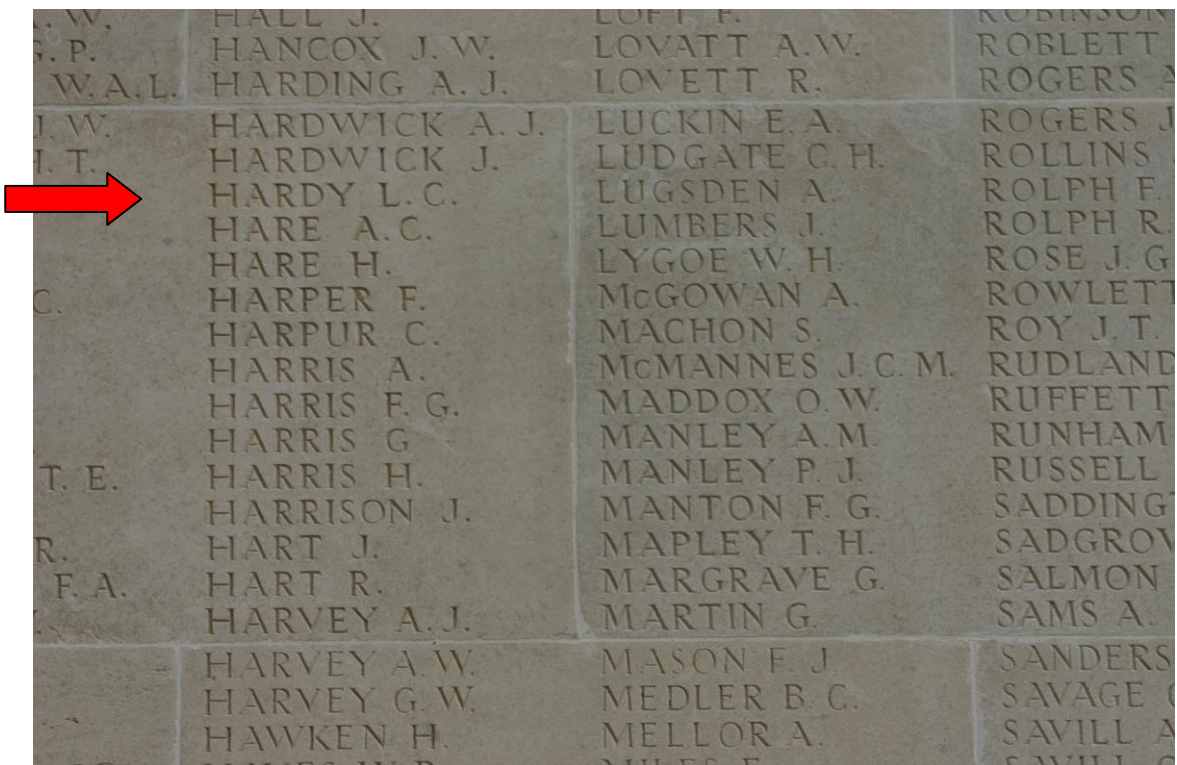
*(Information & photo from CWGC)*

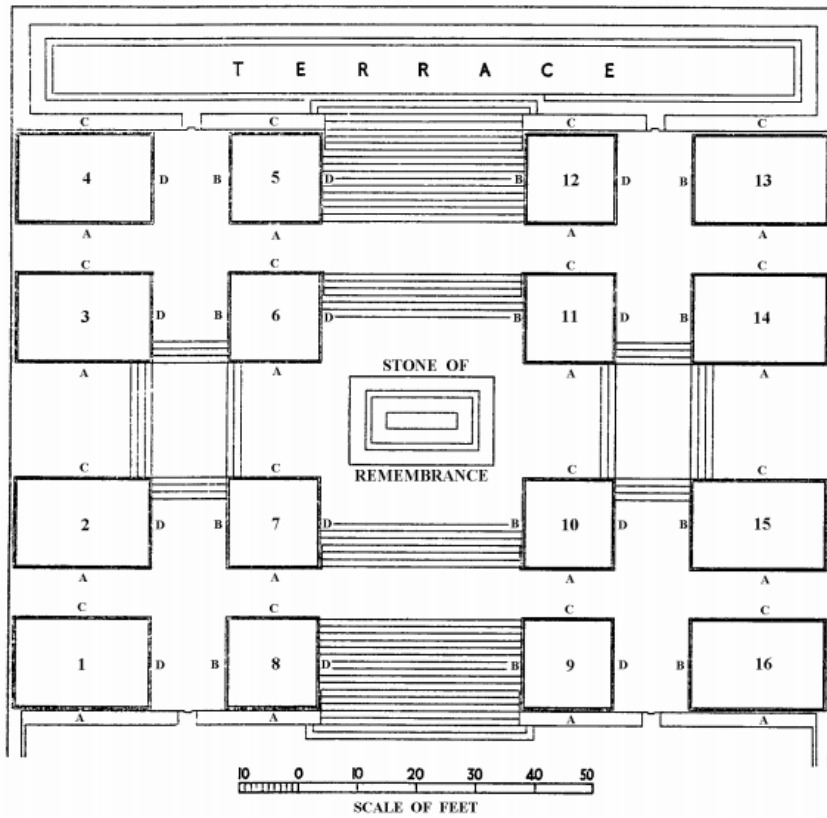


Photo of Pte Leonard Charles Hardy's name on the Thiepval Memorial Panel, France.



(Photos courtesy of David Milborrow)





**THIEPVAL MEMORIAL**

THE NUMBERS OF THE PIERS  
AND LETTERS OF THE FACES