

Caunton Stories



Alexander Antcliffe was a private in the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment. He was born in Caunton, Nottingham on 29th July 1897. Aged 13, he was working as a farm boy. He enlisted in March 1914 at Newark and initially served with the 20th Hussars, Household Cavalry. He later served with the 1st and then the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment. He arrived in France on 29th June 1915 and was serving with the Machine Gun Section, 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment, when he was killed by a shell on 2nd March 1916. Originally commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, his body was later found and identified. He was buried in Oostaverne Wood Cemetery, Belgium.

Alexander's name was removed from the Menin Gate Memorial on 4th February 1937 when his body was recovered and identified by his disc and a coin. Two other men found with him were not identified.

Francis Arthur Wombwell was a Lance Corporal in the 20th Hussars. He was born in Caunton, Nottinghamshire in 1893. Before the war he worked as a farm labourer. He enlisted at Newark in the 20th Hussars. On 17 August 1914 the regiment along with the rest of the 5th Cavalry Brigade, crossed the channel with a strength of 24 officers and 519 men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Edwards. On 23rd August they took part in the Battle of Mons and would be engaged in several key battles of the First World War. Francis would unfortunately lose his life on 3rd April 1918. He was buried in St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France.

George Samuel Moody was a trooper in the 1st Battalion Life Guards. He was born in Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire in 1896. His father was a farmer at Middlethorpe Grange Farm, Caunton and George was working on the farm before the war. He enlisted in the 1st Battalion Life Guards, Household Cavalry in London. By 1918 he was stationed at Etaples, France. During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern or the southern battlefields. In 1917, 100,000 troops were camped among the sand dunes and the hospitals, which included eleven general, one stationary, four Red Cross hospitals and a convalescent depot, could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick. George was killed on the evening of 19th May 1918, during a German air raid on the camp at the base in France while defending nurses and wounded.

George William Barker was a private in the 8th Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment. He was born in Nottingham on 12th March 1894. Before the war he worked as a servant and he enlisted at Newark on 5th October 1914 in the 1st/8th Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment, stating his occupation as a farm labourer. He died of wounds received in action on 19th September 1915 and was buried in Etaples

Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais. On 29th August 1915 he had received gunshot wounds to both legs and neck that would prove fatal less than a month later.

John Frederick Potterton was a private in the 1st/4th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. He was born in Burton, Lincoln in 1895. He enlisted in Grantham in the 1st/4th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. He arrived in France on 18th August 1915 and was killed two months later on 13th October 1915 during the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt. He was initially reported missing and was later presumed dead.

Sydney Gibson was a private in the 2nd/5th Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment. His mother died in 1890 in Caunton and his father died in 1915. In 1901 he was living at the Fox & Hound Inn, Caunton, with its owners George and Anne Drabble. He was described as a servant and also a stock man on a farm. Before the war he was working as a market gardener. He enlisted at Newark in the 2nd/5th Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment (Sherwood Foresters). The battalion formed in October 1914 were part of the second line of Territorials within the British Army. They moved to Luton in January 1915 before continuing to Watford. In April 1916 they were sent to Ireland to quell disturbances during the Easter Rising. Sydney, however, appears to have arrived in France on 2nd March 1915 and was killed in action on 21st March 1918 during the Battle of San Quentin on the first day of the German Spring Offensive. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais.

George William Smith



Alexander Antcliffe