



SECOND LIEUTENANT HUBERT LIONEL HOUSSEMARYNE DU BOULAY

3RD BATTALION ATTACHED TO
1ST BATTALION, WILTSHIRE REGIMENT

Hubert Lionel Houssemaryne Du Boulay was born on 25 June 1897 in Woolwich to Rose (née Hawkins) and Colonel Woodforde George Du Boulay of the Royal Engineers.

In 1901 the family were living in Sandown, Isle of Wight. It was a large household with Hubert and his four sisters and two brothers, and the family employed a Governess and six servants.

By 1911 the family had moved to Marchmont, Parabola Road, Cheltenham. The census of that year shows that Hubert was one of 11 children and his father had retired from the Army.

Hubert attended Cheltenham College as a Day Boy from September 1906 to July 1915. He played in the Cricket XI (1913-14) being Captain in 1914. He also played in the Football XV in 1913-14 becoming Captain and was Fives champion in 1914 and 1915. He was a Senior Prefect and a Sergeant Major in the OTC.

Before leaving college Hubert applied for a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers on 7 May 1915. He was commissioned as Second Lieutenant (on probation) on 28 May 1915 into the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment and was confirmed in his rank on 25 February 1916. After training he was attached to the 1st Battalion, arriving in France on 16 August 1916. Just over two weeks later, on 3 September, Hubert was killed in action during the fighting for Mouquet Farm during the Battle of Pozieres; he was 19 years of age.

The battalion's War Diary for 2/3 September reads:

In the trenches

Orders had been received previously that the Battn would take the trenches R31.C.78, R31.A.48,

R.31.a5.5, R.31.a9.41, R.31.a9.3, R.31.b.0.3, 2.3, 3.2, 3.1, 5.1, 5.0, R31.d.7.9, 9.8. Late on the night of the 2nd/3rd written orders were received that the only attack to be made were upon the lines, R.31.C.4.6 to R.31.a.5.5 and upon R.31.c.7.6 to R.31.a.9.1, R.31.d.4.8., R.31.d.07. This meant that both the flanks of this Battn were exposed. The Bn arrived in position in trenches at 2.30 without a casualty in spite of heavy shelling. The intense bombardment began at 5.10am and the troops moved out of the trenches and formed up about 50 yards off and advanced upon their objective. As soon as they had left the trench they were met by a heavy 'Whizbang' fire, and almost at the same time machine guns from either flank opened upon them. Our right company (D) stated that they got into the enemy trench and were wiped out by our own barrage which did not lift in time. The centre and left companies report that their heavy losses were due to machine gun fire from both flanks. By the time they reached their objective they were numerically inferior to the enemy. The left company reached and occupied R.31.C.8.9 and made a block there.

The few men in the other companies who reached the enemy trench were forced to retire owing to their lack of numbers. The true position was not known at this time and the reserve company was sent up to strengthen the line but as far as could be ascertained, they were knocked out by machine gun fire from the flanks. Shortly after the officers commanding right and centre companies reported that they had been able to get back with infinite difficulty and very few men and that the attack had failed. The Commanding Officer was hit by a bullet in the leg. Five other officers became casualties.

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At about 11am orders were received that the Battalion should proceed back in small parties to BOUZINCOURT, which was duly undertaken. The last of the Battalion arrived at their billets at about 5pm.

An informant, Private Parsons (No 29772) at No 3 General Hospital in Boulogne, stated that: "We made an attack over on Sunday, our objective was the German trench. We failed to take it. Mr du Boulay was our platoon officer, but he went over in the first wave and I was in the second. Private Knight, 8 Platoon, told me that Mr du Boulay was killed as he was going across to No-Man's Land. It was impossible to get him in, there were two machine guns in the German trenches turned on us. We held our own line, and I don't think he can be a prisoner as where he was killed was under our own fire."

The following report appeared in the Gloucestershire Echo on 7 September:

LIEUT H L H DU BOULAY (O C)

General sympathy will be felt for Col and Mrs Du Boulay of Marchmont, Bayshill, Cheltenham, in the loss of their son. Sec Lieut Hubert Lionel Houssemaryne Du Boulay of the Wiltshire Regiment, who was killed in action. He was but 29 [sic] years

of age, and had been at the front line but a fortnight. He entered Cheltenham College (Junior School) in 1906 and won a scholarship there in 1911. He was in the cricket XI for three seasons, in the football XV for two years, and captain of both in his last year, as well as being fives champion in 1914 and 1915. He was in the Upper Sixth Form (Classical) for three years, and was senior college prefect. He was a boy of magnificent physique, a really good cricketer, a clever and powerful three-quarter back, and a good classical scholar. What was said of the Hon Alfred Lyttelton by Mr Asquith was true of him also: " He was the finest type and product of the English public school system, the embodiment of all the qualities that every parent would wish his boy to possess."

Second Lieutenant Hubert Lionel Houssemaryne Du Boulay has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 13A. He is also commemorated on the Christ Church Roll of Honour, Cheltenham College Roll of Honour, Cheltenham War Memorial, All Saints Church War Memorial, on the headstone of his parents' grave in St Peter's Churchyard, Leckhampton and on the headstone of the grave of his grandfather, C W Hawkins in St Botolph Churchyard, Colchester, Essex.

Sources and acknowledgements:

Leaving all that was dear : Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux & G Sacker

Ancestry

www.ancestry.co.uk

Forces War Records

www.forces-war-records.co.uk

British Newspaper Archive

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Find My Past

www.findmypast.co.uk

Cheltenham College Archive

www.cheltenhamcollege.org

National Archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

www.cwgc.org

The Gazette

www.thegazette.co.uk