



PRIVATE WILLIAM VARNDELL

SERVICE NO. 29847

14th BATTALION, THE HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT

DIED 2ND JUNE 1917 AGED 39

William Varndell was born in Corhampton, Hampshire on 10 August 1877[1]. He was the son of John Varndell, a shepherd born in Exton, and Caroline, nee Childes, born in Ovington. William had two older brothers, George and James, one younger brother, Thomas, and two younger sisters, Mabel and Elsie[2]. William attended Lane End Board/Council School, in Cheriton from 1885[3]. The reason for his name being on the Odiham War Memorial is still uncertain in spite of lengthy searching, including checking with the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum, but Varndells had lived in Murrell Green in 1861[4] and in 1911 Charles Varndell, a grocer and baker, was living with his family in North Warnborough[5]. Charles enlisted and was posted to the Army Service Corps on 5 October 1915, but he was discharged 24 days later on the grounds that he was 'not likely to become an efficient soldier'[6]. Another family of Varndells was living at Hawley in 1891, and this family included a 21 year-old daughter, Emily, who had been born in Odiham. The father, Edward, was an agricultural labourer, which may account for the different places of birth within the Hartley Wintney district of all his children.

So it does seem possible that William Varndell had family connections in the area, and one of these may have put forward his name to be included on the Odiham War Memorial.

William, if this is the person on the War Memorial, being the only one of that surname serving in WW1 and the only Varndell on the Hampshire Regiment Casualty Register [7], was fighting on the Western Front. During 1917 it was planned that his battalion, which was part of the 39th Division, would fight in phases of what was to be the Third Battles of Ypres, but beginning with the Battle of Messines, on 7th June. The objective was to take control of the ridge of high ground south of Ypres held by the Germans since October 1914.

It was during the preparation period leading up to this offensive that William was wounded and presumably taken to the Vlamertinghe Casualty Clearing Station, where he died of his wounds and was buried in the Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery,



West-Vlaanderen, near Ypres, Belgium. He was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal[8]

[1] Source - National School Admission Registers 1870-1914, Lane End Board/Council School, Cheriton - www.findmypast.co.uk

[2] Source - 1891 census, Middle Preshaw, Exton, Class RG 12, Piece: 942, Folio: 26; Page: 8

[3] Source - National School Admission Registers 1870-1914, Lane End Board/Council School, Cheriton - www.findmypast.co.uk

[4] Source - 1861 census, Murrell Green, Odiham, Class RG 09; Piece: 706; Folio: 51; Page: 15

[5] Source - 1911 census, Odiham, Class: RG14;

[6] Source - British Army Service Records 1914-1920, www.findmypast.co.uk

[7] Source - Lt Col Colin Bulleid, Secretary, The Royal Hampshire Regiment Trust, Winchester

[8] Source - Forces War Records - www.forces-war-records.co.uk

