

Arthur Walter Boyles - Pte Royal Warwickshire Regiment no. 17386 (11th Bttn).

In memory of our 2nd Great Uncle Arthur Walter BOYLES (Incorrectly recorded as BYLES on his service record). An awesome sacrifice remembered with gratitude.

The 4th child (3rd son) of George Boyles and Clara Elizabeth Suttaby, Arthur was born in Lighthorne, Warwickshire on 28 January 1880 and baptised on 16 May 1880. His father is recorded in 1881 as a coachman / domestic servant and coachman/groom in 1891. By the time Arthur is 21 (1901) his father is a woodman and Arthur is now a groom (not domestic). By 1911 Arthur is a Domestic Groom and his father an estate worker.

Census records show the family lived at Lattimers Cottages, Lighthorne in 1881, the High Street (1891) and then Church Cottages (1901).

Records show Arthur enlisted with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (11th Bttn) in Leamington. The 11th Battalion formed at Warwick in September 1914 and disembarked in Bolougne, France on 30th July 1915 as part of 112th Infantry Brigade, 37th Division¹.



However since Arthur was not awarded the 1914 or 1914/15 Star the assumption is he did not enlist nor see active service until sometime in 1916. Conscription was introduced in January 1914 for single men aged 18-41, this may be why he enlisted. Arthur married Rose Elizabeth Green from Warwick before the end of March 1916.

1916 onwards

It is possible Arthur was at The Battle of Bazentin Ridge on the Somme on 14 July 1916 and Martinpuich, where the battalion were forced to retire with 152 casualties, after which they continued to man trenches at Neuve Chapelle.

On 10/11/ August 1916 at Mametz Wood, where all divisions suffered heavy losses and "intense hostile artillery throughout the day", the commander of the 11th Royal Warks wrote in the War Diary

"This was a very trying day for the troops."

The following day having been bombarded by British fire overnight, the opposition was ready and constantly bombarded the British line before daybreak, aware an attack was coming which they successfully repelled. Heavy losses were incurred again by the 11th Bttn.

On the 13th ***"at daybreak many of our men were still finding their way back to our trenches. The Germans shewed themselves & shouted friendly remarks to our men & appeared anxious for a peaceful spell. Our stretcher bearers went out & fetched in wounded men. For some hours the situation was very quiet. The distance between the lines was 80 – 200 yds. It remained unusually quiet throughout the day."***

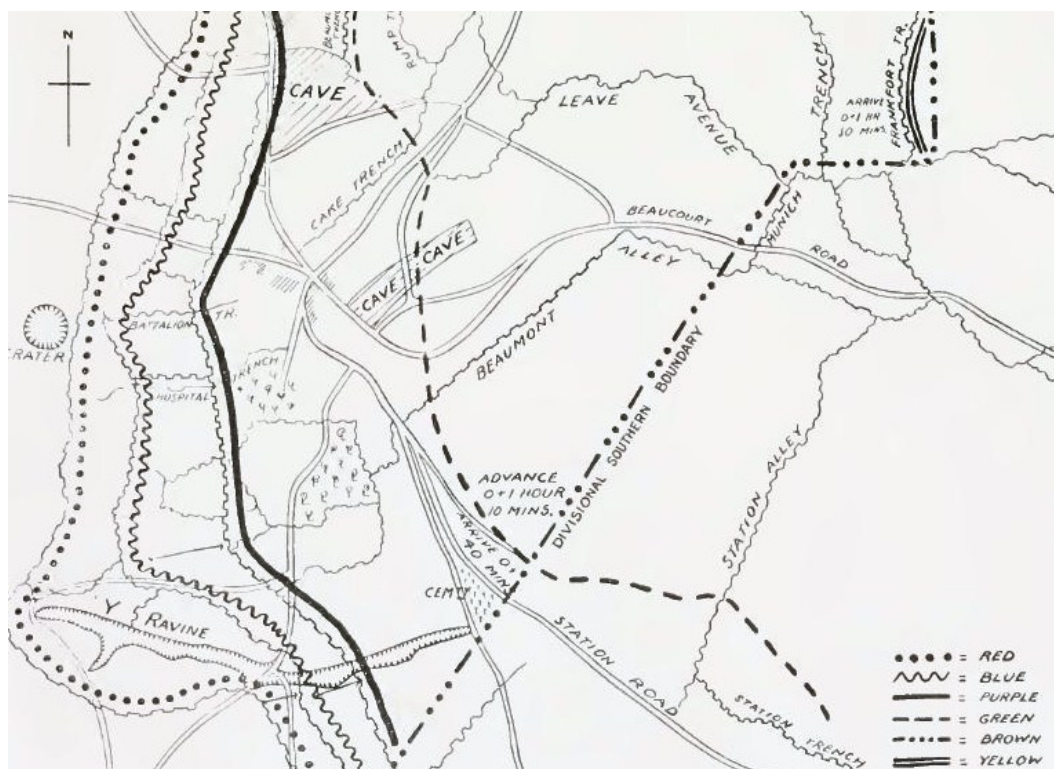
27 Officers and 670 other ranks were "lost."

During September and October the battalion took turns at the front, or rested and trained at various billets. On 1st November 1916 they were training at Douleens, moving forwards on 12 November.

Between 13th and 19th November 1916 the Division fought in the Battle of Ancre, one of the Somme Battles.

On 14 November at "White City" (near Beaumont Hamel on the Somme, named from the white chalk banks its trenches were cut from), the Royal Warks moved forward to attack Frankfort Trench passing over a supposedly British held Munich Trench, from which it encountered hostile fire, losing 2 officers.

Over the next few days the battle to take Munich trench continued with heavy hostile barrages experienced and losses incurred. It is presumably here that Arthur was killed age 36.



Arthur is recorded as "Killed in Action" on 16 November 1916, and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 9 A 9 B and 10 B. He is recorded the same as on his service record " BYLES A. W" , however on the Lighthorne memorial he is correctly recorded as BOYLES.



Memorial left at Thiepval August 2014 from Mike & Sandy Boyles

The battalion diaries record:

15th November 1916. MINDEN TR.

8:30 A.M. Orders received from the 99th Bde, that MUNICH Tr. would be attacked at 9 A.M. The attack to be carried out by the 8th East Lanc & 10th L.N. Lanc Regt, supported by the 11th R. War. R.

MUNICH TRENCH was found to be very strongly held, the attack was held up. Under cover of dark the Batt re-organised in LEAVE Tr. And WAGON ROAD with Batt. Hd Quarters in BEAUCOURT TR. Capt J.S.THAIN. M.C. Adjutant wounded.

BEAUCOURT TR.

16th The Batt held on in WAGON ROAD. During the afternoon a heavy hostile barrage was experienced, 2nd Lieu W.R. WOLTON wounded

17th 1.A.M. The Batt was relieved & moved into billets in MAILLE-MAILLET. At 2.10 P.M. the Batt marched into billets at ENGLEBELMER.

A further 200 "ordinary Ranks" joined the companies on 28th November 1916. In the UK Arthur is remembered on the Lighthorne memorial and Warwick St Mary war memorial (both as Arthur Boyles).

His widow Rose later remarried and died in 1956.

Mike and Sandy Boyles, Cambridgeshire 2018.