Walter Reynolds





Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 6442

Regiment: - York and Lancaster 6th Battalion

Missing, presumed killed in action: - 30th September 1916

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial Pier and Face 14A and 14B

Batley News, 14 Oct 1916 (photo)

Family Details

Walter Reynolds was born in Wakefield in the Spring of 1882, the second child and first son of Henry Reynolds and his wife, Clarissa (nee Dickinson) who married in Summer 1877. The couple had eight children.

In 1891, Henry Reynolds, wife Clarissa and four of their children, including 9-year-old Walter, were living at Stanley, near Wakefield, where Henry was working as a plasterer's labourer. In the late 1890s the family moved to Ossett, and by 1901 they were living on Intake Lane, Ossett but at that time, Walter was not living with them.

Walter Reynolds, aged 19, had joined the York and Lancaster Regiment by this time and was stationed at Tanshelf Barracks in Pontefract. He was posted to India in February 1902 and returned to England in February 1909.

Walter Reynolds married Amy Norton at the Ebenezer Chapel, Dewsbury on the 12th July 1910 and their first child, Cynthia Reynolds, was born on the 17th March 1911. At this time, the couple were living at 9, Caledonia Road, Batley, where Walter was the 'town postman'. They had a second child, Henry Reynolds, born in Batley on the 30th July 1913. He worked at Batley as the town postman for seven years before being called up as a Reservist.

Service Details

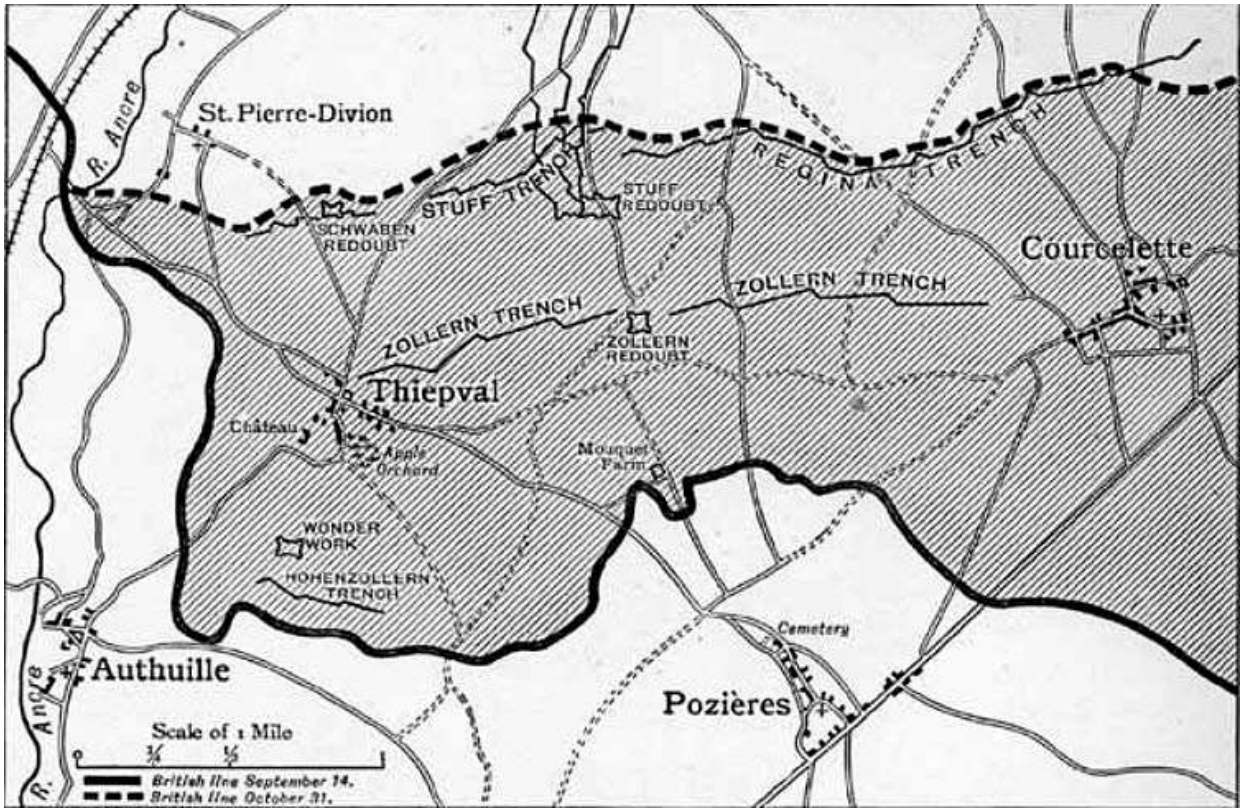
At the age of 18 years, Walter Reynolds first enlisted in the army in September 1900 with the service number 6442. He joined the York and Lancaster Regiment and in March 1904, extended his period of service for another four years. Reynolds was appointed Lance-Corporal in March 1907. During the period 1902 to 1909 he was posted to India, and on his return in February 1909, he was transferred to the army reserve for a further four years. On the 26th February 1913, Walter Reynolds re-engaged in the army and maintained his rank as a Lance-Corporal.

As a consequently, he was in army reserve at the time of the declaration of war on the 4th August 1914. He was sent to Sunderland where he acted as drill sergeant for 13 months until 19th September 1915 and embarked for the Mediterranean (Gallipoli) on the following day, arriving there on 29th September 1915. After the evacuation in December 1915 he served in Egypt. He moved to France on the 27th June 1916 and was killed in action three months later on the 29th September 1916. Walter Reynolds had completed almost 16 years in army service at the time of his death.

Walter Reynolds was killed on the 30th September 1916 by a shell during the bitter fighting when his Battalion made a successful attack on a German trench at the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, which took place between the 26th and 30th September 1916. The 11th (Northern) Division attacked on the 27th September, bringing Sergeant Reynold's 32nd Brigade out of the reserve, and got a footing in the Stuff Redoubt, but were unable to take the German strongpoint completely. Over the remaining three days of the battle, the fighting raged around the Stuff and Schwaben Redoubts. On the 30th September 1916, the 11th Division resumed the attack on Stuff Redoubt at 4:00 p.m. with bombing parties advancing west along Hessian Trench and along Zollern Trench, which by nightfall had taken the southern half of the redoubt. At the end of the battle the British had reached the line of their final objective, but were unable to clear out the two redoubts. In the end they would fall during the battle of the Ancre Heights in early October 1916.

His wife received notification of his death which said he was very highly thought of by his officers who were very sorry to lose him. *"I hope you pride in his death will somewhat soften your grief"* said one of the officers.

Amy later went to live at 17, Springfield Terrace, Dodworth Road, Barnsley,



above: Map showing the German strongholds of the Schwaben and Stuff Redoubts, near Thiepval.

Walter was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley and Ossett War Memorials.

Thanks to Ossett.net



Researched by members of
Batley History Group