

Private Charles Harwood 1899-1918



28451 Private Charles Harwood, "Lies in a corner of a foreign field that is forever England". Actually in St Sever Cemetery Extension, Plot 'P' VII A 3B, Seine-Maritime, Haute-Normandie, Rouen France. He died in The Rouen Military Field Hospital on 22nd April 1918 of blood poisoning (pyæmia) from infected wounds. He was probably wounded at The Battle of St. Quentin or The Battle of Rosieres. He was 19 years old.



Pt. Charles Harwood's Headstone



St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute-Normandie, Rouen France.

It is likely that Charles Harwood was entitled to the Victory medal, also called the Inter Allied Victory Medal. This medal was awarded to all who received the 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star and, with certain exceptions, to those who received the British War Medal. It was never awarded alone. These three medals were sometimes irreverently referred to as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred. Eligibility for this award consisted of having been mobilised, fighting, having served in any of the theatres of operations, or at sea, between midnight 4th/5th August, 1914, and midnight, 11th/12th November, 1918. Women who served in any of the various military organisations in a theatre of operations were also eligible.



The Victory Medal



The British War Medal

In 1914 Germany's army crossed into neutral Belgium in order to reach Paris, forcing Britain to declare war with Germany (due to the Treaty of London (1839) whereby Britain agreed to defend Belgium in the event of invasion). By 4th August 1914 Britain and much of Europe were pulled into a war which would last 1,566 days, cost 8,528,831 lives and 28,938,073 casualties or missing on both sides.

Charles volunteered for The Hampshire Regiment and was with the 11th (Service) Battalion. The Hampshire Regiment consisted of 32 Battalions and received 82 Battle Honours and 3 Victoria Crosses losing 7,580 men during the course of the war.



The Hampshire Regiment 11th (Service) Battalion History

Sept 1914 Formed at Winchester as part of the Second New Army (K2) and then moved to Dublin and then to Mullingar.

Dec 1914 Became the Pioneer Battalion of the 16th Division.

Mar 1915 Moved to Kilworth and then Aldershot.

18.12.1915 Mobilised for war and landed at Havre and the Division engaged in various actions on the Western Front including;

During 1916

The Battle of Guillemont, The Battle of Ginchy.

During 1917

The Battle of Messines, The Battle of Langemark.

During 1918

The Battle of St Quentin, The Battle of Rosieres.

02.05.1918 Reduced to training cadre due to heavy losses.

18.06.1918 Returned to England embarking at Boulogne and arriving at Folkstone. Moved to Lowestoft and reconstituted with the 13th Border regiment.

03.07.1918 Moved to Aldershot

01.08.1918 Moved back to France landing at Boulogne and the Division once again engaged in various actions on the Western Front including; The Final Advance in Artois.

11.11.1918 Ended the war in Belgium, Antoing south of Tournai.

There are two inscriptions in Badsey to the memory of Charles, one in St. James Church and the other in Badsey First School where he was a pupil. His name is also inscribed on the War Memorial in Evesham.



Inscription in St. James Church



Inscription in Badsey First School

Charles was born in Badsey on the 4th February 1899 to Oliver and Florence Mary Harwood who were living in ‘Orchard Cottage’, Mill Lane at that time. Charles was one of nine children. The photo shows him (back row) at the wedding of his sister Margaret (my grandmother) who married Frank Arkell at St James Church on 22 April 1915. Frank Arkell came from St Peters, Cheltenham, seen in uniform and must have been on leave from the Gloucestershire Regiment which he joined in 1914. He survived the War. The marriage ceremony was conducted by the Rev. William Carmont Allsebrook. The photo includes Charles’s grandfather George Harwood (with a beard and flat cap) and Charles’s father Oliver (in bowler hat). His mother Florence Mary is just in front of Oliver. All his brothers and sisters are shown and listed below. Other guests are named as far as possible. The photo may have been taken in the garden of 9, Northwick Road, Bengeworth, Evesham where they later moved to from Aldington.



The Rev. William Carmont Allsebrook, M.A., Honorary Canon of Worcester.
Vicar of St. James, Badsey. 1903-1945



From top row left: Joe Hemming (married Florence Mary's sister), Joe Hemming's wife (Florence Mary's sister), Florence Mary's other sister, Jack Cooke's daughter, Charles Harwood, Jack Cooke's other daughter.

Middle row: Carrie Younge, Frank Harwood, Rose Younge, Walter Wilson Harwood, Frank Arkell (Bridegroom), Margaret Harwood (Bride), Unknown person, 'Min' Andrews (Florence Mary's sister), Oliver Harwood, George Harwood, Oliver George Harwood.

Front row: Charles Arkell (Best Man) Frank Arkell's brother, M. Cordell (nee Younge), Joyce Harwood, Mollie Slater (nee Younge), Kathleen Rose Harwood, Florence Mary Harwood (mother), Alan Harwood, John Harwood (known as Jack).

Three years after this picture was taken, Charles was dead, as well as millions of other young men of his time.



Researched by the Great Nephew of Charles Harwood, Geoff Clarke, Bournville, Birmingham. August 2014.

My thanks go to my cousin, Diana Harwood, for providing the group wedding photo with most of the names. Also to Tony Wood of The Badsey Society, for all his help and encouragement.