

Walter Lennox Andrews

Born Dawlish 2 April 1888

Private,

Service No: 2643

Died 23 March, 1918, aged 29

Household Cavalry, 20th Hussars

Walter Lennox Andrews was the grandson of John Andrews, a labourer who lived in South Brent in a rural community where people earned a living as thatchers, carpenters, blacksmiths, or working the land.

John Andrews (1823-1859) and Sarah Maunder (1826-1883) had a son, William Henry Andrews who was born in South Brent in 1847 (GRO ref Totnes, 1847, Apr – Jun, Vol 9, p 414).

William Henry Andrews became a boot and shoe maker and was set up at 9 Brook Street, Dawlish in 1871.

He married twice, first to Caroline Elizabeth Chown. She was the daughter of Henry Chown(1811-1874) and Mary Jarves(1811-1898) and was born in Exminster in 1846. Henry was also an agricultural labourer.

In 1871 Caroline Elizabeth Chown was a general servant to a household at 8 Marine Parade, Dawlish.

William H Andrews married Caroline Elizabeth Chown in 1872 (GRO ref 1872 Oct-Dec, St Thomas, vol 5b, p 135) and they had three children, Ernest John, Frederick George and Edward A.

Caroline Elizabeth Andrews died in the early summer of 1879 (GRO ref Newton Abbot, 1879, Apr-June, vol 5b, p 90), leaving William Andrews to bring up three young sons.

William Andrews married again in early 1880 to Maria Grant (GRO ref Newton Abbot, 1880, Jan-Mar, vol 5b, p 203). Maria Grant was born in Sandford, near Crediton in 1854 to George and Maria Grant who had 5 daughters and 2 sons.

In the 1881 census William and Maria Andrews were living at The Park, Park Road, Dawlish with four children, three from his first marriage and William Francis, 3 weeks old.

In 1891 the household was at 2 Princes Street with five additional children:

Ernest John,	1874 -
Frederick George,	1875 -
Edward A	1877 -

William Francis,	1881 - 1951
Bessie Florence	1882 -
Sydney Wallis Henry	1884 -
Archibald Charles	1887 -

Walter Lennox	1888-1918 (GRO ref 1888 Apr-Jun, Newton Abbot, vol 5b, p110)
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Lilian E M	1890 -
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By the next census two further children had joined them:

Olive Irene	1892 -
Ethelwyn	1895 -

Their father, William Henry Andrews died in early 1896 (GRO ref Newton Abbot, 1896, Jan – Mar, vol 5b, p 86).

In 1901 their widowed mother, Maria Andrews, was a laundress working in Dawlish Cottage Hospital. She may have been recorded there by the census-taker, but it may be assumed that the family were with their sister Bessie Florence, now 18, at 24 Chapel Street. Bessie was a

general domestic worker and Archibald, 14, was a baker of bread. The younger children, **Walter**, Lily, Olive and Ethelwyn were still at school.

In 1911 Maria was running a boarding house at Clarence House, Golden Terrace with her daughter Ethelwyn, where they had five lodgers, two of which worked on the railway.

Maria Andrews appears to have predeceased Walter as she is not named in the Army Register of Soldiers' Effects. There are two registered deaths of Maria Andrews in the Newton Abbot district but the more likely appears to be registered in 1915, Jan-Mar quarter, vol 5b, page 196, with an age at death of 60.

Walter Andrews became a labourer in the Engineering Dept, Dawlish station. His photo appears in the GWR staff magazine 1918/06/92 and in 1918/12/182. He is recorded in the GWR Roll of Honour War Memorial, a copy of which can be seen at Exeter St David's station on Platform 5.

It is not known when **Walter Andrews** left the railway employment but he appears next in the 14th King's Hussars in India at the time of the 1911 census. He is shown as being a Private, aged 24 and born in Dawlish.

The 14th King's Hussars were sent abroad once more, in 1906. They were sent to Bangalore in India, remaining there until 1911 when they moved to Mhow. In that year the establishment included a two-gun Maxim machine-gun section in addition to the four sabre squadrons. The sabre in question was replaced by a new pattern sword, straight-bladed and longer, that remained in use by the British cavalry for the rest of the 20th century and beyond.

When the Great War broke out in 1914 the 14th were declared to be fit to take the field but apart from a move to the unhealthy climate of Meerut in November 1914 there was, frustratingly, no sign of mobilisation. It was not until 27 Oct 1915 that they received the order to mobilise for Mesopotamia. They embarked at Karachi on 8 Nov in three ships, with a strength of 18 officers, 443 rank and file and 490 horses.

At some point, perhaps at the move from India, **Walter Andrews** was transferred to the Household Cavalry, 20th Hussars.

The Household Cavalry, 20th Hussars regiment was based in Colchester at the start of the First World War and landed in France as part of the 5th Cavalry Brigade in the 2nd Cavalry Division in August 1914. The regiment saw action at the Battle of Mons in August 1914 and both the First Battle of the Marne and the First Battle of the Aisne in September 1914. It went on to fight at the First Battle of Ypres in October 1914, the Battle of Arras in April 1917 and the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917.

It later took part in defending the German Spring Offensive in 1918 when **Walter Andrews** lost his life. The following extract from Wikipedia provides an account of the general situation.

'The 1918 **Spring Offensive** or ***Kaiserschlacht*** (*Kaiser's Battle*), also known as the **Ludendorff Offensive**, was a series of German attacks along the Western Front, beginning on 21st March 1918, which marked the deepest advances by either side since 1914. The Germans had realised that their only remaining chance of victory was to defeat the Allies before the overwhelming human and material resources of the United States could be fully deployed. They also had the temporary advantage in numbers

afforded by the nearly 50 divisions freed by the Russian surrender (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk).'

'There were four German offensives, codenamed *Michael*, *Georgette*, *Gneisenau* and *Blücher-Yorck*. *Michael* was the main attack, which was intended to break through the Allied lines, outflank the British forces which held the front from the Somme river to the English Channel and defeat the British Army. Once this was achieved, it was hoped that the French would seek armistice terms. The other offensives were subsidiary to *Michael* and were designed to divert Allied forces from the main offensive on the Somme. No clear objective was established before the start of the offensives and once the operations were underway, the targets of the attacks were constantly changed according to the battlefield (tactical) situation. The Allies concentrated their main forces in the essential areas (the approaches to the Channel Ports and the rail junction of Amiens), while leaving strategically worthless ground, devastated by years of combat, lightly defended.

The Germans were unable to move supplies and reinforcements fast enough to maintain their advance. The fast-moving stormtroopers leading the attack could not carry enough food and ammunition to sustain themselves for long and all the German offensives petered out, in part through lack of supplies.'

'By late April 1918, the danger of a German breakthrough had passed. The German Army had suffered heavy casualties and now occupied ground of dubious value which would prove impossible to hold with such depleted units. In August 1918, the Allies began a counter-offensive with the support of 1–2 million fresh American troops and using new artillery techniques and operational methods. This Hundred Days Offensive resulted in the Germans retreating or being driven from all of the ground taken in the Spring Offensive, the collapse of the Hindenburg Line and the capitulation of the German Empire that November.'

The 20th Hussars war diary puts them on 20th March 1918 near JUSSY, between St QUENTIN and SOISSONS.

At 4.30pm on the 20th a wire was received instructing 'prepare for attack'.

They were stood to from dawn on the 21st and a bombardment of JUSSY started at 4.30am. At 1.30pm the troops cleared out of the village due to increased shelling. At 3.15pm Major Little led the Royal Scots Guards (RSG) and 20th Hussars Companies across the CROZAT canal (*Modern Canal de Saint Quentin*) to LIZEROLLES (to the north-east). They established H.Q.s in a railway embankment on the southern side of LIZEROLLES, facing east. At 6.45pm the 54th Infantry Brigade arrived from the south and dug in facing north across their lines. Retirement of the whole line across the CROZAT Canal was ordered to commence at 12 midnight with the 5th Cavalry Brigade to cover the retirement. *Casualties on the 21st were 2 Other Ranks (O.R.) killed in action, 5 O.R. wounded.*

At 2am on the 22nd the units on left and right flanks withdrew, followed at 3am by the RSG and 20th Hussars, through the line of the railway which was held by the Royal Lancers and 3

machine-guns. All were across the canal by 4.15am, "without molestation". "Marched to FAILLOUEL arrived 6am." (*Modern Frieres-Faillouel lies to the south of Jussy and about 1km to the west of the canal*)

At 10.30 they turned out to an alarm which proved to be false, that the enemy had crossed the canal. "Turned out again at 1.45pm and moved to Sandpits halfway between JUSSY and FAILLOUEL to be ready to make a counter-attack if enemy succeeded in crossing canal as the bridges over it were not completely broken." "The enemy did cross at MENNESSIS on the right (*facing Faillouel on the canal*) and worked along the canal into JUSSY."

At 7.15pm 8 machine-guns were posted on a line south of the railway which runs on the southern edge of JUSSY and the 12th Royal Lancers moved up into support at Sandpits where 43rd Infantry Brigade H.Q.s were established. *Casualties on the 22nd were 3 Other Ranks killed in action, 9 O.R. wounded in action, 2 O.R. Missing.*

At 3am on the 23rd an assessment of the situation placed some enemy in JUSSY, and some dispersal of available troops was made. At 6am infantry reported JUSSY clear of enemy after a small counter-attack. There had been, "very heavy trench mortar bombardment all night and morning and by 8am enemy reached line of railway south of JUSSY. At the same time enemy reported to have broken through on the right in direction of MENNESSIS."

At 11.30am a small force was sent to stop troops who were retiring under fire and the "43rd Inf Bde H.Q. and the 5th Cav Bde H.Q. were moved back to a line south of DETROIT BLEU at 12 noon." This lies south-west of JUSSY. The small force was about to mount a counter-attack on the right flank when the enemy "were seen pouring round the left flank." The line of the FLAVY-LE-MARTEL to FAILLOUEL road was held for a further two hours before retiring to FAILLOUEL "where touch was established with 43rd Cav Bde on right. Left still "in the air". About 3pm enemy were still pouring round left so retired to edge of large wood to S.W. of FAILLOUEL."

After an hour there they "withdrew through a few French troops onto main CUGNY-UGNY road where all stragglers had been collected and made to dig in. Arrived 7pm and billeted for night behind infantry at LA NEUVILLE. There has been a thick fog up to about midday on all days since attack commenced."

Casualties on the 23rd were 1 Officer killed in action, 1 Officer Died of Wounds, 1 Officer Wounded in Action, 4 Other Ranks killed in action, 31 O.R. wounded in action, 16 O.R. Missing.

There is no means of knowing how **Walter Andrews** lost his life on 23rd March 1918.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: ANDREWS, WALTER Private 2643 23/03/1918
20th Hussars Panel Ref: Panel 6. [Pozieres Memorial](#), Somme, France

The POZIERES MEMORIAL relates to the period of crisis in March and April 1918 when the Allied Fifth Army was driven back by overwhelming numbers across the former Somme battlefields, and the months that followed before the Advance to Victory, which began on 8 August 1918. The Memorial commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 of the South African Forces who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from 21 March to 7 August 1918. The Corps and Regiments most largely represented are The Rifle Brigade with over 600 names, The Durham Light Infantry with approximately 600 names, the Machine Gun Corps with over 500, The Manchester Regiment with approximately 500 and The Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery with over 400 names.

His Death Grant (£9. 12s. 5d) and War Gratuity (£21.0s.0d) were paid to his sister and sole legatee Ethel F Andrews.

