

## PRITCHARD John

Private John Pritchard – D/10297 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards (Prince of Wales Own). He enlisted at Birkenhead on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1915. He died of wounds received at Hooge, Belgium, aged 27, and is buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, France.

John was the eldest son of John and Jane Pritchard. He was born at Quatt, Bridgnorth, Shropshire. In the 1901 census his father is recorded as an innkeeper at Minsterley, Shropshire. The 1911 census lists the family as living at 1, Weatherstone Cottages, Willaston. The father was doing light work at home while his mother was a laundress. John, her son, was then 24 years of age and was working as a groom.

During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern or the southern battlefields. In 1917, 100,000 troops were camped among the sand dunes and the hospitals, which included eleven general, one stationary, four Red Cross hospitals and a convalescent depot, could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick.

Hooge is a small village in Flanders, Belgium. During the First World War it was the site of intensive fighting. At the Battle of Hooge the flamethrower was used to dreadful effect and became one of the most feared weapons during the Great War. Eleven days before the battle, British infantry captured the German-occupied village of Hooge, located near Ypres in Belgium, by detonating a large mine. Using the flamethrowers, along with machine guns, trench mortars and hand grenades, the Germans reclaimed their positions on July 30, 1915. Though few men were lost to actual burns, a British officer reported later that the weapons had a great demoralizing effect, and when added to the assault of the other powerful weapons, they proved mercilessly efficient at Hooge.

At the request of French Commander-in-Chief Joffre, on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 1915, the British Second Army extended its left flank to Boesinghe, thus placing it for the first time in complete occupation of the Ypres salient. Sadly, Private Pritchard lost his life during this offensive.



Hooge 1919.