

Private Charles Davy

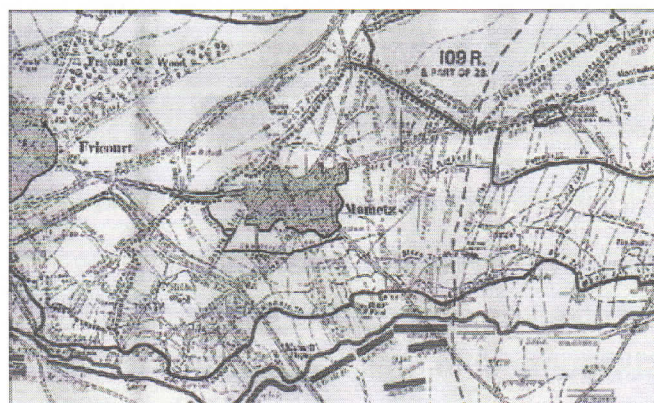
**10th Battalion West
Yorkshire Regiment**

(Prince of Wales Own)

Died 1 July 1916

**Remembered with
Honour**

on the Thiepval Memorial



Map of the Western Front trench lines showing Fricourt Village and wood.

Family

Private Charles Davy was born in 1875, the son of Isaac Davy, Wool sorter, and Elizabeth Butterfield Davy, Clerk in a wool warehouse. The family lived at 360 Hatfield Road, Undercliffe but Isaac had died in 1897 aged 51. Elizabeth and Charles were living at this address at the time of the 1911 Census but military records show the mother to be living at 2 Hilton Avenue, Frizinghall at the time of her son's death.

The Battle of the Somme

On 1 July 1916, the 10th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment formed part of the 50th Brigade attack on Fricourt village.

Heavy losses

The Battalion's War Diary tells us that the battalion took part in the ground assault which began at 7.30am. On their right were the 7th Division and the 21st Division were to their left. The diary tells us that the Battalion attacked in four lines and that the first two lines got through the German position but were then cut off because the assault on their left had failed. It is suggested that the first two lines were able to advance with few casualties because the artillery bombardment that preceded the assault had prevented the German soldiers mounting their machine guns and bringing

them into action. But the Germans were in position before the 3rd and 4th lines advanced. As a result these lines failed to get across “no man’s land” because the German machine guns “wreaked a devastating fire upon them”. “Casualties were very heavy” and included 22 Officers and 750 other ranks from the West Yorkshires, amongst this number was Private Charles Davy, aged 41.



Fricourt: the northern edge of the village in July 1916

Those lines that did break through received no support and were practically surrounded, in their fight to survive they became separated into smaller isolated groups who were wiped out by the enemy. The few men who survived managed to crawl back under the cover of darkness. A major effort to reach these men had been made by the 7th East Yorkshire and 7th Yorkshire Regiments who attacked at 7.30pm but the German machine guns had the same effect; in three minutes the 7th Yorkshire Regiment lost 13 officers and 300 men.

The 50th Brigade sustained enormous losses in its disastrous attempt to capture Fricourt, with no evidence of success. The Battalion was withdrawn to Ville.

The ‘History of the 50th Infantry Brigade’ tells us;

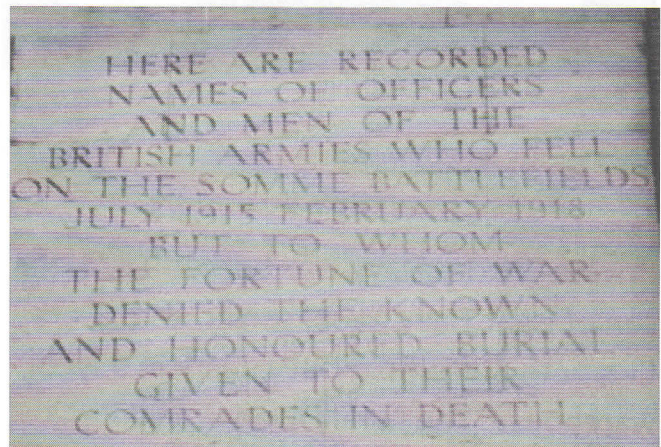
“Thus six hours’ fruitless fighting had destroyed one battalion completely and the larger part of two others. And of what magnificent stuff had they shown

themselves to be! Each line, with the fate of those in front terribly evident in their eyes, mounted the parapet, and stepped forward to face the same storm of bullets and to be mown down in the same pitiless fashion.”

On 2nd July the 17th Division were able to march unopposed into the village following the withdrawal of German troops the previous night.

WAR DIARY			Army Form 9 2110
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY			
Summary of Events and Observations			Remarks and References to Intelligence
Date	Time	Hour	
1916	1 st	7.30 AM	At 7.30 AM the Battalion was ordered to advance against the objective being on the left the 2 nd Bn. The Battalion advanced in 4 lines. 2 lines got through the German positions to the 2 nd line & were cut off, the attack on our left having failed. Casualties were very heavy chiefly owing to machine guns which embedded our left flanks. I was so close that the 2 nd & 3 rd lines failed to get across the main line. 27 officers casualties including Lt Col Wilson, Capt J. Knott 2 nd in command (Both killed) & approximately 750 O.R. The Battalion was then withdrawn to the VILLE.
	2 nd		The Battalion moved to HEILLY Lt Col H.A. ROSS was appointed to command & resumed duty this day.

War Diary of the 10th West Yorkshire Regiment for 1 July 1916



The Thiepval memorial to men like Charles Davy

Missing

The body of Charles Davy was never recovered, but he is commemorated on both the Thiepval memorial and the family grave in Undercliffe Cemetery. He was one of 189 men from the 10th West Yorkshire Regiment who were killed on 1 July 1916 whose bodies were never found. All are commemorated at Thiepval.