



GUNNER GEORGE DRAPER

SERVIVE NO. 48247

115TH BATTERY, 2.5TH BRIGADE, ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

DIED 1ST NOVEMBER 1917 AGED 30

George Draper was born in Odiham on 4 May 1887.¹ He was the 4th child of David, an agricultural labourer, and Margaret of North Warnborough. He had three sisters and one brother.² On 2 April 1894 George started at the London Road Board School. By the time of the 1901 census George has left school and was working as a butcher journeyman aged 13.³ By the time of the 1911 census George had joined the Army and was stationed at the Royal Artillery Barracks and the Cavalry Barracks in Butt Road, Colchester. He was a Private in the 115th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, which was a unit of the XXV Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery.⁴ He had enlisted in Guildford.⁵ The XXV Brigade was under the command of the 1st Division, both before and during the War.⁶

In 1914 the 1st Division fought at the Battle of Mons and the retreat from Mons, which included the Rearguard Affair of Etreux in August. In September they were involved in the Battle of the Marne and the Battle of the Aisne. In October and November they were fighting in the First Battle of Ypres. In 1915 there were winter operations, followed by the Battle of Aubers on 9 May and the Battle of Loos in September and October. 1916 was the year of the Battles of the Somme. The 1st Division were fighting the Battles of Albert and Bazentin in July, the Battle of Pozieres from July to September; and the Battles of Flers-Courcelette and Morval also in September.

1917 brought new challenges for the 1st Division. In March and April they were pursuing the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line in March and April. During the summer the Division was warned to prepare for "Operation Hush", an operation along the Belgian coast, which necessitated specialist training in the Dunkirk area. This operation was cancelled when it was realised that the initial assaults in Third Ypres failed to go according to plan. Finally, in the Second Battle of Passchendaele during October and November, George was killed in action on 1 November.⁷

George was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919.⁸ He is buried in St Julien Dressing Station Cemetery, Langemarck.

¹ Source - London Road Board School Admissions Register

² Source – 1891 Census Odiham, Hampshire, ref. Class: RG12; Piece: 953; Folio: 20; Page: 2; GSU roll: 6096063

³ Source – 1901 Census, Odiham, Hampshire ref: Class: RG13; Piece: 1102; Folio: 23; Page: 2

⁴ Source – 1911 Census, Colchester, ref: Class: RG14; Piece: 10322

⁵ Source: Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919

⁶ Source – The Long, Long Trail

⁷ Source – The Long Long Trail – XXV Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery

⁸ Source – www.Ancestry.co.uk WW1 Service Medal and Awards Rolls, 1914-1920