



Name of Soldier: **Blundy, George William**

Rank: **Private (Service number 3326)**

Regiment: **4th Battalion, Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own, Yorkshire Regiment**

Date of birth	Date KIA	Age
Nov 1887	14 th February 1916	28

Background: George W. Blundy

George William Blundy was born in Harby in 1888. His father, George, was a tailor and his mother, Eliza (b 1860), a seamstress. Both were also born in Harby as was the elder brother, Percy (born 1886). Younger brother, Ronald E, and sister, Kathleen May, were both born in North Collingham (in 1891 & 1888 respectively) so they must have moved from Harby to Collingham c 1889/1890. In 1901 the family lived on High Street, George's father having died in May 1900.

In the 1901 census Percy (died Lincoln 1966) was a pantry boy in domestic service and George a stableboy (Groom).

In 1911 Eliza and 13-year old Kathleen lived in a 4-bedroomed house on Queen Street.

In 1911, George was a groom [or footman?] at Skelton Castle, Skelton-in-Cleveland, North Yorkshire, from where he volunteered and enrolled as a Private (Service number 3326) in the 1/4th Battalion, Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own, Yorkshire Regiment (formerly the Yorkshire Hussars).

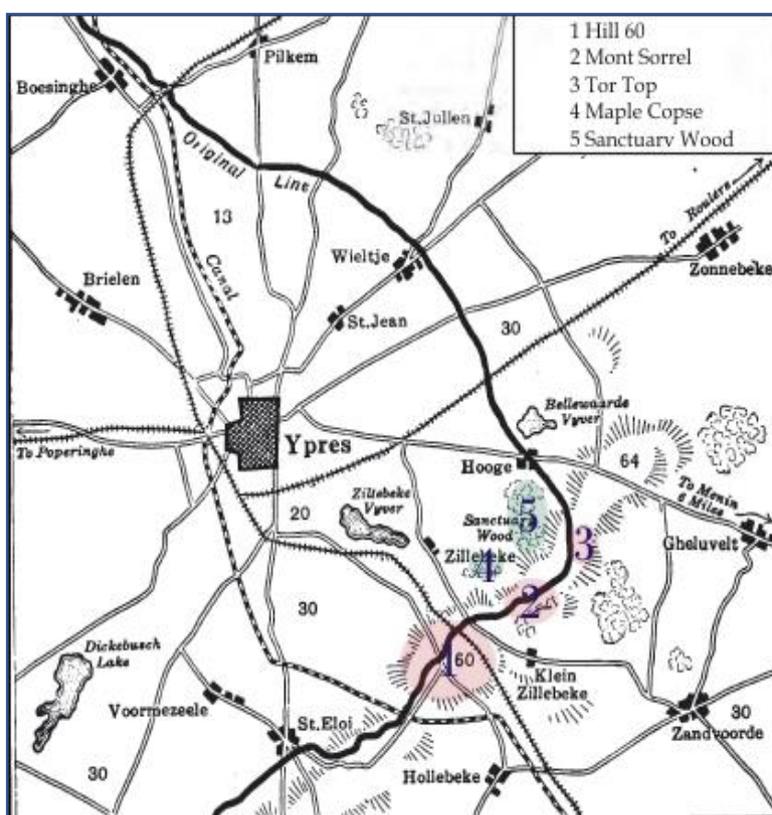
Military History: Private George Blundy

George Blundy went to France in October 1915. On 14 February 1916, the Battalion were defending Hill 60, some 2km South East of Ypres. This hill was man-made, some 50 yards high and 250 yards long, having been created when a nearby railway cutting was dug some years previously. One soldier wrote home "We have had a black week. The 14th February opened very calm, it was just like a Spring day, but suddenly the air became alive with Taubes

(German Aircraft) - at least 22 - who dropped bombs right and left, doing a lot of damage and knocking out a number of soldiers. After this they shelled our trenches right and left. It was very heavy and large number of men were driven into the centre, which was clear of shells. A number of men got blown into the air and on reaching the ground got buried with the debris, whilst others suffered severely."

A regimental report states: "14th February, The dump was shelled at intervals during the day, but everything was comparatively quiet until 3 p.m when the Germans began to bombard. A barrage was fired down the cutting and also between Verbranden Molen and the Dump.

To the right of the Battalion the shelling appeared to be slightly more heavy, if possible. At 5 p.m the enemy exploded a Mine under H1 bombing sap, but did not attempt to occupy the crater it caused. The bombardment continued until 8 p.m, when it slackened slightly. It was then possible to take account of the damage done by the Germans. 13 men had been killed and 5 men badly



Plan of Hill 60 (highlighted in pink) Source: Creative commons map adapted from 'The Literary Digest of the First World War' by Funk & Wagnalls 1919

bruised by the explosion of the mine.

Trenches 37L and 38 were breached in two places and the Lewis Gun in 38 trench buried, but was dug out during the height of the bombardment. The edge of the crater was immediately held after the explosion and work commenced digging through to it.

Support and all communication trenches were badly knocked about. Two men were dug out alive from the trench near the crater and one man picked up alive after having been blown 40 yards. He died soon after he had been brought in.”¹

George William Blundy is listed as one of 19 killed in action at this location on 14th February 1916.

Memorials

George William Blundy is buried with his comrades at the nearby Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Location: II.K.12

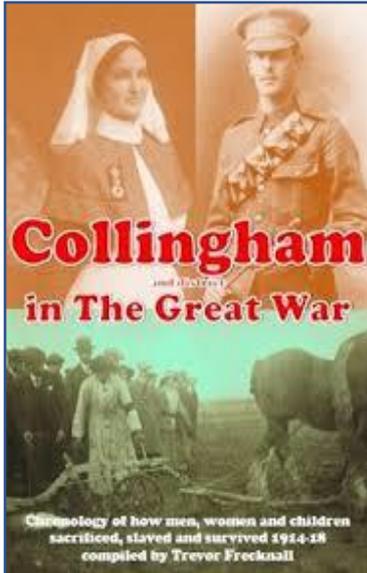
He is also remembered on the North Collingham, Skelton-in-Cleveland and the Regimental (Richmond) memorials.



George Blundy's name on the Skelton War Memorial

Above: Photo by Simon Armstrong April 2017 courtesy of War Memorials Online

¹ Source: <http://4thyorkshires.com/020Bn1916.html>



Extract from Trevor Frecknall's book, **'Collingham & District during The Great War'** p55-56:

'George William Blundy's harsh life was brutally ended in the filthy flooded trenches around Ypres. Born in Harby in 1888, the second of four children, he had to leave North Collingham school at the age of 13 [c 1901] and become a stable boy for Mr Constable Curtis (at Langford hall) to help his widowed mother Eliza (b 1861) keep the wolf from the door at their cottage on High Street.

Presently, she also had an income from journeyman Frank Harrison (born 1858 Ruskington) as she struggled to rear George, Percy, Ronald and Kathleen. George moved to Ossington Hall to work in the service of William Dennison JP and then became a footman among the 16 live-in servants at Skelton Castle, Cleveland. He had been there for five years when he enlisted in the Territorials in 1915 [so since 1910] and was sent to the battlefield in October 1915 in the 4th Batt Alexandra Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment).

His mother received the news that George had been killed from Mrs Elizabeth Sophia Myther Wharton, wife of Wm Henry Anthony Wharton², wealthy occupier of Skelton Castle, who recalled in her letter George had enlisted 'with the greatest pleasure.'

'He thought of his mother but he knew it was his duty. He died a noble death for his country. An official letter arrived a few days later, informing Eliza that George had been killed by an explosion of a mine. The writer apologised for the delay, explaining that all the officers had been killed in the same explosion.'

Percy served in the 5th Lancers and Ronald in the Grenadier Guards.'

Skelton Castle

² William Wharton (1859-1938) was Commanding Officer of the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (a regiment better known as the Green Howards) prior to the outbreak of the Great War. Staff like George Blundy would have had little choice but to enlist.



Left: post card of Skelton Castle 1910 when George Blundy was a footman

there. The house was built on the grounds of the previous castle by John Wharton, MP for Beverley, between 1788 and 1817. The property remains in the hands of the Wharton family. Skelton is 10 miles east of Middlesbrough and near the foot of the Cleveland Hills.

Sources:

With thanks to Jeremy Lodge for his research (2014)

Added: Trevor Frecknall 'Collingham in the Great War' (2015)

Skelton in Cleveland History Society website:

<http://www.skeltonincleveland.com/WarI.1.BlundyGW.html>

War Memorials Online website: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/about-us/>

East Trent Genealogy database: <http://www.easttrentgenealogy.co.uk/>

Ancestry.co.uk

