Sydney Lenton

Sydney Lenton was born in Gretton in 1896. His father was Ephraim Lenton, his mother Elizabeth Lenton (nee Warner), both from Gretton.

Family History

In 1901, Ephraim & Elizabeth were living in Gretton with their children Mary, Phoebe, Hilda, Sydney & Leonard. Ephraim was employed as an ironstone labourer.

By 1911, Ephraim & Elizabeth had two more sons, Joseph & William. Mary, Phoebe & Hilda were employed in a clothing factory. Sydney was employed as a farm labourer.

Military History

Sydney Lenton served as a Lance Corporal (16181) in the 7th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Records show that he first went overseas on 24th December 1915.

It is recorded that Lance Corporal Sydney Lenton died of wounds on 30th April 1916.

The Grantham Journal of 13th May 1916 records:-

Lance Corporals Killed and Wounded

Lance-Corpl. Jinks, of Gretton, has written to his parents informing them that he has been slightly wounded. He was located in a barn which was shelled by Germans, and was wounded in the face. The first intimation of the casualty came through the Army Chaplain, and his parents were naturally very anxious till they heard from their wounded son. At the same time, Lance Corpl. Sidney Lenton, another Gretton native, was mortally wounded in the throat, and intelligence arrived on Friday week that he succumbed to his injuries.

It is recorded the battalion were being held in reserve near Messines Ridge, south of Ypres at the time of the German artillery attack.

Lance Corporal Lenton is buried at the Bailleul Communal Cemetery & Extension Nord and commemorated on the Gretton War Memorial.

Bailleul was occupied on 14 October 1914 by the 19th Brigade and the 4th Division. It became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre, with the 2nd, 3rd, 8th,

11th, 53rd, 1st Canadian and 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Stations quartered in it for considerable periods. It was a Corps headquarters until July 1917, when it was severely bombed and shelled, and after the Battle of Bailleul (13-15 April 1918), it fell into German hands and was not retaken until 30 August 1918.

The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made at the east end of the communal cemetery and in April 1915, when the space available had been filled, the extension was opened on the east side of the cemetery.

The extension was used until April 1918, and again in September, and after the Armistice graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields and the following burial grounds:-

PONT-DE-NIEPPE GERMAN CEMETERY, on the South side of the hamlet of Pont-de-Nieppe, made in the summer of 1918. It contained German graves (now removed) and those of a soldier and an airman from the United Kingdom.

RENINGHELST CHINESE CEMETERY, in a field a little South of the Poperinghe-Brandhoek road, where 30 men of the Chinese Labour Corps were buried in November 1917- March 1918.

BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY contains 610 Commonwealth burials of the First World War; 17 of the graves were destroyed by shell fire and are represented by special memorials.

BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION contains 4,403 Commonwealth burials of the First World War; 11 of the graves made in April 1918 were destroyed by shellfire and are represented by special memorials. There are also 17 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War and 154 German burials from both wars.

Both the Commonwealth plot in the communal cemetery and the extension were designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

In the centre of the town is a stone obelisk erected by the 25th Division as their Memorial on the Western front, recalling particularly the beginning of their war service at Bailleul and their part in the Battle of Messines. The town War Memorial, a copy of the ruined tower and belfry of the Church of St. Vaast, was unveiled in 1925 by the Lord Mayor of Bradford, the City which had "adopted" Bailleul.

Lest We Forget

Sydney Lenton
of the Northamptonshire Regiment

d. 30th April 1916

March 2016 copy