



Private Herbert Thomas Hearn



The London Regiment

Died 9 May 1916

Age 24

Private Herbert Hearn was killed in action on 9th May 1915 during the Battle of Aubers Ridge, Flanders. He had enlisted with The London Regiment just 8 months earlier in September 1914. Herbert's home was at 301 Upper Richmond Road, with parents George and Caroline Hearn.

Private Hearn is buried at Ploegsteert Memorial. The memorial near Hainaut, Belgium commemorates the lives of more than 11,000 servicemen and Herbert's name can be found on Panel 10. If you visit the memorial on the first Friday of the month, you can hear the sounding of the Last Post at 7pm.

We believe Private Hearn was part of the 2nd London Division but this is not certain. If he was, he would have been part of an infantry assault at Aubers Ridge, Flanders that began at 5.40am after a British bombardment. Despite early losses three brigades attempted to advance across no mans' land, but were met with intense cross fire from German machine guns. The advance was halted at 6am with 1000's of men dead and 100's pinned down in no mans' land, unable to advance or fall back. Few lanes had been cut through the wire, and even when men reached it, they were forced to bunch and therefore made good targets for the German guns.

A further bombardment was ordered at 6.20am and then again at 7.45am. By 4pm another assault was ordered and once again the advance was cut down without reaching the enemy. Few men even reached a small ditch 20 yards in front of their own line. One brigade suffered more than 1,000 casualties within minutes. Despite efforts to begin another assault, it became clear that casualties were far greater than initially understood and any further assault was cancelled for that d day. No further battles took place at Aubers and it took three days for British casualties to make their way to the field ambulances.

More than 11,000 British soldiers died on this day. The majority died within yards of their own front line. Mile for mile, division for division, this was one of the highest rates of loss during the entire war.

SERVICE NUMBER: 2914