

STEWARD Sidney Stanley



Rifleman : Rifle Brigade 11th Battalion.

59th Brigade, 20th Division.

Aged 36 Killed in action: 03/09/1916

Service No: S/12775

His father was John Steward an engine driver & his mother was Alice. The 1891 census shows him as an 11 year old living at Tollesbury with relatives :- Lizzie aged 8 , Lettie aged 1, John aged 4 , Elizabeth aged 9, Alice aged 7 , George aged 11, Leonard aged 8 , Bertha aged 14, Charles aged 22 and Sarah aged 24.

The 1901 census shows the family as living in Tolleshunt Knights with the addition of Robert aged 1 month, Millie aged 2, Annie aged 4 & Charles aged 9. Sidney Stanley is no longer living with the family. When he joined up he gave both his place of birth and residence as Tolleshunt. He only served in the Rifle brigade. Two of his brothers were also killed John (10/02/1917) with the Essex Regiment & Charles with the Essex Yeomanry (11/04/1917). When he attested at Winchester on the 3rd September 1915 he gave his occupation as shoemaker. He was 5foot 5 ½ inches tall with a girth of 34 inches & weighed 112 lbs. He gave his father as next of kin.

He enlisted at Watford & served in the 11th (Service) Battalion, which was formed at Winchester in September 1914, as part of K2, attached to 59th Brigade, 20th (Light) Division. Early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The Division first assembled in the Aldershot area with brigades at Blackdown, Deepcut and Cowshott. Artillery was particularly hard to come by; 12 old guns arrived from India in February 1915! When in the same month the Division moved to Witlet, Godalming and Guildford, the artillery had to go by train as there was insufficient harness for the horses. Another move was made, to Salisbury Plain, in April 1915. The Division was inspected by HM King George V at Knighton Down on 24th June 1915, by which time all equipment had arrived and the Division was judged ready for war.

26th July 1915 : completed concentration in the Saint-Omer area, all units having crossed to France during the preceding few days. Early trench familiarisation and training took place in the Fleurbaix area. The Division then remained in the Western Front theatre, taking part in the following actions prior to his death :- Attack towards Fromelles, a subsidiary to the Battle of Loos, 25 September 1915; The Battle of Mount Sorrel, including successful recapture of that height alongside the Canadians on 13th June 1916; the Battle of Delville Wood (third phase of the Battle of the Somme 1916) & the Battle of Guillemont (fourth phase of the Battle of the Somme) . He initially was listed as missing presumed



The ruins of Guillemont Station.
Photograph from the History of the
20th (Light) Division.

This village is situated about six and a half miles east of Albert, and is located on the junction of the D64 and D20 roads. Guillemont held out for some time during the Somme battles, with attacks here on the 30th of July and the 8th of August before the village was finally taken on the 3rd of September, 1916. The 20th (Light) Division was instrumental in taking the village, and this action is described in their Divisional History.

In the morning, their line was just to the west of the village, probably just a little closer than the position of Guillemont Road Cemetery today and, further north, running past the site of Guillemont station. Their objective was to take the village, and continue east past the crossroads where their memorial stands today. The attack had been postponed several times, partly due to poor weather, but the plan was to attack the village from north, west and south. Assembly trenches were dug north of Guillemont Station to aid the northern attack, and at 6 a.m. on the 3rd of September, 1916, a bombardment commenced. The infantry attacked here at noon. The attack also employed 'push-pipes', and liquid fire, innovations which were also employed by the British elsewhere on the Somme battlefields in 1916. The attack went well, although there were casualties, and the second objective (the eastern side of the village) was taken by 1.30 p.m. reference :- <http://www.w1battlefields.co.uk/somme/guillemont.html>



The site of Guillemont village during the War.

Sidney earned the 1914-5 Star, the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.



Campaign :-				(A) Where decoration was earned.
1914-15				(B) Present situation.
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) STEWARD	Rif Brig	Pte	5/1445	MEDAL ROLL RAS
(B) S.S.	---	---	---	VICTORY 10/102/19. 2524
Action taken				15 STAR M/B 863
THEATRE OF WAR.				Pre dead
QUALIFYING DATE.				1.12.15
(6 34 46) W234-HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.				



Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead
 Memorial Reference: Pier and Face 16 B and 16
 C. Memorial: THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an

attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 31 July 1932. The dead of other Commonwealth countries who died on the Somme and have no known graves are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere. No. of Identified Casualties: 72092

Last updated 09/03/2008



Saint Mary's Tollesbury