

In Memory of
Private WILLIAM GEORGE KENT
13789, 2nd Bn., Wiltshire Regiment
Who resided in Faringdon and died on 15 June 1915
Remembered with honour
LE TOURET MEMORIAL



Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Battle of Givenchy Trench

Tuesday 15th June 1915 France, Givenchy Trenches: During the day trench J7 - I5 was shelled and the defenders (2 platoons of each 'C' & 'D' Coys) suffered a few casualties. At 6pm the battalion commenced to attack the line I12, J14 -J13. On quitting their trenches, the leading companies ('C' & 'D') were subjected to a heavy frontal and enfilade fire, the latter from I4 - I9. As the advance progressed it was enfiladed by machine gun fire from both flanks, on the right from the foot of the hill between I12 & I3, on the left from machine guns concealed in the grass somewhere west of J13 'B' coy followed in support of 'C' & 'D' and occupied J9 -I5. 'A' coy in reserve in Scottish trench. 'A' Company had been kept in reserve intact, as it had orders to make a reconnaissance after the position had been captured, the reconnaissance to be on Violaines. The firing line reached a point about 50 yards west of German trench at J14. There was then only one officer not hit in the two leading companies. At 7.5pm half 'A' company went forward to endeavour to push on the attack which had been held up. This half company with half 'D' company then advanced, and were subjected to enfilade fire from the crater, and could not advance beyond the disused Old German trench.

At 9pm the situation was as follows:-The regiment was occupying the old German trench, with 'C' & 'D' Coys in front of them, and the trench J7 - I5, and were in touch with the Grenadier Guards on left of J7. Groups from 'C' & 'D'

companies were returning to old German trench from the front. Orders were received to attack the German line at 9.15pm in conjunction with the Bedford Regt & Yorkshire Regt. The time was subsequently altered to 10pm. In order to form up for the attack the companies which were holding the old German trench were being enfiladed from the right. The German line in this area was formidable, with very deep trenches and dugouts that the weak British bombardment (not helped by poor observation through long grass and poor light) barely touched. Even before the artillery fire lifted, once the Germans saw the 2nd Yorkshires and 2nd Wiltshires advancing they manned the parapets. Machine gun and rifle fire cut down most of the attacking troops. The attack was a complete failure, despite the enormous bravery and dash of the 21st Brigade.

The 2nd Yorks, on the right in front of Givenchy, lost heavily in the crossing of no man's land: of A Company's 5 officers and 170 men who attacked, only 40 were not hit. Of B Company, 1 officer and 31 men escaped, of 5 and 180 who went over. Even so, some men of A Coy under 2/Lt. Belcher got into the German front line, but without support could not hold on. Captain Raley and most of his B Coy were hit before they got away from their own parapet. On the left of the Yorks advance, a small party under 2/Lt. Lloyd Jones bombed their way towards the mine crater down a sunken lane, but eventually every one of this party became a casualty.

The 2nd Wiltshires did not even get as far as the Yorks, only a few men getting even as far as 50 yards from the German line in front of Chapelle St. Roch. The Canadians and Highlanders suffered similarly.

2nd Wiltshires: killed; officers, 4 men 72: wounded; officers, 5 men 128.