



HERBERT GRAHAM

1ST BATTALION ESSEX REGIMENT

Early Life

Herbert Graham was born in 1883 to Albert and Maria Graham. The Graham family, according to the 1891 Census, lived at 6 Southbrook Terrace where indeed they were still living in 1901. Herbert had a brother, Arthur, ten years his senior.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.										
NAME AND SURNAME		RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged 15 years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person		NATIONALITY	
1	Herbert Graham	Head	27	Married	3	House Painter	Widley	Yorkshire	British	
2	Edith Graham	Wife	27	Married	3		Widley	Yorkshire	British	
3	Albert Cyril Graham	Son	1	Single	1					

Herbert had married in circa 1908 to Edith and by the time of the 1911 Census they resided at 71 Reeve Road, Wibsey. At this time they had a son, Albert Cyril and Herbert was working as a House Painter.

Conscription

The Bradford Roll of Honour gives Herbert's enlistment date of 6/12/1916. As a 'conscript', Herbert would have had little choice as to his posting. His Medal Index Card shows this initially to have been to the Norfolk Regiment (Regt No. 30751) and later to the Essex Regiment (Regt No. 41979). Given an enlistment date of December 1916, six months of training followed by some weeks at the Etaples training camp ('Bull Ring') on arrival in France would put Herbert with the 1st Essex possibly only weeks before his death on 24th September 1917.

We believe that Herbert was a stretcher bearer.





Stretcher Bearer

We have evidence that Herbert was a stretcher bearer. This was a job fraught with danger at the best of times, as these brave men ‘rescued’ the wounded. But the danger in this battle was added to by the presence of flooded shell holes and deep clinging mud. Quite often stretcher bearer parties went out to recover casualties in groups of six or eight, rather than the smaller groups of four in other areas of conflict; a change made necessary by the horrible mud.



The 1st Essex undertook such a tour of the front line 22nd to 25th September 1917, their war diary entries:

“22-24/9/1917 – Holding the line ...Casualties were fairly heavy, especially in the support and reserve lines which received a considerable number of gas shells . Total casualties received during the tour, 2 Officers, 41 Other Ranks.

No attack, no ‘glorious defence’ – they were simply ‘holding the line’. From this, it is quite probable that Herbert Graham was another casualty to poison gas. This would likely be ‘mustard gas’...

Final resting places!..

The record of his Back Pay and War Gratuity shows that these monies were paid to his widow, Edith. Herbert on this document is listed as having ‘died from wounds’. This may indeed be true, but this same phrase was also used to cover up that a man had been gassed.

Herbert’s body would have been buried as best they could at the time as the battalion left the line on 25/9/1917. Although his grave marker was originally lost, his body was found after the war (at location J.17.c.7.3 in the Langemarck/ Poelcapelle area) and identified from his identity disc that had partly survived giving his regimental number and that he was in 29th Division, neither his name nor battalion had survived on the disc.

Herbert’s body was exhumed and buried in Cement House Cemetery near Langemarck. This cemetery is still ‘open’ and receives bodies of British soldiers found on the battlefields to this day.

Record of Herbert Graham’s personal effects.

No. of List in which mentioned	Board No.	Regiment No.	Soldier's Name	Regimental No.	Date and Place of Issue	DEBITS			CREDITS			Date of Expiry	To whom Issued	Amount	No. of List in which mentioned		
						£	s	d	£	s	d						
	G20668	60000	Graham Herbert	1000	25-9-17 Langemarck	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7
	G20667	60000	Graham Herbert	1000	25-9-17 Langemarck	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7
	G20668	60000	Graham Herbert	1000	25-9-17 Langemarck	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7
	G20669	60000	Graham Herbert	1000	25-9-17 Langemarck	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7	10	2	7

