



Private George Arthur Down



1st Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Died 7 July 1917

Age 33

George Arthur Down is commemorated by his battlefield grave cross at All Saints' and on the lists of war dead at both All Saints' and at St Mary's where he is known as Arthur. He was killed in action near Loos in France at the age of 33 and is buried in the Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe. The Cemetery is a beautiful English Garden in an area dominated by waste heaps from the local coal mines.

George's home was at 75 Festing Road, Putney, and he was married to Rose. His brother Walter was also killed in the War and he joins his brother in being commemorated at All Saints' Church.

July 1917 suggests a death during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), however, Private Down was to the south and appears to have been involved in a different action as in 1917 his unit from The Buffs Kent was billeted at Mazingarbe and Fochies between periods of duty at the Loos Hulluch trenches.

On July 7th 1917 at 2.55 am a strong enemy raid was made and a party of the enemy, about 60 strong, attempted to enter the trenches. This raid was repulsed by rapid rifle fire but the losses were severe, amounting to 20 killed and 15 wounded.

Private Down was a Territorial soldier who is likely to have been in the Army before 1914 and yet he remained a private. He was 33, which would have been old for a Territorial Private. He may have been wounded in 1914 and returned to service. It is interesting that this man from Putney was with the Buffs who drew their ranks from the areas around Dover, Canterbury and the Romney Marshes.

The Buffs were replaced in the frontline near Loos by the Kings Own Scottish Light Infantry on 29th June and Private Down should not have stayed on. We don't know why he stayed but he did and was killed on 7th July 1917. Another man from the Buffs was also killed suggesting that they were reinforcements. He was not evacuated to a hospital but died very near to the point at which was killed, early in the morning.

SERVICE NUMBER: T/202160