

41) 42352 Private Stanley James **HUTCHINS**
(St Nicolas's Wasing)

Kia 21/09/18, **Age** 19
2nd Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment

Born Brimpton
Enlisted Newbury
Residence Reading

Awarded: British War Medal
Victory Medal

Date arrived in theatre of war: not known

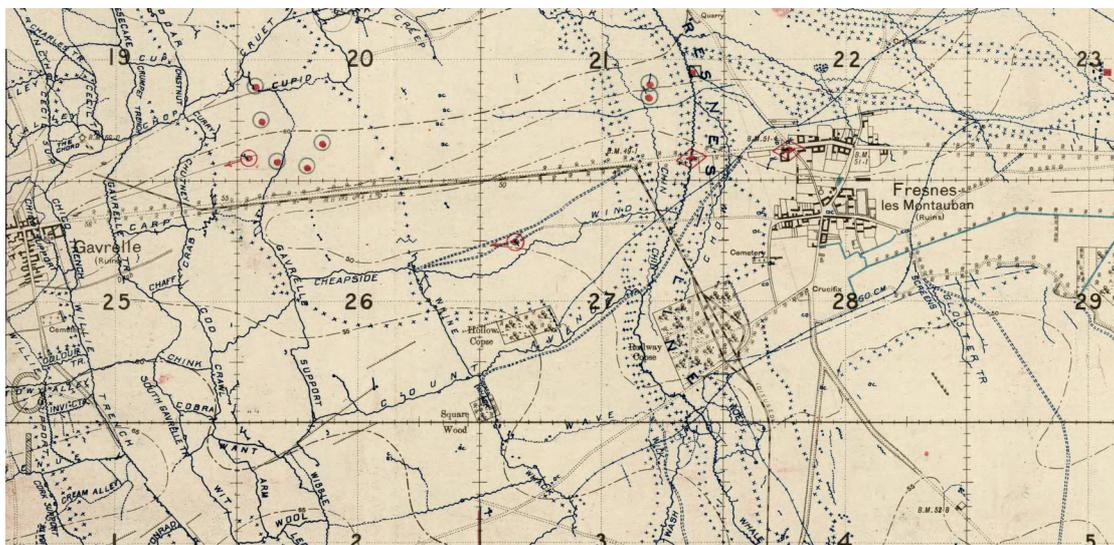
Stanley Hutchins at 19 was one of the youngest Aldermaston/Wasing casualties of the war. He almost certainly would have been one of those who received his calling up papers on his 18th birthday. Given the crisis at the Front in Spring 1918, he almost certainly would have been one of those whose training was hurriedly completed to rush him out to France when the age for overseas service was reduced to 18.5 years. Initially he could have counted himself fortunate to have been posted to his county battalion. By the time of his death, he may have been out in France only a matter of weeks and tragically he would fall within just weeks of the end of the war when the end would have been clearly in sight.

The British progress in the 'Advance to Victory' had been remarkable. In September 1918, the momentum increased as the open warfare would now encounter territory well behind the former static trench lines. Villages would be more likely to be whole and containing inhabitants, only too delighted to be liberated after four years of German occupation. Retreating, the Germans lost more men and materiel every day. Resistance sometimes would be only token and greater reliance would be placed on heavy mustard gas bombardments of lost territory that were designed to prevent Allied access to such areas. Although the Allies had also been using mustard gas, up to this point this had been stocks of captured German gas. From this point, the Allies were now able to use their own produced mustard gas in vast quantities. The casualties in the final weeks of the war were some of the highest in the war, the increase in use of poison gas by both sides being a primary cause.

In late September 1918 the 2nd Royal Berkshire were fully part of the 'Advance to Victory' in the Gavrelle/Fresnes sector near Arras. This area had been the scene of actions throughout 1917 starting with the Battle of Arras in April that year. Here there were still trenches and an enemy that still were very willing to hold them. Given the speed of the overall advance with the almost daily movements and attacks, new maps were needed almost daily and war diary entries become lacking in detail, the relevant ones here are:



Contemporary Sketch Map providing details of trenches described



Contemporary Trench Map showing these trenches between Gavrelle and Frenes

20/9/1918 – Oppy Sector

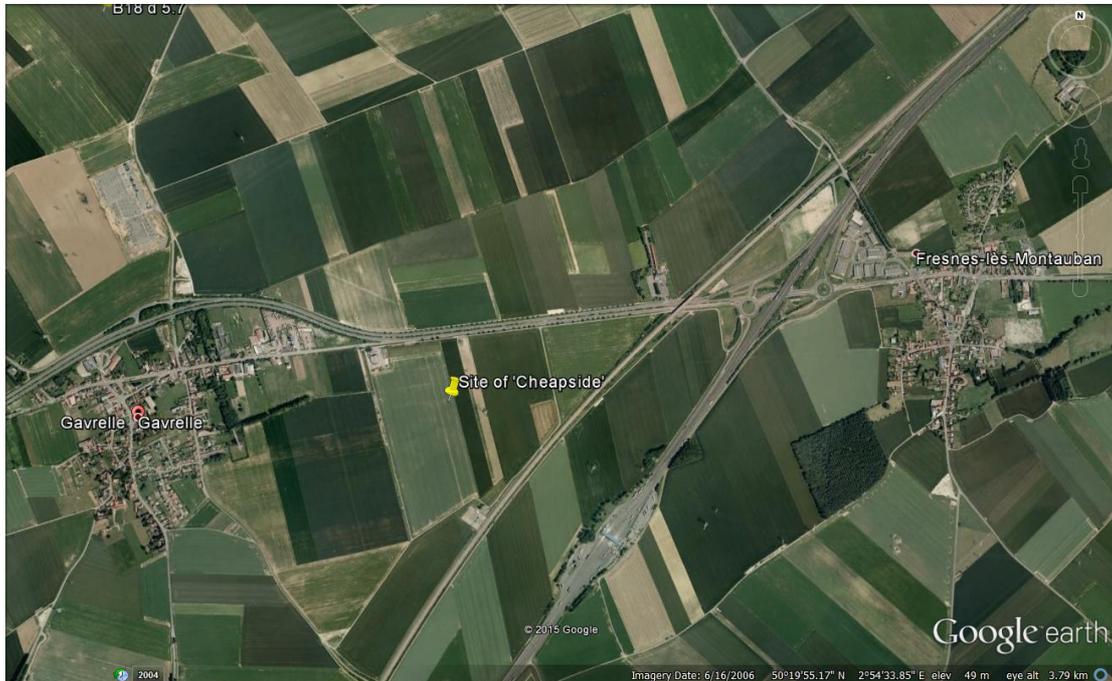
C Company moved up from AUX REITZ CAMP and took up a position in centre of BLACK LINE. Dispositions of companies on completion of move were: D Coy Outpost Zone, B Coy Right Black Line Coy (CORK SUPPORT – CIVIL AVENUE), C Coy Centre Black Line Coy (2 platoons in NAVAL TRENCH from TOWY ALLEY southwards and 2 platoons and Coy HQ in KILKERRAN SUPPORT), A Coy Left Black Line Coy in NAVAL TRENCH from TOWY ALLEY Northwards.

17 Reinforcements joined the Battalion this day

21/9/1918

At 11pm the Battalion advanced their line to a depth of 600 yards.

This 'simple' entry of 21/9 refers to an attack by the 2nd Royal Berkshire made in conjunction with the 2nd East Lancashire.



Satellite image of the area, despite the new motorway and Gavrelle bypass, chalk marks in the nearby field still marks the place of former trenches

A more detailed account of this attack was found in an appendix to the war diary;

'At ZERO 11pm the Barrage fell and the troops went forward. The enemy sent up Golden rain [flares signalling an SOS] and his Barrage came down at ZERO plus 4 it was fairly heavy, but not as heavy as expected. No opposition was met with until the objective was reached but NORTH GAVRELLE Trench was heavily shelled directly B Coy occupied it.

Communication was difficult the wire being continually cut in front of WILLIE SUPPORT.

It was early reported that all was going well except that opposition was being met with at the corner of CHEAPSIDE and WHINE but there was every hope that this would soon be cleared.

This was repeated from time to time by Officers commanding both A and C Coys.

At about 5am OC A Coy reported the 49th Division on the right had been driven in by SQUARE WOOD and was falling back but that C Coy was still in touch with their left.

At about 5.15am OC A Coy reported that the left platoon of Yorks and Lancs had withdrawn and that the enemy was getting round our right flank and was also counter attacking at the junction of WHINE and CHEAPSIDE. C Coy was forced to withdraw to GAVRELLE SUPPORT and A Coy were driven part way down CHEAPSIDE where they established a bombing block this was the situation at daybreak when the line ran GAVRELLE SUPPORT (1 post about 50 yards up CHEAPSIDE) across to CHUTNEY, touch being established on both flanks.'

Daylight would now prevent any further consolidation, but attacks would continue to be made to capture the original objectives on the night of 22/23rd September.

By normal standards the casualties resulting from these two days of fighting by the 2nd Royal Berkshire were very 'light':

Officers: 0 killed, 2 wounded, 3 missing

Other Ranks: 8 killed, 34 wounded, 5 missing



Looking southwards from the Gavrelle-Fresnes road, the site of the 2nd Royal Berkshire attack of 21/9/1918

It was on this first day of the attack on 21/9/18 that Stanley Hutchins was killed, his body was never identified and thus he is commemorated on:

VIS-EN-ARTOIS MEMORIAL, France, Panel 7.

SON OF ALBERT JAMES AND RUTH HUTCHINS, OF 16, BRIMPTON COMMON, READING

VIS-EN-ARTOIS MEMORIAL



Location Information

Vis-en-Artois and Haucourt are villages on the straight main road from Arras to Cambrai about 10 kilometres south-east of Arras.

Historical Information

This Memorial bears the names of over 9,000 men who fell in the period from 8 August 1918 to the date of the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. They belonged to the forces of Great Britain and Ireland and South Africa; the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand forces being commemorated on other memorials to the missing.

The Memorial consists of a screen wall in three parts. The middle part of the screen wall is concave and carries stone panels on which names are carved. It is 26 feet high flanked by pylons 70 feet high. The Stone of Remembrance stands exactly between the pylons and behind it, in the middle of the screen, is a group in relief representing St George and the Dragon. The flanking parts of the screen wall are also curved and carry stone panels carved with names. Each of them forms the back of a roofed colonnade; and at the far end of each is a small building.

The memorial was designed by J.R. Truelove, with sculpture by Ernest Gillick. It was unveiled by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Shaw on 4 August 1930.

GILES S. A.	RISBY J.	BL
GODFREY H. T.	ROBINSON A. F.	BL
GOULD W.	ROBINSON A. G.	BR
GRADY S. A.	ROBINSON F.	BR
GREEN E. G.	ROBINSON W.	BR
GREEN J. H.	ROGHE F.	BU
GRIFFITHS A. H.	ROGERS J. R.	BU
HAMBLETT M. A.	RUSHEN W. W.	BU
HARPER F. C. R.	SHARP C. H.	BU
HARPER H. H.	SIMMONDS W.	BY
HENSHALL A.	SIGNVILLE J. F.	CA
HOLLOWAY F.	SIVITER B. E.	CA
HOLMES G.	SLATER C. G.	CA
HUDSON H.	SMITHERS W. M.	CA
HUNT T. A.	SREEVES F. A.	CH
HUTCHINS S. J.	STANLEY W. H.	CH
JONES E. T.	SYMES H.	CL
JONES T.	TARLING W. J.	CL
KELSEY H. S.	TAYLOR W. H.	CH
KEMPTON R.	TEBOTH W. H.	CC
KERR F.	TEECE G. H.	CC
KEYNTON W. J.	TERRETT H.	CC
KIRKALDIE E.	UPFIELD S. G.	CC
LAIGHT S.	WALKER C. F. S.	CC
LAYDEN F.	WALKER R.	CC
LEES W.	VASSELL T. H.	CH
LIVESLEY C. S.	WATTS S.	DA
LOUND W. E.	WEBB W.	DA
MACE J.	WERRELL C.	DA
MCGILLIVRAY J. F.	WESTBURY N.	DA
MARRIOTT G.	WHEELER A. J.	DC
MATTHEWS E.	WHITE A. A.	DC
MURDEN I.	WHITE W. G.	DC