

Walter Melle (G53635) was born in Isleworth in 1899. He was baptised at All Souls Church in St. Margaret's in July of that year. His father Charles Frederick Von Melle (born from Clapham), is recorded as a "Gentleman" on the baptism record. Before Walter's birth, the Von Melle family, Charles, his wife Alice and older sister Alice Caroline (b1890), had moved south from Cheshire to the Twickenham area. The 1901 Census tells us that this gentleman had previously worked as a General Produce Merchant and that he was now retired. His wife Alice, who was twenty years younger than her husband had a 'mother's help' and a general domestic servant to help around the house. This family lived at 1 The Avenue (now known as A316) in St Margaret's Twickenham and they were still living there in 1911.



It is not clear when Walter joined the Army. There are no service records for him. He would have been only 14 years old at the start of the war, so it is more likely that he joined up a few years later. **Walter enlisted at Hounslow and probably felt that it was prudent to drop the 'Von' from his name.**

By 1918 the British Army was desperately short of soldiers. Some battalions were disbanded and their remaining soldiers were transferred to other battalions to bring them up to full strength. Walter's regiment was the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) attached to 19th London Regiment. In the last year of his short life, young Walter may well have fought in the 1918 German Spring Offensive in March. This was a violent battle where he would have experienced heavy bombardment. The 19th Londoners fought back and regained positions previously lost. The offensive flared up again on 5th April - intense bombardment all day 'with reserves fed in progressively'. The line held. Walter's Battalion was now able to have a few quieter months where hundreds of 18 year old new recruits were sent to fill up the ranks. It is also possible that Walter may himself, have been one of these new recruits.

The Battle of Albert (3rd Battle with this name, fought roughly two years apart) took place on 22-23 August 1918). The advance began at 4.45 am and started well. Unfortunately the morning mist and smoke from the battle resulted in many casualties. However, it is now believed that this 'small' battle and these brave soldiers went forth and paved the way for the beginning of the final advance and the end of the war.

Lance Corporal Walter Melle was killed in action on 22nd August 1918. He is commemorated at the Vis-en-Artois Memorial Ref. Panel 8-9 near Arras in France and at All Souls Church St Margaret's. Walter's father died six years after his son and his mother died at in 1936 aged 72. His sister Alice Caroline died in 1957 in Chichester aged 66. The loss of their son and brother must have been felt keenly throughout their lives.

