

William John HENWOOD



Born: 1894, Padstow, Cornwall
Occupation: Draper's assistant
Enlisted: Truro: 1914 (Volunteer)
Unit: 1/4th Duke of Cornwall's LI (TF)
Rank/number: Lance Corporal: No.200361 (Also 2070)
Death: Killed in action, 22nd November 1917
Detail: William went missing and was later presumed

killed at the Battle of Nebi Samwil in Palestine as he attempted to rescue a wounded man injured by shell-fire. The DCLI regimental history describes this episode, calling it a selfless act of "sacrifice"

William's brother Percy had been killed at the Battle of Arras five months earlier
24

Age at death:

Military info:

Britain's Territorials were faced with a big decision within weeks of war breaking out in 1914. Many Regular battalions were serving in the colonies and Kitchener wanted the part-time soldiers take over their duties so they could return home. Territorials, not legally obligated to serve abroad, were asked to volunteer to forgo this exemption. Those DCLI men who agreed joined the 1/4th and those that did not went to the 1/5th. On 9th October 1914 the 1/4th sailed for India. In 1916 the battalion was posted to Aden and in March 1917 they arrived in Palestine where Britain was fighting the Turks. The Palestine Campaign was spread across present-day Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudia Arabia and Syria, then part of the Ottoman Empire. Early in the war Britain concentrated on defending the Suez Canal, a vital supply route, but in August 1916 it launched an offensive into the Holy Land. The 1/4th DCLI joined the campaign as part of 234th Brigade, 75th Division. After capturing Gaza on 6th November the British pushed on to Jerusalem. To take the city the strategic village of Nebi Samwil had to be captured and on the 21st the 234th Brigade was ordered to attack it. The DCLI, who could muster only two companies due to sickness, helped take the village. On the 22nd the Turks counter-attacked, but the British held out. Of the 200 DCLI men involved 90 were casualties. William went missing trying to save a wounded pal. When Jerusalem fell on 9th November Lloyd George called it a "Christmas present for the British people." Not for the Henwoods - they had lost 2 sons in 6 months.

Grave/memorial:

William was never found. He is listed on Jerusalem Memorial, at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and Padstow War Memorial. Brother Percy is also listed.

Family info:

Father: John Henwood, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1863. Wheelwright.

Mother: Ida Rawlings, born St Allen, Cornwall in 1864. Died 1900 aged 37.

In 1902 John Henwood married Ellen Nicholls, born Lifton, Devon in 1864.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com