Private 21320 George Arthur Parsons

Horseman and later a general servant of Penvose, St Tudy

6th Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Born St. Kew 1882   Killed in Action 7 May 1917 aged 34

George Arthur Parsons was the first born child of William Henry and Elizabeth Parsons (nee Kellow) of Littlewood, St. Mayan, Cornwall. His father was born in St. Eval in 1842; his mother in St. Kew in 1856.

George lived in St. Kew Highway in 1891 along with his brothers and sisters, William H born 1884, Maud (1886), Joseph (1888), Ruth (1890) all born in St. Kew and Ernest who was born in Ladock in 1896. By 1901 he was working as a horseman on Mr. Johns farm in Probus. He then moved to St. Tudy. According to the 1911 Census he was working as a general servant for Richard and Jane Elford, retired farmers, at Penvose, St. Tudy.

He enlisted for service in Bodmin on the 5th of October 1915, and joined the 6th Battalion of the DCLI. They trained at Aldershot being posted to France in May 1916, then to Ypres Salient in June 1916. After training, George would have joined his Battalion in Ypres Salient and then moved into the Arras area. In April 1917 they were fighting in the battles of the Somme.

George wasn't killed in a battle, but rather in the Arras area, near to the Battle of the Scarpe River. On 7th May 1917, the war diary stated that work was being carried out digging and improving fire and communication trenches in Egret, Duck, Curlew and Shikar, as they had done the day before. There were two casualties, George being one of those men. He is remembered with honour at Wancourt British Cemetery.

So, no big push, no Victoria Cross, just a Cornishman doing the vital work to keep the engine of the war moving, and killed in the process.

George's mother lost two of her four sons. Ernest, the youngest boy who also worked as a 'Horseman on a Farm', joined the Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion and was killed in action on 7th April 1918, the day his Regiment returned to France from Italy. He was aged 22.

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