

ARTHUR MAURICE HEAP



1st May 1917

1895-1917 Aged 21

**Lance Corporal 35734, 9th (Service)
Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light
Infantry.**

Maurice Heap was the eldest child and only son of Arthur William Heap and Selina Wooller. The family were from Bowling, south Bradford, and his parents had lived opposite each other on Usher Street all their lives. They married in 1893, and Maurice was born at the end of October 1895. A sister baptized Jesse followed four years later. Arthur William was described in the censuses as a yarn merchant and a buyer, and as an employer. However, another record describes him as a warehouseman. Both families attended the Prospect Wesleyan Chapel in Bowling and Maurice probably went to the Sunday School. He went to Bradford Grammar School in 1909, shortly before his fourteenth birthday, and he would be there for two years in Form IVth Modern lower and Vth Modern middle. After his first year he won the Divinity Prize, and he showed some aptitude for French and German. What he did when he left school aged fifteen is not known—he possibly worked for his father. In the summer of 1914 he played cricket for Harcourt Liberal Club and for Prospect Wesleyan Chapel in the Bradford and District Sunday School League, as both batsman and bowler.

When the war began Maurice was still not nineteen. Only three facts are known about his service. He did not serve overseas until 1916 so it seems he was not among the early volunteers and likely waited until the government began to apply compulsion by means of the Group (Derby) Scheme in 1915, followed by conscription in 1916. He trained in 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion of the West Riding Regiment, which was stationed in the Tyne defences around Newcastle. The scale of losses during the Somme fighting and after meant that men were no longer posted to their 'home' regiment. When Heap was sent overseas he was posted to the 9th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. On the first day of the Somme on 1st July this battalion had overrun two lines of German trenches near Fricourt in ten minutes, but at a cost of 475 casualties, of whom 145 were killed. They were in action again in



September. The battalion had to be rebuilt and Maurice probably joined with a draft of replacements later in 1916 or in 1917. He was appointed Lance Corporal, the first rung on the promotion ladder with responsibility for the discipline of a handful of men.

Heap survived the first day of the Battle of Arras on 9th April 1917 when his battalion attacked the Hindenburg Line at 3.52 pm in the afternoon. They were held up at the main belt of German barbed wire, which was not cut, and lost one in three of the 500 men who went into action. The 9/KOYLI were relieved, then on 25th April returned to the trenches to hold a stretch of the Hindenburg front and support line captured earlier in the month. The Germans were on the far side of a trench block, a barricade. On 28th April the British extended their lodgement by 150 yards at the cost of fifty casualties. At 4.00 am on the 29th they were driven back by a German counter-attack before retaking the lost position. Maurice died on 1st May of wounds probably received in the fighting of 28th or 29th April. He must have died at a dressing station or a Casualty Clearing Station—but since his body was later moved the original location of his burial is unknown. His body now lies in Bailleul Road East Cemetery, near Arras.



Acknowledgements:

Arthur Maurice Heap's photo is courtesy of BGS and the OBA from the memorial book. The family history was researched using census and non-conformist records for West Yorkshire, available on Ancestry.com. Arthur William Heap's occupation is given in the 1901 and 1911 censuses—curiously, Kelly's Directory of Bradford 1912 lists him as 'warehouseman'. I have called him Maurice to differentiate from his father. His school record is from the BGS Annual Reports for 1910 and 1911. The Medal Index Card supplies two of the three facts about his service. His service number suggests he did not join early in the war (<<http://armyservicenumbers.blogspot.co.uk/2009/08/duke-of-wellingtons-west-riding.html>> accessed 14-4-2017). For the 9/KOYLI, <<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-british-infantry-regiments-of-1914-1918/kings-own-yorkshire-light-infantry/>>. The South African novelist Stuart Cloete served with this battalion at the Somme (reference to Stuart Cloete, *A Victorian Son, an autobiography*, Collins, London, 1972 from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Own_Yorkshire_Light_Infantry> accessed 17-4-2017). For the lance corporal, <<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?/topic/158448-duties-of-a-lance-corporal-in-a-training-battalion/>> for Lance Corporal> accessed 17-4-2017.

The battalion war diary of the 9/KOYLI is available on Ancestry.com. Unlike some examples of the genre, it gives a detailed account of the battalion's actions. My account of its service in April 1917 is taken from it. Soldiers Died in the Great War states that Maurice died of wounds (the third fact). The Grave Registration Report (<<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/312718/HEAP,%20ARTHUR%20MAURICE>>) records his re-burial at Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St. Laurent Blangy, Arras, Plot II. Row E grave 39. He is also remembered on the family plot (<<https://www.twgpp.org/photograph/view/1229486>Cemetery: Bradford (Bowling) Cemetery>). Photograph by Geoff Thorndike.

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

