

Private 240732 Gordon Burden

1st/5th Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Born 1897

Killed in Action 19th/20th August 1917 aged 20 years

The first named on the village War Memorial, Gordon is Maggie Lobb's great uncle and the oldest of the family of four boys and one girl whom she knew well. His two nephews Peter and Terry Burden, two nieces Pat Williams and Jennifer Skinner and many other descendants still live in St Tudy.

Born and bred in St Tudy he attended the local Sunday School and sang in the Church Choir. Church records and the DCLI Museum show that Gordon enlisted with his friends and neighbours, Albert and John Worth, in Bodmin on 15th November 1915. After initial training, they were sent to France in May 1916, fighting on the Somme from October to May 1917, then at Arras in June and July followed by Ypres. On 20th August 1917 Gordon was killed by an exploding shell while on guard duty in the town. The letter of condolence to Gordon's parents from platoon commander, Second Lieutenant E Ross, described him as a popular soldier who would be especially missed *"as he was one of my best and steadiest men when under fire... he died like a good soldier doing his duty and that his death was instantaneous and painless"*. Buried by the army chaplain, his grave is in Bedford House Cemetery, 2km south of Ypres. The church bells of St Tudy were muffled before and after a memorial service in his honour. His mother and his brother, Hedley, who was wounded a few days before Gordon's death, subsequently attended a service at the Menin Gate on 8th August 1928 during a British Legion Battlefields Pilgrimage.

Hedley Burden (Maggie's grandfather) survived the war. He wrote to Gordon from VAD Hospital in Shropshire where he was recovering from a deep wound to his left thigh. Having seen Gordon marching away and unaware that he had died three days earlier, Hedley wrote asking him to pick up some personal belongings, photographs and his razor, left in the trenches when he was evacuated to a nearby Dressing Station. The letter was returned unanswered.