

Herts at War

(www.hertsatwar.co.uk)

Name: John Russell WOODS, M.C.

Rank: Captain

Service Number:

Date of Death: 16/09/1916

Age: 21

Regiment/Service: Coldstream Guards 1st Bn.

Award: 1914/15 Star, British War and Allied Victory Medals

Grave/Memorial Reference: I. C. 1.

Cemetery/Memorial: GROVE TOWN CEMETERY, MEAULTE, France

UK Cemetery/Memorial: Hitchin Grammar School War Memorial, Hitchin

Pre War:

He was the son of Lieut. Col. James Woods and Ida E. Edwards Woods of Ottawa in Canada.

He attended the Hitchin Grammar School from 1905-1910 and won the affection of the School by his unfailing cheerfulness and genuine sportsmanship. He became a pillar of the Old Boys Football Club and kept a close association with the School to the end of his all too short life. His home was in Royston in Hertfordshire.

Wartime Service:

John joined the Coldstream Guards early in the war, arriving in France on the 24th May 1915. In 1915 he was offered a commission following distinguished service in the field. By the Spring of 1916 he appears as a Captain in the 1st Battalion and only a few days before his death in that same year he was awarded the Military Cross for gallant conduct.

The 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards was part of the 2nd Guards Brigade whilst the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were part of the 1st Guards Brigade, all three being in the Guards Division.

All three Coldstream Battalions went forward together attacking towards Lesboeufs. They assembled south east of the Ginchy-Lesboeufs road. The 1st Battalion was on the left of the 2nd Guards Brigade with the 2nd Coldstreams on their left and the 3rd Coldstreams on the left of the 2nd Coldstreams.

The 2nd Guards Brigade went forward at 6.20am on the 15th September 1916 under a creeping barrage, attacking the Triangle and Serpentine trenches to the north east of Ginchy on the road to Lesboeufs. They cleared the Triangle in heavy fighting using their bombers. By the end of the day the casualties of the 1st Coldstreams were 360, those of the 2nd Bn, 440 and for the 3rd Bn 361.

Having been wounded, he would have been taken to Meaulte in France and it was there that he died. The private inscription on the headstone, requested by his father reads "*Cheerfulness Discipline & Valour*".

Additional Information:

Acknowledgments:

David G Baines

www.hitchinatwar.org.uk

Jonty Wild

