

**WW1 1914-1918 WAR MEMORIAL**

**ST JAMES' CHURCH, UPPER WIELD**



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**I**



### **Private John Albert Arnold**

2/23<sup>rd</sup> Bn, attached to the  
2/21<sup>st</sup> Bn The London  
Regt (1<sup>st</sup> Surrey Rifles);  
lived in The Old Rectory,  
Upper Wield; killed on  
9/11/17 (aged 29) during  
fighting against the Turks  
in Palestine. Buried at  
Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel. Today the  
London Regiment exists as both 7<sup>th</sup> Bn The  
Rifles, and The London Regt. ( It is possible  
that Arnold wanted to join Giles (also of Upper  
Wield) in the City of London Regiment but  
ended up in a similarly named but different  
"London" Regiment battalion).

**Private William GILES** 13<sup>th</sup> Bn  
The Royal Fusiliers (also known as  
The City of London Regiment).  
Giles grew up in Upper Wield  
(where relatives still live) -  
possibly in Church Farm; killed  
near Bucquoy, France on  
5/4/1918 (aged 35) fighting in  
The Battle of The Ancre. Buried  
at Bienvillers Military Cemetery,  
Pas de Calais, France. The Royal  
Fusiliers exist today as The Royal Regiment of  
Fusiliers.



**Lance Corporal Edgar Percy GOUGH** 10th Bn  
Royal Dublin Fusiliers; lived  
in The Windmill pub, Lower  
Wield; originally joined the  
Royal Hampshire Regt, but  
later transferred (why?) to  
the 10<sup>th</sup> Bn Royal Dublin  
Fusiliers; died in a military  
hospital near Rouen in  
France on 1/4/1918 (aged  
19) from wounds received  
after fighting in The Battle of The Ancre, France;



buried at St Sever Military Extension Cemetery, Rouen, France. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers do not exist today: they were disbanded in 1922 following Irish Independence.

**Private Ernest JEWELL**

10<sup>th</sup> Bn The Hampshire Regiment. Grew up in Lower Wield, where a farm field is still known as Jewells Field; killed near Hill 60 on 21/8/1915 (aged 17) when his battalion was supporting Australian and New

Zealand infantry fighting against the Turks in Gallipoli. Commemorated at The Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, (no known grave). His regiment exists today as The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment.



**Private Albert PRIOR** 2/4<sup>th</sup> Bn The Queens  
(Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Lived in both  
Lower Wield Farm and Kings Farm, Lower Wield,  
and was employed as a shepherd, later as a  
labourer in Four Marks; died of wounds on  
4/11/1917 (aged 37)  
following fighting



against the Turks (and Germans) at Huj, south of  
of Jerusalem. Commemorated at The  
Jerusalem memorial Jerusalem War  
Cemetery (no known grave). His regiment  
exists today as the Princess of Wales' Royal  
Regiment.

**Private Arthur PURCHASE**

2/6<sup>th</sup> Bn The Gloucestershire  
Regiment. Lived in Pitters  
Farm, Lower Wield (brother of  
Harold Purchase- see below);  
missing 2/12/1917 (aged 22)  
during fierce fighting in the

Cambrai area, France: (The  
Battle of Cambrai is famous for the first mass use  
of tanks). Commemorated at Cambrai Memorial,



Louverval, France (no known grave). His regiment exists today as The Rifles.

**Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class\* Harold PURCHASE** Royal Navy, HMS Vanguard. (Brother of Arthur Purchase – see

above; lived in the Yew Tree Pub, Lower Wield after his

**H.M.S. VANGUARD**

parents moved from Pitters Farm, Lower Wield). Lost at

sea 9/7/1917 (aged 16) after the battleship HMS Vanguard

(Jutland Battle veteran) accidentally blew up and sank in Scapa Flow. (835 men were lost with only 2 survivors). Commemorated at Portsmouth

Naval Memorial. \*(A Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class was a boy aged 16 to 18 under training, who had previously served for between 9 months and 18 months rated as "boy 2nd class", shown sufficient proficiency in seamanship and accumulated at least one good conduct badge).

# WW1 GENERAL MILITARY INFORMATION

## Battalions? Brigades?

1. The smallest fighting unit was a 10 man Section. Four sections made up a Platoon.
2. Four platoons made up a Company.
3. Four rifle companies and a HQ company made up a Battalion (consisting of about 1000 men).
4. A number of battalions with similar county or regional recruiting affiliations made up a Regiment (an administrative description rather than an operational organisation).
  - a. Before WW1, most infantry regiments consisted of two regular battalions, (one serving overseas and the second training recruits in the UK) and one or two territorial ( or reserve) Battalions.

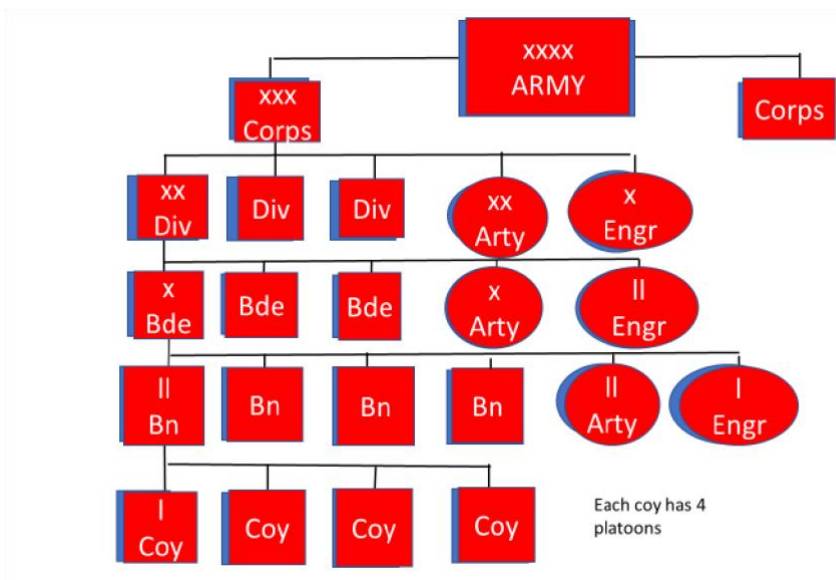
During WW1, with the need for a much larger army, regiments expanded dramatically (some having up to a total of 80 battalions).
  - b. These extra battalions were made up of regular (volunteers) battalions and



territorial (or reserve) battalions whose soldiers initially were not obliged to serve overseas.

- c. As WW1 got under way, and the need for more soldiers grew, mobilisation rules for the reserve battalions were changed: titled the " nth *Service* Battalion, the Royal....." they deployed overseas to fight in their own right.
  - d. Some infantry regiments did not call their mobilised territorial battalions "service" battalions, instead denoting them by the "2/" prefix ( eg 2/21st Bn the London Regiment).
5. Four battalions made up a Brigade.
  6. Three brigades plus artillery and engineer support made up a Division.
  7. Typically three divisions and extra brigades as required plus artillery and engineer support made up a Corps.
  8. A number of Corps plus Artillery & Engineer support made up an Army.

# TYPICAL WW1 BRITISH ARMY ORGANISATION



# The Western Front



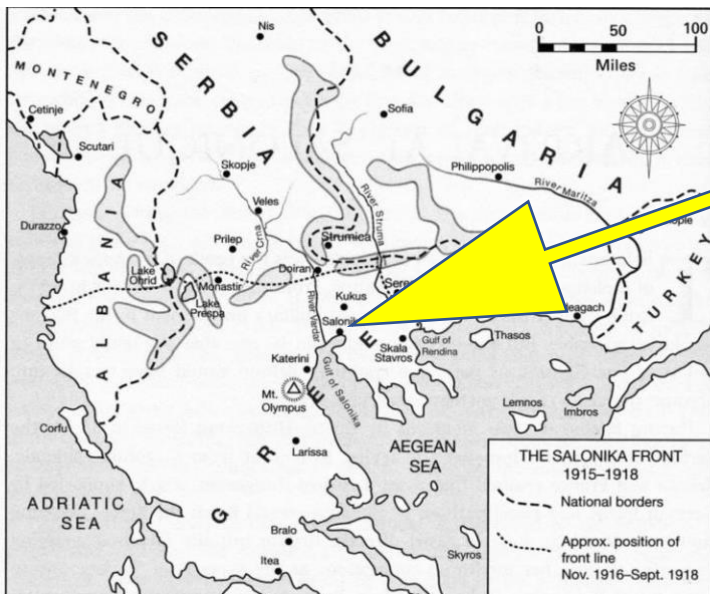
## Historical Notes

### 2/21<sup>st</sup> Battalion The London Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Surrey Rifles) ( Pte ARNOLD)

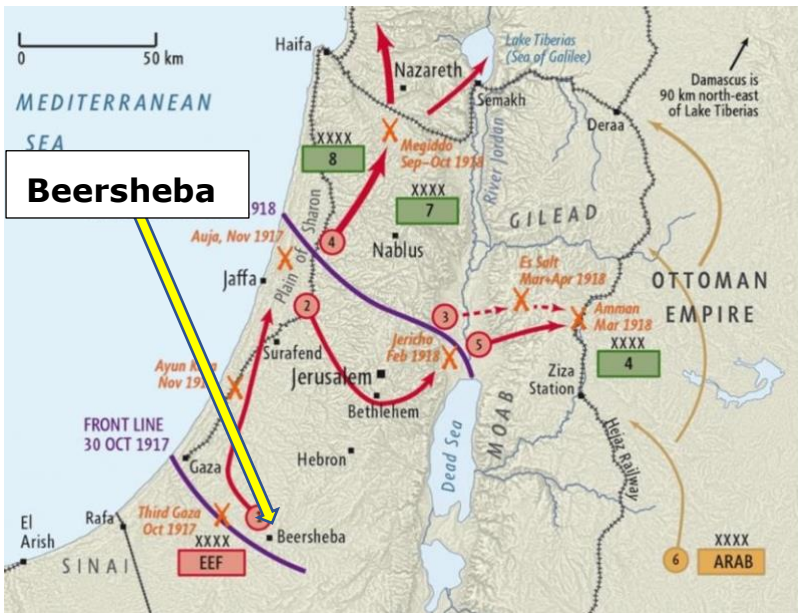
The London Regiment (an infantry unit) expanded to 88 battalions in the First World War. Towards the end of January 1916 the recently formed

2/21<sup>st</sup> Bn moved from its billets near Colchester to Sutton Veny on Salisbury Plain for final training before proceeding overseas.

The Bn was switched from the Western Front to the Macedonian Front in late October 1916 (missing The Somme offensive), disembarking at Salonika to take part in action against the Bulgarians.

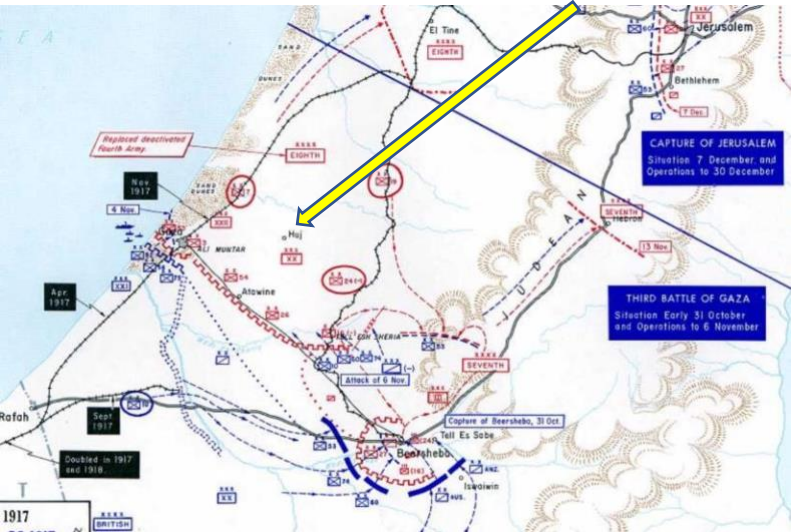


In mid June 1917 the Bn re-embarked at Salonika for Alexandria, Egypt to join the Palestine campaign as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) and took part in the battle for Gaza, fighting the Turks (supported by the German and Austrian army) near Beersheba.



After Beersheba was captured, the Turks withdrew north towards Jerusalem. 2/21<sup>st</sup> Bn, part of 181 London Brigade) was involved in the pursuit of the enemy. On 9<sup>th</sup> Nov (the day after a famous British yeomanry cavalry charge at Huj),

Huj

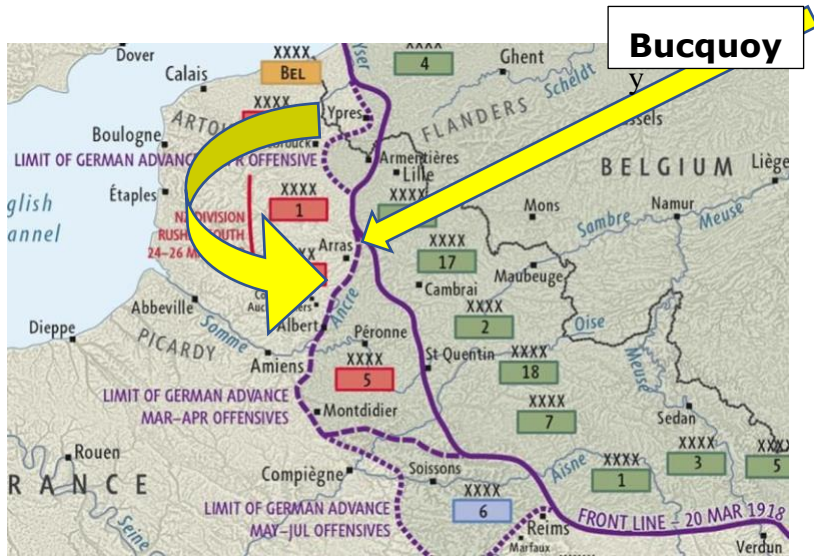


working with Australian infantry and despite being severely hampered by a lack of water supplies, the Bn was involved in follow up operations against rearguard forces in the Huj area - during which Arnold was killed.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Bn The Royal Fusiliers (The London Regiment) (Pte Giles)**

The term "fusilier" derives from the French name for the flintlock musket - fusil: soldiers who carried these weapons were known as fusiliers.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Bn was formed at Hounslow in Sept 1914, and deployed to France in July 1915. During the war it fought throughout the Western Front. In March 1918, the Germans launched a last-ditch offensive (Op Michael) on a broad front in the Somme area. Facing them, amongst hundreds of Allied infantry Bns was the 13th Bn Royal Fusiliers which had re-deployed from the Ypres area to Bucquoy, near Gommecourt on the river Ancre. On March 31st the 13<sup>th</sup> Bn went into the Line at Bucquoy.



## Battle of the Ancre

The following morning the Germans attempted to rush the bombing posts of No. 2 Company. The attacks were beaten off, but on April 5th the battalion was involved in a very determined attack during which the enemy managed to take ground some German distance beyond Bucquoy. The preliminary bombardment at 0530hrs practically obliterated the trench positions of Nos. 1 and 3 Companies. About two hours later the order was given to withdraw. In a desperate fight and under heavy artillery fire, many were killed and several



men buried, (Pte Giles was killed during this fighting) and before the company could extricate themselves a number of men were cut off, but by 1400hrs the line was reorganised. A great many decorations were given for this spirited defence.

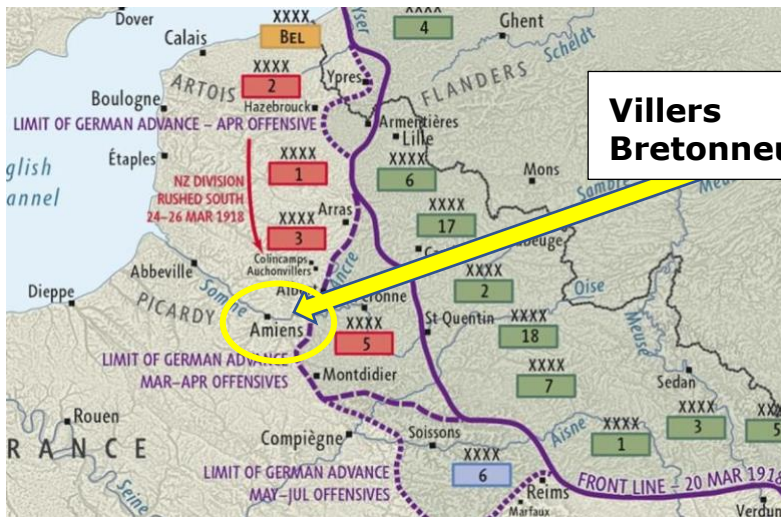
### **10<sup>th</sup> Bn Royal Dublin Fusiliers (LCpl Gough)**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Bn Royal Dublin Fusiliers was formed in Dublin on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1916, deploying to Flanders in Aug 1916. (Why would a young man from Wield join an Irish Bn?) It suffered heavy losses throughout WW1, starting during the first battle of the Ancre, continuing during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres.

By Feb 1918, the Regiment had suffered so many casualties that internal transfers were needed to re-constitute viable battalions. 10<sup>th</sup> Bn was disbanded and its personnel were gradually transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>Nd</sup> battalions and also to a recently formed 19<sup>Th</sup> Entrenching Battalion. (It is



not clear where L Cpl Gough ended up. In March, the 19<sup>th</sup> Entrenching Battalion along with the recently reorganised 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bns were heavily involved in fierce fighting at Villers Bretonneux near the Somme river. The 1st and 2nd Dublins suffered heavily from intense bombardments (which included poison gas) and when the Germans attacked shortly afterwards, they broke through the shattered remnants making significant gains.



**Villers  
Bretonneux**

But their offensive gradually lost momentum and by April, they were pushed back. It was during this fierce fighting that Gough ( still a 10<sup>th</sup> Bn soldier) was injured, later to die in a field hospital.

In April the 19<sup>th</sup> Entrenching Battalion was disbanded, its personnel returning not to their original (now disbanded) 10<sup>th</sup> battalion, but transferred instead to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn the Royal Munster Fusiliers. (All those serving in the entrenching battalions had retained their original parent unit identity and cap badge: maintenance

of morale and cohesion must have posed significant issues for leaders).

## **10<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Hampshire Regiment (Pte Jewell)**

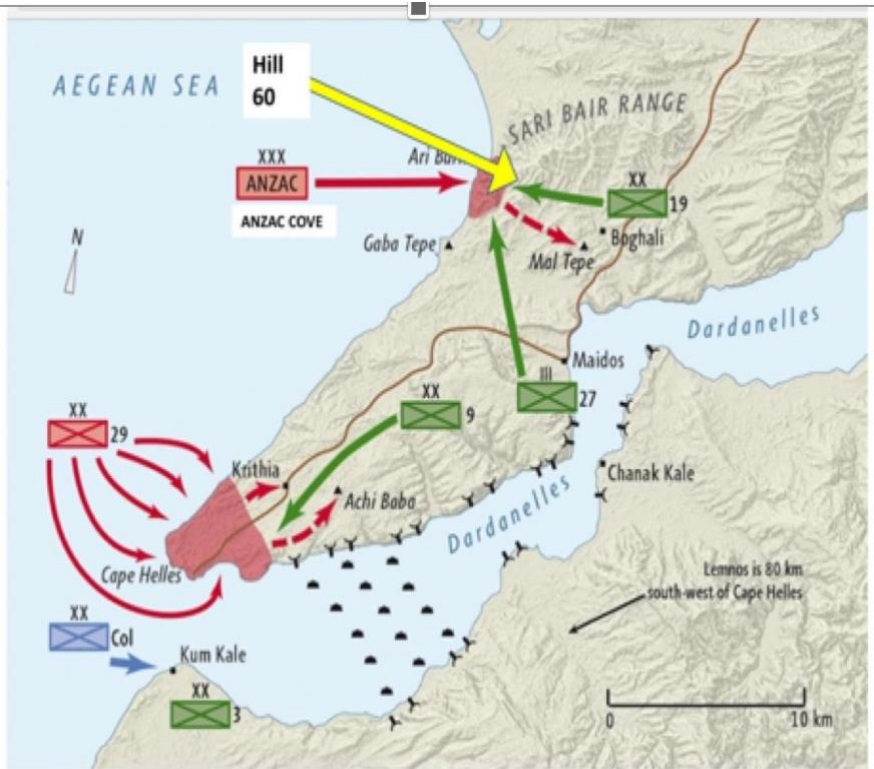
10th Battalion The Hampshire Regiment was raised at Winchester in August 1914 as part of Kitchener's First New Army and moved to Dublin,



joining 10th (Irish) Division as Divisional Troops. They returned to England in May 1915 and

underwent final training at Basingstoke, sailing from Liverpool for Gallipoli in July 1915.

Landing at ANZAC Cove, the bn went into action on Sari Bair between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10 Aug, then going on to attack Hill 60.



Pte Jewell was injured during this action and subsequently died.

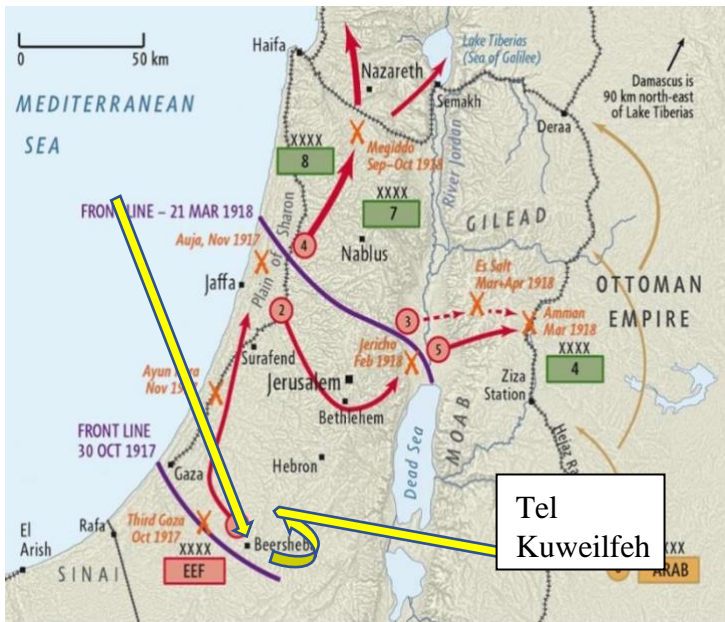


Hill 60

**2/4th Bn The Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment (Pte Prior)**

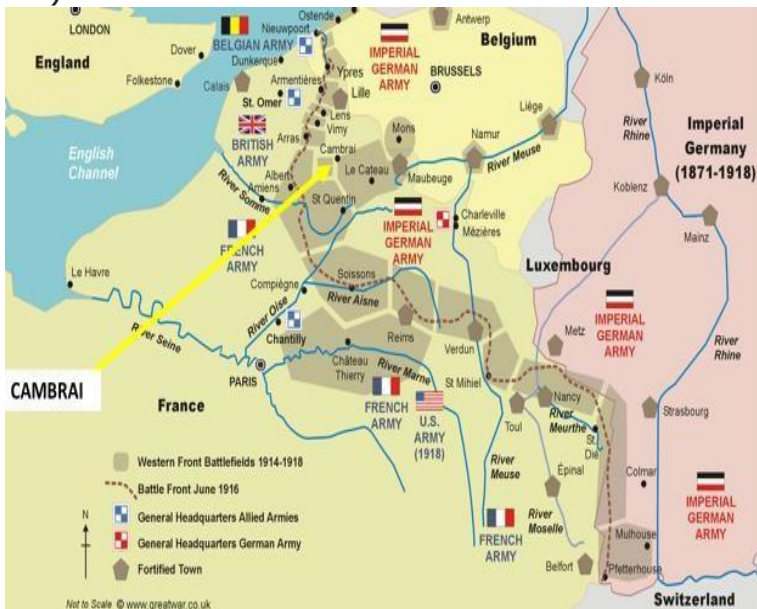
The Bn was part of 160 Welsh Border Brigade (which in turn was part of the Egyptian

Expeditionary Force (EEF) which in 1917 took part in the third battle of Gaza, Palestine. Following the eventual capture of Beersheba, the Turks had withdrawn Northwards to set up defensive positions in the area of Tel Kuweilfeh where they were reinforced by German troops. Tel Kuweilfeh 21 The EEF needed to take the heights of Tel Kuweilfeh as they commanded the only North South road. In addition copious much needed water was there. It was during pre battle skirmishes in and amongst the gullies and wadis that Pte Prior was wounded and later died.



## 2/6<sup>th</sup> Bn The Gloucestershire Regt (Pte Purchase)

2/6th Battalion deployed to France in May 1916 as part of 183rd Brigade, taking part in the Battle of Passchendaele in July 1917. In early December 1917 during the Battle of Cambrai, a heavy German counter-attack forced both the 2/4th and 2/6th Battalions out of their positions in the front line at La Vacquerie, 7.5 miles (12 km) south-





west of Cambrai, reducing the 2/4th Battalion to two companies and inflicting casualties of 16 officers (48%) and 308 other ranks (31%) on the 2/6th Battalion. It was during this fierce fighting that Pte Purchase was killed, his body never recovered.

### **HMS Vanguard (Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class Purchase)**

HMS Vanguard was one of three *St Vincent* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_Vincent-class\\_battleship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Vincent-class_battleship) class dreadnought battleships built for the Royal Navy in the first decade of the 20th century. Vanguard had an overall length of 163.4 m a beam of 25.6 m and a normal draught of 8.5 m. She weighed 20,000 tons at normal load. She was equipped with ten breech-loading 12 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BL\\_12\\_inch\\_Mk\\_XI - XII naval gun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BL_12_inch_Mk_XI_-_XII_naval_gun) inch (305 mm) Mk XI guns in five twin turrets



three along the centreline and the remaining two as wing turrets. She spent her career assigned to the Home and Grand Fleets. Aside from participating in the Battle of Jutland in May 1916 and the inconclusive Action of 19 August several months later, her service during WW I mostly consisted of routine patrols and training in the North Sea. Shortly before midnight on 9 July 1917 whilst at anchor at Scapa Flow, without any warning (nor as a result of enemy action) Vanguard suffered a rapid series of catastrophic ammunition magazine explosions. She sank almost instantly, killing 835 of the 837 men aboard. 3 men survived the

explosion, but one died soon after. The Admiral survived: he had been ashore and with a young officer called Head was on his way back to the ship when she blew up. A relative of the same Head family lives today in Upper Wield.

### **Scapa Flow.**



Scapa Flow

In 1904 in response to the build-up of the German Kaiserliche Marine's High Seas Fleet, Britain decided that a northern base was needed

to control the entrances to the North Sea, as part of a revised policy of 'distant' rather than 'close' blockade. First Rosyth in Fife was considered then Invergordon at Cromarty Firth. Delayed construction left these largely unfortified by the outbreak of World War I. Scapa Flow had been used many times for British exercises in the years before the War and when the time came for the fleet to move to a northern station, it was chosen for the main base of the British Grand Fleet – unfortified.

Admiral Jellicoe, Admiral of the Grand Fleet, was perpetually nervous about the possibility of submarine or destroyer attacks on Scapa Flow. Whilst the fleet spent almost the first year of the war patrolling the west coast of the British Isles, their base at Scapa was defensively reinforced, beginning with over sixty block-ships sunk in the many entrance channels between the southern islands to facilitate the use of submarine nets and booms. These blocked approaches were backed by minefields, artillery, and concrete barriers.