

Henry Foreman (Forman)



Henry was born in 1895 in Battersea, the son of Edward George Foreman (1867-1943), born in the Kensington area, a sugar boiler in a sweets confectioners, and Alice Raybould (1866-1961) from Chelsea. They had married in St Phillips Church in Battersea on 26th April 1886; Alice's father was a blacksmith and Edward's, a labourer. The family lived in the Battersea area after that, at Little Europa Place, then at 25, Knowsley Road. By 1911, they had moved to Isleworth and were living at 35 Algar Road. A few years later, they had moved to 29 Worples Road in Isleworth, close to the police station. *See below left for a 2017 photo of the property.* Henry's parents were still living at this same address at the time of the 1939 register, at which time, Edward was a retired sugar confectioner. Henry had eight siblings: John William (1887-1917); Elizabeth Annie (1890-1960) Albert Edward (1892-1970); Charles (born 1899); Annie Helen (born 1902); Alice (1904-1977); Gladys Violet (1905-1991) and George Edward (1910-1985); most of his family continued to live on in the local area, with their families.



Henry was baptised on March 31st 1895 at St Mary's in Battersea. By 1911, he was employed as a pony boy, possibly in charge of the pony that would pull tubs along the road. He enlisted in February 1915, aged 19, at Chelsea Town Hall, giving his father, Edward George, as his next of kin and his occupation as a wine cellarman. He had several distinctive marks on his back and a small linear scar just right of his ear. He was sent to Winchester and joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps 3rd Company (R10124). However, following a medical examination, he was declared as 'under height' being only 5'1" and was discharged that same week as being 'not likely to become an efficient soldier'. Later, his sparse military records reveal that he served with the Middlesex Regiment (G/167703) and was then transferred to the 12th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, as a Lance Corporal (27686), having enlisted in Hounslow. The 12th Battalion were involved in a significant operation on the German trenches near Gouzeaucourt, south west of Cambrai on the night of 25/26th September 1917. Their war diaries reveal that they carried out a raid in order to obtain

prisoners, identifications and material, also to destroy dug-outs, material and defences. The raid was meticulously planned to be carried out under a 'creeping barrage'. At Zero, a 3 minute barrage would fall on the front line and creep at 25 yards per minute. The Box Barrage would remain until Zero plus 70 minutes, by which time 'all parties will be clear of enemy trenches'. No identifications, letters or maps were to be carried. All ranks were to be issued with a number, to be worn on their left wrist. G.O.C sent the following wire after the raid: *'Please convey to 12th Suffolks my appreciation of their very Gallant efforts last night. The enemy offered a very stubborn resistance but in spite of the very heavy fire which the Batt came under they gained their objectives, inflicted severe losses on the enemy & brought back prisoners. I much regret to hear that the Batt suffered severe casualties in carrying out the attack'*. Henry died on 26th September 1917 and was presumably one of these casualties killed in action. He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, which bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave; locally, he was also commemorated in the Memorial Chapel, in All Saints Church, Church Street, Isleworth. He was awarded the Victory and British War medals.