

Herts at War

(www.hertsatwar.co.uk)

<u>Name:</u>	Harold Bowman
<u>Rank:</u>	Lance Corporal
<u>Service Number:</u>	828
<u>Date of Death:</u>	1st August 1916
<u>Age:</u>	19
<u>Regiment/Service:</u>	23rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers
<u>Award:</u>	1914/1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.
<u>Grave/Memorial Reference:</u>	VI. F. 14.
<u>Cemetery/Memorial:</u>	ABBEVILLE COMMUNAL CEMETERY. SOMME, FRANCE.
<u>UK Cemetery/Memorial:</u>	Hitchin War Memorial, St Mary's Church, Panel A St Mary's Church Memorial Book, Hitchin (<i>not confirmed</i>) Hitchin Grammar School War Memorials Holy Saviour Church War Memorial, Radcliffe Rd., Hitchin



Pre War:

His parents were James H. and Florence Mary Bowman of Hitchin and his home was at the Avenue, Hitchin. He was born in Stotfold and attended the Hitchin Grammar School. The School Register first mentions him as attending the 2nd Form in the Summer Term of 1905 and he left the 3rd Form in the summer of 1907.

Wartime Service:

Harold was recruited in Hitchin and at first was a bugler in the Royal Fusiliers. His Regimental Number was Spts/828. He was mobilised by October 1914.

He was in the 23rd Battalion in France at the time of his death. The Battalion had been formed on the 25th September 1914 at the Cecil Hotel in the Strand, London by E. Cunliffe-Owen, the recruits having mainly sporting interests and in consequence it was called the '1st Sportsmen's Battalion'. It was in the 99th Brigade of the 2nd Division of XIII Corps, 4th Army and Harold landed at Boulogne with the Battalion on the 16th November 1915.

From the 15th July to the 3rd September 1916 a violent clash took place for the possession of Delville Wood. On the 27th July 1916 the 23rd Battalion of the 99th Brigade took the place of honour which resulted in the wood being cleared of German troops by the following day. The casualties were heavy and by the end of the fighting the wood was a vast tangle of fallen trees and undergrowth, bare stumps, shell-holes and dead soldiers. The Battalion lost 12 officers and 276 other ranks at this time, about one third of its fighting strength. Abbeville, where he died of wounds, was the location of the British Red Cross No. 3 Hospital and Nos. 2 & 5 Stationery Hospitals. He would have been brought there via Amiens.

His private inscription on the stone reads "*The name of the chamber was peace where he slept till break of day*".

Additional Information:

Acknowledgments:

Adrian Dunne
David C Baines

www.hitchinatwar.org.uk

