



## Samuel Bailey Essam

Samuel Bailey Essam was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1895 in Great Oakley. He was baptised on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1896. His father Samuel Bailey Essam Snr. was from Rushton, his mother Henrietta Essam (nee Needham) originally from Hambleton. The couple married in 1870.

### The Family

There are records that show Samuel Bailey Essam jnr. attended Great Oakley School before transferring to Geddington School.

In 1901 the family were living at Great Oakley Farm, Great Oakley. Samuel Essam Snr. was employed as an agricultural labourer. With Samuel and Henrietta were their children Ada, Harry (employed as a gardener), Henrietta Ellen, Edith, Phyllis and Samuel.

Three older children John, Fanny Elizabeth and Charles had already left home.

By 1911 Samuel Snr. is recorded as a farmer. With Samuel and Henrietta their daughter Edith (dairy worker) and young Samuel (farmer son working on farm).

Samuel's mother Henrietta Essam died on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1916 aged 66 years.

It is recorded that Samuel Bailey Essam, farmer of Great Oakley, appeared before a Military Tribunal in early April 1916 appealing against his call-up for service on the basis that he was "*needed to run the farm*". Samuel was granted a one month exemption in order to "*make provision for his holding*".

### Military Service

Samuel Bailey Essam had attested on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1915. His place of residence was given as Bridge Farm, Great Oakley. He was to serve as a Gunner (79160) in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was to remain in the Army Reserve until 4<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He was initially posted to the RGA Depot before being posted to Hull on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1916.

Gunner Essam was to serve with the 159<sup>th</sup> (Devon) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.

The 159<sup>th</sup> largely consisted of men drawn from the Devon RGA Territorial Force. The battery went to France in June 1916 and was to serve on the Western Front for the duration of the war.



The 159<sup>th</sup> had joined the 64<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Group (HAG) on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1916. It transferred to the 57<sup>th</sup> HAG on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1917, the 29<sup>th</sup> HAG on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1916 before transferring to the 83<sup>rd</sup> HAG on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1917 (after Gunner Essam's death).

Gunner Essam left Southampton for France on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1917, arriving in Le Havre the following day. He joined the battery in the field on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1917.

Gunner Samuel Bailey Essam is recorded as being killed in action on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1917. The exact circumstances of his death are currently unknown.

Gunner Essam is buried at the Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy.

A greater part of the village was included in the front taken over by British troops in March, 1916, and the remainder fell into British hands on the first day of the Battles of Arras, the 9th April, 1917.

Bailleul Road East Cemetery was begun by the 34th Division in April, 1917, and carried on by fighting units until the following November; and Plot I, Row R, was added in August, 1918. Plots II, III, IV and V were made after the Armistice by the concentration of isolated graves from a very wide area North, East and South of Arras and from the following two burial grounds:-

Northumberland Cemetery, Fampoux, was on the West side of the road from Fampoux to Bailleul-Sire-Berthoult. This road was called Northumberland Lane, and a neighbouring trench was called Northumberland Avenue. The cemetery was used by fighting units from April to July, 1917, and one other burial was made in it in September, 1918. It contained the graves of 69 soldiers from the United Kingdom, and these (except seven, which were not found) were concentrated into Plot V of Bailleul Road East Cemetery.

Lagnicourt "Soldiers' Cemetery" (the German name) was near the South-East side of the village of Lagnicourt. It contained the grave of one R.F.C. Officer who fell in October, 1916.

There are now over 1,000, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, over half are unidentified, and seven special memorials record the names of soldiers from the United Kingdom buried in Northumberland Cemetery, Fampoux, whose graves could not be found on concentration; and a number of graves in Plot V, identified as a whole but not individually, are marked by headstones bearing the additional words, "Buried near this spot". Every year of the war is represented in the cemetery, but more particularly the last nine months of 1917.



Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

*Lest We Forget*

**Samuel Bailey Essam**  
of the Royal Garrison Artillery

d. 14<sup>th</sup> May 1917

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