

# Connected to Imber



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



**30753 PRIVATE**

**H. H. KITLEY**

**DEVONSHIRE REGIMENT**

**4TH OCTOBER, 1917**

## Harold Henry KITLEY

Harold Henry Kitley was born at Langstone, Havant, Hampshire in 1898 to parents Henry & Frances Kitley. His birth was registered in the June quarter, 1898 in the district of Havant, Hampshire. (UK Soldiers Died in the Great War has his place of birth listed as Orcheston, Wiltshire)

The 1901 Census recorded Harold Kitley as 2 year old living with his family at Farlington, Havant, Hampshire. His parents were listed as Henry Kitley (Coachman – domestic, aged 29, born Shrewton, Wiltshire) & Frances Kitley (aged 29, born Puttenham, Surrey). Harold was the youngest of 3 children listed on this Census – Reginald (aged 5, born Havant, Hampshire) & Frances M. (aged 4, born Havant, Hampshire).

A death for Henry Kitley, aged 30, was registered in the March quarter of 1902 in the district of Salisbury, Wiltshire.

The 1911 Census recorded Harold Kitley as a 12 year old at School (born Langstone, Hampshire) living with his stepfather, mother & siblings in a 5 roomed dwelling at Orcheston St. George, near Shrewton, Wiltshire. Harold's stepfather & mother were recorded as Frank Ernest Grant (Farm Carter, aged 34, born Amesbury, Wiltshire) & Frances Grant (aged 39), Frank Grant had married Frances Kitley in 1903 at Orcheston St. Mary. They had been married 7 years & had 3 children together at the time of the Census. Seven children were listed on this Census – the first four being stepchildren of Frank Grant – Reginald A. Kitley (Carter on a Farm, aged 15, born Langstone, Hampshire), Frances May Kitley (aged 14, born Langstone, Hampshire), then Harold, Percy Kitley (aged 9, at School, born Orcheston), Daisy Mabel Grant (aged 6, at school, born Orcheston), Lena Mary Grant (aged 3, born Orcheston) & Elsie Irene Grant (aged 10 months, born Orcheston)

Harold Henry Kitley enlisted at Warminster, Wilts with the Wiltshire Regiment. He was residing at Codford at the time he enlisted (UK Soldiers Died in the Great War) & was given the rank of Private & a service number of 33603. Pte Harold Henry Kitley was transferred to Devonshire Regiment & given a new service number of 30753.

Private Harold Henry Kitley was killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1917. He was attached to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Devonshire Regiment at the time of his death.

Private Harold Henry Kitley is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium – Panel 39, as he has no known grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harold Henry Kitley, 30753, of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., Devonshire Regiment. No family details are listed.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Devonshire Regiment**

1st Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment were in Jersey when war broke out in August 1914. They proceeded to France on the 21st of August, landing at Le Havre, they joined Lines of Communication Defence Troops. On the 14th of September 1914 the 1st Battalion joined 8th Brigade, 3rd Division. The Battle of Le Cateau, The Battle of the Marne, The Battle of the Aisne on the 30th of September they transferred to 14th Brigade, 5th Division. The Battles of La Bassée and Messines and The First Battle of Ypres. In 1915 they were in action at The Second Battle of Ypres and the Capture of Hill 60. On the 12th of January 1916 they transferred to 95th Brigade in same Division. In March 1916 5th Division took over a section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, near Arras. They moved south in July to reinforce The Somme and were in action at, High Wood, The Battle of Guillemont, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval and The Battle of Le Transloy. In October they moved to Festubert and remained there until March 1917 when they moved in preparation for the Battles of Arras. On 7 September 1917 the 5th Division moved out of the line for a period of rest before, being sent to Flanders where they were in action during the Third Battle of Ypres. The Division was sent to Italy and took up positions in the line along the River Piave in late January 1918.

Private Harold Henry Kitley British War Medal & Victory Medal. His Medal Index Card does not state a date of place that he first entered a Theatre of War.

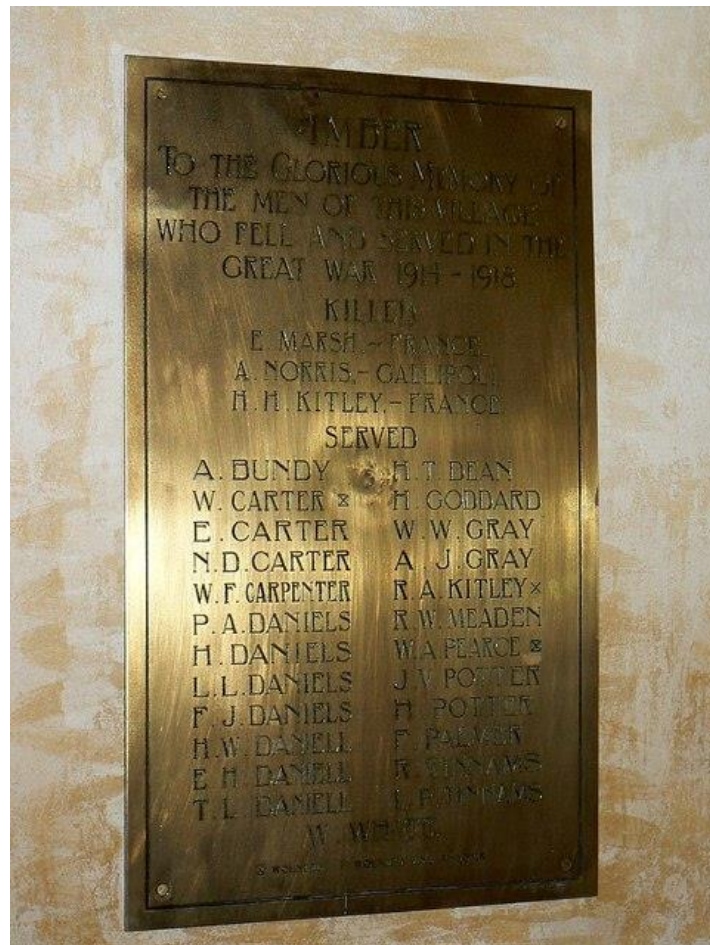


**British War Medal & Victory Medal**

H. H. Kitley is remembered in Casualties of WW1 from the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial book for the parish of Imber, Wiltshire. He is also remembered on the Imber Memorial Plaques.



**Imber War Memorial Plaque (1920)**



Memorial Plaque inside St. Giles' Church, Imber (Photo by Brian Robert Marshall)

## **Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium**

The Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing forms the north-eastern boundary of Tyne Cot Cemetery, which is located 9 kilometres north east of Ieper town centre, on the Tynecotstraat, a road leading from the Zonnebeekseweg (N332).

The names of those from United Kingdom units are inscribed on Panels arranged by Regiment under their respective Ranks.

The names of those from New Zealand units are inscribed on panels within the New Zealand Memorial Apse located at the centre of the Memorial.

The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war.

The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence.

There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September.

The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites.

The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery.

The TYNE COT MEMORIAL now bears the names of almost 35,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. The memorial forms the north-eastern boundary of TYNE COT CEMETERY, which was established around a captured German blockhouse or pill-box used as an advanced dressing station. The original battlefield cemetery of 343 graves was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when remains were brought in from the battlefields of Passchendaele and Langemarck, and from a few small burial grounds. It is now the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world in terms of burials. At the suggestion of King George V, who visited the cemetery in 1922, the Cross of Sacrifice was placed on the original large pill-box. There are three other pill-boxes in the cemetery.

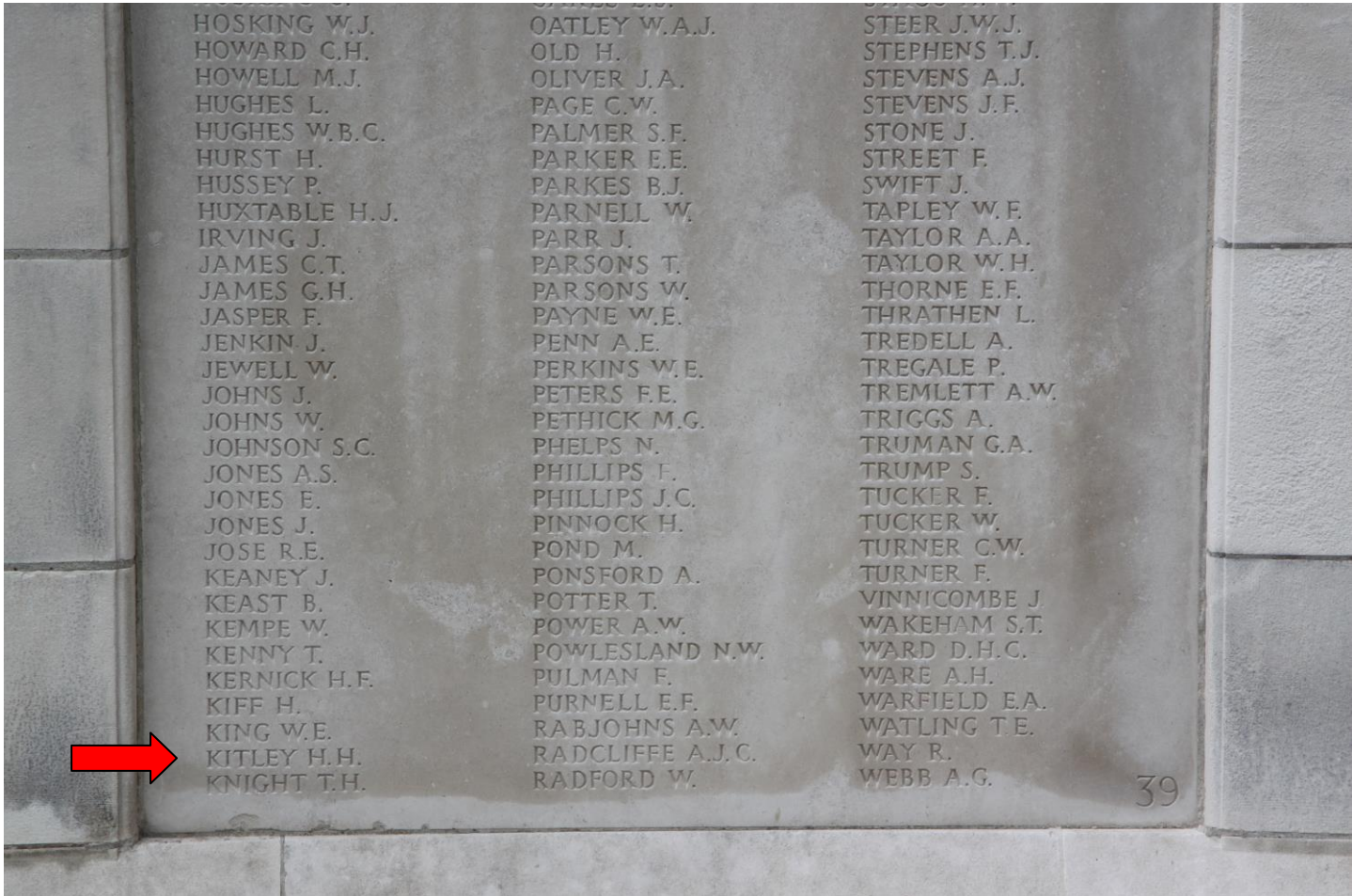
There are now 11,956 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tyne Cot Cemetery, 8,369 of these are unidentified.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*

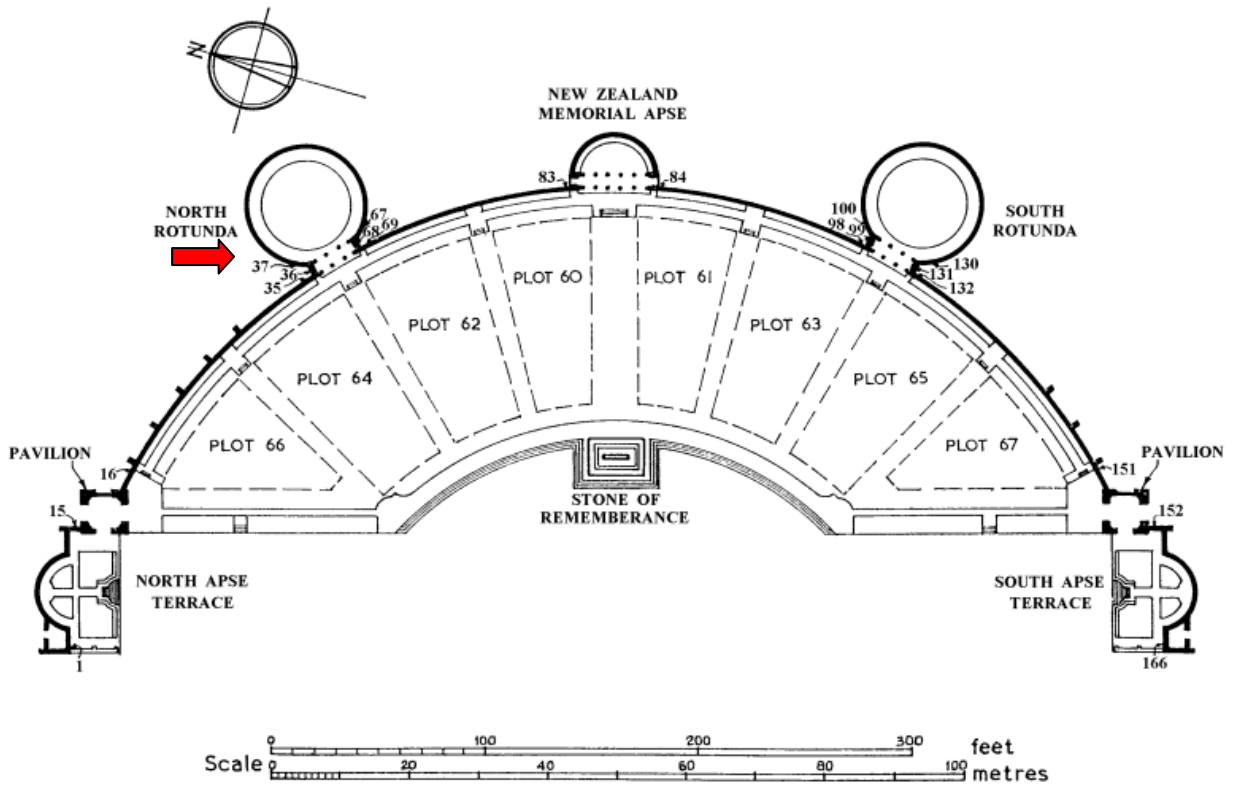


**Tyne Cot Memorial on the boundary of Tyne Cot Cemetery**





(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



LAYOUT OF THE TYNE COT MEMORIAL PANELS