

# GEORGE CECIL GORDON MACAULAY



2nd May 1917

1894-1917 Aged 22

**Second Lieutenant 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion attached 13th (Service) Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment (4th Hull, 'T'Others').**

George Macaulay was the nephew and adopted son of Aulay Macaulay. His father was Aulay's elder brother Colin, who died in 1895. His adopted father and uncle married his servant Margaret, who was half his age, in 1900. She wrote of George's death in 1917 'he was an orphan nephew of my late husband and has been our dearly beloved eldest son since he was four years of age.' Aulay Macaulay, originally from Heckmondwike, was a solicitor and clerk to both the District Council and the West Riding magistrates bench. George's first school was in Harrogate. He went to Bradford Grammar School at the start of 1904 when he was ten, and left at the end of 1908 aged fourteen. He was presented with a copy of Scott's 'Ivanhoe' as second prize in the Lower IVth form in July 1904, and he later won prizes for reading and for writing. In the summer of 1906 he captained the Pinks junior cricket team. In January 1909 he went to Rossall School on the Lancashire coast as a boarder. He became a House Monitor and a Sergeant in the OTC, but above all it was his cricket which flourished as a batsman and fielder. On his return to Bradford in 1912 he was apprenticed to his father's law firm. He joined Heckmondwike Cricket Club in 1913, for whom he was considered a noteworthy recruit. His father, who died in the same year, had also played for the club.

Within days of the outbreak of war in August 1914 George applied for a commission. However, although passed fit and recommended by the Colonel of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment at Halifax, he was impatient and in September enlisted in London as a private in the Public Schools Battalion (16th Middlesex). He was commissioned into the 3rd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment the following February, his former CO writing 'He is likely to make a "good officer", in my opinion.' He went to France later in the same year and was attached to the 60th Trench Mortar Battery (20th Division), which brought a temporary promotion to Lieutenant as he was in command of two hundred men. On 16th



September 1916 George was wounded in the left hand by a shell fragment. Although the wound was slight, it brought him back to England for two months, however he also had to revert to the rank of Second Lieutenant. After his return to France, at the start of April 1917 he was attached to the 13th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, the 4th Hull Pals known as 'T'Others', joining them near Arras where the British Spring Offensive was about to commence.

On the night of 29th-30th April the 13/East Yorkshires took over the front line opposite the German-held village of Oppy. During the next day they were bombarded with gas shells, and also repulsed an attack with grenades and rifle grenades. Late on the night of 2nd May they were withdrawn to provide carrying parties for the attack due to commence early the following morning. The Battalion War Diary devotes a single line to 2nd May's activities and it neglects to report that two officers and seven other ranks were killed. There is evidence they may have died in an unrecorded action involving grenades. One of them, Second Lieutenant Hamm, was a bombing officer. Macaulay had also performed this duty, and one of the dead privates is also recorded to have been throwing bombs and was killed while carrying off the wounded. Four of the dead including George Macaulay were buried in Bailleul Sunken Road Cemetery, then later re-buried in Orchard Dump Cemetery.





## Acknowledgements:

George's photo is from the OBA memorial book, with thanks to BGS and the OBA. The family history was researched using Ancestry.com; www.cwgc.com gives his parents. There are partial biographies of him based on newspaper reports at <<http://westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-people/memorials/1646-the-university-of-leeds-otc-and-roll-of-honour.html>> (accessed 30-8-2016) and <[http://dinsdalelist.co.uk/officers/?zoom=15&is\\_mile=0&directory\\_radius=0&sort=field\\_forename&keywords=Macaulay](http://dinsdalelist.co.uk/officers/?zoom=15&is_mile=0&directory_radius=0&sort=field_forename&keywords=Macaulay)> (accessed 18-4-2017). His record at BGS is from the Annual Reports for 1904-1908. For his career at Rossall School I am grateful to Claire Moore, the Archivist, who also sent the photo of the House Cricket cup-winning team below. There is a picture of his prize book at <<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/media/viewer/viewer/a912d0f0-1771-49df-b1ef-441cd78a825c/80602818/46588396726>>. For cricket, the Yorkshire Evening Post 30-5-1913 and 7-6-1913 (findmypast.co.uk).

This account of Macaulay's military career is based mainly on his file in the National Archives, WO339-43169. The dates of promotions are at <<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29063/page/1332/data.pdf>> and <<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29337/supplement/10484/data.pdf>>. The War Diary for the 13/East Yorkshires is available from Ancestry.com where it is catalogued among 10th, 11th and 12th battalion war diaries. I was alerted to the possible circumstances of his death by reading the discussions at <<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?/topic/206449-east-yorkshire-regiments-at-opypy-wood/&>> (accessed 18-4-2016), and searching the 13/East Yorkshires dead for 2nd May on <[www.cwgc.com](http://www.cwgc.com)> and in Soldiers Who Died in the Great War. For Oppy Wood, see <[http://www.1914-1918.net/gaz\\_opypy.html](http://www.1914-1918.net/gaz_opypy.html)> (accessed 18-4-2017).

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) in April 2017.

