



LANCE CORPORAL CHARLES JOHN STOCKER

SERVICE NO. 6427

14th BATTALION, THE ROYAL HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT

DIED 17th SEPTEMBER 1917 AGED 33

Charles Stocker, the son of Charles, a fishmonger, and Sarah, a tailoress, was born in Basingstoke in 1884.¹ He had an older sister, Sarah. In 1891 Charles and his family were living in Hackwood Road, Basingstoke.² By 1901, Charles's father has died and he is living with his mother, now a wash laundress, in Basingstoke Union Workhouse.³ Later in the year (December) Charles, aged 18 years 11 months, signed an Attestation document to join the Army. His assigned attestation corps was the 3rd Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment and his service number 9950.⁴

By 1911 Charles had left the Army, for in the Census in April of that year he is found boarding with the family of Charles Bone in Medstead and working as a groom.⁵ It is possible that his attestation was for seven years with the Colours and five years in the Reserve, which would explain why from late 1908 he had civilian employment. Later in 1911 he married Florence Adams in Alton District⁶ and the couple lived at 16 Vicarage Road, Alton.

With the outbreak of war in August 1914 Charles would have been called upon to return to the Colours. We can see from his medal index card that he entered a theatre of war on 12 September 1914, which must have been with the 1st Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment, which was in the 11th Brigade, 4th Division. He was assigned service no. 6427.⁷ He would have continued with the 1st Battalion until March 1916 at the earliest before transferring to the 14th Battalion, which was under the command of 116th Brigade in the 39th Division. Here he would have been in the same unit as Thomas Eades.

In 1914, the early months of the war, the 1st Battalion fought in a number of battles including the Battle of le Cateau (The Division fought in this action without its Mounted Troops, Heavy Battery, Divisional Ammunition Column, Field Companies RE, Signals Company RE, Field Ambulances RAMC and Divisional Train which were all still en route from England), the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne and the Battle of Messines.

¹ 1891 Census, Basingstoke, ref. Class: RG12; Piece: 957; Folio: 11; Page: 16; GSU roll:6096067

² *ibid*

³ 1901 Census, Basingstoke, ref. Class: RG13; Piece: 1109; Folio: 90; Page: 4

⁴ Source - British Army Service Records 1760-1915, Findmypast.co.uk, Archive ref.WO96 Box 651, Record no. 341

⁵ Source – 1911 Census Medstead Hampshire, Class: RG14; Piece: 6216; Schedule Number: 28

⁶ Find my past.co.uk Marriage search

⁷ Source – Medal card for Charles J Stocker provided by Hampshire Regiment Museum



In December the Battalion took part in the Christmas Truce.⁸ In 1915 the Battalion was fighting in the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May), which began with a surprise German attack using poison gas against French North African forces holding defences near Ypres. In the June 1915 edition of the Regimental Journal Charles is reported as having been admitted to the 4th G H Versailles on 30 April 1915, having received shell wounds to his left hand.⁹ In the August 1915 edition he is listed as 'sick' in the 12th G H Rouen.¹⁰ In 1916 the 1st fought at the Battle of Albert, 1 - 13 July, and later in the year, 1 – 18 October, at the Battle of Le Transloy. However, it is not clear when Charles transferred to the 14th Battalion. It could have been at any time after March 1916 and if later in 1916 he would have taken part in fighting on the Ancre, the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, the Battle of the Ancre heights and the Battle of the Ancre again.¹¹

Assuming that in 1917 Charles had transferred to the 14th Battalion, he would have fought in phases of Third Ypres – the Battle of Pilkem Ridge, the Battle of Langemarck, the Battle of Menin Road Ridge, the Battle of Polygon Wood and the Second Battle of Passchendaele.

The "Soldiers Died" entry gives Charles's "type of casualty" as "Died of wounds" on 17 October 1917. The Battalion War Diary entry for 1 October seems to suggest that this was the date of receiving these wounds –

"MOUNT KOKEREEL (R.18.c.8.5)

Close order drill under Company arrangements. About

9pm enemy aircraft dropped several bombs on the

Camp. Casualties

10 killed. 1 died of wounds. 14 wounded."

The Casualty Register lists his cause of death (Wound) and date of death only, but this seems to support the 1st October being the date that he received the wounds that led to his death.

Charles was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

⁸ Source – Unit History (Royal) Hampshire Regiment, www.forceswarrecords.co.uk

⁹ Source- Hampshire Regimental Journal, June 1916, p.114

¹⁰ Source - ibid

¹¹ Source – Battle details for 39th Division, www.longlongtrail.co.uk/