

**In Memory of
Private BENJAMIN THOMAS
19142, 8th Bn., Royal Berkshire Regiment
Who died, age 26, on 3 September 1916
Son of Benjamin and Sarah Thomas,
of Wellington Place, Lechlade Rd., Faringdon Berkshire.
Remembered with honour
Faringdon War Memorial and
LONDON CEMETERY AND EXTENSION, LONGUEVAL**



Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

High Wood was fiercely fought over during the Battle of the Somme until cleared by 47th (London) Division on 15 September 1916. It was lost during the German advance of April 1918, but retaken the following August.

The original London Cemetery at High Wood was begun when 47 men of the 47th Division were buried in a large shell hole on 18 and 21 September 1916. Other burials were added later, mainly of officers and men of the 47th Division who died on 15 September 1916, and at the Armistice the cemetery contained 101 graves. The cemetery was then greatly enlarged when remains were brought in from the surrounding battlefields now known as the London Cemetery and Extension.

The cemetery, one of five in the immediate vicinity of Longueval which together contain more than 15,000 graves, is the third largest cemetery on the Somme with 3,873 First World War burials, 3,114 of them unidentified.

Battle of Guillemont

Sunday 3rd September 1916 France, High Wood Section: Noon. 1st Brigade attacked the enemy's trenches [-Wood Lane - and the trenches in High Wood].

The 1st Black Watch attacked in the wood and the 1st Cameron Highlanders, on the right of the Black Watch, against Wood Lane. Zero was at midday and before zero Flammenwerfer and Oil Cans were used against the enemy in High Wood, these however, owing to the very bad weather conditions and also to the heavy shelling of the saps in which they were contained were not a success. At 30 seconds before zero a mine was successfully blown up in the enemy's front line at the Eastern corner of High Wood. There was also elaborate artillery and machine gun support.

At zero the attack commenced and on the front of the 1st Camerons appeared to be very successful for although the casualties were heavy the Camerons had gone forward to right beyond Wood Lane and were in shell holes about 100 yards beyond.

The attack on the left by 1st Black Watch was not as successful for they were held up by machine guns. The O.C. 1st Camerons not having sufficient men left to consolidate the position which had been taken called upon our two Companies (which were originally in "Rifles Trench" and had been subsequently ordered to occupy the front line during the attack) for support. The two Companies went over. "A" Company on the left did not reach their objective but were held up by machine guns from High Wood, "C" Company got across and joined up with the Camerons afterwards sending back men for ammunition and a Stokes Trench Mortar. The men started to consolidate the position. Meanwhile the two remaining Companies of Berkshires who had been on the road were quickly hurried up to the garrison the front line. At about 1.30pm the enemy made a heavy counter attack from the "Switch Line" and with his artillery succeeded in making us withdraw from the captured position and return to our original front line. During this operation the casualties were heavy.