



George Henry Bradshaw

George Henry Bradshaw was born in the Union Workhouse Kettering on 6th May 1885. He was baptised on 15th May 1885 at St Peter and St Paul, Kettering. No father was named. His mother was Harriet Bradshaw (b. Corby 1861).

The Family

In 1891 George Henry Bradshaw was living with his grandparents (Henry and Ann Bradshaw) in Church Street, Corby. Henry Bradshaw was an agricultural labourer. There were a number of children and grandchildren resident. Sons, Joseph (an agricultural labourer), Charles (an ironstone labourer) and George. Daughter Clara was also resident. Five grandchildren, including George Henry were resident.

By 1901 the family were living in Main Street, Corby. Henry Bradshaw was a widower. His son George (a locomotive engine cleaner) and daughters Rose Allen and Harriet (George Henry's mother) were resident. There were seven grandchildren resident, including George Henry, now 15 years old, and employed as a bricklayer's labourer.

Military Service

George Henry Bradshaw served as a Private (7436) in the 3rd (Militia) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment from 6th December 1905 to 19th January 1906. He enlisted in the regular army (7893), whilst serving at the Northampton Depot, on the 19th January 1906.

After basic training he was posted to the 2nd Battalion on 18th August 1906.

There is reference to Lance-Corporal G. Bradshaw, "A" Company, being present with the 2nd Battalion on the 24th/25th July 1910 in Colchester on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Colours to the 58th.

George Henry Bradshaw married Amelia Louisa Harvey (b.1888) in Colchester in 1910. The couple had two daughters, Dorothy (b.1911) and Amelia (b.1913). The family was eventually to settle in Rockingham.

George was transferred to the Northampton Depot on 8th October 1910.

In the 1911 Census, Lance-Corporal George Bradshaw was recorded as being with the 1st Battalion stationed at South Raglan Barracks, Devonport. He is recorded as being the Battalion's designated "postman".



In 1911 Amelia Bradshaw was resident in Colchester living with her mother.

Lance-Corporal Bradshaw was transferred to the 1st Battalion on 4th October 1912 whilst stationed at Devonport. He was promoted to Corporal on 3rd January 1913.

The 1st Battalion moved to Blackdown at Aldershot on 8th October 1913. George was promoted to Lance-Sergeant on 2nd August 1914, then Acting Sergeant on 6th August 1914.

The Battalion embarked for France on 12th August 1914, at which time his appointment as Sergeant was confirmed.

The 1st Battalion were heavily engaged on the Western Front from the start of hostilities and was involved in the retreat from Mons in August 1914 and the Battle of Aisne in September 1914.

The Battalion was then to engage in the First Battle of Ypres (19th October – 22nd November).

Sergeant George Henry Bradshaw was killed in action on 11th November 1914.

The 11th November 1914 witnessed a major attack by the Prussian Guard to break the British line. The 1st Battalion reinforced the line occupying the eastern edge of Nonne Bosschen Wood, close to Polygon Wood. The Battalion suffered heavy casualties. The Battalion with the assistance of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry dug in to repulse a further attack. None came. For four more days the 1st Battalion held the trenches that they had constructed. On the night of 15th November the Battalion was relieved.

The diary for the 1st Battalion for the period 26th October – 15th November 1914 has been lost. The entry for the 16th November notes –

The Regiment was heavily engaged most of the time, in fact on November 14th there were only two officers left – about 300 men.

The Battalion proceeded to march to Vlamertinghe.

Sergeant Bradshaw is buried in Buttes New British Cemetery and remembered on Corby War Memorial and in Rockingham.

Following Sergeant Bradshaw's death in 1914, his wife Amelia was granted a pension of 19s/6d per week from July 1915.



Buttes New British Cemetery

Polygon Wood (the "Polygone de Zonnebeke", or Polygoneveld) is a large wood south of the village of Zonnebeke which was completely devastated in the First World War. The wood was cleared by Commonwealth troops at the end of October 1914, given up on 3 May 1915, taken again at the end of September 1917 by Australian troops, evacuated in the Battles of the Lys, and finally retaken by the 9th (Scottish) Division on 28 September 1918. On the Butte itself is the Battle Memorial of the 5th Australian Division, who captured it on 26 September 1917.

Polygon Wood Cemetery is an irregular front-line cemetery made between August 1917 and April 1918, and used again in September 1918.

A walled avenue leads from Polygon Wood Cemetery, past the Cross of Sacrifice, to the Buttes New British Cemetery. This burial ground was made after the Armistice when a large number of graves (almost all of 1917, but in a few instances of 1914, 1916 and 1918) were brought in from the battlefields of Zonnebeke.

There are now 2,108 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Buttes New British Cemetery. 1,677 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials are erected to 35 casualties known or believed to be buried among them.

The Buttes New British Cemetery (New Zealand), which stands in Buttes New British Cemetery, commemorates 378 officers and men of the New Zealand Division who died in the Polygon Wood sector between September 1917 and May 1918, and who have no known grave.

The cemeteries and memorial were designed by Charles Holden.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Lest We Forget

George Henry Bradshaw
of the Northamptonshire Regiment

d. 11 November 1914



George's widow Amelia Bradshaw remarried. Amelia married Frank Willingham in Essex in 1918. Amelia Willingham died in 1971.

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