

Albert Aaron Steel



Nº242737
6th & 1/5th Battalion
Lancashire Fusiliers

In 1901 Albert is aged 3 living at 5 Grasmere Street Lower Broughton with a sister and his parents.

By 1911 Albert is aged 13 and at school. He is living with 3 siblings, his parents and 3 of his uncles on his mothers side in 8 rooms at 79 North Grecian Street. his father is a domestic coachman.

An aerial photograph of a residential street featuring several red brick houses. The central focus is a three-story red brick house with a white bay window on the ground floor and white-framed windows above. This house is outlined in red and has the text 'No 79' written in green below it. To the left and right are other similar brick houses, some with grey roofs and others with red roofs. The street is paved, and there are green trees and bushes scattered throughout the scene.

Albert remained living in the same address through 1914 and 1915.

BOWRING STREET.			
5732	Steel Albert Aaron 1 Bowring street Dwelling house (successive)
			1 Bowring street 79 Grecian street north

Little else is known of Alberts early years.

When war was declared on the 4th August 1914 he was aged just 16 but like many would be called to serve.

No service record survives for Albert but his wartime experiences can be gained through other documents and the service records of men with service numbers close to his.

It is known that on enlisting Albert was given a service number 242737 and was posted to the Lancashire Fusiliers. One record shows him in the 6th (Reserve) Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (LF).

Name <i>Steel, Albert Aaron</i>	Regimental No. <i>242737</i>	Name <i>Steel, Albert Aaron</i>	Regimental No. <i>242737</i>	Regiment or Ship <i>6th Lanc. Fus.</i>	Rank <i>Pte</i>
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William Bassett had the service number 242741 just 4 form Albert 242737. He was Attested in to service on the 2nd June 1916 and mobilised on the 4th November 1916. He was posted to the 6th (Reserve) Battalion LF.

STATEMENT of the SERVICES of No. <i>242741</i> Name <i>William George Henry Bassett</i>						
Corps	Battn. or Depot	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Army Rank	Dates	Service not allowed to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension years days	Signature of Officers certifying correctness of Entries
General Service		Attested	<i>Private</i>	<i>2-6-16</i>		<i>J. Warner</i> <i>2nd Lt.</i> <i>Edmund Cpt.</i>
General Service		To Army Reserve		<i>2-6-16</i>		
		Mobilized <i>4/11/16</i>		<i>4-11-16</i>	<i>16.</i>	
		Posted		<i>4-11-16</i>		
6th LANC. FUSILIERS.						

It is almost certain that Albert was also Attested in to service in late May / early June 1916 and mobilised in to the 6th (Reserve) Battalion in early November 1916. The 6th Reserve Battalion was a home service battalion training recruits before transfer to service units overseas. Albert would have completed his initial training with them.

At some point Albert headed to France to join the British Expeditionary force. There is no record of when he left.

242741 Bassett left for France on the 12th June 1917 on the Hired Transport Arundel disembarking on the same day and moving to no 23 Infantry Base Depot (IBD) at Etaples on the 13th June. There he was posted to the 1/6th Battalion LF.

	Embarked ...	12.6.17.	H.T. "Arundel"
	Disembarked ...	12.6.17.	
13.6.17. 25th I.B.D.	Joined from England and posted to 1/6th Bn. Lan. Fus.	Etaples.	13.6.17.
	Taken on strength of 1/7th Bn. Lancashire Fusiliers, for Record Purposes.		13.6.17. O.1210. T/25.

Albert may have followed a similar time line, traveling on the SS Arundel as part of a Draft to the Lancashire Fusilier's though once in France was posted from the Base Depot to the 1/5th Battalion LF. Exactly when he joined them is not known. The 1/5th LF were part of the 125 Infantry Brigade 42nd Division

242737	Pte	STEEL	Albert	1/5th Lanco Fus
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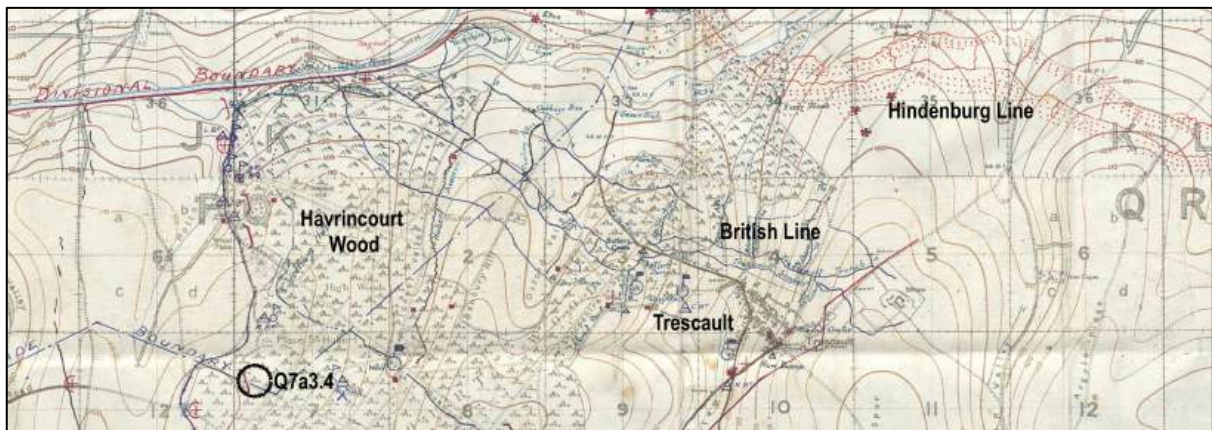


Documents show that at some point Albert became a Signaller and was part of C Company in the 1/5th LF

STEEL Albert Signaller. 242737. »C» Coy Lanc Fusiliers.

Assuming Albert joined the 1/5th LF around mid to late June 1917 when they were in the trenches at Trescault opposite the German Hindenburg Line, at rest at Ytres and then in reserve in Havrincourt Wood. If Albert had joined them in late June the trenches at Trescault may have been his first taste of the front lines.

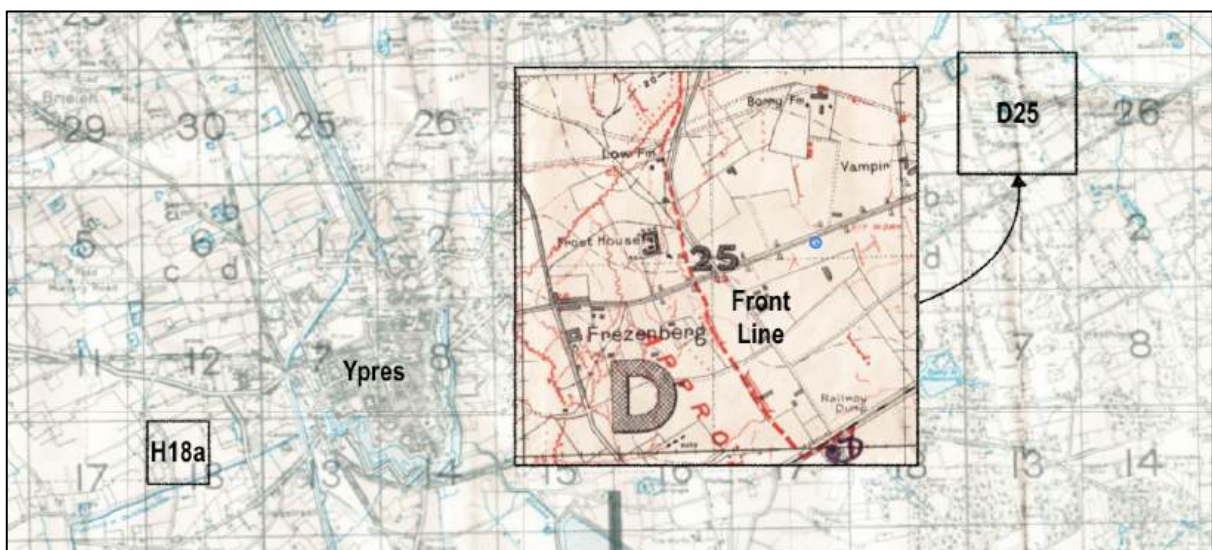
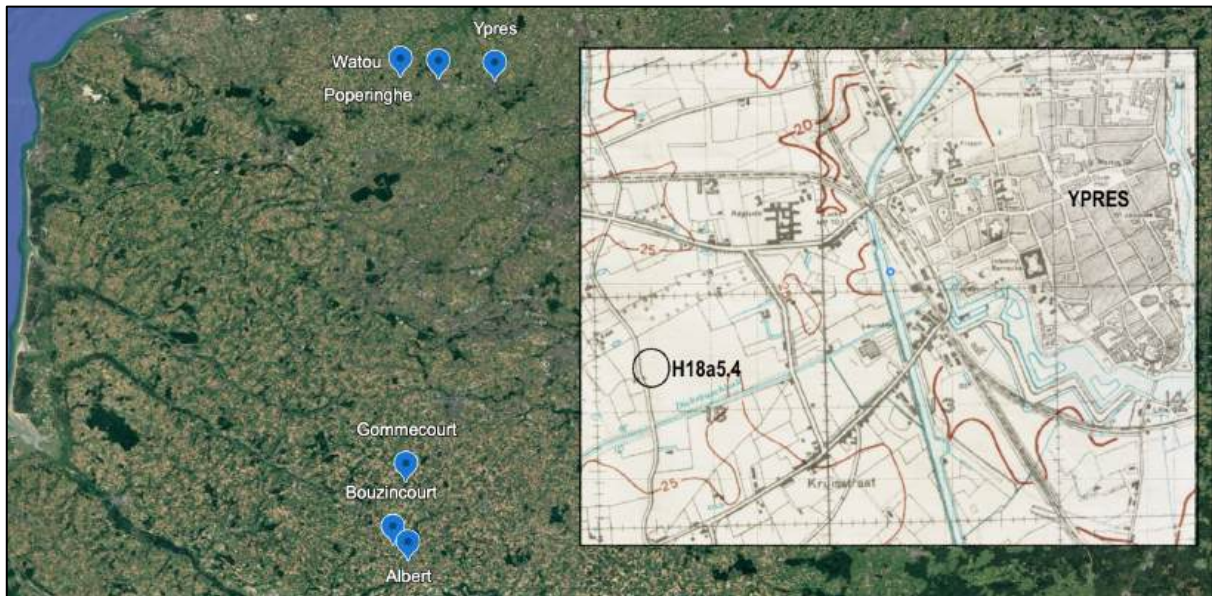
From the 1st July the battalion was in reserve at Q7a3.4 Havrincourt Wood providing working parties and manning the intermediate and secondary lines. on the 5th they moved to Bretincourt and on the 6th to Gommecourt where they spent the rest of the month training with sports in the afternoon's.



British Front line at Trescault 1917



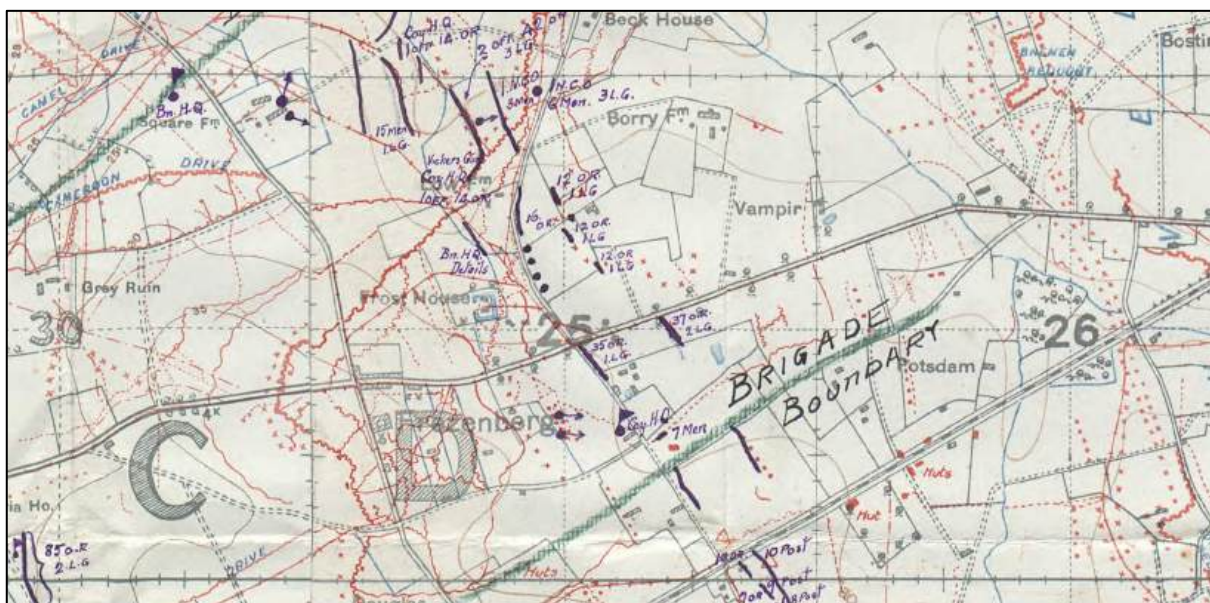
From the 1st to 19th August 1917 the men remained at Gommecourt training. On the 20th they moved to Bouzincourt and on the 22nd entrained at Albert for billets in L7central near Watou where training continued until the 28th. They then moving by train via Poperinghe by train to H18a5.4 south west of Ypres. On the 31st they took over the font lines in D25 central. On the 31st they came under heavy shelling suffering 4 casualties.



On the 1st September the men were relieved in to support with D & C Companies to H16a south west of Ypres for special training in preparation for an attack. The battalion was heavily shelled during the relief with 2 killed.

Attack by C & D Companies on Borry Farm 6th September 1917 – line held after attack D25b25.20 to D25b15.30 through the 7th September.

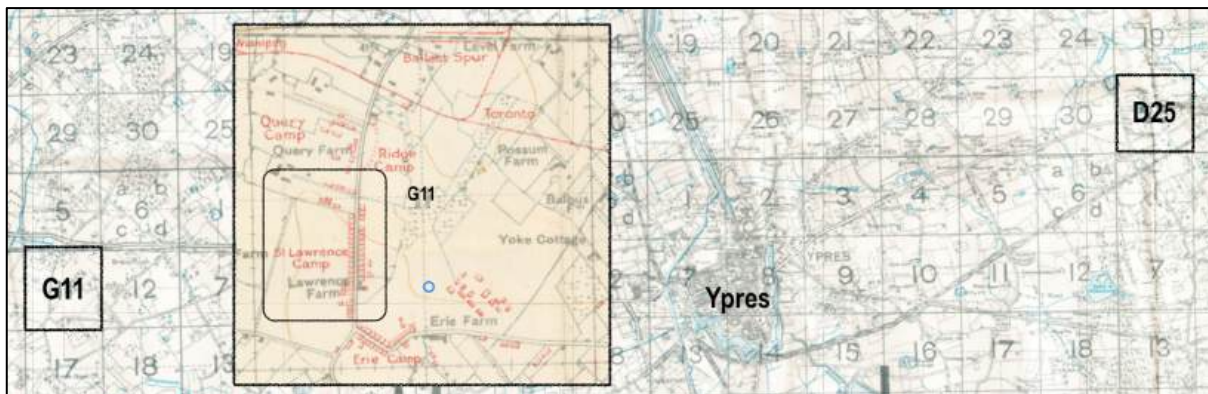
In outpost line - 3rd bank of BORRY FARM. C & D Coys move into assembly trench at midnight.
 7.15 a.m. heavy bomb. of BORRY FARM. 7-30 am ZERO HOUR C. D Coys attack BORRY FARM behind Creeping barrage. 1/6TH LAN. FOS. attack BECK HOUSE and IBERIAN on left D 19 d. & B. respectively. 61st DIV. attack HILL 35th Div. b. at same hour. Sharp fighting throughout day. Heavy Machine Gun fire met from VAMPIR and DOS. S of BORRY and attack held up after 150 yds. Heavy counter attacks at 10-45 a.m. 7-30 p.m. and 11-10 p.m. put up by our artillery fire. At 7.30 p.m. our left which was in the air had to retire to its original line. The right succeeded in holding the line D 25 b. 25.20 to D 25 b. 15.30. and this was consolidated, the left being brought back and joined to our original line.
 In the attack we had heavy casualties from M.G. fire.



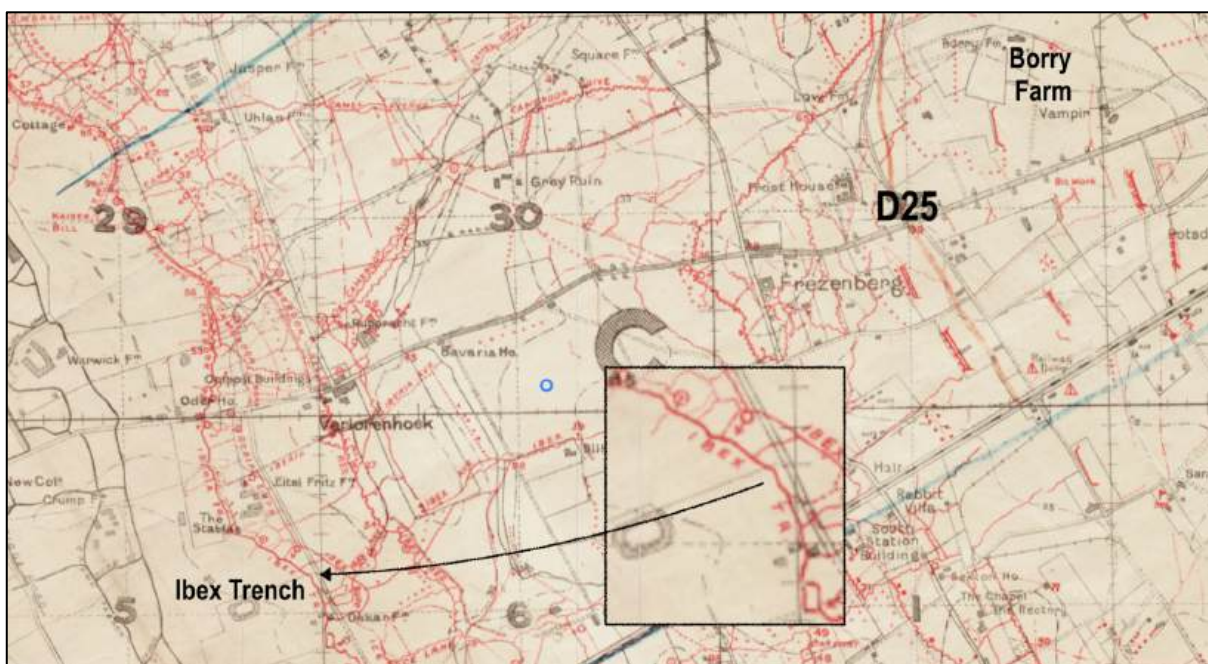
The shell pitted landscape in D25

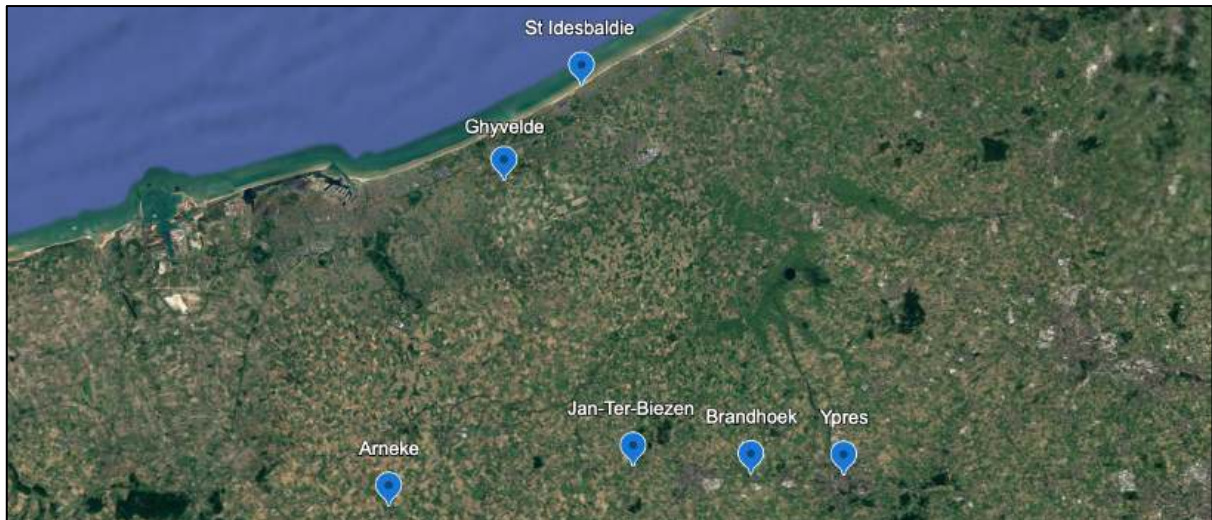


On the 7th September the men were relieved back to St Lawrence Camp G11c5.3



On the 14th September the men moved in to Support in the Ibex Support trench where they remained until the 17th being relieved to Brandhoek. on the 19th they moved to a camp at Jan-Ter-Biezen where they spent time cleaning equipment. On the 19th they moved to Arneke for training, the 24th to Ghyvelde and 25th to St Idesbaldie where training and rout marches took place alongside manning coastal defences.

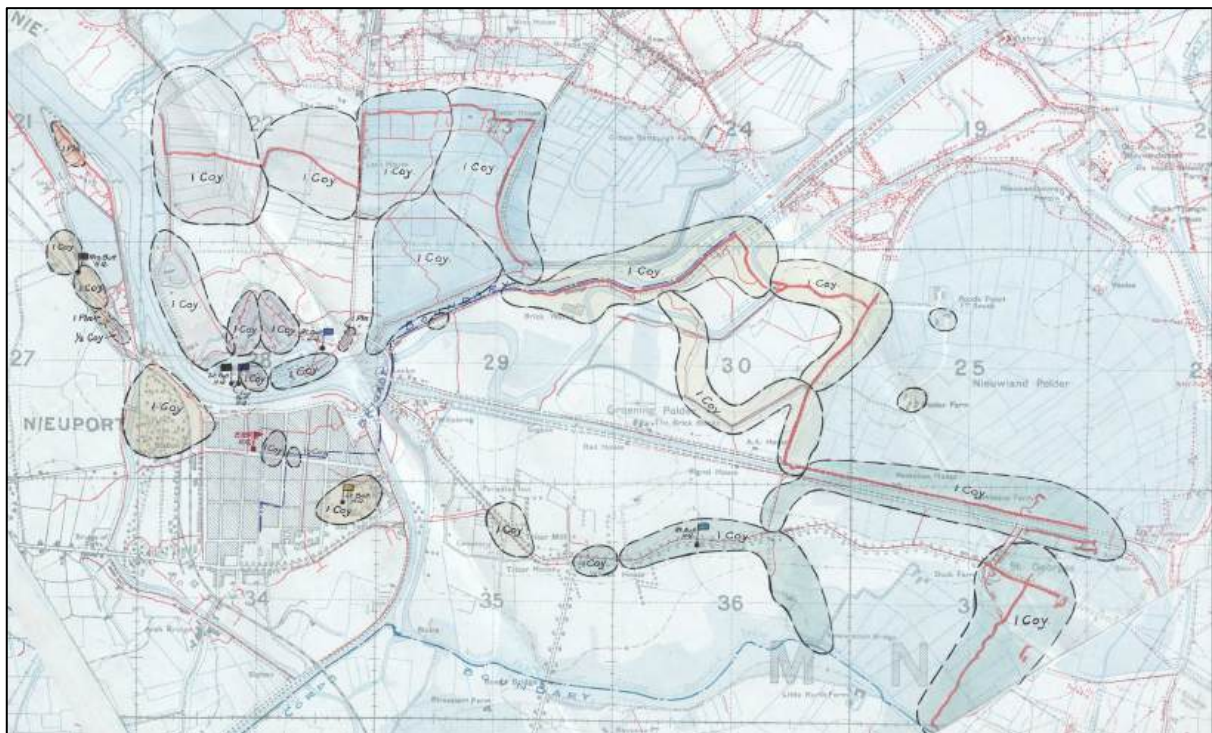




On the 5th October 1917 the battalion moved to Canada Camp at Coxyde and on the 6th to the front line trenches at Nieuport.



Nieuport trenches

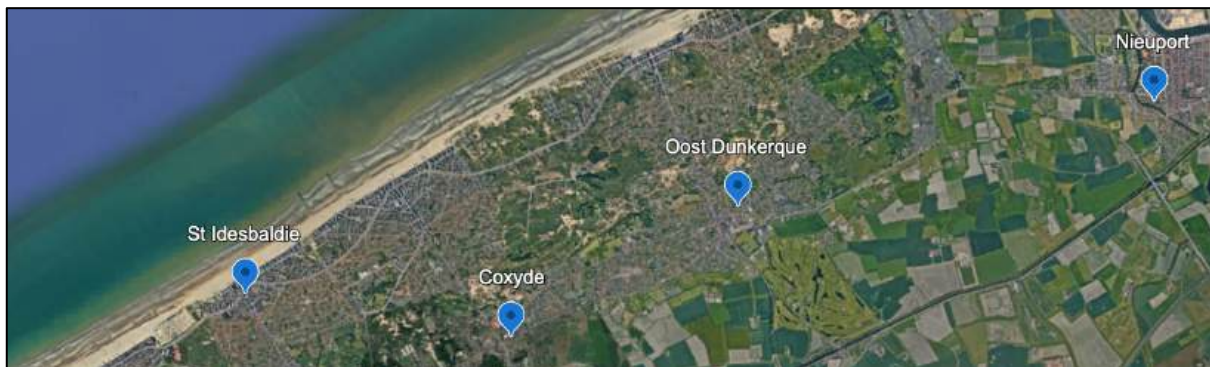


On the 9th October the men moved to Support in the 'Redan' and on the 13th back to the front line trenches. On the 17th they returned again to garrison the Redan and on the 20th back to Canada Camp at Coxyde.

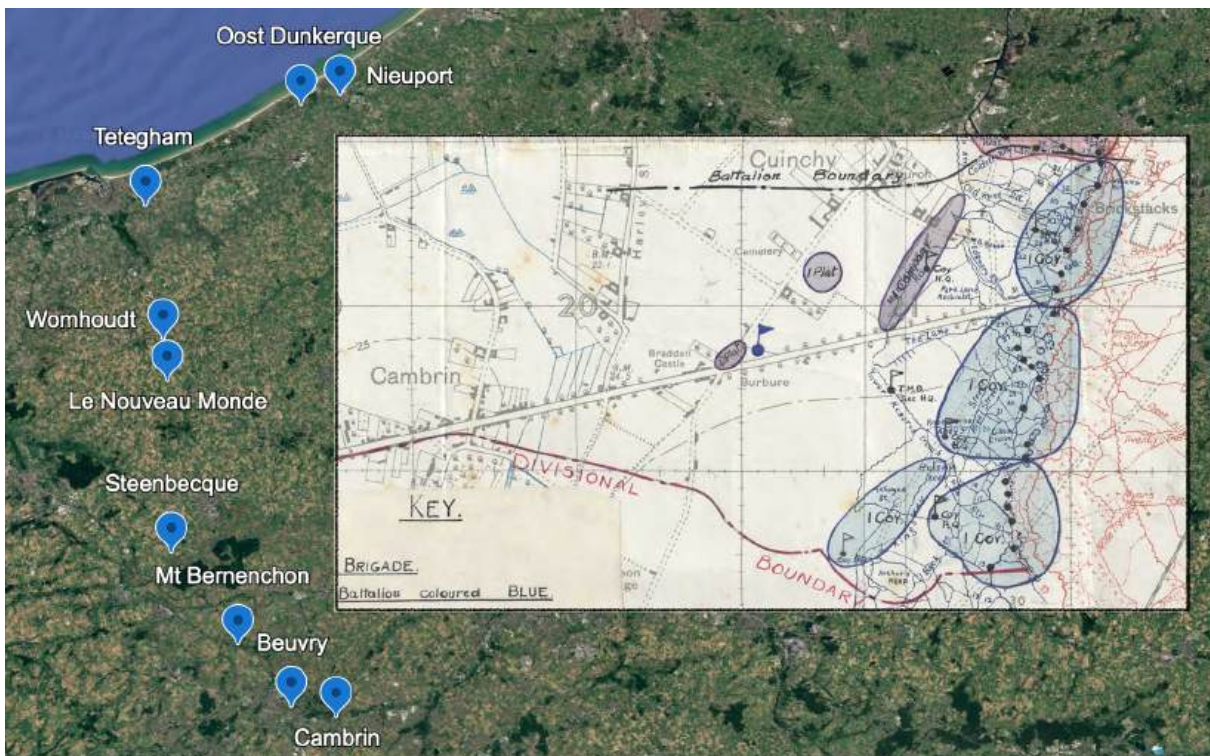
On the 21st October they moved to billets in at La Panne in billets around the cross roads where they spent until the 28th training. On the 29th they returned to Canada Camp (Coxyde) training and providing Working Parties.



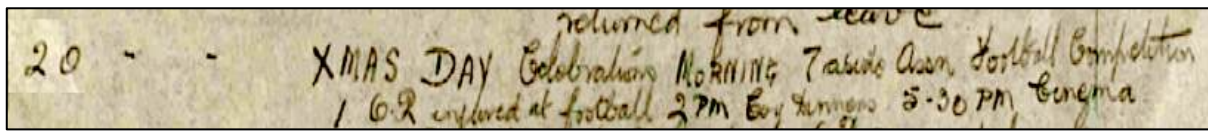
On the 6th November 1917 the men returned to the Nieuport front line trenches for 3 days suffering 8 wounded. On the 10th they were relived to garrison the Redan with 3 wounded. On the 14th they were back in the front line trenches at Nieuport suffering 3 killed and 3 wounded in 4 days. On the 18th they were relived to Brisbain Camp at Oost Dunkerque



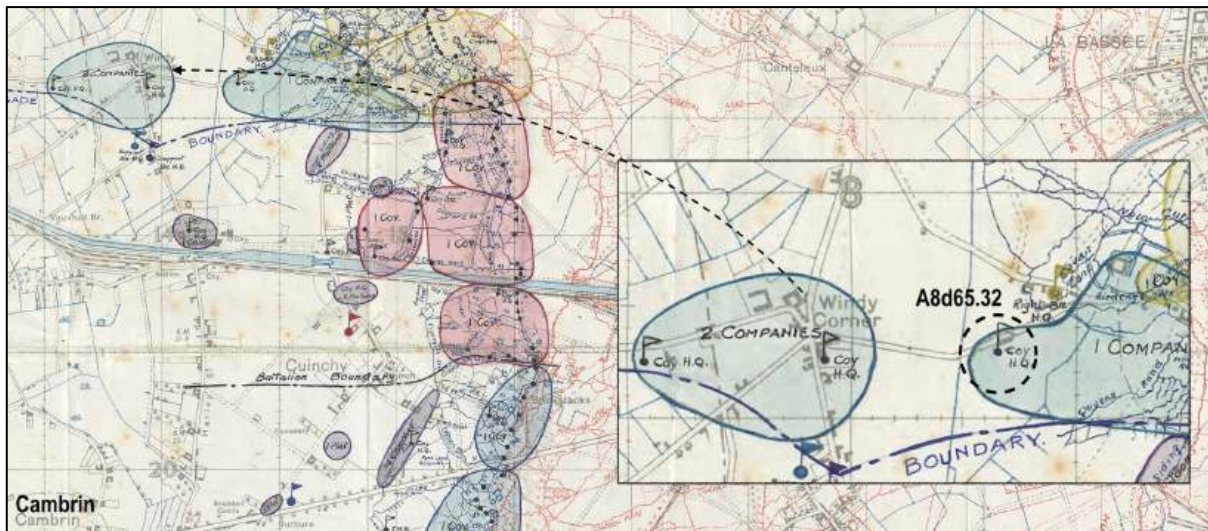
On the 19th November the men moved to Tetegham, the 20th to Womhoudt, 21st to Le Nouveau Monde, 22nd to Longue Croix and 23rd to Steenbecque where they commenced training and in the afternoon inter company football matches. On the 27th they moved to Mt Bernenchon and 28th to Le Perol where training and sports resumed. On the 4th 1917 December the men moved to Cambrin to the front line trenches A22a20.85 to A27b57.47 they suffered 1 wound on the 7th and on the 9th an attempted German raid was driven off. On the 10th they were relived to billets in Beuvry where training commenced.



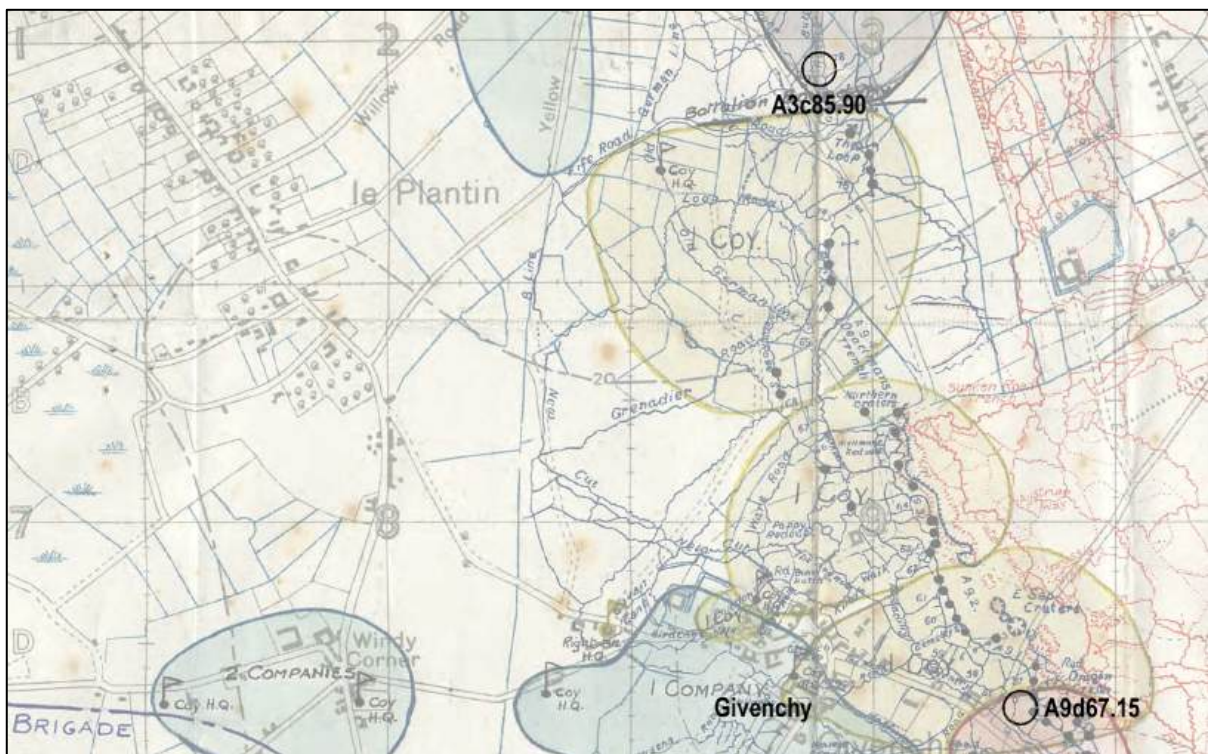
On the 20th December 1917 at Beuvry the men celebrated Christmas Day with a 7 aside football competition and Cinema in the evening.



On the 22nd December the battalion moved into support, A & B Companies at Windy Corner, C Company (Albert) in the Keep & Heart Redoubt at A8d65.32 and D Company O.B.L. On the 24th Christmas Eve they were shelled and from Christmas Day to the 27th they provided working parties. Albert spent Christmas 1917 in the support lines at the Keep.



On the 28th and to the 31st the men were in the v front line trenches at Givenchy A9d67.15 to A3c85.90 (Yellow Company area) where they suffered. 3 wounded



Albert spent New Year 1917 in the front line where on the 1st January 1918 they were heavily bombarded gas shells. On the 2nd a thaw began that caused gas to 'hang around' the effects begin to be felt by many of the men. On the 3rd January they were relieved to Gorre Chateau where from the 4th to 8th they provided working parties



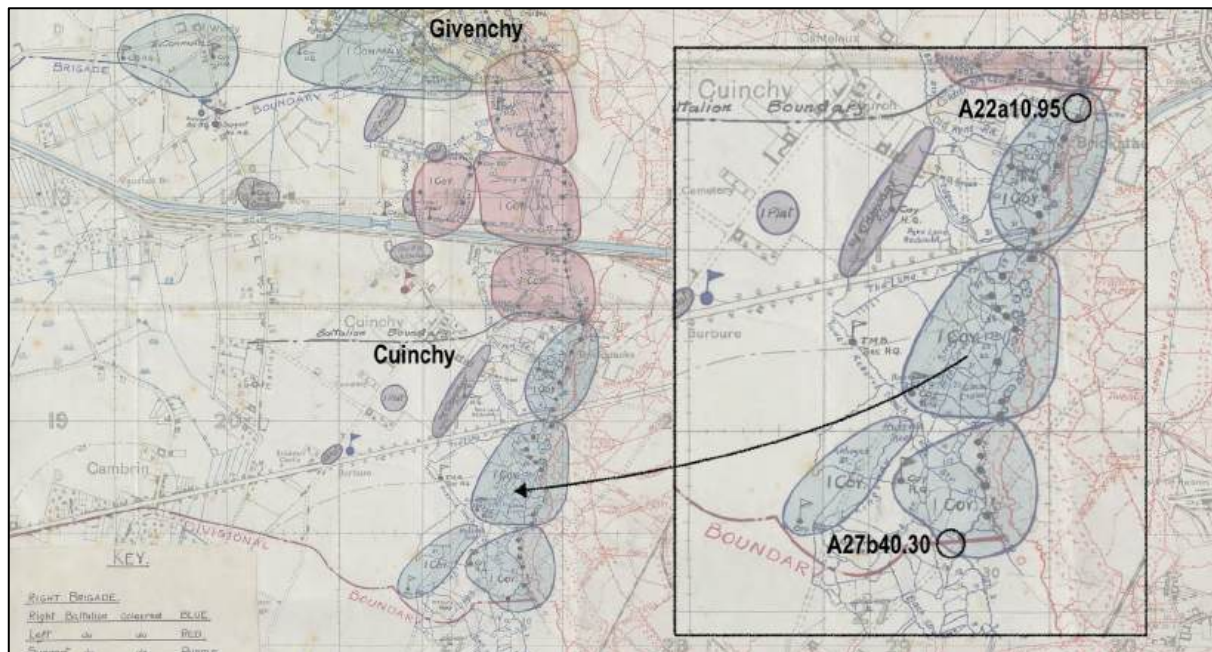
On the 9th January the men returned to the same front line trenches at Givenchy (A9d67.15 to A3c85.90) remaining there until the 17th improving trenches much damaged by heavy snow. (British line to the north of Givenchy occupied by 1/5th LF)



On the 17th January the men were relieved to the Hingette Area training and providing working parties to the royal engineers until the 28th



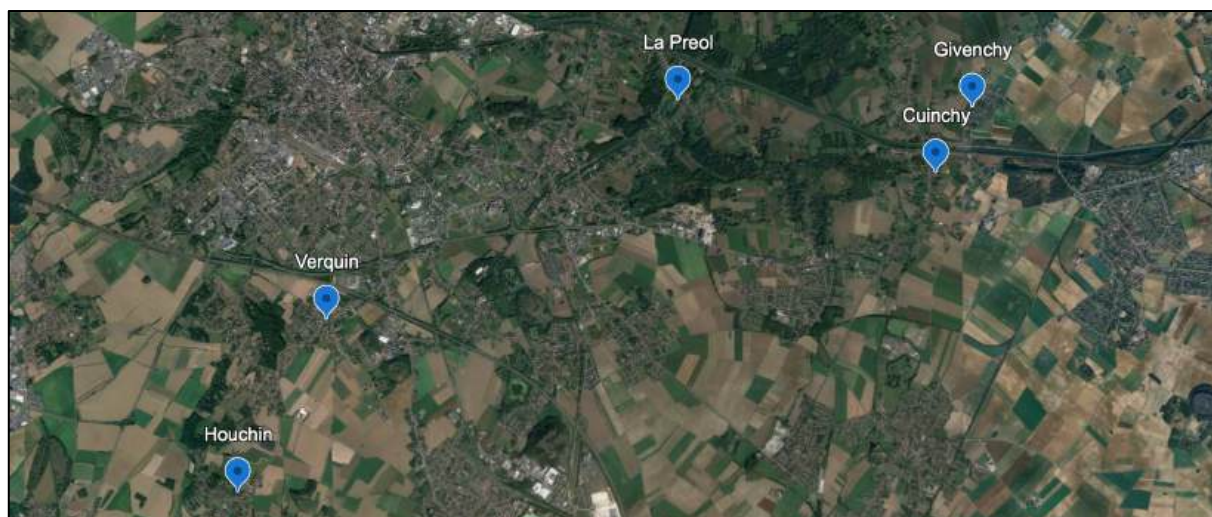
On the 29th January the men moved to the Cuinchy Sector in support again providing working parties to 427 Company Royal Engineers. On the 4th February 1918 the men moved to the front line A27b40.30 to A22a10.95 – working on trenches



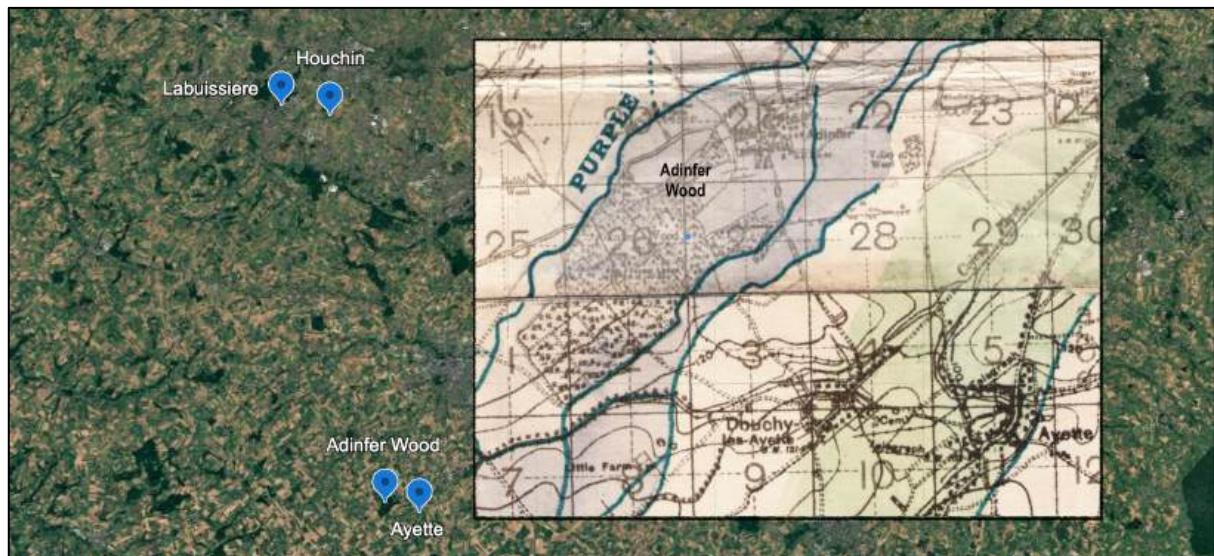
On the 8th the men were relieved to billets in Le Preol and from the 9th to 13th they undertook training and provided RE working parties.



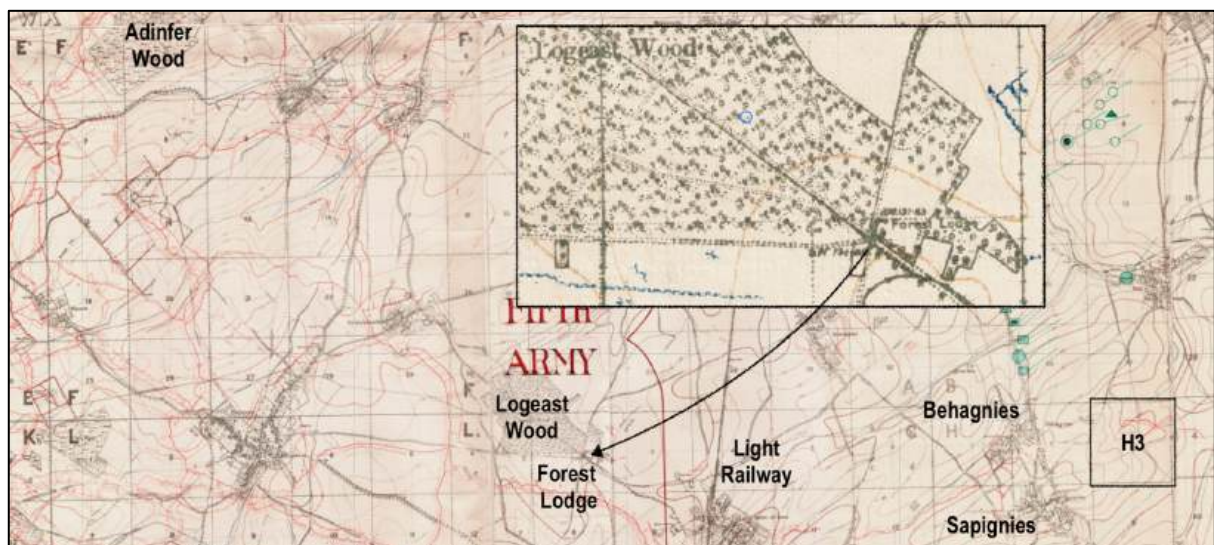
On the 14th they moved to rest at Houchin Camp and from there between the 15th to 23rd February they were training. On the 23rd the men bathed and 24th provided a working party of 400 men for wiring and local defences works at Verquin.



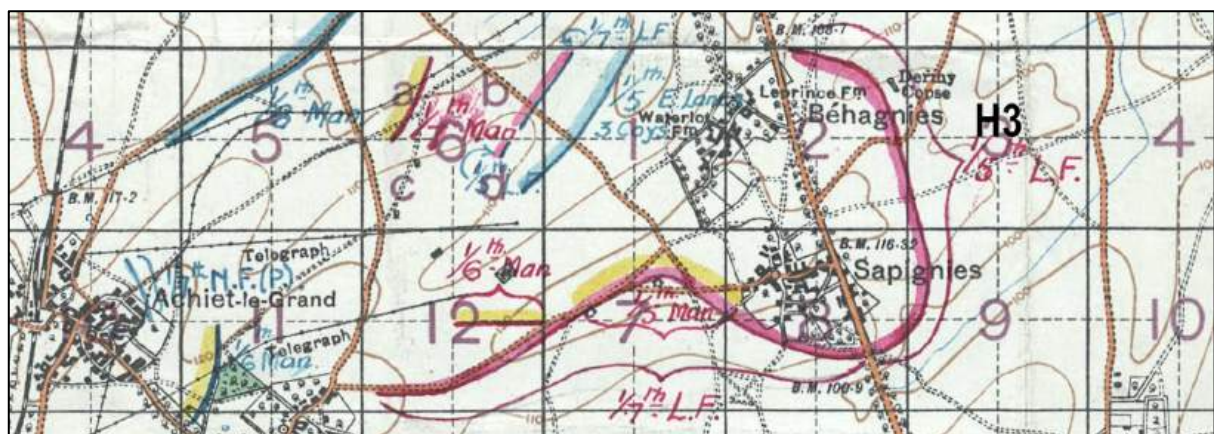
For a month, from the 25th February to 21st March 1918 was spent training at Houchin Camp. On the 22nd March 1918 the men were stood too pending a move then the next day, the 23rd March they marched to Labuissiere and embussed to Adinfer Wood north west of Alette.



On the 24th March 1918 at 3pm the men moved forward from Adinfer wood to Logeast Wood and bivouacked until 8pm at Forest Lodge Cross Roads. They then Moved forward to the light railway and No11&12 Platoon C Company were sent forward to Behagnies and Sapignies to see if in possession of enemy. They were reported clear and positions were taken in front of the villages around H3 central.



The 1/5th LF at 6am on the 25th holding a line in front of the villages



At 6am on the 25th a German attack began. At 8am the enemy were reported massing in-front of Mory to the north east of the villages. A heavy barrage of shells and gas was put up to mask the German attack replied to by British artillery. The German attack came on right flank of battalion where B Company was and by 11am the enemy had got around this flank and the companies left flank was also in danger. All available HQ men and 'stragglers' were sent forward to assist B Company but the party was broken up by heavy fire as soon as it was in the open in H3c.

At 1pm the battalion received an order to withdraw to Gomiecourt Ridge in G6 & G12 but C Company (Albert) did not get the message as all means of communication failed (Albert was a signaller so may have been key in trying to maintain communication) with the Battalion. C Company was dug in and hung on till 3pm when both their flanks were turned and they came under heavy fire from Behagnies to their immediate rear which had been occupied by enemy. They managed to withdraw with only slight casualties and joined the rest of the battalion.

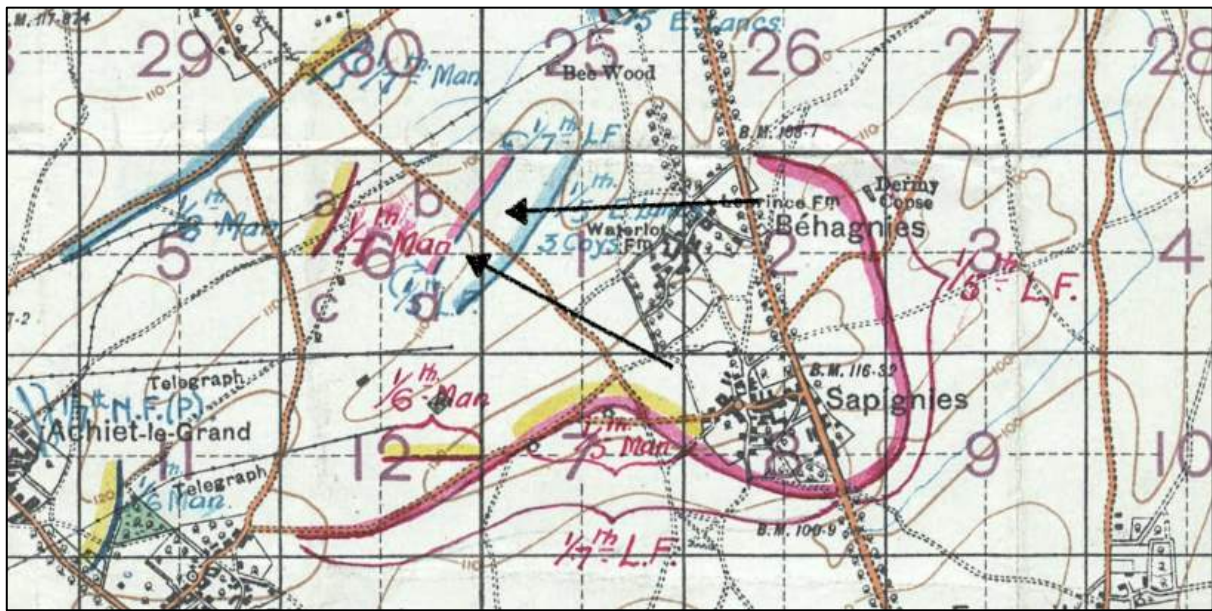
They Remained in this position until midnight when it was found the Battalion to the right had withdrawn leaving a gap of 800 yards. A strong post set up to cover the gap with a request for support denied. Approximate casualties for the 1/5th LF on the 25th was 9 officers 236 men

about 6am the 1st Divisions on the left were attacked and the Battle assisted in driving off the attack. About 9 am all Corps reports that the enemy were massing in front of MORY. A smoke screen of shells and bombs mixed with gas was put up in front of the Battle to screen his advance. Our artillery opened fire. The attack came round the right flank of the Battle. About 11 am Lt Col HOBERTON himself went round the lines and found that B Coys left flank was in danger. A subaltern of the 1/6th Lan Fns. was taken up and shown the direction of a proposed counter attack. Meanwhile a message arrived from Lt. B Coys that the enemy was round his flank. Capt. Adm. S. E. Jenkins, M.C. gathered together all available men of headquarters and stragglers from other Regiments and led forward into the open on the right of the SAPIGNIE road running through H3c. Capt. Jenkins was killed and his party broken up. Lieut. H.R. Waugh who was hit & sent back half an hour later after a counter attack by 1/6th Lan Fns. After this about 1pm news came that BIVUCOURT to the right rear was in the hands of the enemy. Lt Col. HOBERTON then decided after getting into communication with Bde. to withdraw to the GOMIECOURT RIDGE. G6 & G12. B.S.S. to G12. B.S.S. A line was dug. C Coys which did not get the message to withdraw owing to all means of communication failing, held on until 3pm. when both flanks were found to be in the air and being heavily fired on from the village of BEHAGNIES in the immediate rear. The Coys succeeded in withdrawing with only slight casualties and rejoined the rest of the Battle taking up a position on the left of the Battle. With the remains of other Divisions again on the left. and about a Company of MIDDLESEX REGT about 100 yds to the left front. After this everything was quiet until midnight when it was found that the troops of other Divisions on the left had withdrawn without warning the Battle. Leaving a gap of about 800 yds. a strong post was formed on the left flank. Lt Col. HOBERTON asked a Commanding Officer of MIDDLESEX Batt. to fill the gap. This was refused as the Div. to which he

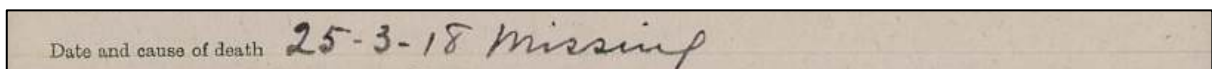
Positions of the 1/5th LF at 6am on the 25th, the position after withdrawal at 4:45 pm (and the position on the 26th after a further withdrawal in the early hours of the 26th March 1918).



Positions of the 1/5th LF on the 25th at 6am in-front of the villages and 3:45pm on Gomiecourt Ridge in G6.

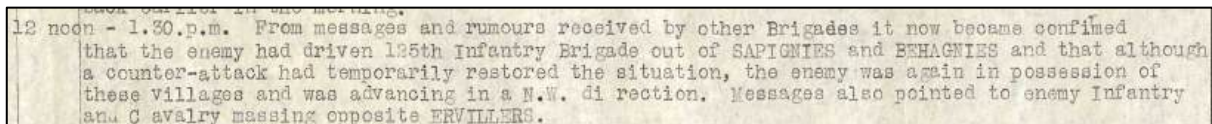


Arthur was one of the 236 Casualties sustained by the 1/5th LF on the 25th March 1918. He was 20 years old. He was reported Missing.



The exact time and place or circumstances that Albert became a casualty is not know, whether in the line or as a signaller trying to communicate with the rest of the battalion elsewhere in the field. Records suggest that he was wounded at some point on the 25th.

C Company failed to receive messages to withdraw at 1pm and held their positions having their flanks turned taking and fire from the occupied village of Behagnies behind them until 3pm when they finally managed to withdraw in sections. It is probable if wounded Albert would have been unable to withdraw with the remainder of C Company,



Almost certainly wounded and unable to withdraw with the rest of C Company Albert may have received immediate medical attention in the field from his fellow soldiers or have treated by German Medics as they over-ran the British positions (if he had not already succumbed to the wound(s). He may have been evacuated to German medical facilities for treatment. He may have been buried where he lie or close to where he fell once the fighting had passed or if evacuated may have been buried at or near a German medical facility, or on route.

Despite Albert still being classed as missing his mother revived a dependents pension of 7 shillings 6 pence a week from the 11th February 1919. The pension continued through 1923.

Reg. 5 on 4/9/13

DISK 415129

DEPENDANT'S PENSION.

Name

Steel, Albert Aaron

Regimental No.

242737

P.1

3/5/29/187

Case No.

D.P.

4175.

Regiment or Ship

6th Lanc. Fus.

Rank

Pte

Documents received from Paymaster

21-12-18

Date and cause of death

25-3-18 Missing

Dependant

M^r Ada Steel

Address

9 Plymouth Rd - Lth Broughton - M/c

Relationship

Mother

Pension

Article 21(14)

7/6

a week from

11.2.19.

Date awarded

2.1.19.

If refused

reason

0.2.19.

Papers

W6406 10140/975 50m (72) 5/18 J.P. Op. 159

W7022 4114/1046 100m (72) 5/18

Steel

M^r Ada

3/D 29/187

1/3/19

4175.

Manchester

9 Plymouth Rd

Lth Broughton

No 242737 Pte Albert Aaron Steel

6th Lanc. Fus.

TRANSFERRED TO—

S.B. 36 D.

(720) W. 6443-11100. 200 100. 625. T.P. 126.

3/D/ 29/187

Regional No.

1/D/ 87

Particulars of Man (Men)

NAME

STEEL

Albert Aaron

OTHER ACTION.

24 SEP 1923

PA 2222

PT 62

PA 62

OK

11/10/20

Regiment

6th Lanc. Fus.

Regt. No.

242737

Rank

Pte

Marital

1

Status

2

Date and Cause of Death

25-3-18

Missing

While Serving

1

Case No.

1

After Discharge

2

2

Particulars of Claimant(s).

NAME

STEEL

Ada

Address

9 Plymouth Rd

Lth Broughton

Relationship

Mother

New Address

1

2

3

Age

1

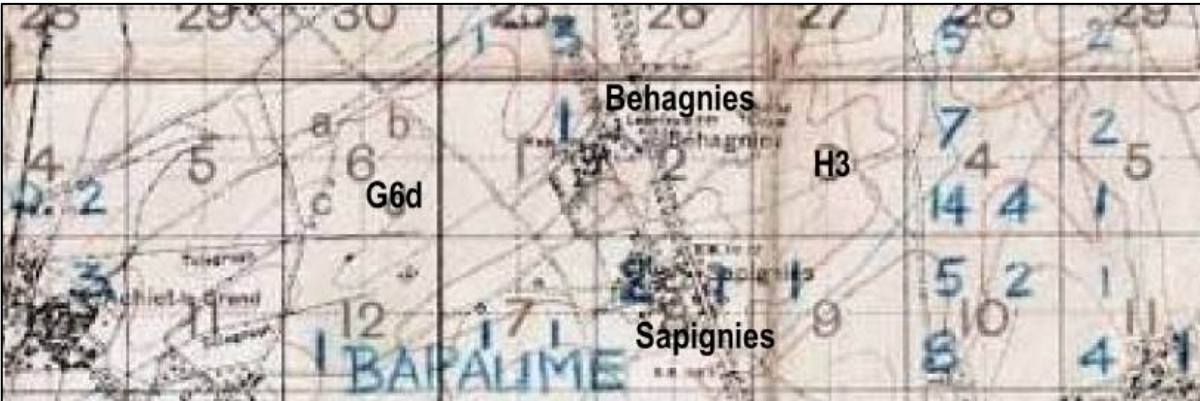
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3

The list of Soldiers Effects noted Albert 'Death presumed' on the 25th March 1918. His mother received the balance of his account £13 19 shillings 1 pence on the 14th January 1920 including a War Gratuity payment of £7 10 shillings.

Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS			CHARGES			Date of Authority	To whom Authorised	Amount Authorised	No. of 1/6 in which authorised
					Account and Date	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	Account and Date		
932974	1166981	Steel Albert Aaron	1/5 th Bn 6 th Lanc. Fus. Pte. 242737	25-3-18 Reims 8-19 Presumed Death France	13 19 1							14-1-20 M ^r Ada	13 19 1	1
Including War Grat: £7-10-0														

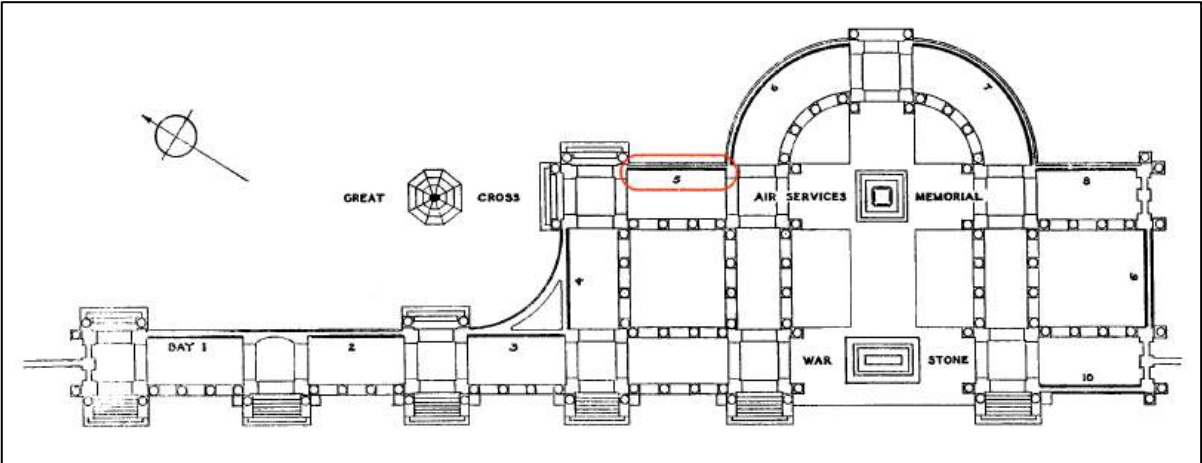
Albert has no known grave. After the war he War Graves Commission was charged with the burial of those who fell. They produce Body Density Maps showing where burials in the field had been found. Their map show very few bodies found in the area of the fighting of the 25th March 1915, either near the initial position of the 1/5th LF around H3, in the villages or the position retired to near G6d

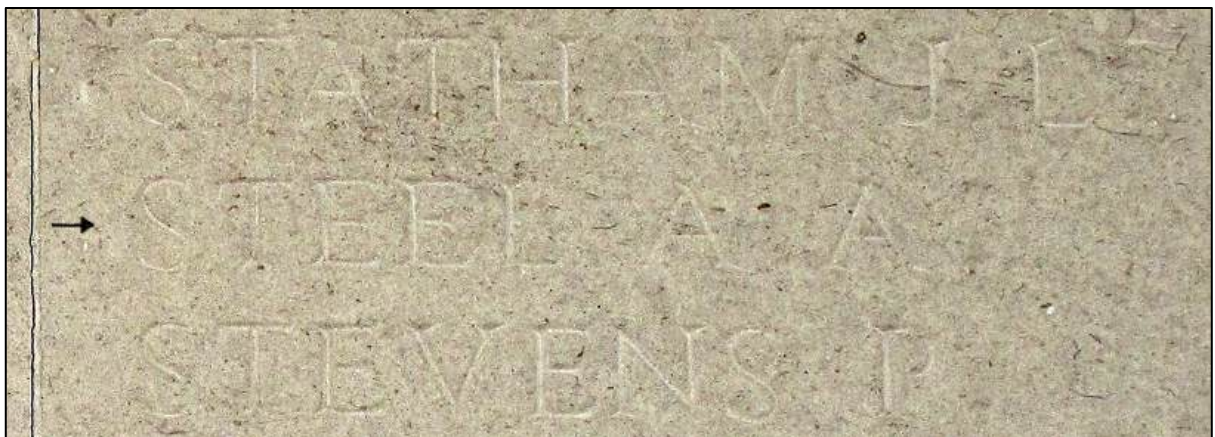


With no known burial Albert is remembered on the walls of the Arras Memorial, Bay 5, Course E, Stone 9.



ARRAS MEMORIAL.		
BAY No. 5 148	COURSE "E" 149	STONE No. 9 149
Smith S.W.	Etheridge W.	Cameron H.
Smith W.	Hedley D.M.	Carruthers C.
Sowerby R.	Levy H.	Carruthers T.
Spencer R.	Love S.	Chalmers W.
Stainton J.	Meikle O.	Christie J.R.
Statham J.L.	Neil W.	Clarkson A.
Steel A.A. ←	Niven J.	Cochran A.
Stevens P.	Orr R., M.M.	Cochran J.
Stewart R.	Prescott J.S.	Collins J.
Storey H.	Walls D.A.	Colebourne J.
Stott C.		Coston J.
Stott H.	Lieutenant	Compton H.
(Typed 5.11.1928).		





For his war service Albert was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory Medals. His family would have received a Bronze Memorial Plaque and Scroll.

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
STEEL	Lanc. Fus.	PLt	242737
Albert A.			

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	H/1/101 B 9	2013	
BRITISH	do	do	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1538.



In Memory Of

Private

ALBERT AARON STEEL

Service Number: 242737


1st/5th Bn., Lancashire Fusiliers who died on 25 March 1918 Age 20

Son of Albert Aaron and Ada Steel, of 9, Plymouth St., Lower Broughton, Manchester.

Remembered with Honour

ARRAS MEMORIAL

Bay 5.



COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION