

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Private George Edwin Bennett (17656)
8th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment

George Edwin Bennett was born on 8 June 1877 in Campden and was the second son of Henry and Ann Bennett of Watery Lane. His father was a native of the town and in the early 1900s was trading as a baker selling bread from his home in the Square.

After leaving school, George worked on the railways. When the war started in 1914 he enlisted at Campden in the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was posted to the 8th Battalion and arrived in France on 18 August 1915.

The battalion took part in the Battle of the Somme, which started on 1 July 1916. At 7.30am on that morning they moved to positions north of Albert and were in the Tara-Usna line by 10am. The British Army suffered almost 60,000 casualties on the opening day of the battle but the 8th Glosters did not attack until 3 July, when they pushed forward into La Boisselle village and consolidated their new position near the ruins of the church. In this action their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A Carton de Wiart,

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won the Victoria Cross. The battalion held the new positions against German counter-attacks before it withdrew to Albert on 5 July. On 9 July it moved to bivouacs north of Millencourt and the next few days were spent doing physical drill including route marches, bayonet practice and running.

At 9pm on 20 July they moved forward again to occupy an old German trench close to Bazentin-le-Petit. The battalion relieved the 10th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment in the front line at 9.30pm on 22 July and the following day they were involved in an unsuccessful attack on the German Switch Line between High Wood and Martinpuich. The battalion attacked at 12.30am after creeping forward to within 75 yards of the

German trenches but they were soon halted by machine gun fire.

It was during this attack on the Switch Line on 23 July that George was killed in action. He was 39 years old and he is buried in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, near Longueval. His name is recorded on three memorials in Campden; in St James's Church, in the Baptist Church and in the High Street.

George never married but he had a partner called Lily and they lived in Poppett's Alley. Four of his brothers, Austin, Enoch, John Ernest and Joseph, also served in the army during the war and survived.



Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval