

Joseph Evans

4h January 1891 to 25th September 1915



MEMORIAM

FAMILY

WAR SERVICE

LOOS MEMORIAL

THE BATTLE OF LOOS

THE RWF/9 AT THE BATTLE OF LOOS

FLINTSHIRE MEN

APPENDICES

Memoriam

Joseph Evans, a private in the 9th Bn., Royal Welsh Fusiliers, died in the First World War on September 25th 1915, aged 24.

Joseph Evans was born on the 4th of January 1891 at Main Street, Buckley, and was baptised February 8, 1891 at Bistre. Joseph was one of 12 children of Jabez Evans and Eliza Parry who were married in 1882. Joseph's sister, Margaret Evans married Charles Kelsall and they were the grandparents of Peter Kelsall. Joseph Evans would have been a great uncle to Peter Kelsall.

In the 1891 census (taken April 5) Joseph is aged 3 months, living with father Jabez (listed as coal miner), mother Eliza and siblings Bessie, Margaret. The address is Buckley Road (at The Cross). Joseph appears in the 1901 census aged 10, at Hewitt's Lane, High Street. Neighbours in Hewitt's lane in 1901 included John Warburton and Joseph Edward Lewis who would also die in the war. The family was still at Hewitt's lane in 1911 with Joseph now 20, occupation hewer (coal miner). The family moved to the Bank Buildings at the top of Mill Lane at The Cross after 1911.

From his medal card, Joseph entered the Theatre of War (France) on July 19, 1915. This is confirmed by regimental history which shows the 9th (Service) Battalion landed at Boulogne 19 July 1915.

Joseph Evans was one of 7 officers and 98 other ranks from the RWF 9th Battalion who died at Loos on 25th September, 1915. Three other Buckley boys were included, George Tatum, William Roberts and Robert Davies. (Another Buckley soldier, Ralph Catherall died the same day at Ypres.) The 9th RWF were part of a diversionary attack north of the main battle of Loos.

Joseph Evans is commemorated at the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France and on the War Memorial at Hawkesbury, Buckley. He is one of 67 men who lost their lives listed on the Bistre Church War Memorial

Family

Joseph was one of 12 children of Jabez Evans and Eliza Parry. Jabez Evans (my grandmother's father) was born 7 June 1860 to mother Sarah Evans (father not identified on birth certificate). Jabez died 18 April 1941. Eliza Parry was born 9 April 1862 in Buckley to William and Margaret Parry. Eliza Parry died 20 December 1940.

Jabez and Eliza were married at the Parish Church in Mold on 10 September, 1882.

1882 Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church in the Parish of Mold</i> in the County of <i>Flint</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
149	September 10 th 1882	Jabez Evans Eliza Parry	21 ^{1/2} 22	Bachelor Spinster	Collier —	Mold Mold	Joseph Evans William Parry	File Maker Collier
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>James Thomas</i> after banns by me, <i>William Lloyd Colhew</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>Jabez Evans</i> <i>the marriage of Eliza Parry</i>			in the Presence of us, <i>James Thomas</i> <i>Rebecca Parry</i>					

Children of Jabez and Eliza were:

1. William 1883
2. Elizabeth (Bessie) 1884
3. Margaret 20/2/1886
4. John (Jack) 15/12/1888, baptism 4/1/89 Bistre
5. Joseph 1891
6. Harry 1893 (Henry?)
7. Jabez 1895 (also served in France)
8. Esther 1898
9. Sarah 1899
10. Edward 1903
11. Annie 1905
12. Thomas 1909.

Joseph was born on the 4th of January 1891 at Main Street, Buckley.¹ He was baptised February 8, 1891 at Bistre.²

1891	Feb 8 th	Joseph	Jabez & Eliza Evans	Main St - Bistre	Collier	J. A. Thomas Curate
No. 512						

¹Birth certificate

² Parish register from Findmypast

In the 1891 census (taken April 5) Joseph is aged 3 months, living with father Jabez (listed as coal miner), mother Eliza and siblings Bessie, Margaret. The address is Buckley Road (at The Cross). Joseph appears in the 1901 census aged 10, address High Street, and in the 1911 census aged 20, occupation hewer (coal miner).

Four of the Evans brothers were very well known footballers, namely Bill, Harry, Jack and Jabez. Bill played for the Buckley Engineers who won the Welsh Senior Cup. Jack won a Welsh Amateur Cup medal. Jabez played for Tranmere and Harry was a very good defender.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Casualty Details

Name: EVANS, JOSEPH

Initials: J

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Private

Regiment/Service: Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Unit Text: 9th Bn.

Age: 24

Date of Death: 25/09/1915

Service No: 16461

Additional information: Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jabez Evans, of 5, Bank Buildings, Buckley, Chester.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: Panel 50 to 52.

Memorial: LOOS MEMORIAL

Soldiers Died in The Great War

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919⁴

Name:	Joseph Evans
Birth Place:	Bistre Buckley, Flint
Death Date:	25 Sep 1915
Death Location:	France & Flanders
Enlistment Location:	Buckley
Rank:	Private
Regiment:	Royal Welsh Fusiliers
Battalion:	9th Battalion
Number:	16461
Type of Casualty:	Killed in action
Theatre of War:	Western European Theatre

⁴ *UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.

Original data: *British and Irish Military Databases*. The Naval and Military Press Ltd

Newspapers

County Herald, October 1914

Joseph was not listed among the list of 178 men from Buckley and District who were serving their King and Country in the Great War published in the County Herald, October 1914. The War was then only two months old. The County of Flint Index indicates that Joseph signed up soon after.

The **County Herald**, October 22, 1915:

Mr. and Mrs. Evans, of Mill Lane, Buckley, have received official intimation that their son [**Joseph Evans**] has been wounded and is among the missing. The latter soldier is 24 years of age, and formerly worked as a collier.

The **Flintshire Observer** for Oct 14 1915 contained a short article on Joseph.

"Mr. and Mrs. Evans of Mill Lane, Buckley have received official intimation that their son is among the missing. He is 24 years of age and unmarried and formerly worked as a collier." This was followed on Oct 21st by similar text with a photograph (copy above).

County of Flint Index

Joseph Evans	5 Liverpool Rd	Battle of Loos
	19.10.14 to 25.9.16	Signed by Jabez Evans

Joseph's brother is on the non-deceased index

Jabez Evans	5 Liverpool Rd	Served in France
	4.2.16 to 14.12.18	

Joseph Evans is one of 67 men who lost their lives listed on the **Bistre Church War Memorial**

Medals

He was awarded three medals as follows:

 The image shows the British War Medal, which is a circular silver medal with a profile of a woman's head on the reverse side. It is suspended from a ribbon with vertical stripes of blue, orange, and blue.	<p>British War Medal ⁵</p> <p>The British War Medal 1914-1920, authorised in 1919, was awarded to eligible service personnel and civilians. Qualification for the award varied slightly according to service. The basic requirement for army personnel and civilians was that they either entered a theatre of war, or rendered approved service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. Service in Russia in 1919 and 1920 also qualified for the award.</p>
 The image shows the 1914/15 Star, which is a five-pointed star-shaped medal. The reverse side features a figure of a soldier standing with a rifle. It is suspended from a ribbon with vertical stripes of red, white, and blue.	<p>1914/15 Star</p> <p>Authorised in 1918, the 1914/15 Star was awarded to those individuals who saw service in France and Flanders from 23 November 1914 to 31 December 1915, and to those individuals who saw service in any other operational theatre from 5 August 1914 to 31 December 1915.</p>
 The image shows the Victory Medal, which is a circular bronze medal. The reverse side features a figure of a woman standing. It is suspended from a ribbon with vertical stripes of red, white, blue, green, yellow, and purple.	<p>Victory Medal</p> <p>The Victory Medal 1914-1919 was also authorised in 1919 and was awarded to all eligible personnel who served on the establishment of a unit in an operational theatre.</p>

⁵ The National Archives,
[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/medals.asp?WT.hp=Campaign Medals - £2](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/medals.asp?WT.hp=Campaign+Medals)

Loos Memorial

***In Memory of
Private JOSEPH EVANS***

***16461, 9th Bn., Royal Welsh Fusiliers
who died age 24
on 25 September 1915***

***Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jabez Evans, of 5, Bank Buildings, Buckley,
Chester.***

***Remembered with honour
LOOS MEMORIAL***



***Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission***

To the glory of God and in memory of 20,598 officers and men of the forces of the British Empire who fell in the Battles of Loos and Béthune and other actions in this neighbourhood, whose names are here recorded but to whom the fortunes of war denied the known and honoured burial given to their comrades in death

Cemetery Details

Cemetery:	LOOS MEMORIAL
Country:	France
Locality:	Pas de Calais
Visiting Information:	Wheelchair access to the cemetery is possible, but may be by alternative entrance. For further information regarding wheelchair access, please contact our Enquiries Section on 01628 507200. The Panel Numbers quoted at the end of each entry relate to the panels dedicated to the Regiment served with. In some instances where a casualty is recorded as attached to another Regiment, his name may alternatively appear within their Regimental Panels. Please refer to the on-site Memorial Register Introduction to determine the alternative panel numbers if you do not find the name within the quoted Panels.
Location Information:	The Loos Memorial forms the sides and back of Dud Corner Cemetery. Loos-en-Gohelle is a village 5 kilometres north-west of Lens, and Dud Corner Cemetery is located about 1 kilometre west of the village, to the north-east of the N943, the main Lens to Bethune road.
Historical Information:	Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the battle. The name "Dud Corner" is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice. The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice. The memorial was designed by Sir Herbert Baker with sculpture by Charles Wheeler. It was unveiled by Sir Nevil Macready on 4 August 1930.
No. of Identified Casualties:	20604

Loos Memorial casualties (from CWGC)

- 20,616 total
 - 268 RWF
- 6,685 on 25th September 1915
 - 201 RWF

Wikipedia

The Loos Memorial forms the sides and rear of Dud Corner Cemetery, located near the commune of Loos-en-Gohelle, in the Pas-de-Calais département of France. Dud Corner Cemetery contains 1,812 burials, less than 700 of whom are identified. The three surrounding walls are 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice

The memorial lists 20,610 names of British and Commonwealth soldiers with no known grave who were killed in the area during and after the Battle of Loos, which started on 25 September 1915. This memorial covers the same sector of the front as the Le Touret Memorial, with each memorial commemorating the dead either side of the date of the start of the Battle of Loos.



Loos Memorial May 27, 2011



Buckley Soldiers on the Loos Memorial

Evans, Joseph. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jabez Evans, 5 Bank Buildings, Private, RWF 9th Battalion, 25 September 1915, France & Flanders, Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, 24. Brother of this author's grandmother, Margaret Evans.

Roberts, William. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Roberts, 45 Ewloe Place, Private, RWF 9th Battalion, 02 October 1915, France & Flanders, Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, 21. Collier before enlistment.

Tatum, George. Son of Edward and Emily Tatum, 1, Church Rd., Private, RWF 9th Battalion, 25 September 1915, France & Flanders, Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, 19. Collier before enlistment.

Davies, Robert. 42 Mill Lane, Private, RWF, 25 September 1915, France & Flanders, burial unknown, died at Loos, 19. Collier before enlistment. Possibly son of John and Lucy Emily Davies. Believed to be R. Davies, Loos Memorial, RWF 9th Battalion, died 25 September 1915.

Also died on 25 September 1915

Catherall, Ralph. Tram Road, Private, South Lancashire, 25 September 1915, France & Flanders, Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, 34. Unmarried, previously a labourer

The Battle of Loos

Wikipedia

The Battle of Loos was the largest British offensive mounted in 1915 on the Western Front fought from 25 September to 14 October 1915. The first British use of poison gas occurred and the battle was the first mass engagement of New Army units. The British offensive was part of the attempt by the French to break through the German defences in Artois and Champagne and restore a war of movement. Despite improved methods, more ammunition and better equipment the Franco-British attacks were contained by the German armies, except for local losses of ground.

The battle opened on 25 September. In many places British artillery had failed to cut the German wire in advance of the attack. Advancing over open fields within range of German machine guns and artillery, British losses were devastating. However, the British were able to break through the weaker German defences and capture the town of Loos, mainly due to numerical superiority. The inevitable supply and communications problems, combined with the late arrival of reserves, meant that the breakthrough could not be exploited.

British casualties in the main attack were 48,367 and 10,880 in the subsidiary attack, a total of 59,247. Of 8,500 who died on the first day, 6,000 have no known grave.

Several survivors wrote of their experiences, the poet Robert Graves described the battle and succeeding days in his war memoir *Goodbye to All That* (1929). Rudyard Kipling's son, John was skilled at Loos as recounted in *My Son Jack*.

The RWF/9 at the Battle of Loos

The Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 9th (Service) Battalion was formed at Wrexham on 9 September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army (K2) and attached to 58th Brigade, 19th (Western) Division. The Battalion moved to Tidworth but by December 1914 was in billets in Basingstoke. They returned to Tidworth in March 1915, and landed at Boulogne 19 July 1915.

<http://www.1914-1918.net/rwf.htm>

Early days [after the battalion was formed] were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division initially concentrated in the Bulford area with the infantry being at Tidworth, Ludgershall and Grately. The battalions moved into billets for the winter, in Andover, Whitchurch, Basingstoke and Weston-super-Mare. In March 1915 all units concentrated near Tidworth.

The Division was inspected by King George V on 23 June 1915. Advanced parties left for France on 11 July and the main body crossed the English Channel 16-21 July. Units initially moved to the point of assembly near St Omer.

The Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions including The Action of Pietre⁶, a supporting/diversionary action during the Battle of Loos

The 19th (Western) Division in 1914-1918
From The History of 19th (Western) Division
<http://www.1914-1918.net/19div.htm>

From Soldiers Died, 7 officers and 98 other ranks from the RWF 9th Battalion died on 25th September at Loos. This represents 25% of the officers who went into action and 12.5% of the rank and file. The *Long, Long Trail* account of the Battle of Loos does not mention the RWF/9, but in context it lists 48 battalions with more than 311 casualties each and mentions 23 other battalions with more than 200 each. Thus the RWF/9 with 105 killed played a “minor role” in the battle.

Most Unfavourable Ground, The Battle of Loos, 1915 by Niall Cherry has this description.

There were three efforts all to the north of actual offensive area, with some starting up to three hours before the attack at Loos. The earliest feint was at a place called Bois

⁶ Several references refer to the RWF/9 serving at Pietre but it seems to this author more accurate to say that they were at Festubert another diversionary action fought at the same time as Pietre

Grenier near Armentieres...Further south around Neuve Chapelle opposite Aubers Ridge elements of the Indian Corps were to attack a German salient west of the Moulin du Pietre...The third diversion was carried out by the wholly British 19th Division from the Indian Corps in front of Festubert. This Division was to cooperate with 2nd Division from I Corps and they were to attack the Rue d'Ouvert as soon as the attack from 5th Brigade (2nd Division) had developed.

The experiences of these three attacks were all broadly similar in that the shortage of ammunition prevented suitable softening-up and there were no reserves to exploit any gains.

The RWF/9 were part of the attack in front of Festubert but they are not mentioned in Cherry's book.

War Diary

Much detailed information compiled from War Diaries was originally obtained from the Picassa website posted by Rob Vaughan.

<https://picasaweb.google.com/110755393264704646300>

Additional files were later provided direct to this author by Rob Vaughan. These files include trench maps, reports written by members of the RWF, War Dairy for the 58th Brigade, and annotated maps showing trench positions and casualties.

9th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers, at the Battle of Loos, 1915 – contributed by Christopher Fyles

Posted to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum web site

Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum situated within the Caernarfon Castle, North Wales.

An account taken verbatim from the War Diary entries compiled by Major Charles Burrard, 2nd-in-Command of the Battalion. Footnotes by Christopher Fyles, great-grandson of Sergeant John Thomas Nicholls, DCM, who served in the 9th Battalion from its formation in 1914 until his discharge in March 1919.

24th September 1915: Brigade H.Q. moved to Advanced Report Centre. Very wet + muddy. Our artillery continued to bombard.

We had been in the trenches since Aug 30th + our total casualties up to the evening of the 24th had been 2 men killed and 11 wounded. On the evening of the 24th Lt Col MADOCKS (sic) [1] and his battalion Hd Quarters moved up to A company mess in the firing-line. He asked me (Major C. BURRARD) to meet him there at 4.15 a.m. [2] the next morning. I retired for the night to a disused dug-out I found in one of the old support trenches. It was then drizzling.

25th September 1915: I met the C.O. in A company mess at 4.15 a.m. + had some coffee. I then went back to my dug-out. It was drizzling + what breeze there was seemed

to be unfavourable for the use of gas; I began to think the attack would be postponed.

5.50 a.m. Our artillery started a furious bombardment.

I hurried down to the firing line and found the smoke candles at work. On my way there, I observed a mile to the south, a thin cloud floating slowly toward the German lines; this I took as asphyxiating gas. The breeze was still very slight but seemed to have turned temporarily in our favour. It was not to be depended on however + too weak + I am of the opinion that the pall of smoke in front of our lines did more harm than good as it brought on inactivity on the part of our Artillery. The smoke was intended to supplement the gas + mislead the Hun into believing that there was an immense amount of that commodity coming towards them. None of our men were injured by our own gas, though I believe a few of the 6th Wilts [3] suffered.

6.30 a.m. About this time I was informed that a sheaf of rockets had been sent up by the Brigade, intimating the commencement of the attack. I personally did not see it. From subsequent inquiry I learnt the following which bore out to some extent the message sent by the Artillery Observation Officer at 6.25 that the Royal Welch were already attacking. Col. Madocks remained at A company mess till the sheaf of rockets went up, he then told Captain HOYLE, commanding A company to commence the attack (A company was to be directing). Captain HOYLE proceeded to No 10 sap but he had already at 6.15 a.m. had men out in the sap & I think it is probable that his leading platoon was already extended, lying down, in line with the head of the sap, ready to advance.

The order had been issued to be ready to commence the attack at 6.30 a.m. This order might be differently interpreted. It should have been made clear whether troops were to enter the sap or remain behind the parapet till 6.30 a.m. The leading platoon of A company being extended in front of the sap it is possible an advance was made before Capt HOYLE returned from HdQrs. At any rate an officer of B company on the left whose company was keeping in touch with A looked at his watch when the advance commenced and it was 6.20 a.m.

The pall of smoke was very thick; Capt HOYLE had orders for his directing flank to march on a certain willow tree but this was now hidden from view + it is believed he diverged to the right in front of the 9th Welsh [sic, 4].

The Artillery observation officer who had wired down that the attack had commenced, about this time surpassed himself by 'phoning that the 9th R. W. Fus. Had taken the first line of trenches. This must have been an effort of the imagination on his part as owing to the smoke, nothing could be seen.

Messages like this led to wild rumours after the action of spies having tapped the wires.

At about 6.50 I met Lt Col. Madocks & his Adjutant in one of the centre bays. He seemed very optimistic and asked me if D company was out yet; if so, we would follow.

The arrangements for attack were as under:-

B Coy {-----} A Coy 50 yards
 ----- distance
 ----- between
 ----- platoons
D Coy {-----} D Coy

I reported that D company was not yet out.

A quarter of an hour later Captain HOGG the Adjutant again went to inquire + in the meantime Col. MADOCKS who was observing over the parapet was struck by a shot in the temple + fell dead at my feet. It was evident by this time that things were not going well; not much could be seen on account of the smoke but there were rumours of the saps being encumbered with wounded which accounted for the delay with D company. – I had seen Capt ACTON, comdg D company a few minutes before just outside our wire entanglement + I suggested to Capt HOGG to get into communication with him + obtain his opinion; Capt HOGG had been gone about 10 minutes when I received information that both he and Capt ACTON had been shot.

The 6th Wilts were now beginning to arrive; to avoid a useless sacrifice of life I gave orders for a retirement. Col. JEFFRIES, comdg 6th Wilts. who arrived shortly afterwards concurred with me.

Our action north of the LA BASSEE canal was intended as a demonstration, the principle attack being carried out south of the canal; our energetic action was the means of withdrawing several battalions of reserve to our front, which the Germans could have utilised further south. But could not this advantage have been gained without such loss of life? Undoubtedly both the G.O.C. 58th Brigade + Col. MADOCKS had been misled as to the damage our Artillery had effected on the enemy's wire after several day's bombardment also the effect it had had on the enemy's morale; the effect on the wire was, as a matter of fact, negligible + the onus of not reporting this, of not making a more thorough reconnaissance rests on the companies who were in the front line; it was unduly optimistic to suppose that the enemy's morale had gone, as during a bombardment the Germans are adept at burrowing themselves into specially deep dug-outs or keeping out of the way.

It was confidently believed that we should have no difficulty in rushing across the intervening space + capturing the German front + support trenches.- When the time came to carry this out we found ourselves up against a row of impenetrable wire and the intervening ground swept by half-a-dozen a machine guns.

C company under Capt K.NICHOLL had been detailed to act as a flanking party + moved up FIFE ROAD. They suffered severely from the enemy's artillery which was most accurate.

The remainder of the morning was taken up in moving the remnants of the battalion to the Reserve Line. During the hours of darkness many of the wounded were brought in.

The following is a list of the casualties on Sept 25th: -

Killed (Officers) – LT.COL. H.J. MADDOCKS, CAPT. C.A. ACTON, CAPT. E.C. PAYNE, CAPT. L.S. HOGG, CAPT. B.W.E. HOYLE, LIEUT. C.F.J. SYMONS, 2nd LT. R.J. WILLIAMS.

Officers wounded – LIEUT. H.J. WILLIAMS, LT. G.H. CHARLTON, 2nd LT. R.H. HIGHAM, 2nd LT. C. FAWCETT

Rank + file	Killed	Wounded	Missing
HdQrs		2	3
A Coy	10	45	28
B “	2	23	44
C “	5	28	3 (believed buried)
D “	7	31	7
Total	24	129	85

(Total casualties, officers and men 249)

It is believed a few of the missing are prisoners of war.

The numbers that went into action were: -
25 officers, 781 rank & file

Footnotes

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Henry John Maddocks, C.O. of 9th Battalion, R.W.F., killed-in-action 25/09/15 and buried in plot I.F.20 in Brown's Road Military Cemetery, Festubert.

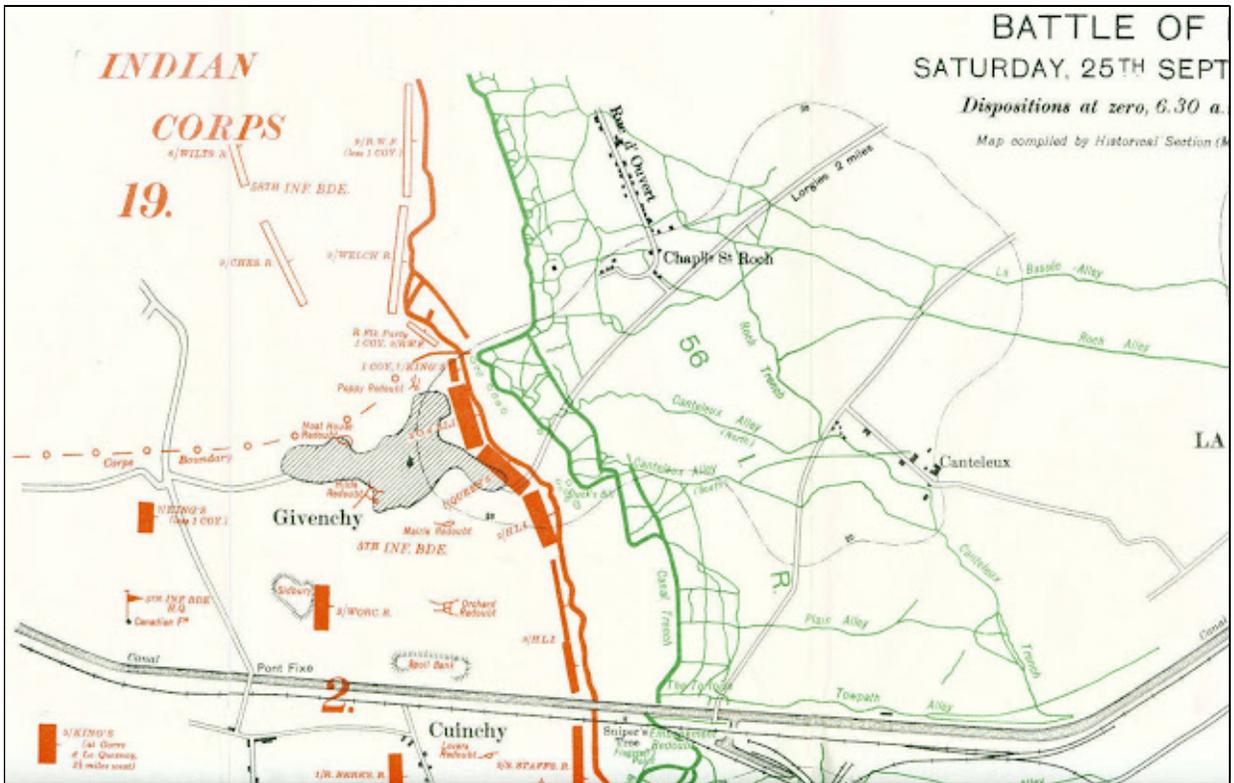
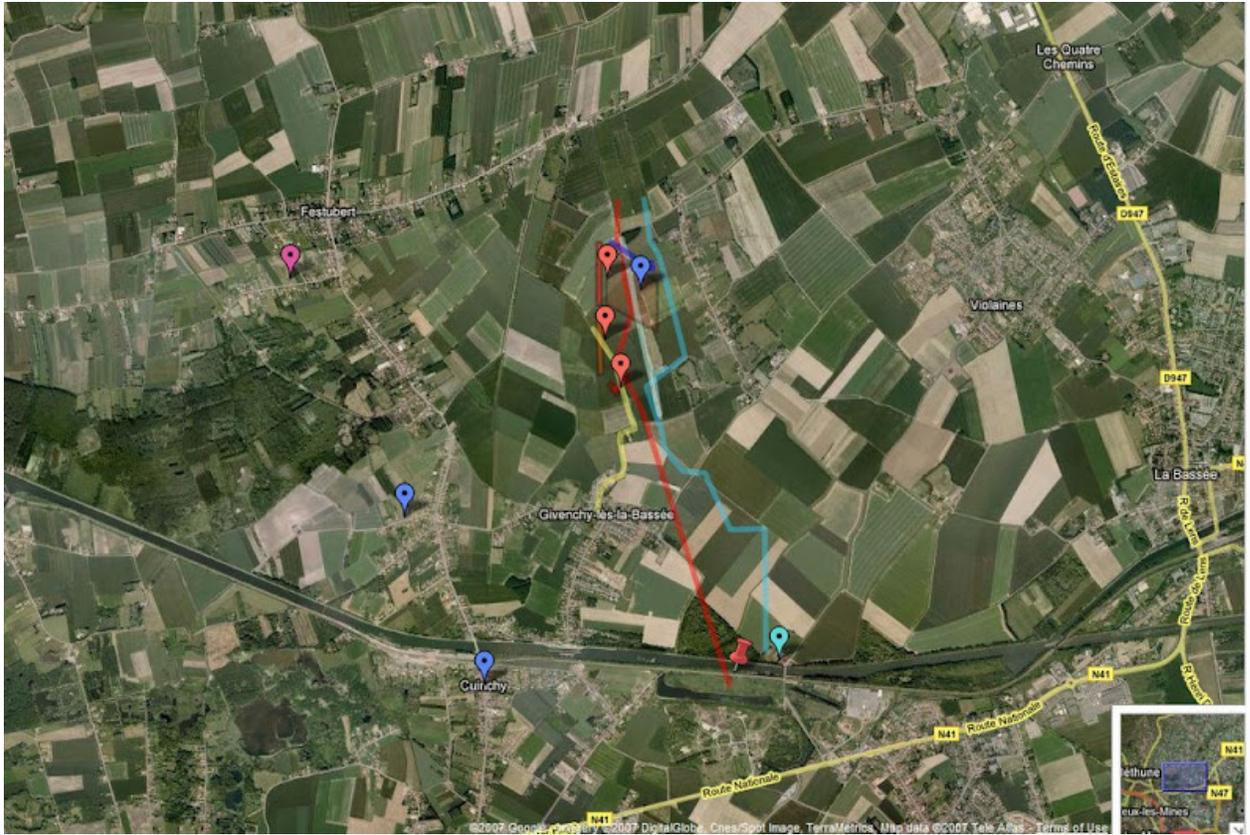
[2] The 24-hour clock system was not in general use until later in the War.

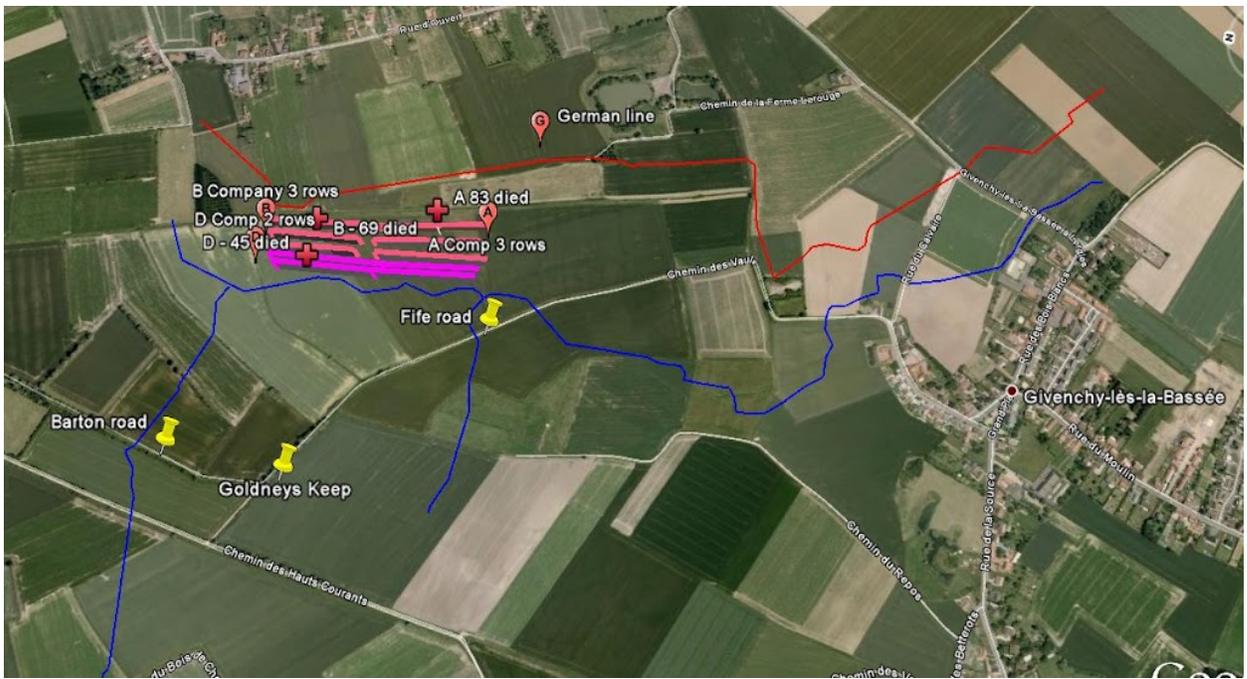
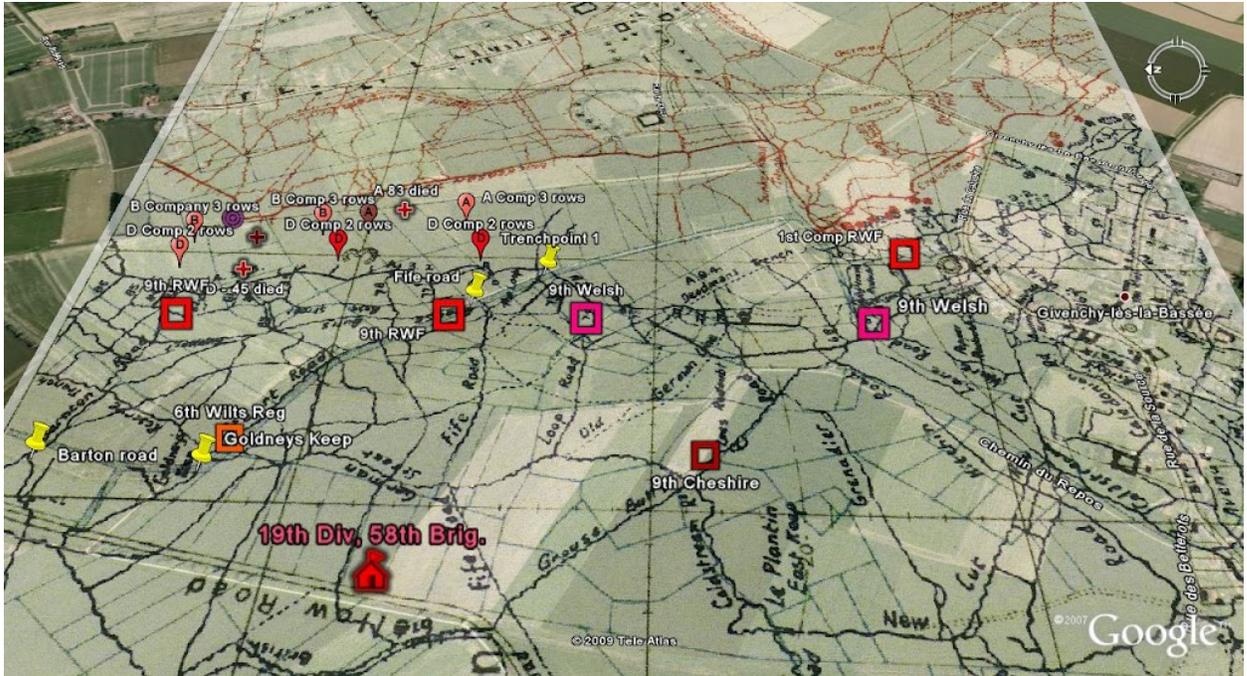
[3] 6th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment, part of 58th Brigade along with 9th R.W.F. They were in Support on 25th September, behind the R.W.F.

[4] 9th Battalion, Welch Regiment, also part of 58th Brigade and on the right flank of the R.W.F.

RWF/9 Casualties

From CWGC and Soldiers Died, 7 officers and 98 other ranks from the RWF 9th Battalion died on 25th September at Loos. This represents 28% of the officers who went into action and 12.5% of the rank and file. Total casualties (killed or wounded) based on the War Diary were 32%. The number of officers listed by CWGC matches the War Diary. The number of other ranks shows that most of the men listed missing in the War Diary as missing were never found. These would have included Joseph Evans. This author has found no documentation of which company he served or any diary that provides the names of rank and file killed.





Flintshire Men

At least 17 of the 109 men from the RWF 9th Battalion killed on 25th September 1915 were from Flintshire⁷.

Buckley Memorial

Evans, Joseph, 24, Private, 16461, Buckley Memorial, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jabez Evans, of 5, Bank Buildings, Buckley, Chester.

Davies, Robert, Private, 12949, Buckley Memorial, Son of Robert and Elizabeth Davies of Mill Lane, Buckley

Tatum, George, 19, 12959, Private, Buckley Memorial, Son of Edward and Emily Tatum, of 1, Church Rd., Buckley, Chester.

Flint Memorial

HILL, Joseph Walter, 27, Private, 13459, Flint Memorial, husband of Sarah Jane Hill, of 10, Langton Grove rd., Weston-super-mare.

From Peter Metcalfe:

Joseph Walter Hill was born in 1888 at Garforth, Leeds, Yorkshire, and was sixth of eight children to William Hill and Ann (Birkin). In the 1901 census Joseph was living with his grandparents, Andrew and Martha Hill, at Fernleigh Road, Grange, North Lonsdale, Lancashire, and in 1911 he was listed as an "Assistant" to Chip Potato Dealers George and Hannah Bradley of Calder Vale Road, Burnley, Lancashire. It is not known how long he was a resident of Oakenholt but he lived for a while with his sister and brother in law, Harriet and Richard Armour, at 5, Gardeners Row, but probably left the area before his marriage.

On 13th July 1915 he married 50 year old widow Sarah Jane Gardner nee Thomas at St John the Baptist Parish Church, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

He enlisted in Wrexham.

He is remembered on two war memorials - Flint Town and Grove Park, Weston-Super-Mare

Private Richard Armour was serving with the 9th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in France and in a letter home to his wife, dated 26th September 1915, he stated:- "Thank God, I am able to write once again, but since writing last we have been through hell; but although I am safe, yet there are chums of ours who are lying asleep forever." He also informed his wife that her brother Private Joseph Hill, of the same Battalion was killed instantaneously in the same battle. Of the platoon he

⁷ About 35 men are listed in CWGC without address or relatives

(Armour) was in, several of his chums had either been killed or were in hospital with wounds. George Johnson, Harold Johnson and Johnny Owens were all right; but he was very sorry that his brother-in-law, Private Joseph Hill, was dead. He could not enter into any of the details of the fighting; but what a blessing it would be when the awful slaughter was over, because war it was not

Hughes, Trevor Owen, 22, Serjeant, 13633, Flint Memorial, Son of Mrs. Emma Hughes, of Volunteer Arms, 76, Mount St., Flint.

Williams, Robert Edward, Private, 12734, Flint Memorial, husband of Harriet (Owen) Williams of Queen St. Flint

From Peter Metcalfe:

It is with regret, which will be shared by the whole of the regiments in the Borough, and particularly those interested in the welfare of the soldiers, that we record three deaths, the intelligence of which has reached parents and relatives. On Saturday last Mrs R. E. Williams, who resides at 10, Queen Street, received the official intimation from the Records' Office, Shrewsbury, that her husband Private R. E. Williams, of the 9th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, has been killed in action, during the recent heavy fighting in France. The deceased soldier, who was a native of the Trevriw, Llanrwst locality, was 37 years of age, and before the War he was an employee at the Shotton Ironworks. He was a member of the Company in which the late Sergeant Trevor Hughes, of the "Volunteer Arms," Flint, was a member. He leaves besides his grief-stricken widow, four children, for whom the greatest sympathy is shown in their bereavement

Connah's Quay/Shotton Memorial

Attwood, John Charles, 26, Serjeant, 12956, Cq/Shotton Memorial, Son of George And Phoebe Attwood, Of 2, Beaconsfield Rd., Shotton; Husband Of Janet Lillian Attwood, Of Belmont Villas, Connah's Quay, Shotton, Chester.

Bellis, Percival, Lance Serjeant, 12713, CQ/Shotton Memorial, Hawarden, Son of Edward and Matilda Bellis of Shotton

Millington, John, 18, Private, "C" Coy. 9th Bn.13315, CQ/Shotton Memorial, Son of Albert and Minnie Millington, of 7, Maude St., Connah's Quay, Chester.

Parry, John, 20, Private, 13309, Cq/Shotton Memorial, Son of John and Ellen Jane Parry, of 128, Church St., Connah's Quay, Chester.

Perry, James, Private,12759, CQ/Shotton Memorial, Son Of Mary Ann Perry of Jubilee St., Shotton

Roberts, William Lloyd, 22, Private, 12944, Cq/Shotton, Son of John and Catherine Roberts, of 69, Brook Rd., Shotton, Chester.

Savage, Frederick, 18, Private, 12954, Cq/Shotton Memorial, Son of Alfred and Elizabeth Savage, of 36, King Edward St. Shotton, Chester.

Tomkins, Joseph, Private, 12775, CQ/Shotton Memorial, born in Worcester, enlisted Shotton

Hawarden Memorial

Burrows, Joseph, Private, 12828, Hawarden Memorial, Husband of Nellie (Jones) Burrows of Aston, son of Thomas and Ann Burrows of Mancot

Thomas, Jacob, 40, Lance Serjeant, 6201, Mostyn, Hawarden Memorial, Son of The Late Jacob and Ann Thomas, Of Mostyn, Chester; Husband of Margaret Thomas, of 2, Parry's Row, Pentre, Queensferry, Chester.

Tozer, John, Lance Corporal, 12732, Hawarden Memorial, Son of Henry Martin and Mary Elizabeth Tozer of Queensferry

Appendices

From the Long Long Trail

<http://www.1914-1918.net/whatbatt.htm>

The **battalion** was the basic tactical unit of the infantry of the British army in the Great War of 1914-1918. At full establishment, it consisted of 1,007 men, of whom 30 were officers. It comprised a Battalion Headquarters and four Companies.

The battalion was usually commanded by an officer with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. A Major was Second-in-Command. Battalion HQ also had three other officers: a Captain or Lieutenant filled the role of Adjutant (in charge of battalion administration); a Captain or Lieutenant was the Quartermaster (responsible for stores and transport); and an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps attached as Medical Officer.

Battalion HQ also included the Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM, the most senior Non-Commissioned Officer) plus a number of specialist roles filled by Sergeants: Quartermaster, Drummer, Cook, Pioneer, Shoemaker, Transport, Signaller, Armourer (often attached from the Army Ordnance Corps) and Orderly Room Clerk.

A Corporal and 4 Privates of the Royal Army Medical Corps were attached to Battalion HQ for water duties; a Corporal and 15 Privates were employed as Signallers; 10 Privates were employed as Pioneers (on construction, repair and general engineering duties); 11 Privates acted as Drivers for the horse-drawn transport; 16 acted as Stretcher-bearers (these often being the musicians of the Battalion Band); 6 Privates acted as officers batmen (personal servants) and 2 as orderlies for the Medical Officer.

Companies. Usually lettered A to D - or in the case of the Guards Regiments numbered 1 to 4 - each of the 4 Companies numbered 227 heads at full establishment. Each was commanded by a Major or Captain, with a Captain as Second-in-Command. Company HQ included a Company Sergeant-Major (CSM), a Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS), 2 Privates acting as batmen and 3 as drivers. The body of the company was divided into 4 Platoons, each of which was commanded by a subaltern (a Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant). In total, the 4 Platoons consisted of 8 Sergeants, 10 Corporals, 4 Drummers, 4 Batmen and 188 Privates.

Each **Platoon** was subdivided into 4 Sections, each of 12 men under an NCO

A search of records for Joseph Evans among those who died in WW1:

- Included in the approximate 705,000 British soldiers who died, there were 2269 with surname Evans (0.3%), and 54 named Joseph Evans
- The RWF lost 9 men named Joseph Evans.

- In addition to our Joseph Evans, the 20,648 dead recorded on the Loos Memorial also include⁸:
 - 66 men with surname Evans (0.3%)
 - 10 men with surname Evans serving with the RWF
 - 3 men with name Joseph Evans
 - Joseph Evans, Buckley (died September 25)
 - Joseph Evans, Varteg, Pontypool, RWF (1st Battalion, 16992 died September 25)
 - Joseph Evans, Norfolk Regiment (died September 26)
 - 201 serving with the RWF
- Joseph Evans from Llanelly (Duke of Cambridge's Own Middlesex Regiment also died September 25 and is buried at Cambrin.
- Buckley losses also included Jesse Evans, son of Joseph and Agnes Evans, Church Road; William Evans, son of Richard and Mary Evans, Bank Farm (or Park Farm) Cottage (Warren); John Evans, Chapel St, Mynydd Isa.

1891 Mold, Flintshire: Buckley Road, Bistre Jabez Evans: head, m, 30, coal miner; Buckley, Flints.

Eliza Evans: wife, m, 28; Buckley, Flints.

Bessie Evans: dau, 6, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

Margaret Evans: dau, 4, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

John Evans: son, 2; Buckley, Flints.

Joseph Evans: son, 3m; Buckley, Flints.

and next door

John Parry: head, m, 31, coal miner; Buckley, Flints.

Elizabeth Parry: wife, m, 28; Minera, Denbs.

Thomas Parry: son, 8, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

John W. Parry: son, 4, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

Esther A. Parry: dau, 2; Buckley, Flints.

and next door

Esther Cheesworth: head, wid, 40, baker; Buckley, Flints.

Joseph Parry: brother, s, 22, coal miner; Buckley, Flints.

Annie Evans: niece, s, 14; Buckley, Flints.

William Evans: nephew, 8, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

1901 Mold, Flintshire: High Street, Buckley Jabez Evans: head, m, 40, coal miner; Buckley, Flints.

Eliza Evans: wife, m, 39; Buckley, Flints.

Margaret Evans: dau, 14, scholar; Buckley, Flints.

Joseph Evans: son, 10; Buckley, Flints.

Henry Evans: son, 7; Buckley, Flints.

Jabez Evans: son, 5; Buckley, Flints.

Esther Evans: dau, 3; Buckley, Flints.

⁸ CWGC

Sarah Evans: dau, 1; Buckley, Flints.

CWGC

The Commission had also been mandated to individually commemorate each soldier who had no known grave, which amounted to 315,000 in France and Belgium alone

The Commission only commemorates those who have died during the designated war years, while in Commonwealth military service or of causes attributable to service. The applicable periods of consideration are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.[4] The end date for the First World War period is the official end of the war, while for the Second World War the Commission selected a date approximately the same period after VE Day as the official end of the First World War was after the 1918 Armistice

**CERTIFIED COPY of
COPI DILYS O
Pursuant to the Births and**



**an ENTRY OF BIRTH
GOFNOD GENEDIGAETH
Deaths Registration Act 1953**

WCN 137585

Registration District Dosbarth Cofrestru		Hstymwell of Mold								
1891 . Birth in the Sub-district of Genedigaeth yn Is-ddosbarth		Mold in the County of Flint								
Columns:- Colofnau:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. Rhif	When and where born Pryd a lle y ganwyd	Name, if any Enw os oes un	Sex Rhyw	Name and surname of father Enw a chyfenw'r tad	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother Enw, cyfenw a chyfenw morwynol y fam	Occupation of father Gwaith y tad	Signature, description and residence of informant Llofnod, disgrifiad a chyfeiriad yr hysbysydd	When registered Pryd y cofrestrwyd	Signature of registrar Llofnod y cofrestrydd	Name entered after registration Enw a gofnodwyd wedi'r cofrestru
311	Fourth January 1891 Main Street Buckley RSP Mold	Joseph	Male	Jobez Evans	Eliza Evans formerly Parry	Coal Miner	Eliza Evans Mother Main Street Buckley Mold	Seventh February 1891	Rup ^t Price Registrar	—
									Cofrestrydd	

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.
Tystiolaethwyd ei fod yn gopi cywir o gofnod mewn cofrestr a gedwir gennyf i.

Jane Amos

Deputy

{ Superintendent Registrar
Cofrestrydd Arolygol

8th May 2012 Date
→ Dyddiad

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GOFAL: MAE YNA DROSEDDAU YN YMWNEUD Â FFUGIO NEU ADDASU TYSTYSGRIF NEU DDEFNYDDIO TYSTYSGRIF FFUG NEU WRTH FOD AG UN YN EICH MEDDIANT. ©HAWLFRAINT Y GORON

**WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.
RHYBUDD: NID YW TYSTYSGRIF YN PROFI PWY YDYCH CHI.**

In Memory of

Private

Joseph Evans

16461, 9th Bn., Royal Welsh Fusiliers
who died on 25 September 1915 Age 24

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jabez Evans, of 5, Bank Buildings, Buckley, Chester.

Remembered with Honour

Loos Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



HE whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

16461, PRIVATE JOSEPH EVANS

9th Battalion., Royal Welsh Fusiliers
Killed in action, France & Flanders, 25/9/1915
Born: Bistre Buckley, Flint, Enlisted: Buckley



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Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Pte	11788 55202
Joseph			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B 20	66032	
BRITISH	do		
15 STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1380

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Pte	16992
Joseph			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B 7	1994	Death Accepted 25-9-15
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/2 B 4	550	
Theatre of War first served in (1) France			
Date of entry therein 25-5-15			

K. 1380

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Sgt	15854
Joseph	Indian Army Coy. Off	2/Lt	
	"	Plat	

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B 6	1842	2 22 2 19
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/2 B 3	4623	
Theatre of War first served in 1/ France			
Date of entry therein 1-12-15			

K. 1380

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Pte	17149
Joseph	Lab corps	Pte	417435

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	LC/101 B 101	15362	2 22 2 19
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	LC/23	E/159/3	
Theatre of War first served in (1) France			
Date of entry therein 5-5-15			

K. 1380

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Pte	16461
Joseph			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B 7	1920	P. D 25/9/15
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/2 B 3	609	
Theatre of War first served in 1/ France			
Date of entry therein 19-7-15			

K. 1380

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
EVANS	R. W. Fus	Pte	19392
Joseph			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B 8	2441	Demob 17-1-19
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/2	746	
Theatre of War first served in (1) France			
Date of entry therein 1-12-15			

K. 1380



MAB Services Limited

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Page Reference: 19307

Catalogue Reference: WO/372/6

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
EVANS Joseph	R. W. Fus	Plt	16992
	— — —	— — —	— — —

Metal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/102 B7	1994	Death Accepted 25.9.15
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/2B4	550	
Theatre of War first served in	(1) France		
Date of entry therein	25.5.15.		



Amgueddfa
The Royal Welch Fusiliers
Regimental Museum

The Castle
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 2AY

Tel : 01286 673362 Fax : 01286 677042

Website: www.rwfmuseum.org.uk
E-mail: rwfusiliers@callnetuk.com

1st May 2012

Mr Peter Kelsall
c/o Charles Kelsall
15 Higher Common
Buckley
Flints
CH7 3NG

Dear Mr Kelsall

Pte 16461 Joseph Evans

Thank you for your cheque and enquiry regarding the service of your great uncle, Joseph Evans, with the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

We do not hold individual soldiers files here at the RWF Archives. They are held at the National Archives at Kew and accessible either through a personal visit or by Researcher or via the Ancestry website. This is, of course, dependent on them having survived a WW2 bombing raid when a large proportion was destroyed by fire & water. In this case my assessment, based on a search on Ancestry, is that Pte Evans' have not survived. This being the case we need to build up a picture from known material. I appreciate that you may have already gathered some material but I enclose all I've found for the sake of completeness.

I enclose his Medal Card which shows that Joseph was entitled to a 'trio' i.e. the 1914-15 Star, the Victory and the British War medals. I enclose material on all three. PD September 25 1915 means that he was "presumed dead" on that date. Times Casualty Lists dated October 1914 (from a Base List dated Oct 4th) shows him as wounded but a later list showed him as 'previously Wounded, now

Missing'. I enclose the material held on the Commonwealth War Graves site and can tell you that "Soldiers Died in the Great War" shows him as 'Killed in Action'

Numbers around his are known to have enlisted in mid-October 1914 and, prior to going overseas in July 1915 the 9th Battalion was in billets at Basingstoke and also Tidworth. The Battalion went overseas on 19th July 1915. I enclose the Battalion War Diary covering its time from that date to the end of September 1915 and including when Joseph went Missing. I also enclose relevant pages from the Regimental Records of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers by Dudley Ward covering the action at Loos. This, together with the War Diary should give you a picture of that action. Sadly, because of the lack of personal papers we do not know which Company Joseph belonged to.

I hope this information, and the enclosures, is useful.

Yours sincerely



Brian Owen
Curator

Researched by: Hywyn Williams

Encl
Medal Card
Medals-general info
CWGC entry
RRRWF material
War Diary material
9th Battalion information sheet

1.

9TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS.

1915.

Appendix

July

LUDGERSHALL

- 18th 7 a.m. Major C. BURRARD 2nd in command, Lt W G THOMAS M.G. Officer & Lt STEPHENS T.O. & R.B. Winser Esqre (Chaplain) left with Transport & machine gun section for HAVRE via SOUTHAMPTON
- 19th 3.30p.m. The following Officers travelled from LUDGERSHALL to BOULOGNE via FOLKESTONE :-
Major H.J. MADOCKS, acting Commandant
Captains C.A. ACTON, K.J. NICHOLL,
E.B. PAYNE, B.W.E. HOYLE, F.M. JONES,
L.S. HOGG (Adjutant), Lieutenants
M.M. LEWIS, M.H. DAVIES,
H.J. WILLIAMS, C. HEALD,
C.F.S. SYMONS, A.T. ORR,
G.H. CHARLTON, L.G. MEADE, 2nd Lts
R.J. WILLIAMS C.V. FAWCETT,
R.H. HIGHAM, C. G. ROBERTS,
V.E. OWEN, R.E. RUCK-KEENE,
H.C. WANGKE (Sig.O.) R.N. THOMAS,
T.W. KARRAN, Lt & Qr. Master LOWRY,
Lt. A.G. GILCHRIST M.O.
Both parties had a very good crossing.
The party under Major C. BURRARD
passed the 19th in a camp just
outside HAVRE.

EN ROUTE

- 20th The above party left HAVRE in the early morning & picked up the remainder of the battalion at a station just outside BOULOGNE. Travelled on to AUDRUICK arriving about 2 a.m. on 21st.

NEAR AUDRUICK

- 21st At OSTOVE and ZELKERKE. Good billets. Weather - fine & hot.
- 22nd - Battalion concentration parade 2.30 p.m. Very wet night.
- 23rd 9.30a.m. Marched to ARQUES beyond ST. OMER. A 15 mile march.

ARQUES

- 24th 8.30a.m. Marched through AIRE to COTTES - ST. HILAIRE. A very insanitary village but a few comfortable billets. We discovered our first battalion had been there 10 days before.

1915.

July

COTTES - ST. HILAIRE

25th

Rested

26th

8 Serjeants Court-martialed for desertion prior to battalion proceeding on active service. Sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment but sentence suspended during war.

27th

Company parades

28th

Battalion route march

29th

Company parades

30th

Brigade route march

31st

Weather hot. Left at 10.45 a.m. Marched to HAVERSKERQUE via ST. VENANT. Bilets very bad excepting those occupied by C company. Throughout our stay at COTTES - ST. HILAIRE and other subsequent places we received unflinching courtesy from the inhabitants who also showed no disposition to make money out of us.

C. BURHARD Major

Comdg 9th R.W.Fus.

9TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS.1915.Appendix.

August HAVERSKERKE

1st to 3rd Company parades.

4th Route march to meet 1st battalion R.W. Fusiliers

5th Inspection by General WILLCOCKS, Comdg Indian Corps. At 2.30 p.m. marched to new billets at REGNIER LE CLERC near MERVILLE.

REGNIER LE CLERC

6th Company parades

7th Brigade route march. Very hot.

8th-9th Company parades. Very hot.

10th Brigade route march. Very hot.

11th-12th Company parades.

13th Night march 10.30 p.m. to 2 a.m.

14th Company parade

15th Church parade.

16th Occupied as a Brigade a line of redoubts in scheme of defence. Marched back & encountered near Merville a terrific thunderstorm. Some poplar trees on the canal were struck just before A company reached them.

17th Lecture by Lt. MEADE, R.A.M.C. on methods of defence against Chlorine gas. Scouts disbanded.

18th Gas lecture for senior Officers by gas expert.

19th 2nd LT THOMAS and 3 men wounded by a bomb, whilst undergoing a course of instruction.

20th MAJOR MADOCKS appointed to command the battalion. Paraded at 6.30 p.m. & marched to VIEILLE CHAPELLE. D company went into trenches with the SUPFOLK & MANCHESTER regiments for instruction.

1915.Appendix.

August

VIEILLE CHAPELLE - I COMPANY
IN TRENCHES E OF RICHENBOURG
ST. VAST

21st

Company parades

22nd

Church parade. 2nd LT. R. N. THOMAS died in hospital at MERVILLE from wounds received in accident with bombs.
A Company to trenches in place of D.

23rd

Company parades

24th

Very hot. 2nd LT. R. N. THOMAS buried at MERVILLE
B Company to trenches in place of A.

25th

Company parades.

26th

Marched at 7.40 a.m. arriving at REGNIER LE CLERG at 10.20 a.m. During our stay at VIEILLE CHAPELLE three companies did an instructional course, each of 2 days, in the trenches; they acquitted themselves very well and there were no casualties.

REGNIER LE CLERG27th &
28th

Company parades.

29th

Marched to RUE DE LANNOY preparatory to taking over a section of the trenches.

30th

Marched to GORRE at 9.30 a.m. and in the evening took over IND (b). 9th Cheshires were on our right and the 6th Wilts on our left. The 9th Welch in Divisional Reserve.

31st

A quiet day with no unusual occurrence.

C. BURRARD Major
Comdg 9th R.W. Fus.

9TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS.

1915.

Appendix.

- September TRENCHES IND I (b) NEAR FESTUBERT
- 1st A & B companies in firing-line, D in support, C in reserve.
 - 2nd Hostile working parties were dispersed by our machine-gun fire. A few shells fell near GOLDNEY'S KEEP
 - 3rd Enemy opened fire on a working party of B company near ROTHESAY BAY. 1 man wounded.
 - 4th Weather vey bad.
 - 5th Work was continued on dug-outs & communication trenches
 - 6th 1 man killed
 - 7th Enemy working hard at the end of the old German trench running from BARNTON ROAD to their line. 2 wounded.
 - 8th Nothing to record - work continued as before - all ranks working exceptionally well & hard.
 - 9th Desultory sniping & some shell fire. Work continued and good progress made. 1 wounded
 - 10th Artillery and machine guns active on both sides. Relieved by 9th Cheshires. Relief completed by 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIGADE RESERVE AT ESTAMINET CORNER

- 11th A hostile aeroplane was brought down on our left.
- 12th Nothing of interest to record
- 13th Employed occasionally in working parties. 1 we man wounded.
- to
- 19th

IND I (b)

20th The 9th R.W.Fus. moved into IND I (b) occupying the trenches from BARNTON ROAD to FIFE ROAD. 9th Welch on our right, the 9th Cheshires & the 6th Wilts being in Brigade Reserve.

1915.

Appendix.

September

21st

Our artillery very active

22nd

4 wounded. Our artillery
bombarding.

23rd

1 killed, 2 wounded,
Bombardment still continuing.

24th

Brigade H.Q. moved to
Advanced Report Centre. Very
wet & muddy. Our Artillery
continued to bombard.
We had been in the trenches
since Sept Aug 30th & our total
casualties up to the evening of
the 24th had been 2 men killed
and 11 wounded. On the evening
of the 24th Lt Col MADOCKS and
his battalion Hd Quarters moved
up to A company mess in the
firing-line. He asked me
(Major C. BURRARD) to meet him
there at 4.15 a.m. the next
morning. I retired for the
night to a disused dug-out I
found in one of the old support
trenches. It was then drizzling.

25th

I met the C.O. in A company mess
at 4.15 a.m. & had some coffee.
I then went back to my dug-out.
It was drizzling & what breeze
there was seemed to be
unfavourable for the use of gas;
I began to think the attack would
be postponed.

5.50
a.m.

Our artillery started a furious
bombardment.
I hurried down to the firing line
& found the smoke candles at work.
On my way there, I observed a mile
to the south, a thin cloud floating
slowly toward the German lines;
this I took as asphyxiating gas.
The breeze was still very slight
but seemed to have turned
temporarily in our favour. It was
not to be depended on however & too
weak & I am of opinion that the
pall of smoke in front of our lines
did more harm than good as it brought
on inactivity on the part of our
Artillery. The smoke was intended
to supplement the gas & mislead the
Hun into believing that there was an
immense amount of that commodity
coming towards them.

1915.

Appendix.

September

25th
(Contd).6.30
a.m.

None of our men were injured by our own gas, though I believe a few of the 6th Wilts suffered. About this time I was informed that a sheaf of rockets had been sent up by the Brigade, intimating the commencement of the attack. I personally did not see it. From subsequent inquiry I learnt the following which bore out to some extent the message sent by the Artillery Observation Officer at 6.25 that the Royal Welch were already attacking. Col. Madocks remained at A company Mess till the sheaf of rockets went up, he then told Captain HOYLE, commanding A company to commence the attack (A company was to be directing). Captain HOYLE proceeded to No 10 Sap but he had already at 6.15 a.m. had men out in the sap & I think it is probable that his leading platoon was already extended, lying down, in line with the head of the sap, ready to advance. The order had been issued to be ready to commence the attack at 6.30 a.m. This order might be differently interpreted. It should have been made clear whether troops were to enter the sap or remain behind the parapet till 6.30 a.m. The leading platoon of A company being extended in front of the sap it is possible an advance was made before Capt HOYLE returned from Hd Qrs. At any rate an Officer of B company on the left whose company was keeping in touch with A looked at his watch when the advance commenced and it was 6.20 a.m. The pall of smoke was very thick; Capt HOYLE had orders for his directing flank to march on a certain willow tree but this was now hidden from view & it is believed he diverged to the right in front of the 9th Welch. The Artillery observation Officer who had wired down that the attack had commenced, about this time surpassed himself by phoning that the 9th R.W.Fus. had taken the first line of trenches.

Vide
Appendix I

1915.

September

25th
(Contd).

Appendix.

This must have been an effort of the imagination on his part as owing to the smoke, nothing could be seen. Messages like this led to wild rumours after the action of spies having tapped the wires. At about 8.50 I met Lt Col. MADOCKS & his Adjutant in one of the centre bays. He seemed very optimistic & asked me if B company was out yet; if so, we would follow. The arrangements for attack were as under :-



I reported that D company was not yet out. A quarter of an hour later Captain HOGG the Adjutant again went to inquire & in the meantime Col. MADOCKS who was observing over the parapet was struck by a shot in the temple & fell dead at my feet. It was evident by this time that things were not going well; not much could be seen on account of the smoke but there were rumours of the saps being encumbered with wounded which accounted for the delay with D company. - I had seen Capt ACTON, comdg D company a few minutes before just outside our wire entanglement & I suggested to Capt HOGG to get into communication with him & obtain his opinion; Capt HOGG had been gone about 10 minutes when I received information that both he & Capt ACTON had been shot.

The 6th Wilts were now beginning to arrive; to avoid a useless sacrifice of life I gave orders for a retirement. Col. JEFFREYS, comdg 6th Wilts, who arrived shortly afterwards concurred with me. Our action north of the LA BASSEE Canal was intended as a demonstration, the principle attack being carried out south of the canal; our energetic action was the means of withdrawing several battalions of reserve to our front, which the Germans could otherwise have utilised further south.

1915.

Appendix.

September

25th
(Contd).

But could not this advantage have been gained without such loss of life? Undoubtedly both the G.O.C. 58th Brigade & Col. MADOCKS had been misled as to the damage our Artillery had effected on the enemy's wire after several day's bombardment also the effect it had had on the enemy's morale; the effect on the wire was, as a matter of fact, negligible & the onus of not reporting this, of not making a more thorough reconnaissance rests on the companies who were in the front line: it was unduly optimistic to suppose that the enemy's morale had gone, as during a bombardment the Germans are adepts at burrowing themselves into specially deep dug-outs or keeping out of the way. It was confidently believed that we should have no difficulty in rushing across the intervening space & capturing the German front & support trenches. - When the time came for to carry this out we found ourselves up against a row of impenetrable wire and the intervening ground swept by half-a-dozen machine guns. G company under Capt K. NICHOLL had been detailed to act as a flanking party & moved up FLEET ROAD. They suffered severely from the enemy's artillery which was most accurate.

The remainder of the morning was taken up in moving the remnants of the battalion to the Reserve Line. During the hours of darkness many of the wounded were brought in. The following is a list of the casualties on Sept 25th:-

Killed (Officers) - LT. COL. H. J. MADOCKS, CAPT. G. A. ASTON, CAPT. R. G. PAYNE, CAPT. L. S. HOGG, CAPT. B. W. E. HOYLE, LIEUT. G. F. J. SYMONS, 2nd LT. R. J. WILLIAMS.
Officers wounded - LIEUT. H. J. WILLIAMS, LT. G. H. CHARLTON, 2nd LT. R. H. HIGHAM, 2nd LT. C. FAWCETT

1915.

Appendix.

September

25th
(Contd).

Rank & file

	Killed	wounded	missing
Hd Qrs		2	3
A Coy	10	45	28
B "	2	25	44
C "	5	28	3 (believed buried)
D "	7	31	7

Total 24 129 85
 (Total casualties Officers
 & Men 249)

It is believed a few of the
 missing are prisoners of war.
 The numbers that went into
 action were:-

25 Officers, 781 rank & file

26th

Weather very bad. During the
 course of the day we were
 withdrawn to the intermediate line,
 a mile back.

27th

In great discomfort owing to mud.
 On a parade I held I complimented
 the men on their heroism in
 rescuing the wounded.

&
28th

29th

Relieved by 57th Brigade.
 Moved to LOCOHI went into billets.

30th

Orders were received during the
 course of the morning to march at
 3.30 p.m. and take over trenches
 near CAMBRIN south of the canal.
 This was a very trying march as
 the weather was cold & it started
 raining before we arrived. There
 were very long waits owing to the
 congestion of traffic. We arrived
 at about 10 p.m. & took over
 BRADDELL and CAMBRIN POSTS in
 Brigade Reserve.

G. BERRARD
 Major
 Comdg 9th R.W.Fus.

were used and recommended—men were even advised to dip a rag or handkerchief in urine as an efficacious and quickly made respirator. Apparently it is not difficult to improvise a filter for chlorine gas. The Canadians, who stood well against the first discharges of gas, had the wit to cram something in their mouths, and, above all, remained calm and did not run; their breathing remained normal. But very soon a bag with goggles sewn in it was provided by the authorities; it was saturated with a glycerine mixture which was found effective. Before other and more penetrating gases were used by the enemy, the British box respirator, with a charcoal filter, was introduced with satisfactory results.

Professor Haldane points out that the first discharges of gas were well carried out by the Germans, but that their respirators were bad, and they were unable to follow the cloud. "This was, apparently, because the most competent physiologist in Germany with any knowledge of breathing was a Jew!" Thence he argues that the anti-Semitism of Germany lost them the war, for they could have got through the biggest gap they ever created in the Allied line, and so marched on the Channel Ports and, perhaps, Paris.

The important question raised by the introduction of gas is its use against the civil population. The Army is controlled and disciplined, and defensive measures can be applied easily; but in future wars the problem that seems to loom before us is civil panic.

THE BATTLE OF LOOS.¹

(1ST, 2ND, 4TH, AND 9TH BATTALIONS.)

After Festubert the 1st Battalion remained in the Richebourg—Givenchy sector through June, July, and part of August. Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Berners assumed command at St. Hilaire on the 24th May.

The 2nd Battalion, which had been transferred with the 19th Brigade from the 6th Division and attached to the 27th Division (Major-General Milne) on the 28th May, remained in the Bois Grenier sector until the 23rd July, when they were again transferred to the 8th Division (Major-General Davies) and moved to the Laventie sector, slightly south.

The 9th Battalion² arrived in France on the 19th July with the 58th

¹ Date: 25th September—3th October. Area: road Aix-Noulette—Neux-les-Mines—Bethune (exclusive)—Cour—Festubert (exclusive).

² Lieutenant-Colonel H. J. Madocks; Major C. Burrard; Captains C. A. Acton, K. I. Nicholl, E. G. Payne, B. W. E. Hoyle, R. M. Jones, L. S. Hogg (Adjutant); Lieutenants M. M. Lewis, M. H. Davies, H. J. Williams, C. Heald, C. F. J. Symons, A. T. Orr, G. H. Charlton, L. G. Meade, W. G. Thomas, Stephens; 2nd Lieutenants R. J. Williams, C. Y. Fawcett, R. H. Higham, C. G. Roberts, V. E. Owen, R. E. Ruck-Keene, R. N. Thomas, T. W. Karran, H. C. Wancke; Lieutenant and Quartermaster Lawry; Lieutenant A. G. Gilchrist (Medical Officer).

Brigade, 19th Division. Crossing from Folkestone to Boulogne, they waited at the latter place for a couple of days, until they were joined by an advance party which had sailed one day earlier from Southampton to Le Havre ; they then proceeded to Merville and underwent a course of training.

This battalion had been taken over at the last moment by Lieutenant-Colonel Madocks from Sir Horace McMahon, who had failed to pass the medical test for active service owing to defective eyesight. The battalion, however, owes him a deep debt of gratitude for the soundness of its training and the spirit he implanted.

The sector allotted to the 2nd Battalion was between Fauquissart and, on the left, a small salient known as "Red Lamp Salient." The Lahore Division was on their right. Just behind them was Laventie. At this period, with the exception of the church and buildings round it, Laventie was little damaged. Many of the inhabitants were there, a fair restaurant hotel was open, and the reserve battalion found comfortable billets in undamaged houses. Five miles behind the line was the town of Estaires, where battalions went for their periodical rest.

The line was held by four companies, each with a platoon in support. On the right, where the trenches were 400 yards apart, there was comparative quiet, but at Red Lamp Corner the trenches were only 60 to 100 yards apart, the ground was higher and drier than at Bois Grenier, and mining and countermining were being actively carried on ; until the men got used to it, the tread of an unseen sentry, or some other repeated sound, was apt to be mistaken for underground work by the enemy. And the nearness of the trenches led to a great deal of bombing. We had a battery of catapults, and abusive messages, as well as bombs, were hurled across to Fritz !

From the very commencement of the war, stories of espionage had been rife ; in time they died a natural death, for few of them were true, but in the early part of 1915 units arriving from England were very suspicious. The 5th Scottish Rifles joined the brigade at the end of 1914¹ ; they were filled with Scotch suspicion and determined vigilance. Major Williams, accompanied by the Medical Officer, Captain Harbison, passing through their area on his way to Armentières, was stopped, and had to be very persuasive before he was allowed to proceed. Before leaving them, he warned the guard that he might be followed by some suspicious persons who might call themselves officers of the Royal Welch ! The desired result was achieved—Captain Owen, the Adjutant, and the company commanders,

¹ This Territorial unit was always referred to as the Scottish Rifles and the 1st Battalion under their title of Cameronians.

who were following, were clapped into the guard-room until someone could be found to identify them. Captain Owen, however, was prompt in asserting that "Guillaume was at the bottom of this!"

Several arrests among civilians were made while the battalion was in the area, which added strength to less well founded rumours.

There was also a rumour during the summer that the war would soon be over. "The mere infantry officer is cynically incredulous, unless some improbable political deal is being negotiated. A more likely rumour is that the 19th Infantry Brigade will soon cease to be Army troops on absorption into a new division." (Dunn.) The latter proved to be true. On the 17th August the brigade marched out of the Fauquissart—Picartin line, shed the supply train, ammunition column, etc., it had possessed as Army troops, and on the 19th marched to Bethune to take the place of the 4th (Guards) Brigade in the 2nd Division. On the road the battalion marched past Lord Kitchener, whose remarks were unusually complimentary; but he did not know that the surplus baggage and other items that would have detracted from the "turn-out" were sent by another route.

The 2nd Battalion, being in shorts, created a mild sensation among the inhabitants of Bethune. The town was of moderate size, but it had good shops and offered a variety of amusements not obtainable in Laventie and Estaires. As September advanced it became more and more thronged. Men who had not seen or heard of each other for ten or twenty years, living oceans apart, met in its squares, in the barber's, in the Café du Globe, in the Hôtel de France!

On the 1st September our 4th Battalion was posted to the 47th (2nd London) Division, and moved to Les Brebis. They then became a Pioneer Battalion, working under the Royal Engineers.

The 9th Battalion had moved to Neuve Eglise on the 20th August, and companies had been instructed by Suffolk and Manchester battalions in trench warfare: they took over a length of the line south of Festubert on the 30th August.

The Battle of Loos was preceded by heated argument. The French reached the high-water mark of man-power in 1915, the British would not develop their full power until 1916. In 1915 the Germans were hotly engaged on their Eastern Front, and had an effective strength of 800,000 rifles on their Western Front, opposing 1,185,000 of the Allied Forces.

The policy of the British Government had been to remain on the defensive on the Western Front until the New Armies were ready in the spring of 1916; meanwhile they desired that all men and material that

could be spared should be sent to Gallipoli. This policy had practically been accepted by the French Government in June, but they then gave way before the arguments of General Joffre, who had always been opposed to the Gallipoli adventure, and declined to send any more troops to the Mediterranean.

General Joffre had conceived an attack on a grandiose scale. The line between Reims and Arras formed a great salient which was held by the German Seventh, First, and Second Armies; north of Arras were the Sixth and Fourth Armies; south of Reims the Third and Fifth Armies. The French and British were to attack the German Sixth Army, and advance in an easterly direction, across the Plain of Douai; while from the Champagne the French would attack the German Third Army and move in a northerly direction. Both attacks were to strike into the plain behind Douai, the natural converging point of all the main roads and railways which fed the three German Armies in the salient.

For this attack other parts of the line were to be thinned out, men and guns would be massed. After a bombardment lasting four days, which would effectively destroy all wire and trenches, the assaulting divisions would advance, each on a 1,500 yards front, disposed in depth from 3,000 to 4,000 yards. All formations would move forwards simultaneously, the picture presented being a steady stream of men, several miles long, advancing irresistibly, the leading divisions being followed by the reserve divisions and cavalry. All divisions not participating in the attack (that is, on other sectors) were to be ready for a general advance should a break-through be successful.

The argument that had arisen—whether the attack should take place in 1915 or 1916—now shifted its ground. Sir John French had at first agreed that the British Army would attack on the left of the French Tenth Army and south of La Bassée Canal; but General Haig, having considered the proposal, reported strongly against it—he was definitely of the opinion that the ground selected was unfavourable, and that the chances of success were beyond reasonable hope. He proposed, as an alternative, an attack astride the canal, fixing the defences round the village of Auchy as the key of the strong position held by the enemy.

General Joffre, however, maintained that the ground between Loos and La Bassée Canal would be found favourable, and gradually, as the series of disasters to the Allied cause accumulated in other theatres of war, the British Military Authorities abandoned their objections.

Meanwhile, through the latter part of June and July the Germans, apprehensive of the state of their defences on the Western Front, had con-

structed a strong second line, sited on reverse slopes, strongly wired, and beyond the effective range of field guns.

The general orders to the British Armies were that the First Army, under General Haig, should conduct the battle; the Second Army was to hold the enemy between Armentières and Ypres, and attack the enemy line north and south of Bellewaarde Lake¹ with the 3rd and 14th Divisions under General Allenby; the Third Army, of nine divisions, which had taken over the line in the Somme area, south of the French Tenth Army, was to support the French attack with its artillery and be prepared to advance should the attack be successful.

In his own hand, disposed behind the First Army, Sir John French held the Cavalry Corps and the XI Corps, consisting of the Guards Division and two New Army divisions, the 21st and 24th.

At the commencement of the battle the German forces opposing General Haig's First Army were, south of La Bassée Canal, the 117th Division (22nd Reserve, 157th, and 11th Reserve Regiments), and the 16th Regiment and 11th Jäger Battalion of the 14th Division; the other two regiments of the 14th Division, the 56th and 57th, were north of the canal, with the 2nd Guard Reserve Division on their right. The organisation of the regimental area placed one battalion in the front line, one in support, and one in reserve, about five miles behind the line.

The general reserves of the German Sixth Army, three divisions, were at Lille and Valenciennes; but there were at hand, as immediate reserves, part of the 2nd Guard Reserve Division and the 8th Division on the flanks of the British attack.

The total strength of the British Expeditionary Force on the 24th August 1915 is given as slightly over 850,000, but these figures are always misleading: an estimate of "effectives" gives 250,000, or slightly more than two-thirds, employed on services out of the fighting line.

Sir John French had received the last possible Regular division on the 15th January² but created the Guards Division in August, which gave him eleven Regular divisions. Territorial battalions commenced to arrive in France in 1914, and were still, for the most part, posted as 5th battalions to Regular brigades. Territorial divisions commenced to arrive in February,

¹ There were other minor diversions along the Second Army front.

² The first eight divisions were Regular divisions, the 8th arriving in France on the 5th November 1914; then followed the 27th on the 13th December 1914, and the 28th on the 15th January 1915; the remaining Regular division, the 29th, was at this date in Gallipoli, and did not arrive in France until the 20th March 1916.

the first being the 46th ; followed by the 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, and, on the 30th April, the 51st. The New Army divisions commenced to arrive in May, and on the 25th September there were fifteen in France.

The growth in number of divisions meant growth in artillery strength, and the shell question was now well on the road to settlement. In the Loos despatch the Commander-in-Chief says : " Our enemy may have hoped, not perhaps without reason, that it would be impossible for us, starting from such small beginnings, to build up an efficient artillery to provide for the very large expansion of the Army. If he entertained such hopes, he has now good reason to know that they have not been justified by the result. The efficiency of the artillery of the New Armies has exceeded all expectations, and during the period under review excellent services have been rendered by the Territorial Army." Associated with this excellence was an encouraging increase in the number of heavy guns.

Briefly, although he had taken over a new sector with his Third Army in the Somme area, Sir John was able to assemble 70,000 men to attack some 10,000 Germans ; also 35 siege and heavy artillery pieces, 36 long-range guns, and massed divisional artillery amounting to 498 pieces. This on the I and IV Corps front, which was about double the amount possessed by the Germans on their corresponding front.

The field of the main attack was a coal-mining district, dotted with slag-heaps and the gigantic machinery of the industry. The main features of the battlefield were Hill 70 on the right, behind the village of Loos ; on the left Fosse 8, a coal-pit, on which was based the Hohenzollern Redoubt, a strong enemy system, jutting out from their main line and having, slightly south of it, the Quarries, behind which lay the mining village of Cité St. Elie—all strongly entrenched and wired.

The distance across No Man's Land varied between 100 and 500 yards.

It was a bare and open country that created an unfavourable impression, but at General Headquarters a change of view seems to have occurred with the decision to use gas. It is lightly touched upon by the Commander-in-Chief in his despatch : " Owing to the repeated use by the enemy of asphyxiating gases in their attacks on our positions, I have been compelled to resort to similar methods ; and a detachment was organised for this purpose, which took part in the operations commencing on the 25th September for the first time. Although the enemy was known to have been prepared for such reprisals, our gas attack met with marked success, and produced a demoralising effect on some of the opposing units, of which ample evidence was forthcoming in the captured trenches."

Many thousands of cylinders were despatched to France—on the I Corps

front 2,500 were used alone—and after a demonstration in a back area the possibility of breaking through the two enemy systems of defence was firmly believed in: the first despondency had completely evaporated.

So we get, then, in the First Army area, a picture of industry and much movement stretching back miles behind the line. The storing of ammunition and the work it entailed may be gathered from the allotment, for the last hour before the assault, of 100 rounds per field gun and 60 rounds per howitzer (4.5-inch, 5-inch, and 6-inch); the gas required 8,000 men to carry it to the trenches; on one corps front it was estimated that over 600 miles of telephone wire had been laid; and then there were small-arm ammunition, hand-grenades, smoke-candles, ladders for climbing out of trenches, bridges for placing across trenches, wire, shovels and picks, a whole list of articles described as battle stores; and finally the assembly of units, in billets, ready to move forward in the successive lines which were to break a road through the German defence and end the war.

These "set-piece" battles were progressive in size, and each time they occurred they created, naturally enough, a lot of preliminary excitement behind our lines. Troops of the six attacking divisions were informed that their objective was Douai. It was known that the XI Corps, consisting of the Guards Division and the 21st and 24th Divisions of the New Army, was held in reserve to give the final "push" which would allow the British Cavalry Corps (assembled round St. Pol) and the Indian Cavalry Corps (assembled at Doullens) and a large force of French cavalry to ride through and behind the enemy lines. It was spoken of as the greatest battle in history.

On the 5th August the 1st Battalion went into the line in front of Vermelles; and on the 24th the 2nd Battalion to Givenchy and alternately to Cambrin. South of the canal the trenches had been made by the French, and were deep and narrow; the communication trenches still retained the French name *boyaux*, and were mostly wired, fire-stepped, and traversed to form in need a defensive flank.

The Cambrin, Cuinchy, and Givenchy sectors were interesting parts of the line, on either side of the canal—the latter on the north bank.

The brickstacks on the Railway Triangle and Canal Embankment of the Cuinchy sector were celebrated for unpleasantness. The company commander holding the line lived in a sandbagged culvert in the embankment, and learned to be vigilant. His right platoon occupied the Bluff, from which the ground fell to a small marshy area, impassable in wet weather—defended by an earthwork keep, the Cabbage Patch—and rose again to the brickstacks. The latter were mostly in the enemy's hands

and were adapted for observation posts, machine-gun, or snipers' posts; the stacks were perfect cover, but flying fragments of brick frequently wounded men in the open.

The Givenchy sector had a dry trench system running northwards to the Warren, which ended in the Duck's Bill, when the ground fell sharply and a breastwork re-entrant ran westwards in a sweep in front of La Plante and then north to Festubert.

The line, having been pushed on to the ridge, gave opportunities for underground warfare, and mining was actively carried on; the ridge was pitted with craters. Frequent minor changes took place in the front line as new-blown craters were connected up by saps. At one point the British and German lines were only 25 yards apart.

Some 1,100 yards behind the front line was Harley Street, running north from the Bethune Road; it crossed the canal at Pont Fixe and continued to Windy Corner, the northern limit of the divisional area. In the ruins of this one-time single-street village the two support battalions were housed with the R.E. workshops and the Advance Dressing Station. One familiar ruin was the Bath House: in 1915 the number of tubs became too small, but some coffins were found in an abandoned workshop and these, when puttied, made excellent baths. Each night the street was thronged with working parties, reliefs, runners, vehicles; and the nearest guns were in the orchards bordering it. Until mid-September a few civilians remained, who lived by ministering to the creature comforts of the troops.

From Cuinchy the rattle and clatter of the enemy limbers on the *pavé* road, bringing up rations at dusk, was plainly audible. The artillery on both sides respected the enemy's ration limbers.

Our 4th Battalion, in their new rôle of pioneers, did not have too easy a time in all the battle preparation. Lieutenant Picton Davies, recovered from the wound he had received early in the year, returned to France and was posted to the 4th. "I travelled up with Lieutenant-Colonel Pereira, of the Grenadiers, who had been appointed commanding officer. When we arrived, the battalion was doing ordinary trench duty at Vermelles—four days in and four days out. The battalion had been badly cut up at Festubert and never made up to strength since. The N.C.O.s were good fellows but inexperienced. Once the C.O. had sized up his command, he obtained a Guardsman as Regimental Sergeant-Major, whose arrival was resented at first by the men, but whose tact and the efficiency he introduced were soon recognised and appreciated.

"On 25th August we moved to the Cambrin area.

"On 2nd September I was posted to B Company as company com-

mander, and as such I remained during the sixteen months of my service with the battalion. This same day the battalion was warned that it would be transferred to the 47th Division. It had been found that the Londoners could not dig, and to a few of us it was confided that gas was to be installed in their front line, which would entail much preparatory trench digging, etc. At night we were told that we were to become a Pioneer Battalion, whereupon the C.O. exclaimed, 'Good God! We shall have to dig latrines for the rest of the war!'

"From the 3rd to the 9th September we dug nightly, making assembly trenches behind the front line. On the night of the 16th three new trenches were begun in front of the front line—to be called W₁, W₂, and W₃.

"W₂ and W₁ were to accommodate the first and second waves respectively in the coming attack.

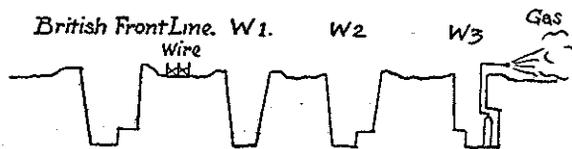
"W₃ was the trench to contain the gas cylinders.

"All these three trenches were begun simultaneously and they were got down two feet the first night, in spite of discovery and interruption by the enemy. I thought

my company lucky to have only twelve casualties.

Three nights' work sufficed to complete the system of trenches. The work was

done behind infantry covering parties, who lay out in shell-holes some way in front of the work.



"W₁ was a mere shelter trench, but W₂ was fire-stepped.

"W₃ had to be of special construction to shelter the cylinders of gas from shell splinters, and to conceal them from air observation. The method used was an overhanging parapet supported by special revetment. A fire-step was made on the rear wall of the trench for the use of the garrison who were to protect and release the gas.

"Duck-boards were laid along each of the trenches, which were to be available and in position as bridges over which the assaulting troops would cross the trenches at zero. All these trenches had to be connected up by communication trenches, and furnished with the usual annexes of a trench.

"In order to assist the assault, once it was launched, advanced machine-gun and trench-mortar emplacements were made, and shell-holes close to the German wire were adapted, and to conceal the existence of new work all the soil excavated had to be taken back in sandbags for disposal.

" All this preparatory work was practically completed by the 18th September.

" On the 19th the gas cylinders were brought up. So far only the officers were supposed to know of the intended use of gas ; men remarking on the unusual form of W₃ were told that it was to provide additional shelter from shell fire. This night an enemy patrol came right over, but it was believed that every man was scuppered.

" The men were then instructed in the method of working the gas cylinders, in what to do in case they became casualties, or in the case of a direct hit on one of the cylinders both prior to and during that attack.

" By the 20th everything was ready. The cylinders were all in position. The long, double, rectangular nozzles that were to discharge the gas clear of the parapet were ready to be joined up. W₃ was manned by us, and the front was strongly patrolled by night. For nearly three weeks prior to this all our work had been done at night ; by day we slept and rested in the cellars of Les Brebis."

All through September the battalions not in the front line dug assembly trenches, made gun emplacements in the support line, carried up stores, and numerous cylinders to be dug into the front line—no vocabulary could express the men's thoughts of those cylinders as they struggled and sweated up the narrow trenches, festooned with detached telephone wires that gripped sometimes the throat, sometimes the feet.

Patrols were active, too. Lieutenant H. M. Blair, of the 2nd Battalion, went out a few days before the battle, on the Cambrin front. " Samson, who was always relieved to know that anyone in his command these days was not married, sent me with a corporal and a bomber to examine the German wire. We started at 9.30 p.m. We were in shorts, so I soon felt I was well over the age limit for patrolling by night in bare knees. I was a subaltern, but the C.O. was the only officer older than I.

" We had been out a long time and I was straddling a disused German trench when a flare fell close to us ; in that posture—even to holding my breath—I stood fast till the flare burned itself out. Beyond the trench were patches of standing corn, which made progress easier. Suddenly we came out of the corn, with the moon at its brightest shining on us and on a party of Germans working on their parapet, and there were only thirty unpleasant yards of burned grass between ! Unseen by the Germans we lay low, hoping they would go to bed and let us get on. We had been out for 2½ hours already. Next day I discovered that we had strayed from our course and were well inside the re-entrant in the German line. As the Germans did not go we started a snail crawl—myself, then the bomber,

then the corporal—at a yard a minute. Arriving at their wire, I signed to the bomber to stop while I crawled in and tested it. The Germans were busy and not throwing flares; the officer or N.C.O. in charge was quite near me, standing in a gap smoking.

“Rejoining my men, we crawled back at the same breakneck speed to the friendly cover of the corn—it was an hour since we left it, an hour of strain, so we sat down for a breather before making for home. Nearing our wire, I changed places with the corporal—he was leading and I was in rear—for I wanted to warn the listening post, who might not be expecting us after nearly six hours' absence. Not a minute after our change of places two shots were fired from the post. The corporal was hit in the chest and stomach and died, poor fellow, soon after being carried into the trench.

“The sentry told me he had been warned that two only had gone on patrol; spotting a third man, he inferred that we were being stalked and fired. It was a tragic mischance that the two snap shots at 40 yards, fired by moonlight at a crawling figure, took effect.”

New batteries kept coming in and “registering.” There was little secrecy in the arrival of guns and no concealment of their emplacements. Observation balloons were up through the day, and there was more aerial activity than had yet been seen. Day after day of fine weather passed with accompanying wonder at the delay in attacking.

Early in the morning of the 21st the artillery opened fire in a way there was no mistaking. At the time the bombardment was impressive. The enemy made little reply, and that on back areas; our casualties were scarcely more than normal. While the British artillery was active, the men could lean their arms on the parapet and watch the shoot; but during pauses in the fire a few enemy machine guns would sometimes traverse the parapets.

On the 23rd there was rain after 7 a.m., and thunder, and more rain later; the roads and trenches that had been clean so long became muddy and slippery.

On the 24th September our 1st Battalion was at La Bourse, in billets; the 4th was looking after smoke-candles and gas, three parties of 80, 54, and 59 men, under Lieutenants P. R. Foulkes-Roberts, H. G. Picton Davies, and C. O. Davies, having been detailed for this duty with the 47th Division on the extreme right of the attacking line; the 9th Battalion was at Festubert, between what was known as Barton Road and Fife Road; the 2nd Battalion was in billets at Bethune.

Between dusk and dawn important decisions had to be taken. All faith in success had been placed on the gas attack, but the gas attack depended on the wind. The bombardment of the enemy positions had

been going on for four days, and it would have been easy to continue it and wait, if necessary, for a favourable breeze ; but such a decision would have had a disastrous effect on the French double attack—that of the Tenth Army on the right, and the greater attack in the Champagne. Without gas the artillery was thought insufficient to support the attack of six divisions, and an alternative plan had been prepared : only two divisions would attack, the 9th assaulting the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and the 15th a limited objective about Loos no deeper than the first-line system of defence.

At 9.45 p.m. on the 24th the weather forecast was considered favourable, and a message to the effect that the gas discharge would take place was sent out. By that time a great movement had started : the assaulting brigades of the six divisions were marching up to relieve the front-line troops, and the movement stretched away back into the distant assembly areas of the XI Corps, the three divisions of which spent the night marching forward to within six miles of the front line.

About 5 o'clock in the morning the breeze veered to the south—it was a faint, puffy, baffling breath of air—and at 5.25 a.m. General Haig attempted to stop the discharge of gas : it was then too late to get the order to the front line. At 5.50 the intense, last-hour bombardment was opened on the German trenches and the gas liberated.

“ With the approach of zero hour on the 25th September we were ready. The nozzles had been screwed on to the cylinders, and we were standing by in our gas-masks. At 5.30 a.m. the gas was released. It was the first time gas had been used by the British. On the front of our division the wind was in the right direction and the right strength—the gas went over well. When the cylinders were exhausted, a smoke screen was put down, the trenches were bridged over with duck-boards, and the infantry, wearing their gas-masks, went over at 6.30 a.m.

“ The 4th Battalion had played its part, and we moved back to the railway cutting. My company had thirty casualties, for as soon as the gas began to drift over, the German guns opened on the trench. We collected and sent back the casualties. We all felt sick as a result of the fumes, and nearly all of us were sick.” (Picton Davies.)

Following events from the right, the 47th Division, advancing forty minutes after the gas discharge, found the wire well cut ; they formed a flank to the south of Loos. Next to them the gallant 15th Division of the New Army (Second Hundred Thousand) went over Hill 70 as far as Cité St. Auguste, but they swerved off their line of advance to the right. On their left the battle began to go wrong with the right brigade of the 1st

Division, which was checked by wire and a stout defence; the left Brigade of the 1st Division pushed through the village of Hulluch with its right flank in the air. Everywhere, excepting the right of the line, the gas went wrong, hindering the advance of the troops and causing no damage to the enemy. Casualties were extremely heavy, and opportunities which were undoubtedly opened up by the rush of the gallant Scots (15th Division) drifted away—the picture of a stream of men, always advancing in successive lines, remained a dream.

In the I Corps area, the 7th Division were on the right and were to capture the Quarries; while the 9th Division (First Hundred Thousand) were responsible for Fosse 8 and the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

The I Corps had to attack over a hard, featureless country. There was Fosse 8, with its slag-heap, and to the left of it many cottages and buildings which practically joined on to the village of Auchy. The corps was to press on to the Haute-Deule Canal, with the 2nd Division forming a defensive flank on its left. But it had always been recognised that Auchy would be a hard nut to crack, and that above all other places its capture was dependent on the successful discharge of gas. Should the 2nd Division fail to capture Auchy, the 9th Division was to form a protecting flank and the 7th Division advance on the canal.

The attack of the 7th Division on a frontage of 1,400 yards was made by the 20th Brigade on the right and the 22nd Brigade on the left. The general scheme was a simultaneous advance from five successive lines of assembly trenches, some eighty yards apart; and the artillery, in two groups—the 22nd Field Artillery Brigade supporting the 20th Infantry Brigade, and the 35th Field Artillery and 14th Horse Artillery Brigades, with two batteries of the 56th Field Artillery Brigade, supporting the 22nd Infantry Brigade—were to follow the advance of the attacking battalions.¹

The German defences were unusually strong, with strong-points at intervals in the front line. They were, however, lightly held by two companies of the 11th Reserve Infantry Regiment in the front line, a company in the Quarries and another at Cité St. Elie. Only two German regiments (the 11th Reserve Infantry Regiment and the 16th Infantry Regiment) and the 11th Jäger Battalion opposed the advance of the I Corps.

The 22nd Brigade attacked with the 1st South Staffordshire and 2nd Royal Warwickshire leading, our 1st Battalion in support, and the 2nd Queen's in reserve.

¹ The 37th Brigade (Howitzers), less one battery, and the 57th Field Artillery Brigade were in Divisional Reserve.

On the 22nd September our 1st Battalion had marched from Gonnehem to La Bourse. The next day Lieutenant-Colonel Berners was ordered to Corps Headquarters as Reserve Brigadier, and Captain E. R. Kearsley took command of the battalion. On the 24th the battalion paraded at 10.45 p.m., and to the tune of the terrific bombardment, as they then thought, marched through the night to Vermelles, and so to their battle position at Clerk's Post, arriving at 2.30 a.m.

The instructions issued were that the attack was not planned to capture any particular locality, but to break down the enemy's defensive system and "shake free from the present indecisive trench warfare." Four objectives were given: the enemy's first-line trenches; the Quarries; Cité St. Elie; the Haute-Deule Canal crossings at Wingles and Meurchin with the high ground east of it.

The South Staffordshire would attack on the right, the Royal Warwickshire on the left. Our 1st Battalion was drawn up in rear and would move forward to the trenches occupied by the Warwickshire as soon as they were vacated by the assaulting troops.

When the leading troops reached the German first-line trenches, the battalion would advance in support and also cover the left flank of the brigade. On gaining the enemy's first line, the battalion was to swing half right.

It was raining hard when the artillery commenced rapid fire and the selected parties in the front trench opened the gas cylinders, alternating gas with smoke from Roman candles.

At 6.30 a.m. the leading brigades of the division advanced, climbing up their ladders over the parapet. The 20th Brigade, on the right, were in the middle of the gas cloud with their flannel-bag masks adjusted. These masks, or smoke-helmets, kept out the gas and also the air. Suffocated, the men had to remove them to breathe, and although they advanced rapidly, many were gassed. They had 350 yards to cross before reaching the German line, and the German artillery, having had plenty of time to note the gas and smoke cloud, was bursting shrapnel in the midst of it. Casualties were heavy. The wire had been cut in gaps and men had to crowd to the gaps to get through, which gave the enemy further opportunities of inflicting heavy loss. But as soon as the trench was entered, the enemy surrendered. The remnants of the attacking battalions, reinforced by their supports, then moved forward, captured a German battery, and reached the Lens road, about the Vermelles—Hulluch cross-roads. They were unable to go any farther.

The 22nd Brigade had 500 yards of No Man's Land to cross. The gas

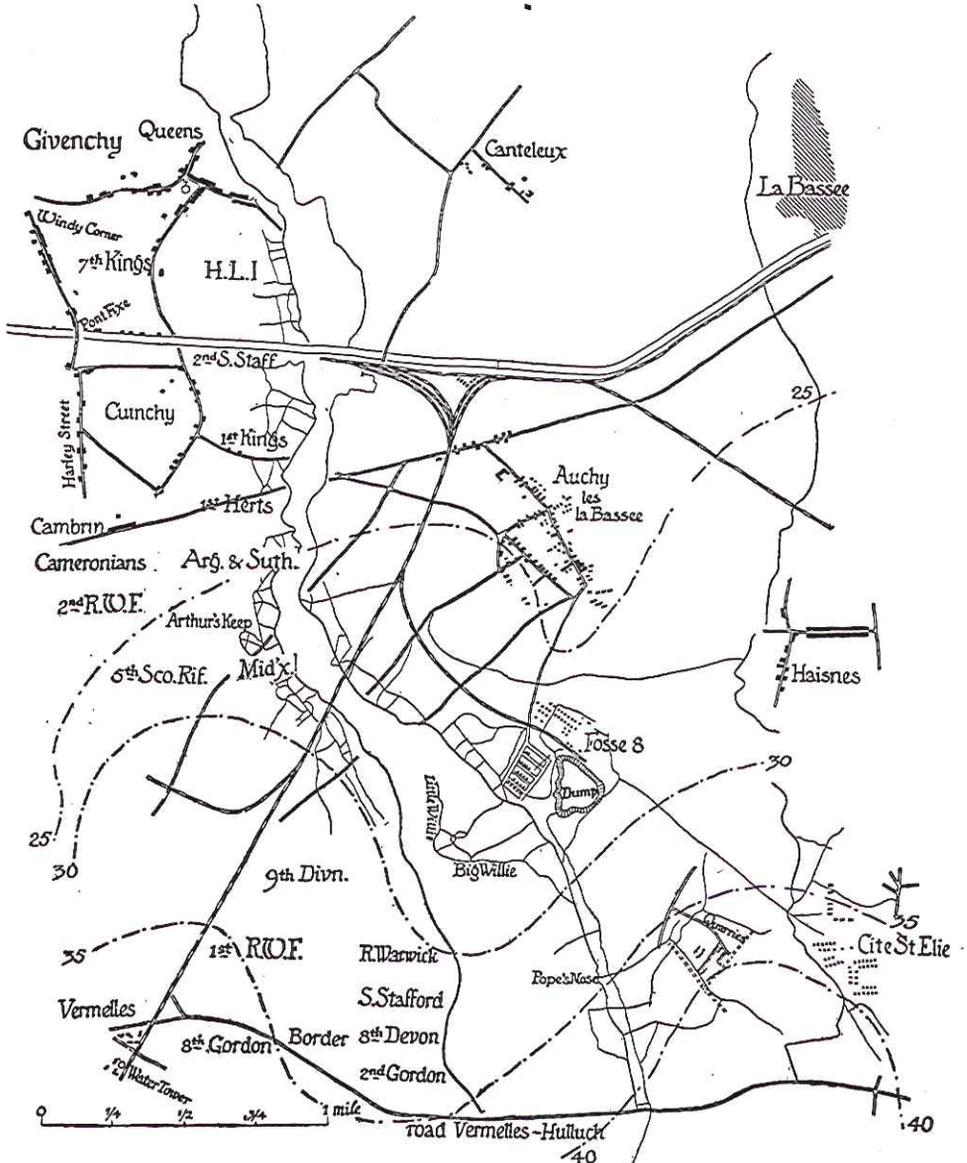
cloud hung thick round their trenches, and their experience was similar to that of the 20th Brigade. However, the Staffordshire and Warwickshire rushed through the smoke and gas and found themselves in the middle of No Man's Land, in full view of the German position. They also found that the wire had hardly been damaged, and had actually to scramble over and through it. The trenches also were in excellent condition after the four days' bombardment, and although the enemy were numerically weak the losses they were able to inflict while the attackers were entangled in the wire may be imagined.

While this was going on, the 26th Brigade of the 9th Division was attacking the Hohenzollern Redoubt on the left. This was a mighty work to which the Germans attached much importance. The slag-heap of Fosse 8 was behind it, tunnelled for observation and machine guns, and the Redoubt, well dug and strongly wired, had been made on a sort of "hump" in the ground in front of the Fosse, and connected up with the main line by the Big Willie Trench and Little Willie Trench. This work was to be assaulted whether the plan of attack with gas or the alternative of two separate attacks by the 9th and 15th Divisions was executed; consequently there had been special artillery preparation, and the assault of the 26th Brigade was quite successful, but it took time, and the assaulting troops had not worked their way down the north and south faces to the main line.

Our 1st Battalion had moved at 6.30 into the trenches vacated by the Warwickshire, and a quarter of an hour later went "over the top." The leading battalions were not yet through the wire. Our battalion, with A and B Companies leading, D and C in support 100 yards in rear, advanced over the 500 yards of No Man's Land and were met by terrific machine-gun fire, from the direction of the Hohenzollern Redoubt, from Big Willie and the slag-heap. The Commanding Officer, Captain Kearsley, seeing what was happening, ran forward from the supporting line, and managed to swing some of the troops round to deal with this fire; advancing then with the leading companies, he was badly wounded as they entered the German front line.

What happened is not clear. Officer casualties were heavy, and the three battalions, Warwickshire, South Staffordshire, and Royal Welch Fusiliers, were intermingled. No one knew who had been hit and who survived. The advance was delayed by fire from a strong-point on the right, dealt with eventually by the 20th Brigade. But at 8.30 a.m. the Queen's arrived from reserve, and the advance then swept forward over the Quarries to the defences of Cité St. Elie. Here the brigade was held by machine-gun fire, and found that the trenches before the village, and a

wide belt of strong wire, had been untouched by the bombardment. What remained of the brigade fell back to the Quarries and consolidated that position.



Lieutenant W. B. Reeves found himself in command of the battalion. Meanwhile the 21st Brigade had been sent forward (five battalions) to support the 20th and 22nd and carry on the advance. The left half-

brigade, 2nd Green Howards and 1/4th Camerons, arrived at the Quarries, and an officer patrol confirmed the report on the defences of Cité St. Elie. A further bombardment was ordered but did no harm to these defences, and at 7.30 p.m. orders were received to consolidate the positions won.

The situation of the 7th Division then was that the 20th Brigade held the Vermelles—Hulluch and Lens—La Bassée cross-roads; the 21st Brigade from the Vermelles—Hulluch road to the southern edge of the Quarries; the 22nd Brigade the east and north edges of the Quarries. Two brigades of artillery had moved up to within 1,500 yards of the captured positions.

Auchy was on the front of the 2nd Division. "The attacks," says Sir John French, ". . . were successful all along the line, except just south of La Bassée Canal." The 2nd Division attacked, on the immediate left of the 9th Division, with all three brigades, two south of the canal, on the Cambrin and Cuinchy sectors, one north, on the Festubert sector.

Only two German battalions held the front opposite the 2nd Division, the width of No Man's Land between them and the 2nd Division being on an average 100 yards. But they, no doubt realising that there were still mines below them (two were to be sprung in preparation for the attack), abandoned their front line, after levelling the parapet, and manned their support trench, which was only 100 yards behind.

The attack of the 19th Brigade, on the right, was led by the 1st Middlesex and the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; our 2nd Battalion were in support. The picture presented to them by the plan of battle was a short intensive artillery bombardment during which the gas was to be released, making all the Germans casualties. The leading battalions would then stroll across to the enemy lines and proceed to occupy the trench about 1,000 yards distant. The final objective was, however, the other side of Auchy.

Of the preliminary bombardment Captain Owen (Adjutant) says: "Our artillery fire was at the time considered to be heavy, but was nothing in comparison to what we became accustomed to later. The enemy's retaliation was slight, and it was quite easy to observe the effect of our fire without much risk. On the night of the 23rd the 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment took over our trenches, and we moved back to Bethune, where we remained until the next night, when we moved to the assembly trenches in front of Cambrin."

Disaster on this front was easy to predict. The wind, though but a faint breeze, was distinctly against the assaulting troops, and one engineer

officer refused to take the responsibility of turning on the gas ; he received, however, a direct order to carry out the programme, which seems an unnecessarily stringent devotion to discipline.¹ The gas left the parapet to the extent of its compressed force in the cylinders, and then blew gently back into the faces of the assaulting troops. In some places it was turned off, in others the cylinders were apparently allowed to empty themselves. Many were gassed.

The Middlesex and the Highlanders climbed over the parapet and stepped out of the cloud of gas and smoke.

Every German, warned by the gas cloud, was standing in his place—there had even been time to light straw fires to disseminate the cloud should it, by chance, blow towards them—and was ready to fire. Undeterred, the troops advanced, but had to bunch to get round the craters. Then the storm broke loose. The assaulting troops fell in heaps. Still, a few managed to reach the wire, which was uncut, of the original German front line.

While the leading battalions were being shattered, the supporting companies knew nothing of what was going on as they moved forward in the deep, narrow trenches to occupy the vacated front line.

Captain Freeman led B Company, and with him were Moody, his only subaltern, and Company Sergeant-Major Pattison, and a few bombers. They had gone only a little distance when the trenches were found blocked with debris, wounded, runners, and stretcher bearers. Arriving at what was thought to be the front line, and was found to be the support, Freeman discovered that only twenty of his men had got through the jamb and kept up with him. As he was due in the front line in twenty minutes, he sent Moody and Company Sergeant-Major Pattison over the top to find and bring up the rest of the company. Just as these two returned to report their failure, Lieutenant-Colonel Williams ran forward with a wound over his eye, from which the blood streamed down his face ; he was very concerned, as he had seen that the attack was failing, so he ordered the troops in the vicinity to advance over the top at once.

At that moment Freeman collapsed—it was found later that he died of heart failure—and Moody led the party forward. Six had become casualties by the time the front line was reached, most of the party thinking, in the confusion and excitement, that it was the German line.

The scene in front was indescribable. The ground was strewn with dead and wounded, thick near the parapet, thinning beyond. Many of the wounded were crawling back through the grass. The gas was still drifting

¹ The Brigadier asked to have the gas order cancelled on the 19th Brigade front, but was informed he was "too late."

up from the right and rising from the cylinders in our trenches to come back over our line.

Moody again made search for the main body of his company, and having found it, reported to Headquarters for orders. Lieutenant-Colonel Williams and Major Clegg-Hill had both been hit, and the Adjutant, Captain Owen, was in command. In lurid and characteristic fashion he told Moody to advance.

Moody got his company into line and went forward. Half the company fell in the first thirty yards. As there was no prospect of the remaining 200 yards being covered by any but those born to be hanged, the remainder dropped in their tracks and stayed where they were.

At 9 a.m. a runner was given a message requesting orders from Headquarters, and failing to return, another was dispatched at 10.30 a.m. B Company then received orders to stand fast and take part in a renewed attack which would be launched at 11 a.m.—the appearance above the parapet of the bayonets of the attacking troops would inform them when to move!

At 4 p.m. Moody, tired of watching for bayonets, crawled back to the trench "like an earthworm," and sought fresh orders. He was greeted at Headquarters by Captain C. S. Owen with, "Hullo! I thought you were dead!"—and told to bring his company back.

B Company crawled back to the trench in ones and twos, under cover of the long grass.

The experience of C Company was similar. Captain Samson was initially wounded just outside the front-line wire.

"I saw no shells bursting over the German trenches, so, the morning being bright and sunny, the German riflemen and machine gunners took their toll of us undisturbed. We may have gone 40 yards, and then the line just fell down. Samson was killed; Goldsmith and I were badly wounded; the casualties among the men were heavy. I was out of the trench with a fractured pelvis. A less wounded man near me wanted to carry me in, but I told him we would both be shot; however, he started to get up and was wounded again immediately. I crawled back slowly, and was laid in the bottom of the trench, where I was nearly suffocated with gas before the Doctor came and had me moved to a narrow communication trench. I lay there for five hours. No stretcher could be used, even if one had been available. Eventually I was carried down slung on my putties between two rifles. It was an exceedingly painful journey. Once clear of the trench the medical arrangements were very good." (Blair.)

In both companies casualties were increased by men attempting to get their wounded comrades back to the trench.

"It was considered hopeless to send any more troops forward. The attack, as far as it concerned our front, was stopped. Many of our own men were gassed. I was in the front line and got a really good stomachful, and my head was splitting for forty-eight hours after it." (C. S. Owen.)

"Some 600 wounded of the 19th Brigade passed through my hands in an improvised dressing-station 1,000 to 1,100 yards behind the front, also about 300 gas and 'wind-up' cases, during the thirty-six hours after zero." (J. C. Dunn, Medical Officer.)

The 9th Battalion fared no better in the attack about Festubert. They advanced in line with the 9th Welch, but again the gas blew back and the wire was uncut. Lieutenant-Colonel Madocks, watching the advance of his battalion from the parapet, was killed at once. The men could do nothing.

So far as the regiment was concerned, the attack of the 1st Battalion only was successful, they having reached the outskirts of Cité St. Elie. After-comments state: "With both flanks in the air, as usual, and a strongly entrenched and wired enemy in front of us, what could we do but fall back? There were no reinforcements!"

Errors of judgment abound in military history, and sometimes appear incredible: one cannot assume the mentality and enter the atmosphere of the moment. The first conception of this battle seems clear, the picture of successive lines of troops advancing, a simultaneous advance of front and rear units; but there was a misunderstanding between Sir John French and General Haig. General Haig understood that he was to have the XI Corps, and only discovered shortly before the battle that Sir John intended to keep the corps under his own hand. Different ideas prevailed in the minds of the Commander-in-Chief and the First Army Commander as to the nature of the battle. Sir John, apparently, never believed a breakthrough possible. General Haig had based his plans on that possibility, and expected the XI Corps to be close up in rear of the attacking divisions and advance with them. With difficulty he persuaded Sir John to move the corps within six miles of the battle-front, and divisions marched all night (24th/25th) through pouring rain to get there; but they were not handed over to him until late in the morning of the 25th, and the difficulties of getting into position were such that they could not be used that day.¹

¹ The question of wisdom in using inexperienced divisions can never be argued satisfactorily, as the 9th and 15th fought with the greatest gallantry and determination, and there is no reason why the 21st and 24th should not have done likewise. The Commander-in-Chief was in favour of using these new formations by brigades, even by battalions.

So the 24th Division, which might have supported the assault of the I Corps, and given the necessary impetus to secure Haisnes and Cité St. Elie, was not available.

The confusion behind the battle-front was indescribable. The question of the reserve had been settled about midday, and First Army Orders had been issued to drive the attack through the German second line (which was believed to have been pierced), but the 73rd Brigade, the leading brigade of the 24th Division, did not reach its allotted place in Fosse Trench till past midnight.

The enemy had tottered, but the moment was lost. The German 117th Division, reinforced by the 26th Reserve Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Guard Reserve Division, was ordered to attack in the north on a front Fosse 8—the Quarries—Gun Trench. They delivered this attack about midnight, with the guns at Auchy taking the 9th Division in flank.

The remnants of the 22nd Brigade—one cannot now distinguish battalions—held the greater part of the Quarries, but touch had never been gained with the troops of the 9th Division on the left. The latter were about 500 yards to the left front of the 22nd Brigade, and the German attack found this gap, and turned the flanks of the 22nd and 27th Brigades. It was impossible to retrieve such a situation, in the middle of the night, with shattered battalions and few officers. The whole of the 22nd Brigade fell back and rallied in the original German front-line trench, 1,000 yards in rear. The Brigade Commander of the 27th Brigade, who had moved his headquarters into the Quarries, was captured. It was, there is no doubt, a scramble.

Our 1st Battalion remained in the German first line through the 26th, and moved into the old British first line on the 27th; the next day they went back to Sailly la Bourse, and on the 1st October into the line again at Cambrin.

The casualties¹ of the 1st Battalion were: killed, Lieutenant G. W. S. Morgan and 43 other ranks; wounded, Captains E. R. Kearsley, R. M. J. French, Lieutenants J. M. J. Evans, A. Walmsley, S. Williams, E. I. Jones, F. Jones-Bateman, W. I. James, H. J. F. Brunt, 2nd Lieutenants H. E. Farmer, H. J. Brett, and 264 other ranks; missing, 135 other ranks.

Of the 2nd Battalion: Captains A. L. Samson, J. A. C. Childe-Freeman,

¹ Three divisional commanders were killed at Loos. With deep regret the 1st Battalion heard that Major-General Sir Thompson Capper died on the 27th from wounds received the previous day. Major-General Thessiger (9th Division) and Major-General Wing (12th Division) shared his fate.

G. O. Thomas, and 34 other ranks killed ; Lieutenant-Colonel O. de L. Williams, Captains C. R. Clegg-Hill, P. B. Welton, Lieutenant H. M. Blair, 2nd Lieutenant H. E. G. Goldsmith, and 71 other ranks wounded.

Of the 9th Battalion : Lieutenant-Colonel H. J. Madocks, Captains C. A. Acton, E. G. Payne, L. S. Hogg (Adjutant), B. W. E. Hoyle, Lieutenant C. F. J. Symons, 2nd Lieutenants R. J. Williams, and 24 other ranks killed ; Lieutenants H. J. Williams, G. H. Charlton, 2nd Lieutenants R. H. Higham, C. Y. Fawcett, and 129 other ranks wounded ; 85 other ranks missing.

All efforts to improve on the situation created by the first assault failed. The 21st Division on the right (IV Corps) and the 24th on the left (I Corps), having gone into battle without food or rest during the previous thirty-six hours, were called upon to attack, sustained heavy casualties, and eventually broke, retiring from the right and centre of the battlefield. The Guards Division was then sent forward but did no good, for the redoubt over the crest of Hill 70 was not taken, and Hugo Wood remained in the hands of the enemy. The enemy also retook Fosse 8 and practically the whole of the Hohenzollern Redoubt ; at the latter the fighting developed into bombing attacks.

Gas was tried a second time, at the Hohenzollern Redoubt, where, although the wind was in the right quarter, it was a failure ; and on the 2nd Division front. " On the 26th and 27th," says Captain Owen, " a continual bombardment was kept up on both sides, and at 5 p.m. on the 27th the 2nd Battalion was ordered to attack the enemy's position. Gas was to be again released prior to the attack. Brigade Headquarters rang up and ordered very careful observation to be made of the effect of our gas on the enemy. It was found that the enemy was very little affected and were holding their line in strength as if expecting an attack. On Brigade Headquarters being informed of this, the attack was stopped just in time to save many casualties."

There remained then nothing—the village and valley of Loos, the reverse slopes of Hill 70.

In the 19th Infantry Brigade the feeling was that the High Command had made a mess of things, and denunciation of " the cavalry Generals " who monopolised these commands was bitter.

THE BATTLES OF 1915.

The battles in which the regiment took part in 1915 were a failure. On each occasion, at Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert, and Loos, the enemy had been greatly inferior in numbers, and the promise of success

seemed assured ; but the experience of the regiment in 1914, when, greatly outnumbered, battalions had repulsed or arrested advancing hordes of Germans, was repeated in 1915, when they, in turn, attacked a numerically weak but brave and determined foe. Obviously attack demanded a greater sacrifice than defence, and good German troops on the defensive might be expected to do as well as British, but, apart from quantities, there was a great contrast in the idea of armaments : at the time of Neuve Chapelle and Festubert shrapnel was still considered by the Army authorities to be effective for wire-cutting and general use against trenches ; it seems that the importance of flattening trenches as well as wire had not been sufficiently considered. On the other hand, the Germans had been, from the first, strong advocates of high-explosive shells which would actually destroy trenches and the infantry in them—as the regiment knew from 1914 experience. The conditions of attack were, therefore, not equal on both sides. Although gaps may have been cut by British shrapnel in the enemy wire, the German machine gunner remained in the shelter of his trench with his fire power unimpaired ; whereas the British, always, by unaccountable short-sightedness, inferior in machine guns, had to resist attack by rifle power alone and in vulnerable trenches.

In spite of the poor artillery support, there had been a great opportunity at Neuve Chapelle. Opinion, within the regiment, was freely expressed at the time that it had been thrown away by faulty command : it was justified. Festubert was the sudden change in plan of Aubers Ridge, and does not appear to have offered the same promise of success as Neuve Chapelle. But these two battles impressed on the enemy the immediate necessity for a strong second line ; and so at Loos, although some cause of our earlier failure had been met by increased artillery and high-explosive ammunition, the task of our infantry was infinitely greater, as was that of the artillery.

One can say that the front-line was completely smashed at Loos. For a couple of hours, perhaps a little more, there was, owing to the weakness in German numbers, an opportunity, which had to be snatched, to get through the second line, but one wonders, if the XI Corps had been at hand, whether they could have been in time to grasp it : the congestion and confusion behind the British front before the first assault were hopeless.

Lessons were learnt on both sides. See the preparations in 1916 for the Somme, the roads and railways that were constructed to deal with the traffic to and from the battlefield ; see, too, the German lines of defence, becoming infinite. The regiment grew, battalions continued to arrive in France ; the Army passed the million figure ; guns could be counted by thousands : and the task became increasingly difficult.