

Philip Augustus Edmonds

Born, Dawlish 1893
Private GS/68538

Died, Camberwell 9 January 1921, aged 27
13th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

Philip Augustus Edmonds was born in the second quarter of 1893 (GRO ref N.A. vol 5b, p112) to Frederick and Mary Ann Edmonds.

Frederick was born in 1854 in Dawlish (GRO ref 1854, Mar, N.A.,vol 5b, p103) to John and Mary Ann Edmonds.

John Edmonds (1811-) was a shoemaker, born in Dawlish and his wife Mary Ann (1812-) was born in Kennford, and in 1861 they were living in Brook Street, Dawlish.

By 1871 John had become a Fly Proprietor, and Frederick was a Cab Driver. John's granddaughter Anna Howard, 13, was living with them and was a Donkey Driver.

In 1881 Frederick had also become a Cab Proprietor at the age of 27.

Frederick Edmonds married in 1884 Mary Ann Creeper in St Simon Zelotes, Chelsea.

Mary Ann Creeper was born in 1851 in Clawton (GRO ref 1851, Dec, Holsworthy, vol 9, p 341). She first appears in the 1861 census living with her grandparents, William and Mary Harris, at Corfcott Green, between Clawton and North Tamerton, Cornwall. Her parentage can be found from a birth certificate, but there is a cluster of Creeper families around Launceston and Egloskerry, about 12 miles south of Clawton.

In 1871 she was a servant, aged 19, to Albert Wilson's household in Bartholomew Street, Exeter.

In 1881 she is one of twelve servants in the household of Sir Albert (Abdullah David) Sassoon (1818-1896) and his son Edward Sassoon at 1 Eastern Terrace, Brighton. This was a very wealthy family and Sir Albert Sassoon was the great grandfather to Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) the WW1 poet. It seems possible that she may have worked for the family in their London home, which would account for her marriage taking place in Chelsea and the first two children being born in London.

Frederick and Mary Ann Edmonds lived in the Exeter Inn, Beach Street in 1891 with their children:

John F Edmonds,	son,	(1886-)	born in	London
Ellen Elfrida Adelaide	dau	(1886-1984)		London
Edmund Dudley	son,	(1892-1968)		Dawlish
Philip Augustus	son	(1893-1921)		Dawlish

John became a baker and so, in time, did Augustus. Frederick Edmonds died in 1909 (GRO ref 1909, July-Sept, N.A., vol 5b, p 61) and his widow lived at 1 Albert Cottages with Augustus in 1911.

British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Cards give an outline of the service career of **Edmonds. P.A.** He 'entered the theatre of war on 29 April 1915 with the Army Service Corps as a Private, No S4/086647. On 3 October 1917 he was transferred to the Northern Regiment for 3 days before joining the 17th Royal Fusiliers on 7 October with service number GS/68538. On 20 March 1918 he was transferred again to the 13th Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) with which he served until 13 October 1918. **He is shown to have been wounded on 9 October 1918.**(see below)

ROYAL FUSILIERS IN THE GREAT WAR (from the Website archive of the Royal Fusiliers)
Second Battle of Le Cateau.

"The second and concluding phase of the British offensive now opened, in which the Fourth and Third Armies and the right of the First Army moved forward with their left flank on the canal line which runs from Cambrai to Mons, and their right covered by the First French Army." * The first stage of the subsequent fighting began with the second battle of Le Cateau, which was launched on October 8th.

The 7th Royal Fusiliers were in position near Niergnies on the morning of the battle, and held their position while the division secured their objectives. During the day the enemy counter-attacked with tanks ; but the assault was easily beaten off, and when the battalion left the line at night they had only suffered three casualties. The 23rd Battalion at the same time attacked and captured Foreville, and, despite a number of counter-attacks, held it all day. The 4th Royal Fusiliers, attacking a little to the south at 4.30 a.m., had gained their objective in less than two hours, but were ordered to assist the 13th King's in a further attack on the second objective at 12.40 p.m. The battalion pushed ahead on to the slope north of Serainvillers, but were there held up by a converging machine-gun and artillery fire. Heavy casualties were sustained in this position, and the battalion became too weak to hold on to the forward line. They retired to the line west of Serainvillers, and at two o'clock the next morning withdrew to Masnieres to enable the Guard to take up the attack. Their total casualties were 121 officers and other ranks ; but against this they could set 128 prisoners, thirteen machine guns, and three guns, and they had so heavily treated the enemy that the Guards found very little opposition when they advanced.

Both the 10th and 13th Royal Fusiliers attacked on this day against the Masnieres-Beaurevoir line. The final objective of the 10th Battalion was the sunken roads north-west of Hurtebise Farm. The companies moved off at 4.34 a.m. close to the barrage, and reached the Beaurevoir line to find the wire not sufficiently cut. There was some difficulty in passing through, and the machine-gun posts inside the wire took advantage of the situation. Two platoons of C Company were left to hold the Beaurevoir line, and the other companies pressed on and captured Bel Aise Farm, with a considerable number of prisoners. A platoon of C were left to complete the mopping up, and the battalion advanced to their final objectives, which they reached and held, despite an intermittent bombardment throughout the day. The objective of the 13th Battalion was Hurtebise Farm, about two miles north-west of Walincourt. They started under the handicap of having to fight their way to their jumping-off line, as Bel Aise Farm and part of the Beaurevoir system were still incompletely cleared. But they went forward so rapidly that they were within half a mile of their objective before the barrage had gone sufficiently far to check the enemy machine guns on the high ground south of the farm. But Nos. 2 and 3 Companies pushed straight on, and at 7.15 a.m. had begun to consolidate their final position. The enemy's fire compelled them to withdraw from the south and east sides of the farm until the 1/1 Herts passed through to Briseux Wood.

On the following day (9 October) they were ordered to continue the advance in support of the 1/1 Herts, who reached Ligny en Cambresis without opposition by 8 a.m. Within less than two hours the **13th Royal Fusiliers** had established a line on the road right and left of the town. They advanced once more on October 10th to establish strong points on the south and east of Caudry, thereby cutting off the town from the east while the 1st Essex carried out a similar operation on the west. The battalion met with little resistance, except from our own tanks, which apparently did not expect British troops so far east, and from the barrage, which was late. No. 3 Company, finding no resistance in their path, pushed forward, captured Bethencourt and threw out a line of outposts to

the east. Lieut. Colonel Smith and Major Whitehead had in the meantime entered Caudry, where they were enthusiastically received by a large number of French people. In these three days the battalion had covered a considerable amount of ground, had captured 200 prisoners and some twenty machine guns. Their total casualties were 116, including Second Lieutenant E. M. Rees killed, Second Lieutenant J. Kinahan died of wounds, and 10 officers wounded. A few days later General H. Bruce Williams, G.O.C. 37th Division, inspected the battalion, and commended them in words which deserve record : " I am extremely pleased with the smartness of the battalion under extremely trying conditions, and also with your steadiness on parade. The work you have done under all circumstances since August 21st, when the offensive opened, has been of the highest order. At present you are the making of the 112th Brigade. You have served under me for two years now, and have never failed me or let me down. I congratulate you."

Philip Augustus Edmonds was awarded the 1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Philip Augustus Edmonds married Lilian H Jolley in 1917 (GRO ref 1917, Q2, West Ham, vol 4a, p210).

His death certificate will show if there is a link to war wounds. (GRO ref 1921,Mar, Lambeth, vol 1d, p 319)

His brother, Edmund Dudley Edmonds, enlisted on 26 May 1916 in the Royal Field Artillery as a Private No 139845 and gave his address as 85 Mersey Road, Walthamstow and his trade as a groom. There are some surviving records of his service which show that he was admitted to hospital from 27 November 1917 to 10 February 1918 for reasons unstated. He was then posted to No 3 Section, 55 D.A.C. (Division Ammunition Column). As a Driver he would probably have driven a limber or a general service wagon containing boxes of ammunition.

On the 20 May 1919 he was posted to No 1 Section of the Highland D.A.C. in Germany where he stayed until despatched to ' Concentration Camp for Dispersal' on 13 September 1919. He was transferred to Class 'Z' Army Reserve on 14 October 1919.

He was living in St Marlebone in 1932 but moved to Plymouth where he appears married to Louisa Edmonds in the 1939 Register, and was shown as a manual worker/porter. He died in Plymouth in 1968 aged 76 (GRO ref 1968 Dec, Plymouth, vol 7a, p 649).

Philip Edmonds does not appear on the Devon Roll of Honour, possibly because he had moved away to London, nor is he on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

He is among those on the supplementary panel to Dawlish War memorial with the inscription:
EDMONDS P.A. PTE. ROYAL FUSILIERS

Commonwealth War Graves entry: Easyt London Cemetery, Plaistow, Screen wall 507.

Last known address: 21 Luton Road, Plaistow

Next of kin: Lilian H Edmonds, wife

References:

Website archive of the Royal Fusiliers

Free BMD refs

Refs from subscription sites: Ancestry.co.uk for Census data, Military service records