

Herts at War

(www.hertsatwar.co.uk)

Name: William Charles Lawson

Rank: Private

Service Number: 14800

Date of Death: 1st May 1915

Age: 19

Regiment/Service: 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment

Award: 1914/15 Star, British War and Victory medals

Grave/Memorial Reference: Panel 31 and 33.

Cemetery/Memorial: YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL, BELGIUM

UK Cemetery/Memorial: Hitchin War Memorial, St Mary's Church, Hitchin
St Mary's Church Memorial Book, Hitchin (*not confirmed*)
British Schools Museum, Hitchin



Pre War:

His parents were James and Caroline Lawson of 28, Periwinkle Lane, Hitchin. He was born in Braintree but resided in Hitchin when he enlisted. Before the war he was employed by Messrs P.H. Barker & Son in Hitchin and was a well-known Sunday School teacher at St. Mary's Church. Enlisted in September 1914

Wartime Service:

He was given the Regimental Number 14800 and served with 'B' Company in the 1st Battalion having volunteered in September 1914. He trained at Felixstowe and was considered to be one of the best shots in his Company. He volunteered to go to the front and he was posted there in April 1915. He was gassed at Hill 60 and died as a result. The 1st Battalion was part of the 15th Brigade in the 5th Division of II Corps in the 2nd Army.

He saw action at Hill 60 where he suffered from being gassed from which he never recovered from.

His death coincides with a German attack on Hill 60 with dense clouds of chlorine gas and shells commencing at 6.30pm on the 1st May 1915 although there was no follow-up attack by the infantry. Twenty-two men were admitted to hospital suffering from the effects of the gas and two died. It is thought that the Germans had used the gas shells earlier than they had intended, as their original plan was to precede the gas with mine explosions followed by an infantry attack.

He has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate to the Missing at Ypres in Belgium.

Additional Information:

Acknowledgments:

Adrian Dunne

David C Baines

www.hitchinatwar.org.uk

