

Charles Mitchell EDYVANE



- Born:** 1896, Padstow, Cornwall
- Occupation:** General labourer
- Enlisted:** Bodmin: 14th December 1914 (Volunteer)
- Unit:** 1st Wiltshire Regt. (Also 6th DCLI)
- Rank/number:** Private: No.28101, (6th DCLI No.17212)
- Death:** Killed in action, 1st September 1918
- Detail:** Charles died during an attack on Beaulencourt, near Bapaume north of the Somme, during the last weeks of the war. His battalion, the 1st Wilts, stormed the heavily-fortified village at 2am following a bombardment. They took their objective, but suffered 18 killed and 41 wounded. Charles, who had been at war for four years, was one of the fallen.
- Age at death:** 24
- Military info:** Charles enlisted on 14th December 1914 along with nine other Padstonians, three of whom would die in the war. He was posted to the 6th DCLI, which was part of 43rd Brigade, 14th Division. By Spring 1915 they were ready for war and the battalion arrived in France on 22nd May that year. They fought at Hooze in the Ypres Salient and became the first division to be attacked by flamethrowers. In 1916 they saw action on the Somme at Delville Wood and Flers-Courcelette. In 1917 the Battalion fought at Arras and at Passchendaele. It was during this time that Charles heard of his mother's death aged 54. Early in 1918 the army cut battalions due to manpower shortages and in February the 6th DCLI was disbanded. Charles was sent to the 1st Wiltshire, part of 110th Brigade, 21st Division. The battalion took part in the Battles of the Lys, the Battle of the Aisne and the final advance in Picardy where it fought over the old Somme battlefields of 1916 with Byng's Third Army. On 1st September 1918 the battalion were ordered to capture Beaulencourt, two miles south-east of Bapaume. The 1st Wiltshire attacked in the early hours behind a creeping British barrage. Their war diary says: "The village was strongly held by enemy machine guns, but the battalion attacked with such determination that the opposition was overcome and by 5.30am the village was in our hands." Charles, a veteran soldier at 24, was dead. The war ended in victory two months later, but the young Padstonian who served through every hellish year of it, was not there to enjoy the peace.
- Grave/memorial:** Charles lies in Beaulencourt British Cemetery, his name wrongly spelt. He is honoured at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: George Mitchell Edyvane, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1870. General labourer. Mother: Susanna Runnals, born Lostwithiel, Cornwall in 1862, died Padstow 1917. The couple wed in 1890 and had 12 children, four of whom died.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com