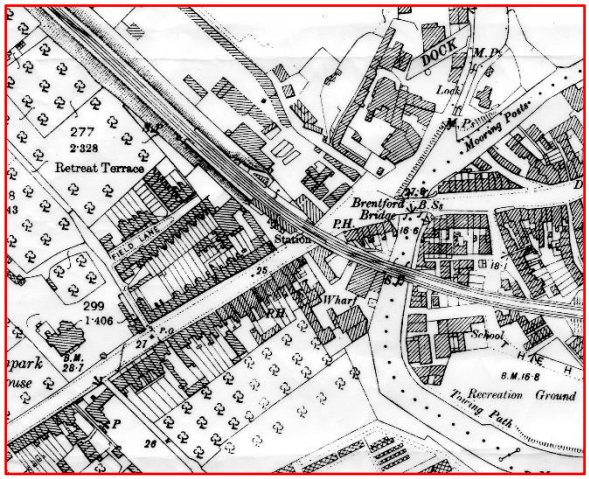
Charles Albert Abear

Charles was born in the parish of New Brentford on 30th January 1896, and baptised in April of that year. He was the fourth son of William (a carman) and Mary Avery, who had married in St. Stephens Church, Twickenham in 1884 His family lived at 12 Retreat Place, Field Lane, Brentford but sometime in the next decade they moved to 8 Retreat Terrace nearby. See below for a 1915 map of the area. Charles lived in a sizeable family – he had three older brothers, George, John and William, and one younger brother, Ernest as well as two older sisters, Alice and Florence - in all, their births spanned 11 years. In 1901, the oldest brothers, John and George, worked together in Bands Tannery in Plough Yard as 'skin dressers' – part of the process of making parchment. The Bands Company was established in Boston Road in 1845 and moved to Plough Yard in 1910.



Charles enlisted at Chiswick (Reg. No. G/18039). His regiment, 7th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment was formed at Chichester on 12 August 1914 under the command of 36th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division. Training was given at Shorncliffe Kent in October, and after a short time in billets in Folkestone, and three months in Aldershot on 'divisional manoeuvres' and 'advanced war training', Charles's battalion was 'mobilised for war' landing in Boulogne on June 1st 1915 and gathering in Saint-Omer.

The regiment, under the mantle of the British Expeditionary Force, was soon in action on the Western Front, including the Battles of Loos, Albert, Pozieres and Le Transloy. This last mentioned battle commenced on 1st October and was to prove critical for Charles. Hard fighting took place, notably in the area of Bayonet Trench, in actions that were repeatedly indecisive. Some time on the first or second day of the battle Charles was mortally wounded, dying of his wounds on 2nd October 1916. He was 20 years old.

Charles was laid to rest in the Heilly Station Cemetery in Mericourt L'Abbe. He was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal and also honoured at All Saints Church in isleworth. The war claimed not only Charles in 1916, but also his brother John, who was killed in action 28th April 1917. It would seem that the loss of both Charles and John were too much for their mother Mary to bear. She died in June 1917 aged 54. Charles' father William died three years later in 1920 at the age of 56, brother George survived the conflict.