



George Hammond (42140) died on 29th May 1918. He was 18 years old when he died from wounds inflicted at the Battle of Aisne. There is every possibility that this young man signed up to fight for his country when he was underage. (Officially a recruit had to be 18 to join the army and 19 to serve overseas. It is thought that over 250,000 underage teenagers went to fight for their country). Recruitment officers were paid for every new recruit, so some turned a blind eye to their age.

There are no surviving service records for George. We do know that he was an Isleworth lad and that he enlisted in Hounslow, but we don't know when. It appears he was formerly attached to the Northamptonshire Regiment with a service number of 49371. At some point this youngster joined the 8th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. We do not know if George was with this regiment when they landed in France at the end of July 1915 (as part of 110th Brigade 37th, and later 21st Division). If so, he would have endured some terrifying battles. He might have fought at the Battles of Bazentin Ridge and Le Transloy in 1916, followed by the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, Polygon Wood and the Second Battle of Passchendaele in 1917...we just don't know. What we do know is that in 1918, George's luck ran out.

George was almost certainly killed at the Third Battle of the Aisne (27th May – 3rd June 1918) as we know his battalion was fighting there. The battle was ferocious. It began with an intense artillery bombardment (two million German shells were fired in four hours, across a 64 mile stretch of Allied lines) followed by a poison gas drop. With their defences spread thinly, the allies were unable to stop the attack. Between 20-40 German units then advanced through gaps in the allied lines and gained over 13 miles of territory. There were heavy casualties on both sides and George would have been one of them. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that George 'died from wounds'. This would imply that George survived long enough to reach a medical facility.

George's family must have been devastated. Not only had their son been killed, but that he had to face what must have been a frightening and painful death for one so young. His family home was 214 Linkfield Road, Isleworth. George had three sisters, Edith, Lizzie and Gertrude. His parents, George and Maria (nee Plummell/Pummell) had married in 1893 in Brentford, although they were both born in Berkshire. George senior was a Brewer's Drayman (a driver of a low bed wagon used to move beer kegs) and almost certainly worked at Isleworth Brewery. He was a boarder at 'David's Place' in Isleworth back in 1891. Clearly Maria and George decided to stay in Isleworth to raise their family (the family originally living at Denmark Cottages, 3 Linkfield Road).

George was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He left £6 16s to his father George. George is buried in Marfaux Cemetery. Grave Ref V.H.3. He is also remembered on the memorial in St John's Church, Isleworth.



Courtesy of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment Trustees