

FRED RUSHFORTH



21st September 1918

1898-1918 Aged 19



Private 45270, 12th Battalion London Regiment (The Rangers) (affiliated to King's Royal Rifle Corps).

Fred Rushforth was one of the young conscripts who formed the bulk of the British Army by 1918 and who won the war. He was born in Manningham, probably in November 1898. His father John Albert Rushforth was a portrait painter in 1891 before he became an inspector for the National Telephone Company. His mother Ada Annie Shepherd lived in Hull before she moved to Bradford. They married at the end of 1897 and would have four children, of whom Fred was the eldest. They lived in Manningham. Fred probably went to the Bradford Grammar School on a scholarship, starting in 1909 shortly before he was eleven. He remained at the school for five years, leaving in July 1914. His final year was in the Matriculation Form. Of twenty-six pupils in this form fifteen would serve in the war seven would be killed.

After he left school Fred went to work for a woollen cloth merchant, Messrs. A. Walker & Co. Ltd. whose premises were on Leeds Road. It is presumed that he was a clerk. He was called up on 11th December 1917, an event which normally occurred when a recruit reached the age of eighteen years and one month. He was assigned to the King's Royal Rifle Corps and may have received his basic and specialist training at Wimbledon. Fred was posted overseas when he reached eighteen and a half, the age recently having been reduced by six months. He was posted to 12th Battalion London Regiment, The Rangers. He was probably part of the draft of 227 men and six officers who joined from the King's Royal Rifle Corps on 19th August to replace battle casualties. In the last week of August the Rangers made several attacks along the north bank of the River Somme, advancing against weakening German resistance although at the cost of nearly 300 casualties. On 6th September an advance of more than four miles was made before resistance stiffened when the elite German Alpine Corps was

brought into the line.

At 5.30 on the morning of 21st September the Rangers with 2/10th Battalion London Regiment attacked the Dados Loop system of trenches to the north-east of Epehy. They came under a German barrage soon after leaving their trench, and then intense machine-gun fire from the flanks as the attacks on either side had been held up. Casualties were very heavy and stretcher bearers worked all night to bring in the wounded. Fred Rushforth was wounded during the course of the advance and died shortly afterwards. The Rangers lost thirty-two men killed. Fred was reported missing and on 22nd November his parents published a request for information from anyone having a relative in the same regiment. He was buried in Pigeon Ravine Cemetery at Epehy.

Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



Acknowledgements:

Fred's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for 1910-11 to 1914. The 12/ London War Diary (Piece 3009/8: 1/12 Battalion London Regiment (1918 Feb - 1919 May) 58th Division 175 Brigade, read on Ancestry.com) lacks detail. For the 21st September 1918 attack I used *The Rangers' Historical Records From 1859 to the Conclusion of the Great War*, edited by Captain A. V. Wheeler-Holohan and Captain G. M. G. Wyatt (Harrison and Sons, London; 1921) (<https://archive.org/stream/rangershistorica00whee/rangershistorica00whee_djvu.txt>) and the 2/10th Battalion London Regiment War Diary (Piece 3009/5: 2/10 Battalion London Regiment (1917 Feb - 1919 Mar), fol 156., Ancestry.com). The position attacked can be located on trench map 57C.SE (22.9.1918) X.21-22.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in September 2018. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.