



BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Tillington</i> in the County of <i>Sussex</i> in the Year 1895					
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name. Christian. Surname.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
1895 Sept. 29 No. 127	Charles Henry	William & Eliza Stoner	Upperton	Labourer	W. J. R.

Baptism entry in All Hallows' Church Records

At the age of 27 years, in 1887, William Stoner of Tillington married Eliza Chandler from Lurgashall. They had seven children between 1887 and 1903 and sometime before 1896 the family moved to Upperton where father was a domestic gardener and where Charles Henry was born in 1895. He was christened in All Hallows' Church on September 29th of that year. After leaving Tillington School at the age of 14 years Charles became a farm labourer and by 1911 the family had returned to Petworth and were living in Lowheath Cottage.

Soon after his 19th birthday, sometime between September 24th and 26th 1914, Charles travelled to Chichester and enlisted in the Royal Sussex Regiment. At this time the 2nd Battalion was fighting in France and therefore Private C H Stoner G/3812 was most probably posted to the 3rd Battalion, which was formed in August 1914 specifically to train recruits for overseas battalions. After training Pte Stoner was posted to the 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, and he left England on October 20th 1915 to join his Battalion at Lilliers, some 12 kilometres NW of Bethune where it was resting from front line duties. On October 25th the Battalion received 'draft of 8 Signallers and 19 Machine gunners' and on the 29th '28 Other Ranks joined Battalion'. It is likely that Pte Stoner was one of these reinforcements but his function is not known.

**Soldiers joining** a fighting regiment were encouraged to make a Will before they joined the front line for the first time. Once completed this Will was kept in a pocket service book tucked into their uniform. Charles made his Will on October 30th 1915, providing more evidence that he had joined the Battalion only a few days earlier. It is interesting to note that below his signature he has written his Battalion as the '3rd Royal Sussex Regt'. This was his training Battalion and is another indication that he had only just arrived.

**The Battalion War Diary** for late December 1915 records;

Dec 22nd - Battalion moved to support trenches in section B1.

Dec 26th - Battalion moved up to the firing line in section B1.

There is no mention of Christmas Day until the entry for 3rd January 1916.

On 3rd Jan Christmas Day was celebrated in billets, the 25th December being spent in the trenches, and consequently but little celebration could take place, but however we made good on the 3rd.

20 sh. 6 pence payment in a B. 6h  
30/10/15. WILL. *W. J. R.*  
In the event of my death  
I give the the whole of  
my Property to my  
Mother,  
Mrs Eliza Stoner  
Shephards Lodge  
Petworth Park  
Petworth  
Sussex  
Signed Charles Stoner  
3rd Royal Sussex Regt

Charles Stoner's original will



British troops waiting to go 'over the top' at the Battle of Albert

During 1916 the Battalion (1st Division, 2nd Brigade) fought bravely on the Somme, including the Battle of Albert (1-13 July), the Battle of Bazentin (14-17 July), the Battle of Pozieres (23 July) and the Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15-22 September). On September 24th the Battalion was in reserve and was 'allocated the baths' in the town of Albert. In the afternoon of the 25th it moved in reserve to High Wood (close to Albert) which had been captured some ten days earlier. The next day the Battalion was ordered to attack the German trenches.

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
STONER C.H.	R. Sussex R.	PL	G/3812
Medal	Unit	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	8/2/1916	1436	
BATTION	15	5/2/1915	296
Thirteen of War first served in	20/10/15		
Date of entry service			

Medal Card showing medal entitlement



1914-15 Star British War Medal Victory Medal

**The War Diary** entry for September 26th:

About 5pm orders were received that the battalion would attack the German line 900 yards in front of PURE TRENCH.... The attack was launched at a 11pm, but was unsuccessful.

Sept 27th: At 2pm .... the battalion again attacked the German position, B Coy led the assault with A Coy in close support. The battalion advanced steadily and in splendid order, in spite of much hostile artillery fire, and easily secured its objective.... Our casualties during the advance were slight and the captured position was consolidated before dark.... Our casualties in both attacks were OR (Other Ranks) killed 21. Wounded 99. Missing 36.

Private Charles Henry Stoner G/3812 was one of the 36 missing after this battle (Battle of Morval) and he is remembered on the Loos Memorial.



No needs he any hearse to bear him hence,  
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.

The Volunteer - Herbert Asquith