



Herbert Quinton Lank

Herbert Quinton Lank was born in St. George's, Stamford in 1885. His father was Samuel Lank from Stamford, his mother Emma Lank from Easton.

The Family

In the 1891 Census, the family was living in Stamford. Samuel Link was employed as a painter. Herbert was the youngest of three children; also resident were brother Archie and sister Dorothy.

In the 1901 Census, Samuel was employed as a coach painter. Herbert's employment was as an errand boy.

Military Service

Records exist which show that Herbert Lank attested for the 4th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment (4282) on 6th January 1905, but was transferred to the Northamptonshire Regiment on 12th January 1905. His occupation was given as labourer.

Currently no documentation has been found regarding Herbert Lank during the period 1905-1911.

Herbert Lank served as a Private in the Northamptonshire Regiment (7617).

In the 1911 Census, he is recorded as being stationed with the 2nd Battalion at Floriana Barracks, Malta.

In April 1913 he married Annie Rebecca Palmer of Gretton.

It is recorded that he was killed in action on 9th May 1915 at the Battle of Aubers Ridge whilst serving with the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment; his body was never recovered. Four other soldiers from the Borough died that day, three from Corby, one from Weldon. All served in the Northamptonshire Regiment at Aubers Ridge.

He is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial.

The carnage at Aubers Ridge, as with many other battles on the Western Front, meant that the fate of many soldiers was not known until some time after the event, if



ever. The extract below from the Grantham Journal of 14th October 1916 was not untypical:-

Missing Soldier Presumed Dead

Pte. Herbert Quinton Lank, Northants Regiment, who was reported missing nearly eighteen months ago, is now presumed to be dead, an official intimation having been sent to his wife, who resides at Gretton. Pte. H.Q.Lank, who lived at Stamford, belonged the Reserve Forces when war broke out. He was wounded in October 1914, and was notified missing on his 30th birthday.

The Le Touret Memorial commemorates over 13,400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. The Memorial takes the form of a loggia surrounding an open rectangular court. The names of those commemorated are listed on panels set into the walls of the court and the gallery, arranged by regiment, rank and alphabetically by surname within the rank. The memorial was designed by John Reginald Truelove, who had served as an officer with the London Regiment during the war, and unveiled by the British ambassador to France, Lord Tyrrell, on 22 March 1930.

Almost all of the men commemorated on the Memorial served with regular or territorial regiments from across the United Kingdom and were killed in actions that took place along a section of the front line that stretched from Estaires in the north to Grenay in the south. This part of the Western Front was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the first year of the war, including the battles of La Bassée (10 October – 2 November 1914), Neuve Chapelle (10 – 12 March 1915), Aubers Ridge (9 – 10 May 1915), and Festubert (15 – 25 May 1915). Soldiers serving with Indian and Canadian units who were killed in this sector in 1914 and '15 whose remains were never identified are commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle and Vimy memorials, while those who fell during the northern pincer attack at the Battle of Aubers Ridge are commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

In October 1914, II Corps of the British Expeditionary Force moved north from Picardy and took up positions in French Flanders where they were immediately engaged in the series of attacks and counter attacks that would become known as the 'race to the sea'. Over the course of the next year most of the British activity in this sector focused on attempting to dislodge the German forces from their advantageous position on the Aubers Ridge and capture the city of Lille, a major



industrial and transport centre which the Germans had occupied early in the war. The ridge is a slight incline in an otherwise extremely flat landscape from which the Germans were able to observe and bombard the British lines. Following the British capture of the village of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, the Germans greatly strengthened their defences along the ridge, reinforcing their positions with thick barbed wire entanglements, concrete blockhouses and machine gun emplacements. These extra defences frustrated British attempts to break through enemy lines and led to very heavy casualties at the battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert in May 1915.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Society

Grantham Journal

Lest We Forget

Herbert Quinton Lank
of the Northamptonshire Regiment

d. 9th May 1915