

Marlow Men in the Passchendaele Campaign

Many Marlow men took part in the Passchendaele campaign. The heaviest casualties were incurred by the 2nd Bucks Battalion during an engagement on 22nd August 1917.

The 2nd Bucks Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry had been recruited at the start of the War in 1914 and included many men from Marlow and the surrounding area. The battalion had been sent to France in 1916 and had already been involved in extensive fighting.

On 22nd August 1917, the British forces launched an assault as part of the Passchendaele campaign against German defences north of Ypres. The 2nd Bucks Battalion made up the right flank of the British attack.

At 4:45am the British artillery put down a barrage and waves of infantry advanced behind it. The soldiers from the Bucks Battalion pressed on and came under heavy fire from the front, flanks and rear and were entirely cut off from all communication. When the Battalion was relieved at night, it had made progress but at a heavy cost – of the 13 officers and 637 other ranks that went into action, 11 officers and 338 other ranks were reported as casualties. Many were missing and their bodies never found. Almost all the officers had become casualties at the very start of the action, leaving Sergeants to command the remaining men. By nightfall, the men who were not wounded or killed were reported as being ‘in the last stage of exhaustion’.



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry during the First World War.

Many men from Marlow and the surrounding area were amongst the casualties in the attack on 22nd August. Amongst those killed were the brothers Arthur and Robert Crew who lived in Prospect Road before the War.



Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium where many of the Marlow men who died during the Passchendaele campaign are commemorated.



THE LATE PRIVATE R. W. CREW.



THE LATE LANCE-CORPORAL A. W. CREW.

Arthur and Robert Crew were amongst the Marlow men killed on 22nd August.