

Herts at War

(www.hertsatwar.co.uk)

Name: James Henry Sewell

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: 265385

Date of Death: 31st July 1917

Age: 21

Regiment/Service: Hertfordshire Regiment

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

Grave/Memorial Reference: Panel 54-56

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

Hitchin War Memorial, St Mary's Church, Hitchin
St Mary's Church Memorial Book, Hitchin (*not confirmed*)
Hitchin Territorials Memorial, Hitchin
Holy Saviour Church War Memorial, Radcliffe Rd., Hitchin
Tilehouse St Baptist Church War Memorial, Hitchin
British Schools Museum, Hitchin

Pre War:

The son of James Henry and Emma Elizabeth Sewell, of 50, Radcliffe Rd., Hitchin, Herts. He was born and resident in Hitchin and before the war was employed by Spencer & Co Engineering and was also a member of the Church Lads' Brigade.

His home was 50, Radcliffe Rd, Hitchin and he was the only son of James Henry and Emma Elizabeth Sewell.

Wartime Service:

He volunteered in Hitchin in August 1914 and was drafted to France in 1915 with the Regimental Number 265385. He fought at Ypres and Arras and was wounded in October 1915 and did not return to France again until January 1917. He was killed in action at St. Julien and "the last seen of him was just before the final objective was reached".

On the day of his death, the 1st Herts were cut to pieces by shot and shell at St. Julien in the Ypres Salient. They had marched from Vlamertinge to their assembly position arriving by midnight on the 30th/31st July 1917. A general bombardment of the German lines commenced at 3.45am on the 31st July and the Hertfordshires left their assembly position at 5.00am and passed through St. Julian during the morning. Unfortunately, the promised supporting artillery barrage did not materialise as the guns could not be brought up due to the all -prevailing mud. By noon the Herts had crossed the Steenbeck stream and had come across unbroken wire that prevented any further advance. The German artillery and machine-guns had virtually ceased to exist. Over half the fighting strength of the Battalion, including most of the officers, were killed or wounded in a single day.

Additional Information:

Acknowledgments:

Adrian Dunne, David C Baines
www.hitchinatwar.org.uk

