

## **Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short**

**By Simon J. Bartlett, a great-nephew**



**With brother Alan in 1913, and in training in Ireland, before his promotion to sergeant: probably 1915.**

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## 1. Origins and childhood

Harry Bailey was born on October 22, 1893, in Stourton, Warwickshire. Stourton was in the parish of St Michael, Whichford, until 1911, but the centres of Stourton and Whichford are two miles apart, whereas the villages of Cherington and Stourton lie side by side. As a result, like his five brothers and sister, Harry was baptised in the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Cherington, on December 10th. 1893.

The family home from at least 1891 was a tied cottage which went with the job of farm labourer. It was owned by the Shaw family, the then head of which was farmer Robert Bartholomew Shaw. The first head of the Bailey family of Stourton was Harry's grandfather John Nichols Bailey (1810-1890), shoemaker and sometime butcher, who was a resident of Cherington at the time of his marriage in 1833 and by the time of the 1851 census was living in Stourton. Born in Bodicote, Oxfordshire, a dozen miles from Stourton, he had been apprenticed to a Banbury shoemaker until 1829.

Harry Bailey's father John (1847-1918) was the sixth of the ten children of John Nichols Bailey and his wife Mary, née Colleycutt. In the 1881 census entry, recorded on the night of April 3rd, the household of farmer Robert Shaw includes a general domestic servant named Mary Allen, from Ashton under Hill, then in the county of Gloucester but now in Worcestershire. Later in the year, on November 8th, John Bailey, occupation shepherd, married Mary Elizabeth Allen at the Parish Church of St Barbara in his bride's home village of Ashton.

1901

census

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the

Page 15

Civil Parish

St Michael

Rural District

Stratford-on-Avon

Town or Village or Hamlet

Stourton

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

Name and Surname of each Person

RELATION to Head of Family

Condition as to Marriage

Age last Birthday of

PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION

Employer, Worker, or Own Account

If Working at Home

WHERE BORN

(1) Deaf and Dumb  
(2) Blind  
(3) Lame  
(4) Imbecile, Feeble-minded

John Bailey

Head

Mar

53

Labourer on Farm

Worker

Warwick Stourton

Mary E. Bailey

Wife

Mar

40

Cher. Ashton and Hill

William C. Dr

Son

S

18

Labourer on Farm

Worker

Warwick Stourton

Frederick - Dr

Son

S

16

Labourer on Farm

Worker

Stourton

John - Dr

Son

"

14

Labourer on Farm

Worker

Stourton

Arthur - Dr

Son

"

11

Scholar

Stourton

Alice May. Dr

Daughter

"

8

Stourton

Harry - Dr

Son

"

7

Stourton

The census taken on March 31, 1901 (left) records all of John and Mary's family including Harry, except for their last child, Alan, who was born in 1903. Sons William Cornelius ("Bill" or "Will"), Frederick ("Fred") and John ("Jack") were by then all farm labourers, and were another generation of Baileys employed by local landowners the Shaws. By this time Robert Bartholomew Shaw had retired, leaving his son Robert Henry (Harry) Shaw in charge.

In the 1960s, Ashton-under-Hill farmer Fred Archer wrote about his memories of pre-war Ashton and in his books records tales, events, and conversations with old villagers.<sup>1</sup> He repeated dialect words that they used, many of which were familiar to him, and reproduced their own way of saying others that were not strictly dialect. Some I heard my granny (Alice) use, probably learnt from her mother, and I'm sure her brother Harry used them too, when he chose to speak "local", for example, with the village mates he ended up alongside on the Western Front. Most typical are the verb forms. Some examples are, *thee bist* - you (familiar) are; *beunt ya?* - aren't you?; *thur yunt* - there isn't; *mi bwoy/bway* - my boy; *fayther* - father.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



The picture above left shows Harry and sister Alice at home in Stourton with their mother and baby brother Alan, born in March 1903. On the right is the Bailey family home in around 1924, known today as “Long Walk”. The use of liberal amounts of farmyard manure produced the Baileys’ prize-winning vegetables, as well as often towering flowers to provide plenty of nectar for honey bees – a hive is visible on the left of the photograph.



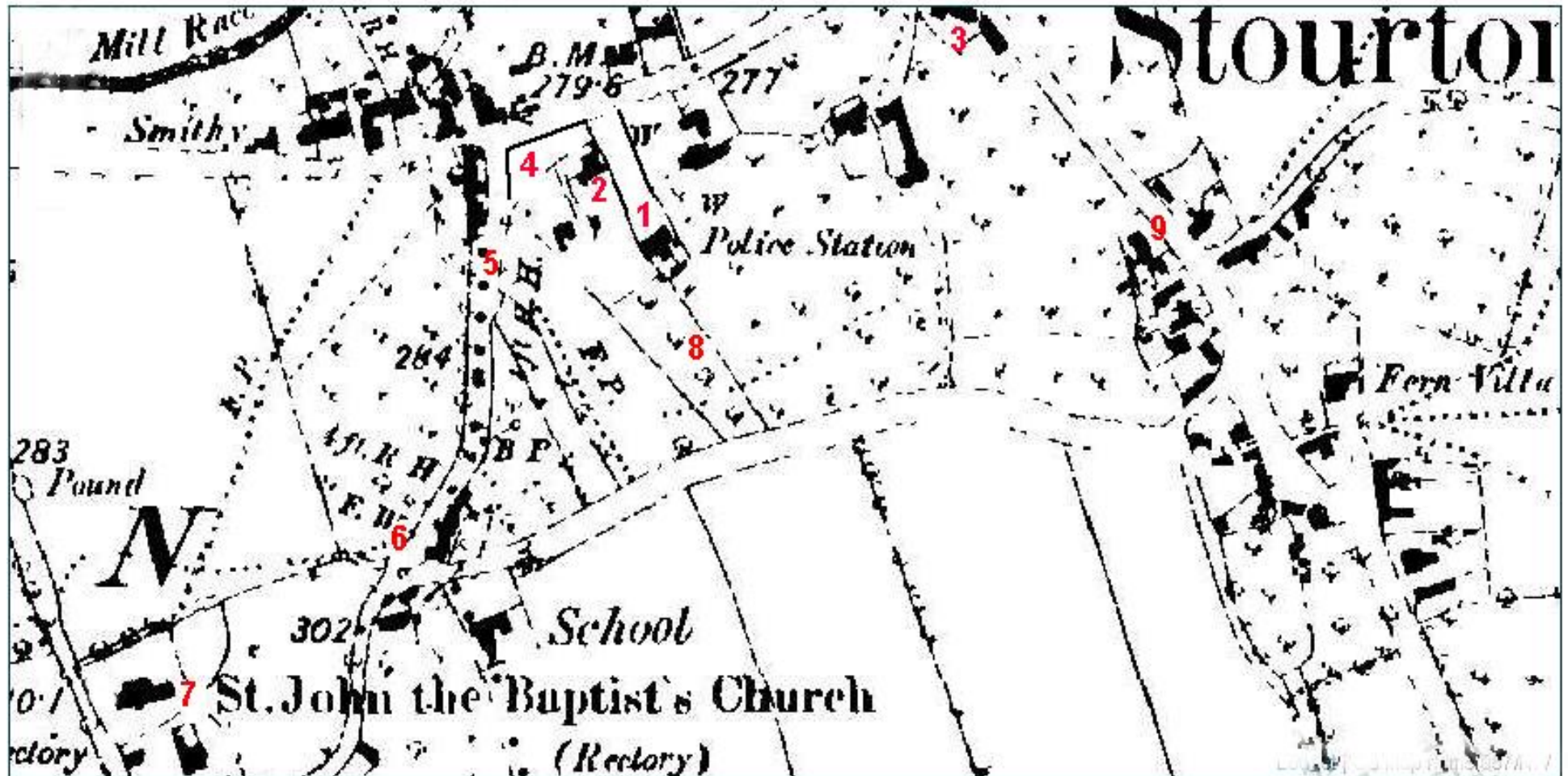
In the boater is Harry’s brother Arthur, who had a successful career in the Warwickshire Constabulary, ultimately rising to Chief Superintendent. He is pictured with his wife Jessie, sister Alice Bartlett, her children John Edward and Mary, and his dog Dandy. When the Shaws auctioned the building in the 1930s, Arthur had the wherewithal to buy it, paying £800. After the sale he kept the half on the left and sold the other half to Alice and her family. In 2018 her daughter Mary’s widower Arthur Cornish still lived there with their only child, another Harry.

Features of its roof structure suggest that Long Walk was once a barn, probably originally standing on a field track, hence the “long walk” up from the road. A date stone (left) on the façade may refer to the year of its conversion to a dwelling, probably by farming landowner William Jaques, rather than that of its original construction.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the left (E.) side of the building was the local Police Station – now 1, Long Walk, and marked (1) on the Ordnance Survey map below, from the 1893-1897 series. Growing up next door may well have influenced Arthur Bailey in his choice of career. In 1891 P.C. Henry Prime and family appear to have been the Baileys' next-door neighbours; at the 1901 census they were P.C. George Barrett, his wife and son. Until the second decade of the 21st century, a single-storey one-roomed building adjoining the rear of what had been the Police Station had stout iron rings bolted to the wall. They were standard fittings to restrain prisoners when the room was used as a police cell or "lock-up". (2) and (3) on the map were Shaw family residences, (3) being attached to their farm buildings. The Green at Stourton (4) and Featherbed Lane (5) are on the western boundary between Stourton and Cherington, while (6) marks the Cherington and Stourton war memorial, erected where the villages join.



## Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Stourton had only a Methodist chapel, now converted into a private house; so the Parish Church in Cherington (7) was, and is, used by inhabitants of both villages. (8) was the Shaw family's orchard, leading up to the road which marks Stourton's southern boundary with Cherington. The 1915 photograph of the Bailey family which appears on a following page was taken in the orchard. This was enjoyed by Bailey children as a playground and by all the family as a place for a picnic. Apples from the orchard were no doubt used by Harry's brother Bill Bailey in the making of his powerful cider. By the time of the First World War, the Police Station was at (9). That building is now called The Bell House and is shown in the 1914 picture of the villages' volunteer soldiers, in the following chapter. On Chief Supt. Arthur Bailey's retirement, he and wife Jessie lived at Fern Villa. The fact that it is named on the Ordnance Survey map suggests its status as a more notable residence, which was appropriate for a "local boy made good".

### 2. Growing up

The whole family, including Alan, are recorded in the 1911 census schedule. Will, or Bill, has followed in his father's footsteps as a cattleman, while Harry and Arthur are looking after the horses. The enumerator ("G.C.L.") was George Caleb Long of Cherington, wheelwright and Parish Clerk.

1	John Bailey	Head	61		Married					Cowman on Farm
2	Mary Elizabeth Bailey	Wife		49	Married	29	7	7	0	
3	William Cornelius Bailey	Son	28		Single					Cowman on Farm
4	Fredrick Bailey	Son	26		Single					Farm Labourer
5	John Bailey Junr	Son	24		Single					Farm Labourer
6	Arthur Thomas Bailey	Son	21		Single					Groom (Domestic)
7	Alice May Bailey	Daughter	<del>20</del>	18	Single					
8	Harry Bailey	Son	17		Single					Groom (Domestic)
9	Alan Bailey	Son	8							School

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that:— (1.) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex columns. (2.) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3.) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	Total.		
	Males.	Females.	Persons.
	7	2	9
Initials of Enumerator <u>G.C.L.</u>			

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop. <u>7 rooms.</u>
--

Of the seven rooms they had, just three were (and still are) upstairs bedrooms, and one of those is tiny. It must have been a tight fit at night, although matters would have improved in 1913 when both John jnr (Jack) and Alice got married and left the family home.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Figures in the census entry for Mary Bailey show that she and John had then been married for 29 years, that she had had 7 children, and that 7 were still living and none had died. Five of them married: John Jnr. ("Jack") and sister Alice married Eliza ("Lizzie") Brewer and Sia Bartlett in June and December 1913, while the wedding of Arthur and Jessie (née Wells) took place in 1915. In 1919, on his return from the war, Fred Bailey married Lucy Davis, while Alan married Edith ("Edie") Butler in 1937.

As Harry grew, he made the most of village activities. For example, he had a good singing voice and was encouraged to sing solos by Mrs Nora Dickins of Cherington House<sup>2</sup>. The Dickinses had for generations been the most influential family in the community. A former pupil of Elgar's, Mrs Dickins started a village Choral Society and would "headhunt" singers for "her" Parish Church choir, even among chapel goers. She was a founder of the still flourishing Chipping Norton Music Festival and also ran a lending library ("Mrs Dickins' Cherington Book Club"), to which Harry belonged<sup>3</sup>.

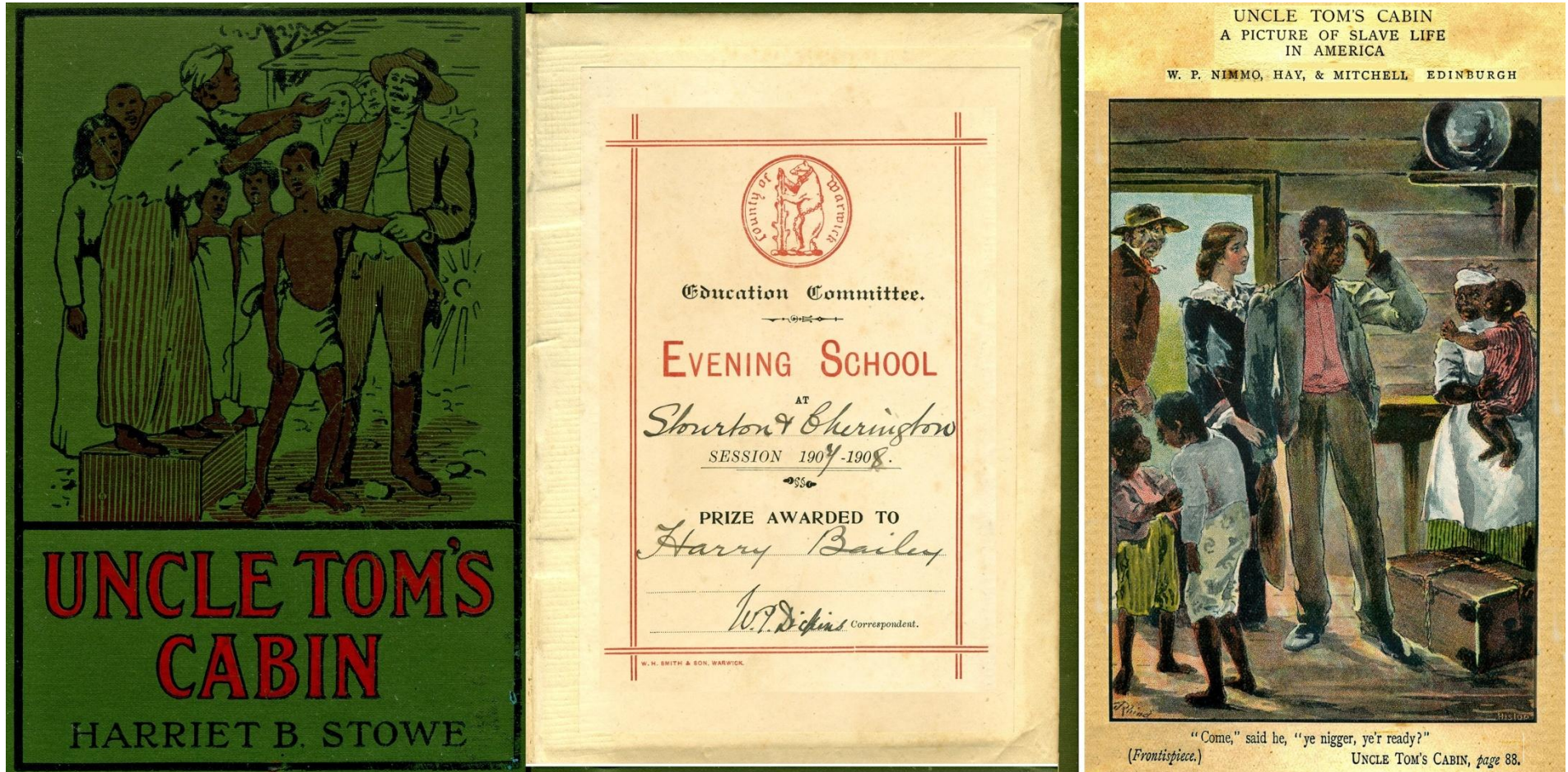


In this photograph of about 1909, Fred Bailey is right at the back in the bowler hat, with brother Arthur to his left. On the extreme right of the picture stands a very small boy: Harry Bailey, then aged about fifteen, is third from the right in the same row, with no-one directly behind him.

By then, Harry would already have left school, the leaving age for most being just twelve. The Workers' Educational Association had been founded in 1903 by Albert and Frances Mansbridge, using half a crown (12½p) of their housekeeping money, but had not yet established branches all across the country. However, we know that Harry Bailey went to Stourton and Cherington Evening School, and he seems to have been a good pupil. On February 20<sup>th</sup> 1908, he received a sixpenny copy of Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* "for regular attendance and good conduct", and at the end of the school year 1907-8, when he was nearly fifteen, he was awarded another popular book as a prize:



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



The prize certificate appears to have been signed by barrister William Park Dickins, head of the Dickins household of Cherington House until his death in the following year of 1909. However, it is very possible that the prize was chosen by his daughter Mrs Harriet Eleanora, “Nora”, Dickins (she was the widow of a cousin, Rev. Alan Dickins, so retained her maiden surname when she married).

As a moral tale asserting that Christian love can overcome something as destructive as enslavement of fellow human beings, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would have been considered very suitable for a young mind. In the nineteenth century, it is claimed, it sold more copies than any other book apart from the Bible, and when young Harry received a copy as his Evening School prize, it was still a best-seller.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Harry became a member of the recently formed village football team. Surviving minutes<sup>4</sup> show that it was started in September 1907, when by a unanimous vote it was named Cherington Old Boys. Fred Bailey and Sia Bartlett were on the first committee, with Arthur Bailey as secretary. In those pre-war days they played 13 or 14 matches, from October to March (11 in the first season). The length of the season was undoubtedly affected by the fact that many of the players will have been farm labourers working long hours in spring and summer. In 1910-11 the Old Boys had three



practice nights, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. For 1909-10 they had the goalposts repaired and painted and this may have been a good omen as the results were Played 13, Won 10, Lost 1, Drawn 2. 1911-12 was an outstanding year. Their great rivals in the Wolford and District League were the Shipston-on-Stour team Shipston Excelsior. In the last match of the season, on March 16th, second-placed Cherington beat leaders Shipston 3-1 away, on their sloping pitch, to overtake them and lift the league champions' cup. Fred Bailey was the triumphant goalkeeper, with future brother-in-law Sia and brothers Jack and young Harry also playing.

Here is the Cherington Old Boys **Cup-Winning Team**. The photographer appears to have tried to scratch "C W T" over the ball, on his glass negative.

Standing: Ern Harris (linesman), full backs Jack Bailey and Sia Bartlett, goalie Fred Bailey, coach Frank Simkins. Crouching: half-backs F. Gregory, Bert Jarrett, Fred Simkins. Forwards: Will Miller, Harold Hunt, George Ridley, Frank Jarrett, Harry Bailey.

The Evesham Journal and Four Shires Advertiser reported the match on March 23rd 1912. They made two mistakes with the names of Cherington O.B. players when they referred to "Ben" in goal (it was Fred) and a "Hampton" as the scorer of their second goal (it was Ridley). Here is an extract:

*Mander [captain of Shipston] won the toss and kicked downhill ... from the start each team played for all they were worth, each goal being visited in turn. Then H. Bailey got away in the left, and sent in a shot which [goalkeeper] Foulger partly cleared, but Ridley dashed in and netted a beauty. From the kick off down came the homesters, only to be sent back by a sound defence, but they still kept up the pressure and sent in some good shots, but they found Ben all there. Just before the interval the homesters scored from a corner..... Half Time: Shipston 1 Old Boys 1. From the restart away went the Old Boys ... the home forwards could do little uphill against the visiting halves, spoiling their chances by holding the ball and trying the short passing game, unlike their opponents, who were lifting the ball from wing to wing, much the better game in the mud, which was plentiful. Hampton scored again from a corner, and just before time Hunt scored a third .... The Old Boys thus gain the league championship.*



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The league win was a victory to make the most of, and worth penning a few lines of doggerel for, to commemorate the feat. The verse was printed out on this “memorial” card for distribution among family and friends, and surely to be left in places where it would be read by the players and supporters of Shipston Excelsior, no doubt smarting from their home defeat and loss of a championship title they thought was theirs.

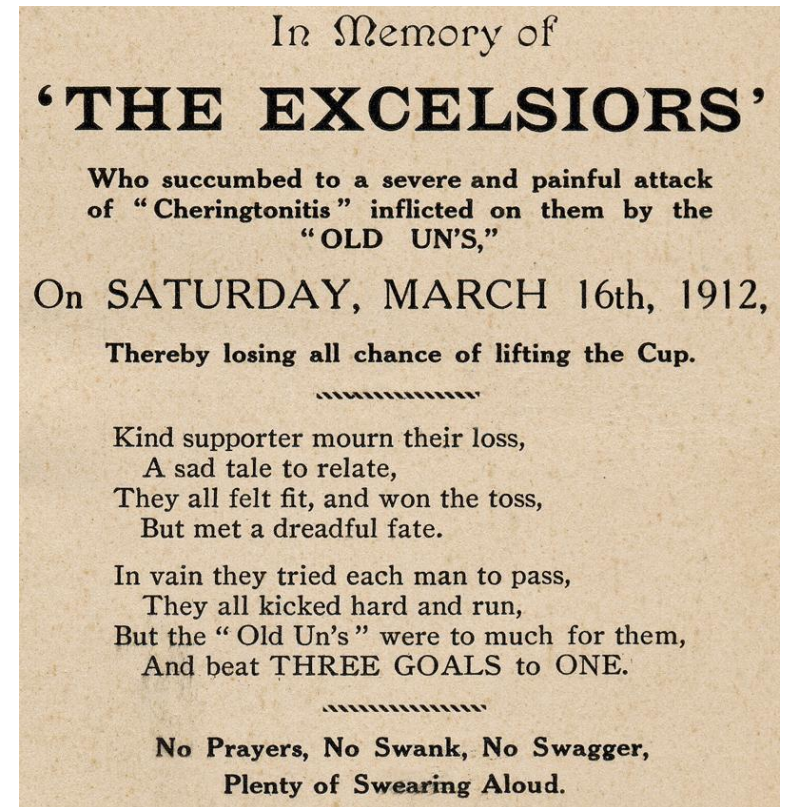
So Harry was one of the village heroes – he had grown into a boy chap. The “boy chaps” were the young men as yet unmarried, and in places were known as such up until the 1950s., especially in south-west England, but also in Cherington and Stourton.

Although many soccer fans in Harry’s village (possibly him included) followed Aston Villa, the Bartlett in-laws supported West Bromwich Albion. This was almost certainly the result of their having an uncle, Joseph Seth Riley, living about four miles from the team’s ground, The Hawthorns. That meant taking Friday afternoon off to cycle the 50 miles there, stay the night, see the match on Saturday and then probably ride home on the Sunday. A more costly option, which could at a pinch have meant doing the round trip in one day, was to cycle 16 miles to Stratford-on-Avon and catch a train.

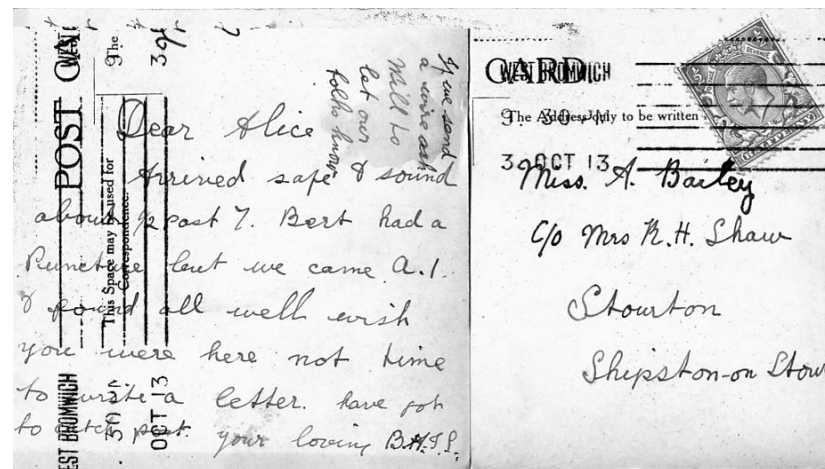
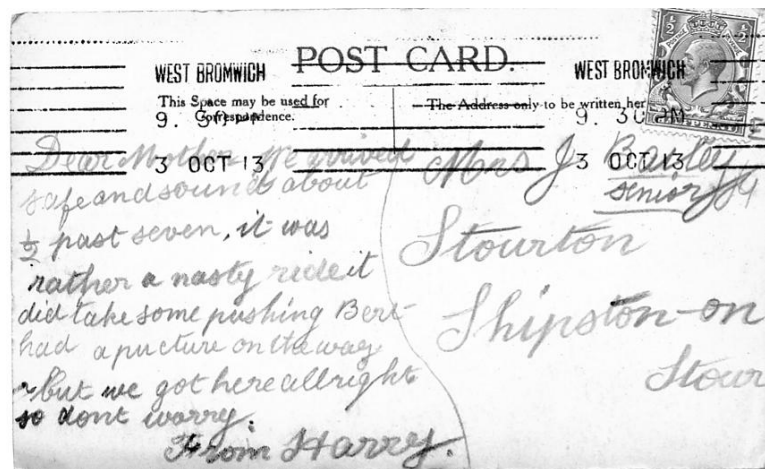
A match worth the effort was of course West Brom v Villa. In the 1912-13 season, the fixture was on Saturday, October 4th, and Baileys and Bartletts decided to do the hundred-mile round trip by bike. We are able to learn how they got on, at least on the way there, from two surviving postcards, shown below.

They were pre-telephone days for most people, and there were no public phone boxes till the first concrete kiosks appeared in 1920, four years before the iconic red phone box. Telegrams were an option, but an expensive one if the wire contained many words. However, costing just a halfpenny, a postcard was a cheap way to send a message, and also a quick one. Thanks to the vast network of local branch railways and the acceptance that a rural postman had to walk and cycle a long round six days a week until his bag was empty, it was the norm for a letter or card sent by early evening to be delivered the next day, if the distance involved was not too great. There was no “second class” mail!

Another postcard, involving a different journey, suggests that the cyclists would aim to average about ten miles an hour, so with breaks the trip to West Bromwich would have taken something like six hours. Of course, bad weather, punctures and the like would complicate matters. Riding at night was often difficult, with little or no artificial light outside towns, and a cyclist relying on a carbide front light producing a gas flame which would easily go out if you hit a bump or it ran out of the water needed to react with the lumps of carbide. Nevertheless, the affordable “safety bicycle”, with its smaller wheels (a notable advance from the penny farthing type where the rider was high in the air) and pneumatic tyres, was a liberating means of transport for many, and an invention which when the men rode to see the match at West Bromwich was still less than twenty years old.



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Postcards franked in West Bromwich at 9.30 p.m. on Friday October 3rd 1913, the eve of the derby between West Bromwich and Aston Villa.

We learn from the cards that the cyclists had arrived two hours before, so they would have ridden most of the last hour in the dark. The main message on the card on the right was written at 90 degrees to the address and has been rotated. Harry Bailey's card to his mother shows that in the absence of gears, for most cyclists, a hilly ride involved quite a bit of pushing up the hills. Gearing had been invented (including the famous Sturmey Archer hubs) but was still not commercially available, apparently through lack of demand – very possibly because of the extra cost involved.

The second postcard is signed with the initials of the two pairs of brothers who had gone to see the big match - B, H, F and S for Bert and Sia Bartlett, Harry and Fred Bailey. Addressed to Alice Bailey and ending "your loving ...", it was undoubtedly written by her future husband Sia, who was to marry her just two months afterwards. Although they had only been apart for a few hours, he seems to be missing her: "wish you were here, not time to write a letter". It seems that Alice would be working at Mrs Robert Henry Shaw's on the Saturday morning, when the postcard was due to arrive, as it is addressed to her there so that she would receive it without delay.

Sia Bartlett (born 1885) was by all accounts a good footballer. In his youth he was offered a trial with Small Heath, which soon afterwards, in 1905, was renamed Birmingham, becoming Birmingham City during the Second World War. However, his mother refused to allow him to take up the offer.

The note scribbled at right angles to the main message says, "If we send a wire ask Will to let our folks know". This was a momentous occasion and they were obviously considering forking out sixpence to send a telegram with the result of the match, in which case Alice's brother Will would be the one to pass the message on when it arrived from the Whichford telegraph office. The Albion beat their fierce rivals 1-0, before a huge crowd of 48,000. However, they lost the return fixture 2-0. They finished 5th in the First Division, with 43 points from 38 matches [W15 D13 L10], while Villa, with just one point more, were runners-up to champions Blackburn Rovers. In those days a win was awarded with just two points, so Albion's total would today have been 58 points and Aston Villa's, 59. Harry cannot have dreamt that just a year after that derby match, he would be in the army.

### 3. War

#### 3 (i) Historical background to its outbreak

In 1914, the major European powers were aligned in two blocs, called the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) and Triple Alliance or Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy). Further treaties between members of these groupings and other nations meant that any aggression against an individual country would almost inevitably produce a domino effect.

On June 28th 1914, the heir to the throne of Austro-Hungary, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated by Serbian anarchists. This was the pretext for Austria-Hungary to declare war on the Serbs, who were affiliated to the Triple Entente. The Serbs had been resisting attempts at imperial dominance ever since their independence in the previous century. The Italians abandoned the Triple Alliance, arguing that it was a defensive pact and that they would not be drawn into aggression through their membership of it.

As for the German Empire, as early as 1897 they had drawn up a plan for territorial expansion with obvious designs on their French neighbour. Kaiser Wilhelm, King George V's cousin, feared that the declaration of war on Serbia would serve as a pretext for Britain, France and Russia to surround and annihilate Germany. With her own pretext, Germany mobilised, declared war on France on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the next day, invaded Belgian territory. In response to this aggression, at 11 p.m. on August 4th 1914, Great Britain and her Empire declared war on Germany.



Kaiser Wilhelm II, King George V, and Archduke Franz-Ferdinand



### 3 (ii) Harry Bailey enlists

The very next day, Field Marshal Earl Kitchener of Khartoum took over as Minister for War and issued orders for the expansion of the army. He did not believe that the war would be 'over by Christmas' as the popular press in both Great Britain and Germany put it, but that it would be a long and costly affair. The British Army including reserves then numbered about 730,000 men, all professional soldiers; there were no conscripts. Germany had a standing army of 4,500,000. Kitchener's famous recruiting order, *Your King and Country need you: a call to arms*, was published on 11 August 1914. Men would sign up for three years, or the duration of the war, if longer than that. The first wave of volunteers was to form what was initially called Kitchener's Army; as enlistment continued, this first group of six divisions or around 100,000 men became Kitchener's First New Army, or K1.

Harry Bailey, and those of his fellow-villagers who signed on in the September, joined the ranks of another new unit, K2. At the start of the war a recruiting sergeant was allocated to each village. He would get men to attest and send them off to the barracks – in this case at Warwick - to be documented and kitted out. Men were generally proud to enlist in their own county's regiment, but sometimes that regiment had to fight its own corner. There are stories of local regiments setting up recruiting stations on the county border to waylay men trying to cross to join another county regiment - men were attested on the spot and sent to their "rightful" barracks.

Fourteen of the twenty-six villagers who had volunteered by September 1914 pose here outside the then Police House in Stourton. A wall poster behind reads, "WAR. Men of Warwickshire, join your brothers. We are proud of you." In the following list of the volunteers' names, the fallen are marked †. Forenames are given in *italics* when it is not certain which of two brothers is the one pictured.

Back, left to right: -- Jarrett [*Her*]bert Joseph (1886-1939) or his brother Thomas † (1894-1916), ?, ?, Harry's cousin George Bailey (1898-1977), ?, -- Ivens Ernest John (1895-1963) or his brother Arthur William † (1892-1917).

Front: George Bryan (1897-?), Wilfred Joiner (1894-?), Fred Bailey (1884-1973), Albert Allen Woolliams (1891-1947), Riley Brewer (1889-1957), Harry Bailey† (1893-1916) and his cousin John Edward (Jack) Thornett† (1875-1916), Francis Henry (Frank) Gillett (1892-1962).

By the gate is George Bailey's brother Fred (1904-2002).



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

According to a listing in a local newspaper of the time, most Cherington and Stourton volunteers were first attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Harry with service no. 6680). However, Jack Thornett was shown as a recruit in "Kitchener's Army"<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps protocol demanded this, as although he was living in Stourton, he was born in Leicestershire, where his parents still lived. At 39, he was possibly the oldest volunteer, and George Bailey (16) the youngest. Official age limits at the time were 18 and 38.

The only known wartime correspondence from Harry Bailey is the following brief note which he sent to his mother on arrival at the barracks in Warwick. The removal of the stamp, and with it, part of the postmark, means the date of sending is uncertain. What appears to be a "10" is visible in the position for the day of the month. If the date was September 10th, it would mean that the recruits went to Warwick on the day they enlisted in Stourton. That would perhaps have been unlikely unless the Army provided transport at short notice.



In addition to men, horses and mules were needed. At the beginning of the war, compulsory purchase by the Army took many thousands of horses used both for work and play. The sales were a major event in Harry's village of Stourton, and took place on the green there, just a few yards from the house where he had lived since birth.



The picture above, captioned "Buying horses for the war, at Stourton", is marked ©F.H. This was Frank Harris, one of two photographer brothers living in and working from Stourton. The other, Henry Harris, 16 years Frank's senior, was also a baker. He was known in the village as "Jam Puff".

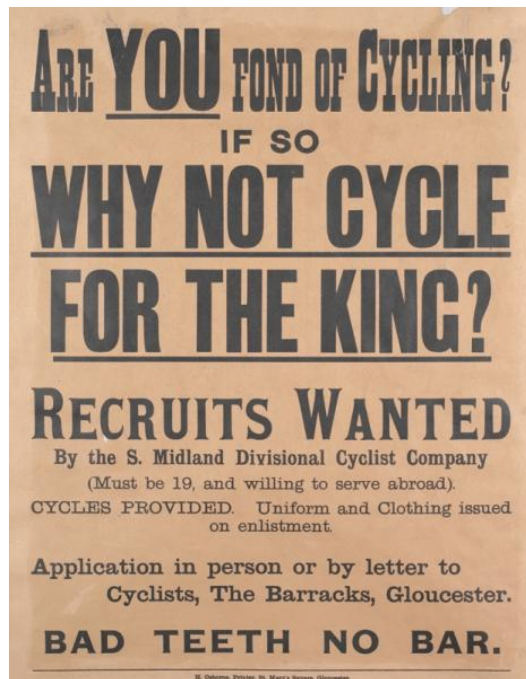
The British used over a million horses in the course of the war. More reliable and easier to maintain than lorries of the time, they moved better through the mud. Their roles were to haul heavy artillery guns, to supply food and munitions to the soldiers, to bear the wounded to hospitals, and sometimes simply to allow a man to get from place to place more quickly than on foot. Incredibly, the British occasionally resorted to cavalry charges even on the Western Front, and right up to the final year of the conflict. Like so many of the offensives mounted by both sides, these were invariably senseless, suicidal confrontations with murderous barbed wire entanglements, withering machine gun fire, and high explosive artillery shells.



### 3 (iii) Training

The principles and details of training were laid down in the Field Service Regulations and in army publications such as "Infantry Training 1914". For ordinary soldiers initial training aimed to improve physical fitness, and taught a man individual and unit discipline, how to follow commands, how to drill and march, some basic field skills and how to safely handle his weapons. Later, as the soldier specialised (in the infantry, for example, as a rifleman, machine gunner, rifle grenadier, signaller, bomber) he received courses of instruction relevant to his role. All soldiers would receive basic training in first aid, gas defence and defensive wiring. But frequently, especially among the volunteers, it was believed there was too much 'bull', designed to suppress the individual spirit, ingenuity and initiative out of a man. Many men arrived at the Front utterly unprepared for the experience.

Some of the local Cherington and Stourton volunteers, including Harry, were transferred to the 11th Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, where he received the regimental number 12425. The 11<sup>th</sup> was created at Winchester in September 1914 as part of K2 and attached as Army Troops to 16th (Irish) Division. In that same month of September, the Battalion was sent to Mullingar, some 60 miles west of Dublin, for training.



What keen cyclist could resist the above!



In December 1914 the 11th Battalion became Pioneers to the Division. It was the development of trench warfare that led to the formation of the "Pioneer" Battalion. Numbered among the Service Battalions, as their name suggests their intended role was to serve mainly as an advance party, non-combatant, which would prepare the ground for an advancing army.

Above: the 11th Hampshire at Mullingar. The fifty recruits here would form a single platoon. Harry Bailey is five from the right in the second row.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Military Barracks, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, and a street in the town

In practice, Pioneers often worked in conjunction with the Royal Engineers, whom they provided with skilled labour. On the battlefield, their work included the digging and repair of trenches, laying of roads, railway lines and tramways, installation of barbed wire entanglements and transport of supplies and munitions. According to a Regimental history<sup>6</sup>, their first work in France was to erect huts for the Division and to assist 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division parties in entrenching and wiring in advance of the arrival at the front line of combat troops. Although they did not normally take part in offensive action themselves, Pioneers were exposed to constant danger as they often worked near, on, or even in front of the front line. Servicing a Division of 18,000, the 1,000-strong Battalion would consist of four or five Companies. The word was often abbreviated to "Coy(s)". Coys were typically labelled A, B, C and D, with some men assigned to the Battalion H.Q. Each Coy was subdivided into four platoons.

War Diary entries generally describe activities by Company. Unfortunately it is not known exactly which Coy Harry Bailey was a member of. After three months, in March 1915, the Battalion moved south to the village of Kilworth in County Cork, from where it was still a long way to Tipperary (forty miles, to be exact). Each soldier carried a message from Lord Kitchener in his pay book, reminding him to be 'courteous, considerate and kind' to local people and allied soldiers, and to avoid 'the temptations both in wine and women'. Training was hard, but in many cases a recruit's health was improved by the body-building Army food, professional medical attention and arduous exercise regime.

If they were "gentlemen" (public schoolboys were automatically put into that category) recruits were typically given the rank of second lieutenant and put in charge of a platoon of around fifty men, many of whom would often be older – and maybe wiser – than they themselves were.

Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Service Battalion soldiers, or "Pioneers", at work constructing a trench and dug-outs, and laying a line of a light railway.



### 3 (iv) Final preparations



The 11th Hampshire returned to England in September 1915, to be stationed at Aldershot. Despite censorship, enough stories would by then have filtered through for soldiers to know at least in part what they would be faced with in France. While waiting to travel out to the Front, men were able to go on leave and see their families and friends for what, for so many, would be the last time.

On Sunday, October 24th 1915, Harry's nephew, seven-week-old John Edward Bartlett, was baptised at Cherington. In this photograph, he is being cradled by his grandmother Mary Elizabeth Bailey. Standing, left to right, are the baby's mother, Alice Bartlett, and her brothers Will, young Alan, Fred, John (Jack), Harry and Arthur Bailey. Fred and Harry both sport Army regulation moustaches, compulsory at that time. Next to Arthur is Jessie, his wife of six weeks. Seated are John Bailey senior and Jack's wife Eliza (Lizzie) with baby daughter Annie.

The expressions on most of the faces seem rather serious. After a year of bloodshed, and with the certainty that Lance-Corporal Fred and Sergeant Harry would before long be out in France, the christening was probably not a completely happy event.

However, if for unspecified reasons the whole of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division's training had not been "much retarded" <sup>7</sup>, the Battalion would almost certainly have left for France earlier and the uniformed brothers would have been missing from the photograph.

Being a policeman, Arthur was exempt from army service. As farm workers, Will and Jack would later be eligible for conscription, but their employer supported the claim that they had skills which made them essential to him, and the tribunal concurred<sup>8</sup>.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

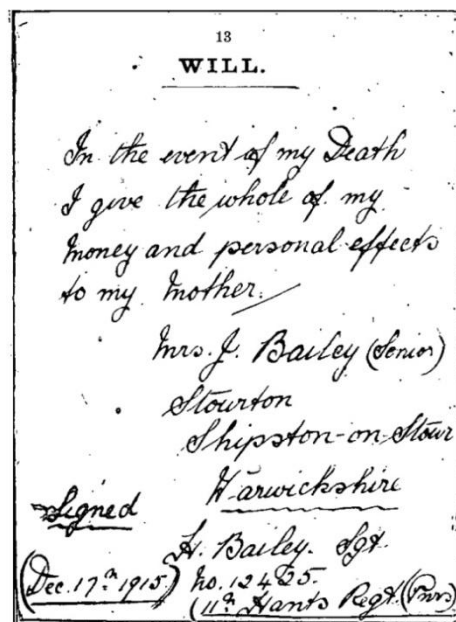


This is undoubtedly a picture of Harry Bailey's platoon, to judge by the number and ranks present. Cherington and Stourton soldiers present include: front centre, Harry; 3<sup>rd</sup> from rt., brother Fred. Behind Fred, slightly left, Wilf. Joiner. Third row 3<sup>rd</sup> from rt., Jack Thornett; last right, Riley Brewer. The platoon was commanded by a subaltern (i.e. an officer below the rank of Captain), seated here in the centre of the front row. In this case his cuff insignia, with a single pip, show that he was then a 2nd Lieutenant. The use of cuff insignia soon became optional, and largely disappeared, as it was found that they often aided the enemy in identifying the wearer as an officer. This officer was Alan Chadwick, referred to in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Harry's position next to him, in a confident pose, suggests the responsible role that by all accounts he was to play in the platoon. Of the other 41 men in the picture, there are three sergeants, a corporal and four lance-corporals, seated on either side of the platoon commander. At full strength, a platoon numbered from forty to fifty men, typically having two sergeants. While Harry is sitting to Chadwick's right, on his left is a sergeant with a crossed swords insignia above his three chevrons. The crossed swords identify a Sergeant Instructor in P.T. (Physical Training), which historically had included sword fighting. If he had this specialist role, it may account for the fact that there were in addition two "normal" platoon sergeants. The platoon was divided into four sections of about a dozen men, each under a lance-corporal. One of these was Harry's brother Fred (front row, third from right). He became a signaller trained to use semaphore flags, which were soon discarded, as they gave away positions.



### Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

As a platoon sergeant, Harry's basic daily wage was about 2s 4d, similar to what an agricultural labourer received back home, though it was of course "all found", with free "board and lodging". His platoon commander received about three times that. Lance-Corporal Fred Bailey would have got about 1s 6d. For a Private the daily pay was just a shilling, out of which a pint of beer, when he could get it, would cost him about 9½d (one franc), while at the other end of the scale the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Crockett, earned 27 shillings.



As the time approached for them to leave for the battlefields, something to focus soldiers' minds was the making of a will. Harry Bailey's was written on the eve of his departure for France and the Western Front, probably at Pirbright Barracks near Aldershot. It was to be the last night of his life on British soil.

Some will forms, though not Harry's, carried the footnote "Soldiers are recommended to make a will before embarkation, on [no. of form], and to hand it to the Officer in charge of Records for safe custody." The will form was typically a page from a soldier's pay book – worryingly for the superstitious, this one was on page 13. He carried the book with him at all times except when involved in an attack. On the page opposite the form were instructions on what to include in the will to make it a legal document, with sample wording, on which Harry's will was clearly based. However, no witnesses to such a will were required. In practice, even unsigned and undated wills were accepted.

The name of the soldier given in the sample will was Thomas Atkins. How the name became standard to refer to a British soldier is unknown, although one widely-circulated version traces it back to the eighteenth century. Following the Battle of Boxtel in 1794, during the Flanders campaign, the Duke of Wellington is said to have spotted the best man-at-arms in his regiment, Private Thomas Atkins, lying terribly wounded. The private uttered the words "It's all right, sir, it's all in a day's work" and died shortly afterwards.

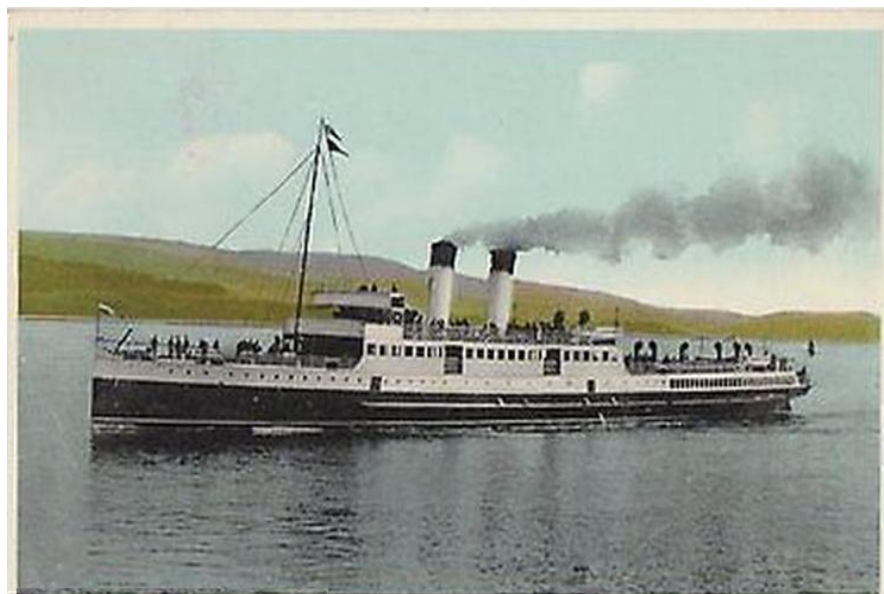
Tommy thus became a symbol of the British soldier's stoicism and devotion to duty. Whatever the truth of the story, the name was given in specimen War Office forms at least by 1815. So a Great War soldier came to be known as a tommy, which was the name called out by the Germans across no man's land if they wanted to communicate with the British soldiers.

The fact that Harry left his worldly goods to his mother, rather than to his father, may mean that she was in practice the head of the household. John Bailey senior was not in good health, suffering from failing eyesight and circulatory problems. However, his wife was not well either, debilitated by a persistent cough. In the event, while John Bailey did not live to see the Armistice, dying aged 71 years on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1918, his widow Mary Elizabeth survived him by only a few months. She succumbed the following May to the strain of chronic bronchitis, and no doubt worn out by a life of constant hard work and a struggle to make ends meet.

Mary Bailey died at 57, which was close to the published life expectancy for a woman <sup>2</sup>. However, in practice, 57 years was still a fairly early age to die at, as the overall statistics were skewed because death in childhood was still common.

### 3 (v) Journey to the Front

The first entry in the Battalion War Diary is for December 18th 1915; the location given is "Pirbright, Woking". Early in the morning, the troops left Pirbright for nearby Brookwood station to "entrain" for Southampton and cross to Le Havre. The diary records the departure of three troop trains, at 4.30, 6.35 and 8.35 a.m. At "4 p.m.", the thousand or so soldiers of the Pioneer Battalion left Southampton on H.M.T. (His Majesty's Transport) *Queen Alexandra*, arriving at Le Havre at "7 p.m." (both French and British time) after an uncomfortable time aboard. One of the times in inverted commas is wrong - the crossing time is impossibly short. The speed achieved would be three times what the ship had managed on her trials in 1912!



T.S. Queen Alexandra.

"Rough passage, much sea sickness. Very small boat." More fortunate were the six officers who four hours later left Southampton aboard H.M.T. *Maidan*, which bore the "Regimental Transport". They had an "uneventful passage."

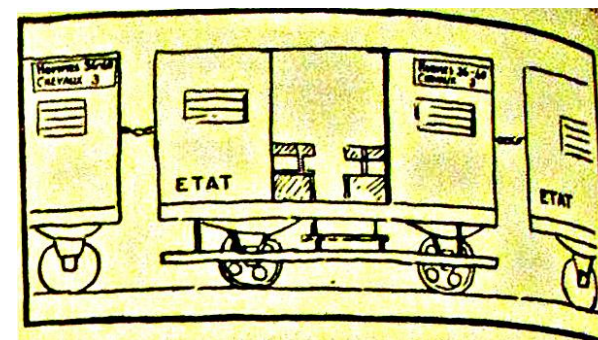
Despite the apparently cramped conditions, after arriving in port the Battalion had to wait for first light to leave the ship: "Havre, 19.12.15, 7.30 a.m.: Bn less 6 Officers and transport disembarked and marched to No.5 Rest Camp."

At 6 p.m. that evening, Harry and his compatriots had to prepare for what would undoubtedly have been another sleepless night for most. Again, the diary betrays the lack of organisation:

"The Bn less 3 Officers 125 men 37 horses and 9 wagons entrained at Point 3. Men travelled in trucks 36 men per truck. Lighting on train only consisted of small hand oil lamps. Train throughout journey was late and consequently neither the men or horses were able to obtain hot water or be watered throughout the journey. Rations were not able to be properly issued, there only being time to put boxes into trucks during momentary halts."

doubt similar to the one Harry travelled in, was made by an unnamed sergeant of the regiment in his diary, probably in August 1914. An extract from the diary appeared in the Regimental Journal<sup>10</sup>. The capacity marked on the truck is "Hommes [men] 36-40, Chevaux [horses] 3". "État" shows that the truck was owned by the State. The sergeant's detachment travelled 40 to a truck, but their journey was much better than what Harry endured.

This sketch of a truck, no



After a "very pleasant passage" to Le Havre on Saturday 21st, next day the sergeant changed three shillings (15p) and in the evening went into town with his 3 francs 60 centimes in his pocket. Though it was a Sunday he was surprised to see the shops open and "market carts coming in by dozens [.....] somewhat different to England". The townspeople were pleased to see the soldiers, "especially when our fellows were whistling the *Marseillaise*". At a stop on the journey to the Front the French gave them coffee – "I could not touch it, tasted sickly as though mixed with rum."



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

However, he “had a delightful wash then entrained again. Every station or stopping place the people gave us many cigarettes and refreshments.” After all, it was still believed by some that ‘it would all be over by Christmas.’ Nevertheless, the mood soon changed. The diarist was shocked when he arrived at their destination of Le Cateau, about sixty miles (95 km) S.E. of Noeux-les-Mines, where Harry Bailey’s first billet was located. At Le Cateau, he encountered the reality of war. He was met with retreating troops and refugees fleeing in panic, and almost immediately came under fire from the German troops, advancing into France by overwhelming force of numbers. Just two months later the sergeant was killed in action.

As for Harry Bailey’s own train journey, after nearly 18 months of war there were no French ‘cigarettes and refreshments’ to greet *him*. Finally, after 23 hours, the train arrived at its destination, the small town of Choques in the Pas de Calais *département* (the “Calais Passage”, what we call the Straits of Dover). This is just 50 miles inland from the French channel port. They had travelled 170 miles at an average speed of just over 7 mph.

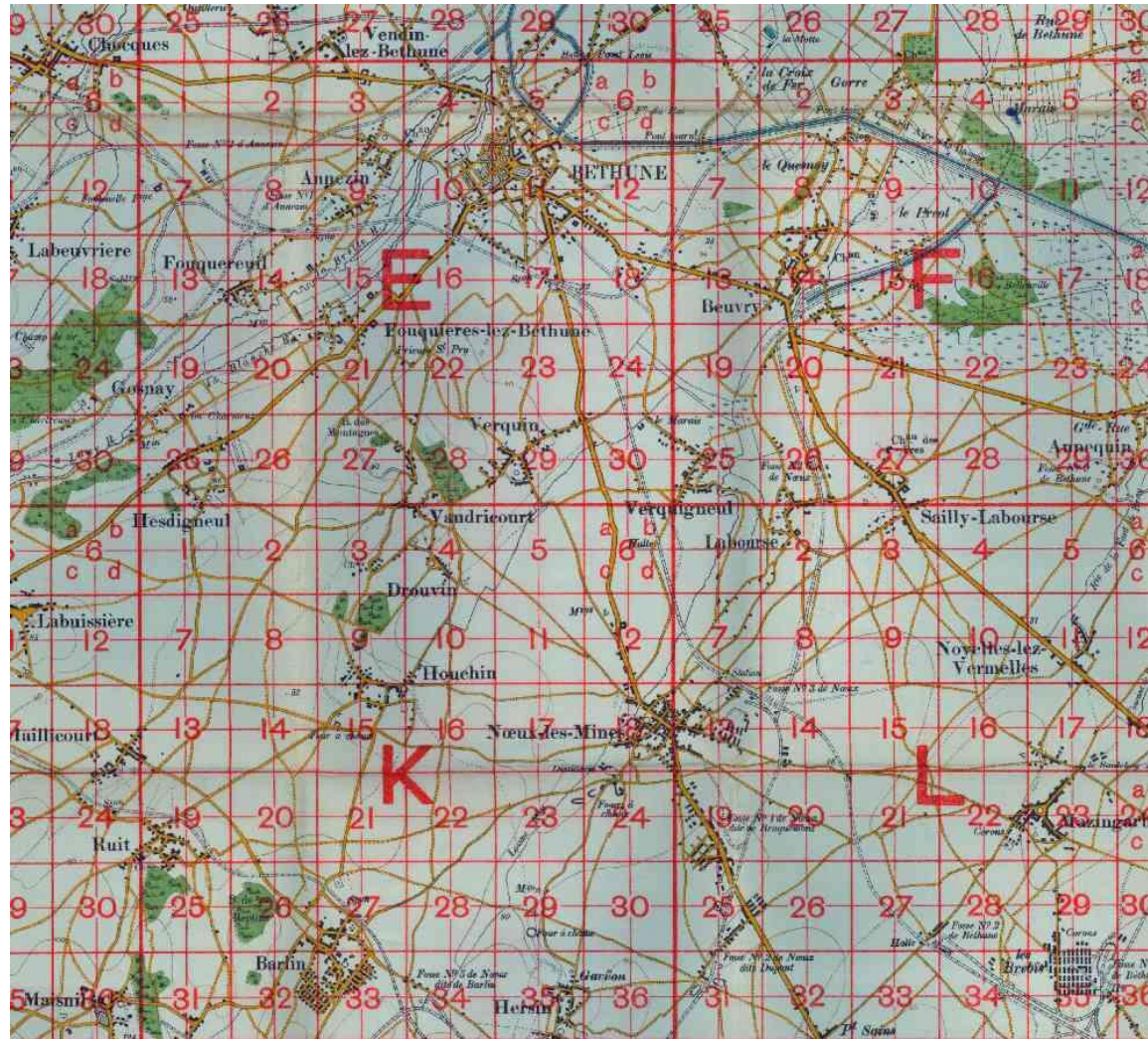
At 7.30 p.m., two and a half hours after ‘disentraining’, the Battalion “proceeded by March Route through Bethune to Noeux-les-Mines [ 7½ miles/12 km] & billeted. Billetting completed 2 a.m. 21/12/15.” The last entry on this first page of the Diary is for December 21st and states simply, “Pouring with rain, Battalion settled into their billets.” A hundred years on, Noeux is just an hour’s drive from Calais (and about three from Le Havre).

The Diary was written up by Capt. F.G.J. Berkeley, Adjutant to the C.O., Lt. Col. Crockett. One of his main responsibilities was correspondence. Crockett’s second in command was Major Earle; Majors Palmer and Bell and Captains Hazard and Andrews commanded the companies. Under them, Captains Stacke, Bland, Powell and Thyne and “no less than 21 subalterns” (junior officers; most commonly 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants)<sup>11</sup>.



Despite Noeux les Mines and its pits being heavily shelled in 1915, Sergeant Bailey would still have found a working mining town when he arrived. Today, all the coal mines have closed, and one of the old slag heaps rising over the flat fields surrounding the town boasts an artificial ski slope.

# Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



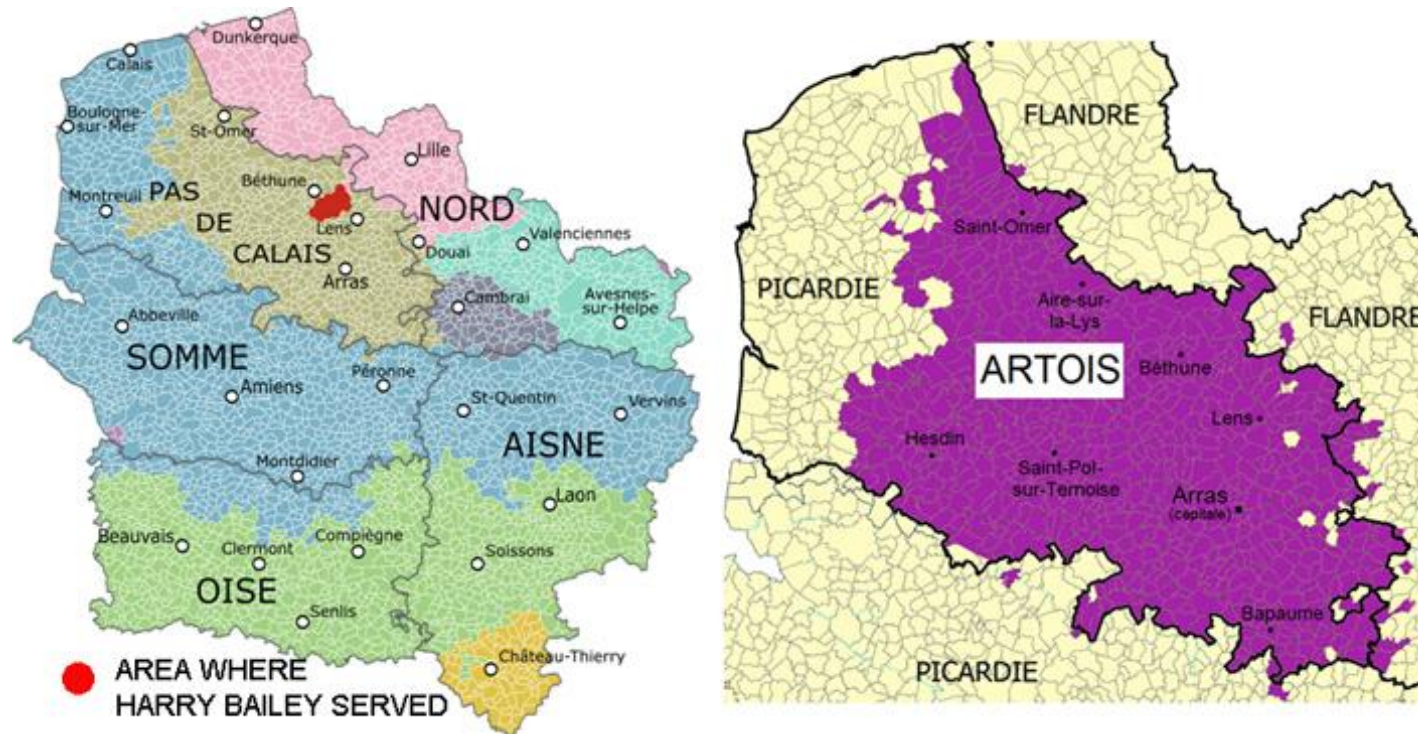
Map 1 Sheet 36b, part of N.E. quadrant. Area where the Pioneers arrived and were first stationed

This is a 1:40,000 map of 1915, printed in Britain and based on existing civilian maps of northern France and Belgium, but overlaid with reference squares. It was used for overall planning, each numbered square representing 1,000 yards by 1,000 yards on the ground. From the railway station at Chocques, in the top left-hand corner of the map, the soldiers had to march a distance of about 7 miles to reach their first billets, east to Bethune then south to Noeux-les-Mines (K18). In this coal-mining area each mine, or *Fosse*, and pit or shaft, *Puits*, is named on the map in italic script.



#### 4. Harry's life in the War Zone

*Roses of Picardy* was a song which during the war sold at a rate of 50,000 copies a month; its lyricist Fred Weatherly also wrote the words of *Danny Boy*. We know that Harry was a good singer and he, like thousands of other tommies, must have sung Haydn Wood's famous tune. Equally famous to this day is John Macrae's poem *In Flanders Fields*. The words "Roses are shining in Picardy" and "In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row" have become synonymous with the Great War; but what exactly are Flanders and Picardy and did Harry Bailey serve there?



Map 2 Regions of North-East France until 21<sup>st</sup> century reforms, and the pre-Revolution provinces

Map 2 shows where Harry was stationed in the Pas de Calais. However, the old provincial names were still in general use, so it can also be said that he served in Artois, which is sandwiched between Flanders and Picardy. The provincial boundaries varied through history, with the ebb and flow of the relative powers of kings and noblemen. In 1415 King Henry V came to Artois and defeated the French near the village of Azincourt (Agincourt). Artois was part of the Netherlands until 1659, although by then French-speaking. Its ancient capital, Arras, is still known to the Dutch as Atrecht.

4 (i) DECEMBER 1915

The Battalion H.Q. was in Noeux-les-Mines, six miles west of the front line but in range of heavy artillery and of course aerial bombardment.



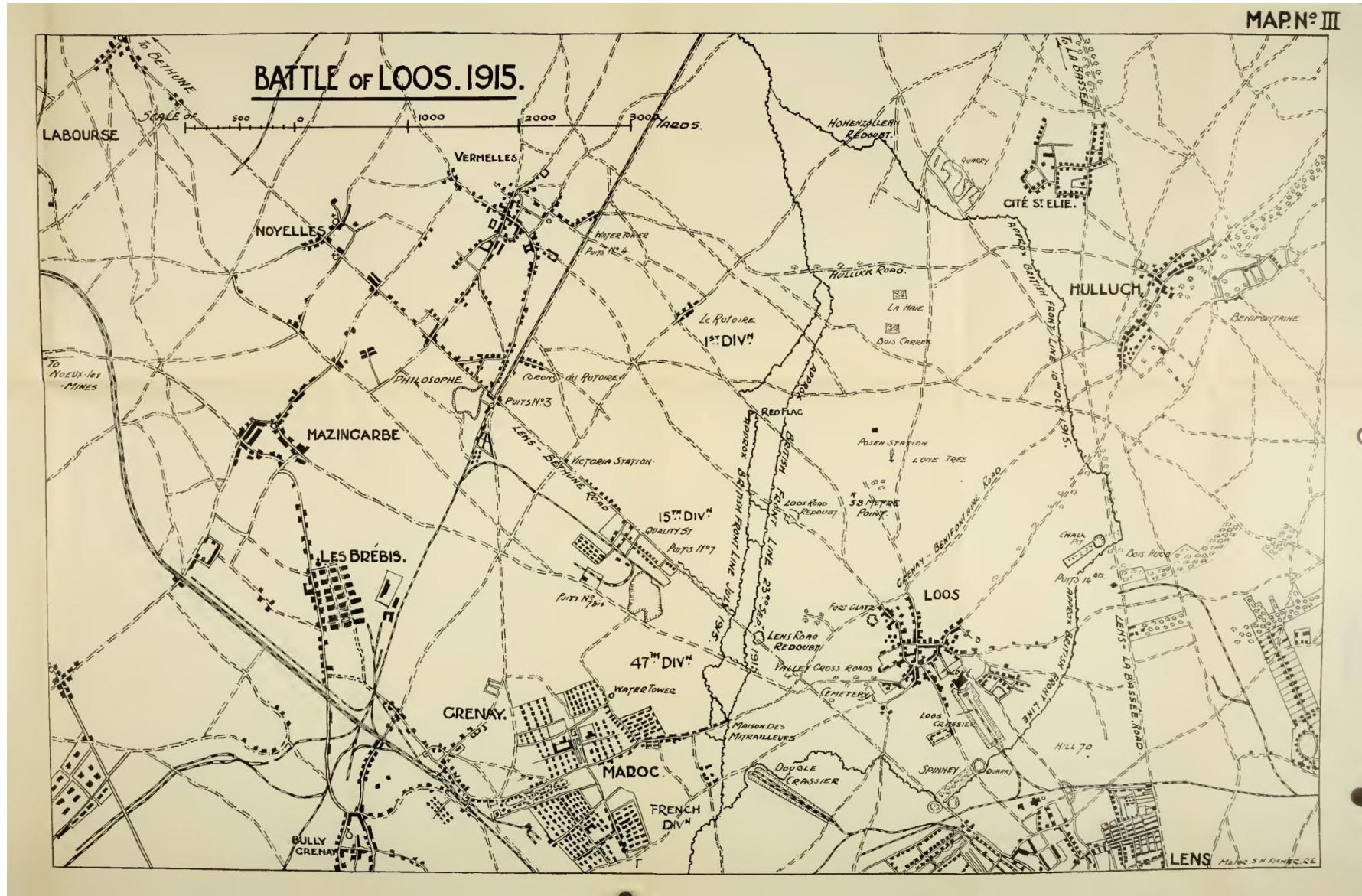
A wintry view of a supply depot in Noeux-les-Mines

During their first few days based at Noeux-les-Mines, the Hampshire Regiment Pioneers worked on new "horse lines". This probably refers to open lines of stakes strategically placed out of danger from enemy fire, where horses were tethered: there was not enough stabling for most horses.

As work such as digging forward trenches and laying barbed wire progressed, the soldiers were sometimes close to German trenches, where danger from snipers, machine guns and shelling increased. Before the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire arrived, the autumn of 1915 had seen major encounters in the area, including action from 25th September to 19th October which became known as the Battle of Loos (pronounced "loss" in French, but known as "lose" to the British). Loos-en-Gohelle is a village just seven miles south-east of Noeux. Tactics ordered by British commander John French, who ironically was a kindly, compassionate man, had produced disastrous results and he was replaced by Field Marshal Haig on the very day Harry Bailey arrived in France. However, Haig was equally inept, and his strategies led to the senseless slaughter on the Somme and at Passchendaele.

On the first day of the Battle of Loos under Field Marshal French, the British lost 8,500 men, most of them killed by German machine-gun fire. In another attack, on the Hohenzollern Redoubt north of Loos, nearly 4,000 men were slaughtered in the space of a few minutes. The battle saw the first British use of chlorine gas, which gassed some 600 German soldiers but affected over four times that number of Allied soldiers when the wind changed and blew gas back towards the British lines. The 25 days of engagements produced 50,000 British casualties, including over 20,000 deaths. Yet despite the suffering and carnage, there were moments when soldiers were able to reach out to their fellow-men in opposing trenches<sup>12</sup>.



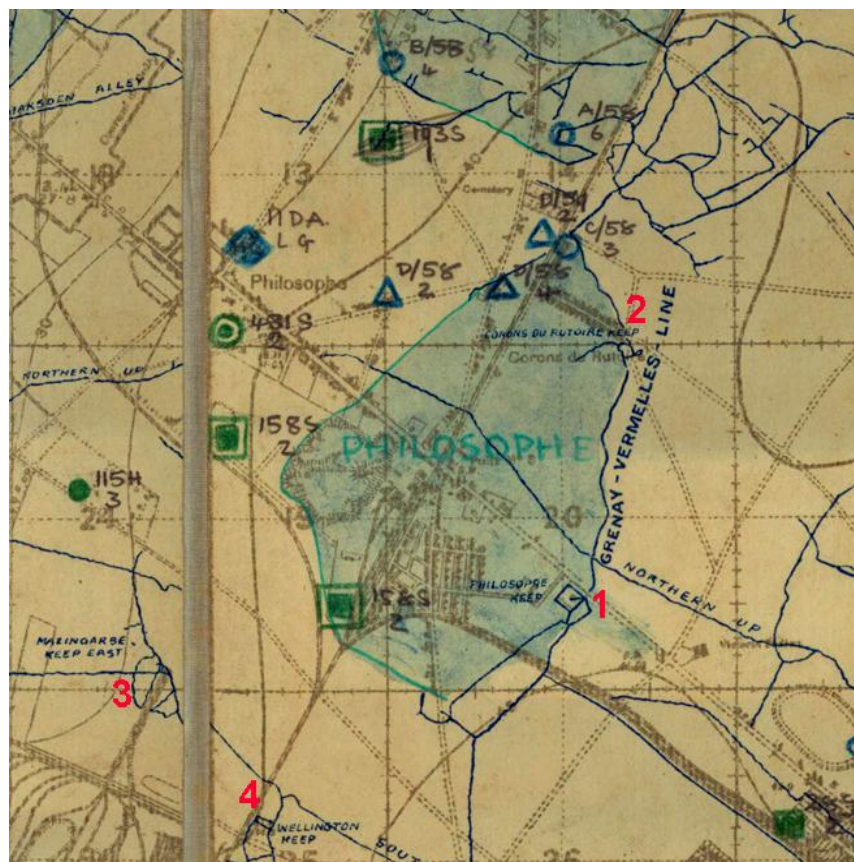


Map 3 is taken from a Great War history of the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division. It shows territory of no more than five miles by three (8km x 5km), yet covers virtually the whole of the area in the Pas de Calais where Harry Bailey lived and worked for most of the few months he survived after his arrival here. Note the three British front lines, with their dates, and coal mining settlements with squares and rectangles dotted to show rows of miners' cottages.

If Christmas Day was marked in any way by the Battalion, the War Diary entry made no mention: "25/12/15 Xmas Day. D Company working at PHILOSOPHE<sup>13</sup> erecting huts."

Philosophe was a mining settlement just N.E. of Mazingarbe, at square L18 on the edge of the Bethune area map. Miners usually lived in terraced rows or blocks of identical cottages built by the mining company and called "*corons*". The cottages had cellars which the Germans had used as efficient dugouts when establishing their defences. Where dwellings were detached or semi-detached, the name "*cité*" tended to be used instead. If these houses had been shelled, they were sometimes taken over by soldiers and converted into dugouts by excavating the area within the damaged walls, and covering it with iron and sandbags. However, on Christmas Day the Pioneers were erecting purpose-built huts from scratch.

"26.12.15 ....D Company to transfer their headquarters to Philosophe – 10 men to live in each completed hut and Officers to be accommodated in the cellars of Philosophe Keep. Work on Reserve[d] line wire to start on 28th inst."



Map 4 Extract of trench map, area N.E. of Mazingarbe, (?)1917

The "keeps" were fortified strongpoints, often making use of the structure or remains of an existing building. The reserve lines were backups behind the front trench lines and a second line of "support trenches", all of which were defended by wire entanglements, and aimed to protect headquarters and command posts situated some distance behind the front line. Meanwhile the other Companies were "entrenching", and erecting further huts.

The blue shaded areas on this trench map, possibly from 1917, are "defended positions". Keeps named include the Philosophe Keep (1) and the Corons du Rutoire Keep (2) on the defensive line shown here as "Grenay-Vermelles": these were two villages respectively south and north of Philosophe.

Why a particular name was given to a trench, keep, point on a transport network, and so on, may be obscure, for example south-east of Mazingarbe Keep East (3) is "Wellington Keep" (4), both on the puzzlingly named "Southern Up" trench line. However, some names reveal the origins of troops stationed there. Trenches near the town of Loos include Regent St. and Chancery Lane, Blackwatch Alley, Scots Alley, Devon Lane. Naming may also be arbitrary, as where enemy trenches known from reconnaissance are named by the cartographers with one initial letter, e.g., from north to south, Hampton, Hastings, Hemlock, Hendon, etc.

Much of the Pioneers' work took place at night, to aid secrecy and make the soldiers less visible targets. The first diary entry naming a casualty is:

"Noeux les Mines 30/12/15.

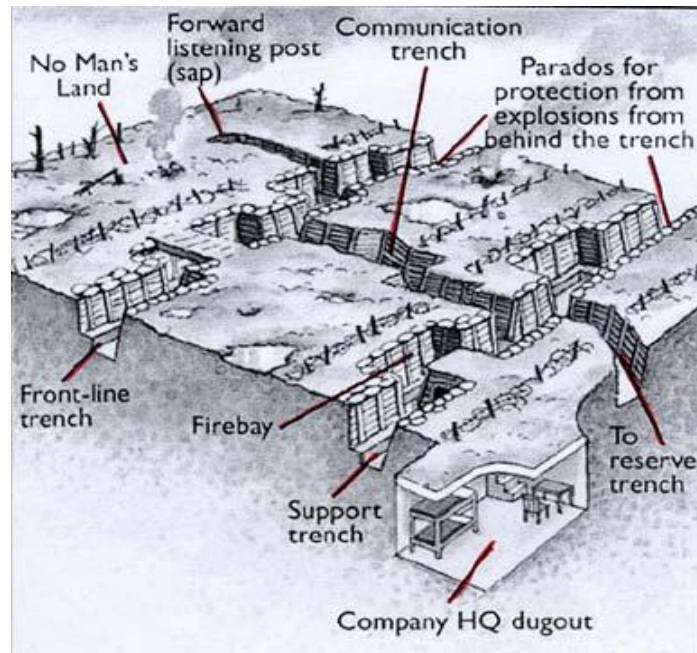
Pnr 12228 Hewett G.P. wounded in thigh during night work with D Company.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

When the Pioneers were not caught up in fighting, and so not incurring many casualties, the killed and wounded were generally named individually in the daily reports in the Battalion War Diary, which today provides vital information for researchers. However, when the Battalion did end up in the thick of the fighting, Diary entries often give no specific location other than "in the field", and casualties are too numerous, and the situation for the adjutant-diarist maybe too difficult, for individuals killed or wounded to be named.

### Entrenching



After the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, the Germans were being pushed back. The German commander, General Erich von Falkenhayn, assessed the situation and ordered his army to dig trenches to defend against French and British troops. The trenches provided necessary protection from artillery shells and machine guns, and gave soldiers a major advantage when warding off a frontal assault. The British and French soon began digging their own, and trench warfare was born.

The photograph above shows soldiers "entrenching". British guidelines for trench construction state that it took 450 men approximately 6 hours to dig 275 yards of a front-line trench (about 7 feet deep and 6 feet wide). Because of German defensive strategy, they would typically dig the first trenches in a particular area, choosing the higher ground, which often left the British and French on lower-lying land liable to flooding. The use of duck boards along the bottom of a trench improved the situation to an extent but many Allied trenches contained permanent water. Because the

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Allies viewed the trenches as temporary positions to be abandoned as territory was regained, they were poorly constructed and generally shallower as compared to the German trenches, some of which had such luxuries as electric light and toilets. The above diagram of a typical trench layout shows clearly the zigzag construction, preventing an invader in the trench being able to fire along the trench line, and also affording more protection from shell blasts. The communications trench enabled troop movement between trench lines, afforded some shelter, and carried the telephone lines.

4 (ii) JANUARY 1916 Battalion casualties this month were “three killed and 44 wounded, including shell-shock cases”.<sup>14</sup>

War Diary entries early in the month illustrate the typical work of the Pioneers. On New Year’s Day, with the Battalion still based at Noeux-les-Mines, tasks were carried out at the locations marked below. The three map references given for January 1st are shown on the map by blue circles and the letters A, B and C, which refer to the Company in question in each case). Square L is on map sheet 36B, but square G is on 36C.



Map 5 Locations of Company work parties on January 1st and 2nd 1916 (see text for key)



N.B. There are full transcriptions in the endnotes of all the original handwritten extracts from the Regimental War Diary that are included in the text.

Date	Place	Summary of Events and Information
1/1/16	NEUX LES MINES	A Company Ref. Map. 36 B. L 19 A.O.S progress with hut erection & delivery of more material from MINX. Carrying shale & formation of road & paths. Well 18/ft down. B. 36 C. G. 25-6 17. Entrenching & revetting. C. 36 B L 24 C 8.1. Entrenching. D. Huts completed - night wiring. General BUCKLAND Chief Engineer 4 <sup>th</sup> Corps inspected huts erected by A Coy.

In the above Diary entry<sup>15</sup> for 1/1/16, MINX appears to refer to a depot, but has not been identified. We learn that A Company had bored or drilled a water well down to a depth of 18 feet. Depending on the water table, a depth of several hundred feet might need to be reached to get a reliable, unpolluted supply. As the war went on, special drilling units were formed, with specialist personnel and equipment, notably portable rigs imported from America. Hundreds of wells had to be sunk, as each soldier used ten gallons (45 litres) of water a day, and a horse or mule a similar volume.

Meanwhile, B Coy were "entrenching and revetting". After a trench was dug or repaired it might need shoring up ("revetting"); *fascines*, bundles of brushwood, were often used for this, if available. Revetting was especially used around artillery batteries, but also provided a visual obstruction, providing cover for pioneers or engineers. This entry for January 2<sup>nd</sup> <sup>16</sup> again gives exact map references, a feature dropped in later Diary pages.

2/1/16		A B & C companies continuing their work. D. One Officer & 50 men marched at 7.30 pm to Loos. They carried heavy stores, iron rails wire etc to a point on the HULLUCH-LOOS road, about 30 B ref trench map 30 C NW 3 W 3. They returned about 6 am on Jan 3 <sup>rd</sup> . During the day 30 Hcos & men were employed road making in MAZINGARBE 9 am - 4.30 pm. A Coy. Six huts are now ridge high, three practically complete. Well down 26'. Boring too difficult in getting enough transport for carrying shale the road & path way making is behind hand. Unloaded truck 198/Tarrant had material brought material on to site.
--------	--	--

D Coy's destination on the Hulluch-Loos road is shown on Map 3 by a yellow circle and "D". This was about 7 miles from their billets and until actions in the previous October had been enemy territory. A trench map of March 1917 shows it to be on what was then the line of the Reserve Trench N.W. of Chalk Pit Wood (see next page), only a few hundred yards from the front line. Clearly, it was in an area where movement had to be under cover of darkness, whereas other D Company men were able to work in daylight, road-making about three miles west, at Mazingarbe.

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"A" Coy had got the well down only another 8 feet since the previous day, which suggests that no specialist equipment was being used; maybe they were digging it out with pick and shovel. It is reported that they unloaded a truck carrying "Tarrant hut material". Walter Tarrant was a Surrey builder whose firm manufactured large numbers of prefabricated wooden huts for military use on the Western Front. The photograph here shows women carpenters preparing Tarrant hut components in a workshop near Calais, in 1917.

The War Diary entry for January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1916<sup>17</sup>, mentions the 157<sup>th</sup> (Field) Coy of the Royal Engineers, attached to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division as were the Hampshire Regiment Pioneers, who worked in conjunction with them. The Field Companies provided know-how and technical support for fighting units. The R.E.'s work was vital in such areas as transport and communications infrastructure, water supply, the design and building of front-line fortifications, chemical and underground warfare, and the maintenance of guns and other weapons. The war of 1914-18 relied on engineering.

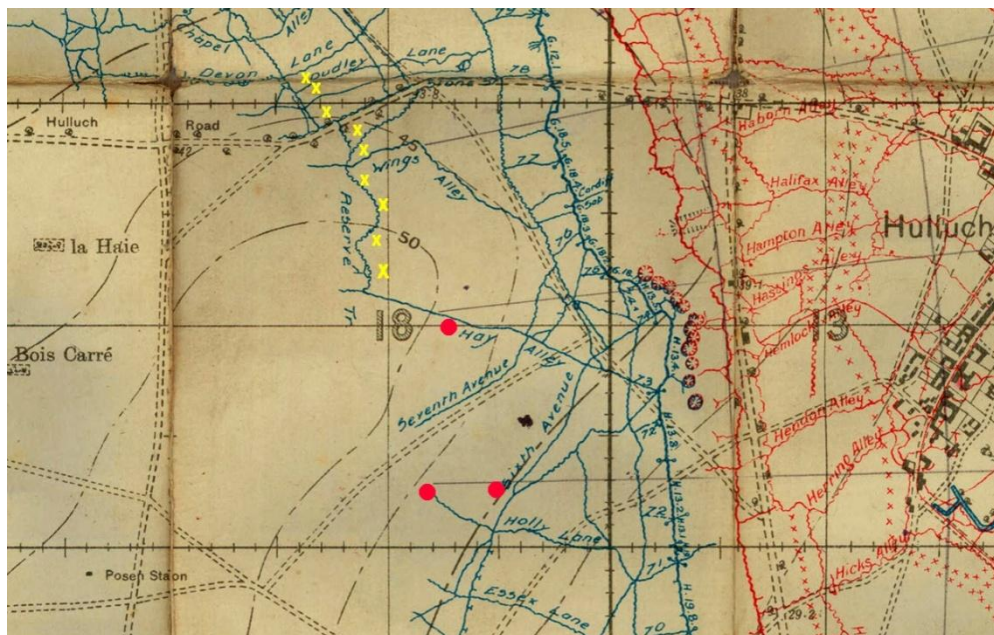
3/1/16  
 Day:- 2 Officers & 90 other ranks paraded with the two sections of the 157<sup>th</sup> (F) Coy R.E. & marched to RE dump EGYPTIANOPHE.  
 Huts were picked up & working parties were sent out composed partly of RE & partly of Pioneers. Each working party had a carrying party of Pioneers. 1<sup>st</sup> party excavated trench wide along front of RESERVE TRENCH, working in a NORTHERLY direction. A party marched W from the RE Camp along TENTH AVENUE, to WING'S WAY where it left the trench & proceeded to erect wire on the front of the RESERVE TRENCH between the limits DEVON LANE, WING'S WAY. DEVON LANE was the NORTHERN limit of the night's work. Three parties worked on tasks between the two extremes limited on them the flanks of their sections by other trenches, HAIE ALLEY, HOLLY LANE, SIXTH AVENUE which cut the reserve trench in an EASTERLY direction. Parties returned to camp independently between 2 am & 6 am. One pioneer was injured by falling into a trench. (Ref. TRENCH MAP 36 C N.W.3. P.E 403).  
 2353 Wt. W2544/1454 700,000 5/15 D. D. & L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.  
 F.S. Berkeby Capt  
 11<sup>10</sup>/Hants Regt

The March 1917 map below left (6) shows wiring (marked **xxx**) reported above; red dots indicate rough limits of the area where "other tasks" were done. Allied trenches are in blue, German ones in red. On the other map (7) is Tenth Avenue, formerly a "German switch" (redeployment) trench. Note the two symbols of eyeballs and eyelashes, which must indicate observation posts. "Lone" was an area where a lone cherry tree had been left standing despite being machine gunned and was a key feature in the wasteland, a marker for artillery and advancing troops.

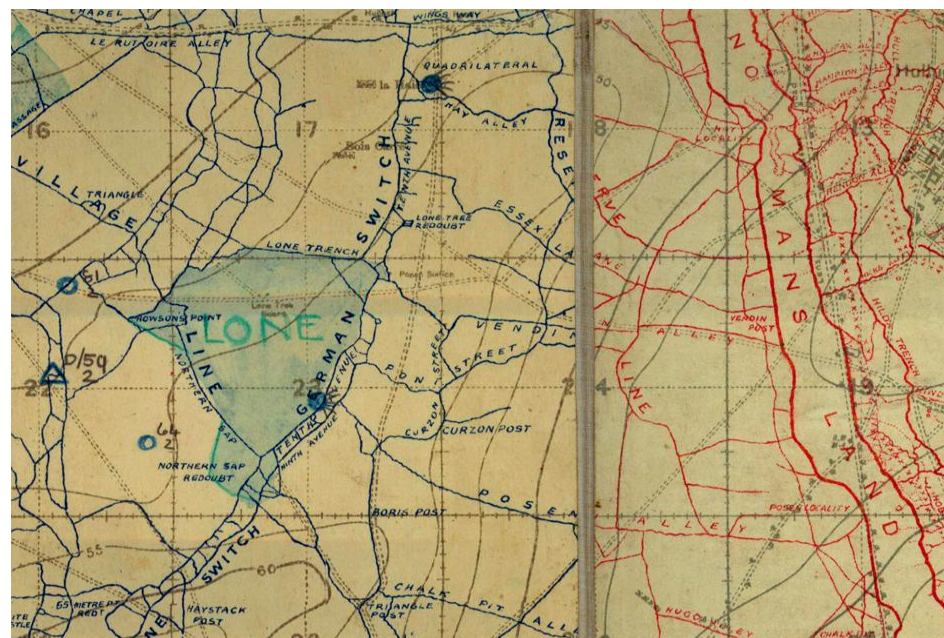
Maps marked "Lone Tree" were superseded by others, such as Map 7, marked "Lone Tree Board" after the tree was cut down – some said by souvenir-hunting soldiers - and replaced by a signboard. The abbreviation to "Lone" suggests its celebrity among the troops<sup>18</sup>. At the annual act of remembrance of the Battle of Loos in 1995 a new flowering cherry was planted there, and a memorial plaque dedicated to those killed in the battle.



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Map 6 Location of work parties on 3-1-1916



Map 7 Showing trenches worked on on 3 January

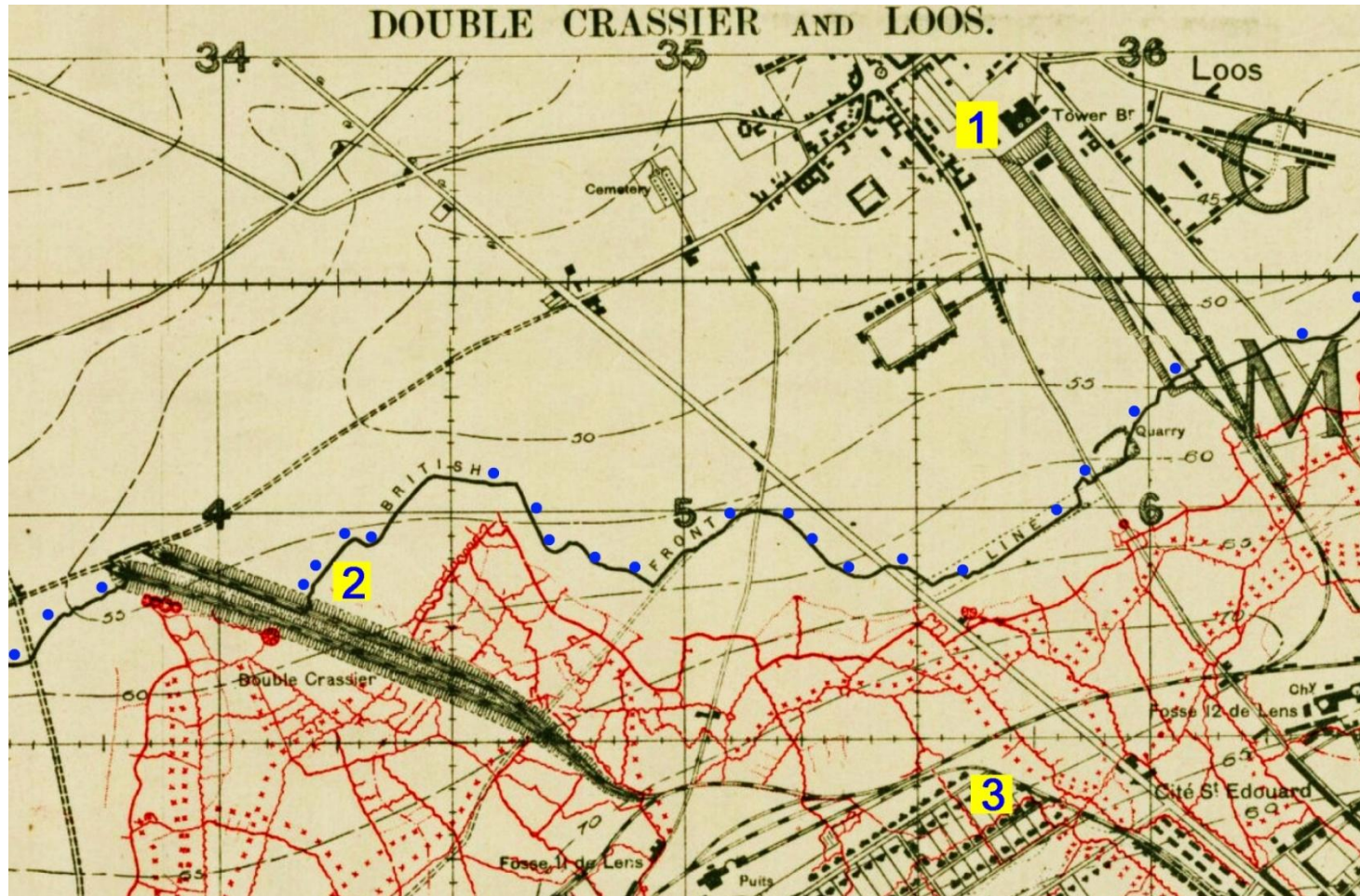
Entrenching, well digging, hut erection, road making, the laying of wire and carting of stores continued in the following days. Here are a few short associated extracts from the Diary; they underline the danger the Pioneers were often exposed to when wiring, due to the proximity of the enemy:

[Re D Coy wiring in front of the Reserve Trench] On January 5th "the Wing's Way-Devon Lane party was under machine gun fire and shrapnel [sic]. Parties return to billets about 2-2.30 a.m.". On 8th, at the same location, two bursts of machine gun fire caused the soldiers to seek shelter in the Reserve Trench, and when they re-emerged, a third burst wounded two Pioneers, one of whom died two days later and was buried at Chocques, where the Battalion had arrived by train from Le Havre. On 9th, no wiring was done as "the enemy were expected to bombard the Reserve Trench."

That same day, while D Company remained with the Royal Engineers at Philosophe, the rest of the Battalion moved three miles south-east from Noeux-les-Mines to billet at another mining community with the unlikely name for an industrial village of Les Brebis, "The Ewes" (area map square L35). However, only two generations back, the area had been completely rural. There was no room for D Coy: "Town is hopelessly overcrowded".

Around Les Brebis, much work was done on trenches, the mention of a "Quarry Trench" and a landmark named "Double Crassier" (twin slag heap) being reminders that this was very much a mining area, while another landmark given was the grimly named "Sniper's House". One particular task carried out under cover of darkness was the deepening of the "sap-head" at the "south-west corner" of Double Crassier.





Map 8 These twin slag heaps, where the Pioneers dug listening trenches, are much larger today due to subsequent mining.

banks alongside the railway lines. The Double Crassier (2), is about a mile (1.5 km) away. Each heap, nearly 1 km long, is shown on the map with its own trackway to transport slag to the top in trucks. At (3) there are the typical rows of miners' dwellings. The trenches cut through the middle of the settlement and if the houses had cellars, they would typically be used as ready-made dugouts.

The German trenches are in red and the British Front line (highlighted here with blue dots) is very possibly as Harry Bailey would have known it. It approximates to the position established when the Germans were pushed back from Loos in the autumn 1915 offensive.

We have seen that a sap trench went directly forward from the trench line towards the enemy positions, and its head was the location of a listening post into which a soldier would sneak to attempt to eavesdrop on nearby enemy positions.

The double crassier was on the S.W. outskirts of the small mining town of Loos-en-Gohelle. These heaps were known as "dumps" by the British. Some rose over 100 feet (30 m.) above surrounding flat land, so were strategic obstacles, also used by artillery spotters as observation posts. The Double Crassier was a prize which caused bloody fighting in the Battle of Loos. The pit-head winding gear towers were also useful lookouts - the twin tower at Loos was baptised *Tower Bridge*.

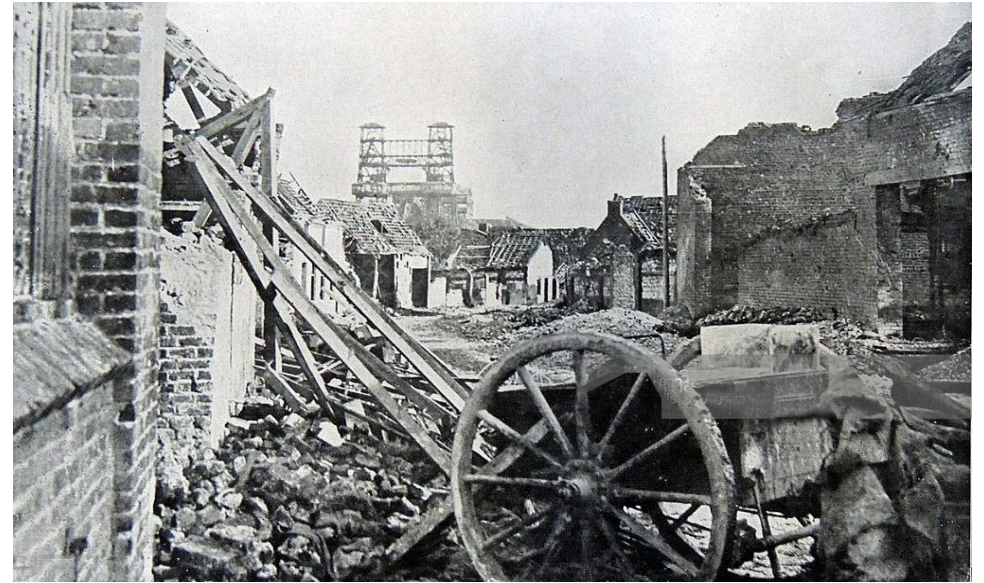
This map, divided into 500-yard (457 m.) squares, dates from about 1917. It names "Tower Bridge" (1). Shading to the south-east of it is Loos Crassier, spoil



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Postcard sent in 1906: Loos miners' cottages at Pit 5 of the Béthune Mining Co.



It is said that after the Battle of Loos, not one building or tree in the town was left intact. The picture above shows Loos as Harry would have found it when his Battalion moved there in January 1916.

In the view of Loos as it is today, the twin slag heaps, such a strategic landmark in the Great War, are called "terrils" rather than "crassiers", because of their different shape and formation. In the old days the spoil was dumped on the "crassier" mounds, but with technological advances, lifts carried the waste right to the top of the dumps, producing the conical shapes of the "twin terrils" seen here. One was for pit 11 and one for no. 19; they remain the largest in Europe.

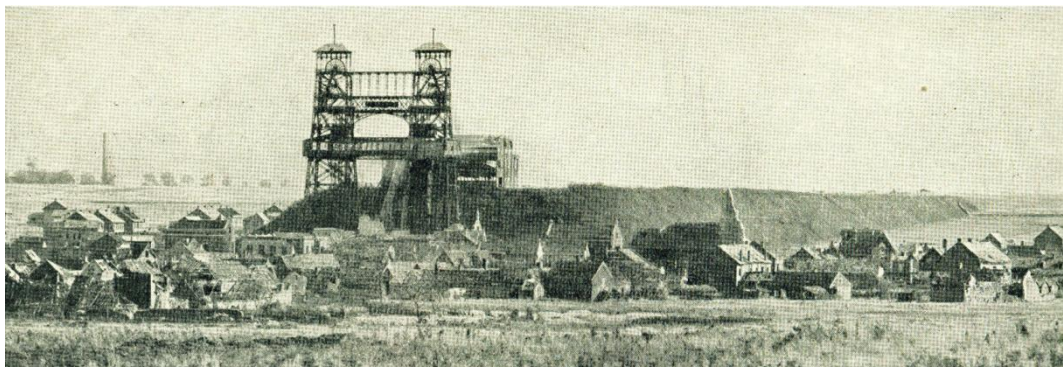
The Béthune Mining Company disappeared in 1946 with the nationalisation of the coal industry. The last Loos pit closed in 1986 but some of its buildings, dating from 1923 to 1966 (the concrete winding tower shown) now form part of a cultural, economic and environmental centre. The housing layout of *cité 11* looks little different from that of *cité 5* in the old postcard. Over the centuries, Loos has suffered much



destruction in successive conflicts, being almost wiped from the map by marauding armies on no less than five separate occasions in its history.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



The photograph on the left is a view of Loos-en-Gohelle taken in the earlier part of 1915. It is dominated by the enormous structure of the main pit-head lift which reminded the "tommies" of London's Tower Bridge, and was officially referred to by that name among the British. Although as a result of shelling during the Battle of Loos the town was left in ruins, the towers were still standing, as damage to them was reported in the War Diary on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1916. Despite the terrible wartime destruction, by 1923 most of Loos had been rebuilt.



This picture of the twin slag-heap known as the Double Crassier was taken in 1918 when nature was already starting to reclaim this part of the battlefield, by then abandoned. An old trench, with what looks like a dugout in the foreground, and the holes and undulations left by all the continual shelling, are silent reminders that Harry and his mates of the Pioneer Battalion risked their lives around here, working away in the dark near the front line among the craters, barbed wire and sniper's bullets.

For example, the War Diary reports on a night's work as follows:

"11/1/16. A Coy.- All the Company worked from 7-11 on saps at SW corner of double 'Crassier' & making new front line trench. Considerably worried by snipers owing to moonlight. 11197 Cpl CARR W. received a Bullet wound, left leg, below knee."

The detail of a trench map below shows that A Company were working near a Crassier bank in the area of Bank Sap, very close to the German trenches named "Codfish". Bank is very possibly a play on the London place name: soldiers of the London Regiment who were stationed in the area were clearly responsible for naming three of the four long slopes of the Double Crassier after hills in London, from N. to S., Putney Hill, Snow Hill, an unnamed bank (on the trench map, at least) and Ludgate Hill.

Trenches in the surroundings (see following map) also had names of places familiar to Londoners, such as Embankment, Piccadilly, Regent St., Pall Mall, Haymarket. In contrast, the German trenches were named by the British using the widespread custom of choosing random words beginning with the same letter – just to the south of Codfish, there are trenches with names like Corkscrew, Cockscomb and Comet. To the east, "M" becomes the initial letter: Muriel Alley is visible on the map, with its adjacent lines of crosses indicating "obstacles", which were usually barbed wire entanglements.





Map 9 Trenches illustrating different naming patterns, and showing the slag-heap slopes named Putney Hill, Snow Hill and Ludgate Hill

Even the soldiers' billets were within range of German fire<sup>19</sup>:

LES BATHS	14/1/16	2 PM	The Tuck 3 no 11331 "B" Coy was killed by a piece of shell in the Baths whilst standing at the door of his billet. Some half dozen shells were fired into the town. D company rested & the other companies carried on as usual.
-----------	---------	------	---

On 15<sup>th</sup> January the Battalion moved to Loos itself, closer to enemy lines, and for the rest of January suffered almost daily shelling, some casualties resulting, though no deaths were reported. Atkinson's Regimental History<sup>20</sup> records that C and D Coys, under Major Earle, were relieving the Pioneers of the 47<sup>th</sup> [London] Division, which "though much below establishment, was holding a long frontage and welcomed the 11<sup>th</sup>'s assistance. This party had plenty of hard work and suffered several casualties, and on January 22<sup>nd</sup> the battalion undertook its first minor operation."

Even though actual combat was not the *raison d'être* of Pioneer battalions, the events of January 22<sup>nd</sup> show that when reinforcements were needed and the Pioneers were available they could easily be caught up in fighting. The day before, the 21<sup>st</sup>, men of the 11<sup>th</sup> had been going about their work in dull, cloudy weather, "C.O. visited A Coy at work near the double CRASSIER". Then, the place literally erupted, as the War Diary entry describes below. The first sentence is rather confusing, as the word 'mine' is first used with the meaning 'explosive device', and secondly, tunnel or gallery. Here, the mine was "defensive", exploded to destroy an enemy tunnel. A mine exploded to destroy enemy positions above it was "offensive".<sup>21</sup>



MINE exploded about point M6a01 with object of destroying enemy mine - report below. The operations were considered to be successful - The O.C. Centre was ordered to detail two parties to occupy the near edge of the CRATER & to consolidate it by Dawn. Each party to consist of 5 Grenadiers, 1 Officer 2 sappers & 15 Riflemen. Lt. DONNITHORNE was selected as the Officer for the party & the men were found by The 21<sup>st</sup> LONDON REGT. In addition a reserve party of one Officer (Lt. WIRE) & 25 men of HANTS (PIONEERS) were held in readiness in the ENCLOSURE. The Right Party (Lt. DONNITHORNE) was ordered immediately after the explosion to clear the Trench of debris & to consolidate the Crater. Immediately after the explosion Lt. DONNITHORNE ordered his party to enter the CRATER & clear trench & construct new one on the inner edge. This party immediately came under close thrust fire from the German & after 45 mins. the enemy kept up sending FLARES continuously & the whole place was as light as day, showing up the party against the white chalk. At 2.45 A.M. Lt. DONNITHORNE telephoned to Lt. WIRE for 10 men who were immediately sent up under CPL ATKINS, Lt. WIRE bringing up the remainder himself at 3.15 A.M. Lt. DONNITHORNE was wounded in the leg at 3 A.M. & 7 men of the 21<sup>st</sup> London Regiment & five of the 11<sup>th</sup> HANTS (P) reserve party were casualties - names of 11<sup>th</sup> HANTS as follows - Lt. DONNITHORNE, CPL ATKINS (DC)

APPENDIX  
I.

2353 Wt. W2544/1454 700,000 5/15 D. D. & L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

The exact position of the operation is revealed by a report from the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division <sup>22</sup>.

At 2 a.m. we exploded a defensive mine at M.6.a.1½.1 and occupied and consolidated the near edge of the crater. The Germans sent up red and green rockets immediately but their artillery did not open fire until 2.20 a.m. Most of the German fire was directed on the reserve trenches -especially in MAROC Section. Many shells were blind. It is reported that the German mine was damaged and will probably be unfit for use in the immediate future. The crater will be known as HARRISON'S Crater. [It is shown on the trench map extract below at M.6.c.1½.6].

MAROC and FOSSE 7 were shelled during the day. Our artillery shelled various suspected German Observation Posts and Machine gun emplacements during the day. A working party in M.4.c. was dispersed by artillery fire.

The mining settlement MAROC was about 2 miles/3km W. of the new crater. On [Map 4](#) it is in square 33, and the pit Fosse 7 in square 27, to the N. M.4.c. was at the S.W. end of the Double Crassier in the area of the Crassier Trench and Bank Sap (on Map 8, above). Harrison was the lieutenant leading soldiers of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company (R.E.) that planted the mine, "in circumstances of the greatest danger from an enemy mine." <sup>23</sup>



After the explosion the crater was indeed “defended”, but the War Diary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn South Wales Borderers records that on February 19<sup>th</sup>, Harrison’s Crater was between the two front lines and occupied by German snipers, for whom the crater provided “excellent cover”. The Germans had machine guns guarding the approaches. The Borderers attacked and after heavy fighting, recaptured the crater.

Consolidation of a crater was carried out according to published instructions, with the object of making it into a strategic strongpoint. The following notes are from the War Office document of 1916, fuller extracts of which are reproduced in the endnotes<sup>24</sup>.

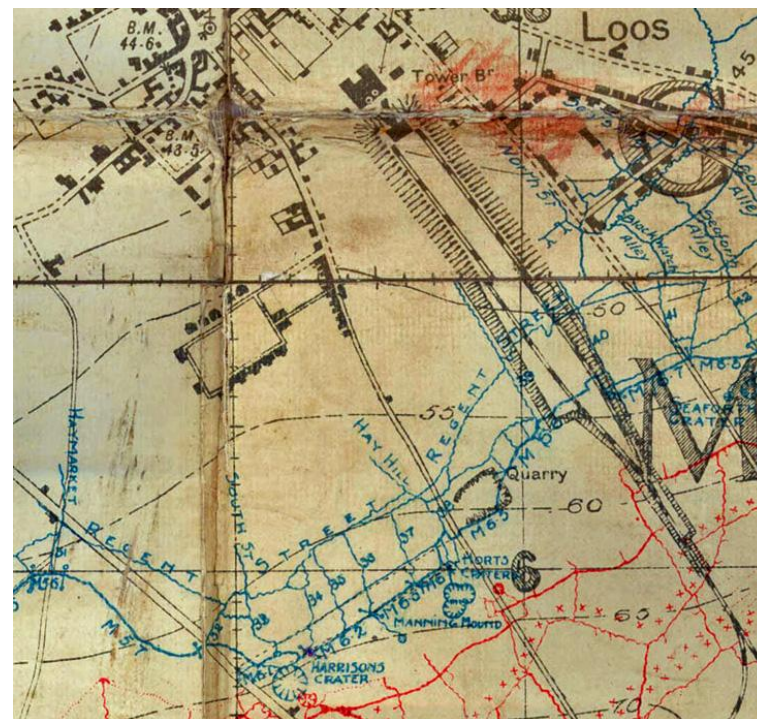
Occupying and consolidating a crater has three main advantages:

“(a) It can be turned into a strong point capable of holding a small garrison; (b) It gives command of the ground in the vicinity; (c) It forms a considerable obstacle.”

Immediately a large crater is formed “Parties must be rushed out at once to seize the [near] lip. They had to “take sufficient grenades, water, &c.”, since if the action was in daylight hours they might be on their own till support was able to arrive after dark. Speed was vital; there would usually be “a quiet period” until the enemy recovered.

Consolidation included having several “posts” of soldiers along the front lip, and to link them, digging two communication trenches in from the rear, one from each side, and “strutting” them: as a result of the explosion that formed the crater the ground would be loose and especially liable to slippage. One or two dug-outs were constructed by tunnelling into the sides of the crater. Trenches towards enemy positions had to be “straightened or filled in” for at least 40 yards from the front lip of the crater.

As happened on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, if the crater was created by an Allied mine, working parties of R.E. and Pioneers would be held ready with equipment such as strut frames for the trenches. In addition, the War Office booklet on how to consolidate a crater advised,



Map 10 Harrison’s Crater is in square M6c

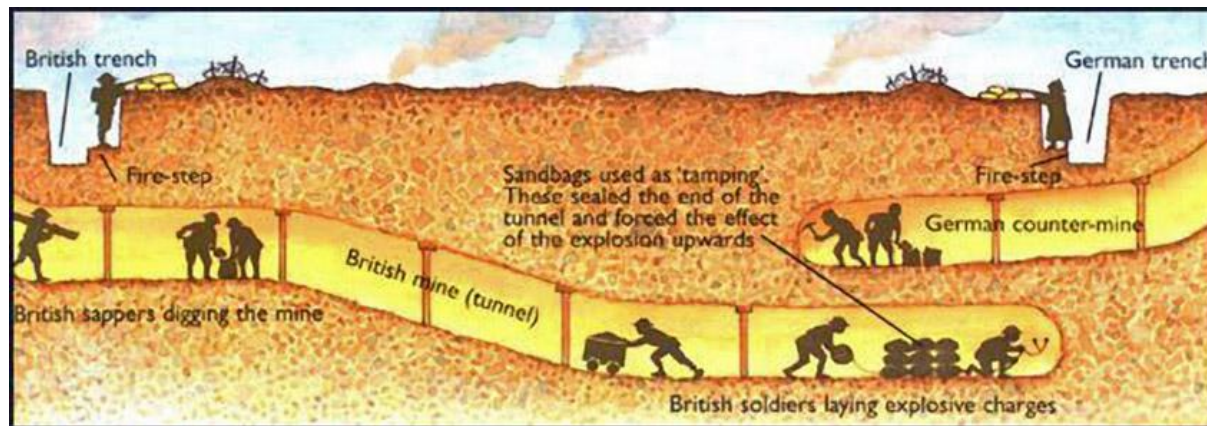
“Collapsible knife-rests, French wire and other forms of portable wire entanglement should be brought up in large quantities and thrown over the “lip” of a crater.” Knife rests were pairs of poles fixed at 45° so they stood upright; wire would be coiled round them. “French wire” may be concertina wire, seemingly used by them before the British did<sup>25</sup>. This was large coils of wire expandable lengthwise; it would stand up with no or few supports.

The Diary entry for 18<sup>th</sup> contains a reminder that there was still a world outside: “Major EARLE went to PHILOSOPHE to attend court of enquiry on missing Bicycles & returned in the evening.” Enemy bombardment permitting, the Pioneers’ work continued. For the first time, a victim of shell shock was recorded. The few named in the War Diary up to May 1916 were all officers. Presumably, cases among ORs (other ranks) were either not even medically identified or did not warrant a mention in the diary pages. The last three days in January were largely quiet, and 29<sup>th</sup> a “warm spring day”!





The photograph of Harrison's Crater seems to have been taken from the top of a slag heap, or even from the lip of another crater. It was found in the photograph and scrap album of WW1 Army Chaplain Leonard Pearson, which was rescued from a skip and is now at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It shows entrances to several dugouts in the far lip. They are dwarfed by the size of the crater, which suggests the enormous power of the underground explosion that created it. There is no indication as to whether the dugouts visible were made by the Allies, by the enemy, or both. As can be seen from the photograph on the right, some dugouts excavated, at least in the trenches, did not go back very far.



This diagram illustrates the underground war waged early on in the war. As the War Diary records in the case of the explosion that created Harrison's Crater, the preparations previous to the detonation of a mine under enemy positions exposed the men charged with the operation to the risk of being blown up at any moment by explosives in an enemy counter-mine. On some trench maps, craters in No Man's Land are in blue superimposed on enemy red, and connected to Allied trenches by a Russian sap<sup>26</sup>.

Later in the war, troop positions were more mobile, and the tactic of underground mining was used less.



By this time, Harry Bailey would have experienced much of the reality of war. Hopefully he would have enjoyed lighter moments, maybe on those days the war diarist recorded as “quiet”. It is another matter as to whether as a mere sergeant, he saw the humorous side of some of the farcical aspects of military bureaucracy, or knew of half-brained officers “going through the motions”, as exemplified in the text below. The ORs tended just to be on the receiving end, forced to do sometimes stupid things at the whim of the “gentlemen” who made the rules just as they had back home<sup>27</sup>.

The following extract from a 1922 history<sup>28</sup> of the London Division, some of whose soldiers served in the same area as the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regt., illustrates the point, even if some of the anecdotal detail might have been ‘embroidered’:

From time to time our Higher Command turned their attention to various devices for winning the war. The personal appearance of the troops attracted their attention. The following is quoted from 1st Corps Routine Orders dated April 12th, 1915 [when moustaches were compulsory]:

Moustaches — It is observed that of late the provisions of King's Regulations regarding the shaving of the upper-lip have been disregarded. Any breach of these regulations will be severely punished in future. The most farcical apologies for a moustache were adopted, cut as close as nail-scissors would clip them. We never heard of any punishment. Perhaps that was not strange in an army whose King wore a beard, whose Prince of Wales, with clean-shaven face, was then serving with them, and whose greatest wars, from Wellington's backward, had been fought clean-shaved. The regulation, introduced in 1860, was finally rescinded in 1916, partly because some moustaches prevented a good gas mask seal!

On April 20th, 1915, the order was issued that Batteries in action are not to hang their washing up in the vicinity of the guns.

Later the vocabulary of the troops received attention at General Headquarters. Slang expressions were no longer to be used. Such “slang” words as “dug-out” and “bomb” were forbidden. Instead, the words “splinter proof” and “grenade” alone were to be used in future.

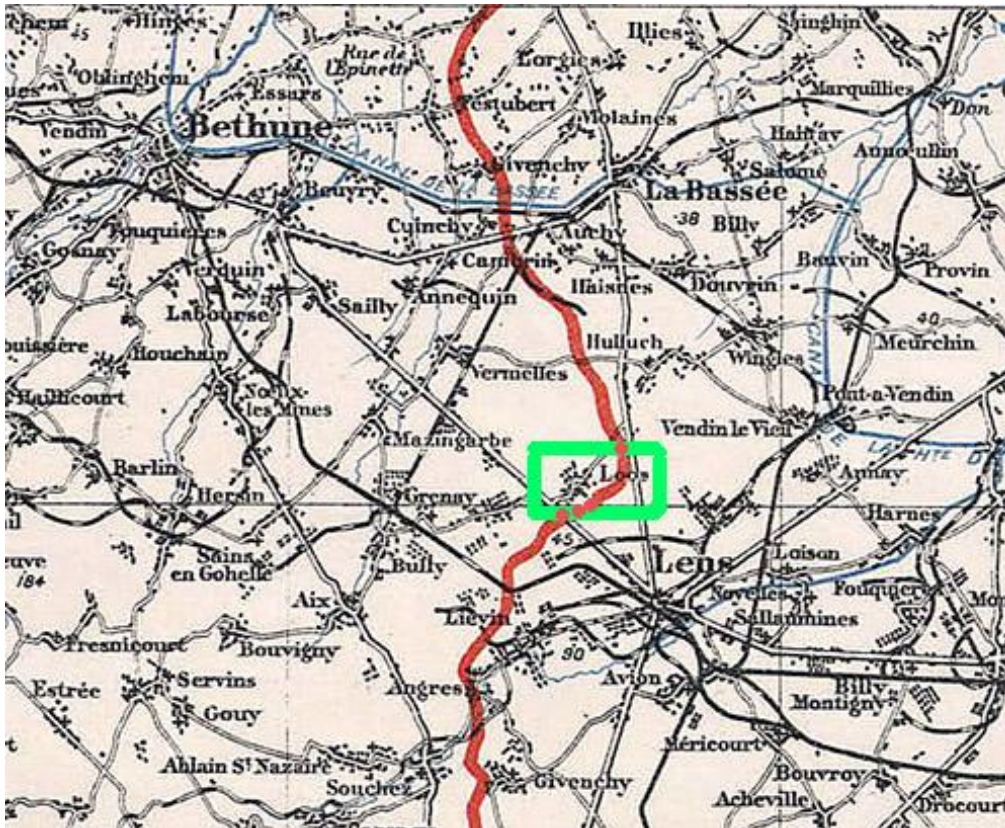
Shortly after this a corps commander paying a flying visit to the trenches reached the lines of a certain company. “Where is Captain Smith?” asks the attendant CO. “He is asleep, sir. Been out all night with a working-party.” Just then Captain Smith appears, rubbing his eyes. “I am sorry they sent for you, Captain Smith”, says the G.O.C., in his kindest tones. “You were in your dug-out, weren't you?” “No, sir.” “What!” says the general. “Do you tell me you were not in your dug-out?” “No, sir”, says Smith. “We have no dug-outs now, sir. I was sleeping in my splinter-proof.”

Some visiting generals gave great delight to the troops. One general—whose name we could give—found it difficult to follow his trench names on the map. Going round the firing-line of breastworks<sup>29</sup> at Festubert with a majority of Canadians he kept on asking, “What is this place called?” .... “What is this?” At last they came to a low bit, under fire from the German snipers, and particularly unhealthy. “Ah! And what place is this?” says the general, looking over the parapet. “This”, said the exasperated major, “is the place where you are going to put your head down and run as fast as God will let you, or you'll get a bullet in your backside.”

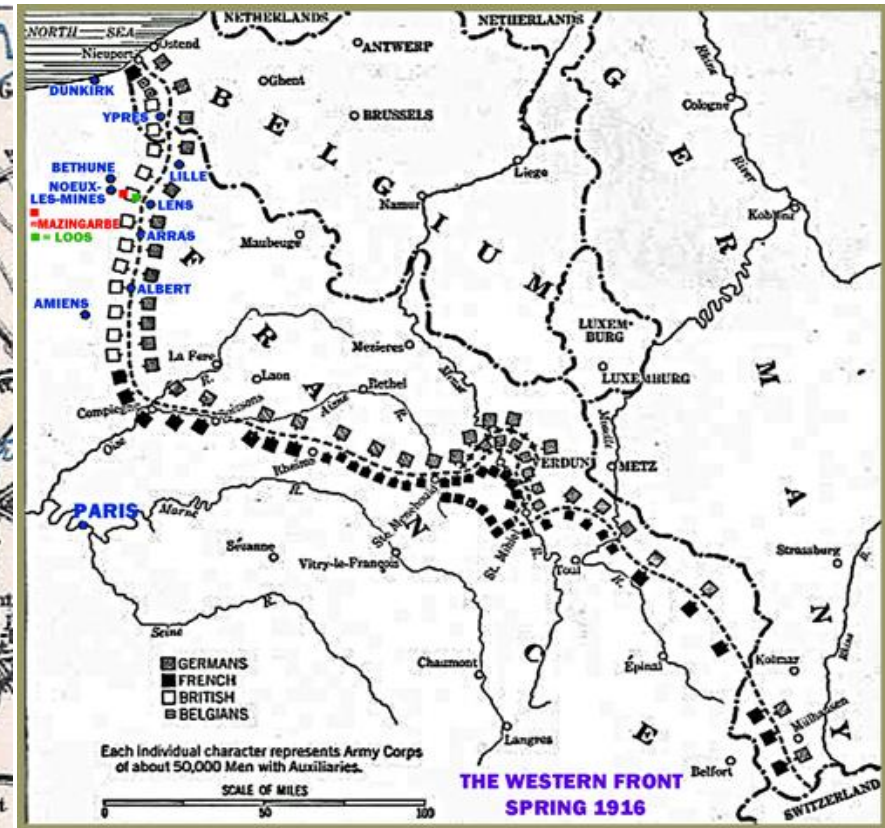
#### 4 (iii) FEBRUARY 1916 Battalion casualties: “little over 20”.<sup>30</sup>

For the first ten days the Battalion remained in Loos, under constant threat of bombardment. Although the enemy had retreated from the town three months before, during the biggest British attack of 1915, they were still entrenched barely a mile to the east of the town centre. Though the Pioneers' billets in the area of Noeux and Mazingarbe had hardly been in safe havens, they were now living virtually on the front line.

Figures below, for Spring 1916, show Britain with 12 Army Corps (at least 600,000 men) on the Front, including the thousand from Harry's Regiment. Front Line (in red) after the Battle of Loos (Sept.-Oct. 1915), and its location on the Western Front, which stretched from the Channel to Switzerland:



Map 11



Map 12

On the following War Diary page, for February 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, "No casualties" begins to appear as a routine comment; the mindset has changed so that this is now considered to be an event. One notable non-human casualty, on Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, was "Loos Towers", which must refer to the pithead gear known to the British as 'Tower Bridge': "Bottom bridge on Loos Towers broken in middle". (Ten weeks later, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, the "East Pylon of Loos Tower was shot down".) Troops arrived to relieve the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire, including the R.M.F. and R.W.F., the Royal Munster and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

The first entry, for February 1<sup>st</sup>, contains a notable reference to tunnelling: it was known that the Germans were tunnelling immediately to the S. and E. of Loos, intending to explode underground mines under British positions, and a counter-offensive had been started in January (see 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire War Diary entry for January 22<sup>nd</sup>, above), spearheaded by the 173<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company. Shafts were sunk and galleries driven, one focus being on the area of the Double Crassier. The underground war was waged at three levels, "Main", "Deep" and "Deep Deep". As time went on the British gained the upper hand in this action due to their developing steel casing for shafts, which enabled them to go deeper than the enemy.



**11<sup>th</sup> Hants (P).**  
**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**  
(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in U.S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LOOS	1/2/16		Fine day. Snipers aircraft active. One party - 1 officer and 18 other ranks 4 R.H.F. arrived in LOOS for work under 2/3 Coy R.E. Party of R.M.F. departed this evening. Two officers + 32 OR - 4 <sup>th</sup> R.H.F. arrived tonight + were billeted in ST EDWARDS ROAD for work on ST VINCENT TUNNEL.	
"	2/2/16		Very quiet day	
"	3/2/16		Fine bright morning. LOOS shelled with what appeared to be 8" shells, from 11 a.m till 2 p.m. Several trenches badly blown in. There appeared to be two guns firing from the direction of HULLUCY. Bottom bridge on LOOS TOWERS broken in middle. Snipers aircraft active in forenoon. One dropped a bomb on LOOS near COMMANDANT'S HOUSE. No. 12267 9 <sup>th</sup> DERRA A. of 1 <sup>st</sup> Coy wounded.	
"	4/2/16		Rain today. 1 officer and 50 men 9 <sup>th</sup> DUBLINS arrive for attachment to 11 <sup>th</sup> HANTS. Reinforcements arrive consisting of 39 men for this battalion. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt DUKA admitted to hospital. Sick. No. 14327 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt KENTON G. wounded.	
"	5/2/16		Fine day. 9 <sup>th</sup> DUBLINS under Lt Egan started to improve trenches along BLOCK'S WAY. Reinforcements joined H.A. in the evening. A good lot of men. Work progressing on FERNES LANE and REGENT STREET + new fire WEST from DEN'S ROAD. A few shells sent into LES BR&S. No casualties.	
"	6/2/16		Ran 11406 Mrs BROWN RD "B" Coy slightly wounded by bullet returning from work. Still at duty. Quiet day + very little evening shelling. Rain in the evening + very dark night for work. Work same as previous day + good progress made.	
"	7/2/16		Quiet day. Work as usual. FERNES LANE improved, + new sand to a trenchment. DUBLINS working on BLOCK'S way. No casualties.	
"	8/2/16		Capt ANDERSON evacuated sick. No casualties. Orders for relief by 4 <sup>th</sup> R.H.F. + 1 section 142 <sup>nd</sup> Bn. 11th (S) Bn. Hants. Reg. (Pioneers)	

11<sup>th</sup> Hants (P) Lt. Harry Bailey  
Captain & Adj. Hants. Reg. (Pioneers)

Reminder: to read a transcript of the War Diary entries, click on its endnote number or use the pdf bookmarks to navigate to the endnote in question [31](#).

For the next month, the Battalion was relieved of front line duties and the Pioneers were marched from place to place far from the shells and bullets. A period of "rest" had been ordered, and this break in customary work routines was the closest the soldiers got to real leave. As the following two modern road maps show, they followed a circular route which finally brought them back to familiar territory between Noeux les Mines and Loos.

A vintage 'POMMY'S COOKERY' fuel canister with a metal handle and a rectangular metal cooking pot, both showing signs of age and use.

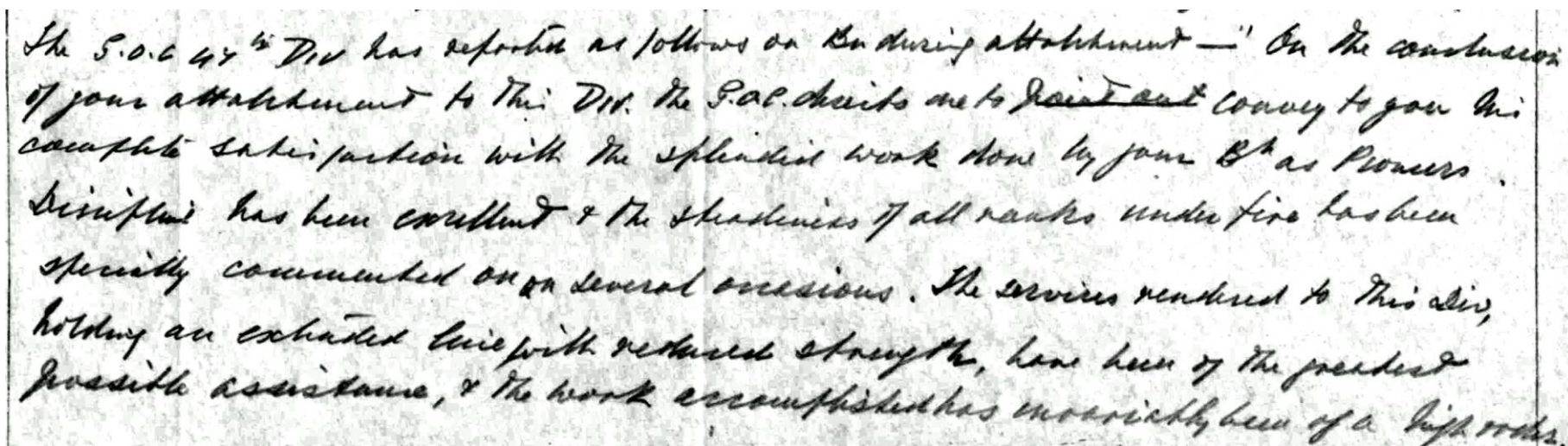
*it is perfection. -- Used by the British, Belgian and French Army in the Field, and the Red Cross Society. - Price, 2/- Refills, 1/- ADVANTAGES.—1. Wind does not blow it out. 2. Composition unaffected by weather or climate. 3. Stand carries heavy pots or pans. -- Tommy's Cooker Co. Ltd. -- Works 31 Carburton St., London, W.*



The cookers, using solidified methylated spirits, were actually inefficient. One soldier said it took two hours to boil half a pint of water!

The men arrived at Ligny at 5.30 in the evening; historical daylight tables show that sunset was at about 6. "Billets mostly barns & stables. Wet & windy day with head wind which increased the difficulties of the march. Rain ceased in the afternoon & fine night." The G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] 16<sup>th</sup> Division "watched the march and reported favourably." He ordered "two days' complete rest." Nevertheless, the diary entry for the same day, 13<sup>th</sup> February, notes that 100 men were sent on to Steenbecque, 11 miles (17.5 km) north of Ligny, "for work under FOREST CONTROL Officer"; presumably they didn't walk. On 21<sup>st</sup> a previously unmentioned "Quarry detachment" was referred to as being at "Bequin". The location was actually Beugin, a small village about 9 miles (14 km) S.W. of Noeux-les-Mines. Ligny, Steenbecque and Beugin were all well away from the Front.

The War Diary entry for February 13<sup>th</sup> continues with praise for the Battalion which reflects well on Harry Bailey<sup>32</sup>:



The G.O.C 44<sup>th</sup> Div has reported as follows on Bn during attachment — "On the conclusion of your attachment to this Div. the G.O.C. desires me to ~~jointly~~ convey to you his complete satisfaction with the splendid work done by your Bn as Pioneers. Discipline has been excellent & the steadiness of all ranks under fire has been specially commented on on several occasions. The services rendered to this div, holding an exhausted line with reduced strength, have been of the greatest possible assistance, & the work accomplished has invariably been of a high order."

The G.O.C. goes on to say that he has recommended that the Battalion be allowed a period of rest and wishes that his thanks be communicated "to all ranks" for "their excellent work." The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February were "observed as a holiday" and 16<sup>th</sup> was "pouring with rain" with a "gale of wind"; proposed inspections by Corps and Divisional commanders were cancelled. The Quartermaster and an interpreter went to Estrée to look for billets.

Estrée Blanche was the next stop, 3½ miles (5.5 km) from Ligny. The short march on 17<sup>th</sup> took the soldiers about 90 minutes. It was not a great place to be: "billets here indifferent", though "a supply of straw" was bought to improve matters. What was worse, "village full of Diptheria [sic]". One wonders how the soldiers got their tongues round these place-names. Another Estrée, Estrée Cauchie, was known as "Extra Cushy".

Fortunately, on the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> a move was made to another village, Enquin les Mines, just 1½ miles (2km) to the S.W. Here, there were "better billets for all ranks", though the unfortunate Lt. Jefferies "went sick with measles". Around this time, several cases of measles were reported among the junior officers<sup>33</sup>. The diary is more discreet about more senior officers' ailments; it records only that they "took sick leave", sometimes returning to England. Complete discretion is extended to the "other ranks"; tommies' illnesses never warrant a mention in the pages of the Diary.

## Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Map 14 Lines of Battalion route marches during the three weeks' break from normal duties

A pleasant entry is assigned to Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> February: "Fine sunny day. Church parade 'as strong as possible'. Rest of day holiday." However, at 7 a.m. on 22<sup>nd</sup> the Battalion were informed that they were "in the 47<sup>th</sup> [London] Div area" and ordered to move on, which must have caused more than a few grumbles. In wintry weather, the men marched about 5 miles (8 km) north to the village of Mametz, where they were to stay for a week<sup>34</sup>:

<p>MAMETZ " 23/2/16</p>	<p>Clear of village by 11/45 AM. Snowed hard &amp; very cold &amp; had to have chains on the way to give skidding party time. Arrived at MAMETZ at 2/30 pm. Billets to be arranged tomorrow - getting shelter for night as soon as possible. 3" of snow &amp; cold. Formed a rifle range &amp; bombing school.</p>
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On the following days shooting practice was arranged – “every man to fire ten rounds of S.A.A.” (small arms ammunition). For most this was with their rifle, as typically, only officers had a pistol. Bombers from each company threw Mills bombs (grenades) and the machine gunners fired their weapons. There were several route marches. The diary entry for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> notes, “Church Parade at 10/30 AM. Cold thaw, and lot of snow gone. Route march in afternoon.”

The next afternoon’s work was “packing wagons”, and on 29<sup>th</sup>, a “very fine, warm day”, the Battalion moved on again, S.E. to the village of Bourecq. The 9½-mile (15 km) journey took just under four hours, so they kept up a good pace. We do not know how much kit they were carrying - it depends on what was packed in those wagons. However, they were on light duties, and it is hard to believe that it was the full complement of “marching equipment”. In 1914, for combatant infantry this weighed nearly 60 lbs, or 27 kg, i.e. more than a large fully packed suitcase (see below).

On arrival, at 11.30 a.m., billets were allocated. “Lack of straw as usual and the outgoing Bn (BERKS) left billets very dirty.”

(A) Personal clothing		(B) Arms :—		(E) Accoutrements :—		(F) Articles carried		(G) Rations and water :—	
*with field dressing		Rifle, with sling		Waistbelt ..		in pack :— lb. oz.		Water (in bottle) ..	
Helmet	1 0½	Bayonet, scabbard,	8 3½	Two 75-round	0 13	Greatest ..	6 5	Emergency ration (9½ oz.)	2 2½
Jacket*	2 8½	and frog [belt strap]	1 4½	cartridge carriers	1 7	Socks ..	0 4½	and portion of bread	
Trousers	1 15	Total ..	9 8½	Two braces ..	0 9	Comforter cap ..	0 3½	ration (say 12 oz.) car-	
Jersey	1 5½			Pack (with supporting		Mess tin and cover	1 6½	ried in haversack ..	1 5½
Braces	0 4			strap) ..	1 8	Tooth brush ..	0 0½	Portion of meat ration	
Shirt	1 1½	(C) Ammunition :—		Waterbottle (empty),	1 7½	Boot laces ..	0 0½	(say 12 oz.) carried in	
Woollen belt	0 4½	150 rounds S.A.A.	9 13½	with carrier		Housewife (fitted)	0 3	mess tin ..	0 12
Socks	0 4½			Haversack (17 oz.) with	1 5	Towel and soap	0 11½	Total ..	4 4
Boots	8 14			fork and spoon (4 oz.)		Razor and case	0 2½		
Puttees	0 12½	(D) Intrenching tool		Total ..	7 1½	Shaving brush ..	0 1½	Marching Equipment :—	
Clasp knife	0 7½	and carriage (say)	3 0			Comb ..	0 0½	(Total of (A) to (G))	58 4½
Drawers	1 2					Pay book ..	0 2		
Total	15 0					Total ..	9 9		

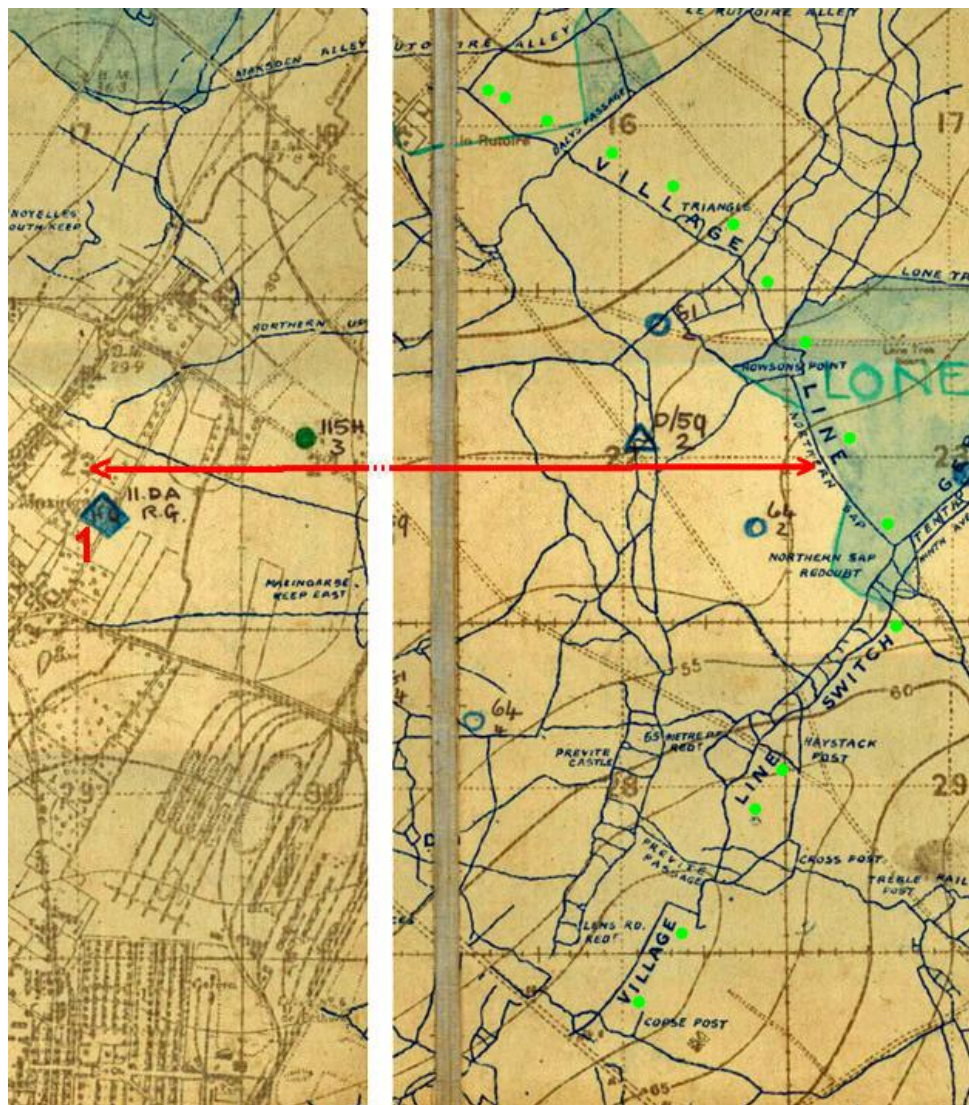
Weight of “Marching Equipment” for infantry. “Fighting Equipment” was minus (F) but with extra ammunition, and weighed 4½ lbs/2kg less.

Pioneers’ equipment would have been slightly different as they were not intended to be principally combatants and they carried picks and shovels. “Tin hats” or steel helmets were introduced from 1915, but until mid-1916 not every soldier had one, except for those on the front line.

#### 4 (iv) MARCH 1916

The stay at Bourecq lasted five days, during which, 28 more soldiers, plus 3 NCOs, were transferred to Forest Control, 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps. Subsequent events and evidence suggest that Harry Bailey remained with the Pioneers. There were more route marches, and on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Battalion team “defeated R.E. [the Royal Engineers] at SOCCER 3-2”. The importance of sport to fitness and wellbeing was realised increasingly as the war went on, and football was of course very popular, not least because little special equipment was needed. Among so many soldiers, possibly including the odd professional footballer, chances of Harry making the team were slim. Nevertheless, as a keen player, duties permitting he probably watched.

Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Map 15 Shows the 3 miles/5km (—) from Mazingarbe to the Village Line trench (…)

The same day, orders were received "to move to MAZINGARBE and be attached to 15 DIV for 'Special defence work'." The move was made the next day, along the route shown on Map 14 above. "Men stood the 17-mile [27 km] march well". This was the end of the Battalion's 63-mile (100 km) tour of villages and towns to the west, and a return to the work routine suspended three weeks before. "Old WORKSHOPS taken over at Noeux".

On Map 15, the blue-shaded diamond at Mazingarbe (1) is marked "H.Q." To the south lie the railway sidings and miners' dwellings of the mining complex around Les Brebis, which included the no. 2 and no. 6 pits of the Béthune mining company.

The Pioneers first went to work on the Village Line trenches. "7/3/16 [...] Wet & snowy. Companies worked by night wiring & improving defence work on VILLAGE LINE". This line of trenches was several miles long, and work on it was to continue throughout the month. It included the "Village Line Switch"; switch lines connected main defensive lines and enabled troops to redeploy quickly, especially during combat.

The work area was perhaps two miles west of the enemy positions, less in places, and easily within range of German artillery, as were the Battalion's billets at Mazingarbe and workshops at Noeux les Mines.

Aerial bombing was also an increasing threat, and there were almost inevitable accidents involving inexperienced troops with insufficient training faced with unfamiliar weaponry and munitions. Whereas in previous months, casualties were relatively rare, hardly a day now passes without deaths or woundings being recorded

All this is reflected in the following War Diary extract, for March 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, which reports an accident involving a father and son and gives some indication of how rarely Harry Bailey and his fellow-soldiers sometimes got to wash their clothes. [35](#) [36](#)



13.3.16	<p>Fine day. C.F. 1<sup>st</sup> Corps accompanied by Major Bell went round VILLAGE LINE on tour of inspection. 11384 P<sup>te</sup> Tetten &amp; D killed here today by shrapnell. Battalion 74/Bn wash for the first time since 11/2/16. Thunder storm.</p>
14.3.16	<p>First Summer day. German artillery very active all day. Colonel Jackson accompanied by Lieut. Smith went round VILLAGE LINE. Lieut Col CROCKETT returned today from sick leave and assumed command.</p>
15.3.16	<p>Dull day. N<sup>o</sup> 11580 P<sup>te</sup> WILKS wounded this evening by spent bullet in leg.</p>
16.3.16	<p>Enemies artillery very active during the morning. Enemies aeroplane dropped some bombs on NOELK DES MINES after dark. N<sup>o</sup> 12548 P<sup>te</sup> ALDIDGE, 19466 P<sup>te</sup> BUNCE A and 17480 P<sup>te</sup> BUNCE A. wounded tonight. The latter two, apparently, by the explosion of a bomb. BUNCE A. while digging trenches found a very bomb &amp; pulled the "pin" thereby starting the fuse. The bomb exploded wounding himself and his son.</p>
17.3.16	<p>Brilliant day. A draft of 40 N.C.O then accompanied by 1 officer (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Macconnachie Northampton Regt) arrived this afternoon.</p>

It is probable that the Bunces survived the war, as neither is listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records of war dead, which overall are extremely accurate. Perhaps they took evasive action before the grenade exploded, otherwise one or both would surely have perished.

16<sup>th</sup> March: "Enemies aeroplane [sic] dropped some bombs...". A typical bomber was the Friedrichshafen GIII, right, widely used on the Western Front from 1916. It carried up to half a ton of bombs. Some were stowed internally but most on external racks.

Things were very different from 1914, when often unarmed aeroplanes were used almost solely for reconnaissance, and Allied and German pilots would greet each other with friendly waves.

It is not difficult to imagine that the very first time Harry saw a plane in the air was over the fields of France.



During most of the rest of the month, the Allied positions were bombarded by high velocity shells, though no Battalion casualties were recorded. There were also several "very quiet" days. On two occasions it may have been due to the fact that troops on both sides were sheltering from the weather, the first when it rained all day and the other when it snowed for a day and a night.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Like many other places in the former coal-mining belt of Northern France, Mazingarbe was a small village until the first pits opened in the mid-nineteenth century. As more and more miners settled there it grew into a town. It was at this time that the pictured “chateau”, the Villa Saint-Arnould, was built. At the end of the century, the setting-up of a chemical complex drove further development.

In the First World War, the Villa was used by the British troops stationed there as their Headquarters, and also held medical posts. Mazingarbe suffered considerable damage during the war; though behind British lines it was dangerously close to the front line and was heavily bombarded.

However, the chateau survived, and is now used as the Town Hall.



In 1915, the school buildings at Mazingarbe were taken over by the British as billets. Almost certainly, they will not have been able to accommodate all the soldiers, but there must be a distinct possibility that a school was for a time “home” to Harry Bailey. The building shown in the postcard was the local boys’ school.

At least during Harry’s time in France, unlike infantrymen on a turn in the front line, the Pioneers never had to live in trenches. In this sense they were lucky, as they would not have been overrun with rats, have been able to wash fairly regularly and keep lice at bay, and not suffered severe foot infections like “trench foot”, due to cold, wet boots and lack of movement.

In World War Two, Mazingarbe suffered again, ironically at the hands of the Allies who had defended it a generation earlier. In September 1943 an Allied aerial bombardment of the town’s factories and mines claimed the lives of 27 civilians.

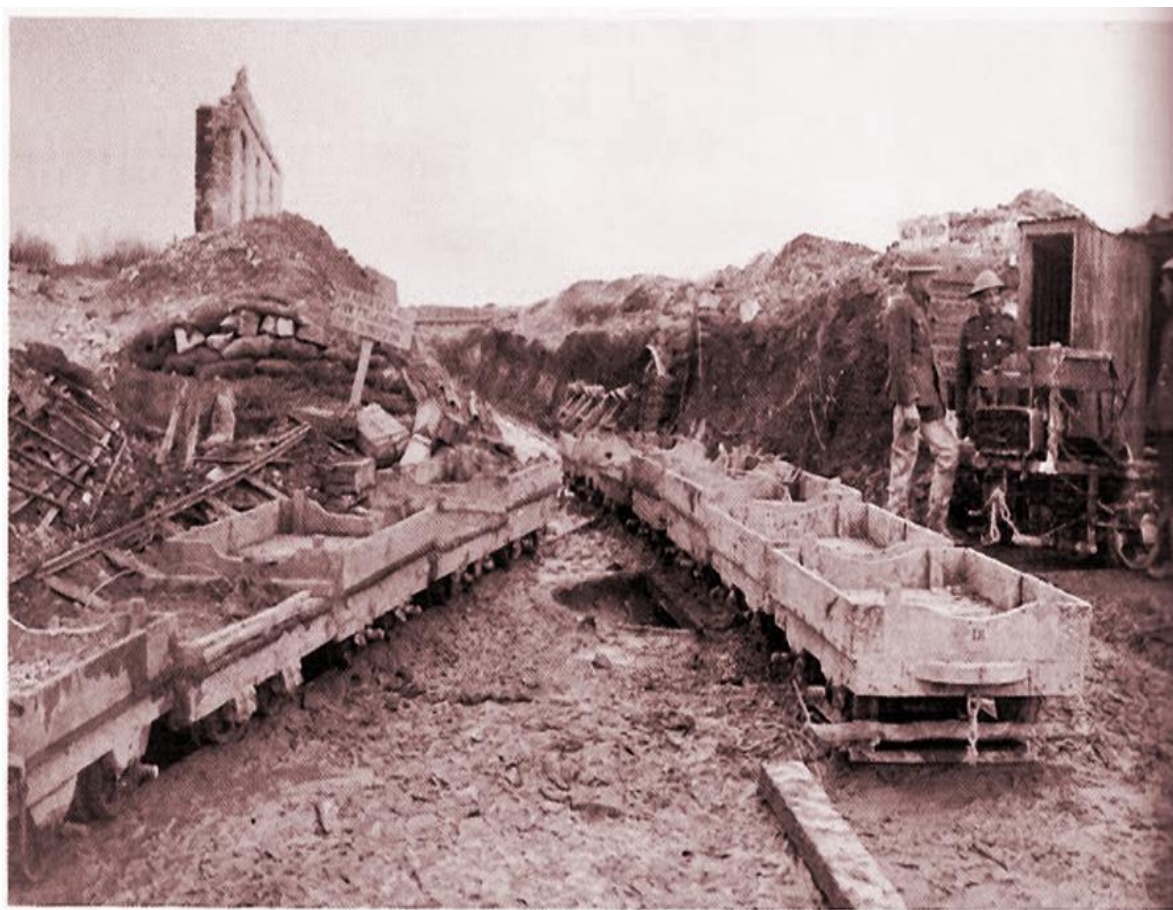


Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, while C and D Coys continued work on the Village Line, other Pioneers began work on a “new tramway to Charing Cross”. The location of this has not been identified from surviving maps, but logically would have been in the area between Mazingarbe and Loos where the Pioneers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion had so far spent much of their time.

While various communication points were rather pretentiously named, the reality on the ground was less impressive. The names chosen were reminders of Blighty<sup>37</sup> for British soldiers, but whether this made them more or less homesick is debatable. At least the names were easy to pronounce and would cause no possibly risky misunderstandings. They also underlined what was their own territory and so might have helped morale a little. A spot well-known to the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire would have been their local “Victoria Station”, just a couple of miles east of Mazingarbe.

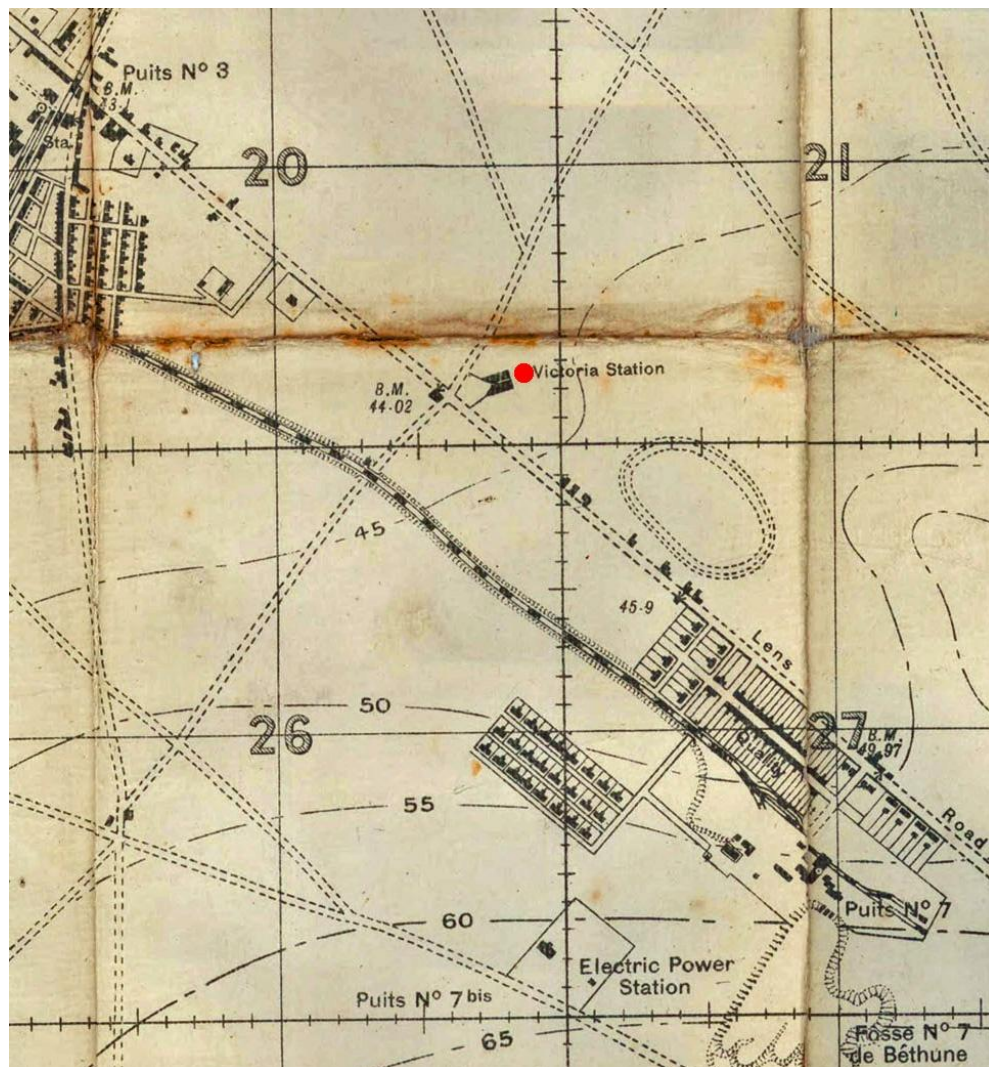
The picture below is from an Imperial War Museum collection<sup>38</sup> where it is captioned,



*WDLR [War Dept. Light Railway] trains did not penetrate as far as the front line trenches. For transport over the last few hundred yards, trench tramways (also with 2ft gauge), laid with lighter rails and equipped with smaller (usually hand pushed) wagons were used to distribute the ammunition. These trench tramway trucks are pictured at a junction grandly named "Oxford Circus" outside Arras in April 1917.*

The Royal Engineers had dedicated units called Army Tramway Companies, responsible for the construction, maintenance of these tramways, but typically, Pioneers did much essential spadework. The previously quoted History of the London Division paints this picture<sup>39</sup>:

*“The R.E. and Pioneers had the work of consolidation after each advance - a long march over heavily-shelled wilderness, followed by work under the worst conditions, black wet nights, heavy ground, constant chance of coming upon some little enemy stronghold that had survived our last assault. There was, besides, the work of clearing communication trenches, of making forward tracks and tramways, arranging water-supply, and so on - the provision of all the ways and means of life in an uninhabitable region, and, not least, the bringing forward of all material necessary for their work.”*



Map 16 Area of Victoria Station (●), at map reference G20d.7.2, near Mazingarbe

At Pit No. 7, near the centre of map square 27, "Quality" labels a 'garden suburb' built for the miners. It was naturally an improvement over the traditional blocks of miners' cottages or terraces. The British called the road through it, and the trench there, Quality Street. This was the title of a 1901 play by J.M. Barrie (his *Peter Pan* came in 1904). A comedy about two sisters who start a school for 'genteel children', it was a hit in London and elsewhere for many years. So "Quality Street" became a household name, firstly due to the play and since 1936, because of the chocolates.

#### 4 (v) APRIL 1916

The first week of the month produced almost daily casualties.

"1/4/16 – "Fine day. Enemy's artillery active. What appeared to be one of our aeroplanes fell when over LIEVIN" <sup>40</sup>.

"2/4/16. – Pnr Johnston died of wounds. He was a Battalion orderly who had been hit by shrapnel two days before, in Loos.

3/4/16. – 10836 Pnr Coombes and 11587 Brown H. were wounded by rifle bullets when working on the Village Line. "Very hot day."

4/4/16. – "Fine day. Pnr BULPITT accidentally killed by explosion of a grenade he had picked up."

5/4/16. – "Lt. WINDLE and Capt. HAZARD went on leave. Pnr ELLIOTT was killed and Sergt. DAVIS was wounded by a shell whilst working on tramway line near VICTORIA STATION. Cold day with N E wind."

The map shows Victoria Station at a crossroads. The main Lens-Bethune road and a railway run N.W. and the road to Vermelles, NNE. Shortly before Harry arrived in France, during the Battle of Loos, the ditch on the south side of the Lens road had been a front line trench.

The station lies between Pit no. 3 and Pits no. 7 and no. 7b, with an Electric Power Station close by. The notches on the sides of the grid squares are 50 yards apart. "Puits" and "Fosse" may be loosely used to refer to a mine or colliery in general, though a strict use might be Puits as a shaft (it also means well) and Fosse as a shallower working (fossa being Latin for ditch, as in our Roman road, the Foss(e) Way.

Certainly the map marking by "Fosse N° 7 de Béthune" looks more like open cast mining. "Béthune" refers to the mining company that owned it. Eight of the ten largest French coal mines were in the Pas de Calais.



Forming as it did part of an industrial complex, with a railway connection and an electric power station, the location was a target for enemy guns: "10/4/16 [...] Artillery activities during the day, particularly against QUALITY STREET." <sup>41</sup> Two days before, one of the Pioneers' billets in Mazingarbe had been hit by a shell, wounding six men.

During the whole of April, work continued on the long Village Line, and from 10<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, on front line Listening Posts and Galleries, where the Battalion worked with the Irish Regiment. On trench maps or aerial photographs, trenches leading to these Posts appear as stubs reaching forward from trench lines into no man's land <sup>42</sup> and generally referred to as "saps". In Tudor times a sap was a spade or mattock; sapping came to mean digging under fortifications to undermine them and end a siege. In the Great War a sap was a narrow trench, covered or uncovered, and Pioneers were in effect "Sappers". The use of "gallery" in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire War Diary clearly refers to a covered, or "Russian", sap, dug by tunnelling.

A listening post, often called a sap-head (the end of a sap trench) was a shallow, narrow, often disguised position, usually 30 yards in front of the front line. It was typically occupied by two men, often lying down. They had to keep a close watch for any signs of enemy activity in the vicinity, such as enemy patrols, wiring parties, mining, or preparations for a gas attack, indicated by the presence of gas cylinders. Manning listening posts was considered a dangerous activity given that both sides would often launch raids intended to knock out enemy sap-heads. Soldiers with a knowledge of German were used if at all possible, as the posts were close enough to enemy lines to hear conversations and telephone calls being made.

As the war wore on, listening posts in tunnels became equipped with more and more sophisticated listening devices, designed to detect the presence and position of enemy troops on the surface above a gallery. This work was often preparatory to the explosion of an underground mine.

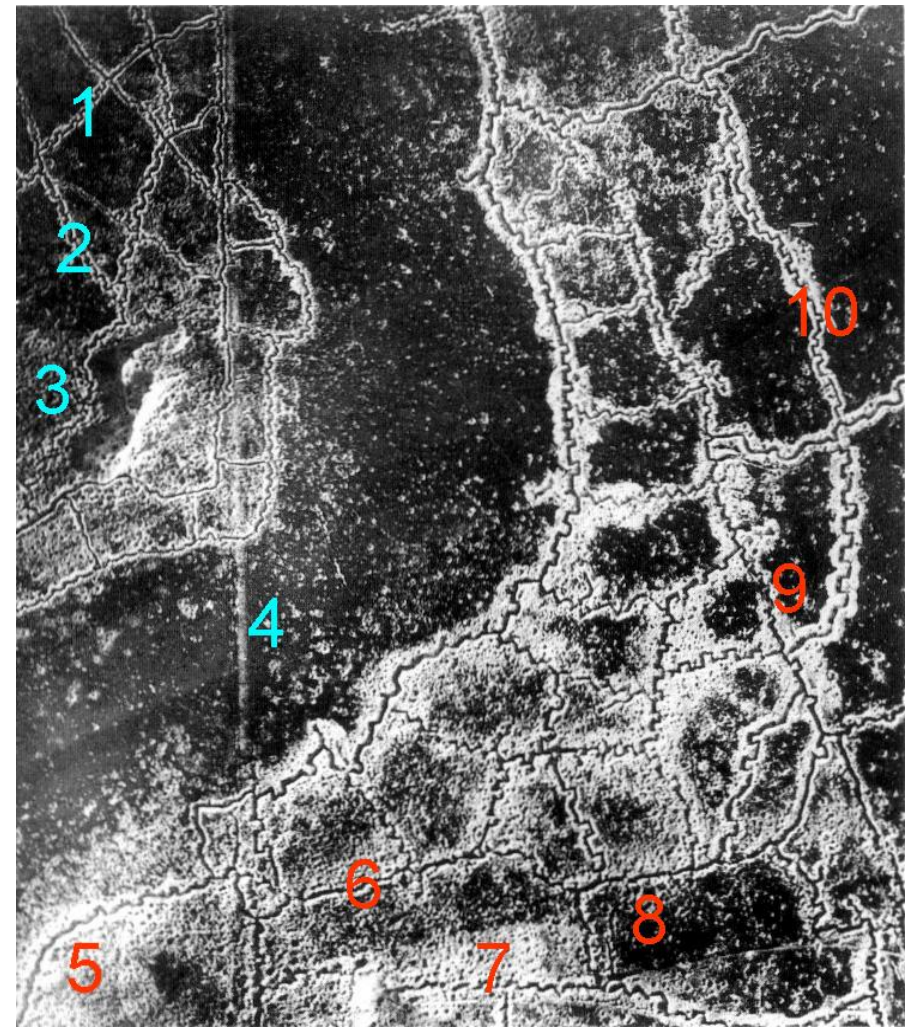
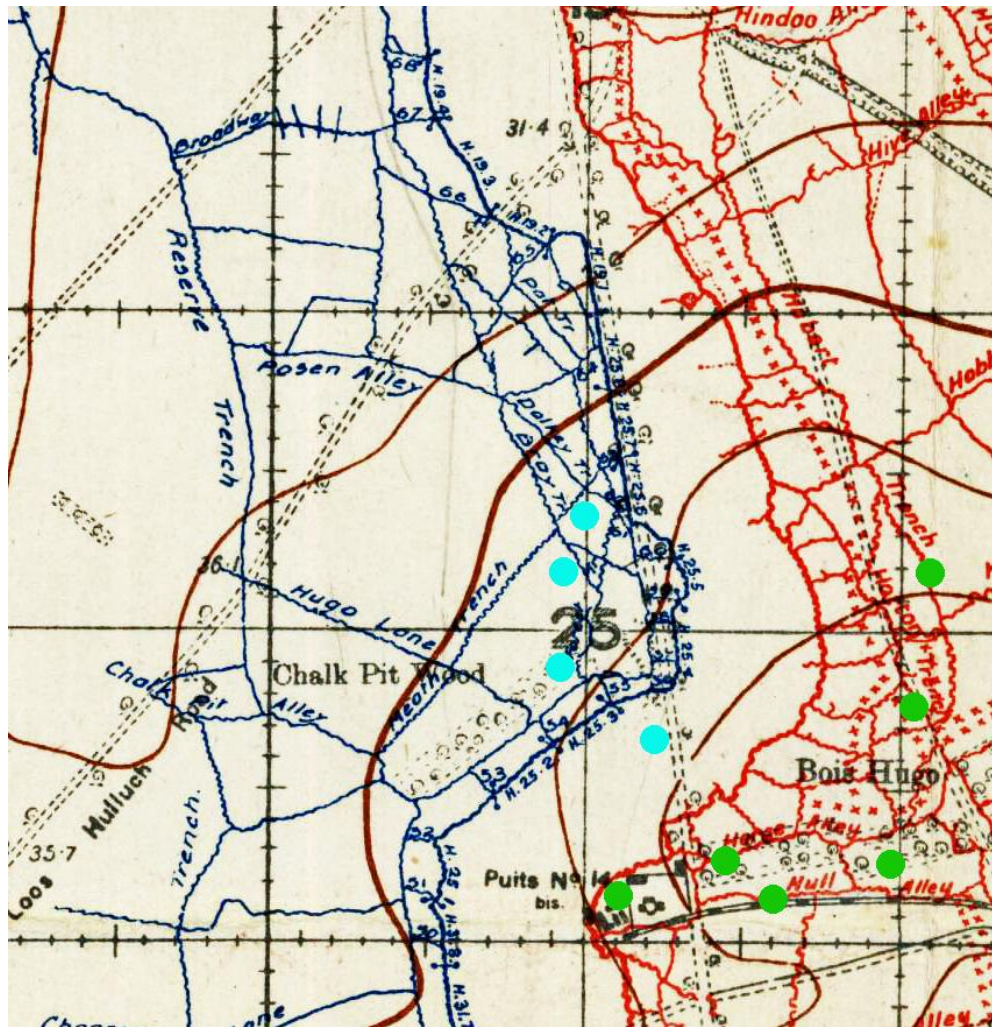
On April 7<sup>th</sup>, it was decided to dig a new support trench at the rear of Chalk Pit Wood, which had been on the British front line since the Battle of Loos six months before. If circumstances allowed, there were three lines of trenches, of which the support trenches were the second line of defence, behind the front line. The general layout of trenches is clear from the [diagram](#) in chapter 4 (i), for December 1915. Troops in the support trenches would aim to check an enemy attack if the front line was overrun. "Dressing stations" were established there, where the wounded would be patched up before they were evacuated, if necessary, or returned to the front line. Any kitchens established would also be sited there, to supply hot food. The support trench would also hold stocks of food, medical, and other supplies to take up to the front line soldiers.

Behind the support trenches was a third line of reserve trenches, where back-up troops could amass for a counter-attack if the first two lines of trenches were overrun. Linking the three lines at about ninety degrees to them, were the communications trenches. Apart from allowing troop movement with some protection, they would carry buried telephone and electric power cables, sometimes at a depth of six feet or more to resist impacts from shelling. The distance between the front line and reserve line would usually be between 200 and 500 yards, for example, a support line might be 75 yards back from the front line and the reserve trenches a further 300 yards back from them.

The following aerial photograph was taken in July 1917 and illustrates the use of three lines of trenches linked by communications trenches. It is catalogued as showing part of the Loos-Hulluch sector <sup>43</sup>. Hulluch village was about 3,000 yards (2km) N.E. of Loos. The central black shell-pocked area is No Man's Land, with British trenches to the left and enemy trenches on the right. A study of trench maps shows that the noticeable curve in No Man's Land is a unique feature in the sector. This confirms that the Allied trenches shown are those around Chalk Pit Wood – see Map 17 below. The picture is one of the most widely reproduced aerial photographs from the war, and quite by chance, shows territory where Harry Bailey worked.

Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Confusingly, while on British maps, Allied trenches were in blue and enemy ones in red, on the trench maps used by the French it was just the opposite! This surprising state of affairs continued until early in 1918, when the British adopted the French convention, swapping the colours.



Map 17 (trenches correct to March 4, 1917) Chalk Pit Wood area N. of Loos. Dots mark features numbered on the aerial photograph: (1) Meath Trench (2) Bray Trench; (3) Chalk Pit Wood (4) Loos-La Bassée rd. in No Man's Land (5) Pit 14B (6) Horse Alley (7) Hull Alley (8) Hugo Wood (9) Horton Trench (10) Hobart Trench

To make the Chalk Pit Wood support trench, two parties of 120 men were organised, one working from 8.30 pm (sunset) to 12.30 a.m. and the second party "until daybreak", then at 6.45 a.m. Detection by the enemy of such a large group of men cannot have been difficult and will have added



to the inherent danger of working only a few hundred yards (maybe 400 metres) from the German front line. On the night of April 9<sup>th</sup> Major Bell “taped new trench” in preparation for its digging; the next night 320 men of A, C and D Coys (rather than the 240 originally planned) went to work.

The Diary entry for April 12<sup>th</sup> is brief: “New trench on right of HUGO LANE dug by 320 men.” This could have been Chalk Pit Alley, which according to its length as shown on Map 17, and the number of men employed, might have been made in one night. This would of course depend on factors like the width and depth of the trench dug, the ease of digging through the chalk, and the level of risk posed by the Germans. Presumably “on right of” means looking forward from the Allied side, and refers to a trench roughly parallel to Hugo Lane, therefore, a communication trench. That they were making Chalk Pit Alley seems to be confirmed by the fact that just over a week later, the War Diary names it as having then been inspected by the Battalion’s Commanding Officer accompanied by the officer in command of the Royal Engineers – the R.E. would have overseen the construction.



There is no mention in the War Diary as to how the Pioneers reached their work sites. Buses were sometimes used for bringing infantry up to a safe distance from their final destination, if this was on or close to the front line – London buses were brought over to France for troop transport. Unsurprisingly, units which got the use of these were London regiments. If a light railway was in the right place, it might be used; horse-drawn wagons were another option where roads were passable. Tramways might not have saved the walking but at least tools and materials could be pushed along on the trucks. However, a frequent “commute” would probably have included marches snaking between the shell holes for the working party, such as the one over duckboards pictured above, or just a long trudge through the mud.

The Diary page for April 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup><sup>44</sup>, reproduced below, records bad weather with heavy rain and strong wind, which would have made for the “black, wet nights” of labour previously referred to<sup>45</sup>. There is little indication that work was curtailed but at least the Battalion were given the Thursday off. Interestingly, the page is more tidily and clearly written than many. Could this possibly have been due to the fact that the bad weather meant diarist Captain Berkeley was able to spend more time at his writing desk?



WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.			Army Form C. 2118.
<small>Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.</small>			
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
MAZINGARBE	17/4/16		Bn ordered to repair RAILWAY ALLEY. Windy & Wet. Good work during the night. Work on LINE & WILLAGE LINE temporarily suspended. Parties of Infantry detailed to make MEATH TRENCH under Lt GIRLING arrived without tools & consequently nothing was done. Work on LISTENING POSTS proceeding.
	18/4/16		CARE & CO inspected RAILWAY & CHALK PIT ALLEY. Bn put in another night work on RAILWAY ALLEY. Work on Artillery OP and Hospital DUGOUTS. Pouring wet night. Quiet day generally with low clouds & strong wind.
	19/4/16		Pouring rain & high wind. Bn worked on RAILWAY ALLEY. Fatigue party from Bde failed to turn up & consequently no material taken up for Hospital DUGOUTS.
	20/4/16		Lt HART RE. inspected LISTENING POSTS. Bn had a days rest. Weather improving.
	21/4/16		Wet. Work proceeded on RAILWAY ALLEY, LISTENING POSTS & DUGOUTS. CO attended conference at DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

781. Berkeley Capt.  
Hart RE.  
Captain & Adj.  
Hants. Regt.

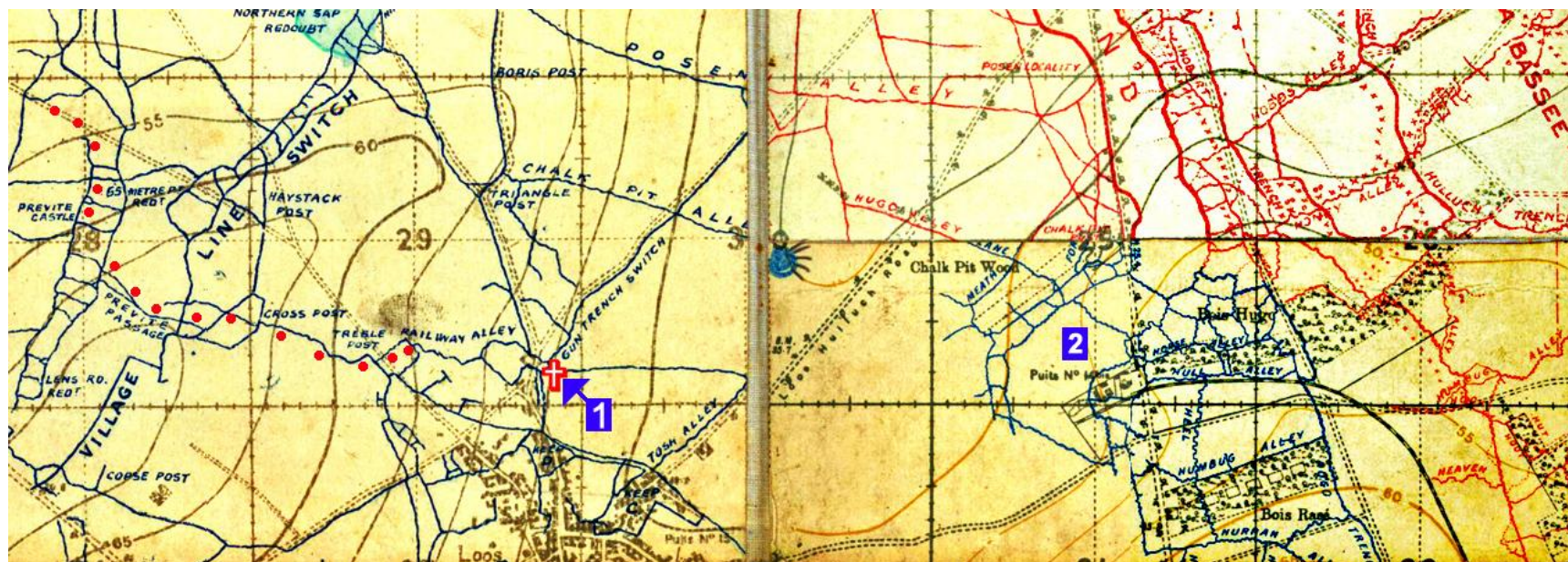
The following description of Railway Alley, and other places familiar to the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire, is from a contemporary history of the 1/5th Leicestershire battalion, published in 1919. It describes events which had occurred just two years earlier.<sup>46</sup>



*On the 14th of November, while in Brigade Support at Philosophe, we were ordered to reconnoitre the "Hill 70" sector, with a view to taking over the line from the Sherwood Foresters.<sup>47</sup> The same day we moved to some particularly cold and uncomfortable huts at Mazingarbe, going to the line the next night. Our route lay along the main Lens road past Fosse III. and Fosse VII., then by tracks past Privet Castle ["Previte Castle" on the map below] to **Railway Alley**. This endless communication trench led all the way past the famous **Loos** Crucifix, still standing, to what had been the front line before the Canadian attack. Thence various other alleys led to the front line.*

*Our new sector was by no means luxurious. There was a front line trench and portions of a reserve line, all rather the worse for wear, while the communication trenches, "Hurrah " and " Humbug " Alleys, were unspeakably filthy. The whole area at the top of the hill was an appalling mess of tangled machinery from Puits 14 bis, battered trenches, the remains of two woods, Bois Hugo and Bois Raze [Rasé], and shell holes of every shape and size. There was mud and wet chalk everywhere, and a very poor water supply for drinking purposes .....*

The area around Railway Alley is shown below. The route down from Mazingarbe to Railway Alley described above, one Harry may well have used, is highlighted by the dotted red line. No. 1 marks the approximate location of the Crucifix and no. 2 is Pit 14 bis; the other trenches and the woods referred to are to the E. and N.E. Contours show Loos to be at 40 metres above sea level, and Hill "70", apparently that number of metres high, say 230 ft. The hill was strategically significant in this flat country, even though the summit was lower than the tops of the Double Crassier slag-heaps. For reasons unknown, squares 24d and 24a are wrongly shown in red, the colour of enemy trenches (parts of Posen Alley and Hugo Alley, for example). This is mapping of German-held territory as it was before the Allied push to liberate Loos late in 1915. (Note the "ND" of No Man's LaND).



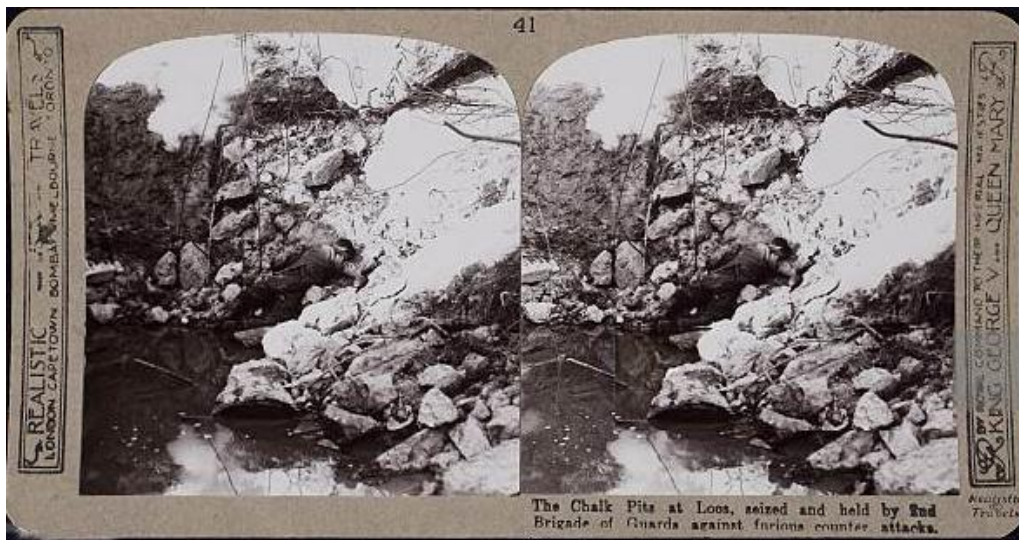
Map 18 (believed to be from 1917) The area around Railway and Chalk Pit Alleys, where men of the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Service Battalion worked in April 1916



We know from the 1919 history quoted from above that the “famous Loos Crucifix” pictured here stood alongside Railway Alley and miraculously survived the war, which is perhaps what made it so well-known.

The CWGC<sup>48</sup> refers indirectly to the crucifix in its description of Loos war cemeteries. Of the present Dud Corner cemetery at Loos, believed to be so named due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice, it says that many graves there are of men whose remains were brought in from a number of small burial sites in the vicinity. These included two small local cemeteries which no longer exist, the Tosh Cemetery and the Crucifix Cemetery.

Tosh Cemetery, on the north edge of Loos-en-Gohelle, took its name from a nearby communication trench called Tosh Alley, shown on Map 18, above. Crucifix Cemetery, clearly named after the Loos Crucifix, was “a little west of Tosh Cemetery”, so the crucifix statue could well have stood close to the spot where in the Great War, Railway Alley crossed the “Gun Trench Switch”. This would have been a traditional place for a wayside cross. The Switch followed the line of the Hulluch road, which approached Loos from the N.E. and joined the road from Haisnes, coming in from the N.W., near the intersection of the two trenches: the crucifix would have provided travellers along the two roads with a place to pray, either to give thanks for a safe arrival or to ask for protection at the start of a journey. Even if passing soldiers were not allowed to pause there, or did not want to, many must have prayed as they marched by, for folks back home and for protection for themselves and their mates.



Chalk Pit Wood has a connection with Kipling and received considerable publicity in 2015. It was well-known to the British public a century before, a view being chosen for a stereoscopic photograph, captioned “The Chalk Pits at Loos, seized and held [in 1915] by 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of Guards against furious counter attacks.”

Most of the 1,800 graves at the Haisnes war cemetery, 4 miles/7 km N. of Loos, contain the remains of unknown soldiers interred when the Loos battlefield was cleared in 1919. One has a memorial to John Kipling, 18-year-old son of Rudyard, wounded near the Wood in 1915 and posted as missing. Only in 2015 was it accepted that the remains in the grave, known to be those of a first lieutenant of the Irish Guards, are John Kipling’s. He had been thought to be a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt until new evidence proved his promotion, and therefore that the grave of the last outstanding Irish Guards first lieutenant still to be identified must be his.





**EXAMINE ARMS.**

Officer (severely). "IS THIS RIFLE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN CLEANED?"

Private. "WELL, SIR---YES. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THESE SERVANT GALS ARE!"

To return to the Leicestershire battalion's History, a couple of pages after the description of the march via Railway Alley to Hill 70, the author writes of two accidents. One shows how what in theory was a routine task could so easily go awry, while the second, like the reference to the rather silly regulations noted in Maude's History of the 47<sup>th</sup> London Regt., shines a ray of light relief through the gloom of violence and suffering:<sup>49</sup>

*The transport had as bad a time as anyone, bringing rations on the light railway through Loos, which was never a pleasant spot. Once again a mule succeeded in falling into a trench, and it took R.S.M. Lovett and a party of men more than an hour to extricate it.*

*The 4th Battalion took our places at the end of the tour, and we marched back to Mazingarbe. Our billets had been slightly improved, and Headquarters now had a house in the Boulevard, commonly called "Snobs' Alley". While here a new horse, a large chestnut, which arrived for the Padre, caused considerable commotion in the Regiment. First he bolted with the Padre half-way from Mazingarbe to Labourse [if taken literally, about two miles!], when he finally pulled him up and dismounted. He then refused to move at all, and went down on his knees to Padre Buck, who was most disconcerted, especially when the animal moaned as though truly penitent. The next day the Adjutant tried to ride him, and once more he bolted. This time his career was short, for horse and rider came down on the Mazingarbe cobbled high road, and the Adjutant had to go to Chocques hospital with a broken head, and was away for a week.*

In the Hampshire Regiment History referred to previously, Atkinson writes as follows when referring to work done in March and April <sup>50</sup>:

*A spell in March at Mazingarbe under the 15th Division was chiefly notable for snow and generally bad weather, but good work was done and the line much improved. Early in April the 16th Division took over the N. portion of the Loos salient and the 11th Hampshire reverted to its command. Under whatever Division they were the Pioneers were always busy, some in the front line, others on communication trenches and rear areas.*

*One piece of work which earned special praise was the virtual reconstruction of Railway Alley, a communication trench running North of Loos to the front near Chalk Pit Wood. Casualties, though frequent, were never heavy, and some small drafts with several officers from the 13th Battalion filled up the gaps, caused more by sickness and various 'employments' than in action.*

The following War Diary page<sup>51</sup> records the congratulatory message from Major-General Hickie, Commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division of which the Hampshire Regiment formed part. Back in February it had been the Commanding Officer of the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division who had praised the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire for their work and morale during the period when the Pioneers were attached to the 47<sup>th</sup>. It suggests that they were a body of men whose dedication to their task was exemplary.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
			11 <sup>th</sup> (S) Bn HANTS REGT (PIONEERS)
MAZINGARBE	22/4/16		WET again - Work suspended. Following received from DIVISIONAL COMMANDER: - The Divisional Commander begs you to convey to the Officers & men of the 11 <sup>th</sup> Hants (Pioneers) his extreme appreciation of the work they have done in the last few days on RAILWAY ALLEY. This work is a gift to the Division & to troops that will succeed it in this sector, that will tend much to the safety of the line & to the reduction of casualties. He takes this opportunity to thank Col Crockett and his Battalion for all their good and gallant work & for their exemplary conduct during the past four months. (S) W. B. HICKIE Cndg. 16 <sup>th</sup> Div.
	23/4/16		Easter Sunday. Fine bright day. Work on Railway alley etc. ABBATOIR shelled. Considerable Artillery activity. 2LT JONES, 2LT HAYWARD, 2LT CORSER & 2LT HAMMON posted from 13 <sup>th</sup> HANTS.
	24/4/16		COY ADT spent most of day inspecting the trenches. Very fine. Artillery active. Work on RAILWAY ALLEY etc. LT MITCHELL-DAWSON, 2LT RAYNER & 2LT PEARCE posted from 13 <sup>th</sup> HANTS. LT CRAIG relieved from 16 <sup>th</sup> Div H.Q.
	25/4/16		Very hot. C.O. went round RAILWAY ALLEY. Work on RAILWAY ALLEY and continuation of TRAMWAY to NEW VICTORIA STATION.

Just as on Christmas Day, with Harry newly arrived at the Front, on Easter Sunday too, the Pioneers put in a normal shift. On that "fine bright day" (the eve of the Easter Uprising that led to Irish independence), the local abattoir was shelled. Commandeered by the military authorities, it was the place of execution for cowardice or desertion. Between December 1915 and March 1918, 11 soldiers faced the firing squad there. The first, Royal Munster Fusilier James Graham, died at dawn on 21<sup>st</sup> December, just hours after Harry had marched into Noeux-les-Mines.

Despite the introduction of systematic 'camouflage' (from the French meaning "stage make-up"), aerial reconnaissance and the proximity of opposing forces made easier the detection of military presence, and the slaughterhouse would have been spotted as a target for the artillery.



Four days after Easter, the Loos sector suffered an enemy gas attack which affected Pioneers working on the edge of No Man's Land<sup>52</sup>:

MAZINGARRE	26/4/16	Hot fine day. Artillery Active. Work on TRAMWAY and VILLAGE LINE & LISTENING POSTS.	
"	27/4/16	GAS ATTACK on LOOS SECTOR. See 16 <sup>th</sup> DIV SUMMARY. The men working on LISTENING POSTS had the following casualties (see APPENDIX)  Bn worked on all the support, reserve & front line trenches repairing damage done by bombardment.	APP. 2.
"	28/4/16	ITS CASE & GIRLING went on leave	
"	29/4/16	FALSE GAS ALARM at 9.30 PM. Heavy Artillery Bn. Bn worked repairing trenches. 4 AM GAS ALARM. Heavy attack on HULLUCH SECTION (SUMMARY). C.O attended conference at 16 <sup>th</sup> DIV H.Q. Bn carried up 25000 yds of WIRE & 1200 screw pickets for wiring.	

Gas was first used in World War One by the French, who employed tear gas in 1914. The first use of a killer gas was in January 1915, when the Germans used chlorine, in contravention of a 1907 convention banning "poisonous weapons". They claimed that the convention referred to chemical shells, but not gas projectiles. Thereafter gas was used by both sides, with varying degrees of success. Sometimes wind changes blew gas back over the lines of those who had used it; on occasion enemy shells hit unused gas canisters and released the contents.

Late in 1915 the more deadly phosgene was introduced. Mustard gas, used from mid-1917, is better known, but phosgene was responsible for 85% of the estimated 100,000 war deaths from gassing. A colourless gas said to smell of mouldy hay, it was much more difficult to detect than grey-green chlorine. A drawback of its use in combat was that it took up to 24 hours to incapacitate a victim. In contrast the burning effect of mustard gas, not in itself so deadly, could incapacitate troops almost instantaneously. It was the most effective chemical weapon used, and impregnated ground it came into contact with, so had a long-lasting effect. Advancing soldiers were sometimes burned when passing over ground that their own side had polluted with the gas. The effects of gassing on a survivor could be permanent. An old soldier of Cherington, Sampson Smith, would drink cider mixed with black treacle and ginger as the "only remedy" to clear his breathing<sup>53</sup>.

A gas helmet effective against phosgene had been introduced in January 1916 though inevitably there was a delay before all those who needed it actually received it. It is not known what protective equipment the men gassed on 27<sup>th</sup> April had. The Appendix referred to<sup>54</sup> lists four men who were gassed, one of whom died the next day, and a further 22 "Gassed (slightly) continuing duty". Elsewhere in the area, hundreds more from other units died<sup>55</sup>. A Battalion Progress Report included in the Diary<sup>56</sup> suggests that the "Listening Posts" where the victims were working were in the area of Chalk Pit Wood (see [Map 17](#)). The Pioneers were in fact digging "Listening Galleries", some over 20 ft/6m underground, where, it is noted, they hit the water table.

Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

The War Diary records a False Gas Alarm on 28<sup>th</sup>, on the night after the attack, and a further alarm in the early hours of 29<sup>th</sup>. Gas attacks were usually warned of by ringing bells, swinging rattles, or often by hitting a spent artillery shell. In the days following the attack, the Diary frequently includes wind direction in the short weather report – when the wind was in the east, there was obviously a risk that the enemy would release gas to blow towards the Allied lines.



British gas attack during Battle of Loos, 1915. Right, the same area today: view from 2 miles/3 km E. of Mazingarbe, N.E. towards Le Rutoire.

The reference to wire transported on April 29<sup>th</sup> underlines the vast quantities that were used. The War Office document of 1916 referred to previously with reference to “crater consolidation” gives very detailed instructions as to how wiring was to be laid<sup>57</sup>; a brief summary follows. It must be borne in mind that wiring needed to be done in the dark to reduce the risk from impossibly high to extreme, but it was probably still an activity less dangerous only than actually “going over the top”.

According to the “book”, wiring parties would start 30 yards in front of the front line and lay coils of “concertina” wire a minimum of 10 yards deep between them and the enemy, in rows about six feet apart, thus finishing, say, 20 yards in front of their own trench. This distance prevented enemy soldiers creeping up and lobbing grenades into that trench. Artillery found wire more difficult to breach if it did not follow the “trace” of the trench. The wire “obstacle” was to be about three feet high, but variations in height, achieved by leaving different amounts of a stake above ground, made it more difficult to cross, as did variations on the standard six feet between posts. Gaps were left about every 50 yards to allow patrols to pass through.

If the closeness of the Germans put the wiring parties in grave danger, consider the poor sentries: the War Office guide states, “Each wiring party should have a double sentry lying down about 30 or 40 yards towards the enemy to prevent patrols sniping or bombing the party.”



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

At least they were potentially less visible than the Pioneers laying the wire. It was not unusual for enemy patrols to encounter them, or the wiring parties from the opposing side. Then hand-to-hand fighting would ensue, if one or both sides did not flee back to their nearest trench.

In the earliest days of wiring, all the enemy had to do to locate a wiring party was to listen for the sound of stakes being hammered in. Needless to say, that state of affairs was short-lived. Hammers were muffled with leather or "at least eight" thicknesses of sandbag, and where the ground allowed it, "pigtail" or "corkscrew" pickets were used, screwed into the earth. The War Diary page above refers to 1200 of these "screw pickets". If that number was to be enough at standard spacing for the 25,000 yards of wire given, it suggests that the 25,000 referred to the length of straight wire as manufactured. The length of the concertina wire barricades using that wire would be much shorter.



Secrecy and silence were vital. The coils of wire were prepared in advance, in daylight, cut into manageable lengths for a man to carry, and often rewound on a stake with pieces of sandbag protecting the handler. A string was attached to one end to make it easy to find in the dark. If the original wooden drums were to be carried up to the area to be wired, it was stressed that the "pieces of tin" on them must be "removed to prevent noise". Likewise "equipment, unless necessary" was to be left behind to reduce the risk of sounds of chinking metal.

Men assigned to wiring duties lived in constant fear of enemy flares sent up to illuminate an area of the battlefield. Soldiers caught in No Man's Land by such flares would either freeze until the light of the flare died, or else (more often) throw themselves instantly to the ground. It was not uncommon for enemy machine gun fire to accompany the sending up of flares as a precautionary measure.

Captain Geoffrey Donaldson of the Warwickshire Regiment wrote in a letter<sup>58</sup>, "*The night before last I took out a patrol of four men about half way across No Man's Land. There is comparatively little risk attached to this work but it is of course a considerable strain on the nerves. Last night, I went out with Wakefield and a wiring party, that is to say with about six men improving our wire entanglements. I consider on the whole this is as nerve-racking a job as any, more so than patrol work.*"

## 5. Journey's End

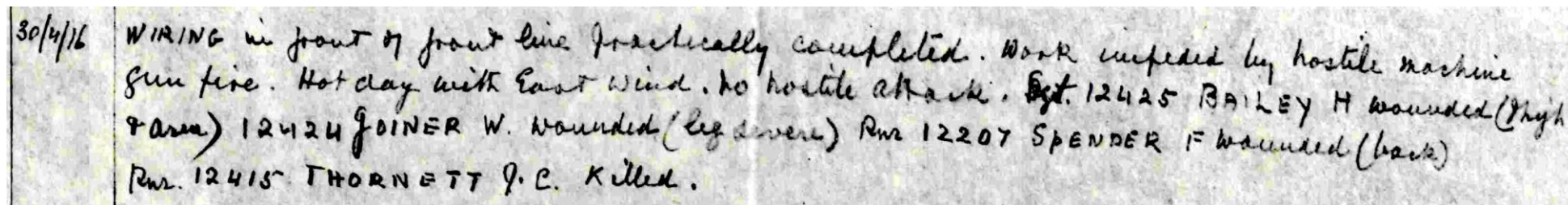
On the last day of April, Sergeant Harry Bailey was out laying barbed wire. Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> marked 132 days since Harry had arrived at the Western Front. The weather was hot, with wind from the east, which always meant a risk of another gas attack, but no attack of any kind came. To judge from the War Diary entry, work during daylight hours may have been limited, since only the wiring is mentioned, and this was carried out after dark. We do not know exactly where he went, but we do have an indication.

A few surviving weekly "Battalion Progress Report" sheets are attached to the War Diary. One is a report for the week ending May 3<sup>rd</sup>. It carries no individual dates, so we do not know on how many nights in that week (Wednesday to Wednesday) wiring parties were out, but from the War Diary reports it seems like three, April 30<sup>th</sup> and the next two days. In the Progress Report, the reference to wiring is as follows:

(Time) *Night*. (Place) *Front line*. (Nature of Work) *Repairing wire from Munster Crater to Chalk Pit Salient*. (Progress made) *About 300 yds new wire or strengthening old*. (No. of Pioneers) *46*. (Remarks) *Owing to congestion of trenches the whole of one night spent in carrying*.

The Chalk Pit salient is shown on [Map 17](#); Munster Crater has not been located on trench maps, but from descriptions of fighting in the Battle of Loos by the Royal Irish Fusiliers it appears to have been between Chalk Pit Wood and the village of Hulluch about two miles (3 km) to the north<sup>59</sup>. [Map 6](#) marks a string of unnamed craters in No Man's Land west of Hulluch, one of which could possibly have been Munster.

The Battalion War Diary tells us part of what happened that Sunday night to May Day morning.



30/4/16 WIRING in front of front line practically completed. Work impeded by hostile machine gun fire. Hot day with East wind. No hostile attack. Sgt. 12425 BAILEY H wounded (thigh & arm) 12424 JOINER W. wounded (leg & arm) Pnr 12207 SPENDER F wounded (back) Pnr. 12415 THORNETT J. C. Killed.

We see from the Diary that Harry was working alongside two of his life-long friends, Wilf (Wilfred) Joiner and his cousin John Edward (Jack) Thornett. Together when they were given their Service Numbers in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire, 12415, 12424 and 12425, they all appear in the photograph of volunteers who "answered the call" on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1914, which is reproduced in 3 (ii)<sup>60</sup>. Pioneer Spender was not among the soldiers from Cherington and Stourton and has not been identified, but appears to have survived as he is not recorded among the fallen by the meticulous Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Wilf Joiner also survived the war, despite his "severe" wound.

It was probably that "hostile machine gun fire" that killed Jack Thornett and left Harry mortally wounded. Jack was buried in the Extension to the Communal Cemetery at Mazingarbe, near what was his home for the last eight weeks of his life. His mother had been born Sarah Bailey, and was a sister of Harry's father John; Jack had preferred to live down at Stourton with the Baileys and work on the farm, rather than in the Leicestershire stone quarries where the Thornetts earned their livelihood. He is commemorated on two war memorials; at Mountsorrel, his



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

Leicestershire birthplace, and in his adoptive home villages of Cherington and Stourton. It is in a way a fitting coincidence that in the next grave to his own at Mazingarbe lie the remains of a soldier bearing the name Bailey, if not those of his pal Harry<sup>61</sup>.

Harry, Wilf and Pioneer Spender probably endured the typical journey of evacuation; its different stages are highlighted in italics:<sup>62</sup>

*Stretcher bearers*, carrying medical basics such as morphine and bandages, attempted to recover the injured (or dead) from the battlefield. The first stop was the *Regimental Aid Post* (RAP), close behind the trenches and likely to be just a rough dugout. Basic first aid would be provided here by the Battalion Medical Officer and his orderlies. The wounded would either be patched up and sent back to fight, or if too badly injured (certainly Harry and Wilf's case) would be sent on to the next station. Only ten days before, the Pioneers had been working on "Hospital Dugouts" in the area<sup>63</sup>, so there exists the possibility that the three wounded men were sent to one of the First Aid posts that they themselves had helped to create.

From the RAP many wounded were taken maybe half a mile (800m) back, to *Advance Dressing Stations* manned by members of the R.A.M.C. [Royal Army Medical Corps] Field Ambulance. These Dressing Stations were most often merely tented areas, designed to provide a modest level of triage and treatment. Casualties unfit to return to duty moved on to ...



... a *Casualty Clearing Station* (CCS), typically about 12 miles/20km from the front line. The first ones set up lacked even essential facilities and equipment, but by the Spring of 1916 a CCS could be expected to have had operating theatres, mobile x-ray units and for the more seriously wounded about 50 beds and 150 stretchers, usually laid on the bare floor. The nearest station for Harry Bailey was CCS 33 at Béthune, around ten miles/15 km distant. CCS 1 was a little farther on, at Chocques, where the troop train from Le Havre had brought him on arrival in France in December 1915.

A Casualty Clearing Station was a short-stay facility; those patients who had been treated successfully enough there were deemed fit for duty again. Harry would have reached there by horse-drawn Field Ambulance wagon (pictured here), by motor ambulance or lorry, or possibly, by WDLR (War Dept. Light Railway), if there was a convenient line.

Wounded men could suffer terribly if bumped about in a wagon en route to a CCS.

The severity of Harry Bailey's wounds meant that he was sent on to a military hospital, known as a General, Base or *Stationary Hospital*. The term 'stationary' marked a contrast with many of the Casualty Clearing Stations, which would pack up and move on in response to changes in the active fronts. Most British hospitals were near a railway line, and close to the coast, in order for casualties to arrive by train and if appropriate be evacuated to England. Special ambulance trains and hospital ships were fitted out to carry the wounded. Harry was taken, almost certainly by train, to the town of Abbéville, some fifty miles S.W. of the area where he served, where the Stationary Hospital was known as No 5, British Red Cross B Section.



Stretcher cases awaiting transport to a Casualty Clearing Station; a posed view of an Ambulance Train; view of a ward in a Clearing Station

Whether a gravely wounded soldier survived or not obviously depended in many cases on how he had been treated during evacuation, and what delays there had been in his receiving vital assistance. For example, the prolonged application of a tourniquet to reduce loss of blood soon led to infection and tissue death due to the lack of circulation, and the shock caused by amputations could be fatal to a seriously weakened patient. In earlier stages of an evacuation, filthy surroundings, almost inevitable rough handling, exposure to disease and the elements, and the use of unsterilised medical equipment, all took their toll. Antibiotics to combat infections did not yet exist. German statistics show that among their casualties, 15% of leg wounds and 25% of arm wounds proved fatal, and this was mainly owing to infection.

We do not know how long it took to get Harry to Abbéville, or if he was beyond help when he arrived. But one day during the week following his wounding, the telegram boy took the long walk from the road up to the Bailey cottage at Stourton. He probably brought the news that Harry was wounded and too ill to be brought back to England, and a suggestion that a family member go out and visit him. At any rate, Harry's brother Will, the eldest son of the family, was despatched. However, when his train reached Southampton, he was given the news that Harry had died, on Monday May 8<sup>th</sup>, just a week after being shot. The story that was passed down in the family was that he had been "shot in the leg", which implies that the wound which proved fatal was the one that, according to the War Diary, he received in the thigh.<sup>64</sup>

He was buried in Abbéville Communal Cemetery, in grave III.G.16. A simple wooden cross marking it was later replaced by a standard headstone. These often carried an inscription chosen by the family, probably from a list provided by the authorities. The Baileys chose "Our loss is great; we'll not complain, but hope to meet in Heaven again." Officially limited to 66 characters, some inscriptions far exceed this number. The published cost to the family was 3½d (1½p) per letter – some paid 3d – but the government later made this payment voluntary.



## Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps tend newly dug graves at Abbéville



WAACs looking after Abbéville Cemetery graves on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1918. Photo ©Imperial War Museum  
Below, Harry's headstone photographed in 1985



As no wartime correspondence from Harry has come to light, it is fortunate that a letter of condolence from his platoon commander was reproduced in a local newspaper<sup>65</sup>. Harry is seated next to the officer, the then 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Chadwick, in the platoon photograph shown in chapter 3 section iv - detail here on the left.

Chadwick was something of a loner, working before the war as a surveyor in the Arctic wastes of Canada, and after it, travelling to rural India where he became a disciple and friend of a revered guru (photo left). Following Harry's demise he was twice wounded in the head, suffered "shell shock", and served as a Pioneer right through the war. Mentioned in despatches, he rose to the rank of Acting Major and was awarded an O.B.E. in 1919. A biographical sketch of Alan Chadwick is in the endnotes<sup>66</sup>.



As for Harry's Battalion, in the German Somme offensive of 1918 the British were pushed back by up to 50 miles. As the infantry retreated, the Pioneers were ordered to dig in and slow or halt the attacks, and virtually left on their own, with the Royal Engineers. The War Diary entry for Mar 30<sup>th</sup> 1918 (place, "in the field") records that since 21<sup>st</sup>, D Coy (about 200 men at full strength) had suffered very heavy casualties and had no officers and only 19 men left, so were amalgamated with B Coy. The Pioneers had become front line infantry.





## 6. Back home

Chadwick paid a warm tribute to his platoon sergeant, which seems to express more than convention required. We learn from his letter that he himself was with the wiring party on the fateful night when Harry Bailey was shot.

### LOCAL WAR NOTES & NEWS.

#### THE LATE SERGT. BAILEY.

Mrs. Bailey has received the following letter from Lieut. Alan W. Chadwick, platoon commander, in reference to the death of her son, Sergt. Harry Bailey, whose photograph appears on this page: "I am writing to condole with you on the death of your son, Sergt. H. Bailey, who was wounded on the night of April 30th. Although I know it must be a great sorrow and grief to you, you will always have the comfort in knowing that he died doing a great deed. We were wiring the front line, and were within forty yards of the German trenches, when he was hit helping to bring in a wounded man, who unfortunately died afterwards. He was my platoon sergeant for several months, and I had always watched with great pleasure and interest his rapid rise in the regiment. I am afraid we shall never be able to replace him, and we all feel his loss severely. He was trusted by his officers and all who dealt with him, and greatly loved and respected by them. After he was wounded he was recommended for valour, and the news of his death came as a great shock to all. Please accept my great sympathy with you in your trouble."

#### OUR WAR PORTRAITS.



Sergt. H. BAILEY,  
9th Royal Warwicks  
(Died).



Pte. J. THORNITT,  
9th Royal Warwicks  
(Killed).

Lieutenant Chadwick writes to Mary Bailey that Harry was "hit helping to bring in a wounded man, who unfortunately died afterwards". Since the only soldier named in the Battalion War Diary as being killed that night was Jack Thornett, it seems almost certain that Harry was shot when trying to save his cousin. This, and the comment that Harry was trusted, loved and respected, is a fine tribute to him, as was the recommendation for a gallantry award. A "recommendation for valour" was usually made by a commanding officer using Army Form W3121. Unfortunately, almost all the W3121s from the First World War were destroyed by enemy bombing in World War Two.



## Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short

In the event, Harry's recommendation was among the large majority of cases where no award was granted. On his medal roll card (below, left) are listed the three campaign medals he was awarded posthumously, the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal. The Star was awarded to those who served between August 1914 and December 1915. The British War Medal was received by service personnel or civilians who entered a theatre of war or otherwise served overseas between 1914 and 1918, or in Russia from 1919 to 1920. Finally, the Victory Medal 1914-1919 was awarded to all eligible personnel who served on the establishment of a unit in an operational theatre during those years.

Name	Rank	Regt. No.
BAILEY Harry	Sgt	12475
Medal	Roll	Page
VICTORY	11/1038	32
BRITISH	do	do
15 STAR	21/810	178
Remarks: DIED		
Theatre of War first served in		
11 France		
Date of entry therein		
19.12.15		



Pictured above: The 1914-15 Star, and the British War Medal



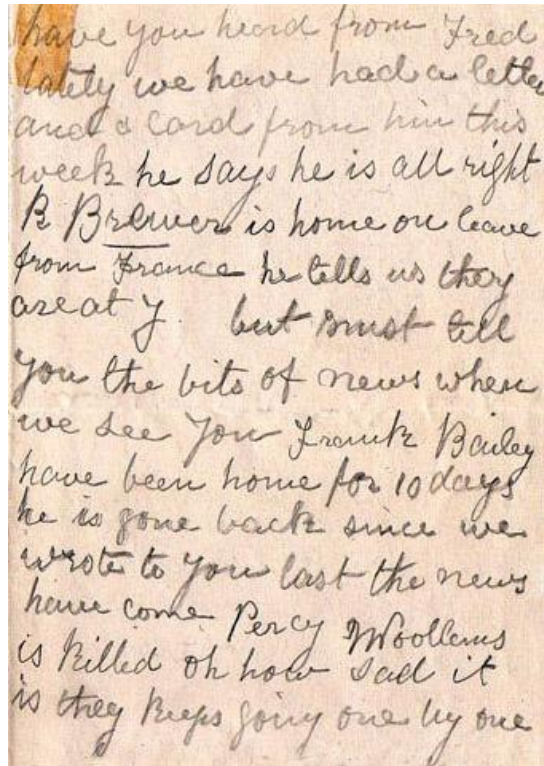
The Victory Medal

Harry's parents suffered during the war from advancing age and hard living conditions and the news of his death must have come as a hammer blow. There must have been letters from the Front sent by Harry, but they have not survived. However, there remain a few written by Mary Bailey in 1917 to Harry's brother Arthur, serving away from home in the police force. They give at least some idea of her feelings and the day-to-day existence back home.

The weather could have an enormous influence in a rural community at that time, when poor crops from a cottage garden might mean going hungry. The winter of 1916-17 was marked by heavy snowfall, with up to 10 feet (3m) in mountain areas, and continuous sharp frosts ruined many stores of winter vegetables. Potatoes had always been important to keep the wolf from the door, but were increasingly so when wartime scarcities pushed up the price of so many foods, especially meat, and they receive frequent mention in Mary Bailey's correspondence. In one letter she tells Arthur that there is no sugar to be had locally, so if he wanted any in his tea when he came to visit, he would have to bring some with him!

Her letter style does not run to the use of punctuation - on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917, she writes, "*the weather still keeps very cold [...] a lot of snow again dear Arthur I have waited til to day before I wrote for our Will has had to appeal again it came off yesterday [...] Mr Shaw got him off again [...] what a suspence it have been to be sure it have made my head bad I havent nowed what to do I thought he would be sure to have to go....*" <sup>67</sup>.

One concern of Mary's when writing on April 15<sup>th</sup> is some valuable seed potatoes; she then goes on to mention her sons Fred and Harry. "*I have had a cold again made my cough worse again [...] we have had such awful weather [...] they cant plant nothing the frost killed all the green stuff in the garden we was glad you received your potatoes all right [...] dear Arthur you said about the expence of sending them I paid 1/.3 rail y carriage & 4<sup>d</sup> from here to Stratford and I had 1 shilling and a penny on your club to finish it the money is all gone now Arthur I often thinks about the old times of a few years ago what would we give to have them back again nobody was satisfied then now what a job it is to live and get a few things it all keeps graduly getting deerer we have had a letter from Fred Saturdey morning he was then all right I sent him a little parcel he got it for Easter Sunday it will soon be 12 months since our poor Harry died I have got an enlargement of his photo taken I have it done at Birmingham it looks well too I have got it come back this week I don't now if you have one like it one he had done when he was Corpral in Ireland [...]*. The photograph referred to appears on the title page of this biography.



have you heard from Fred  
latly we have had a letter  
and a card from him this  
week he says he is all right  
R Brewer is home on leave  
from France he tells us they  
are at Y. but must tell  
you the bits of news where  
we see you Frank Bailey  
have been home for 10 days  
he is gone back since we  
wrote to you last the news  
have come Percy Woollemus  
is killed Oh how sad it  
is they keeps going one by one

Mary Bailey passes on to her son all the news about soldiers from the home villages, and on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1917, says, "*they have just heard that Harold Joiner is missing I don't now if I have told you Ant[h]ony Dickins was missing but have found out he is a prisoner in Germany how awful it is all the while from one thing to another ....*". The next page is reproduced here. Son Fred, as usual, thinks it best just to say that he is "all right", while Riley Brewer, brother of Jack Bailey's wife Lizzie and another 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Pioneer, has said that they are at "Y". Mary may have known from the newspaper that "Wipers", as the tommies called the town of Ypres, was actually written with a Y, but the whole spelling is beyond her so she leaves the rest of the name blank<sup>68</sup>. Nephew Frank Bailey's leave is over, and on giving Arthur the news of the death of infantryman Percy Woolll[i]ams, Mary puts her suffering into words:

*Oh how sad it is - they keeps going one by one.*

As the war drew on, as we have seen, the Pioneers increasingly became directly caught up in the fighting. By May 1918 they had suffered such heavy losses that the Battalion was back in England, reduced to a training cadre. Without enough men left alive for the Battalion to function as such, some survivors were transferred to other units and a nucleus of officers, NCOs and ORs formed a group, or cadre, charged with training other units. In many cases these units consisted of newly-arrived Americans, the U.S.A. having entered the war in April 1917. Eventually the cadres received new drafts of men and trained themselves up ready for return to the order of battle. The 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire was reconstituted with one of the Border regiments and returned to the Front in August 1918, taking part in the final advance in Artois, the region to which they had been assigned back in December 1915 when the train carrying them steamed in from Le Havre.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



After the war had ended, like most towns and villages in Britain, Cherington and Stourton erected a war memorial to their men who had perished in the conflict. They being two villages but one community, it was decided to place the memorial at the top of Featherbed Lane, where the two join. A memorial in the Parish Church, restored in 2010, recorded the names of all who served, with the central panel reserved for the names of the fallen.

In the Great War, over half of the Allied soldiers on the Western Front were killed or wounded and one in eight lost their lives. Cherington and Stourton's sacrifice was even greater. Of the sixty-six men recorded as having served, a quarter died – seventeen, to be exact. The difference in the Second World War was marked, with just one villager killed on active service then, Jim Compton dying from the blast when his tank was hit.



Harry Bailey (1893-1916) – a life cut short



Returning soldiers brought back a deadly enemy, the Spanish 'flu virus which killed over 200,000 in Britain in 1918-19, including the young wife of Harry's brother Jack, and caused their sister Alice to be gravely ill for many long weeks.

Despite everything, at least some of those who came back made an effort to find a little fun in life. Four old soldiers are shown here posing as a makeshift band, with two who did not go to war, young Henry Fletcher (the violinist) and shoeing smith Frank Simkins, with his harmonica and faithful old terrier. Fred Bailey is "conducting" his brother-in-law Riley Brewer (concertina), and ukulele players Herbert Taylor, on the left, and Herbert Jarrett (both "Bert", inevitably).

The caption reads, "Boys of the Old Brigade. And we all went marching home again, in the rain, down the lane". The words are from what was a very well-known music-hall song. Click on the title below to hear a 1911 recording of it made by a popular performer of the time, Mark Sheridan. Another of his most popular recordings was *I Do Like To Be Beside the Seaside*.

[We all went marching home again](#)<sup>69</sup>

*With some pals I went the other night,  
Started on a ramble, just a city scramble.  
Each one gay and everything's alright,  
Suddenly, it started off to rain.  
Joe said, 'I'll go back to get my gamp.  
Shan't be long, I live just near a lamp.'  
Someone cried, 'To separate won't do!  
We all came out together  
and we're going back with you.'*

*Chorus: We all went marching home again.  
Home again! Home again!  
We all went marching home again,  
Like the boys of the old Brigade  
We all went marching home again,  
Down the lane, in the rain  
Shouting out upon the way,  
'Tiddy fa lol fa lol da lay!  
We all went marching home again!*

I wonder if great-uncle Harry used to enjoy singing that one?



[Simon J. Bartlett](#)<sup>70</sup>



## Endnotes

*The scanned originals of handwritten War Diary entries reproduced in this biography have been digitally optimised and are reasonably legible. However, endnotes include transcripts of all the Diary extracts; spelling and grammatical mistakes remain uncorrected. [Return to Contents page](#)*

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Archer's best-known books, available today in modern reprints, are probably *The Distant Scene* (1967) and *Under the Parish Lantern* (1969). They are by a farmer, not a "writer", but well worth reading for anyone interested in country lore and especially if you know the Vale of Evesham.

<sup>2</sup> Memories of Jean Bailey, daughter-in-law of Harry's brother Arthur.

<sup>3</sup> Personal and family memories recounted by my father, Jack Bartlett. He was one of the singers "poached" by Mrs Dickins for the church choir.

<sup>4</sup> In July 1968, a local Cherington and Stourton newsletter, "Indian Summer", produced in connection with the "Senior Citizens" club, printed an interview with my grandfather Sia Bartlett in which he recalled events in his life. Included were extracts from the original Cherington Old Boys minute book which Sia had kept in his possession.

<sup>5</sup> Starting on September 19<sup>th</sup> 1914, *The Evesham Journal and Four Shires Advertiser* newspaper published in its pages a "Roll of Honour", listing names received of soldiers who had enlisted from towns and villages in its circulation area. The Cherington and Stourton list was printed in its issue of Sept 26<sup>th</sup>., giving alongside the names the Regiment or other unit to which the soldiers were initially attached on enlistment. See " Evesham Journal Roll of Honour", at [www.littlebeams.co.uk](http://www.littlebeams.co.uk)

<sup>6</sup> The Regimental History of the Royal Hampshire. Regiment, Vol.II ( 1914-1918), by C.T. Atkinson. Robert MacLehose & Co. Ltd., 1952. p.132. This work has been reprinted by the Naval and Military Press U.K. 2004ff and in 2017 was available to read online at: <http://lib.militaryarchive.co.uk/library/infantry-histories/Regimental-History-Royal-Hampshire-Regiment-1914-1918.asp>

<sup>7</sup> C.T. Atkinson, op.cit.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 6, extracts of letters written by Harry's mother to her son Arthur in 1917.

<sup>9</sup> The information on the illnesses of Harry's parents is taken from Mary's letters of 1917 – see Chapter 6 – and their death certificates.

<sup>10</sup> Journal of the Hampshire Regt, Jan. 1915, p. 30, which says the writer was killed on 31/10/1914. He may be Sgt Frederick George Dunford.

<sup>11</sup> The names of the officers are as recorded in Atkinson's *Regimental History* [op.cit], p.132.

<sup>12</sup> A newspaper which Harry would have read, *The Evesham Journal and Four Shires Advertiser*, reported this anecdote in its issue of May 27 1916:

PTE. GREEN ON LEAVE Pte. G.R. Green, of one of the London battalions (son of Mr. G.J. Green, of Evesham) is at home on leave for the first time since he went out nine months ago. He landed just in time to take part in the battle of Loos, through which he went unscathed and he has had good luck since. He tells us that quite recently a German came over the parapet of the trench where he was and gave himself up. He spoke English perfectly, and said he formerly lived in Holloway-road, London: he had had enough fighting and wanted to get back to "dear old London".

<sup>13</sup> All the names of places (including trench names) and of people recorded in the Hampshire Regiment's War Diary are in block capitals. Presumably this was according to regulations and designed to enable rapid extraction of key information. The place names would be relevant to strategy and personal names to such things as checking on officers' movements and leave and the identity of casualties.

<sup>14</sup> C.T. Atkinson, op.cit., p.135.

<sup>15</sup> Transcript of War Diary extract (*WD* in subsequent endnotes):

Noeux les Mines 1/1/16 A Company Ref Map 36B L19 A08 Progress with hut creation & delivery of more material from MINX. Carting shale & formation of road & paths. Well 18 ft down.

B. 36c G25 b17 Entrenching and revetting. C. 36B L24 C8.1. Entrenching. D. Huts completed – Night wiring.  
General BUCKLAND Chief Engineer 4<sup>th</sup> Corps inspected huts erected by A Coy.

<sup>16</sup> *WD* 2/1/16 A B & C Companies continuing their work.

D. One Officer & 50 men paraded at 7.30 pm & marched to LOOS. They carted heavy stores, iron rails, wire etc. to a point on the HULLUCH-LOOS road, about 30B ref trench map 30C NW3 no. 3. They returned about 6 a.m. on Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>. During the day 30 NCOs and men were employed road making in MAZINGARBE 9 a.m.-4.30 p.m.

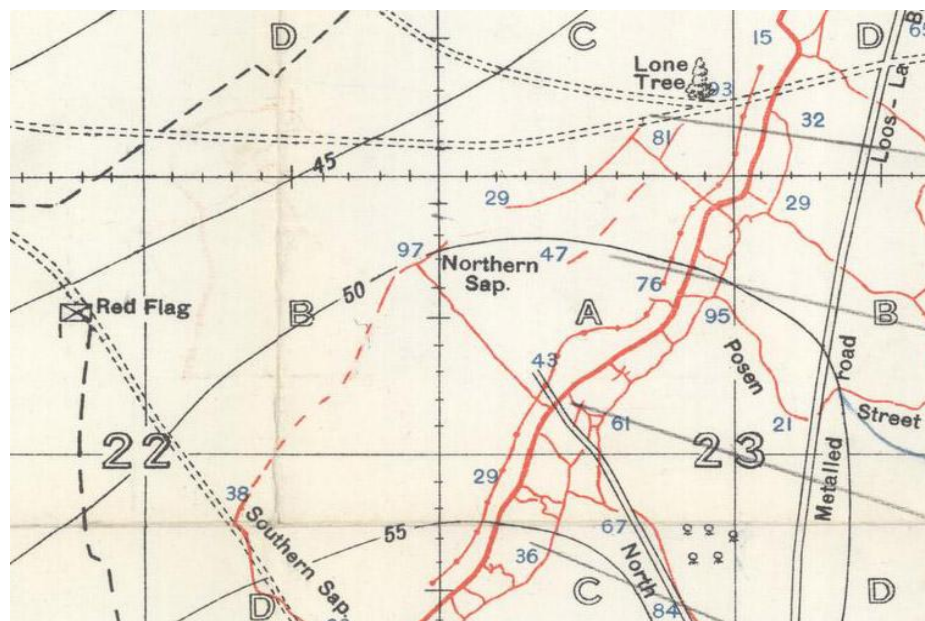
A Coy. Six huts are now ridge high, three practically complete. Well down 26'. Owing to difficulties in getting enough transport for carting shale the road & pathway making is behindhand. Unloaded truck 198 (Tarrant hut material) & brought material on to site.

<sup>17</sup> *WD* 3/1/16 D Coy :- 2 officers & 90 other ranks paraded with the two sections of the 157<sup>th</sup> (Fld) Coy R.E. & marched to RE dump E. of PHILOSOPHE. Stores were picked up & working parties were sent out composed partly of RE & partly of Pioneers. Each working party had a carrying party of Pioneers. 1<sup>st</sup> Party erected barbed wire along front of RESERVE TRENCH, working in a NORTHERLY direction. A party marched N. from the RE Dump along TENTH AVENUE to WING'S WAY where it left the trench & proceeded to erect wire on the front of the RESERVE TRENCH between the limits DEVON LANE, WINGS WAY. DEVON LANE was the NORTHERN limit of the night's work.

Three parties worked on tasks between the two extremes limited on the flanks of their sectors by other trenches, HAIE ALLEY, HOLLY LANE, SIXTH AVENUE which cut the reserve trench in an EASTERLY direction. Parties returned to camp independently between 2 a.m. & 5 a.m. One Pioneer was injured by falling into a trench. (Ref TRENCH MAP 36C N.W.3. P.E no. 3). *F.G.J. Berkeley Capt. 11<sup>th</sup> Hants Regt.*

<sup>18</sup> In *The History of the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division 1914-1919*, ed. Alan H. Maude (Amalgamated Press, 1922), when referring to November 1915, immediately after the Battle of Loos, the writer suggests that the Lone Tree was cut down for strategic reasons rather than to obtain souvenirs: "This tree, while it stood, was the only prominent object on the slope, about 1,800 yards behind the front line. It had been useful as an aiming mark for our guns before the advance [on Loos], and was cut down when it was found that the enemy put it to a like use." At the top of Map 19 (below this endnote) which dates from earlier in 1915, the tree's position is marked with the words "Lone Tree" and a small drawing of a leafy tree which suggests that it was then still flourishing. Another landmark is the "Red Flag" shown on the map in square 22A. This flag marked the position of the British front line at that point before the Loos campaign began, and all reference to it disappeared from later maps.





Map 19 The German trenches, in red, changed hands during the Battle of Loos

<sup>19</sup> *WD* Les Brebis 14/1/16 2pm Pnr TUCK G. no. 11331 "B" Coy was killed by a piece of shell in Les Brebis whilst standing at the door of his billet. Some half dozen shells were fired into the town. D company rested & the other companies continued as usual.


<sup>20</sup> C.T. Atkinson, op.cit.

<sup>21</sup> *WD 22/1/16* MINE exploded about point M6a01 with object of destroying enemy mine - report below. The operations were considered to be successful - The O.C. [Officer Commanding] Centre was ordered to detail two parties to occupy the near edge of the CRATER & to consolidate it by Dawn. Each party to consist of 5 Grenadiers, 1 Officer 2 Sappers & 15 Riflemen. LIEUT DONNITHORNE was selected as the Officer for the party & the men were found by the 21st LONDON REGT. In addition a reserve party of one Officer (Sec Lt WIRE) & 25 NCOs & men of HANTS (PIONEERS) were held in readiness in the ENCLOSURE. The Right Party (Lt Donnithorne) was ordered immediately after the explosion to clear the trench of Debris & to consolidate the Crater. Immediately after the explosion Lt Donnithorne ordered his party to enter the CRATER & clear trench & construct new one on the inner edge. This party immediately came under close direct fire from the German rifles & guns. The enemy kept up sending FLARES continuously & the whole place was as light as day, showing up the party against the white chalk. At 2.45 a.m. Lt DONNITHORNE telephoned to Lt WIRE for 10 men who were immediately sent up under CPL ATKINS, LT WIRE bringing up the remainder himself at 3.15 a.m. Lt DONNITHORNE was wounded in the leg at 3 a.m. & 7 men of the 21st London regiment & five of the 11th HANTS (P) reserve party were casualties - names of 11th Hants as follows - Lt DONNITHORNE, Cpl ATKINS (D Coy) ..... [entry ends here. Note in margin at start of day's entry: "APPENDIX I"]

<sup>22</sup> The report is included on p. 20 of the 11<sup>th</sup> Hampshire War Diary in an Appendix of Operation and Progress Reports for January 1916.

<sup>23</sup> Appendix I, referred to above; unfortunately it does not include the casualty list started in the WD page for Jan 22; and *WD* p.21, report of January 23 1916 (original wrongly dated December 23) congratulating the soldiers involved in preparations for the successful explosion of the mine and in action leading to the subsequent occupation of the crater it created.

<sup>24</sup> Extract of official War Office advice on Consolidation of Craters:

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.   
NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO FRONT TRENCHES.  
[S.S. 112.] O.B./1029.  
CONSOLIDATION OF TRENCHES,  
LOCALITIES AND CRATERS  
AFTER ASSAULT AND CAPTURE,  
WITH A NOTE ON RAPID WIRING.  
GENERAL STAFF, WAR OFFICE.  
1916.

### 3.—OCCUPATION OF CRATERS. .

i. The occupation and consolidation of mine craters presents many difficulties, and all ranks should understand the principles to be acted upon in the event of the explosion of mines on their front.

ii. Craters are usually formed as a result of one of the following mining operations:—

- (a) An attack by us on the enemy's trenches;
- (b) An attack by the enemy on our trenches;
- (c) Underground fighting.

iii. The possession of a crater offers the following advantages:—

- (a) It can be turned into a strong point capable of holding a small garrison;
- (b) It gives command of the ground in the vicinity;
- (c) It forms a considerable obstacle.

iv. (a) When mines are exploded by us in connection with an attack on the enemy's trenches, our object should be to seize and hold the whole of the mine crater or craters, or a line in front of them. The latter plan is usually the best, and the craters in rear can then be turned into strong points.

(b) When craters are formed as the result of an attack by the enemy on our trenches, or in the course of underground fighting, our object will usually be to seize and hold the near "lip" of the crater.

Parties must be rushed out at once to seize the lip. It may be impossible to open up communication to these parties till after dark. They should, therefore, take sufficient grenades, water, &c., and must be prepared to hold on though isolated.

v. Before the explosion of a mine a forecast should be made of the state of affairs to be expected after the explosion, and all details of probable requirements should be worked out. These would include:—

(a) The formation of dumps of engineer materials as close up as possible.

(b) The organization of working and carrying parties.

Work should start immediately after the explosion of the mine, and no time should be lost in turning into account the quiet interval which usually follows the explosion.

/...



**The personnel of R.E. Field Companies should be freely used for this work under instructions given through the General Staff.**

**vi. The following are the main points to be attended to in the actual consolidation of the craters:—**

**(a) All trenches should be strutted as they are constructed. Special frames for this purpose must be made beforehand.**

**(b) All works on a crater, whether inside or outside the "lip," should be provided with a parados.**

**(c) Dug-outs should be made by tunnelling into the sides and not at the bottom of a crater.**

**(d) At least two communication trenches should be constructed leading into each crater.**

**Entrances to craters should be made at the sides and not through the rear "lip."**

**(e) All trenches leading up to a crater from the enemy's line should be straightened or filled in for a distance of at least 40 yards from the position of the defenders, so as to keep the enemy bombers at a distance.**

**This work can usually be carried out with the least difficulty immediately after the explosion.**

**(f) Collapsible knife-rests, French wire and other forms of portable wire entanglement, should be brought up in large quantities and thrown over the "lip" of a crater.**

**vii. There are two main methods of holding craters:—**

**(a) Method "A." (See sketch on p. 6 and Plate A.)**

**This method should usually be employed after the explosion by us of a mine in the enemy's trenches or in the area where it is known that the enemy is not engaged in mining.**

**The front "lip" of the crater is held by means of several posts. Two communication trenches lead into the crater, one on each side, and give lateral communication between the posts. One or two dug-outs are constructed in the sides of the crater.**

<sup>25</sup> Alan H. Maude, op. cit., p.40 (November 1915): "*There was hardly any wire in front of the line, and every night parties staggered out with coils of barbed wire and French concertinas.*" The first wiring had resembled agricultural fences with lines of wooden posts and barbed wire straightened from its original coils.

<sup>26</sup> As we have seen, the term *Russian sap* refers to a tunnel that is dug at a shallow depth under no man's land towards an enemy position. It is sometimes mapped as a discontinuous line, indicating that part of it beneath the surface.

<sup>27</sup> Set in a dug-out, R.C. Sherriff's play of 1928, *Journey's End*, highlights the tensions between a colonel using men as pawns in tactical moves in bloody games of chess, one of his captains, forced to pass on commands he saw no sense in, and a raw junior officer who was drawn to simple actions of solidarity with the men which were "not the done thing", such as sharing a meal with them in their trench. Suspense builds prior to a suicidal dash across the sixty yards of No Man's Land to grab a German soldier for interrogation. Ten men and two junior officers go out and just four of the party return, but they get a German and the operation is considered by the rejoicing colonel to be a great success.

The play broke a ten-year silence around the shocking reality of trench warfare and is the only drama about WW1 written by someone who fought in it: the first action which Capt. Sherriff M.C. took part in was the Battle of Loos. In the premiere of the play, his Capt Stanhope was played by a young Laurence Olivier. Initially billed "for one night only", the play first ran for two years, and was translated into 18 languages.

<sup>28</sup> Maude, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>29</sup> Breastworks were temporary fortifications above ground, consisting of earth, masonry, sandbags, tree trunks, etc., thrown up to breast height.

<sup>30</sup> C.T. Atkinson, op.cit., p.135.

<sup>31</sup> *WD* The location for all the following diary entries, made on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> , was Loos.

1/2/16 Fine day. Enemies aircraft active. One party - 10 officers and 18 other ranks 4R.W.F.[Royal Welsh Fusiliers] arrived in LOOS for work under 2/8 Coy R.E.[Royal Engineers]. Party of R.M.F. [Royal Munster Fusiliers] departed this evening. Two officers & 32 OR [Other Ranks] - 4th R.W.F. arrived tonight & were billeted in St. EDWARDS ROAD for work on St VINCENT TUNNEL.

2/2/16 Very quiet day.

3/2/16 Fine bright morning. LOOS shelled with what appeared to be 8" shells, from 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. Several trenches badly blown in. There appeared to be two guns firing from the direction of HULLUCH. Bottom bridge on LOOS TOWERS broken in middle. Enemies aeroplanes active in forenoon. One dropped a bomb on LOOS near COMMIDANT'S [Commandant's?] HOUSE. N° 12267 Pnr PERRY A. of "A" Coy wounded.

4/2/16 Rain today. 1 officer and 50 men 9th DUBLINS arrive for attachment to 11th HANTS. Reinforcements arrive consisting of 39 men for this battalion. 2/Lt. DUKA admitted to hospital sick. N° 14327 L/C KENTON G. wounded.

5/2/16 Fine day. 9th DUBLINS under Lt EGAN started to improve trenches along BLOGG'S WAY [location unknown]. Reinforcements joined H.Q. in the evening. A good lot of men. Work progressing in FERNEY'S LANE [location unknown] and REGENT STREET & new piece WEST from LENS ROAD. A few shells Sent into Les Brebis. No casualties.

6/2/16 Pnr 11406 Pnr BROWN R W "B" Coy slightly wounded by bullet returning from work. Still at duty. Quiet day & very little enemy shelling. Rain in the evening & very dark night for work. Work same as previous day and good progress made.

7/2/16 Quiet day. Work as usual. FERNEY'S LANE improved and new sand bag revetment. Dublins working on BLOGG'S way. No casualties.

8/2/16 Capt ANDREWS evacuated sick. No casualties. Orders for relief by 4th R.W.F. & 1 Section 142nd Brigade M.G. [Machine Gun] Company received.

*F.G.J. Berkeley Capt. Hants Regt*

Captain & Adj't 11th (S) [Service] Bn. Hants Regt. (Pioneers)

<sup>32</sup> *WD* The G.O.C. 47<sup>th</sup> DIV has reported as follows on Bn during attachment [sic] – "On the conclusion of your attachment to this DIV the G.O.C. directs me to ~~point out~~ [deleted] convey to you his complete satisfaction with the splendid work done by your Bn as Pioneers. Discipline has been excellent and the steadiness of all ranks under fire has been specially commented on on several occasions. The services rendered to this Div, holding an extended line with reduced strength, have been of the greatest possible assistance, & the work accomplished has invariably been of a high order."

<sup>33</sup> C.T. Atkinson's history (op.cit.) p.135 says, "an epidemic of measles sent many men and several subalterns to hospital".

<sup>34</sup> This Mametz should not be confused with the Mametz on the Somme, scene of fierce fighting at the start of the Somme offensive in July 1916. *WD* Clear of village by 11/45 AM. Snowed hard & very cold & had to have dinner on the way to give billeting party time. Arrived at MAMETZ at 2/30 pm.



Billets to be re-arranged tomorrow - getting shelter for the night as soon as possible. MAMETZ 23/2/16 3" of snow and cold. Formed a rifle range & bombing school.

<sup>35</sup> *WD* 13.3.16 Fine day. C.E. [Chief Engineer] 1st Corps accompanied by Major Bell went round VILLAGE LINE on tour of inspection. 11384 Pnr Tether A.D. [Alfred David] killed here today by shrapnell [sic]. Battalion wash for the first time since 11/2/16. Thunder storm.

14.3.16 First Summers day. German artillery very active all day. Colonel Jackson accompanied by Lieut [?]Wendle went round VILLAGE LINE. Lieut Colonel CROCKETT returned today from sick leave and assumed command.

15.3.16 Dull day. No. 11580 Pnr WILLIS wounded this evening by spent bullet in leg.

16.3.16 Enemies artillery very active during the morning. Enemies aeroplane dropped some bombs on NOEUX LES MINES after dark. No. 12545 Pnr ALDRIDGE, 19486 Pnr BUNCE A. and 17480 Pnr BUNCE A. [sic] wounded tonight. The latter two accidentally, by the explosion of a bomb. BUNCE A. while digging trenches found a No. 7 bomb & pulled the "pin" thereby starting the fuze. The bomb exploded wounding himself and his son.

17.3.16 Misty day. A draft of 40 NCO and men accompanied by 1 officer (2 Lt. Maconochie, Northamptons. Regt.) arrived this afternoon.

<sup>36</sup> [*WD* 13<sup>th</sup> March] The word shrapnel may perhaps sound German: indeed the Diary entry for rather than English. However, it was originally the name given to a thin metal case, or "shell", containing a powder charge and lead shot and designed to explode in the air before impact, which was invented by British soldier General Henry Shrapnel around the time of the Peninsula War (1808-14). Nevertheless, his name was not actually applied to the projectile until 1852. Shrapnel gradually came to refer to the shower of fragments produced by the exploding Shrapnel shell.

...."Battalion wash" means that soldiers did their washing rather than managed a proper body wash. It was usually only in the trenches where soldiers had difficulty in washing themselves properly but while Harry was with them, the Pioneers were only in trenches when on a work shift. Laundries were set up behind the lines where men could have their uniform washed. The "last Battalion wash" (on 11<sup>th</sup> February) had been when they arrived in Les Brebis from Loos, spending just one day there. For nearly a month after that, however, many of the soldiers of 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion had moved from place to place, away from facilities provided by army infrastructure. That fact, as well as the winter weather, may have meant they did not do washing because they could not get things dry. Wartime photographs exist captioned "Battalion wash." and showing long lines of washing.

[*WD* 16<sup>th</sup> March] The no. 7 bomb which wounded Pioneer Bunce and his son was a British grenade produced only for a short time in 1915 but found in use up to 1917. It was a fragmentation grenade with two casings; the inner one held the explosive charge while the outer one was filled with scraps of metal to produce shrapnel.

<sup>37</sup> The origin of the name Blighty is not certain but it was first used among the British in India, and may come from "blitey", 'home' in Hindustani.

<sup>38</sup> Imperial War Museum ref. Q5093.

<sup>39</sup> op.cit.: The History of the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division 1914-1919, ed. Alan H. Maude, Amalgamated Press 1922, p.74.

<sup>40</sup> Liévin is 3-4 miles (5-6.5 km) south of Mazingarbe and the plane would have been easily visible over the flat terrain on a clear day, the more so if the observer was using field glasses.

<sup>41</sup> *WD* page 60, April 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 1916.

<sup>42</sup> For named examples around the Double Crassier, see [Map 9](#).

<sup>43</sup> Photograph from the Canadian McMaster University Digital Archive, at [library.mcmaster.ca/Maps/WW1](http://library.mcmaster.ca/Maps/WW1). This is a magnificent, free WW1 collection, mainly of contemporary road and trench maps. Most of the maps in this biography come from the McMaster library. The National Library of Scotland also holds maps, at [maps.nls.uk](http://maps.nls.uk), which can be viewed free online, or purchased. Without aerial photographs there would have been no accurate trench maps: spare a thought for the airmen who took on this extremely hazardous work, which cost the lives of many of them.

<sup>44</sup> *WD* page 62, April 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 1916, Bn based at Mazingarbe.

17/4/16 Bn ordered to repair RAILWAY ALLEY. Windy and wet. Good work during the night. Work on LINE & VILLAGE LINE temporary [sic] suspended. Parties of Infantry detailed to make MEATH TRENCH under Lt GIRLING arrived without tools & consequently nothing was done. Work on LISTENING POSTS proceeding.

18/4/16 CRE & CO inspected RAILWAY & CHALK PIT ALLEY. Bn put in another night's work on RAILWAY ALLEY. Work on Artillery O.P. [Observation Post] and HOSPITAL DUGOUTS. Pouring wet night. Quiet day generally with low clouds and strong wind.

19/4/16 Pouring rain and high wind. Bn worked in RAILWAY ALLEY. Fatigue party from B[rigade] failed to turn up & consequently no material taken up for HOSPITAL DUGOUTS.

20/4/16 Lt. HART R.E. inspected LISTENING POSTS. Bn had a day's rest. Weather improving.

21/4/16 Wet. Work proceeded on RAILWAY ALLEY, LISTENING POSTS & DUG OUTS. CO attended conference at DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

<sup>45</sup> See description in chapter 4 (iv) of the R.E. & Pioneers' work, quoting Maude (op.cit.).

<sup>46</sup> The Fifth Leicestershire: A Record of the 1/5th Battalion the Leicestershire Regiment, T.F., during the War, 1914-1919  
By Captain J. D. Hills M.C., Croix de Guerre. Pub. Echo Press, Loughborough, 1919. Page 223. Excerpts of the History are available on line.

<sup>47</sup> Hill 70 was a point just to the E. of Loos which became a focus of fighting when the Germans were pushed back from the town. Canadian forces succeeded in recapturing the hill, but suffered heavy losses.

<sup>48</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission

<sup>49</sup> Capt. J.D. Hills, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>50</sup> C.T. Atkinson, op.cit., p.135.

<sup>51</sup> *WD* page 56, April 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 1916, Bn. based at Mazingarbe:

22/4/16 Wet again. Work suspended. Following received from DIVISIONAL COMMANDER:--- The Divisional Commander begs you to convey to the Officers & men of the 11<sup>th</sup> Hants (Pioneers) his extreme appreciation of the work they have done in the last few days on RAILWAY ALLEY. This work is a gift to the Division & to troops that will succeed it in this sector, that will tend much to the safety of the Line & the reduction of casualties. He



takes this opportunity to thank Col. Crockett and his Battalion for all their good and gallant work & for their exemplary conduct during the past four months. (Sd) W.B.HICKIE Cmdg 16<sup>th</sup> DIV.

23/4/16 Easter Sunday. Fine bright day. Work on Railway Alley etc. ABBATOIR shelled. Considerable Artillery activity. 2 LT JONES, 2LT HAYWARD, 2LT CORSER & 2LT GAMMON posted from 13<sup>th</sup> HANTS.

24/4/16 CO & ADJT spent most of the day inspecting the trenches. Very fine. Artillery active. Work on ~~V.L. RAILWAY ALLEY etc.~~ [deleted item included in entry for 25<sup>th</sup>]. LT MITCHELL-DAWSON, 2LT RAYNER & 2LT PEARCE posted from 13<sup>th</sup> HANTS. LT CRAIG rejoined from 16<sup>th</sup> DIV H.Q.

25/4/16 Very hot. C.O. went round RAILWAY ALLEY. Work on RAILWAY ALLEY and extension of TRAM WAY to new VICTORIA STATION.

<sup>52</sup> Transcription of *WD* extract from p. 64 (Bn based at Mazingarbe):

26/4/16 HOT fine day. Artillery Activity. Work ~~as~~ on TRAMWAY and VILLAGE LINE & LISTENING POSTS

27/4/16 GAS ATTACK on LOOS SECTOR. See 16<sup>th</sup> DIV SUMMARY. The men working on LISTENING POSTS had the following casualties (see APPENDIX). [In margin, "APP. 2", but only one sheet attached to Diary].

Bn worked on all the support, reserve & front line trenches repairing damage done by bombardment.

28/4/16 Lts CADE & GIRLING went on leave. FALSE GAS ALARM at 9.30 pm. Heavy Artillery Barage (sic). Bn worked repairing trenches.

29/4/16 4 Am GAS ALARM. Heavy attack on HULLUCH SECTION (SUMMARY). C.O. attended conference at 16<sup>th</sup> DIV H.Q. Bn carried up 25000 yds of WIRE & 1200 screw pickets for wiring.

<sup>53</sup> Sampson Smith was the grandfather of Jean Bailey, daughter-in-law of Harry's brother Arthur. She supplied this information in 2016.

<sup>54</sup> *WD* p. 65, Casualty List. Apart from those affected by gas three men are given as "wounded", two of them accidentally.

<sup>55</sup> In 2017 the website of the Parishes of Booterstown and Mount Merrion, near Dublin, carried an article entitled *A Tale of Two Aprils 1916* (April in the trenches and April fighting for Irish independence), in which a local author writes,

*[.....] at 5am on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1916 at Hulluch, six kilometres north of Lens in Northern France, the Germans commenced a heavy bombardment of the Irish front line. Fifteen minutes later, a strange cloud of greenish smoke drifted towards the Irish trenches. The cry went out, "Gas". The Irishmen in the trenches scrambled to get their inadequate gas masks over their faces before the chlorine gas, released from 3,800 cylinders could tear their eyes and lungs out. Immediately behind the gas cloud, the Germans began their assault.*

*Some troops managed to get into the Irish trenches before they were beaten back by the Irishmen. More gas was released by the Germans but again they were repulsed by the Irish; the bombing parties holding back the Germans for a considerable time. The 49<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division which included the 8<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers was at the epicentre of the attacks. [....] The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division suffered almost 2,000 casualties that day, hundreds of Irishmen dying in agony as the gas took its gruesome toll.*

<sup>56</sup> Weekly Progress Report 11<sup>th</sup> Hants Regt (Pnrs) for week ending 27/4/16. Page 78 of War Diary.

<sup>57</sup> 4.—NOTES ON RAPID WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS. ["Rapid" presumably refers to wiring close to the enemy, where speed reduced risk.] :--

One of the first requirements in consolidating a position is to get some wire out in front of it. The following general principles regarding the construction of wire entanglements should be observed :—

- (i.) The rear edge of the entanglement should be about 20 yards from the trench; if the trace of the entanglement is irregular and does not follow the trace of the trench, it will make the task of the hostile artillery more difficult.
- (ii.) The depth of the entanglement should be as great as possible and at least 30 feet. The wire available should be expended in forming a deep entanglement rather than a "heavy." one (i.e., one with a large amount of wire between each net of posts). The construction of two belts with an interval between them, rather than one belt of twice the depth, gives the hostile artillery a deeper target to destroy, without increasing the material required for constructing the entanglement, except by one row of pickets.
- (iii.) There will seldom be time in rapid wiring to "dig in" the wire for concealment. Every advantage should be taken, however, of natural folds in the ground, long grass, or brushwood, or other means of concealment.
- (iv) Wire entanglements should be 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet high.
- (v.) The posts in a row should be about 6 feet from each other, and the rows about 6 feet apart. If wooden posts are used they must be strong; light posts are useless.
- (vi.) The difficulties of crossing an entanglement are increased if it is not too regular, e.g., if the heights of the posts above ground and the distances between them are varied. For rapid wiring drill, however, a regular entanglement is easier to construct.

To ensure that an obstacle can be erected with rapidity and in silence, every one of the working party must know what he has to do and work so that he does not get in the way of the others. This necessitates some form of drill. There are a large number in use, of which a selection is given on pages 14 to 20. The following notes and rules will be found useful in carrying out any form of drill for constructing wire entanglements:—

- (i.) The party should, as far as possible, work so that the obstacle is always between them and the enemy. . Each wiring party should have a double sentry lying down about 30 or 40 yards towards the enemy to prevent patrols sniping or bombing the party. If circumstances necessitate it, a special covering party should be provided.
- (ii.) The party should work extended and not bunched together.
- (iii.) Large parties, in which each group of men has only one operation or duty to perform, will erect entanglements quicker than a small party, in which each man has several duties to perform in succession, unless latter is very well drilled.
- (iv.) The best unit of entanglement is about 40 or 50 yards long. Its construction can then be controlled from one point. This distance is also a convenient interval to leave small gaps for patrols.



(v.) A line of posts is best laid out at night by putting down a tape or string with the intervals of the posts marked by bits of rag or sandbag tied on to it.

(vi.) The end of a coil of barbed wire will be found secured on the drum tucked under the standing part. In the dark it is very hard to find and release. Coils should, therefore, be prepared by daylight. A good method is to attach a piece of string to the end, uncoil the roll half a turn, re-coil it on a piece of old sandbag and fasten it up by the string. The end of the wire can then be readily found in the dark. The pieces of tin on the wooden drums should be removed to prevent noise. It may be found convenient, to make carrying easier, to re-coil the barbed wire in smaller coils on a stout stake

(vii) Pickets should be made up in bundles of one man loads. They should be tied firmly with plain wire or brought up in sandbags. The latter is the surer way of keeping them together, at any rate with small wooden pickets. A drum of barbed wire is best carried over the shoulder, with a stout stake passed through it, which also serves for uncoiling the wire. Pickets and wire should be dumped by the carrying party, outside the trench, behind the centre of the length to be wired.

(viii) Mauls, if used, should be muffled by nailing on a leather face or with sandbags. About 8 thicknesses of sandbag material are necessary to be of any use.

(ix) Equipment should not, unless necessary, be worn by wiring parties, as it is liable to cause noise.

Notes with reference to iron screw posts and pickets: The posts are 5 feet long with four eyes, the pickets are 3 feet 6 inches long with two eyes, or 15 inches long with a loop at the end. If the ground is soft, the posts can be screwed in two feet deep or more [.....]

<sup>58</sup> Letter of June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1916, quoted on the Spartacus Educational website at <http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWbarbed.htm>

<sup>59</sup> In *A Tale of Two Aprils 1916*, op. cit., see note 55 above, the writer says that the Royal Irish Fusiliers were fighting near Hulluch, and Munster Crater is mentioned with reference to the actions of a captain in the Fusiliers:

*Captain G W Eaton saw that the situation was serious so decided to bring up part of No. 15 platoon to support the bombing party and placed his men on the high ground South of Munster Crater, forming a block behind the bombing party and at the same time commanding Connaught Lane so as to prevent the enemy advancing without direction.* The text in italics is from the War Diary of the 8<sup>th</sup> Bn, R.I.F. for April 27<sup>th</sup> 1916.

<sup>60</sup> There three Joiner/Joyners of Cherington and Stourton who served: Wilfred, Harold and Bert. Bert appears on the War Memorial in the Parish Church as having joined up in 1915. Harold's date of enlistment is not given there as he died (as a POW), and the dates of service are given only for those soldiers who survived. However, his medal roll shows him as having been drafted into the Navy in 1916. Therefore the Joiner in the photograph must be Wilfred (the informant, my father J.E. Bartlett, was sure that he was a Joiner but did not know which one).

<sup>61</sup> In the Extension to the Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery, John Edward Thornett's grave was given the reference I.B.3, while in I.B.4 lies the body of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Charles Bailey of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Source: [www.forces-war-records.co.uk](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk) (2017)

<sup>63</sup> See *WD* page 62, for 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April 1916, reproduced in chapter 4(v).

<sup>64</sup> Information re the leg wound and Will's train journey to Southampton was given by Harry's nephew John Edward Bartlett.

<sup>65</sup> *Evesham Journal and Four Shires Advertiser*, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1916. Harry's brother-in-law Sia Bartlett was for many years the village correspondent of the newspaper, which provided him with a small but regular supplement to his wages. That could have been how the *Journal* reproduced the letter.

<sup>66</sup> Major Alan Wentworth Chadwick O.B.E. (1890 -1962) Source: Louis Buss, author of *The Life and Times of Alan Chadwick*.

Chadwick was born in Basingstoke, Hampshire; his birth was registered in the second quarter of 1890, so he was about 3½ years older than his platoon sergeant. He was the fourth son of clergyman-schoolmaster James Chadwick, an Anglo-Catholic, who at the 1901 census was in charge of and resident at Queen Mary's School, Worthing Road, Basingstoke, with boarding pupils. This later became St Mary's Grammar School for Boys.

At the 1911 census Alan Chadwick is in Romsey, visiting Retired Major John Fraser, his Indian-born wife and family; an India-born lady visitor is also present. His occupation, described as "Nil", maybe indicated his frame of mind. He had gone up to Oxford, to study theology, or so it is believed, though there are no precise records of his studies there as he "dropped out". However, it is known that his tutor had a special interest in Eastern religions. He abandoned his university studies when he was nearly 21, so possibly, shortly before the census. He had a crisis of faith, and feeling the need to escape, in late 1911 he crossed the Atlantic to Canada, where he became a surveyor, surveying unmapped wilderness.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 he rushed home from Canada and volunteered, enlisting as a Second Lieutenant. He says of his first months in the army that he felt happy, maybe because having failed his family and peers he finally felt he was doing something worthwhile. In 1916 he was wounded in the head but returned to the front; however, after a few days he was invalided home with severe "shell-shock", which would today be called post-traumatic stress. Later in the war he received another head wound, but was at a Pioneer at the front right through the war. Mentioned in despatches, he rose to the rank of Acting Major. In 1919 he was one of thousands awarded the O.B.E. for "valuable service rendered in connection with military operations in France".

After the war he went to South America and worked for a time as a bank clerk. Thanks to an inheritance, by 1930 he describes himself as "retired". He has an interest in Hinduism and by 1935 he is in India, where on the holy mountain of Arunachala in Madras he meets the most revered guru in southern India, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, and becomes his disciple and close friend. He was disapprovingly looked on by others when he received the guru's teaching sitting in a chair, but found it difficult to keep his balance when sitting cross-legged on the floor as convention prescribed. He therefore adopted the wearing of a belt with catches to hold his legs together so that he could relax with his hands free.

At the outbreak of WW2 he faces a dilemma. He feels the need to do his duty and serve his country but cannot bear to leave the guru. So when in 1942 he is called up, he becomes an Indian citizen, adopting the name Sadhu Arunachala. He apparently lives fairly happily, writing poetry and translating his master's teachings. Bhagavan rarely spoke English other than to Chadwick, with whom he had long conversations, the much travelled



English gentleman with the simple villager who had never left his home area. But in 1950 the guru dies and the disciples disperse. However, Alan is drawn back to Ramana Maharishi's shrine and lives quietly close by until his death in 1962.

<sup>67</sup> Farmer Shaw's workers Will and Jack Bailey both had to appear at the appeals tribunal at Stratford-on-Avon more than once, to avoid conscription, and Robert Henry ("Harry") Shaw, as a well-respected local figure, had the necessary influence to convince the tribunal that his men were vital to the war effort at home. With reference to William Bailey, his mother explained in her letter what exactly happened:

*"You remember the photo of the ricks we have got in the parlour well Mr Shaw took a p card and showed it with him and he said that was the only thing that got him off they thought he was doing more good on the land than in the trenches..."* The photograph is the one below this endnote, of the perfectly clipped corn ricks built by Will. Like the picture of Harry as a corporal, it was still on a wall of the Bailey cottage nearly a hundred years later. Apart from being a source of pride in the family – the ricks would be just as highly prized today, as a work of high-class craftsmanship – it may have saved Will's life. Those ricks needed to be solidly built, as corn would often be left in the ricks all winter, to be threshed in the spring.



The ricks on Harry Shaw's land at "The Buildings", Stourton – today known as Marsh Farm

<sup>68</sup> The Battalion War Diary shows that they were then based at Poperinghe in Belgium (today spelt Poperinge), which is a few miles west of Ypres. Another offensive was being prepared, to capture ridges east of Ypres, on the last of which lies the place now known locally as Passendale, but in English still spelt as it was when the rural village was the centre of unimaginable carnage which history records as the Battle of Passchendaele. The Allies gained about five miles of territory for 200,000 men killed, and the enemy lost a similar number. Within a few months, all the territory was back in German hands.

<sup>69</sup> The song recording is at [www.littlebeams.co.uk/history/cherington/weallwentmarching..marksheridan.1911.mp3](http://www.littlebeams.co.uk/history/cherington/weallwentmarching..marksheridan.1911.mp3)

<sup>70</sup> The author can be contacted via [www.littlebeams.co.uk](http://www.littlebeams.co.uk)