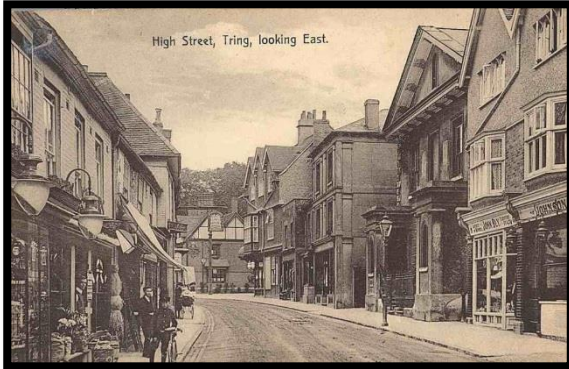


PRIVATE EUSTACE REGINALD PHEASANT

Eustace Reginald Pheasant was born on the 20th August 1894 at Longdon Street, Tring, Hertfordshire, the son of James & Julia Agnes Pheasant. His father worked as an Insurance Agent. Records show that Eustace attended the Tring New Mill Infant, Junior & Middle School.



By 1911 the Pheasant family were living at 28 Wingrave Road, Tring, and Eustace, now aged 16, was working as a Grocers Assistant in the town. His brother, Howard (13) and his sister, Ena (5), were still at school.

On the 1st January 1915 Eustace joined the Territorial Army, enlisting in the Hertfordshire Regiment where he was issued with the Regimental Number 4438. He would have spent the next six months training, mainly at Halton Camp, Buckinghamshire, which had been offered

by Alfred De Rothschild, the estate owner, to Lord Kitchener for military training at the outbreak of World War One. Following his basic training and preparation for overseas service, the big day came on the 17th August 1915, when Eustace left the shores of England to make his way to France. On arrival, he would have been held in an Infantry Base Depot, most likely No.17 at Etaples, close to the French ports where his preparation for service at the front would continue. Replacement troops were often drafted into the line where they were most needed, and this meant that their Regiment may change. Eustace remained with the Hertfordshire Regiment who, on the 30th August, had moved into the Montmorency Barracks, Bethune, having left the Guards Brigade to become part of the 6th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division, and this is most likely where Eustace joined them.

A Service Record has not survived for Eustace, so it is difficult to assess at what points he was not with the Battalion. The following is an overview of where the Battalion served from August 1915 to August 1918.

The Battle of Loos

Throughout early September 1915 the Battalion continued with its work in building, maintaining and repairing trench works. However, on 25th September things changed dramatically for the men of the Hertfordshire's, as they became embroiled in the Battle of Loos. At 6:30am that morning, the men of No.3 & No.4 Companies were in support of the 1st Battalion, Kings Liverpool Regiment, as they went into the attack. The men of Liverpool failed to reach the German trenches and were held up by heavy machine-gun fire. As a consequence, the Hertfordshire's were ordered not to advance. Throughout that night they helped bring in the casualties the Liverpool's had suffered.

It was on 27th September, whilst the Hertfordshire's were waiting in trenches in preparation for an attack, that the first award of a Victoria Cross was to be made to the regiment. A citation for the award reads as follows;

“Corporal Alfred Burt was standing in a trench when a large Minenwerfer (Trench Mortar) fell amongst the men. Burt knew only too well the destructive power of these bombs, and could have easily taken cover behind a traverse. Instead, he immediately ran forward put his foot on the fuse, wrenched it out of the bomb, and threw it over the parapet, thus rendering the bomb innocuous. His presence of mind and great pluck save the lives of others in the Traverse”.



On the 30th September the Battalion moved back to billets at Bethune. Their casualties throughout September had been; 3 Officers wounded, 4 Other Ranks Killed, 2 Other Ranks dying of their wounds and 35 Other Ranks being wounded.



By the 1st October 1915 the Battalion were back in the trenches. This time they had taken over the old German front line trench at Vermelles, on the Hulloch Road. It was whilst they were here that **Corporal Reginald “Jack” EVANS** was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. His citation reads;

“For conspicuous gallantry and ability at Cuinchy on 22nd September, 1915, when he went out in bright moonlight 150 yards to see how far the wire had been cut by artillery fire. He made an exhaustive examination of it, remained out an hour and a half, and returned with a report which was most valuable. He knew that our machine-guns were ordered to open fire at 10 p.m., but in order to complete his reconnaissance thoroughly he did not return till 10.30 p.m. He has frequently volunteered for and carried

out useful patrol work of this nature..”

In February 1916, Reg was badly wounded in the face and underwent pioneering plastic surgery performed by Captain (later Sir) Harold Gillies at Britain's first plastic unit set up in the Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot. Following a remarkable recovery, Reg later joined the Royal Sussex Regiment, serving as a Sergeant, and took part in the British Expeditionary Force's campaign in Russia during 1918-1919.



The Battalion moved in and out of the line throughout October, November and December 1915 but despite the intermittent shelling of their positions, the majority of their time was spent sheltering from the poor weather conditions, as were their enemy. During this time the Battalion saw several drafts of new troops, ensuring that the Regiment remained at strength and that any casualties had been replaced.

1916

The first weeks of January 1916 were to see further drafts of new troops, 126 men arriving in the first week. The Battalion war diary also records further awards of gallantry medals and lists a few individuals who had been mentioned in dispatches. These were;

- **Corporal Alfred BURT – Victoria Cross**
- **Captain Aylmer Gustavus CLERK – Military Cross**
- **Lieutenant Kenneth Morton OLIPHANT – Military Cross**
- **Corporal William George SPINKS – Distinguished Conduct Medal (KIA 26/09/1916)**
- **Private Charles HAGGAR - Distinguished Conduct Medal**
- **Private Robert FARNHAM - Distinguished Conduct Medal**

Men who were Mentioned in Dispatches

- **Regimental Sergeant Major Frank YOUNG**
- **Sergeant Reginald EVANS**
- **Sergeant William Gilbert CALLOW MM (KIA 31/07/1917)**
- **Private Rodney STEVENS**
- **Private George Ashley DUNN**

The winter weather meant that operations were virtually at a standstill, although the daily gesture of intermittent artillery shelling between the opposing forces continued. The Battalion continued to rotate in and out of the Givenchy trench system and saw Lieutenant Colonel Henry PAGE-CROFT, who had led them since 1914, transfer to command the 68th Brigade, being replaced by Major Frank PAGE, who led the Battalion until his death at St.Julian on the 31st July 1917.

It was on the 8th March 1916 that the Battalion came under the command of the 188th Brigade, 39th Division. Throughout the month were held under canvas at Sercus, receiving two drafts of reinforcements, totalling 4 Officers and 150 Other Ranks, from the 3rd/1st Battalion. On the 30th March the refreshed and replenished Battalion marched to Pont-Du-Hem.

The Battalion found itself back in the trenches on the 1st April 1916, for a four-day stint, during which time **Lieutenant Walter Williamson PARK** was killed and **Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Fontaine LAMBERT** (Pictured) was wounded, dying from his injuries on the 15th April.



On the 8th April 1916, a further reinforcement draft of 96 men joined the Battalion. These were distributed amongst the Companies, and brought the Battalion up to a strength of 1004 Officers & Men. The Battalion were in now billets at Robermetz, near Merville and had seen cases of both Scarlet Fever and Measles break out, one of which proved fatal.

On the 14th April 1916, the Battalion marched to billets at Vielle-Chappelle, about 4 miles from the Cuinchy sector of the Western Front. Two days later, on the 16th April, they entered the frontline trenches, when the Battalion relieved the 13th Welsh Regiment at Festubert. Here, they spent two days in the frontline trenches, during which time things were relatively quiet.

On the 18th April, the Battalion were relieved by the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment and marched to Reserve billets at Le Plantin and Rue L'Épinette, where they took a well-earned rest and awaited further orders. They moved out of reserve positions on 26th April and marched to the village of Le Choqvaux, close to the La Basee Canal, where they moved into more comfortable billets on local farms. The small village was just 3 miles North of the town of Bethune, where the troops could spend a little time relaxing, and enjoying the local pleasures available to them. On the 2nd May 1916, the Battalion moved into front-line trenches to relieve the 12th Royal Sussex Regiment, in what was known as Subsection B2 at Givenchy. German snipers were known to be very active in the area at the time and **Private Thomas CUMMINGS (Watford)** was killed that day, believed to have been shot by a sniper. On the 5th May, **Private William WHITMARSH (Harpenden)**, who had been amongst the 96 men who joined the Battalion on the 8th April, was also killed in action. William and Thomas are buried at the Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy. It must have been a terrible shock for Eustace and his comrades to have seen these young men die so suddenly, at the hands of a sniper.

On the 10th May **Sergeant George GREGORY** was awarded the Military Medal for his brave act of carrying two wounded men to safety during a heavy German artillery barrage, following the explosion of a mine. Sergeant Gregory was to be awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal later in the war and was amongst one of the most highly decorated soldiers in the Battalion.

The Battalion spent most of May 1916 rotating in and out of the front line in the Cuinchy-Festubert area. On the 26th May 1916 they were located at C.2 Subsection at Festubert, having relieved the 13th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment the night before. At 6.00am that morning, a group of six German soldiers crawled through the long grass which had grown in front of the British positions. They leapt up and surprised the men who were located in a forward post named Island 30, killing three men and wounding Private Harold King, who was evacuated to a Field Ambulance at Bethune, where he died the next day.

Those who died were:

Lance Corporal Reginald Frank CHATFIELD (Watford) – Killed.

Private Herbert Vincent CAIN (Whitwell) – Killed.

Private John PAYNE (Letchworth) – Killed.

All three are buried in Le Touret Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoué, France.

Private Harold KING (Royston) – Died of Wounds.

Buried in Grave V. D. 49 at Bethune Town Cemetery, France.

The Battalion were unexpectedly relieved by the 17th West Yorkshire Regiment on the 28th May and marched to billets at Ferme du Roi, near Bethune. On the 5th June 1916, a draft of 1 Officer and 15 Other Ranks joined the Battalion, the majority being Signallers. The following morning the entire Battalion marched to the village of Gorre, where they took over frontline trenches from the 17th Sherwood Foresters. They remained in the Gorre/Festubert region throughout June and July, rotating in and out of the Trenches at regular intervals and resting in the Bethune area when allowed.

On the 29th June 1916 the Battalion were at Vielle Chappelle, about 2.5 miles North-West of Le Touret. The next day Eustace, and his comrades, marched into the trenches at Femme Du Bois, where they took over the positions that had been previously held by the men of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment. The Battalion settled into a routine that they had seen so many times before, one of continual rotation in and out of the trenches in the Givenchy-Cuinchy Sector.

Although the Battalion were in support of a successful Trench Raid that was carried out by the 4th/5th Battalion, Black Watch, on the 17th June, it was on the 19th July that 3 Officers and 61 Men of the Hertfordshire Regiment made their own successful raid on a German trench on the North Bank of the La Bassee Canal. Their task was to enter the German trenches, kill Germans, take prisoners and collect as much material and equipment as they possibly could to help identify the units they faced. Despite a successful outcome, a number of men were killed or died as a result of the raid. These were;

Lance Corporal James Walker GITTINGS (Abbotts Leigh, Bristol) – Killed
Private Herbert WOOSTER (Shenley) – Killed
Private Walter Ernest FARROW (Hemel Hempstead) – Killed
All three are buried in the Le Touret Military Cemetery.

Private George TURNER (Sawbridgeworth) – Captured and Died on the 20th July
Buried in Grave VII.G.7 at the Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez

Sergeant Herbert George BREWSTER (Hertford) – Died of Wounds on 23rd July.
Buried in Grave VIII.A.143 at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery.



By the 25th July 1916 the Battalion had seen 1 Officer and 12 Other Ranks Killed, and 7 Officers and 38 Other Ranks Wounded. Amongst these were a number of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's), including two Company Sergeant Majors.

Photo: Sergeant Frank Young.
Frank followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Hertfordshire Regiment. Following his service with the Regiment on the Western Front he was recommended for a Commission in the Regiment. It was left to men such as Arthur Whitman to fill the void left by men like Frank Young after they departed from the Battalion. As a Second Lieutenant, Frank was to win the Victoria Cross on the 18th September 1918 at Havrincourt, losing his life in the process.

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

It was on the 10th August 1916 that the Battalion left the Trenches near Festubert for the last time, after being relieved by the 15th West Yorkshire Regiment. They marched back to Bethune, where the Brigades of the 39th Division were placed into Army Reserve. They made preparations to move South to the Somme sector, where the British Army had been engaged in a major offensive since the 1st July.

On the 11th August, the Brigade marched to billets at Cauchy-A-Le-Tour, a 9-mile march. The following day they moved to Monchy Breton, a further 7 miles. By the 13th August they had reached Ostreville, where they remained for a period of 10 days, undergoing training in preparation for their arrival on the Somme. It was here that another draft of 12 Other Ranks joined the Battalion on the 15th July. They marched to billets at Houvin-Houvigneul on the 23rd August, and the following day marched a further 9 miles to the village of Grouches-Luchuel, where they were joined by a further draft of 64 Other Ranks. The next day, another 9-mile march took the Battalion to the village of Bus-Le-Artois and, following an overnight rest, they marched the remaining 5 miles to their objective, the village of Englebemer, arriving there on the 26th August 1916. The journey had been completed entirely on foot and they had covered a distance of nearly 50 miles, with each man marching in full service order, carrying all of his own kit in the high heat of the summer.

On the night of the 26th August 1916 the 39th Division took over positions near Thiepval from the 6th Division. Fighting had been very heavy in this area since the 1st July, when the Battle of the Somme opened, and the men of the Hertfordshire Regiment knew that some of their number would soon be lost in the bitter stalemate that typified the Western Front at that time. On the last day of the month a further new draft of 30 Other Ranks arrived to ensure that the Battalion maintained full strength.

The 1st September 1916 saw the arrival of 6 Officers and 30 Other Ranks from England. The following day the Battalion moved into positions overlooking the Ancre Valley, named Fort Prowse and Fort Moulin. No.1 Company were positioned a short distance away in the village of Mesnil, in preparation for an assault on German positions on the 3rd September. The 118th Brigade were in support of the attack, but it was deemed to be a failure as the Germans made a successful counter attack in the afternoon, forcing the attacking British troops to withdraw. **It was during this attack that Eustace was wounded. His name is shown on the Casualty List for that date, but the type of wound and the seriousness is not indicated.**

The German artillery had been particularly aggressive during the operation of the 3rd September, and there was considerable damage to the British trenches. Working parties from the Hertfordshire Regiment assisted in the repair work, which involved very hard labour throughout the night. For the troops in the trenches, things were not much better. Due to the high level of gas shells the Germans had been firing, they were required to wear their gas helmets all through the night.

On the 12th September, the Hertfordshire's were relieved by the 1st/6th Cheshire Regiment and moved into billets in Englebelmer, a welcome relief from the drudgery of the trenches, which had been made worse by continued rainfall in the area. During the time they were in the Somme sector, a total of four drafts had arrived, bringing 86 new faces to the Battalion. Sadly, since their arrival in the sector the Battalion had seen 17 members killed or dying of their wounds, with many more wounded. For Eustace, and many of his comrades, it was a time of great fear, as it was not a question as to whether they would be killed or wounded, but when.

The 19th September 1916 saw the Battalion back in the frontline. This time they were holding the sub section of a well-known position named Y Ravine, remaining there until the 3rd October. During this time, they were engaged in mainly repairing Trenches, Dug-Outs and Tram Lines. On the night of the 20th/21st September two Patrols were sent out under Corporal's King and Bilby to investigate the enemy fortifications. They reported the German barbed wire as up to 30 feet deep and heavily staked with very long spikes, and completely impassable. The Battalion were relieved by the 13th Royal Sussex Regiment on the 3rd October, and they, in turn, took over positions from the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment in the right sub section of the village of Hamel. The Hertfordshire's remained here until the 7th October when they moved into Huts and Billets in the village of Martinsart, after being relieved by the 11th Royal Sussex Regiment.

On the 14th October 1916, the 118th Brigade were ordered to attack a German strongpoint known as the Schwaben Redoubt, on the outskirts of Thiepval. The Hertfordshire Regiment were held in Reserve to support the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment, who were at the forefront of the assault. The attack was successful and the Cambridgeshire's were able to seize and hold the position. A Platoon of the Hertfordshire's were used in a supporting role during the attack, with two Officers winning the Military Cross and three Other Ranks winning the Military Medal.

Awards to;

Captain Charles Frederick HACKER (RAMC) - Military Cross

Second Lieutenant John Phillip KEMBLE - Military Cross

Lance Corporal Edwin Thomas SAUNDERS – Military Medal

Lance Corporal Jack WELCH – Military Medal (KIA 26/09/1917)

Private Randall ILOTT – Military Medal

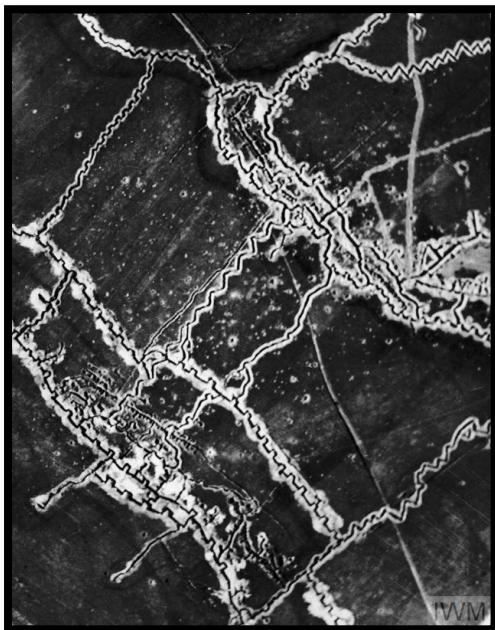


Photo: An aerial view of the German Trench system in the Thiepval area including the Schwaben Redoubt. (IWM)

A Note on Lance Corporal Jack WELCH

Jack Welch came from Hitchin and had joined the Hertfordshire Regiment on the 5th September 1914. He was amongst the first members of the Battalion to arrive in France on the 6th November, and would have been well known by Arthur. He had seen service up and down the Western Front and was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 5th May 1916 in place of **Lance Corporal William Arthur HIGGINS**, who had been promoted to Corporal. Jack's bravery during the attack on the Schwaben Redoubt saw him awarded the Military Medal, and a few weeks later he took part in the assault on the Hansa Line, during the Battle of the Ancre. On the 31st July 1917, with the Battalion

suffering devastating losses, Jack Welch was admitted to No.132 Field Ambulance with the classification N.Y.D.N. (Not Yet Diagnosed – Nerves). This was classified by No.62 Casualty Clearing Station later that day as Shell Shock. Despite this, Jack was declared as Fit for Duty just 5 days later and returned to his unit on the 9th August 1917. Sadly, just eight weeks after being returned to his unit, on the 26th September 1917, Jack was killed by a shell. His body was never found and his name is recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

THE BATTLE OF THE ANCRE

The Battle of the Ancre began on the 13th November 1916, and was the final large scale British attack of the Battle of the Somme. The Hertfordshire Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Frank Page DSO, achieved notable success in the battle, advancing 1600 yards and holding their position. The attack had been preceded by seven days of heavy shellfire and was launched before dawn to try and take the Germans by surprise. The men travelled lightly, each had been given bombs and around half the men carried spades. Moving an entire Brigade into position in the dark was a very difficult operation and careful reconnaissance had to be carried out ahead of the attack. Second Lieutenant Gilbey had carefully marked out the lines on which the different Companies had to assemble over the previous nights and this work helped the Brigade get into position without too many difficulties. Every man was in his place before 2am, ready for the attack.

The Hertfordshire Regiment attacked from the Schwaben Redoubt, which they had been involved in capturing a few weeks earlier. The attack was aided both by the darkness and also a mist which hid the soldiers. It had also been dry for several days leading up to the 13th November which allowed the men to move much faster across the battlefield although they still had to carefully avoid shell holes, some of which contained up to a foot of water. Despite the mist and darkness, the battalion kept together and moved quickly towards the Hansa Line, their ultimate objective. The advance was a great success and the battalion was able to seize the whole of the Hansa Line as well as capturing 250 prisoners and nine machine guns. During the battle, seven of the Regiment's officers were wounded and another 150 men were either killed or wounded.



Photo: These men of the 39th Division (possibly Hertfordshire's) can be seen washing in the River Ancre at St. Pierre Divion (IWM)

Back To The Salient

It was at 7.36am on the 19th November 1916 that the Battalion, along with a quarter of the 118th Machine Gun Company, left the Somme sector, after boarding Train No.24 at Candas. The journey took them back to Belgium, where the Battalion had first seen service in November 1914.

On the night of the 30th November 1916 the 39th Division relieved the 5th Belgian Division and moved into positions along the Yser Canal, near Boesinghe. They remained in these positions until the 15th December when they were relieved by the 11th Royal Sussex Regiment and moved into billets at "E" Camp near Elverdinghe, for a well-earned rest. The Battalion left its billets on the 23rd December, and took over the Hilltop Section, just North of Sint Jean. It was here, in the wet and mud drenched trenches, that Eustace was to spend his Christmas. Relief came in the form of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment on the 29th December 1916, when the Battalion moved to Dug Outs on the Left bank of the Yser Canal.

1917

A German Trench Raid took place on the 7th January 1917, which resulted in the loss of four men from the Battalion. The raid saw three Hertfordshire men taken prisoner, one of whom was Private William Frank BASTERFIELD of Hitchin. In total, the Battalion suffered 19 casualties during the attack, mainly from artillery fire, with 1 Officer and 3 Other Ranks being Killed, 1 Other Rank dying of their wounds and 14 Other Ranks Wounded.



Those who died were;

Captain Eric Butler SMALLWOOD MC (Stoke Newington)
Lance Corporal Herbert CURRELL MM (Codicote)
Private William STOTEN (Royston)

All three men are buried next to each other in a small plot at Essex Farm Cemetery, Ypres.

Private Albert HONOUR (Watford) – Died of Wounds
Buried at Mendinghem Military Cemetery.

Photo: 17-Year old Private William STOTEN of Royston killed on the 7th January 1917.

During the raid, the bravery of one of the defenders was recognised, when **Corporal Henry BEER** was awarded the Military Medal. The Battalion were relieved by the Cambridgeshire Regiment and moved into dug outs on the Canal Bank where, later that day, a draft of 57 new arrivals joined them. Four days after their relief, on the 12th January, the Battalion returned to the trenches, this time in the sub-section at Wieltje, where they took over positions occupied by the 10th Liverpool Scottish. During the relief, the frontline was heavily bombarded by German artillery, causing the death of three men and wounding four others.

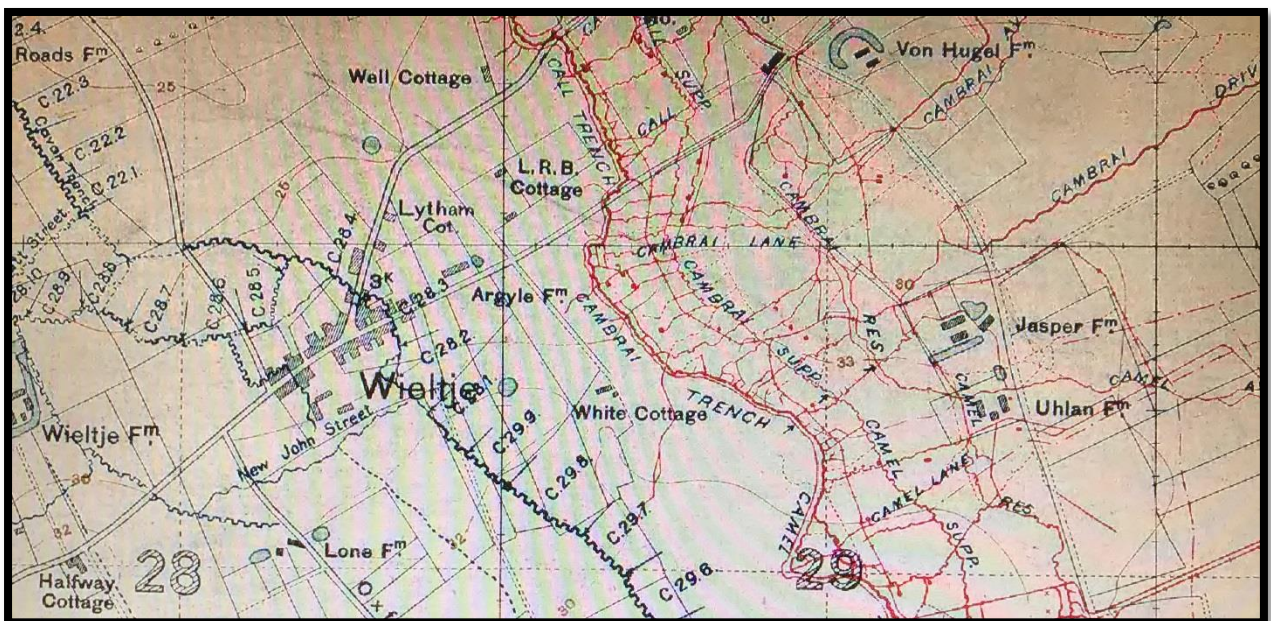
Those killed were;

Private Charley TURVEY (Chorleywood)
Private Albert Edward LOSEBY (Hertford)
Private Cyril Rowland GOUGH (Watford)

All three men are buried next to each other in Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery. Ypres.

After being relieved by the Cambridgeshire Regiment on the 18th January the Battalion moved back to the Dug Outs on the Yser Canal Bank and, on the 24th, they moved into more comfortable billets in "C" Camp on the outskirts of Poperinghe. It was not until the 3rd February that the Battalion returned to the Dug-Outs at Canal Bank and, the following day, were back in the frontline at Wieltje. They remained there until the 9th February, when they were again relieved by the Cambridgeshire Regiment and returned to the reserve positions on the Canal Bank.

On the 12th February 1917, the Battalion were back on the frontline and were ordered to make a night raid on the German trenches, with the aim of taking prisoners and reconnoitring the German positions. The raiding party, made up mainly from men of No.1 & No.4 Companies, consisted of 3 Officers, Second Lieutenants Follett Mcneil DRURY, Robert Leslie HARDY and W.THOMPSON, and 64 Other Ranks. They left their positions on the Canal Bank and moved swiftly to a jump off point in no man's land to await zero hour. The Raiders then advance to their objectives, with the first patrol finding Argyle Farm unoccupied. The party's detailed to deal with No.3 and No.4 Sap, found them to be totally obliterated and unoccupied. The remainder of the raiding party entered the German trenches in an effort to achieve their objective. There is no doubt the raid was a surprise to the enemy, and the few men in the area were very quickly overpowered. Three Germans were found in the front trench, one of whom was bludgeoned, and the others were taken prisoner. The firing of blue rockets was the order to withdraw, and the Raiders made their way back to no man's land. They then returned to the canal bank, where it was established that all raiders had been accounted for by 2.00am on the 13th February. They had only suffered four slight casualties, and their endeavours were regarded as very successful.



Map: A Trench Map shows the location of the Trench Raid on the 12th February 1917.

The men of the Hertfordshire Regiment remained in the frontline until the 16th February, when they again moved back to the Canal Bank. The following day they moved by train to "Y" Camp on the outskirts of Poperinghe. On the 4th March 1917, under the Army Council Instruction (ACI) 2414 of 1916, published on 23rd December 1916, affecting soldiers of the Territorial Infantry, Eustace received a new service number, 266338, which was part of a block of numbers allocated to the Hertfordshire Regiment. All documentation and references to his service now used his new number.

In general, March 1917 was a fairly quiet month for the Battalion. They had been inspected by Lieutenant- General Sir Thomas Morland on the morning of the 2nd, and marched to Kruistraat the following day. They remained here for a few days until moving into the trenches on the 6th March, where they took over positions from the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment in the Observatory Ridge Sector. Following the usual routine, the Battalion moved in and out of the frontline throughout March taking over positions from the Cambridgeshire's in the Hooze sector. Five members of the Battalion were to lose their lives during this month, with many others being wounded. Those killed were;

Lance Corporal Stephen John SMITH (Hertford) - 14/03/1917

Private Sidney William MAYS (Leigh on Sea) - 14/03/1917

Private Albert William FISHPOOL (Cheshunt) – 26/03/1917

Private Henry Charles REID (St.Albans) – 26/03/1917

Private Frederick George Keith NUNN - 30/03/1917

In early April 1917, the Battalion left the subsection at Hooze and moved into billets at Houtkerque. Here, on the 6th April three awards were made;

Private Frederick ALDRIDGE (Hertford) – Bar to his Military Medal

Private Frederick William WATERS (St.Albans) – Military Medal (Wounded & Missing 31/07/1917)

Private Henry Thomas CRANE (Hertford) - Military Medal

The Battalion spent most of early April away from the front line, in a location known as “B” Camp. By the middle of the month, they had moved to “C” Camp near Poperinghe, where they were employed in the construction of a new railway line. During this period, they were reinforced by two drafts totalling 77 men, who would help to bring the Battalion up to full strength. On the 3rd May 1917, the Battalion left its billets and moved into positions along the canal bank at Ypres. They remained here, in reserve, until the 10th May when they relieved the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment in the HILL TOP sub section. During this period the unit war diary mentions that an Officer, 2/Lieutenant Basil H. JOHNSON, was hit by a bullet in the left forearm. It does not, however, mention how **Private Leslie Arthur TUCKER (Watford)**, was killed in action on the 11th May.

It was on the 23rd May 1917 that the Battalion, less Nos.1 & 4 Companies, relieved the 2/5th Lancashire Fusiliers in the WIELTJE sub sector. Nos.1 & 4 Companies remained at “C” CAMP. Whilst the Battalion was in this location several of its members had their names published in the London Gazette as being mentioned in dispatches. These were;

- **Lieutenant Colonel Frank PAGE DSO & Bar**
- **Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Ernest WHITFIELD MC**
- **Quartermaster and Honorary Major Thomas BARBER, OBE, TD**
- **Captain Aylmer Gustavus CLERK DSO, MC**
- **Captain Thomas Pilling GIBBONS, MC**
- **Second Lieutenant Gordon McMULLEN**
- **Sergeant Sidney RAND**

By the end of May the Battalion had moved to Wormhoudt and it was here, on the 3rd June, that Eustace and the men of the Battalion attended the King's birthday parade. In this location, they were safe from the rigours and horrors of trench life, but as Spring turned to Summer they entered a period of intensive training in preparation for one of the biggest assaults the enemy were to experience, since the Somme offensive. The Battalion were billeted in the Moule-Moule-Seques area, about 7 km outside of St.Omer on the Calais Road. In this district, a full-scale model of the sections of the line to be attacked had been prepared. Woods were shown by branches of trees, and dummy trenches indicating the German positions.

Day in and day out the troops were put through the part to be played by them in the attack, advancing first in artillery formation, then extending at a given point, which represented the crest of a reach at the southern edge of Kitchener Wood, on which was situated the famous Falkenhayn Redoubt, and continuing in extended order to the line of the second objective, where in due course the barrage would be picked up.

DAY OF DAYS – ST.JULIAAN – 31st JULY 1917

The attack on the St Julien position, which has been given the name of the Battle of Pilkem, took many months of intense planning which saw the Hertfordshire's, along with other units of the 39th Division, undergo a special course of training. Once this was completed they were ready to take part in the assault which, unbeknown to them, was to bring complete devastation across the home county.

The plan of attack for the 39th Division was laid down in the Unit War Diary. The section to be attacked was divided into three separate objectives, roughly the first, second, and third German defence systems, named in Operation Orders as the Blue, Black and Green lines respectively. There was to be a very thorough artillery preparation for some days previous to the offensive, to be followed by the infantry advancing in leapfrog formation behind an impenetrable barrage. The 116th and 117th Infantry Brigades were to capture the Blue and Black lines, and the 118th Brigade, composed of the 4th/5th Black Watch, the 5th Cheshire Regiment, 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment and the 1st Hertfordshire Regiment, were to assault, capture and consolidate the Green line.

This latter objective was rightly considered the most difficult, as it was not possible to give it the same amount of artillery preparation as the others, on account of a lack of direct observation and the distance it was situated from the guns. In fact, the Brigadier in his address to the Regiment on the day before the offensive was launched, stated this, and added that "Pride of Place" in the centre of the line had been allotted to the 1st Hertfordshire Regiment.

The action was expected to be very local, especially as the success of an attack of this nature primarily depended upon the close proximity of the infantry to a creeping barrage. To fully appreciate the work performed by the Battalion on 31st July, it must be remembered that all ranks had had it impressed on them, day after day for some time, that their part was to consist of merely walking behind the creeping barrage with slung rifles, and that no opposition would be met with, other than an improbable machine gun nest, which if necessary, would be dealt with by tanks. In due course the Battalion reached almost as high state of perfection as was possible to expect, in their training, and on 22nd July, with the remainder of the 118th Infantry brigade they moved by a motor bus to the camps near St.Jean Ter Biazin, preparatory to taking up the assembly positions for the battle. Routes to the line were arranged and one officer for each company went forward on the 27th and 28th to arrange for the assembly positions, which consisted for the most part of shell holes behind Hill Top Farm.

On the night of the 30th/31st July 1917 the Battalion left the bivouacs near Vlamertinghe, which they had occupied on the previous day, and after a rather trying march across country through desultory shellfire and gas, in the pitch dark, finally reached their assembly position just after midnight, suffering only a few casualties.

The following are extracts from operation orders issued by Lieutenant Colonel Frank Page, issued on the 29th July 1917.

1. (a) the 5th Army is to capture the hostile trench system East and North East of Ypres on Z day.
(b) The XVIII Corps will capture the hostile trench system on its present front.
Right Division = 39th. Left Division = 51st. Reserve Divisions = 48th Right and 11th Left

(c) The 39th division will attack at zero hour on the Z day and will capture the German trenches on the frontage shown on the attached map as far as the Green line, which will be known as Cuthbert trench when consolidated.

(d) The 23rd Division (Prussian) is holding the area to be attacked by the 39th division. Its probable dispositions are 1 Battalion 448th infantry Regiment, and half Battalion 449th infantry Regiment in the frontline system, the same in the Kitchener system, and the same in the Langamark Line. The 450th Regiment is said to be in the neighbourhood of Poelcappelle.

(e) The objective of the 118th infantry brigade is the Green line. The attack on the Green line will be carried out with:-

6th Cheshires on the right. 1st Hertfordshires in the centre. 4th/5th Black Watch on the Left. 1st Cambridgeshires in reserve near Border House.

(f) Three machine guns of the 118th machine gun company and two stokes mortars are allotted to the Battalion.

2. Assembly

The brigade will move into the assembly position on Y/Z night. The 1st Hertfordshire's will leave the camp at 8:45 PM and March via Queens Road-Bridge 2-and Overland track, to the assembly positions. Nos.1 and 3 Companies near Irish Farm, Nos.2 and 4 Companies and Battalion Headquarters to La Belle Alliance and Coney Street.

3. Advance

- (a) At 0+1 hour 40 minutes the 118th infantry brigade will advance from the assembly position. Herts and Cheshires from the X line and Black Watch and Cambs from the canal bank.

(b) The 1st Herts will arrive just West of the blue line at 0+2 hours 10 minutes. The further advance will be made so that the three attacking battalions are on the East bank of the Steenbeek by 0+6 hours 10 minutes.

The orders for the attack of the 1st Herts were:

No.1 Company on the right and No.2 Company on the left, each into waves, in the front-line.
In Support, No.3 on the right and No.4 on the left, also into waves.

The company officers were:-

No.1 Company. Lieutenant Hardy commanding with Lieutenants Walthew, Thompson and Scott.

No.2 Company. Captain Lowry commanding with Lieutenants Ritchie, Head and Secretan.

No.3 Company. Lieutenant Gallo commanding with Lieutenants Marchington, Francis and Edwards.

No.4 Company. Captain D'Arcy Fisher commanding with Lieutenants Lake, Macintosh, Gilbey and King.

The following is a transcribed account of the action of the 31st July 1917 as described by an officer of the 1st Battalion, Hertfordshire Regiment, Captain Bernard Gripper.

At 3:45 am on 31 July 1917, just as dawn was breaking, the barrage opened with a burst of flame along the whole line of the divisional front, the most intense barrage that had been put up, to that period of the war. The 1st Hertfordshire's were not due to move off for some time so, as no reason for secrecy existed, fires were lighted and the men had breakfast.

The weather, which had been fine practically throughout July, had broken on the 28th and during the whole of the 31st low-lying clouds and drizzle rendered co-operation with the Royal Flying Corps almost impossible. The state of the ground was such, from the rain, that progress of any sort could only be made with great difficulty, and it was this fact, more than anything else, which led to the comparative failure of the operation.

The Germans were well aware of the impending offensive and it transpired subsequently that they were also in possession of most of the details of it. They had accordingly withdrawn most of their guns in the forward area, and had apparently resigned any idea of holding their first system seriously; which was not surprising in view of the pounding it had received from our guns.

Hardly a shred of wire was to be seen, and what remained of the trenches was lightly held by inferior troops. The Blue Line gave little trouble, nor did the black line, although the Falkenhayn Redoubt, on the Southern edge of Kitchener Wood needed the attentions of a tank before it succumbed. The 1st Hertfordshire's left their assembly positions about 5am and advanced in artillery formation over the captured ground to the first German line of defence, the blue line, where they took cover on account of the desultory shelling and a certain amount of machine gun fire. The latter was silenced shortly afterwards, by which time the 116th infantry brigade had reached the black line.

So far, the attack had gone exactly to plan. While the 1st Hertfordshire's were on the Black Line, bearings were taken in order to confirm that the Battalion was keeping direction, and to ascertain the position of St. Juliaan, which lay over the crest of the Ridge. The 1st Hertfordshire's resumed their advance according to schedule, No.1 and 2 Companies leading in artillery formation, followed by Nos. 3 and 4, being wished "Good Luck" by the 116th Brigade as they went through them. On gaining the crest of the first ridge leading platoons came under machine gun fire; the signal to extend was immediately given, and the promptitude with which platoon commanders and NCOs got their men out of artillery formation, saved many casualties.

The "Dead Ground" West of the Steenbeek was reached and the Battalion had to cross the stream by a plank bridge owing to its swollen state. It was here that the Battalion had their first disappointment, as the two tanks detailed to accompany them were both out of action. One stuck irretrievably in a shell hole, and the other fell into the Steenbeek, and although its crew made gallant efforts to get it under way again, they could not do so. The Battalion, after crossing the Steenbeek, having plenty of time to do so, reorganised in the "Dead Ground" on the far side of the stream. The Colonel was full of optimism and the example he set kept everyone cool and collected. The Padre wandered from company to company, although shelling was pretty continuous, cheering the men up giving them cigarettes and showing absolutely no fear, as calm as if such a thing as fear never existed.

The moment for the advance came, and although the intense barrage promised did not exist, as it appeared that only two 18 pounders and two 4.5" Howitzers were in action on this part of the line, the Herts guards swept up the Hill. Reconnaissance patrols from No.1 Company were then extended along the St Julien-Poelcappelle Road, but No.4 Company was shortly afterwards compelled to withdraw a little owing to "shorts" from the two howitzers. By this time the Battalion were in touch with the Cheshires on the right, but there was no sign of the Black Watch, which had apparently got hung up in Kitcheners Wood. A Battery of 77mm guns had been discovered between the Steenbeek and St. Juliaan, which were duly appropriated.

The unpleasant features on the left of the line at this time were (a) no sign of the Black Watch and (B) persistent machine gun fire from some pillboxes half left. At about 9:35am a message was received from the officer commanding the left company of the Cheshire Regiment, intimating that the Germans were massing for an attack on the Springfield-Winnipeg Road, and at the same time a reconnaissance patrol of the 1st Hertfordshire's reported that the Germans were holding a line of old artillery dugouts about 400 yards East of the Poelcappelle-St.Juliaan Road. This information was sent to Battalion headquarters on the Steenbeek, and Colonel Page ordered the two leading companies to move up and man the latter road, with a view to forestalling any counter attack that might be in contemplation by the enemy. The road was manned and the enemy were in sight of the Battalion for the first time, in force, that day. On the left the counter barrage was very heavy, and the left of the Battalion was entirely in the air, and the ground was a very sticky making the going very heavy.

The casualties on this flank were getting heavy, and still the promised intense barrage was conspicuous by its absence. During this advance Captain Lowry, commanding No.2 Company was killed. About this time two German aeroplanes, flying very low, passed over the Battalion, firing very lights, and machine-gunning the Battalion, and shortly afterwards the Germans launched a counter-attack. This was in some force, commencing with a line in extended order, which advanced up to the line of dugouts previously mentioned, when we joined up with about 100 others who were taking cover there, and who had opened heavy rifle fire to cover the advance.

At this point the counter-attack was stopped by a rifle and Lewis Gun fire, mainly from No.1 Company on the right. The heaviness of the enemy casualties this point and also later in the day, is vouched for by those of the Regiment who were taken prisoner, Lieutenant Walther estimating that he passed upwards of 150 German dead alone, on the ground over which the Battalion and advanced. At 10:10am the intense creeping barrage was due to recommence in order to cover the advance to the third objective, the green line, but this completely failed to materialise on the battalion's front, owing, as it transpired later, to the impossibility of moving the guns up through the mud. Had this barrage been available, there is little doubt that the attack would have been entirely successful. Casualties up to this time, especially on the right, had not been heavy, and the men were in excellent spirits. The attack had to continue, and the men followed their officers without a moment's hesitation, into a veritable hail of rifle and machine gun fire, proceeding from the shelters about 300 yards in front. In spite of all their special training, for this very attack, in advancing at a walk in comparative safety behind a barrage, the Battalion adopted the only possible course, namely open warfare methods of short sectional and individual rushes, with the greatest promptitude and gallantry. The casualties were at once devastatingly high, Lieutenant Gallo, commanding No.3 Company and Lieutenant Scott of No.1 Company were killed almost at once, and many officers including Lieutenant Hardy, commanding No.1 Company, were wounded, but the Battalion carried on, taking a heavy toll of the enemy, as was discovered when the position, about 400 yards east of the Poelcappelle-St.Juliaan Road, was taken at the point of the bayonet, together with some 70 or more prisoners.

By this time practically the whole of the supporting companies were in the front line. On this position being captured the Germans put down a very heavy barrage underlying about midway between it and St.Juliaan, thus entirely cutting off the Battalion from any reinforcements which might have been supplied by the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment who were in reserve.

Lieutenants Francis, Thompson and Walthew on the right, with Lieutenants Ritchie and Head on the left and Lieutenant Secretan in the centre, went on with the remnants of the Battalion. On the left Lieutenant Ritchie and Head advanced on either side of a cross hedge with about five men each, Lieutenant Head advanced on the left side and was never seen again. Lieutenant Ritchie went on the right side of the hedge and found a row of pillboxes about 200 yards on, carrying his Lewis gun himself, he tried to get around them, but was knocked out, so Private Atkins went on with the three remaining men.

In the centre, Lieutenant Secretan was killed, and the final act of the Battalion in the gallant fight can best be given in Lieutenant Francis' own words, who with Lieutenant Thompson, was taken prisoner on the Green Line. "Our line was woefully thin by this time, consisting mainly of No.1 Company, some of my own company No.3, and some of No.4 Company. The remainder of No.3 Company could be seen forming a second line some 300 yards in the rear. It was here I met Lieutenant Thompson of No.1 Company, the only other officer that could be seen. We had a hurried consultation: our left flank was bare, obviously non-existent: our right flank was in touch with the company of the Cheshires, but beyond them in the rear it could be seen that the cemetery was still untaken. Heavy fighting could be heard going on and the Germans showed their presence by the number of rockets being sent up. In front, we had a small creeping barrage, nothing to what we had seen earlier in the morning, we heard afterwards most of the guns had been unable to move owing to the mud. Everywhere around us was the cry, "stretcher bearer wanted".

We remembered our strict orders,"Never mind your flanks, carry on with your job", and decided to push on, taking advantage of the barrage and not waiting for our second line. The time now was somewhere around 12 noon. It was rather like leading lambs to the slaughter, as we had a pretty fair idea of what the Langmarck Line was going to be like though as yet we couldn't see it, owing to the hedge lining the road in front of us, and also knew that beyond those few men in our second line there was no further help. It cannot, therefore, be wondered at that our men, who had behaved up to now so magnificently, began to lose heart. It was just at this time that a Private of the Cheshires came up to us, saluted as if on parade, and said "Connecting file Cheshires sir". The way this man behaved was wonderful, he stuck to us the whole time and was eventually captured with us, he kept in front with Thompson and myself shouting, "There are Cheshires, come on the Herts". I believe Thompson has his name, as he certainly deserved a medal. We carried on at the walking pace keeping a good line, and having comparatively few casualties, until we reached the road. After going through the hedge, lining the road, we had our first view of the Green Line, the great big trench on top of a rise, and what was worse two thick lines of uncut wire in front, but it was our objective and the Germans in the trench in front of us could be seen running away. It was at this point that Sgt Hammond came up to me with a broad grin on his face and said something about at last getting at the Bosche, and would he tell the men to get ready to go absolutely all out.

Immediately afterwards a Private came up and reported Sgt Hammond badly wounded in the leg, he died immediately I believe. I won't say much about Sgt Hammond, as anyone who was out in France with the Hertfordshire's knew him, but I should like it to be known that he died just as he had always carried on, absolutely fearless and looking as if there was no finer fun on earth than going over the top.

We were now faced with this terrible uncut wire, and the German fire was beginning to be particularly heavy again. Thompson and I managed to scramble through it with a few men the remainder following. The Germans, unfortunately, who were leaving the trench looked round, saw how few we were, and from both flanks and from the front the most murderous machine gun fire was poured onto us. Those who had not yet reached the wire went back a bit, and the few who had got through went on a little way and finally took cover in a shell hole. Our little party was now reduced to about six men, including the two officers and the Cheshires orderly. The Cheshire company on our right had been more successful and reached the trench and entered it.

Our barrage was now knocking the Langmarck Line about in front of us, it seemed deserted now immediately in front though on the flanks it was obviously occupied. It was bitter to sit there and think that with a few more men and more ammunition, as small arms ammunition had mostly been used in St. Juliaan, the trench was ours for the asking. For a little while nothing happened, we lit flares for our aeroplanes, but they quickly went away, and a German one appeared flying low and firing on us. It may be mentioned that although our aeroplanes were obviously doing good work, we were hampered and worried ever since leaving St. Juliaan by low flying German machines.

Germans could be seen well in our rear, both to the right and left of us, though our immediate rear was clear, and soon our men could be seen advancing again. They reached the wire and we tried to re-join them. It was hopeless, the fire was too heavy. Three of the men with us were shot at once, so we sheltered again in a shell hole, and the men who had come up had to fall back. I gather that they were all wiped out as they were practically surrounded on all sides. We were still mystified as to what had happened to the Cheshire company but we quickly knew, as Thompson pointed out some Germans with some English coming out of trench on our right, and to our horror the English were the prisoners and were picking up the wounded and searching the ground. The Germans were now everywhere, the time being about 1:30pm, and we were finally taken about 4pm. It seemed to us we were the only two survivors of that awful day. Corporal Oliver of No.1. Company I believe, had been badly wounded getting through the wire and died very shortly afterwards. He had shown very fine spirit. I know little of what happened on the left. The Black Watch obviously failed early. No.2 Company got held up at the pillboxes where Lieutenant Head was killed. No.4 Company I do not remember seeing at all. After being captured we crossed the Langmarck Line and were taken to Passchendaele. The Germans had evidently had a bad fright, as every arrangement for a hurried leave was obvious; guns left lying unattended in the fields and everything very much in confusion. There were however many battalions massed at Passchendaele ready to move up, and obviously very reluctant to do so.

What happened with the Battalion headquarters is given from notes by the Reverend E Popham MC, chaplain to the Battalion and Regiment, and Sergeant Major Tite DCM. The padre writes; it was while we were at the Steenbeek that the doctor, Captain Charles, did such magnificent work, going from a shell hole to shell hole dressing wounds. After the Battalion had advanced from the stream a message came asking for reinforcements, and I lost sight of Colonel Page, hearing a few minutes later that he had been killed instantly by a piece of shell.

The Sergeant Major writes; about 12:30pm the adjutant, Captain Milne, was hit and died almost at once. I got together all available men, about 25, mainly signallers and officers servants, and formed a line in shell holes. We then opened fire and the enemy, who were advancing over undulating ground at about 500 yards distance, were compelled to halt. We continued to hold them with the aid of a few stragglers who found their way back, and a Sgt and about 20 other ranks of the 14th Hampshire Regiment, but running short of ammunition we had to retire to a partly dug trench on the opposite side of the river. Just before this I stopped a bullet in my left arm which put that limb out of action, and a few minutes later captain Charles, the medical officer, was hit in the thigh.

The chaplain at once went to him, but I yelled to him to lie down. I was later reinforced by Sgt Ashwell who turned up with a Lewis gun and one man carrying magazines. This was a great help and I placed him on our left flank where there was a gap of about 1000 yards between us and the black watch. During the whole of the time the chaplain, with total disregard for personal safety, did all possible to aid the wounded, and when he retired, he was the last to leave and brought with him, almost carrying him, a man was wounded in the leg. About 6pm Lieutenant Walker of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment's arrived with half a company and took over command, ordering me to go back and get my arm seen to. This I did and after walking until nearly midnight, found our transport near Elverdinghe, where I reported to Major Phillips, afterwards receiving treatment at the Corps dressing station nearby. The padre also writes; we had a few badly wounded men in a pillbox, while I was with them I heard that captain Charles had been hit, and calling to him they found that his thigh had been shattered by a bullet. After making him as comfortable as we could, four splendid stretcher bearers crawled down the hillside with him and eventually got him back, one of the bravest bits of stretcher work ever done by the Herts. I wish I could remember their names. By this time, we were numb with sorrow and also a bit anxious as we did not know where the British army was, but after a time RSM Tite managed to get in touch, and found that a company of the Cambridgeshire Regiment were waiting in our rear, and we felt easier. On arriving at the Camb trench I found an officer in charge and our boys fighting happily, and as it was not the place for badly wounded man, I decided to try and take him back, and we managed to get to a dressing station at about 7pm. The next morning, I found brigade headquarters and the Brigadier asked me to take charge of the remainder of the Battalion until Major Phillips could come up, which I did until relieved on the evening of August 1.

The following extracts from Sir W Beach Thomas letter, published in the Daily Mail on 15 August 1917 summarised the fighting in the area covered by the 118th infantry brigade.

"The highest sacrifice in the third battle of Ypres was perhaps paid by the 1st Hertfordshire Regiment, who with other territorials as gallant as themselves, took St. Juliaan and pushed forward deep into the enemy's country beyond. I have heard no more splendid or moving tale of gallant men going out to death and glory since the war began, not even that of the Lancashire's told the other day. The achievement of some of the same troops in the final capture of Thiepval, St. Pierre Divion, and the Schwaben Redoubt a year ago went almost unrecorded. It would be a double injustice if this second and yet more heroic venture also were left unrecorded. Losing men all the time, but never checked, these troops pushed on a good 1200 yards to the next line of German trenches. The men reached the approaches to a trench defended by 400 yards of uncut wire, 6 yards deep and running along a contour swept by machine guns from the left, front, and flank. Still they did not stop. Some made their way round, some hacked at the wire and forced a way over it. Somewhere about this time the last of the officers in the Hertfordshire Regiment fell, and the Sgt, himself wounded, took command. Among the men still with them was a padre, a chaplain of many fights, who cheered them on and at the end, being the last man to cross a little stream, carried, and when he could no longer carry, draped, a wounded man to safer quarters a mile or more to the rear. I write especially of Regiment known to me personally better than any Regiment in the army, and one weighs words with special care in writing of friends. The fight was one of the stoutest fights of war, worthy of the Guards at the first battle of Ypres. The men were "Hertfordshire Guards" indeed, and homes should ring with this story of sacrifice and valour".

AUGUST 1917

Following its complete decimation at St.Julien on the 31st July, the remnants of the Battalion, approximately 130 men, were collected on the 2nd August by Major Phillips, Captain Whitfield and Second Lieutenant Eric Macleane Paul and taken the men back to a position at Tower Post and Irish Farm. The following day the party went forward in support of the 116th Brigade, staying in the old German front line system until the 5th August, when they moved to a bivouac camp at Reigersburg Chateau.

On the 7th August the Battalion moved by train from Vlamertinghe to Caestre, and then by bus to a camp at Thieushouk, where it remained until 14th August. During its short time here, the Battalion was addressed by the Commander of the 2nd Army, General Sir Herbert Plumer and received three Drafts of new troops, totalling 152 Other Ranks. The newly refreshed Battalion moved to a Camp at Ridge Wood on the 14th August, where it remained for a further 5 days.

It was on the 19th August 1917, that the Battalion returned to the frontline, where it took over trenches from the 17th Notts & Derbys Regiment at Klein Zillebeke. Here the Regiment suffered its first casualties since the devastating losses at St. Julien, with one man being Killed and two reported as Missing. The Battalion also received a further draft of 24 Other Ranks.

Corporal Arthur Charles Balaam

The only death recorded by the Battalion between the 19th and 23rd August 1917, was that of Lance Corporal Arthur Charles Balaam. He joined the Battalion on the 20th August 1915, initially serving with No.4 Entrenching Battalion, but joining the Hertfordshire's on the 28th December 1915. With the exception of a short period in hospital in September 1916, Arthur had served continuously with the Battalion in both the Ypres Salient and on the Somme until he was reported as Killed in Action or Dying of Wounds on the 23rd August 1917. His name is recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial. The Corps Burial Officer reported burying his body on the 17th November 1917, but it is assumed that the grave was lost in subsequent fighting in the area. His mother, in letter dated 23rd August 1920, the anniversary of her son's death, wrote to the War Office asking for any medals he may have been entitled to. The evidence of her suffering can be felt when she writes; "although neither pension or medals can make up for the loss of my dear son, I (his mother), would like to have any medal that is due to him, as a memento of him". It is unlikely, that his mother was aware that her son had been buried, and that his body had been lost on two separate occasions.

On the 23rd August the Battalion moved into Reserve. Where it suffered a further nine men being wounded. A few days later, on the 27th, they moved to Ridge Wood where they were held in Divisional Reserve. It was here, at the end of August that they received a further draft of 33 Other Ranks and two men were to be awarded the Military Medal.

265156 Lance Sergeant Alfred ENSBY

265176 Lance Sergeant William GAINES

(Sergeant Gaines was to later win a Bar to his Military Medal)

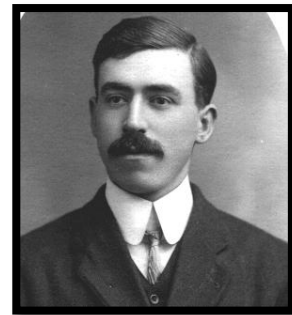
The Battalion took over positions from the 3rd Battalion, Rifle Brigade at Mount Sorrel on the 2nd September 1917, with Battalion headquarters being located at Canada Tunnels. The Mount was a 30-metre hill with a commanding position over the city of Ypres. The wooded elevation also overlooked the important road between Ypres and the town of Menin. A few months before, in June 1917, the area had been the scene of intense fighting between German and Canadian troops. In just a few short days the Canadians had suffered over 8000 casualties in killed, wounded or missing.

On 6 September the Battalion were relieved by the men of 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment and moved into the support area at Larchwood Tunnels. There then came a period where it moved to billets at Chippewa Camp, Ascot Camp and Ridge Wood. During this time the Battalion made itself ready for offensive operations, as part of the ongoing Third Battle of Ypres.

By the 19th September, the Battalion had a total strength of 14 officers and 556 other ranks, all fully equipped in fighting order in readiness for the forthcoming operations.

At dawn, on 20th of September 117th Brigade undertook an attack on German positions in the vicinity of Shrewsbury Forest, on the outskirts of Ypres. Two companies of the Hertfordshire Regiment moved from Zwarteleen to trenches around Image Crescent in order to support the attack, being held in reserve positions. It was in this location that the Battalion had suffered some of their first battle casualties on the 19th November 1914.

The Battalion had probably one of the busiest months for the movement of personnel it had ever seen, with 6 Officers and 382 Other Ranks joining them, whilst 5 Officers and 213 Other Ranks left the Battalion as consequence of becoming Casualties, most of these being suffered in the period between the 26th-28th September when the Battalion suffered significant shelling in the vicinity of Tower Hamlets Ridge. One of those casualties was **Maurice Arthur NEWBERRY (Pictured)**, a Stevenage man, whose body was originally buried on the edge of Bitter Wood, but was re-interred in August 1919 and today his grave can be found in Hooge Crater Cemetery.



This figure does not include those Officers and Men who left the Battalion as a result of Sickness. The war diary shows that in the period Battalion

The Battalion found itself at Bodmin Copse on the 1st November 1917, with two Companies located in Jar Trench. Here, they were subjected to gassing by German artillery shells and their casualties over a three-day period were 2 killed, 2 died of wounds, 5 gassed and 8 wounded. On the night of the 3rd of November, the Battalion were relieved by the men of the 12th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment and bussed back to Chippewa Camp. The following day **Lieutenant-Colonel Eric Charles Malcom PHILLIPS** re-joined the Battalion from a Base Depot, along with a new officer, **Second Lieutenant Leslie Lascelles NORRIS**.

The 5th November saw the Battalion move to Vierstraat Camp No.2, where they took over billets from the 17th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters and spent the next few days engaged on salvage work in the forward areas. It was whilst they were based here that 35 men were sent to Hospital, still suffering from the effects of gassing at Bodmin Copse.

On the 12th November, the Battalion were back in the front line, this time at Polderhoek, taking over positions from the 16th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters. The following night four Germans approached one of the Herts posts and were fired upon with a Lewis Gun. The Germans fled the area and one of them was killed. The Battalion War Diary simply describes this incident as "slight activity". This man's body was searched two nights later and his shoulder straps and papers were sent to Divisional HQ. He was identified as a member of the 31st Reserve Infantry Regiment, 18th Reserve Division. The weather at the time was bad with very heavy fog making the relief of troops extremely difficult. The Hertfordshire's were relieved by the Cambridgeshire's on the night of the 14th November and moved back to Reserve Trenches at Bodmin Copse. The following day the men were engaged in work as Carrying Parties, taking supplies and ammunition to the forward positions.

On the 16th November, the Battalion were relieved by the 16th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters and taken by lorry back from Shrapnel Corner to Chippewa Camp. The Battalion casualties for this spell in the frontline was 4 Killed, 1 Died of Wounds, 4 Wounded, 10 Missing and 30 Gassed. Some of these figures changed as men fell victim to their injuries. Those known to have died in this period were;

Corporal William GLENISTER (Hemel Hempstead) – Killed - Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium
Private James GRAY (Watford) – Died of Wounds - Menin Road South Military Cemetery, Belgium
Private Robert DARBY (St.Albans) – Killed - Hooge Crater Cemetery, Belgium
Private William Ross YOUNG (Abbotts Langley) – Killed - Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium
Private Edward John SORRELL (Ilford) – Killed - Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium
Private Elwyn Archibald HUGHES (Ebbw Vale) – Killed - Hooge Crater Cemetery, Belgium
Private Herbert James EDE (Wareside) – Killed - Hooge Crater Cemetery, Belgium
Private Frank Edward HENSON (St.Albans) – Died of Wounds - Hooge Crater Cemetery, Belgium

Private Harold Walter CAIN of Offley, Hertfordshire, was killed accidentally on the 16th November 1917 after a fire was lit in a Cookhouse Dugout by Private Ramsey, which later caused a grenade to explode. Harold Cain received wounds to his neck and burns to his face and right hand. His injuries were severe and he died later that day as a consequence of his wounds. He had been wounded twice before, once on the 3rd February 1916 by a grenade and a second time on the 4th August 1916. On both occasions he had received injuries to his face and head.

The 17th November saw the arrival of Majors John Bolle Tyndale Gough and John Simonds as well as Lieutenant Angier Percy Hurd. John Gough was the Recruiting Officer in the early part of the war and had signed the attestation papers for many of the Regiments recruits. He was killed in action on the 22nd March 1918 during the German Spring Offensive and is buried in the Ste. Emilie Valley Cemetery, in Villers-Faucon.

A fire broke out in the Officers Huts on the 18th November and although three huts were destroyed and a great deal of kit was lost, there were no casualties to the personnel.

After taking over the positions at Polderhoek from the 17th Battalion, Kings Royal Rifle Corps, the men of the Hertfordshire Regiment then travelled by light railway to Zillebeke. During their time here there was very little activity and they later moved to the tunnels at Torr Tops. By the 25th November the Battalion were back in billets at Chippewa Camp, having suffered 3 men killed and 5 wounded.

By the end of the month the Battalion had moved to the Ypres area where it spent the remainder of the month carrying out fatigue work at Potijze and Godewaersvelde, seeing very little action. Ten Officers joined the Battalion on the 6th December and a draft of 40 Other Ranks joined them on the 13th. **Private Herbert Charles BYATT**, who had been taken prisoner at St.Julien on the 31st July, died on the 23rd December 1917, two days after his 38th birthday, as consequence of the wounds he received in that battle. He is buried in the Cologne Southern Cemetery, Germany. Christmas Day was spent enjoying the presents and comforts that had been sent from home and the men of the Battalion remained at rest until the end of the year.

1918 – Return to the Somme

On the 8th January 1918 a German shell landed directly on the Headquarters of “A” Company, killing **Captain Fourth MacNeill DRURY** and **Second Lieutenant Edward Frederick Montagu BROWN**.

Overall, the winter months were relatively quiet, with the troops of all sides doing their utmost to shelter from the freezing weather. The Battalion continued to train in preparation for the offensives they knew would begin once the weather improved.

On the 26th January 1918 the Battalion left the Ypres sector and travelled by train to Bray-Sur-Somme, where they rested for three days and made preparations to move into the Fifth Army area of the Somme. A draft of 75 men joined the Battalion on the 28th January and the following day they boarded a train to Peronne and then marched to Haut Allaines, where they were billeted in tents. By the end of the month the Battalion were in a tented camp in South-East of Dessant Wood, near Fins, and 1 Officer and 50 Other Ranks had been attached to the 178th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers. The Battalion remained at Dessant Wood until the 6th February when they were ordered to relieve the troops of the Cambridgeshire Regiment in positions close to Gouzeaucourt Wood. The following day they were themselves relieved by the 4th/5th Black Watch and the 6th Cheshire Regiment, and marched to billets at Sorel. It was here that **Sergeant George COULDREY** and Private **Alfred Percival STRATFORD** heard that they had been awarded the Belgian Croix De Guerre. The Battalion was transferred from the 118th Brigade to the 116th Brigade on the 8th February 1918. As a consequence, it relocated its position to Church Camp, Heudicourt, on the 9th February, where a draft of 65 men joined them that night. It was on the 11th February 1918, whilst the Battalion were located near frontline positions at Gouzeaucourt, that **Lieutenant Edward Algernon TAYLOR** and **Lance Corporal William George OVERTON** of No.3 Company were shot by a Sniper whilst on Patrol. The Battalion moved into billets at Revelon Farm and remained in this vicinity for the rest of the month.

THE GERMANS ATTACK – THE SPRING OFFENSIVE

The Battalion war diary records that on 21st March 1918 there was a violent enemy bombardment on the whole of the Corps front. The Battalion stood to at 6:30am but did not move off until 4pm, when it took up dispositions on what was known as the Brown line near St.Emilie. The following morning the Battalion was violently bombarded and assaulted by German troops, to such an extent that they were forced to retire to the green line, spending the night at Hamel. Before dawn on 23 March the Battalion marched to Bussy where it hastily dug in on the East side of the village. When both flanks became exposed the men of the Hertfordshire Regiment once again retired, this time to a line of trenches on the Peronne – Nurlu Road. After covering the 4th/5th Black Watch as they retired, the Battalion withdrew to the St.Dennis Line which the war diary describes as being, “very stubbornly defended”. The Battalion then retired with difficulty to a line pivoting the Peronne – Clery Road, with the remainder of the 116th Infantry Brigade to cover the retirement of both the 117th & 118th Brigades.

The following morning the Battalion marched from Maricourt to Insaune stopping briefly for breakfast across the River Somme at Cappy. They arrived later that day at Chuignolles, where they spent the night. The 26th March saw Battalion leave Chuignes to a line in front of the Chuignes - Foucaucourt Road, in support of the 117th & 118th Brigades. After covering their retirement the Battalion fought a series of rearguard actions on the enemymplished, under very harassing machine gun fire from the enemy, the Battalion conformed to the general retirement on Clery Village, where it consolidated the remnants of the Battalion and defended a line of trenches behind the village and running down to the River Somme.

On 24th March what remained of the Battalion was subjected to an intense bombardment in their trenches, and were attacked by a large formation of enemy troops. After heavy fighting the Herts boys returned to a crest in front of the Feuilleres - Hem Wood Road, and it was here that the Battalion commander Lt Col Eric Phillips went missing. It was later established that Eric Phillips had in fact been taken prisoner by the enemy. On the evening of 24th March the Battalion received orders to withdraw through the 35th Division to Maricourt, where it spent the night.

The following morning the Battalion marched from Maricourt to Insaune stopping briefly for breakfast across the River Somme at Cappy. They arrived later that day at Chuignolles, where they spent the night. The 26th March saw Battalion leave Chuignes to a line in front of the Chuignes - Foucaucourt Road, in support of the 117th and 118th Brigades. After covering their retirement, the Battalion fought a series of rearguard actions on the many ridges in front of the village of Chuignolles, in the afternoon the Battalion occupied the Proyart - Froissy Road. Orders were given for the Battalion to withdraw behind Proyart, astride the Foucaucourt - Manotte Road.

The Battalion, who were in trenches on both sides of the road on 27th March, were ordered to move forward in support of the 118th Infantry Brigade being temporarily attached to the 4th /5th Black Watch. Soon after moving forward British troops were seen returning on the left in large numbers. Consequently, the Battalion was ordered to move forward to the left to cover the withdrawal. After having skilfully carried this out Battalion conformed to the general withdrawal to a line between Morcourt and the Foucaucourt - Lamotte Road. The Battalion collected and assembled, then counter-attacked the enemy, driving him back to within a few hundred yards of the village Morcourt. The position and gained was held stubbornly, against all enemy attempts to retake it.

On the morning of the 28th, orders were received for a speedy evacuation of this line. The enemy at this point was well in our rear in possession of Lamotte so that the withdrawal had to be done quickly. The Battalion show the utmost resource during this dangerous manoeuvre, losing very few men.

The retirement took place in daylight through Harbonnieres to Caix. At the latter place, the Battalion attacked the enemy successfully but thereafter had orders to retire to Coyeux where it again assembled in a counter-attack in which the acting commanding officer was wounded. During the day rearguard actions took place along the riverbed to Ignaucourt. In the evening the battalion went into trenches in front of Aubercourt.

Some small respite took place on the 29th, with little enemy activity apart from some machine gun fire. However, on the 30th March the enemy advanced on the right flank on the other side of the river De Lule. The Germans very soon enfiladed the Hertfordshire positions both with artillery and machine guns. This was followed by a strong enemy bombardment and attack on the Herts front. After stubborn resistance the Hertfordshire's fell back to the Bois de Hangard, making two counter attacks en route. The following morning the remnants of the Battalion were relieved and marched to billets at Longeveux, a village on the outskirts of Amiens. By this time the remnants of the Battalion were being commanded by a Second Lieutenant, who was the only surviving officer.

The Battalion arrived in Amien on the 2nd April and following a period of reorganisation, reequipping and with a draft of new Officers and Other Ranks they set off for Belgium, arriving at Voormezele by the 16th April, now under the command of the 118th Brigade. It was on the 9th May that the Battalion boarded trains at Audricq and headed South to Candas, returning once more to the Somme region. It was here, on 11th May, that they were due to transfer to the 37th Division. They arrived at Candas in the afternoon, transferred by lorry to Orville, where they spent the next two nights under canvas.

GAS!, GAS!, GAS! - MAY 1918

On the 11th May 1918 the Battalion boarded buses at Orville, and travelled to the village of Fonquevillers. Here they dismounted from their buses and moved into an old trench system on the East side of the village. At that very moment, they were bombarded by a number of German gas shells. The effects were devastating with every Officer and man, with the exception of just 1 Officer & 7 men, being affected by gas and having to be transported to hospital for treatment. The following morning, the Officer and his men were also admitted to a Casualty Clearing Station. The Hertfordshire Regiment was, once again, completely devastated.

There are no entries in the Unit War Diary until the 15th May 1918, when it shows that the Battalion Transport and Quartermaster Stores moved to Louvencourt where it was later joined by a draft of 1 Officer and 81 Other Ranks. It was on the 22nd May 1918 that the remainder of the Battalion absorbed the remnants of the 6th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, a total of 30 Officers and 650 Other Ranks. These men, blended with the remains of the Hertfordshire's, formed the nucleus of a new Battalion. It was the beginnings of a new formation, the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment. This new formation moved to the village of Vauchelles on the 23rd May, where they remained for the rest of the month.

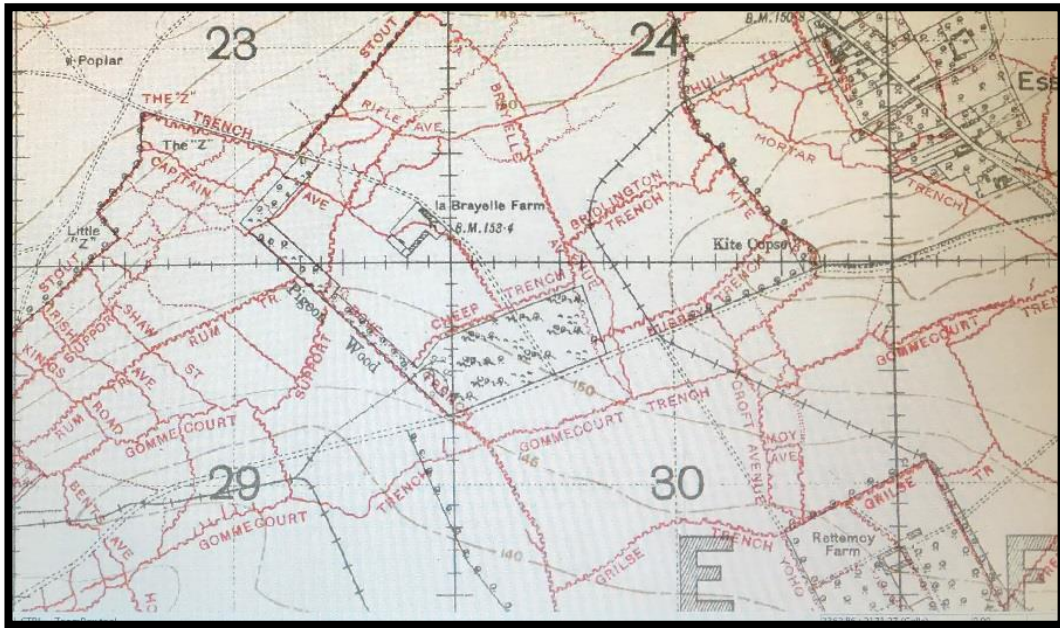
The end of May also saw a number of officers and other ranks receive gallantry awards for their services in the field. Some of these had lost their lives at the time the event took place, whilst others were to be killed later in the war.

- **Lieutenant Guy Basil George GRIPPER – Military Cross**
- **Second Lieutenant John Chrissy ROGERS – Military Cross**
- **Sergeant Harry RANDALL – Distinguished Conduct Medal (KIA 30/04/1918)**
- **Sergeant George CLEMENTS – Bar to Military Medal**
- **Sergeant George ADAMS – Military Medal**
- **Corporal Frank RAINSDON (Shown as RAMSDEN) – Military Medal**
- **Lance Corporal James BUTTERFIELD – Military Medal (KIA 23/08/1918)**
- **Lance Corporal Bernard Edward KENT – Military Medal (DOW 29/03/1918)**
- **Private Charles William ABRAHAMS – Military Medal**

It was on the night of the 5th/6th June 1918, that the Battalion moved by bus and route march to billets at Pissy, where they remained until the 10th. Throughout the remainder of June the Battalion moved to billets in various locations in the region to the South-West of Amiens, and by the end of the month were in billets at Souastre. On the 25th June the newly reconstituted Battalion were in Reserve trenches at Fonquevillers, where they had suffered so grievously in May. The War Diary records the following gallantry awards for June 1918.

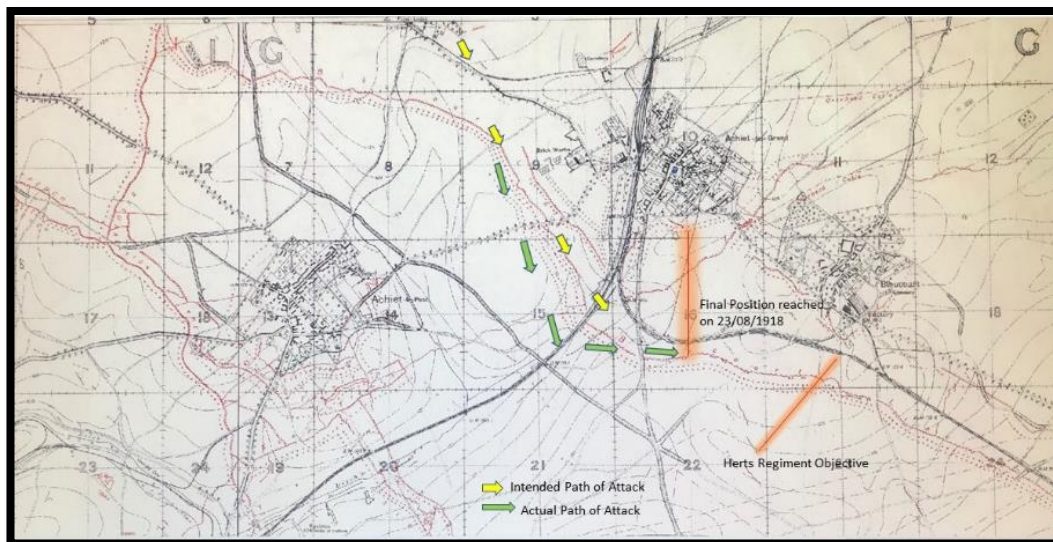
- **Captain Anthony Gibbons GRINLING – Military Cross**
- **Captain John Fairfax CHRISTIE – Military Cross**
- **Lieutenant Henry John HENSMAN – Military Cross (KIA 18/09/1918)**
- **Sergeant Albert ALLEN – Distinguished Conduct Medal**

The Battalion War Diary for July 1918 has very few entries in it and creates the impression that the Hertfordshire Regiment were being quietly held in Reserve throughout this hot summer month period. The reality is very different. On the 3rd July they were in a location named "Z", on the outskirts of the village of Essarts. From here they moved into positions in Pigeon Wood, former German trenches, and on the 6th July were back in the front line.



Over the next 10 days the Battalion were subjected to bombardments by both artillery and trench mortars, as well as direct frontal attacks by small parties of German infantry. The Hertfordshire's had sent out patrols on at least two occasions, who encountered enemy troops. By the end of July, the Battalion had seen 13 men being killed, or dying from their wounds, with many more injured.

During the early days of August 1918, the Battalion moved in an out of the line in the Essarts area. On the evening of the 13th August, the Germans began to retreat to positions near the village of Achiet-Le Grand, with the Hertfordshire's quickly pushing their front forward to keep pace with the enemy. By the 22nd August the Battalion were in positions on the Southern edge of Logeast Wood, and it was from here that they launched an attack on a railway cutting in front of Achiet-Le Grand. The fighting was intense with the Germans defending their positions with heavy rifle and machine gun fire. As the attack began three Company Commanders became casualties and the Battalion lost direction, moving too far South. However, it reached the railway cutting where it captured many prisoners and machine guns, then pushed on to consolidate a line just South of the village of Achiet-Le Grand. Although the attack was successful the Battalion suffered 29 Killed, 21 Missing and 155 Wounded. It is possible that it was here that Eustace was wounded.





Eustace was Discharged from the Army 27th September 1918 and was issued with a Silver War Badge numbered B24957. The Silver War Badge was issued in the United Kingdom to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness during World War I. The badge, sometimes known as the Discharge Badge, Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge, was first issued in September 1916, along with an official certificate of entitlement. The sterling silver lapel badge was intended to be worn on civilian clothes. It had been the practice of some women to present white feathers to apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing the King's uniform. The badge was to be worn on the right breast while in civilian dress, it was forbidden to wear on a military uniform. The badge bears the royal cipher of GRI (for Georgius Rex Imperator; George, King and Emperor) and around the rim "For King and Empire; Services Rendered". Each badge was uniquely numbered on the reverse. The War Office made it known that they would not replace Silver War Badges if they went missing, however if one was handed into a police station then it would be returned to the War Office.

ORIGINAL

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the "WAR BADGE."

Note.—In returning this form, care should be taken that "Army 16," 211, Great Portland Street, 27, Oldham St. London, W.1, is inserted on the envelope. E & 4

Regtl. No.	Rank	Name (in full)	Unit discharged from	No. of Badge and Certificate (To be completed at War Office)	Date of:—		Cause of Discharge (Wounds or Sickness and para. of K.R.)	Whether served Overseas (Yes or No)
					Enlistment	Discharge		
265945.	Private.	Marvel, William.	1st. Herts.	B 24956	28/ 9/14.	8/10/18.	Army Order VI. dated 14th. Sept. 1918.	
268538.	"	Pheasant, Eustace Reginald.	" "	B 24957	6/ 1/15.	27/ 9/18.	2. (a). Age 22 Years. K.R. 392. (xvi).	Yes.
270028.	"	Allen, Arthur Ryall.	" "	B 24958	19/10/16.	28/ 9/18.	" " " 26 " " " " "	"
271388.	L/Corpl.	Pilcher, Ernest Arthur.	" "	B 24959	3/ 9/14.	1/10/18.	" " " 20 " " " " "	"
286114.	Private.	Head, Harry.	" "	B 24960	7/11/14.	2/10/18.	" " " 31 " " " " "	"
270428.	"	Harder, Fredk. Wm.	" "	B 24961	3/ 9/14.	17/ 9/18.	" " " 38 " " " " "	"
203997.	"	Tapp, Ernest Chas.	5th. Beds.	B 24962	30/ 5/14.	9/10/18.	" " " 20 " " " " "	"
202448.	"	Webb, Frank William.	" "	B 24963	11/12/15.	11/10/18.	" " " 38 1/2 " " " " "	"
269695.	"	Smith, Albert Ed.	1st. Herts.	B 24964	3/ 2/15.	25/ 9/18.	" " " 32 1/2 " " " " "	"
290943.	"	Slowgrove, Claude Ed.	Hunts. Cyc.	B 24965	9/10/16.	18/ 9/18.	" " " 28 1/2 " " " " "	"
201381.	"	Simmonds, Thos. Draper.	5th. Beds.	B 24966	22/11/06.	13/ 9/18.	" " " 31 " " " " "	"
200230.	Sergt.	Dolby, Percy.	" "	B 24967	2/ 8/14.	18/ 9/18.	" " " 29 " " " " "	"

I certify that the particulars furnished hereon are correct.

Place Wapley. Date 18/10/1918. 851 25001 1918 Officer i/c. Record Office, Wapley. Colonel.

I certify that Badges and Certificates, numbered as above, have been issued to the individuals concerned.

Place _____ Date _____

Signature and Rank of Officer certifying issue.

W3545—H2222 100,000 10/16 HWV(B55) H16/13000
92—H335 100,000 1/17

The entry in the Silver War Badge Roll gives the details for Eustace Pheasant. The Badge number is unique and the cause is "discharged from the army under the King's Regulations 392 (xvi) No longer physically fit for war service".

In October 1919 Eustace was presented with the 1915 Star, and in June 1920 he received two other campaign medals, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Each of these were inscribed with his name, rank and regimental number.

Name PHEASANT E.R.		Corps HERTS	Rank PIR	Regtl. No. 4438
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks	
VICTORY	K/2/101 B4	293		
BRITISH WAR	do	do		
15 STAR	K/2/16 B 27			
S.W.B. List K/724/2 shows Regtl No 266328				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein 17-8-15				



Medal Index Card for Eustace Pheasant

1/1st. Batta. HERTS. Regiment or Corps when Decoration was earned.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Decoration granted under Army Order XX of 1919. B. 27.

To be left blank.	On Date of Discharge.		NAME	Date of the enlistment.	REMARKS	Amount of deposit of gratuity.	To be left blank for use in War Office.
	Regtl. No.	Rank					
	4401	Pte	LING, G. J.	10.7.15(1)	Disembodied 20.3.19.		
	4404	Pte	WORTON, R. B.	10.7.15(1)	Discharged 19.3.19.		
	4407	Pte	PERRIN, G.	10.7.15(1)	Died of Ws 27.11.15.		
	4415	Pte	TENNEY, E. H.	17.8.15(1)	Discharged 24.4.17.		
	4416	Pte	WARREN, H.	10.7.15(1)	Disembodied 21.3.19.		
	4420	Pte	PARNHAM, R.	10.7.15(1)	Discharged 1.9.16.		
	4431	L/Sgt	HOLLANDY, E.	10.7.15(1)	Discharged 23.10.18.		
	4458	Pte	PHEASANT, E. R.	17.8.15(1)	Discharged 27.9.18.		
	4450	Pte	MALING, W.	10.7.15(1)	Disembodied 30.3.19.		
	4452	Pte	BANKS, E.	10.7.15(1)	Disembodied 31.3.19.		
	4453	Pte	BOND, A.	10.7.15(1)	Died of Ws 12.10.16.		
	4455	Pte	FORDHAM, W. P.	17.8.15(1)	Disembodied 7.4.19.		

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Decoration as detailed above.

Place Warley Date 11/11/19

Signature and rank of Officer certifying W. B. Borewell Asst. Officer, No. 2 Infantry Record Office, No. 8 District, Warley.

1915 Star Medal Roll

REGIMENT OR CORPS. 1/1st. Batta. HERTS. of 1919.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal under British War Medal granted under Army Order 301 & 306 of 1919.

Held by an individual in the force in respect of which the medals are awarded.	NAME	Theatre of war in which served	Dates awarded (to be left blank)	Amount of deposit of gratuity.	REMARKS
265280	Pte SPOCKS Robert	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265280.			
265283	Pte SPOCKS Edward Victor	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265283.			
265285	Pte THORPE Ernest Henry	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265285.			
265286	Pte SMITH Henry	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265286.			
265287	Pte WATSON Edward	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265287.			
265288	Pte BAILEY Frederick	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265288.			
265289	Pte CHAMMAN Will Bertram	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265289.			
265290	Pte WILLIAMS Henry	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265290.			
265291	Pte BANE George	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265291.			
265292	Pte PHILLIPS Blasco A.	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265292.			
265293	Pte HARRIS William	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265293.			
265294	Pte BARR Alfred	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265294.			
265295	Pte BARR Edward	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265295.			
265296	Pte FORDHAM William	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265296.			
265297	Pte WOODS William	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265297.			
265298	Pte BENTLEY Arthur	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265298.			
265299	Pte STANTON Robert	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265299.			
265300	Pte GOODEY Albert	1st Herts, 4411, Dec 7th Bde, 265300.			

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place Warley Date 11/11/19

Signature and rank of Officer certifying W. B. Borewell Asst. Officer, No. 2 Infantry Record Office, No. 8 District, Warley.

British War Medal & Victory Medal Roll

POST WW1

STILL MISSING


Birmingham Mother Who Vanished from Bed

Nothing has been heard of Mrs. Ada Pheasant, wife of Mr. Eustace Pheasant, of 389, Harborne-lane, Harborne, Birmingham, since she mysteriously disappeared from her home on 31 January, a month after she had given birth to her third child.

Mr. Pheasant, who started work as a cleaner at Cadbury's three days before his wife vanished, visited Stafford yesterday, hoping that a clue that had come from that town would yield some news of his wife.

He returned, however, disappointed and at a loss to know what can be done to solve the mystery.

He told the *Birmingham Gazette* last night that when he last saw his wife—at 3.30 a.m. on the day of her disappearance—she was feeding the baby in a bed adjoining his own. He fell asleep shortly afterwards, and when he awoke his wife had vanished. The baby was in her bed.



MRS. PHEASANT.

Life after the Great War appears to have been difficult and tragic for Eustace. He met Ada Bradley and on the 23rd June 1924 the couple married. Together, they had three children, Trevor (1925), Raymond (1930) and Beryl Joyce Pamela (1934).

The Birmingham Gazette on Friday 16th February 1934, reported how Ada had gone missing on the 31st January, just a couple of weeks after the birth of their daughter. She had last been seen by Eustace feeding their young baby in the early hours. He had fallen asleep, but when he awoke, the baby was on the bed and Ada was missing. Sadly, Ada had chosen to take her own life and was found drowned in the canal close to their home on the 25th February 1934 aged 35, leaving Eustace with two young boys and a baby girl, who was born with some physical difficulties. An inscription to Ada can be found on her father's headstone in St. Peter's Churchyard, Harborne, Birmingham.

A little time after Ada's death, Eustace met Muriel Gill, a woman who was 19 years his junior, and the couple married on the 20th April 1935. With Muriel, Eustace produced another six children. Peter (1936), Eileen (1937), Roger (1939), Margaret (1941), Alan (1942) and Judith (1945). Tragedy also struck Eustace in his new life when Alan died at the age of 6 months on the 30th July 1942.

By the outbreak of the Second World War, Eustace was living at 14 Stow Grove, Birmingham, Warwickshire. At this stage in his life he was working as a Blueprint machine operator. In a final tragic episode, Eustace was to lose his first daughter when Beryl died on the 7th January 1950 at the age of 16.

65-01 Registration District BIRMINGHAM.									
1934 DEATHS in the Sub-District of SELLY OAK in the County of BIRMINGHAM C.B.									
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
225	Found dead 25 th February 1934 on the canal near Harborne Lane Selly Oak U.D.	Ada Pheasant	Female	35 years	of 369 Harborne Lane Harborne Birmingham U.D. Wife of Eustace Pheasant, a labourer at cocoa works	Drowning Suicide while of unsound mind P.M.	Certificate received from W.H. Davison Corner for Birmingham. Inquest held 27 th February 1934	Twenty-eight February 1934	J.A. Tinsley Registrar

Registration District BIRMINGHAM.									
1940 DEATHS in the Sub-District of HARBORNE in the County Borough of BIRMINGHAM.									
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
123	Seventh January 1950 8 Station Road U.D.	Beryl Joyce Pamela PHEASANT	Female	16 years	Spinster of no occupation Daughter of Eustace Reginald Pheasant a Blue Print worker at James manufacturers	1. a Acute Bronchitis " Idiopathic epilepsy Certified by M.H. Sheiwell M.B.	J.W. Dingley Uncle 64 Moor Pool Avenue Birmingham 17	7 th January 1950	K.G. Pacey Registrar

Eustace passed away on the 5th August 1956, just two weeks before his 62nd Birthday.

Remember Him.