

Herts at War

(www.hertsatwar.co.uk)

Name: Anthony George Spurr

Rank: Private

Service Number: 2924

Date of Death: 9th May 1915

Age: 26

Regiment/Service: 13th Kensington Battalion
London Regiment

Award: 1914/1915 Star, British War and Victory Medals

Grave/Memorial Reference: Panel 10.

Cemetery/Memorial: PLOEGSTEERT MEMORIAL, BELGIUM

UK Cemetery/Memorial: Hitchin War Memorial, St Mary's Church, Hitchin
St Mary's Church Memorial Book, Hitchin (*not confirmed*)
Hitchin Grammar School War Memorial, Hitchin



Pre War:

Anthony was the eldest son of George E. and Ethel Mary Spurr of 'Dowlands', Wymondley Road, Hitchin. He was certainly attending the Hitchin Grammar School by the Spring of 1904 and was in the 6th Form, he left in the Winter Term of 1905. All who knew him remembered his alert kindly disposition and strong literary bent and he was a frequent contributor to the Hitchin Grammar School Chronicle. He was a journalist with the Watford Observer. He and his younger brother, Douglas B. Spurr, were the first fatal casualties from the Hitchin Grammar School during the war.

Wartime Service:

He had enlisted in Watford in a Territorial unit by September 1914 and was given the Regimental Number 2924 in the 13th (County of London) Battalion (Princess Louise's Kensington Battalion), going to France on the 11th February 1915. The Battalion had arrived at Le Havre on the 4th November 1914 and, shortly after, joined the 25th Brigade, 8th Division, IV Corps, First Army.

After a bayonet charge on the day of the disastrous attack on Aubers Ridge he was shot by the enemy and killed instantly. It was Sunday the 9th May 1915, the weather calm, bright and sunny. A bombardment of the German trenches began at 5.00am and the infantry attacked at 5.30am. The Kensingtons were on the extreme left in the attack on the German trenches around Rougebanc north west of Fromelles. Unfortunately, the British bombardment was totally inadequate to cut the wire, as they were using shrapnel instead of high explosive and the number of shells available was hopelessly insufficient. A description written in the style of the times reflects what happened: *"It was a day of glorious deeds but unavailing sacrifice. Near Rougebanc the 13th (Kensington) Battalion of the London Regiment succeeded in reaching its objective on the extreme left with a dash which shed fresh lustre on Territorial arms, carrying not only the first, but also the second and third German trenches and then digging themselves in. "You have done splendidly" said the Brigadier in a message to the captured position promising to send reinforcements. Alas! these never reached them; the supports were seen to advance and then to fade away; while the Battalions which should have connected up with the Kensingtons in the first case never got through."* Losses that day were 145 Officers and nearly 10,000 men.

Additional Information:

Acknowledgments:

Adrian Dunne, David C Baines

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