

43) Second Lieutenant Henry J LOVE MM  
(St Nicolas's Wasing)

**Died** 2/11/18, **Age** 26  
2nd/4th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment

Formerly: 10432 Pte, Royal Berkshire Regiment

**Awarded:** 1914-15 Star  
British War Medal  
Victory Medal

**Date arrived in theatre of war:** France 30/5/1915

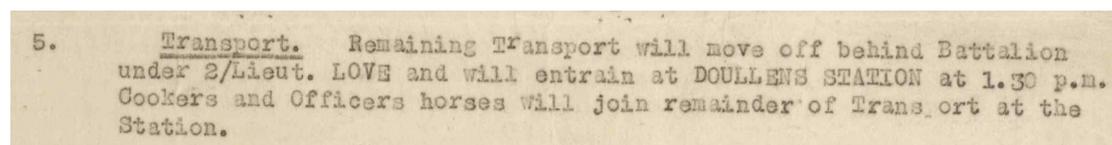
Henry Love was one of those men who joined up at the outbreak of war into one of the first Kitchener battalions of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion. They were formed at Reading on 25 August 1914 as part of K1 and placed under command of 35th Brigade in 12th (Eastern) Division. They moved initially to Shorncliffe and on to Folkestone in January 1915 and thence to Malplaquet Barracks at Aldershot on 1 March 1915. They arrived in France on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915. After an initial period of trench training, Henry would have first seen action in The Battle of Loos in September 1915. Thereafter he would have served in the majority of battles on the western front: Somme, Arras and Third Ypres.

At some stage, Henry Love was awarded a gallantry medal, the Military Medal, though neither the date for this award nor what this was for was found. There is no evidence that he was promoted through his years of active service. However, probably by late 1917, he would have found himself one of the very few 'originals' of his battalion. At this time, such experienced men were offered the possibility of being selected and trained to take up a commission to become an officer. This at least would mean several months back in England away from the horrors of the trenches and if successful, would mean as an officer a less onerous existence as regards physical labour when in the line.

It is evident that Henry Love was successful and obtained his commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. The date of the formal announcement being placed in the London Gazette was not found. As a newly commissioned officer, he may have had a choice of postings. However, by 1918 he was back with the Royal Berkshire Regiment, the 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> battalion, a Territorial unit.

A thorough search of the war diary of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire from 1/4/1918 was undertaken, only a single mention was found of Henry Love (see below). The diary did contain evidence of officers joining the battalion, but these are not named. The diary did not contain the routine monthly list of officers serving.

The war diary of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire for October/November 1918 shows the battalion continuing the overall advance to victory. The diary lacks mention of both names and casualties (unusual in that officers are normally mentioned by name in their actions and when becoming casualties). A battalion movement order of 8/10/1918 included this entry:



5. Transport. Remaining Transport will move off behind Battalion under 2/Lieut. LOVE and will entrain at DOULLENS STATION at 1.30 p.m. Cookers and Officers horses will join remainder of Transport at the Station.

This is the only entry in which Lt Henry Love is mentioned. The battalion's final actions of the war were:

*25/10/1918, 4am: A and C Coys captured LA JUSTICE – one prisoner – then pushed forward to line of VALENCIENNES-AVESNES Railway. Consolidated A and C Coys in front line, B and D Coys in Support line.*

25/10/1918, 4pm: Battalion with help of smoke barrage attempted to ascertain if it were possible to cross RIVER RHONELLE and gain high ground on opposite side. Enemy found to be holding high ground on opposite side of river strongly with M.G.'s. Coys forced to withdraw to original positions. Patrols active throughout night on SW side of river.

26/10/1918, 9am: Left Front Coy (A Coy) occupied Chateau near ARTRES at 10am. 4<sup>th</sup> Division on left attacked with heavy Artillery Barrage, occupied ARTRES, also established bridge head across river and gained slope of hill on our left.

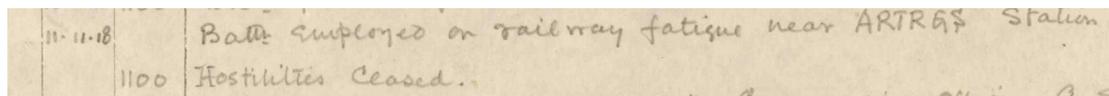
26/10/1918, 4pm: A and D Coys attempted to cross river. D Coy succeeded and gained slope on opposite side and established touch with 4<sup>th</sup> Division. A Coy were caught by Enemy Gas Shell bombardment and suffered casualties. B Coy relieved A Coy in original front line. Battalion was relieved by 1<sup>st</sup> Bn East Lancs. Regt and withdrew to billets in BERMERAIN. Battalion in Reserve.

1/11/1918, 1pm: The Battalion relieved 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucester Regt in the Main line of resistance, on high ground south of the River RHONELLE

1/11/1918, 2pm: The Battalion moved into the front line and held the position whilst the 183 Brigade attacked.

2/11/1918, 11pm: Battalion was relieved by 8<sup>th</sup> West Surreys (24<sup>th</sup> Divn). Battalion withdrew to billets in BERMERAIN

The 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire took no further active part in the war and remained in reserve until the armistice was signed on 11/11/1918:



Even with no specific details listed of casualties listed, it is highly likely they were indeed suffered in these engagements. Indeed casualties are specifically mentioned resulting from the Gas Shell bombardment of A Company at 4pm on 26/10/1918. According to his Medal Index card, Lt Henry Love is listed as having 'died of wounds' on 2/11/1918.

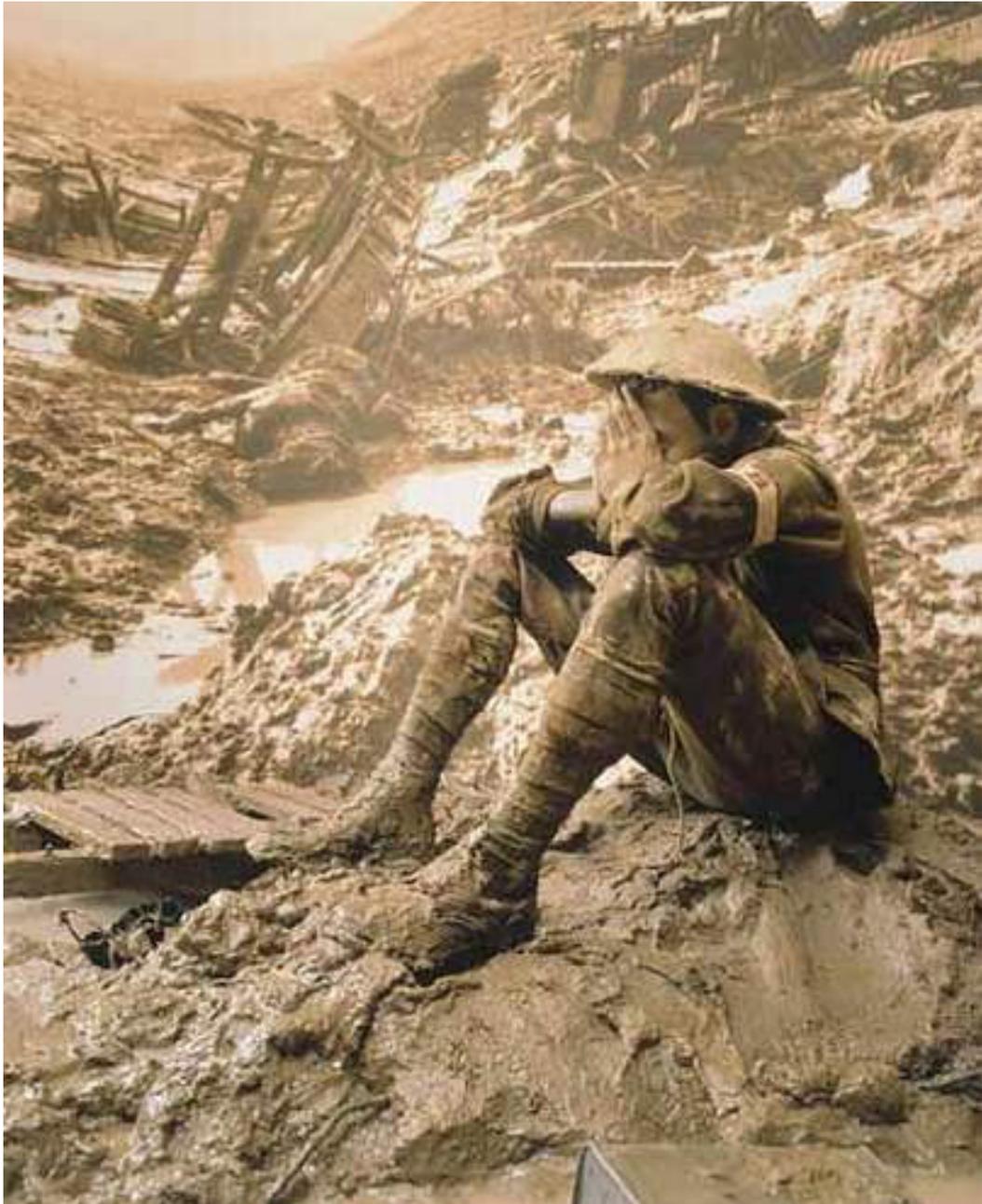
It is known that Awoingt British Cemetery was an active Casualty Clearing Station at the time of Lt Henry Love's death. Clearly here he died of his wounds and was buried here.

Lt Henry Love MM is buried in:

AWOINGT BRITISH CEMETERY, France, III. A. 26.

### **SON OF MR AND MRS W.J. LOVE, OF FIR VIEW, UFTON, READING**

Henry Love was most likely the final Aldermaston soldier to lose his life in the Great War, just days before its end. He had also been one of the first to enlist into his local regiment and saw action at most of the major battles on the Western Front. He was decorated for gallantry and received a commission. His Medal Index Card also states his medals were given to his mother. She was probably also the person to receive the telegram from the War Office regarding the death of her son. It is possible this telegram arrived as the church bells were sounding the Armistice and the end of the war.



**'Armistice – no celebration bells, only silence, the reaction from one who was there'**



**The village of Awoingt where Henry Love is buried – today**



**'Not Forgotten' – children and villagers of Awoingt lay flowers on British soldiers graves**

## **AWOINGT BRITISH CEMETERY**



### **Location Information**

Awoingt is a village some 3 Kms east-south-east of Cambrai and a little south of the main straight road, the N43, from Cambrai to Le Cateau.

### **Historical Information**

Awoingt British Cemetery was begun in the latter half of October 1918 and used until the middle of December; the village had been captured on 9/10 October. By 28 October, the 38th, 45th and 59th Casualty Clearing Stations were posted in the neighbourhood, and the great majority of the burials were made from those hospitals, but 16 graves in Plot III, Row H, and Plot V, were brought in after the Armistice from the country immediately surrounding the village.

Awoingt British Cemetery contains 653 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War, including a special memorial to one casualty whose grave in the cemetery cannot now be found. The cemetery also contains 63 war graves of other nationalities, most of them German.