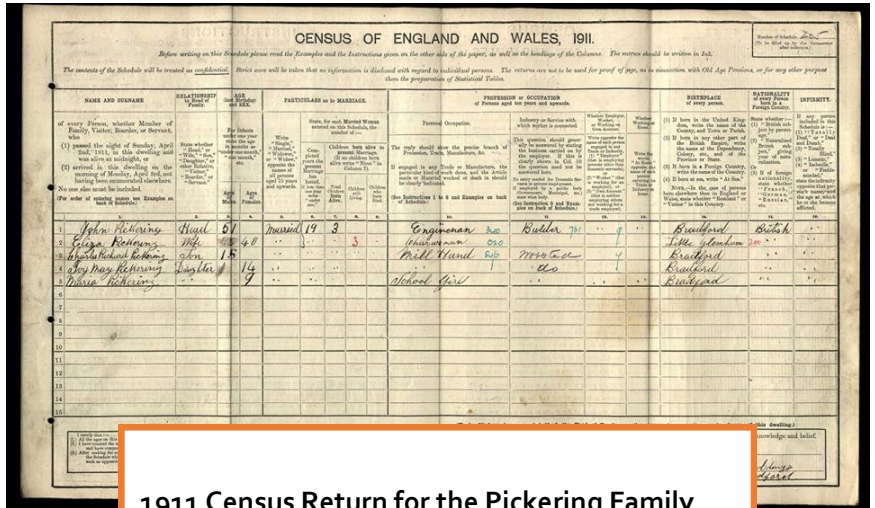


CHARLES RICHARD PICKERING

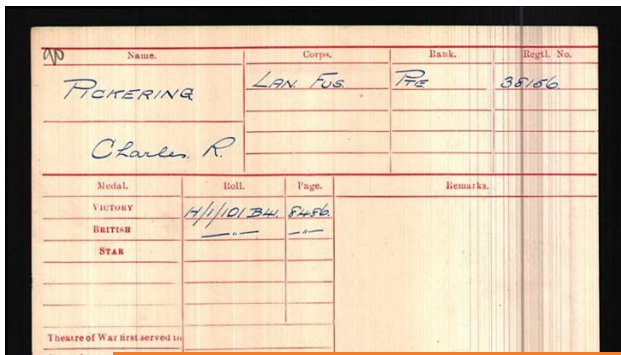
15TH LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS

Early Life

Charles Richard Pickering was born on 15th March 1896 to John and Eliza Pickering of 9 Providence Row Bolton, Bradford. The 1911 Census shows the family were living at No.2 Cansfield Buildings, Otley Road. Charles was their only son but he had two younger sisters. At this time he was employed as a mill hand.

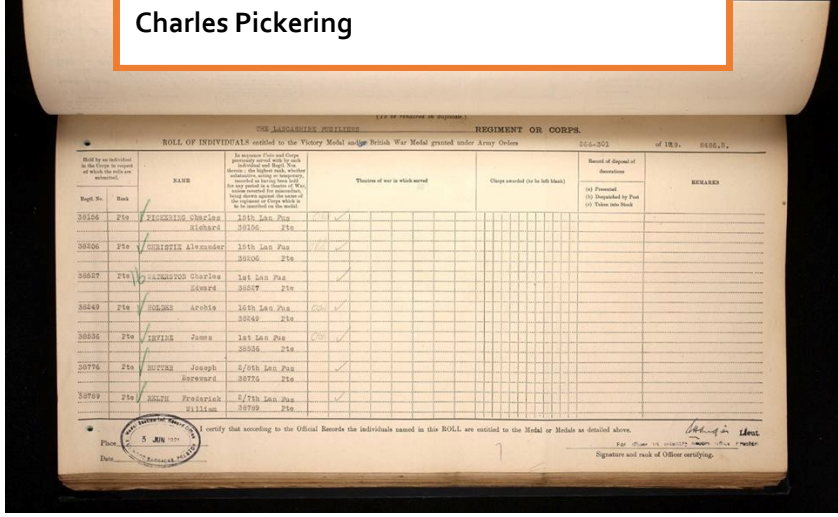


1911 Census Return for the Pickering Family



Medal Index card and Medal Roll for Charles Pickering

Charles was 18 when war broke out in 1914, his Service Records have not survived and his Medal Index Card simply lists him as a Private in the Lancashire Fusiliers who did not go out to France until after 1st January 1916. His Medal Roll for his War and Victory medals lists him as being a member of the 15th Lancashire Fusiliers.



This battalion had been raised in September 1914 as the 1st Salford Pals and like the Bradford Pals had been severely cut up on 1st July 1916 at the start of the Battle of the Somme. It is not known when Charles joined the battalion.



From the War Diary of the 15th Lancashire Fusiliers we learn that at the start of December 1917 they were in the trenches preparing to make an attack close to the village of Passchendaele itself:

War Diary of the 15th Lancashire Fusiliers

4/12/1917 – In trenches – Holding front line, left sector (32 Divn Front). Preparatory to attack.

2/12/1917 – In trenches – The Battalion was attached to the 97th Infantry Brigade for operations near WESTROOSBEKE. On the night of the 1st/2nd the battalion was formed up on a taped line ready to move up by 1.30AM and moved forward at Zero; 1.55AM on a three company frontage of 450 yards.

A Coy advanced keeping touch with the 17th Highland Light Infantry on their RIGHT, but came under heavy machine-gun fire. All the Officers and senior NCO's became casualties. They advanced quite near to their objective, but their casualties were heavy and the Company became very scattered.

B Coy advanced without much opposition, reached their objective, and commenced consolidating.

C Coy joined up from the original line at TOURNANT FARM on the LEFT, to B Coy on the objective forming a defensive flank of about 250 yards.

After A Coy had suffered so many casualties, two platoons of D Coy under 2/Lt J. Hirst and 2/Lt J. Pollitt were pushed forward and the gap that had been caused was filled in and the line held intact.

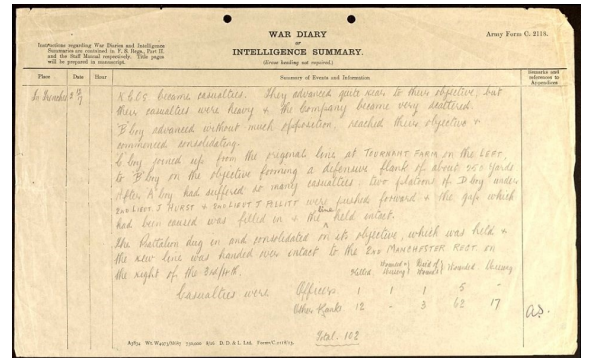
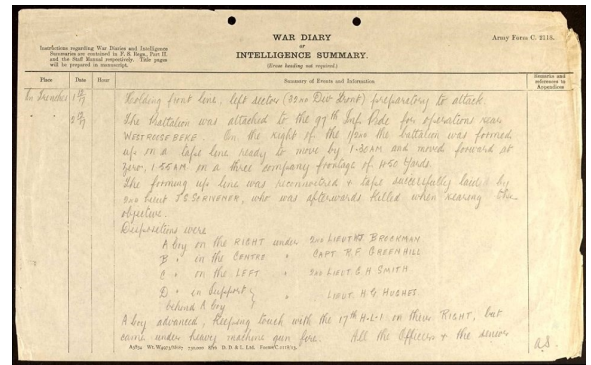
The Battalion dug in and consolidated on its objective, which was held and the new line was handed over intact to the 2nd Manchester Regt. on the night of the 3rd/4th.

Casualties were:

Officers: Killed 1, Wounded and Missing 1, Died of Wounds 1, Wounded 5

Other Ranks: Killed 12, Died of Wounds 3, Wounded 62, Missing 17

Total: 102"



It is not known what happened to Charles Pickering, though as it would seem that the majority of casualties befell to A Coy, it is likely he was one of these. The conditions this attack was fought in were simply dreadful and took place in a moonscape of water-filled shell-holes, snow on the ground forming their edges – fulfilling the mental picture of what ‘Passchendaele’ means to us today with all those horrific images.



Charles Pickering's body was lost, but was found in the battlefield clearances at Map Reference V.22.d.2.2. It is not recorded how his body was identified. He was then reburied at Poelcapelle British Cemetery