

Frederick Cuthbert TONKIN

Born: 1894, South Stoneham, Hampshire
Occupation: Trainee dental surgeon
Enlisted: Nottingham: 6th September 1914 (Volunteer)
Unit: 1st/7th/8th East Yorkshire Regt. (Also Kings RR)
Rank/number: Captain
Awards: DSO/MC
Death: Died of wounds, 4th November 1918
Detail: Frederick was fatally wounded by artillery fire at Englefontaine in France as the 7th East Yorks assembled for their final attack of the war. He was taken to a field ambulance, where he died.



His possessions included a letter from home, a silver cigarette case, a service revolver and the ribbons for his MC and DSO.
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Age at death:

Military info:

At the outbreak of war Frederick was 20 and training as a dentist in London. He put his career on hold and enlisted in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps as a private. He was 5ft 5ins tall with light brown hair. In 1915 he was offered a commission and in February he joined the 7th East Yorks, arriving in France on 14th July that year. Early in September 2nd-Lt Tonkin was transferred to the 8th East Yorks, in 62nd Brigade, 21st Division, who were about to go into action in the British assault at Loos. The battle started on 25th September and the next day the Battalion suffered heavy casualties. Frederick was severely wounded and invalided home. On 25th January 1917 he returned to France, joining the 1st East Yorks. In 1917 the Battalion fought through the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the battles of Arras and Passchendaele. In November Frederick was posted to 7th East Yorks, part of 50th Brigade, 17th (Northern) Division. In December the Battalion moved south from Ypres to the Somme where they took over the line near Harvincourt. Frederick was promoted lieutenant and slightly wounded. On 21st March 1918 the Germans launched a massive offensive across a 50-mile front and the British retreated west. The Battalion were badly mauled and Frederick took over command of A Company. In the weeks that followed he won both an MC and the DSO for gallantry, but a week before the guns fell silent he was fatally wounded.

Grave/memorial:

Frederick was buried at Forest Communal Cemetery in France and is also commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and Padstow War Memorial.

Family info:

Father: William Tonkin, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1861. Accountant. Son of shoemaker Peter Tonkin. Mother: Emma Boyce, born Millbrook, Hants in 1855. They married in 1891, had 2 sons and lived in West Bridgford, Notts.



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