

THE GREAT WAR CENTENARY

1914-1918  2014-2018

1915



LED BY IWM

LEST WE FORGET

REMEMBERED WITH PRIDE IN 2015
THOSE WHO DIED IN 1915

LEARN  ENGAGE  REMEMBER

INTRODUCTION

1915 marked the first full year of the First World War. As will be seen from the summary of the year which appears in this booklet, it saw a number of attempts by the Allies to break the deadlock of trench warfare which had developed on the Western Front, including the costly Battle of Loos when several police officers from our predecessor forces were killed, including six on the same day - 27th September.

It was also a year which saw the Allies attempt to force Turkey out of the war resulting in the terrible fighting and loss of life on the Gallipoli peninsula where a Glamorgan police officer lost his life. At the Second Battle of Ypres the Germans used poison gas on the Western Front for the first time and the British responded in kind at the Battle of Loos. Both were precursor events to even more terrible technologies of war in the shape of atomic bombs and other weapons, later in the century.

As we look back over the span of 100 years it is important to consider why we remember these events so long ago. There are, it seems to me, two main reasons. The first is the sense of connection which we still feel for those who served and especially for those who died or

were wounded. This arises in the context of our families, our communities and policing. Second, is the impact which the War had on our world: its effects are still resonating down the years to our own day, particularly in the Middle East.

Last year we marked the centenary of the commencement of the war with a booklet which sought to provide some context and background and details of those who had died during 1914. It has been very well received and many copies have been distributed to individuals, including relatives of some of those who died, and organisations.

In this year's booklet, in addition to profiles of those who died, we have other sections which we hope will be of interest. We have produced a separate booklet to mark the centenary of the Welsh Guards and the close connection between our predecessor forces and it during the First World War.

We hope to be able to produce similar booklets for the remaining years of the centenary so that together they will be a lasting tribute to all those who served and, especially, to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

WE REMEMBER THEM ALL WITH PRIDE. YN ANGOF NI CHANT FOD.

Peter Vaughan QPM
Chief Constable, South Wales Police

FIRST WORLD WAR PROJECT GROUP

The Group has continued with its work of researching the history of our predecessor forces during the war and, in particular, the personal stories of those police officers who served in the armed forces at that time. The following is a summary of some key areas of activity:

- The total number of deceased officers recorded on the Memorials of the Glamorgan, Cardiff, Swansea and Merthyr forces is 90. However, we have now identified two more Glamorgan officers who are not shown on the Headquarters War Memorial. One is PC Arthur Richmond Perkins of Maesteg who served with the Welsh Guards and was killed in action on 10th September 1916. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. The other is PC Frank Trott of Porthcawl who also served with the Welsh Guards and died on 11th November 1918. He is buried at St John's Church, Newton, Porthcawl. Further information regarding both officers will be provided in future booklets. In addition, if we discover any other officers who have been omitted from the Memorials we will ensure that their details are also recorded in due course.
- In recent months, wreaths, with inscriptions signed by the Chief Constable, have been laid on behalf of the Force to remember those former officers who have no known grave and are commemorated on the Loos Memorial in Northern France and at the Thiepval Memorial (this included PC Perkins). A further wreath was laid at the Welsh Dragon Memorial at Mametz Wood to specifically remember the former officers killed there in July 1916. In addition, remembrance crosses have been placed on graves in France, and also in Wales, on the graves of PC Trott at Porthcawl, PC William George Mathias of the Glamorgan Constabulary and the Welsh Guards, buried in Fishguard, and PC William Jones Thomas of the Glamorgan Constabulary and Welsh Guards, buried at St Edeyrn's Church, Llanedeyrn, Cardiff. In this way, out of the total of 92 identified as having been killed in action, died of wounds or of other causes, 72 have now been remembered in France, Belgium and Wales through the laying of wreaths at memorials or the placing of crosses on individual graves. We will continue our efforts so that as many as possible of those who died are remembered in this way.

- A new Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Bridgend, which is a joint venture with Bridgend County Borough Council, has been named Ty Richard Thomas in remembrance of Police Sergeant Richard Thomas of the Glamorgan Constabulary who served in the area prior to the First World War. He was a Welsh rugby international who played for several clubs in South Wales including Bridgend. He played in the first international match between Wales and France and was in the Welsh side which won the first Grand Slam in 1908. He was a Company Sergeant Major in the 16th (Cardiff City) Battalion of the Welsh Regiment during the War and was killed in action during the attack on Mametz Wood on the Somme on 7th July 1916.
- Contact has been established with the families of a number of the police officers who have died and this has been a most rewarding experience. We have also been able to assist other individuals with their research.
- In addition to remembering those who died, we are also

researching those who were recognised for their gallantry. We hope to follow this up in future booklets and we would also like to examine the effect the war had on the policing of South Wales.

- The production of booklets such as this is an important feature of what the Group does, as is mentioned by the Chief Constable in his Introduction. As a Group we believe that by remembering the efforts of those who have gone before us, we are able to communicate with our communities on something which means so much, to so many people.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Project Group for their excellent support which is entirely voluntary on their part. They are: Danny Richards, Robin Mellor, Peter Wright, Paul Wood, Daryl Fahey, Coral Cole, Allison Tennant and Philip Davies of the Western Front Association. In addition, the Force's Printing Department has, as always, provided a first class service in producing this booklet and other items.

Gareth Madge OBE

Chair, First World War Project Group

1915 A SUMMARY

19TH JANUARY

Germany begins bombing Britain through the use of Zeppelin airships. Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn are bombed and several people are killed and injured.

24TH JANUARY

In the Battle of Dogger Bank, the Royal Navy sinks the German cruiser, *Blucher*.

4TH FEBRUARY

Germany declares a naval blockade around the coasts of Britain and Ireland. From now on Allied and neutral shipping are at risk of attack by U Boats.

19TH FEBRUARY

British and French warships begin their attempt to force their way through the Dardanelles Straits by bombardment of the shores.

10TH MARCH

The start of the British offensive at Neuve Chapelle in France. There are heavy losses and there is much criticism of the lack of effectiveness of the shells used by the artillery. This leads to the so called "Shell Crisis" which causes serious problems for the Asquith government.

22ND APRIL

The start of the Second Battle of Ypres where the Germans use poison gas for the first time.

25TH APRIL

Following the unsuccessful attempt by the Allied navies to force their way through the Dardanelles, the land campaign at Gallipoli begins with landings by 70,000 British, Commonwealth and French troops who meet strong resistance from Turkish forces.

30TH APRIL

PC 251 Bertram Frederick Crees of the Glamorgan Constabulary is killed in action near Ypres.

7TH MAY

The British liner *Lusitania* is torpedoed and sunk by a German U boat off the coast of southern Ireland. Over 1000 passengers and crew lose their lives including 128 Americans which causes outrage in the United States and provokes a diplomatic crisis between it and Germany.

R.M.S. Lusitania



7TH MAY

PC 119 William Arthur Jones of the Swansea Borough Police dies in an accident in Kent whilst serving with the Royal Engineers.

9TH MAY

Unsuccessful British offensive at Aubers Ridge in France.

20TH MAY

PC 397 William George Mathias of the Glamorgan Constabulary dies of sickness in hospital in England whilst undergoing training with the Welsh Guards.

23RD MAY

Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary.

25TH MAY

There is political discontent in Britain as a result of the rising losses on the Western Front and the problems in shell manufacturing resulting in too few being produced and too many of those that are, lacking effectiveness. Liberal Prime Minister Asquith responds to the pressure by establishing a Coalition Government in which David Lloyd George becomes Minister of Munitions.

31ST MAY

London experiences its first Zeppelin raid. Seven people are killed and thirty five are injured.

4TH JUNE

The fighting in Gallipoli continues. The British losses amount to 6,000 men as the Allies attempt to move inland from the beaches.

6TH JUNE

26 people killed and 40 injured in Zeppelin raid on Hull.

6TH AUGUST

Further allied landings are made on the Gallipoli Peninsula at Suvla Bay.

7TH AUGUST

PC 134 Frederick Richards of the Glamorgan Constabulary is killed in action at Gallipoli.

8TH SEPTEMBER

Zeppelin raid on London kills 22 and injures 87.

25TH SEPTEMBER

Start of the Battle of Loos. British use poison gas for the first time.

27TH SEPTEMBER

British and Canadian forces capture Hill 70 at Loos but overall

the Loos offensive has only limited success before it is terminated in October.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC Benjamin Evans of the Cardiff City Police, and PC 203 Michael Doyle, PC 648 David William Evans, PC 591 David Charles Grant, PC 364 Ernest Lewis Reeves, and PC 622 Charles Henry Snailham, all of the Glamorgan Constabulary, are all killed in action during the Battle of Loos.

6TH OCTOBER

PC 1330 William East of the Glamorgan Constabulary is killed in action near Loos.

8TH OCTOBER

PC 138 William Holland of the Swansea Borough Police dies of wounds near Loos.

12TH OCTOBER

PC 255 Leonard Nowell of the Glamorgan Constabulary dies of wounds near Loos.

British nurse, Edith Cavell, is executed by the Germans by firing squad because of assistance she had given to Allied prisoners of war to escape.

17TH OCTOBER

PC 239 William Hammond of the Glamorgan Constabulary is killed in action near Loos.

25TH OCTOBER

PC 404 William Henry Carter of the Glamorgan Constabulary dies of wounds near Loos.

31ST OCTOBER

British troops start to use steel helmets on the Western Front in place of the caps worn until then.

17TH DECEMBER

In Grantham, Lincolnshire, Edith Smith is attested as the first female police constable with powers of arrest.

19TH DECEMBER

Sir Douglas Haig replaces Sir John French as Commander of the British Expeditionary Force.

23RD DECEMBER

Thousands of Allied troops are evacuated successfully from Gallipoli as the offensive there is brought to close. Some 250,000 Allied soldiers were killed, wounded or taken prisoner during the campaign.

1915 ROLL OF HONOUR

30TH APRIL

**PC 231 BERTRAM
FREDERICK CREES**
GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
SAPPER 13986 17TH FIELD
COMPANY, ROYAL ENGINEERS

Bertram Crees was born in Dulverton, Somerset on 20th May 1888. He was the son of Frederick and Emily Crees and had an older sister, Jessie, and a younger brother, Victor. His father was a police constable. At the time of the census of 1901 Bertram, his parents and younger brother were living in the police station at East Brent, near Wells in Somerset. Bertram was then 15 years of age and a labourer in a carpentry shop. At some stage he left the West Country and moved to South Wales, joining the Glamorgan Police on 2nd May 1908. By 1911 he was stationed in Port Talbot and lodging with a Sergeant Edward Phillips and his wife, Georgina, at 36 High Street, Taibach. Bertram was married in 1913 to a Winifred Pickford, also from Somerset.

During his police service Bertram was evidently able to utilise his previous employment in carpentry to good effect when he was

involved in a colourful case before the Stipendiary Magistrate at Aberdare on 18th June 1913 and reported extensively in the “*Aberdare Leader*” three days later. The case concerned charges brought against one David Williams of the Glosters Arms, Aberdare, for permitting the public house to be used for illegal betting. The newspaper said that:

“this was a case in which a great deal of public interest was taken, scores of people failing to get admission into court to hear the proceedings.”

The prosecution said that:

“the practice of using licensed houses in the town had become very prevalent, but that there was a great difficulty in discovering offenders. The owners of the houses evidently know of what was going on, and had set traps. The local police, in order to capture the offenders, had called in an outside officer from Abergwynfe. This officer came disguised as a carpenter out of employment and went to the Glosters Arms on three days, June 10th, 11th and 12th. On these days he found bets being made.”

The report then goes on to set out Bertram's undercover activities in the pub which resulted in it being raided by the police and the matter being brought before the court. At the conclusion of the hearing Williams and his co-defendants were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

Subsequently Bertram served at Tonmawr but following the outbreak of war he joined the Royal Engineers and went with them to France, arriving there on 17th August 1914.

In 1915 Bertram was serving with the 17th Field Company attached to the 27th Division which took part in the Second Battle of Ypres. The Company's War Diary records that, on 30th April, "*Spr 13986 Crees B.F. killed by shell (in billets)*". At the time the Company was in billets at Potijze, near Ypres. The 27th Division's Headquarters was at Potijze Chateau. (Among those buried at the nearby Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Potijze Burial Ground is Bertram's Glamorgan Constabulary colleague, PC 62 Edward John Taylor of the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, who was killed in action on 8th May 1916).

Bertram was thirty years of age when he died. The Chief Constable of Glamorgan, Captain Lionel Lindsay, reported the death to the Glamorgan Police Standing Joint Committee in June 1915. He also indicated that "*a war fund had been raised by members of the force to assist the relatives of those members of the force who lost their lives in the war. At present there was over £800 in hand.*"

On 9th September 1916, the "*Cambria Daily Leader*" reported that at Bryn Seion Chapel, Tonmawr, local men serving in the army were recognised and that also,

"A portrait of the late Sapper B.F.Crees, killed in action, was also presented to Mrs. Crees in remembrance of her heroic husband. Sapper Crees, who was the village constable, was one of the first to join the colours."

Bertram has no known grave and is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres, on the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Police Headquarters in Bridgend and on the War Memorial at East Brent in Somerset.

7TH MAY

PC 119 WILLIAM ARTHUR JONES

SWANSEA BOROUGH POLICE

LANCE CORPORAL 49094

101ST FIELD COMPANY ROYAL
ENGINEERS



William Arthur Jones was born in Birmingham in 1881.

It appears that he had served with the police before he moved to South Wales as is shown by the above photograph taken by a Birmingham photographer.

In any event, by the time of the census of 1911 he was living at 6 Rutland Street, Swansea with his

wife, Elizabeth Laura, who had been born in Haverfordwest and their daughter, Florence Ena, who was then 16 months old.

William joined the Royal Engineers at the start of the war but did not see active service. The 101st Field Company, with which he served, was attached to the 23rd Division during the early months of 1915 and was based in Kent where they were engaged in constructing defences in areas to the south of London. It is likely that it was whilst engaged in such work that William met his death on 7th May 1915.

The “*Herald of Wales*” newspaper reported on 22nd May 1915, that the Swansea Police Watch Committee passed a vote of condolence with the family of the late PC Jones who it was stated “*was fatally injured by the collapse of a bridge at Sellindge in Kent*”. It was also stated that the Chief Constable was to report further with regards to a pension.

William is buried in the churchyard of St Mary’s in Sellindge. He is also commemorated on the First World War Memorial Tablet in Swansea Central Police Station.

20TH MAY

**PC 397 WILLIAM
GEORGE MATHIAS**
GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 1210 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS



A Pembroke-shire man, William was born at Letterston, near Fishguard on 12th December

1884. His parents were John and Sarah Mathias.

William's father died in 1908 aged 51.

On 20th November 1909 William joined the Glamorgan Police. Typically for that period, which saw a great deal of unrest in the industrial communities of South Wales, William was, at the time of the census of 1911, billeted with other police officers at the Ogmore Arms in Gilfach Goch, the Registrar endorsing the census form that they were there "temporarily during the coal strike."

William was stationed at Bridgend at the commencement of the war.

He resigned from the police on 9th April 1915 and joined the army. He was one of 200 members of the Glamorgan force who had by then either been recalled to the colours as reservists or who had joined up voluntarily.

The Welsh Guards had been formed in March 1915 and William was undertaking training with them at Caterham when he contracted pneumonia and died there on 20th May 1915.

William is buried in the Burial Ground of Hermon Baptist Chapel, Fishguard, along with his father, and his mother who died in 1935 aged 78. He is also commemorated on the Fishguard War Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

7TH AUGUST

**PC 134 FREDERICK
RICHARDS**
GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
CORPORAL 13027
4TH BATTALION,
SOUTH WALES BORDERERS

Frederick Richards was born in Aberavon on 26th March 1883, the son of Edgar George Richards and Emily Richards. He had five brothers.

By the time of the Census of 1911 the family had moved to Cardiff where they lived at 4 Romilly Crescent, Canton. Frederick's father ran a fruit and vegetable business and it appears that Frederick worked with him in it, as did other members of the family.

Frederick joined the Glamorgan Constabulary on 23rd March 1912 and prior to the commencement of the war was stationed at Ogmere Vale.

The 4th Battalion of the South Wales Borderers had been formed on 7th August 1914 and it was with them that Frederick served. The Battalion spent the next few months in various camps in Southern England before leaving for the Middle East as part of the 13th (Western) Division which together with other reinforcements, was to make a further attempt to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula from Turkish forces.

The original intention in February 1915, under direction from Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, had been for British and French warships to force their way through the Dardanelles

Straits and make ultimately for the Turkish capital Constantinople which could then be bombarded and potentially force the Turkish Empire out of the war.

However, the naval operations were not successful and several ships were sunk or damaged with much loss of life. An expeditionary force was then created to which the Australian and New Zealand armies made a substantial contribution ("the ANZAC's"). Landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula took place in April 1915 with the intention of seizing the coastal areas from which the Turkish gun batteries had been attacking the Allied warships. These landings were followed by severe and bitter fighting resulting in large numbers of casualties on both sides.

A decision was then made to make a renewed attempt to take the Peninsula and further landings were to take place at and near Suvla Bay. It was to this operation that 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers was to contribute.

The Battalion sailed from Avonmouth on the White Star liner the *SS Megantic* on 28th June 1915. There was a delay in sailing

as a transport ship had been sunk by a German submarine off Lundy. The Battalion arrived at Gallipoli on 15th July and spent two weeks on the peninsula before being withdrawn to Mudros, on the Greek island of Lemnos, to prepare for the main attack.

On 4th August, together with other units of the 13th, Division the Battalion landed at “Anzac Cove” and proceeded to move inland. Its objective was to capture the ridge known as Sari Bair in conjunction with the landing by other divisions at Suvla Bay six miles to the north.

The Battalion had to cover at night two miles of difficult ground which was covered with boulders and prickly scrub. Fighting ensued, including with bayonets, but eventually they reached and secured their objective on the ridge. It was during this operation that Frederick was killed in action on 7th August. The Battalion lost 19 men in total killed that day.

The history of the South Wales Borderers in the First World War gives this description of the scene:

“All night long the men worked steadily, though many, weak

from the already prevailing dysentery, were hardly fit for the effort but had refused to be left behind. To their right rear heavy firing indicated that the assaulting columns were struggling forward up the slopes of Sari Bair: far away to their left intermittent firing could be heard and distant flashes seen, the landing at Suvla was in progress. Morning (Aug. 7th) found the battalion well dug in, though in places the trenches, sited in the darkness, were found to give such poor fields of fire that readjustments were imperative. Heavy fighting was going on both to the right and left, but the 4th found themselves in a backwater between the Sari Bair and the Suvla struggles, of both of which their position gave them a view. No counter attack developed against them, either that day or the next, and though enough snipers were about in front to make movement in the open imprudent the chief casualties came from shrapnel: the Turkish gunners had soon detected the presence of British troops on the Damakjelik Bair spur and shelled the position pretty

steadily all day, giving the 4th reason to be glad of the hard digging they had put in.”

In subsequent days the battalion did face a severe counterattack and after further heavy fighting by 22nd August it had suffered casualties amounting to 400 officers and men out of 775 who had gone ashore on 4th August.

Ultimately, the campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsula failed to achieve what it set out to do. In the light of a continuing deadlock, the heavy losses which had resulted, and the need for efforts to be concentrated in France and Belgium and other places, all Allied troops were evacuated in December 1915 and early January 1916. The sacrifice of Frederick Richards, like that of so many others, so far from home was not rewarded with success.

Frederick is the only member of the predecessor forces of South Wales Police to have lost his life at Gallipoli. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial on the Peninsula and on the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC 203

MICHAEL DOYLE

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 7793 2ND BATTALION,
IRISH GUARDS

An Irishman, Michael Doyle joined the Glamorgan Constabulary in 1914.

He had been born in 1891 at Tullaherin in County Kilkenny, the son of Patrick and Kate Doyle. By 1911 he lived with his parents and three brothers and three sisters in Kilfane, Thomastown, Kilkenny. His father was an agricultural labourer and the census of that year gave Michael's occupation as domestic servant.

During his time with the Glamorgan force he served at Caerau near Maesteg. The "*Glamorgan Gazette*" reported a case heard by the Bridgend Magistrates Court on 7th August 1914 involving Michael. Under the heading of "Policeman Assaulted" it said:

"Thomas Rees, haulier, Caerau, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly in Tonna road, Caerau on August 2nd, and with having assaulted

PC Michael Doyle. The constable stated that defendant bit him on both hands, and struck him in the face. After a severe struggle he managed to handcuff him and took him to the Police Station.

Defendant was fined 15s on the first charge and £2 on the second."

Following the outbreak of war Michael returned to Kilfane where he enlisted in the army on 16th April 1915. He joined the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Guards with whom he went to France on 16th August 1915.

The Battalion was part of the 2nd Brigade of the recently formed Guards Division which played a prominent role in the Battle of Loos. On 27th September the Battalion led the attack in an area known as Chalk Pit Wood as part of the attempt to capture German positions on Hill 70 near Loos. After a ninety minute preliminary artillery bombardment, at 4pm the Irish Guards left their trenches and moved forward. Initially their casualties were light but as they then moved up a bare slope hundreds of men from the Battalion and other units were

mown down. By 5pm withdrawal had begun with the Irish Guards spending the night in the Wood. The Battalion War Diary described the situation there:

"It rained throughout the night. Heavy and accurate shelling throughout the morning. Many shells pitched actually on to the trenches burying many men and blowing a few to pieces."

It was sometime during 27th September that Michael was killed in action. One of the officers from his Battalion who was also killed that day was Second Lieutenant John Kipling, son of the poet and author, Rudyard Kipling, who later wrote a detailed history of the Irish Guards in the First World War. In it he said in relation to the battle in which he had lost his only son:

"Evidently, one and a half hour's bombardment against a countryside packed with machine guns, was not enough to placate it. The Battalion had been swept from all quarters, and shelled at the same time, at the end of two hard days and sleepless nights, as a first experience of war, and had lost seven of their officers in forty minutes."

As for Michael, his body was never found. He is commemorated on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC BENJAMIN EVANS

CARDIFF CITY POLICE

PRIVATE 1348 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS

Benjamin was born in Llangunnor, Carmarthen in 1890, the son of David and Anne Evans. He had four sisters and one brother by the time of the census of 1901 when the family had moved to live near Abergavenny where his father was a farmer.

By 1911 Benjamin had joined the Cardiff City Police since, according to the census of that year, he was then lodging with a Thomas Chapman, described as a policeman on temporary pension as he was disabled, and his wife Emily, at 61 Romilly Crescent, Canton. A PC Robert Fleming of the Cardiff force was also a lodger with them.

At some stage after the outbreak of war Benjamin joined the army and went with 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards to France on 17th

August 1915. The Battalion was heavily engaged during the Battle of Loos and Benjamin was killed in action on 27th September 1915 aged 25. He was single and survived by his parents who lived at Byrgwn Mawr, Goytre, Abergavenny.

Benjamin has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, the Cardiff City Police Memorial at the Cardiff Bay Police Station, and on the Abergavenny War Memorial.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC 648 DAVID WILLIAM EVANS

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY

PRIVATE 1270 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS

David was born at Llandovery, Carmarthenshire in 1890.

He joined the Glamorgan Constabulary in 1912 and was stationed at Caerau, near Maesteg at the outbreak of the War.

He enlisted in the army at Bridgend and on 17th August 1915 went to France with the Welsh Guards. He was killed in action at the Battle of Loos on 27th September 1915.

David has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC 591 DAVID CHARLES GRANT

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 1331 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS



David was born in Cogan, Penarth in 1889, the son of William Thomas Grant and Emily Grant.

The family lived at 66 High Street in Barry and at the time of the census of 1901, in addition to David, there were seven other members of the household: David's father, then aged 44, his mother, aged 41, his brothers, Richard, aged 17, Samuel, aged 15, and George, aged 6, together with his sisters, Mabel, aged 13, and Susan, aged 10. David's father was a coal trimmer.

David attended the High Street Elementary School in Barry and after leaving school worked on

the railways, firstly with the Barry Railway Company, and then with the Rhymney Railway Company in Caerphilly.

David was a member of St Paul's Church in Barry and sang with the church choir.

He joined the Glamorgan Constabulary in 1911 and was stationed at several places in the force area including Llantwit Major, Bridgend and Porthcawl where he was at the outbreak of the war.

Along with several other local police officers he enlisted in the army in May 1915 joining 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards. He was clearly well regarded in the Porthcawl area as the following report from the *Glamorgan Gazette* for 23rd April shows:

"Four of our policemen have resigned and leave today to join the Welsh Guards. They are PC's Grant, Wm. Richardson, William Thomas, and Denis Hayes; while PC Trott goes from Newton. We are all sorry to lose them, but we admire their patriotism and their desire to

give their burly frames to more active service for the King. PC Grant had only lately come amongst us, but he had already made friends by his genial manner and straightforward conduct. The other members we knew fairly well, and wish them a long and honourable career and rapid promotion in "The Guards". Now we have to fall back on our sergeant once more."

Sadly, only PC's Richardson and Hayes were to survive the war.

David was with the Welsh Guards when they landed in France on 17th August 1915 and took part with them in the Battle of Loos when, on 27th September, they attacked German positions on Hill 70. The Battalion suffered heavy casualties through an artillery bombardment before the attack and as a result of fierce machine gun fire from Hill 70. It was sometime during this battle that David was killed in action.

He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

27TH SEPTEMBER

PC 364 ERNEST LEWIS REEVES

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 1279 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS



Ernest was born on 24th December 1894 in Cardiff the son of William and Sarah Annie Reeves. She

was from Wooton-under-Edge in Gloucestershire.

At the time of the census of 1901, Ernest was living with his mother in Spring Street, Newport. Also in the household at that time were his older sister, Girtsey, then aged 8, his younger sister, Alice, aged 4, his brother William, then a year old, and his grandfather, William Reeves, then aged 81.

The family then moved to Cardiff where Ernest attended Gladstone Primary School.

By the census of 1911, Ernest had moved to live with a Walter Fred Blomeley and his wife Hannah and their six children at Martin's Terrace in Abercynon. At this time

Ernest, at 16 years of age, was working as an engine attendant at one of the local collieries.

On 15th August 1914, eleven days after Britain's declaration of war on Germany, Ernest joined the Glamorgan Constabulary. However, he resigned from the force on 23rd April 1915, whilst stationed at Penarth and subsequently joined 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards.

The Battalion landed in France on 17th August 1915 and took part in its first major action on 27th September during the Battle of Loos. At 4pm on that day it came under heavy artillery fire as it marched along the Vermelles-Loos road. Despite suffering many casualties the Battalion continued on to the front line. At 6pm it attacked an enemy held position known as Hill 70. Unfortunately, the Battalion sustained heavy casualties due to enemy machine guns positioned on the summit. It is likely that Ernest was killed either during this engagement or the artillery bombardment which preceded it.

Ernest was 20 years of age when he died. He was survived by his mother who at the end of the war was living in Dogfield Street,

Cathays, Cardiff, his father having pre deceased him.

Ernest has no known grave and is remembered on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

27TH SEPTEMBER

**PC 622 CHARLES
HENRY SNAILHAM**
GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
SERGEANT 15156
**3RD BATTALION,
GRENADEER GUARDS**



Charles was from Merthyr where he was born in 1893. His father was also named Charles and his mother

was Sarah. Charles senior was originally from Pontypool and Sarah had been born in Maesteg.

At the time of the census of 1901 the family was living in David Street in Merthyr where Charles' father worked on railway engines. In addition to Charles, there were three brothers younger than him. His parents subsequently moved to live at 11 Hankey Terrace, Merthyr.

In March 1911 Charles joined the army and was posted to the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards. He was at the Guards Depot at Caterham in Surrey at the time of the census of that year. Amongst those there at the same time were Leonard Nowell and William Hammond, both of whom would become members of the Glamorgan Constabulary and would also die at Loos in France.

Charles left the army early and was transferred to the reserve in 1913 the year that he joined the Glamorgan force with which he served for less than a year. At the outbreak of war he was stationed at Aberdare.

He was, as a reservist, recalled to the colours and mobilised on 5th August 1914, a day after Britain declared war on Germany. He joined the 3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards which was stationed at Wellington Barracks in London. After a period in training and preparation, the Battalion went to France in July 1915. The men paraded at Chelsea Barracks at 4am on the 26th when a message from the King was read to them. They then travelled by train from Waterloo

station to Southampton where they embarked on the river Clyde steambot, "*Queen Alexandra*". They were escorted by a Royal Navy destroyer as they crossed the English Channel to Le Havre.

During the first two months in France the Battalion was largely engaged in training activities. An occasion of note, however, was that on 18th August the Battalion, together with 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards and 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards, took part in a parade at St Omer where they were inspected by the French War Minister and his British counterpart, Lord Kitchener. Also present was the Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir John French.

During his time with the Battalion Charles' qualities as a leader were clearly recognised as he was promoted to lance corporal in November 1914 and then, within quick succession, to corporal and sergeant in July 1915.

In September 1915 the Battalion, as part of the Guards Division, took part in the Battle of Loos. On the 27th men from the Battalion supported the Scots

Guards during their attack on a coal pit and buildings near Loos in the same day's fighting that claimed the lives of several of Charles' colleagues from the Glamorgan Constabulary.

The attacking forces initially gained their objective, but had to withdraw under heavy fire. It was during this action that Charles was killed. According to a report in the "*Aberdare Leader*" on 23rd October 1915, a shell burst in front of him. (The report indicated that he had been wounded which, of course, subsequently proved to be incorrect).

Charles was 22 years of age when he died. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial and on the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

6TH OCTOBER

PC 548 WILLIAM EAST GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY **PRIVATE 1330 1ST BATTALION,** **WELSH GUARDS**

William was born in Bridgend on 28th January 1888, the son of George and Jane East. His father was from Stroud in

Gloucestershire, whilst his mother was from Cardiff. He was one of six children, having four brothers and one sister.

At the time of the census of 1901 the family lived in the Bridgend area. William's father was employed as a general labourer whilst William himself, at 13 years of age, was a grocer's assistant.

William joined the Glamorgan Constabulary on 19th November 1910 and at the time of the census of 1911 he was based at Caerphilly police station. He resigned from the Force on 23rd April 1915 and then joined the 1st Battalion of the Welsh Guards, serving with the Prince of Wales' Company, a title granted by King George V to the leading company of the Regiment.

William went to France with the Battalion on 17th August 1915. The Battalion was heavily engaged during the Battle of Loos and it was during the later stages of the Battle when the Battalion occupied positions near Vermelles that William was killed in action.

The history of the Welsh Guards in the First World War describes the situation at this time:

“The billets in Vermelles were anything but comfortable. The gunners with their cheering weapons were all over the ruins, and, although one likes to hear the sound of British guns, no one wants to lie down by the side of them to rest. The Germans had a naval gun which fired armour piercing shells with what seemed like a retarded action, and they searched with this gun for the British batteries amongst the ruins. This went on all day and night, and there were a good few casualties.”

The “Glamorgan Gazette” reported William’s death in its edition of 15th October 1915:

“News was received on Saturday by Police Sergeant John Gill, of Bedlinog, of the death in action of Police Constable William East, of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. Police Constable East enlisted when he was stationed at Bedlinog. He was formerly stationed at Caerphilly, Llanbradach, and Bargoed. A native of Bridgend, he was very popular with his fellow officers. He played rugby football for Bridgend, Penarth, and other well known Welsh clubs....

The story of how Police Constable East met his death is told in the following letter which Police Sergeant J.H. Folland, Giffach, received from his brother, Private William Folland, who was Police Constable East’s chum: “Dear Brother-Just a few lines to let you know that am all right and in the best of health. I am sorry to inform you that poor East was killed yesterday (Tuesday). He and I were sitting on the side of a trench having a laugh and joke when a shell came and struck him on the left side and it was all over with him in less than five minutes. I and Sergeant Bevan, of the Swansea Police, buried him shortly after it went dark, and put a bit of a cross on his grave. He was a good and true friend. We are beginning to feel the winter coming on-the wet weather and cold nights. One good job, however, we are very well provided for.”

In 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1919, at the time of the anniversary of William’s death, “In Memoriam” notices appeared in the “Glamorgan Gazette” in remembrance of him. It is to be noted that they refer to “Hulloch”

as the place where he was killed. This is near Vermelles. Also the date of death is given as 5th October whilst official records state it was 6th October. It may have been that he was killed on the night of 5th/6th October.

The notice which appeared on 4th October 1918 read:

“East-In loving memory of Pte. W. East, 1330, Welsh Guards Regt., Prince of Wales Batt., killed in action at Hulloch, Oct. 5th, 1915, aged 28 years-Fondly remembered by Father and Mother, Sisters Phoebe and Beat, Brothers Jenk and Henry. In the bloom of life death claimed him, In the pride of his manhood days, None knew him but to love him, None mentioned his name but with praise. God bless him.”

William has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

8TH OCTOBER

PC 78 WILLIAM HOLLAND

SWANSEA BOROUGH POLICE
SERGEANT 1318
1/6TH BATTALION,
WELSH REGIMENT

William’s father, also called William, came from Exeter whilst his mother, Sarah, was from Aberaman.

William was born in Cardiff in 1887 and at the time of the census of 1911 he lived at 50 Alexandra Terrace, Swansea, with his parents and his wife, Lillian, who was born in Swansea and aged 24. Also present in the household were William’s brother James, aged 31, his brother John, aged 21, and his sister Ellen, who was 17 years of age. William’s father worked as a stoker in the Swansea Gas Works, James was a postman and William and John were said to be “tube workers”.

At some point William became a police officer with the Swansea Borough Police. It would also seem that he joined the part time volunteer army before the war since during it he served with a Territorial Force unit, the 6th

(Glamorgan) Battalion of the Welsh Regiment.

At the end of July 1914 the Battalion had been at camp in Portmadoc in North Wales but this was curtailed and the men returned to their homes. On the day that war was declared, 4th August 1914, the Battalion was mobilised and went to their war stations which involved guarding sites of military importance. Thus contingents were deployed to the docks at Briton Ferry, Port Talbot and Swansea and also to the fort at Mumbles Head.

Initially orders were received for the Battalion to go to India but in the event these were rescinded and it marched out of Swansea on 28th October 1914, following what the history of the Welsh Regiment in the First World War describes as “a most stirring speech” by the Commanding Officer, Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart.

The Battalion arrived at Le Havre in France on 29th October, William amongst them. It comprised of 28 officers and 812 other ranks. It was the third territorial unit to be deployed to France.

Their duties during the period up to the summer of 1915 were largely of a support nature, guarding key positions and so on. However, in July they became, along with the 1st Battalion of the Welsh Regiment, part of the 84th Brigade with which they were in October to take part in the Battle of Loos.

It is likely that it was during a period of intense fighting in an area known as the Hohenzollern Redoubt that William suffered wounds from which he was to die. There had already been a great deal of action in the vicinity in the previous days. The regimental history gives this description:

“The fighting in the vicinity of the Redoubt had been terrific, and all the communication trenches leading up to the Redoubt, and to the old British front line had been smashed out of all recognition. There had been no time to bury the dead, who in some cases had been built into the hastily patched parapets. It was indeed a scene of desolation.”

Amongst the casualties during these days was Lieutenant Colonel Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart. The

Battalion war diary for 2nd October contains the following:

“Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart was mortally shot through the head death being instantaneous. His body was placed in a zinc and wood coffin and conveyed to Bethune where he was placedin the public cemetery on 7th October 1915.”

Crichton-Stuart was the second son of the 3rd Marquess of Bute and Conservative Member of Parliament for Cardiff from 1910 until his death. His statue now stands prominently in the gardens near the National Museum in Cardiff.

After he was wounded William was treated at the Number 1 Casualty Clearing Station at nearby Choques which is where he died on 8th October 1915.

The “*Cambria Daily Leader*” of 28th October 1915 carried the following report:

“Mrs. Holland, of 33 Rodney street, Swansea, whose husband was before the war a police officer in Swansea, and was killed in recent fighting in France, as already reported in the “Cambria Daily Leader” has

received a touching letter, couched in the following terms, from Company NCO’s on behalf of his Company and battalion.

The letter is as follows-‘It is with deep regret and sorrow that we write these few lines, hoping that it will bring some comfort to you in this sore time of trouble. The news of dear Bill’s death came to us five minutes ago, and I can assure you it was with very great surprise we heard it. I may add that we have missed Bill since he got wounded, and have realised during the short time he has been from us what a friend and comrade we had lost. There is one consolation that may bring comfort to your breaking heart, and that is that Bill died a hero, facing the enemy. It is with a prayer that every man of “B” Company goes to rest tonight-that God in his great mercy may bring the comfort to you and family that you need.

We have lost a friend that we will never find anyone to equal, and it is not only in Bill’s Company but in the whole battalion. We did not think his

wound would prove so serious as it has turned out. The sergeant-major was with Bill when he got hit, and all his thoughts were of you and the little boy, as they always had been out here.

When he was wounded he called out for you three or four times, and his words will always ring in the sergeant-major's ears.....If there is anything that we can do or let you know, I can assure you that it will be an honour to us.'

*The letter is signed by
E. Shugford CQMS., and
C. W. Huntley, CSM."*

William is buried at the Military Cemetery at Choques. Most of the 1801 soldiers from the First World War buried there were, like William, casualties who had died at the nearby Casualty Clearing Station.

The inscription on William's grave reads, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

William is also remembered on the Memorial Tablet to the officers from the Swansea Borough Police who died in the First World War and which is now to be found at the Central Police Station in Swansea.

12TH OCTOBER

PC 255 LEONARD NOWELL

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 120 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS
(FORMERLY PRIVATE 15067
2ND BATTALION,
GRENADEER GUARDS)



Leonard was from Somerset having been born in Bridgewater on 1st October 1892, the son of

Ernest and Eliza Nowell. It seems that Leonard's first name was Ernest after his father.

At the time of the census of 1901, the family was living in Bridgewater. In addition to Leonard (referred to in the return as Ernest) and his parents, also in the household were his brother, Clifford, then aged 4, and his sister Julia, who was then 7 months old.

By 1911 the family had moved to live at 1 Chapel Street, Llandaff in Cardiff. His father was employed as a general labourer and his

brother Clifford, who also seems to have had the name Ernest, was a gardener's labourer. Another child had by then been born, namely Dorothy, who was a year old.

Leonard was no longer at home as he had joined the army on 21st January 1911 and the census of that year shows him as stationed with the Grenadier Guards at the Guards Depot at Caterham in Surrey.

He subsequently left the army and joined the Glamorgan Constabulary on 20th July 1912 and was stationed at Treharris at the outbreak of the war.

However, he had presumably been retained on the reserve and was, therefore, recalled to the colours since he became a Private, number 15067, in the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards, who were, in August, based at Chelsea Barracks in London. Following mobilisation, on 12th August, the Battalion paraded at Chelsea and then marched to Nine Elms. They then went by train to Southampton from where they sailed on the "Cawdor Castle" arriving in Le Havre on the

afternoon of 13th August.

Leonard saw action with the Battalion in the major battles in which they were engaged during the early stages of the war including the Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, and the First Battle of Ypres in 1914. A picture of what it was like for him emerges from a letter he wrote following the death of another police officer serving with the 2nd Battalion, PC Thomas Evans of the Merthyr Borough Police (see the South Wales Police Commemorative Booklet for 1914). The letter was reproduced in the "Western Mail" of 30th November 1914:

"How Police Constable Thomas Evans, of the Merthyr Police, died is narrated in a letter received from Private Leonard Nowel, 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards, who was a friend of the fallen Guardsman. Writing to Police Sergeant J. Thomas, Treharris, Nowel says:

'On the morning he got wounded we advanced through a wood and got into a ploughed field. When we had gone about two hundred yards in the open the Germans opened fire on us with

a machine gun. We all lay down, but poor old Tom had a bullet through his chest. After we had lain there about twenty minutes some of us started to crawl back, and we got hold of Tom by the foot and pulled him under cover. Another chap and myself carried him on a stretcher for about a mile. He was chatting all the way. We sent him to the field hospital. He had done his duty well. It was only by luck that I didn't get it. I was wounded on the 21st of this month in the arm, but it is not very serious."

The writer was formerly a constable in the Glamorgan Police and stationed in Treharris. He was groom to the late Superintendent Gill."

It seems that Leonard was one of those in the Grenadiers, and other Guards Regiments, who transferred to the Welsh Guards when they were formed in February 1915. They were to take part in the Battle of Loos during September and October 1915 when they suffered many losses. It was towards the end of this period that Leonard sustained wounds from which he died.

On 12th October the Battalion was occupying positions in the village of Vermelles. Its war diary records that on that day:

"Town shelled again this morning and 3 big ones went into our transport. Killed Wells servant Nowell albeit he died going to the hospital."

"Wells" was Lieutenant Nigel Wells, the Battalion's Transport Officer, who had held that position since the Battalion went to France. The regiment's history for the First World War gives this description of him:

"Nigel Wells who commanded the transport, was a hard old warrior from one of the South American Republics.....he wore an eyeglass and a small piece of moustache about half the width of his mouth. He said he was twenty nine years of age, and was annoyed when some of the younger officers, looking at his sun scorched face, suggested he might be a hundred-the truth lay anywhere between the two."

Leonard died whilst he was being treated by Number 2 Field Ambulance. He is buried at

Vermelles British Cemetery.

Throughout the war medical units used the cellars of a chateau in the village and a nearby brewery to operate on the wounded. The cemetery commemorates over 2100 casualties from the war.

Leonard is also commemorated on the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

A press report of Leonard's death stated that he had been wounded at the First Battle of Ypres. It also said that Leonard's father was serving with the 5th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment. Records show that his father enlisted in July 1915 but was discharged in January 1916 due to sickness. The 5th Battalion was a Territorial Force unit and Ernest would have been engaged only on home service duties during this time.

The report also said that Leonard's brother (presumably Clifford) was a driver with the Army Service Corps and was on active service. There is a record of a Sergeant 343458 Clifford Nowell with the Army Service Corps who was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

17TH OCTOBER

PC 239 WILLIAM HAMMOND

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 12732 3RD
BATTALION, GRENADIER
GUARDS

William was a Staffordshire man having been born in Tunstall, on 25th June 1883.

At the time of the census of 1901 he was living in Tunstall with his widowed mother, Sarah, then aged 55, and his sister, also called Sarah, who was then 21 years of age.

Tunstall, together with other boroughs and districts in the area, merged in 1910 to form Stoke-on-Trent. This was the region known as "The Potteries" with a large number of pottery works. It seems that William was employed in such a works and served an apprenticeship there. His sister also worked in the pottery industry.

William joined the army in June 1906 serving with the Grenadier Guards. At the time of the census of 1911 he was stationed at the Guards Depot in Caterham in

Surrey. He served for 7 years in the regular army before leaving to join the Glamorgan Constabulary on 29th April 1913 .

Before the outbreak of war he was stationed at Blaenclydach in the Rhondda but was, as an army reservist, recalled to the colours when mobilisation took place on 5th August 1914 following the declaration of war the previous day.

From his service record it appears that William went to France with the 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, arriving in Le Havre on 12/13th August 1914. He served in France until the end of December when he returned to Britain. He may have been wounded but there is no record of this. He would, however, whilst in France with the 2nd Battalion, have taken part in the early actions of the war including the Battle of Mons and the first Battle of Ypres. PC Leonard Nowell of the Glamorgan Police was amongst those there at the same time.

The *Western Mail* for 7th October

carried the following report:

“Police Constable Coles, who before the war was stationed at Tonypany, and is now serving with the 3rd Company of the Grenadier Guards, writing to the police at Tonypany, says he has met several members of the Glamorgan Constabulary at the front. ‘The Glamorgans are sizing up well out here.’ he states. ‘I met Harry (Police Constable Evans. Tonypany) a fortnight ago chasing the Germans. Hammond (a Penygraig constable) is with me.”

Then on 21st November 1914 the *Western Mail* reproduced the following letter from William himself:

“Writing to Police Sergeant Baker (Penygraig), Private William Hammond, of the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards, says:-‘Thanks very much for the “Weekly Mail” you sent me, and also for your letter. I am perfectly well, and have nothing to complain about. We are now taking advantage of a rest that

we have had given us after four months hard work and anxious moments.

You have read, no doubt, about the battle of Ypres, and how the Huns have tried time after time to take it. I have been in that struggle for the past five weeks, and still I am able to tell you the tale after all their firing. They intended giving us a rough time on the 17th of last month. They tried to break through, but failed. They started shelling us about seven o'clock in the morning, and kept at it for six solid hours, and yet did not do any damage. The reason they shelled so much was to make us keep under cover, so as to allow their troops to crawl and advance without being seen. They did not catch us napping, although they came to within 200 yards. Here they stopped and entrenched. They had a big advantage, for the ground between us was open, with an incline which was to their advantage, as it enabled them to crawl on their stomachs to within 30 yards of our trenches.

Their artillery had ceased firing, and we had not fired a shot. Then we had the order, and in ten minutes there lay in front of our line hundreds of dead and wounded. It may seem a great number in so short a time, but it was as easy a task as I have ever seen, for it was only a matter of loading and pulling the trigger, and they could not be missed. I may say that they tried the Irish Guards, who were on our right, in the evening, but only to be repulsed and with the same result. We afterwards learned that they were, or at least some of them were, the much talked of Prussian Guards, which had been sent to make one of their noble charges. If so, they found the English Guards one too many."

In August 1915 William returned to France, this time to join the 3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards with whom he had served before the War. They had arrived in France the previous month, and had with them another Glamorgan policeman in PC Charles Henry Snailham.

In mid October the Battalion was occupying trenches in the vicinity of the Hohenzollern Redoubt near Loos. The Battalion War Diary states that on 16th October their trenches had been heavily shelled by medium calibre guns resulting in 5 men being killed, 12 wounded and 1 missing. The diary goes on to describe the situation on the following day, 17th October 1915:

*“Very heavy and accurate shelling from 6am-2pm by guns of all sizes. Capt Lord F. Blackwood was blown up by a shell and concussed. Soon after noon Capt Dowling and Lt Hirst were buried in their dugout and had to be evacuated.
11 killed, 33 wounded,
1 missing.....the Battalion was relieved by 1st Bn Scots Guards and went into rest trenches behind Vermelles railway (Sussex Trench) a smooth relief which finished at 2am.”*

William was one of those killed in action that day. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Loos Memorial and the Glamorgan Police War Memorial.

25TH OCTOBER

PC 404 WILLIAM HENRY CARTER

GLAMORGAN CONSTABULARY
PRIVATE 1214 1ST BATTALION,
WELSH GUARDS



William was born in Paulton, Bristol on 22nd January 1893, the son of Henry and

Mary Jane Carter. In 1911 the family was living in Hope Place, Paulton. In the household at that time, according to the census of that year, were William's parents, then aged 54 and 52 respectively, his brother, Frederick, aged 32, William, then aged 17, and another brother, Albert, aged 12. From the census of 1891 William appears to have also had a sister named Amelia.

William's father, his brother Frederick and William himself, are all described in the 1911 census as being coal miners.

William subsequently moved to live in South Wales and joined the

Glamorgan Constabulary on 25th August 1914.

He served in Nantyyffyllon before resigning from the Force on 16th April 1915 so that he could join the 1st Battalion of the Welsh Guards and landed with them in France on 17th August 1915.

It was during the Battalion's time near Loos later that year that William sustained wounds from which he died on 25th October at Number 6 Casualty Clearing Station. In the days before then the Battalion had been at Vermelles, which the Regimental History described:

“The comparatively safe, if not comfortable, Lancashire Trench was left on the 19th, when the battalion went to Vermelles, and occupied, for the most part, cellars. The village was still a mark for German gunners, with their infernal armour-piercing shells, mixed up with others, so that although they were called rest billets, it was preferable to be nearer the front line. During the four ensuing days casualties crept up.”

There was, apart from the shelling, much grenade throwing on both sides and the Welsh Guards were constantly at risk from German snipers.

On 23rd October the Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion of the Coldstream Guards in the Hohenzollern Redoubt, part of which the Battalion's War Diary described in these words

“embankment composed of loose earth, equipment and dead bodies, smell bad, and sights inexpressible.”

William was buried at Lillers Communal Cemetery near Bethune. The 6th Casualty Clearing Station was one of several that was based in the small town of Lillers at one time or another during the war. There are 894 Commonwealth burials in the cemetery.

William is also remembered on the Glamorgan Police War Memorial at Bridgend.

THE BATTLE OF LOOS ● 1915



Ruins in the church quarter of Loos, 24th November 1915. (c) IWM (Q 58151)

The British offensive in the coal mining area around the village of Loos in Northern France began on 25th September 1915 and continued until the middle of October. Whilst there were early successes, a failure to exploit gains by timely use of reserves undermined the British efforts. The first divisions of Kitchener's "New Armies" of volunteers, in particular, had a difficult time. It was also the first occasion on which the newly formed Guards Division, which included the Welsh Guards, had fought together in a major battle. It was the task of the Welsh Guards to

take German positions at Hill 70 and whilst they achieved some success they suffered heavy losses, particularly from machine gun fire, before being forced to withdraw.

A total of 11 police officers from our predecessor forces died in this area during September and October 1915 whilst serving with the Grenadier, Irish and Welsh Guards. Six of them lost their lives on one day-27th September 1915. By the time the battle was terminated it had cost the British Army over 50,000 casualties. The only significant long term gain was the ruined village of Loos itself.



*Welsh Guards
Remembered on
the Loos
Memorial*



*South Wales Police
Remembers - Wreath
laid at the Loos
Memorial, April 2015*

THE GREAT WAR CENTENARY

1914-1918  2014-2018

South Wales Police is currently gathering information about the many police officers from our predecessor forces of Glamorgan, Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath and Cardiff who served in the armed forces during the First World War.

We want to ensure we uncover as much information as possible about our proud history, and the many men who served both the force and their country to ensure they are never forgotten.

All the stories and information collected,

including photographs, letters and newspaper coverage from that time will be shared online and on Facebook.

To make a contribution please email:
policemuseum@
south-wales.pnn.police.uk

FIRST WORLD WAR PROJECT GROUP

Gareth Madge (Chair),
Danny Richards, Robin Mellor, Peter Wright,
Paul Wood, Daryl Fahey,
Allison Tennant, Coral Cole, together with Philip Davies of the Western Front Association.



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