

15) 81435 Private Hubert Roxby **IREMONGER**
(St Mary's Aldermaston)

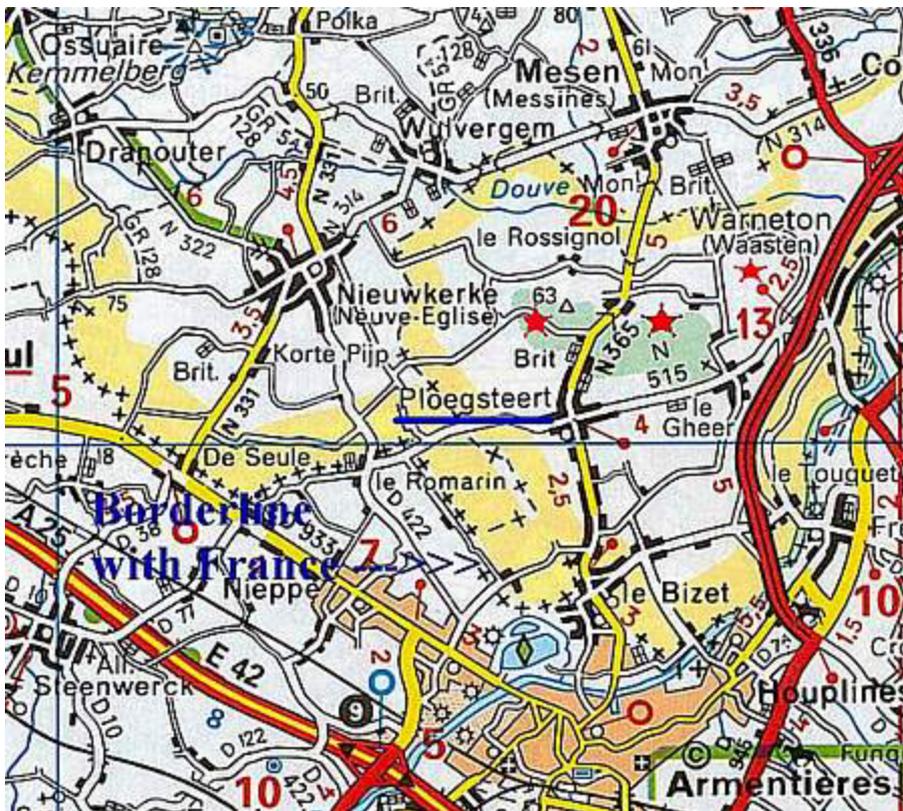
Kia 25/01/16, Age 24
8th Bn. Canadian Infantry

Hubert Iremonger was born on 2nd July 1892 in Aldermaston. He grew up in the area and was for a year a soldier with the Royal Berkshire Regiment Territorials. At some time before 1914, still single, he left the area and went to Canada and established himself as a farmer.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 there was a rush to the Colours, not only in the UK but throughout the British Empire, including Canada. During the Great War some 80% of the men serving in the Canadian Army had been born in Britain. Hubert Iremonger was no exception and he joined the 8th Battalion Canadian Infantry on 18th December 1914 in Winnipeg. This battalion had been formed earlier on 2nd September and had embarked for the UK on the *Franconia* and arrived on 14th October 1914. Hubert Iremonger was therefore a replacement to his battalion and, following training, would likely have arrived in France to join his unit mid to late 1915.

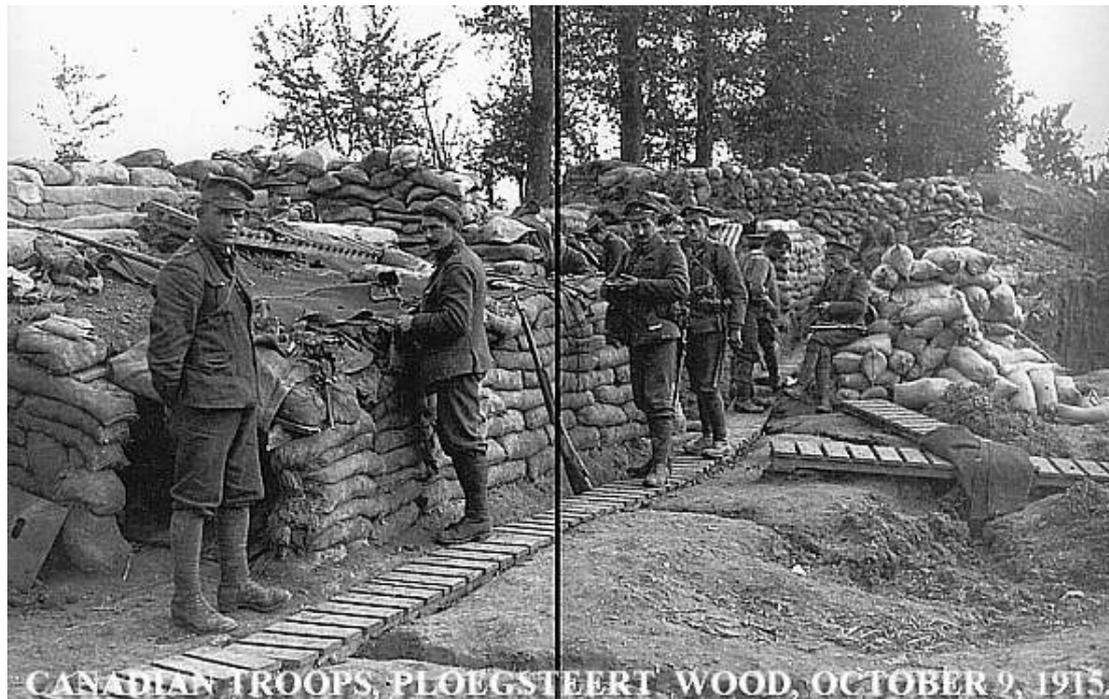
The Canadian Archives contain detailed records of their servicemen, including where known, the exact circumstances of a soldier's death. For Hubert Iremonger, this is as detailed as it is tragic:

'Whilst standing in the front line trench at Ploegsteert on the afternoon of January 25th 1916, a high explosive shrapnel shell, burst directly overhead, a fragment of the shell entering the back of the neck and piercing his skull. He died without regaining consciousness about an hour after being hit.'



'Plugstreet' and its famous 'Wood', to the south of Ypres, was a quiet sector in the winter of 1915-16, though there would always be a steady stream of casualties from shellfire and other projectiles. In just a few months time the British troops would be issued with the 'Brodie' Shrapnel Helmet, designed to reduce the large number of casualties to head wounds

from both shrapnel and falling debris. Even at the beginning of 1916 after a year of trench warfare, soldiers had only their service caps.



It is conceivable that one of these men could be Hubert Iremonger



Taken just weeks after his death, Canadian soldiers of his unit wearing Brodie helmets that could have saved Hubert Iremonger's life

The locations of both the shell burst in relation to Hubert Iremonger and the point of entry indicate that he would likely have head the shell coming, realised it was coming very near, covered his head with his hands and buried it into the parapet of the trench in a vain hope he might escape the deadly shrapnel.

The wound was very serious and no doubt was realised to be fatal to his comrades at the time. Letters to relatives of the fallen in the Great War often mention their loved one was hit in the head by a sniper's bullet or a shell fragment and died instantly, suffering no pain.

Such letters were written to give some comfort the grieving relatives, in that the soldier died without suffering. In many cases, the reality was far from this, death was rarely instantaneous and thus generally agonising. In Hubert Iremonger's case, the frankness of the account of his wounding and death does give some reassurance, that unconscious, he is unlikely to have died in pain.



'Plugstreet Wood' Today



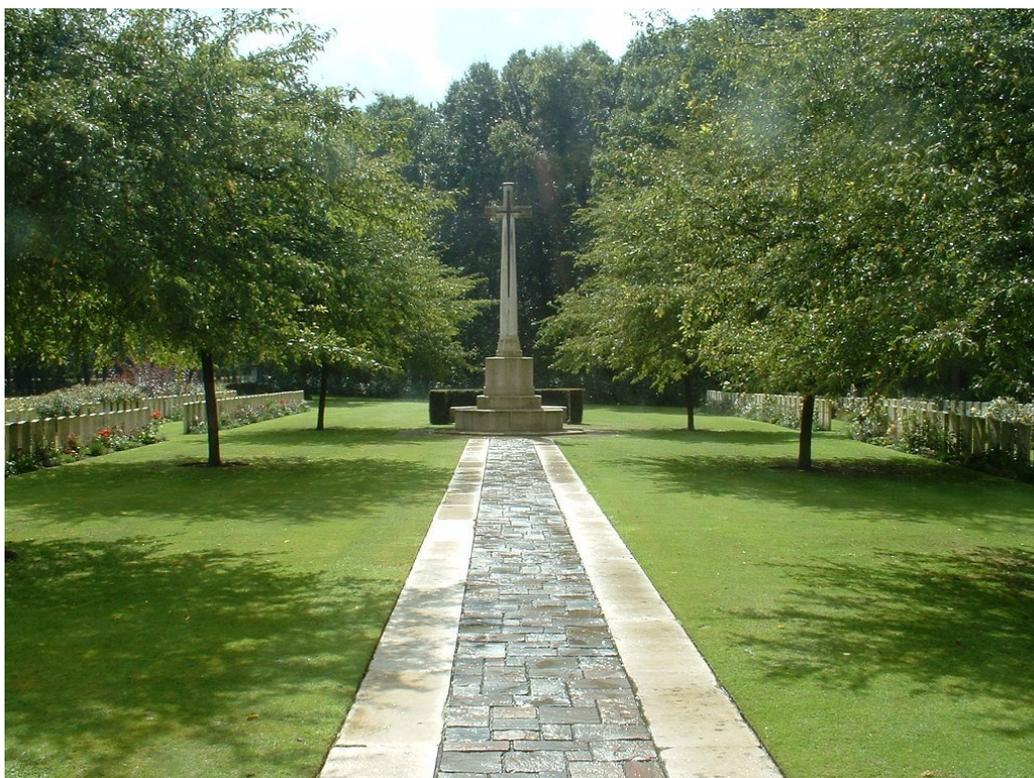
Relics of 1914-18 within 'Plugstreet Wood'

Hubert Iremonger is buried at:

BERKS CEMETERY EXTENSION, Belgium, III. A. 51.

SON OF MORTIMER WEST IREMONGER AND ELLEN IREMONGER, OF
ALDERMASTON, READING, ENGLAND.

BERKS CEMETERY EXTENSION



Location Information

Berks Cemetery Extension is located 12.5 kilometres south of Ieper town centre on the N365 leading from Ieper to Mesen, Ploegsteert and on to Armentieres.

Historical Information

Hyde Park Corner was a road junction to the north of Ploegsteert Wood. Hill 63 was to the north-west and nearby were the 'Catacombs', deep shelters capable of holding two battalions, which were used from November 1916 onwards.

HYDE PARK CORNER (ROYAL BERKS) CEMETERY was begun in April 1915 by the 1st/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment and was used at intervals until November 1917. The cemetery contains 83 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and four German war graves.

BERKS CEMETERY EXTENSION is separated from Hyde Park Corner Cemetery by a road. The extension was begun in June 1916 and used continuously until September 1917. At the Armistice, the extension comprised Plot I only, but Plots II and III were added in 1930 when graves were brought in from Rosenberg Chateau Military Cemetery and Extension, about 1 kilometre to the north-west, when it was established that these sites could not be acquired in perpetuity. Rosenberg Chateau Military Cemetery was used by fighting units from November 1914 to August 1916. The extension was begun in May 1916 and used until March 1918. Together, the cemetery and extension were sometimes referred to as 'Red Lodge'.

Berks Cemetery Extension now contains 876 First World War burials.

Within Berks Cemetery Extension stands the PLOEGSTEERT MEMORIAL, commemorating more than 11,000 Commonwealth servicemen who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave.

The cemetery, cemetery extension and memorial were designed by H Chalton Bradshaw.



81435 PRIVATE
H. R. IREMONGER
8TH BN. CANADIAN INF.
25TH JANUARY 1916 AGE 24



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