

The history of 38th (Welsh) Division

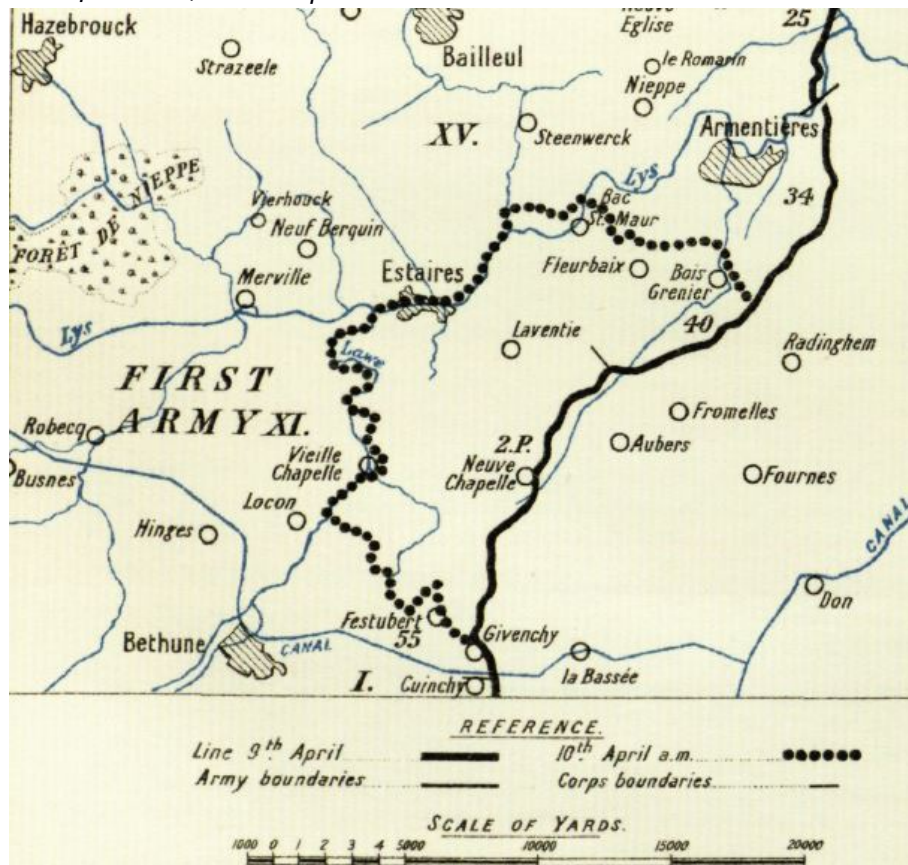
On 10 October 1914 official sanction was given for a Welsh Corps of two Divisions to be raised by public subscription. It is generally described as the “Welsh Army Corps”. The Corps was never actually formed but two months later, this Division was created, originally part of the Fifth New Army and numbered 43rd. However, the Fourth New Army was broken up in April 1915 and the Division was renumbered 38th (Welsh), becoming part of K4. It was formed of many volunteer units that had already been raised by public subscription and private projects. The Division moved to France between 21 November and 6 December 1915 and then remained in France and Flanders throughout the war.

The 11th Battalion was disbanded at the end of January 1918 and on 31 January was at Estaires. The previous week they had spent in sports and relaxation in very warm weather for the winter, and then engaged in digging strong points and connecting them together as the weather suddenly turned very cold. This area became a battlefield on 9-11 April. They were to resist a German attack on ground gained two years earlier in the Battles of the Somme. It may be assumed that the remnants of the 11th Battalion were used to support other Divisions which were under strength, but there is no surviving record.

9 April – 29 April 1918: the Battles of the Lys 1918.

The third German offensive, Operation Georgette, takes place in Flanders with the objective of capturing key railway and supply roads and cutting off British Second Army at Ypres. After initial successes the German attack is once again held after British and French reserves are somehow found and deployed. (Extract from the Long, Long Trail)

Phase: the Battle of Estaires, 9 – 11 April 1918



Dawlish World War One Project

The German break-in on 9th April saw them crossing the river Lys at Bac St Maur and the Lawe near Pont-Riquel.

The Battle of Messines, 10-11 April 1918.

Private Edmund Crook was wounded and taken to 23rd Casualty Clearing Station at Lozinghem where he died on 12th April. The Clearing Station was about 2 km west of Lapugnoy to which the dead were taken, to the Lapugnoy Military Cemetery where his grave can be found with the inscription, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

The Commonwealth War Graves entry reads:

Private CROOK, E C Lapugnoy Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais
Service Number 44386 Died 12/04/1918, Aged 33 11th Bn. South Wales Borderers
Son of William and Elizabeth Crook, of Dawlish, Devon; husband of Gertrude Ellen Crook, of 10, Exe St., Exeter.

The cemetery lies 6 km west of Bethune.

Edmund Charles Crook is listed in the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour and in the Devon Roll of Honour.

The Dawlish War memorial inscription is: CROOK E. C. PTE. S.W.BORD^{RS}

Next of kin: Gertrude Ellen Crook, 10 Exe St, Exeter

References:

Free Birth Marriage & Death records

The Long, Long Trail website

Refs via subscription sites:

Census records

Newspaper extracts via National Newspaper Archive

WW1 Service Medal Rolls

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919

UK, Register of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929

Lucking Ian family tree (ancestry.com)

Oliver family records