

42476 Private Albert Stoter 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (The Green Howards)

1893-1918

Albert Stoter was born on the 23rd February 1892, in East Hendred, the son of William Stoter and his wife Sarah (nee' Haines). He can be found in the 1911 census living with his parents and siblings William, Edward, Henry Leonard and Ivy, near the Wheatsheaf in East Hendred. All the sons and their father were farm labourers working on the nearby farms.

Albert would have had to enlist into the army under the Military Service Act of 1916 which introduced conscription in January 1916. Under the provisions of the Act men were deemed to have enlisted if they were aged between 19 and 41 and resident in the UK and were unmarried or a widower on 2nd November 1915. This was extended to married men and the age dropped to 18, on 25th May 1916. Men were placed in a group depending on their age and occupation. Initially at the start of WW1 when a man enlisted he could express a preference for the unit he joined, usually but not always the local regiment. However, as time went on, the needs of war meant that this was not always the case and after training men could be transferred to an entirely different unit on the Western Front that needed fresh drafts of personnel for a variety of different reasons.

Albert initially expressed a preference to join the Royal Field Artillery and it was with them that he had his initial training receiving the army number 164273. After training, Pte Albert Stoter was transferred to the 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (The Green Howards) for his army service on the Western Front. It is not known exactly when this would have taken place as Albert's service record has not survived but it probably would have been in 1916.

The 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards) was originally formed at Richmond in Yorkshire, and went to France on the 26th August 1915. It was part of 69th Brigade 23rd Division, and for the next six months served in the Armentieres and Loos sectors of the Western Front. The Division (with the 9th Yorks) entered the Battle of the Somme on 3rd July 1916, and subsequently captured the village of Contalmaison by the 14th July 1916. Fighting later ensued along a trench called Munster Alley towards Martinpuich in which all the Brigades of the Division took part. On the 8th August 1916 the 23rd Division was relieved and sent north to the quiet sector of Ploegsteert Wood near Armentieres and subsequently returned to the Somme sector in mid-September 1916 where it was placed in reserve. It was times like this that army units in WW1 took the opportunity to re-equip and retrain. It was also the time that new drafts of men would be received and it is likely that this is when Private Stoter would have joined the 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment in France. October 1916, found the 9th Yorks fighting around the village of Le Sars which was captured on the 8th of that month. The end of October 1916, the 23rd Division was back in the Ypres Salient where relieved Australian troops in the Sanctuary Wood area. They were to remain in the Ypres Salient

until October 1917 taking part in the Battle of Messines Ridge in May 1917 and then during the 3rd Battle of Ypres the 23rd Division was in action around the Menin Road and Polygon Wood.

In November 1917, three UK Infantry Divisions were sent to Italy, to support the Italians in their campaign to defeat the Austrians on the Asiago Plateau in Northern Italy. One of these Divisions was the 23rd Division.

On arrival in Italy the 23rd Division concentrated around Mantua, south of Verona. From here the Division (including the 9th Yorks) marched out on the 19th November 1917 to the front line, relieving the Italians on the western part of the Montello and the adjoining plain south of the Piave river at the beginning of December 1917. Defences were reorganised and patrols were sent out to locate the enemy. The troops were relieved by the 41st Division on the 13th February 1918. Casualties for the Division were 38 dead and 136 wounded which were light compared to France were mainly due to artillery and air attack. Amongst them was Private Stoter on the 14th January 1918, who was wounded in the left hand and evacuated via the 70th Field Ambulance to the 39th Casualty Clearing Station at Dueville. On recovery Private Stoter returned to his battalion which was to serve in Italy until September 1918. As a result of a reorganisation of the army in Italy, the 9th Yorks returned to France where they were attached to the 74th Brigade 25th Division.

The 25th Division was to take part in the 100 Days Offensive that finally ended the Great War. This had begun with the Battle of Amiens in August 1918. The battle pushed the Germans out of France, forcing them to retreat beyond the Hindenburg Line and culminated in the Armistice of 11 November 1918. It was during this offensive, that the 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment took part in a battle to retake the village of Pommereuil, 3 kilometres east of the town of Le Cateau.

On the night of the 23rd October 1918, the 9th Yorks were at Honnechy, with orders to advance to help take the village and the nearby Bois de l'Eveque. The attack was launched in bright moonlight at 1:20am. The village was captured in the face of heavy fire from the mills and farms along the banks of the Richemont river. Bois de l'Eveque was reached and the infantry consolidated their gains from the days battle. The 9th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment's casualties for the day included nine men killed in action who were all buried at Pommereuil included with them was Private Albert Stoter.

References

WW1 Medal Roll entry for 42476 Pte Albert Stoter 9th Bn Yorkshire Regt (The Green Howards)

39th Casualty Clearing Station Register for 42476 Pte Albert Stoter 9th Bn Yorkshire Regt (The Green Howards)

WO95/2247 War Diary 9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (The Green Howards)

The Green Howards, 1914-1919 (19th Foot/Yorkshire Regiment) by Colonel H C Wylly 1926.

Wikipedia entries for 23rd and 25th Infantry Divisions

East Hendred Parish Register and 1911 Census.

Trevor Hancock

White Horse Ancestors

26th August 2018