



Hankerton

World War I Casualty Biographies

Edgar Law

Edgar was born in 1895. He had a twin brother called Cecil. He lived in Dolmans Cottage, with his father Anthony who was an Agricultural Labourer, his mother Mathilda, older brother Fred and younger sister Lily.

He was a Private in 2nd Battalion, Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). His number was 1076. He was killed in action on 25th August 1916 in France/Flanders.

Edgar was part of the notorious Battle of the Somme, and is thought that he died at the Battle of Deville Wood. The commander General Douglas Haig intended to capture the Garman 2nd position between Deville Wood and Bazentin le Petit. The attack was successful but costly. Both attack and counter attack went on for 7 weeks. It was the 3rd general attack in the battle of the Somme.

His regiment went to France quite early in the war and it is possible that he was one of those who played football with the Germans during the truce of Christmas day! !

Fred Law

Fred was born 1893, he lived in Dolmans Cottage with his father Anthony who was an agricultural labourer, his mother Mathilda and his twin brothers Edgar and Cecil.

He was a private in the 6 Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers (formerly 13191 Wiltshire Regiment) his number was 3177. He died in Gallipoli, on 15th August 1915 along with his friend Albert Painter.

The first of the Royal Munster Fusiliers arrived at the Dardanelles, Turkey on the SS River Clyde on the 25 April 1915, with heavy losses on both sides during the landing and subsequent fighting. By the middle of July taking trenches, losing them and retaking them again continued on both sides. More new drafts arrived to replace casualties but this did not relieve the intense hunger thirst and exhaustion suffered much of the time. A months rest was promised on the 15th July but by 22nd July they were back in action. The climax came in August in the Battle of Scimitar Hill, the last great battle of the campaign, the Turks inflicting severe casualties, the scrub bushes then catching fire killing many wounded and others taking cover. The unsuccessful attack cost the Munsters 79 men and three officers that day alone. Fred and Albert among them.

Reginald Arthur Loder

Arthur was born in 1897 and lived in Murcott with his Mother, who was married and Head of House, sister Ethel Kathleen aged 10, brother Harold Ernest aged 8 and baby sister Queenie Gladys 10 months. There is no mention of his father but there was a "lodger"!

He was a Private in 5th Battalion, Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment). His number was 10274. He died 28th January 1917 in Mesopotamia.

The survivors of the slaughter at Gallipoli were sent to Kut in Turkey on the 25th January 1917 they assaulted the Turkish front line, one flank of which rested on the Hai River, which they had crossed only a month before. They took heavy casualties in this action one of which was Reginald, he died of his wounds 3 days later. He is buried at Amara War Cemetery.

Albert Edward Painter

Albert was born in 1895. He lived in the cottage now known as Cherrybrook Cottage with his father George who was an agricultural labourer, his mother Rhoda and sisters Rosa and Annie.

He was a Private in the 6th Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers (formerly 13189 The Wiltshire Regiment) his number was 1274. He died in Gallipoli, on 15th August 1915 along with his friend Fred Law.

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George Pennell

George was born in Hankerton in 1893, he was the oldest of our lads to join up he was over 30. Before the war he was a general carrier to Cirencester and Swindon. He married Ruby Barrett in Nov. 1914 and had two children Gladys and Sidney, they lived in Flistridge Hill, Upper Minety. His parents were William and Betsy (nee Beale) and they lived in what is now called Rossley Cottage in Chapel Lane.

He was a Lance corporal in the 3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards his number was 27980 he enlisted at Malmesbury. He was killed in action on the 27th November 1917, France/Flanders.

Cambrai was a key supply point for the Germans and capture would threaten the rear of the German line to the north. The battle started on 20th November and the final British effort was on the 27th November, early success was soon reversed by German counter attack, and there were many casualties including George. By the end of the battle on the 7th December, the gains and losses on both sides were largely proportionate, the British gaining towards the North, the Germans to the South.

Thomas Henry Smith

Thomas was born in 1892, he lived in one of Hankerton's Farm Cottages, along with his father William who was a cowman on the farm, his mother Elizabeth and older brother Ernest. Thomas also worked on the farm before the war.

He was a Private in the 10th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment and enlisted in Tetbury. His number was 21739. After fighting in France/Flanders, he died of his wounds back in England.

The first day on the Somme 1st July 1916 was the opening day of the Battle of Albert. The object of the attack was to capture the German First and Second positions from Serre, south to the Albert-Bapaume road. There were many attacks and counter attacks resulting in Meagre gains". Thomas must have been wounded in the battle and shipped back to England. Presumably he died in some military hospital and then brought back to Hankerton to be buried because the inscription on the grave reads, "If only we could have clasped his hand and just have said good bye ".

Arthur Charles Woodward

Arthur was born in 1890. He lived in the Old Post Office, with his father who was an agricultural labourer, his mother Fanny who was the Post Mistress, and his sisters Eliza, Emily and Amelia. He to was an Ag. Lab. before the war.

He was a Private in the 5 Battalion, Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Reg.) his number was 19239. He died 24th November 1918 in Mesopotamia.

The 5 Battalion had been fighting in Gallipoli and those that survived went on to Mesopotamia to take part in operations as part of "Lewin's Column", pushing north towards Turkey, with advance

units reaching as far as Altun Kopri when Turkey signed an armistice on 31st October 1918. By 31st December 1918 all areas north of Kirkuk had been evacuated. Sometime during this period Arthur died we presume from some sort of illness, of which there were many! !