



Rifleman Charles Edward Wells



**1st/8th Battalions West Yorkshire Regiment
(Prince of Wales's Own)**

Died 13 October 1917

Age 33

Charles Wells was a rifleman in the 1st/8th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment and died of his wounds on 13th October 1917, most likely following the battle of Poelcappelle which took place four days earlier.

The Battle of Poelcappelle marked the end of the string of highly successful British attacks in late September and early October 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres. On the main front the German defences withstood the limited amount of artillery fire managed by the British after the attack of 4 October. The ground along the main ridges had been severely damaged by shelling and rapidly deteriorated in the rains which in some areas turned the ground into a swamp. The weather and ground conditions put severe strain on all the infantry involved and led to many wounded being stranded on the battlefield which could have included Charles.

Charles was born in Mortlake in 1884 and in the 1911 census is recorded as living at 7 Gladwyn Road, Putney with his mother, Ellen, a widow and his younger brother Walter. Charles, who in 1911 was 27, was a postman and his brother, four year younger, was a 'washouseman'. His war records state that at the time he died he was married to Ada and lived at 13 Roskell Road, Putney. In the 1911 census 13 Roskell Road was listed as containing 2 separate households, the Holkers with their 2 children, Fred (aged 6) and Gladys (aged 3) and (presumably) living on a separate floor was Emily Balls, a widow, with her teenage children and niece.

Charles is buried at the Nine Elms Cemetery in Belgium at grave B9 in plot V. The cemetery was used by the 44th Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) when it moved to Poperinghe (now Poperinge), from Brandhoek. The job of the CCS was to treat a man sufficiently for his return to duty or, in most cases, to enable him to be evacuated to a Base Hospital. It was not a place for a long-term stay. The cemetery contains 1,556 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 37 German war graves from this period.

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