

George Henry Pilgrim Private Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line 9th (Queens Royal) Lancers Service no. 10355



Date of birth	Date KIA	Age
June 6 th 1888	27 March 1918	29

Background: George Henry Pilgrim

George was the eldest of 9 children of Langford Moor-born labourer Thomas (Tom) Richard Pilgrim (1860 – 1939) and Emily née Elston Pilgrim (1868 - 1924). In 1911 Tom was a roadman for the district council. However, when his son, William, married in St John Baptist in 1913, Tom was down as 'shepherd' on the register.

Moor

The 1901 Census for Langford records:

Thomas Pilgrim	40 yrs	Horseman on Farm	b. Langford
Emily	33yrs	b. North Wheatley	
George H	12yrs	b. Langford Moor	
William	11yrs	b. North Wheatley	
Edith	5yrs	b. Brough	
Olive	1yr	b. Brough	
	Emily George H William Edith	Emily33yrsGeorge H12yrsWilliam11yrsEdith5yrs	George H12yrsb. Langford MoorWilliam11yrsb. North WheatleyEdith5yrsb. Brough

Further children born and baptised in Winthorpe are: Robert Edward (1902) Elsie Maud (1904-1994) Alice Ivy (1908-1965) and Kathleen (1910-1978).

In 1911 George has left home and was a Gardener/Domestic at Tatton Park on the Tatton Hall Estate, Knutsford, Cheshire, & sharing 3 rooms in 'The Stables' with the four other gardeners. His address on enlistment, however, was Dorset.

He was a member of Brough Choir for 'many years.' – See extract from May 1918 South Collingham Parish Newsletter on p 3.

Ancestry.co.uk shows that George's brother, William, and his wife Lucy née Haughton, emigrated to Canada in 1913 – one of many villagers who made the break with England. William also enlisted in the war & survived. He died in Oakville, Ontario 1953.

Military History: Private George Pilgrim

George enlisted in Dorchester on May 15th, 1915. The Regiment's Nominal Roll shows he was in hospital on 11th Nov 1916 (no reason given) and re-joined the unit on 30th Dec 1916¹.

The 9th Lancers

Were mobilised to France in August 1914 as part of the 2nd Cavalry Division which became the 1st Cavalry Division in September 1914. They remained on the Western Front throughout the War. Although a horse mounted regiment, they often fought as infantry. Involvement in major operations from 1915 when George was involved included:

1915

Winter Operations 1914-15 The Battles of Ypres 1915 ("Second Ypres")

1916

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette (a phase of the Battles of the Somme 1916)

1917

The First Battle of the Scarpe (9 - 12 April, a phase of the Arras Offensive) The Tank Attack (20 - 21 November, a phase of the Cambrai Operations) The capture of Bourlon Wood (24 - 26 November, a phase of the Cambrai Operations) The German counterattacks (30 November - 3 December, a phase of the Cambrai Operations)

1918

The Battle of St Quentin (21 -23 March, a phase of the of the First Battles of the Somme in which the Division was engaged until 1 April)

On 24 March 1918 each brigade and the machine gun squadron provided a regiment to be constituted as a "Dismounted Division". These units returned to 1st Cavalry Division two days later.

The Battle of Bapaume (24 - 25 March, a phase of the of the First Battles of the Somme) The Battle of Rosières (26 - 27 March, a phase of the of the First Battles of the Somme)

On the day and in the area that George Pilgrim died on 27th March 1918 ... "A confused

series of vicious actions followed involving six British Divisions who were attacked from the

front, flank and rear by eleven German Divisions. Ordered 'to hold the line at all costs',

 $^{^1}$ Via email to HP from the Curator, 9/12 $^{\rm th}$ lancers Museum, Derby 5 $^{\rm th}$ Feb 2018 Page ${\bf 2}$ of ${\bf 6}$

bitter fighting saw trapped British units driven to attempt difficult retirements through German-held positions but Rosières temporarily, held firm".

Many had to escape back through German lines.

However, George Pilgrim is recorded as being killed near to Morlancourt. The scene of an allied counter-offensive on the next day. JL

George Pilgrim is Remembered on:

- **O** Pozieres Memorial, Somme Panel 4 B (implying body never recovered)
- **O** Balderton St. Giles Church War Memorial as G H PILGRIM Tpr. Lancers
- South Collingham St John's Church Parishioners War Memorial as G H PILGRIM Private 9th (Queens Royal) Lancers
- South Collingham St John's Church Roll of Honour War Memorial as George Henry PILGRIM

Canterbury Cathedral 9th Queens Royal Lancers War Memorial and Roll of Honour Sources:

http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/People/Details/21057

http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/1586813/PILGRIM,%20GEORGE%20HENRY

UK Soldiers died in the Great War, 1914-1919 www.ancsetry.co.uk

The Long, Long Trail <u>http://www.1914-1918.net/1cavdiv.htm</u> Rosières. http://www.cwgc.org/spring1918/content.asp?menuid=34&submenuid=35&id=71&menun ame=Rosi%E8res&menu=subsub

Operation Michael http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Michael

http://www.britishpathe.com/video/famous-9th-lancers-regiment

Pages 1-3 researched by Jeremy Lodge 2014

Additional Information: George H. Pilgrim

Added from Trevor Frecknall's 'Collingham in the Great War':

'The fact that George (or Harry as he was universally known) is remembered on the war memorials inside the churches in Langford, Balderton, South

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Collingham and Minterne Magna in Dorset demonstrates how he had always been willing to travel in search of work – just like his father, Tom, a labourer. Henry, as he preferred to be known, took to gardening and had branched out as far as Tatton Park, near Knutsford, Cheshire, by the time of the 1911 census – and was in Dorset by the time he enlisted in The Great War.' - TF²

has come to hand that Harry Pilgrim was killed on an early date of the present great German offensive. For many years he was a most enthusiastic member of Brough Church Choir and of Mr. Cecil Woolley's Bible Class. He was very popular with his associates and his death will be greatly deplored by all who knew him. R I.P.

Above: Rev Maxwell's tribute to George Pilgrim in his May 2018 newsletter c/o Collingham District Local History Society archives Ref: EC/B/50. Cecil Woolley founded the church and school at Brough.

Right: George Pilgrim's name on the Minterne Magna War Memorial in St Andrew's Church, Minterne Magna, Dorset.

This suggests George Pilgrim's employment upon enlistment was perhaps at the splendid Minterne House, home of the Churchills in the 1600s and 1700s and later owned by the Digbys. The 10th Baron Digby (1846-1920) was in residence during the war. Lord Henry Digby still owns the house today. The church is less than a mile from Minterne House and Gardens.

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The 9th Lancers in action March 27th 1918

The following is a scanned extract from the regimental history written by Major E W Sheppard in 1936 kindly forwarded by Angela Tarnowski, Curator of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers Museum. It describes the attack from paragraph 2 onwards in which George Pilgrim (in 'C' Squadron) was killed:

Beale-Browne, consisting of 150 men from each of the three brigades of the 1st Cavalry Division. This thin array was extended across the peninsula between the Somme and the Ancre from Sailly le Sec to Mericourt l'Abbe early on the 26th, and the

whole of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade dismounted party, as soon as it was remounted at Buire, was sent up to reinforce it. At 7 p.m. the Ninth was at Mericourt, where they spent the night.

The morning of March 27th dawned on a situation no less grave than on the preceding day. The gap between the armies had been discovered and penetrated by the Germans, who were about to cross in force to the south bank of the Somme well behind the Fifth Army's left. The 1st Cavalry Division was now under the Third Army, with a mission merely of holding the line across the Somme-Ancre peninsula already taken up, but an attempt was to be made to regain touch with the troops on the far side of the Somme.

Just at dawn the Ninth, saddled up and ready for action, were ordered to establish themselves on the high ground south-east of Treux. Forming in

9th Lancers In Action at Treux.

Cavalry

again sent

Forward.

line of troop columns, "A" Squadron on the right, "C" in the centre and "B" on the left, they galloped the ridge and dismounted to take post, their right on the Bray—Corbie road, their left under cover in a wood south of Treux. Here they

became a target for heavy enemy machine-gun fire, and "A" Squadron, enfiladed from the south, had to struggle back across open downland and reform at right-angles to its old front in closer touch with "C." The regiment's lines were by now woefully thin, but still highly resilient, as some Germans who tried to set up machine guns on the high ground above the line held by "C" Squadron soon found ; twice they had to retreat at speed, and their continuous sniping, shelling, and mortar bombardment of "C" and "B" Squadrons' positions brought them no profit at all. Soon after dark the regiment was once more ordered to evacuate its stubbornly held positions, and withdraw to Hamelet. Its losses had been considerable ; Lieutenant C. F. Foster and 7 men had been killed and 1 officer and 12 other ranks wounded or missing. Thanks to the heroic efforts of Captain Lilly and his helpers, all the wounded were got away. Lieutenant-Colonel Durand, who had rejoined and resumed command on the 25th, had now only six other officers left with the regiment.

Above: The account shows that George Pilgrim was one of 7 men killed in fighting that day.

Sources in additional information:

- Insignia and regimental history extract kindly supplied by Angela Tarnowski of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers Museum, Derby
- Milterne House.org (website)
- Collingham and District Local History Society (South Collingham Parish Newsletter)
- T Frecknall 'Collingham and District in the Great War.'

Visit:

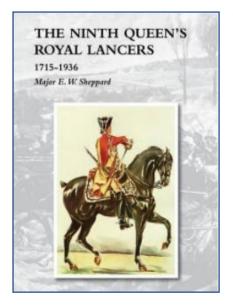
9th/12th Royal Lancers Museum, Derby: https://www.9th12thlancersmuseum.org/

Address:

9th/12th Royal Lancers Museum Derby Museum & Art Gallery, The Strand, Derby, DE1 1BS

Tel: 01332 642231

Books:



The Ninth Queen Royal Lancers 1715-1936 by Major E W Sheppard has been reprinted (2015) by Naval Military Press ISBN 10: 1845749782 / ISBN 13: 9781845749781 £28.00



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