

Samuel Albert Pearce was born in Redenhall with Starston in 1886, the son of Albert Pearce, a Maltster and his wife Elizabeth.

In 1901 aged 14, he was a Bricklayer's Labourer.

He married May Randall in 1907.

In 1911, he was working as a Bricklayer and the father of 1 year old Hilda. The young family came to live in the loke where Mrs Woodhouse used to live, off Priory Lane. The brick works were on the site of Brick Kiln House.

Samuel was the father of 3 children when he enlisted in Norwich, into the Norfolk Regiment. He became an Acting Corporal and was then transferred to the 11th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment.

On 21st October 1916, he was killed in action with the British Expeditionary Force, in France.

The day he died, his Regiment made a successful capture of Stuff Trench, with very heavy casualties, Samuel was one of them. The War Diaries are very concise..."The Battn capture German First Line (Stuff Trench)."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission recommends that one reads "Undertones of War" by Edmund Blunden... for a descriptive account of that time. Edmund Blunden was in the same Battalion and Regiment as Samuel, so would have been with him before the capture of Stuff Trench.

"The walk to the front line lay over the most bewildering battlefield, so gouged and hummocked, so denatured and dun, so crowded with brown shrapnel-cases and German long-handled grenades, rifles, water bottles....."

"....and then the loud whirring of an aeroplane sounded over our heads. British! -not so.....our hearts sank at the knowledge that they knew about tomorrow."

"That night, our attacking companies went forward and lay in a ditch with a few 'baby elephant' shelters in it, and much water....."

....“The clear autumn day was a mixed blessing for Harrison, who, in his determination to send over the companies to take Stuff Trench after as much ‘rest’ as could be found in that Golgotha, had arranged that they should advance from the reserve trench direct to the assault. And by way of novelty the assault was ordered to be made six or seven minutes after noon; the men would therefore have to move forward in broad day and over a sufficiently long approach- liable to the air’s jealous eyes.....”

“Orders had been admirably obeyed; the waves extended, the artillery gave tongue at the exact moment. The barrage was heavy but its uproar was diffused in this open region.....”

“News of the attack always seems to take years in reaching headquartersAt last some messages, wildly scribbled.....Stuff trench was taken, there were few men left.....”

The messages and signals “A” Form record.....Casualties that day: 268

Samuel’s name is recorded in Chichester Cathedral, in the Royal Sussex Regimental Chapel. His name there is very easy to view. The panels hang open on the wall. He is also commemorated in Norwich Cathedral, in the Book of Remembrance. Names are more difficult to view here, because the pages are not turned very frequently.

In France his name appears on The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme Battlefields.

Samuel’s widow remarried in 1919 and became Mrs Garner, moving away from Shotesham, with her 3 young children.

Samuel’s youngest daughter Thirza, died in 1986.

His granddaughters live in Dersingham.

NORMAN J.C.
PARRIS R.W.
PEARCE S.
RAPLEY C.G.
ROBERTS R.C.

448 MINNS·G

821 MUNNION·F

1145 PAGE·C·H

15231 PEARCE·S

R 718 PORTER·G·W

15777 RENSHAW·H·H·MM

343 ROBERTS·R·C

THOMPSON·T·N

