



John Richard Voller

John Richard Voller first appears on the 1891 Census as a small boy of 6. His father, also called John, is a railway signalman. He and his wife Sarah have 10 children - the elder three - Annie 18, George 16 and Alfred 14 - are already working as 'soap factory hands' probably at the Pears works. They lived at 2 Wood Lane Cottages. By 1901, John junior and his sister Mary, have joined their older siblings at Pears, whilst mother Sarah watches over Sarah junior, Harriot, James, Florence, Gordon and toddler Sidney. The family now live at 14, South Western Terrace London Road, Isleworth (later renumbered 424 London Road). By 1911, John (senior) and his wife Sarah had been married for 39 years. They had 17 children in total, 11 of them still alive.

There are many articles in the local Middlesex Chronicle paper relating to the sporting life of this lively family. John (known as Jack), Gordon (known as Pat), Alfred and James, all took part in various activities at Pears Athletic Club, including competitive bowling, cricket, football, billiards, whist, cribbage and vegetable growing! Alf was well known for his beautiful tenor voice, and we are told by a local historian that the family had their own singing group called the 'Snowflakes' which regularly entertained locally.

VOLLER: In ever-loving memory of our dear boy Jack, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Voller, 424, London-road, Isleworth, killed in action in France on the 10th of September, 1916.—From Father and Mother.
God be with you till we meet again.
VOLLER: In fondest memory of our dear brother Jack, killed in action in France on September 10th, 1916.—From his Brothers and Sisters.
For ever with the Lord.

John Voller was ten years older than his brother Gordon yet they appear to have enlisted together in Hounslow in September 1914. According to the 'Bubbles' Publication produced by the Pears Company, the brothers joined the 8th Middlesex Regiment. They "*left for Gibraltar on February 1915, and afterwards saw active service against the Senussi*" (N. Africa). In 1916 they were both sent to France. It is not clear when John transferred to 1/16th Battalion Queen's Westminster Rifles, but probably in February 1916.



Courtesy Mary Brown
Pears cricket match. The Voller boys
L to R standing- 1 Gordon (Pat) 2. Alf
Sitting - 3. John (Jack) 4. George

Regimental records tell us that later that year on the **10th September 1916** 'the night was very dark and the enemy were pouring heavy shells into Leuze Wood without cessation'. A final paragraph reports 'From start to finish we had....no chance. Ordered to attack from a wood we had never been in...on a black dark night...on a position we were unable to properly locate...there was a breakdown of communication...no artillery barrage...14 hours exceedingly heavy shelling...with hardly any trained bombers to lead the attack'. **Lance Corporal John Richard Voller was killed in action on this date, in Leuze Wood, at The Battle of Ginchy. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Thiepval Memorial, Department de la Somme, Picardy France and on the memorial at St John's Church in Isleworth. .**