

Robert ENGLAND



Born: 1889, Hawker's Cove, Padstow, Cornwall
Occupation: Farm labourer and stone quarryman
Enlisted: Bodmin: September 1914 (Volunteer)
Unit: 6th Somerset LI (Also 6th DCLI, Oct 1914)
Rank/number: Private: No. 15176 (DCLI No.15590)
Death: Killed in action: 23rd August 1917
Detail: Robert was killed at the Third Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele. The second phase of the offensive, the Battle of Langemarck, started on 16th August and ended on the 18th. But the 6th SLI was engaged in fierce fighting in the days that followed and on the 22nd attacked up the Menin Road. During counter-attacks on the 23rd Robert was killed.

Age at death: 27

Military info: The 6th SLI were formed at Aldershot in August 1914 as part of 43rd Brigade., 14th (Light) Division. In May 1915 they arrived in France and on 31st July the Division became the first to be attacked by flamethrowers during an attack at Hooge. That September the Somersets were also involved in the Second Attack at Bellewaarde, a costly diversion for the British assault at Loos. In 1916 during the Somme offensive 6th SLI fought at Delville Wood and Flers-Courcelette. In 1917 they were involved in the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the Battle of Arras. At Third Ypres the 6th SLI took part in the Battle of Langemarck. The battalion came into the line on 17th August and on the 22nd attacked with 14th Division astride the Menin Road. Next day the Somersets suffered fierce counter-attacks and intense shell-fire losing in all 44 killed and 213 wounded. Robert was one of the 74 missing. A soldier later wrote to one of Robert's sisters telling her they had found his body in no man's land and had brought him back for burial. He sent her photos found on the body and said he had been killed on 31st August whilst attempting with comrades to save a tank. In August 1918 the Army Council officially declared Robert dead and concluded he died on 23rd August 1917. This seems more likely than the 31st as at that time the 6th SLI were in billets at Le Roukloshille

Grave/memorial: Though buried Robert's grave was never found. He is commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial, St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: Robert England, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1859. Trinity Pilot. Mother: Cordelia Worden, born St Kew, Cornwall in 1860. Married 1879. Twelve children.

Additional info: For 7 years Robert worshipped at the Mission Church of the Good Shepherd at Cove, Padstow. He was also verger, bellringer and Sunday School Teacher.



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