

Arthur Clarence SLUMAN



Born: 1889, Padstow, Cornwall
Occupation: Agricultural merchant
Enlisted: 4th August 1914 (Pre-war Special Reserve)
Unit: 10th Worcestershire Regt. (Also 3rd/8th Devons)
Rank/number: Corporal: No.43532 (Devons No.4348)
Death: Killed in action, 10th April 1918
Detail: Arthur was a machine-gun instructor serving in England when the Germans launched their huge last-ditch offensive on 21st March 1918. He was immediately rushed to France with thousands of other men to fill the depleted ranks of the British Army. Arthur was sent to the 10th Wilts where he died fighting an enemy advance on the mist-shrouded slopes of Messines Ridge.

Age at death: 29

Military info: Before the war Arthur joined the 3rd Devons, a Special Reserve Battalion. These were part-time soldiers automatically called up on outbreak of hostilities. The unit supplied men for the regiment's other battalions and Arthur was sent to the 8th Devons, part of 20th Brigade in the 7th Division, and arrived in France after 1915. The 8th battalion fought on the Somme in 1916 and at Passchendaele in 1917. Arthur, a machine-gunner, was sent home to be an instructor, but when the huge German offensive struck on 21st March 1918 he was rushed back to France and within days was fighting with the 10th Worcesters. This unit, part of 57th Brigade in the 19th Division, was battered in the initial onslaught and in late March it was moved north to rest. Unfortunately, the Division ended up right in the path of another major German attack near the Lys river, which began on 9th April. As dawn broke the following morning a thick white mist shrouded the 10th Worcesters on Messines Ridge. At 5.30am a barrage crashed down and 13 enemy battalions charged. "The dense waves of the attack poured forward in the mist, surged through the gaps between the defensive posts of the British battalions, and then flooded over the defences from flank and rear," says the regimental history. Overwhelmed, the British retreated to high ground and rallied around a lone field gun battery. They held on until a new defensive line could be organised. As dusk fell the battery and its brave defenders withdrew. But back on the darkening slopes of Messines lay Arthur, one fallen soldier among many. The Germans attack failed.

Grave/memorial: Arthur's body was never found and he is commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial, Ypres, at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on the Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: Francis Sluman, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1849. Master tailor.
Mother: Emily Stribley, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1851. Married in 1879.



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

+Lest we forget+