



REMEMBERING THE FALLEN OF SHEFFIELD PARK FROM WORLD WAR I

CPL RICHARD WILLIAM GIBSON – DIED OF WOUNDS IN FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 1916

Richard was born on the 1st October 1885, in Hailsham. As a 19-year old he enlisted into the 3rd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment on 23 Oct., 1904. At the time of the 1911 census he was serving out in India (Rawalpindi). After seven years service he was transferred to the Army Reserve. He joined the LB&SCR on 27 May, 1913, at Kingscote as a Porter (Signalman) under the tutelage of Station Master Herbert Pemberthy. Just a year later on the 8 May, 1914, he is transferred as a Porter (Signalman) to Sheffield Park (George Reddish, Station Master).

On the 6 Aug., 1914, he was mobilised for military service joining the 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment (service number 8124) with the rank of Private. After initial training he is posted for service in France on 27 Aug., 1914. He sustains an enemy shrapnel injury to his right knee on 10 Sept., 1914, and is treated in a Field Hospital and returned to England. After periods serving with the Regimental HQ and a spell with the 3rd Battalion, he is promoted to Lance Corporal on 19 Oct., 1915. He is posted back to the 2nd Battalion on 28 June, 1916, and is promoted to Corporal on 12 July, 1916.

The following is extracted from the War Diary 2nd Battalion:

9th SEPTEMBER, HIGH WOOD – The Germans were very active all day with their artillery. At 4.45pm, in conjunction with the 1st Northamptonshires on our left and the 2nd Kings Royal Rifle Corps on our right, the Battalion advanced to the attack, our objective being a portion of the trench WOOD LANE. In spite of very heavy artillery fire and M gun fire, the attacking line, which consisted of “C” and “D” coys, advanced steadily and in splendid order, closely followed by “A” Coy, which was to form an outpost line in front, and “B” Coy, which was to consolidate “D” Coy secured its objective with few losses. “C” Coy on the left was less fortunate, suffering rather heavily from M gun fire from HIGH WOOD. It entered the enemy trench with little difficulty. “A” Coy pushed through and advanced some distance in front of the captured line, accounting for several of the enemy who had run back. On our right the 60th Rifles gained their objective, but the Northamptons on our right were driven back by an intensive fire. This left our flank exposed and a defensive flank was dug connecting the captured line with their original front line. By dusk consolidation was well under way. Several

prisoners were captured and one Maxim Gun was secured by the Battalion Scout Sergeant. Our casualties were as follows:

OFFICERS KILLED: Capt D'Harvey; 2Lts C.J. Fonder; G.L. Reade; W.G. Humphries; J.T. Clarke and H. E. Coleman. WOUNDED: Cpts F.C. Sainton and H. Wigston; 2Lts C.A. Collins and W. Brown

OTHER RANKS: 43 Killed, 146 Wounded, 59 Missing and 4 Wounded and Missing

10th SEPTEMBER, HIGH WOOD – We managed to maintain the ground captured the previous day and the situation remained fairly quiet. At night A, B & C Coys were relieved by the New Zealand Rifles and came back to BECOURT WOOD. "D" Coy occupying the captured trench, could not be relieved till it was quite dark, so headquarters remained in the vicinity for that night.

11th SEPTEMBER, HIGH WOOD and BECOURT WOOD – "D" Coy were relieved by the 21st London Regt and we came back to BECOURT WOOD.

Richard's military record is endorsed on 1 Oct., 1916, "Wounded and Missing". We cannot be sure, but the assumption must be that he was lost on the 9 Sept. in High Wood. (On 13 Feb., 1917, his record is endorsed "Regarded for official purposes as having died on active service 6 Sept., 1916" (there is no obvious reason why this date was chosen; the Battalion was resting on this day). Presumably this would have resulted in a formal letter to his parents.

He has no known grave. His name is recorded on The Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 7C.