



**Private Percy Hutton** joined 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion East Surrey Regiment, and started his army career at Aldershot where he was instructed in field manoeuvres and advanced war training. By the end of May '15 all the units associated with his Division (artillery, engineers, horses

etc.) began to arrive at Saint Omer in France. Percy, who was only 18, would soon be part of the largest British Offensive on the Western Front to date - the Battle of Loos (Late Sep to early Oct 1915). It was here that British forces used poison gas for the first time. 75,000 infantry soldiers advanced on the German lines but the German defences proved too strong and losses were heavy for very little gain. But Percy had survived.

**On 12<sup>th</sup> October the Regimental War Diaries record the proposed plans for the next day's attack at Hulluch Quarry and the Hohenzollern Redoubt**

**1. 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade – allotted the task of securing the line G12d central to the East corner of the Quarries**

**2. The attack will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> (Oct 1915)**

**3. The following will be the procedure. 12 noon artillery bombardment. 1pm gas and smoke will commence, the former lasting till 1.50pm**

**The assault will be launched on the German Gun Trench ...by the East Surrey Regt.**

**4. At 1.30 our blocks at either end of the German trench will be opened under cover of the smoke curtain. Simultaneously....bombing parties will push in from both flanks ...a further party will move forward in rear of the assault and be responsible for bombing the German communicating trench G12d.3.9.** (UK WWI Diaries France, Belgium & Germany) 1914-1920

On 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, the East Surrey Regiment advanced on 'Gun Trench' as planned, but they were unable to achieve their objective as they were facing heavy machine gun fire. It must have been terrifying for Percy and his companions. Sadly, Percy was killed in action on this day. Percy's paternal grandparents can be found on the 1871 Census living at Cross Road Twickenham, having moved east from Oxfordshire almost certainly in search of work. In 1881 their son Thomas (a general labourer) married Fanny Goodway and together they set up home in Sandycombe Road Twickenham. Arthur was born in 1883, followed by a daughter Emily a few years later. Ten years later father Thomas is listed as an 'excavator', Arthur is an engine cleaner, Emily is working 'in service' at Crossdeep Hall and Percy has arrived, born in 1896. By 1911, the family are not living together at all. At 14, Percy is a butcher and is living as a boarder at 143 Colne Road Twickenham. Emily is in domestic service in Lichfield Rd. Kew. His mother Fanny is in service in Teddington, his father is working and living in Guildford, and his brother Arthur is married and living at 2 Radnor Gdns. Twickenham and is working as a railway stoker. Percy is commemorated on the Loos Memorial (Panel Stone 66) and the St Bridget's Memorial, Isleworth. He was 18 years old.

