

RICHINSON NEWELL

9TH BATTALION WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

EARLY LIFE

Richinson Newell was born in 1891 to Fred and Martha Ann Newell (nee Holdsworth) in Bradford. He was named after his Grandfather.

The family is listed on the 1901 Census as living at 8 Dover St. Fred was now recently widowed but would remarry in 1902 to Sarah Ann and in 1911, they would be living at 14 Mount Pleasant, Mountain, Queensbury, Bradford.

The household was a large one with Richinson's four brothers and three sisters. He was working as a Twister in a Worsted Mill, possibly the nearby Black Dyke Mill.

1911 Census Record



Soldiers of the West Yorkshire Regiment during training

Poelcapelle

The 9th West Yorks took part in a major attack on Poelcapelle on 9th October 1917 as part of the Battle of Passchendaele. This date also saw the Bradford Territorials (1/6th West Yorks) making an attack on the Belle Vue spur with the 49th Division to the right.

The War Diary of the 9th West Yorkshire gives one of the most detailed and contemporary accounts of an attack in the dreadful conditions of this battle.

According to the Bradford Roll of Honour, Richinson enlisted into the West Yorkshire Regiment on 20th April 1916, he had now left home and was living at 157 Dirkhill Rd, Horton. This would conform with attesting under the Derby Scheme in late 1915 and being called up 'in his class. This date would suggest Richinson was still single.

Given his enlistment date, it is likely that Richinson joined the battalion in the field, towards the end of 1916.



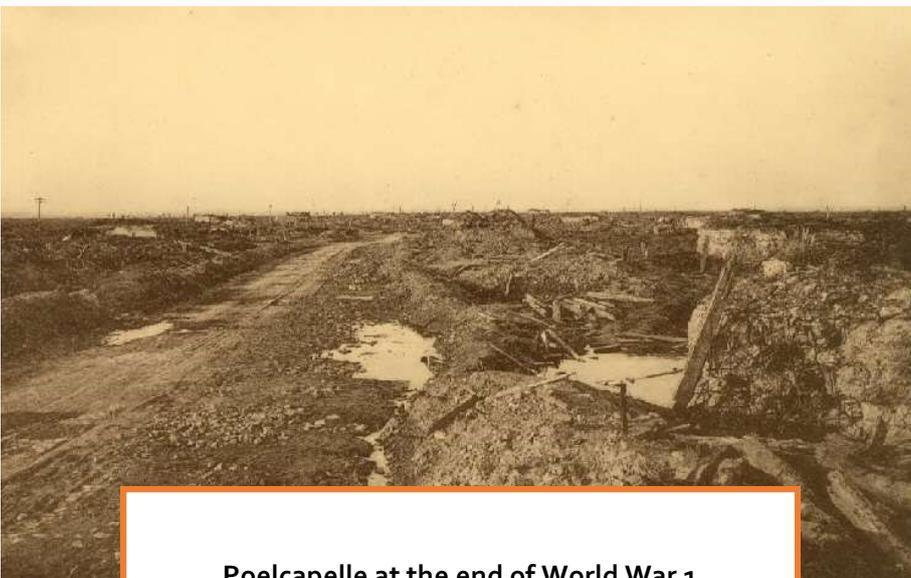
The War Diary of the 9th West Yorkshire Regiment

“9/10/1917 – In the line – At 5.20AM the Battalion attacked the enemy in conjunction with the 6th Bn York and Lancaster Regt. on the right and the 6th Yorkshire Regt. on the left. The 8th Bn. Duke of Wellington’s Regt. was in support

The attack was carried out simultaneously by flank divisions. Our barrage opened promptly and was good but unfortunately a number of High Explosive shells did not burst owing to the state of the ground [soft mud, HE shells carried percussion fuzes and needed to strike something hard]. Rain had fallen for the greater part of the day and as the ground was churned up so as to be one endless mass of shell-holes, mud and water were everywhere and almost impassable. The barrage rate of advance was 100 yards in 4 minutes. Our infantry advanced when the barrage opened and immediately assumed the formation of four lines.

The enemy put his barrage down seven minutes after ZERO, but it was not very heavy for the most part. On the other hand our barrage did not succeed in smashing the concrete emplacements in which the enemy had placed his machine guns. Despite the terrific ordeal to which he was subjected, the enemy continued to fire his machine guns and it was impossible after the attack had been launched to silence them. In consequence we were subjected to fire which thinned out our lines very quickly by cross-fire and or traversing, the machine guns swept the whole of the Divisional front

Very few Officers were left in either the Yorkshire Regt or our own Battalion and the lack of command began to take effect. On our left the 6th Bn Yorkshire Regt. was completely hung up, the remnants of the Bn. fell back in the hope of re-organising. When our men saw this, the news was quickly spread that the 6th Bn Yorkshire Regt was retiring, as the enemy by this time had parties almost in line with us on this flank, we took up a position further back so as to preserve the general line and remain in touch on our flanks. “



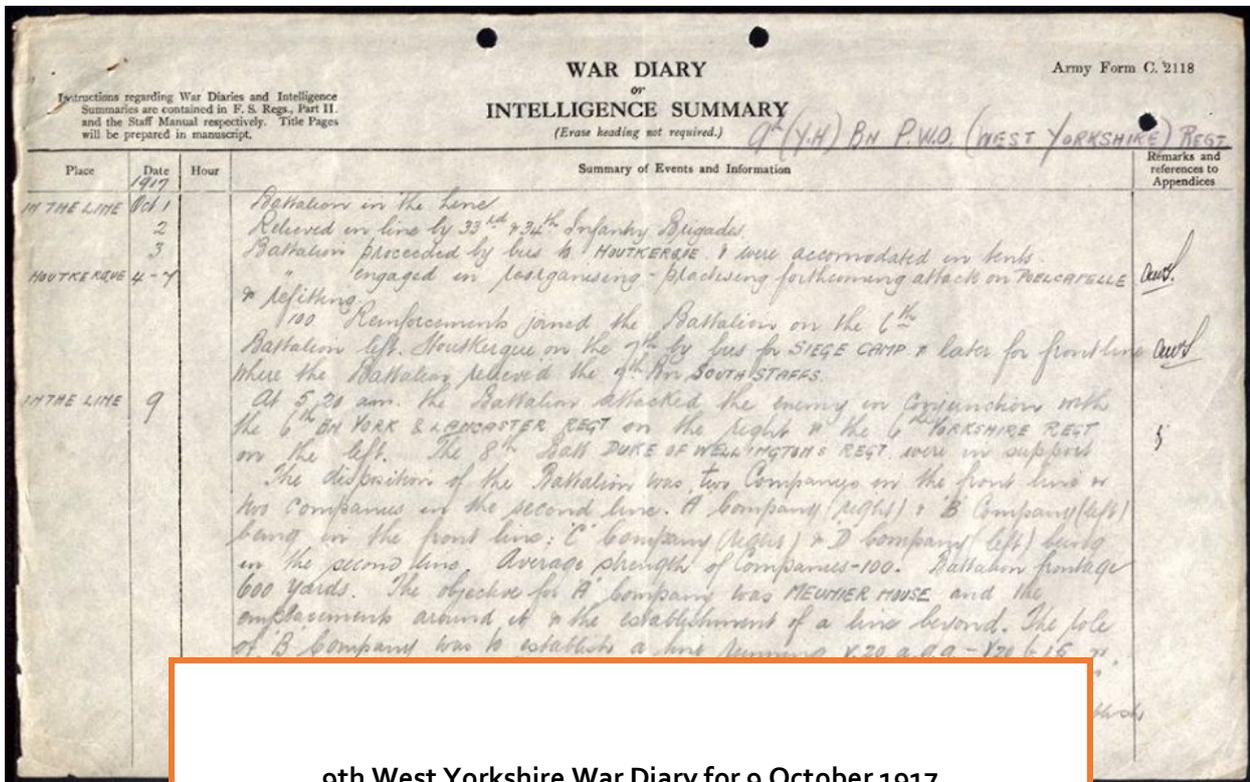
Poelcapelle at the end of World War 1

CASUALTIES

The total number of casualties for the attack by the 9th West Yorks amounts to 215 (of approximately 400 attacking) from all ranks, of which 51 were reported as killed.

The CWGC records would indicate 100 fatalities to the battalion, meaning those listed as ‘Missing’ at the time had been killed.

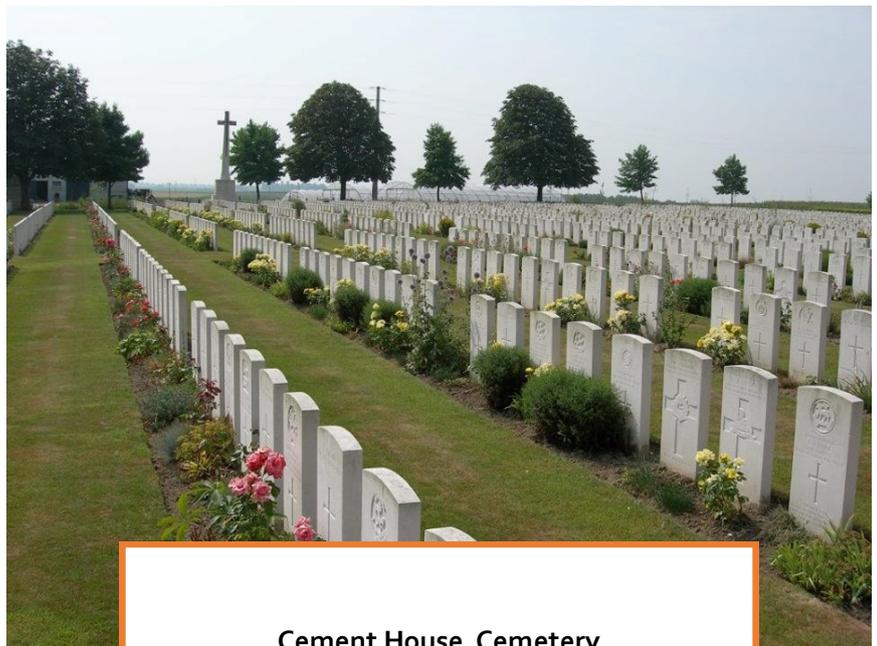
Richinson Newell was killed in this attack by the 9th West Yorkshire Regiment on 9 October 1917. It is probable that he was listed as one of the ‘Missing’ .



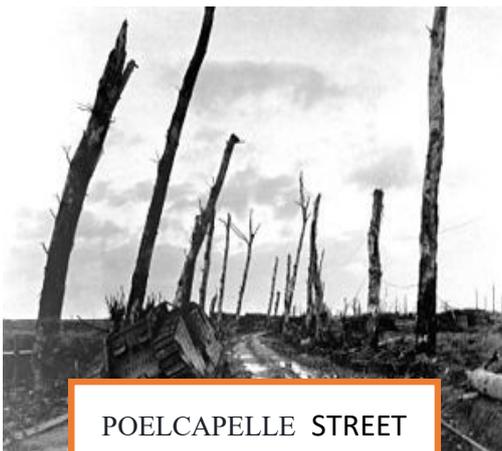
9th West Yorkshire War Diary for 9 October 1917

Richinson Newell's body is reported to have been found after the war at Map Reference V.20.a.4.1.

Following identification he was reburied in Cement House Cemetery. Richinson Newell's back pay and War Gratuity was paid to his father.



Cement House Cemetery



POELCAPELLE STREET CORNER

The attack at Poelcapelle failed to achieve its objectives. Some units did manage to advance a short distance, although in several cases were then forced to pull back later in the day.