

Henry Alfred Hogarth BREN

Born Leeds 21 February 1892 Died France 9 September 1916, aged 24
Lieutenant Leinster Regiment, 4th Battalion (Special Reserve)

Henry A H Bren was the second son of Henry Alfred Bren (1855-1930) and Georgiana Elizabeth (nee Cole) (1859-1938).

H A Bren was born in Hopai, Jaffna, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and he married G E Cole on 30 October 1885 in Nasik, Mombay, India. She had been born in Notting Hill, London.

Their first child, Robert Bren (1889-1938) was born in Bombay (now Mumbai) and soon afterwards they returned to Britain where Elsie Muriel Georgiana Bren (1890-1972) was born in Reading, Berkshire. They then moved to Leeds where they were living at 4 Reginald Terrace, Potternewton for the 1891 census and for the birth of **Henry Alfred Hogarth Bren**.

H A Bren was a clergyman (clerk) who was appointed Principal of the Church of England Training College, Swindon Road, Cheltenham and is settled there by the 1901 census. His eldest son, Robert, followed him into the church and the younger son, **Henry A H Bren** appears to have been resident at the College in 1911. He matriculated from Oriel College, Oxford in November 1911.

At this time his mother and siblings are shown at 'Nasik', Holcombe, and that remained their family home until her death in 1938. Note that the house bore the name of the district where they married in 1885.

On the outbreak of War **Henry Alfred Hogarth Bren** joined the Public School's Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment and he was a Private in that regiment when he applied for Appointment to a Commission in the Special Reserve of Officers, stating a preference for the 4th Battalion of the Leinster Regiment (Special Reserve).

He was awarded a Temporary Commission on 7th November 1914.

It appears that he served initially in Ireland for he was admitted to the Military Hospital, Curragh, in October 1915 for 'Nasal obstruction and tonsils', and was declared 'fit for general duties' on 27 January 1916.

He embarked for France on 15th July 1916, but was suffering from Hay Fever by 31st July and admitted to the 7th Stationary Hospital, Boulogne for two weeks, rejoining his unit on 20th August.

His father received a telegram at St Paul's College, Cheltenham dated 16th September, stating, 'Regret to inform you that **Lieut H A H Bren** Leinster Regiment was missing September 9. This does not necessarily mean killed or wounded. Further reports will be sent when received. Kindly notify Casualties War Office full name of officer's father.'

A further telegram reached Rev H Bren, St Paul's College, Cheltenham, dated 4th October, 'Deeply regret to inform you that **Lieut H A H Bren** Leinster Regiment previously reported missing 9 October (*clearly error for September -ed*) now reported killed in action. The Army Council expresses their sympathy.'

Revd Bren moved to Holcombe to retire; he was then 61. He is shown as resident at Holcombe in the 1919 and 1923 Kelly's Directories for Dawlish, living at 'Nasik', Fordens Lane (the first house on the left entering 'Fordens Lane' from the Teignmouth Road).

In Holcombe Church a brass memorial tablet reads as follows:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
HENRY ALFRED HOBART BREN
LIEUT LEINSTER REGIMENT
EXHIBITIONER OF ORIEL COLLEGE OXFORD
WHO FELL AT THE STORMING OF GUILLEMONT AND
GINCHY 9 SEPTEMBER 1916 AGED 24
With Christ which is far better

Wilfrid Miles noted in the British Official History that the defence of Guillemont was judged by some observers, to be the best performance of the war by the German army on the Western Front.

A pause in Anglo-French attacks at the end of August to organise bigger combined attacks, and postponements for bad weather, coincided with the largest counter-attack by the German army in the Battle of the Somme.

Joffre, Foch and Haig abandoned attempts to organise large combined attacks in favour of sequenced army attacks and the capture of the German defences from Cléry on the north bank of the Somme to Guillemont from 3 – 6 September brought the French Sixth and British Fourth armies onto ground which overlooked the German third position.

Rain, congestion and reliefs of tired divisions then forced a pause in French attacks until 12 September. (wikipedia)

Commonwealth War Graves entry:

Bren, Henry Alfred Hogarth, Lieutenant, died 9/9/16 aged 24, Leinster Regiment, 4th Battalion attached to 7th Battalion. Son of Revd Henry Alfred Bren and Mrs Bren of "Nasik", Holcombe, Dawlish, Devon. Recorded on Thiepval Memorial Pier and Face 16c. Thiepval Memorial, The Somme, 80300 Authuille, France.

Bren, Henry Alfred Hogarth, Lieutenant, Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) 4th Battalion, killed in action - Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918

Dawlish War memorial inscription: 3 Memorial tablets St George's Church, Holcombe, Dawlish EX7 0JT

Devon Heritage site info: Not on Dawlish War Memorial.

Last known address: "Nasik", Holcombe, Dawlish

Next of kin: Father, Revd Henry Alfred Bren (ret'd)

References: Holcombe Church memorials. CWGC, Census and BMD records
Officer records at the National Archive, Kew National Probate Calendar records
UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War Ireland's Memorial Records
Birt family tree (ancestry) The **Battle of Guillemont** (3–6 September 1916) see Wikipedia.