



Edward Stanley Read

Corporal Edward Stanley Read (born 2nd Quarter 1887) was the youngest son of Arthur Rigden Read and Elizabeth Read (nee Brenchley). Arthur, born in Margate, worked for the Post Office, later becoming a Postmaster.

The couple married in spring 1878 and had five sons. When the boys were young, the family lived in Camberwell, and later moved to 7 Clifden Road Brentford. The 1901 Census tells us that eldest son Arthur, was working as an Architect & Designer, Frank was an Auctioneers Clerk and Henry was a Commercial Clerk. 14 year old Edward would probably have just left school. Middle son Percy was based at Fort Rowner (one of the five forts built in the 1860s to defend the western approaches to Portsmouth Harbour) which was being used to prepare troops – and Percy, for the Boer War. The family must have been devastated when the boys' mother, Elizabeth, died in April 1902. She was 42. Eight years later, in 1910, father Arthur died too. He was 55. They are buried together at Ealing and Old Brentford Cemetery.



The 1911 Census records that Edward was living as a boarder at 62 Thornbury Road, Isleworth. He was 24, single and working for a Wine & Spirit merchant. We don't know when he joined up but he enlisted in Sun Street, Shoreditch and became a soldier with the City of London Regiment 2/7th Battalion. If he joined up in Aug. 1914, he would have begun his training with a march to Burgess Hill in Sussex on November 19th. Uniforms came later, and rifles later still! His battalion eventually became part of the 58th Division and after many months of coastal defence duties, and final training on Salisbury Plain, the Battalion left Southampton Docks for Le Havre on 26th January 1917.

On 8th Feb. 1917 Edward's battalion went into battle for the first time, at Monchy-au Bois and Ransart, south of Arras. Edward survived. On the night of 22nd May (at the Second Battle of Bullcourt) an attack on the enemy was 'successful' but 120 soldiers were killed or wounded. Edward survived this battle too. The Battle of Menin Road Ridge began on the 20th September. It was a vicious battle and the 2/7th suffered from relentless German shellfire. British casualties 20-25th September were over 20,000 (of those 3,148 were killed). Unfortunately, Edward was one of these casualties. He did not die in the mud and noise of battle. He was severely injured and taken to No.47 Casualty Clearing Station.

Three Casualty Clearing Stations were made ready for the troops at the beginning of the battle and the troops, with their black humour, named them Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem. Very sadly, Edward did not benefit from 'mending, dosing or bandages', and died of his wounds on 21st September 1917. He is buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery in Belgium.

Edward left his effects to his four brothers. It was older brother Arthur, as next of kin, who liaised with the Imperial War Graves Commission to give Edward a headstone on his grave.

