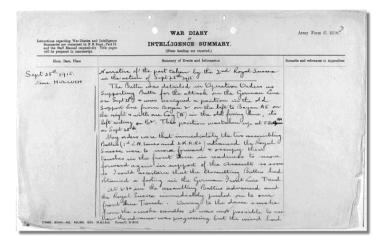


Jane Quennell married Henry Butt in the summer of 1874. By 1881 the couple were living at Hill Top Cottage, Tillington, with their two children, Edward and Henry. William was born in early Spring 1883 and christened in All Hallows' Church on March 25th of the same year. At the age of four or five years he probably went to Tillington School, a short walk from his home. At the time of the 1901 census William was 18 years old, single, living at home and employed as a domestic gardener. Ten years later he was still single and living with his parents, but by then he was a bricklayer's labourer.







Medal Roll showing service number and battalion

Perhaps with a sense of patriotism and the promise of pay substantially better than that of a labourer, William, at the age of 31, enlisted in the 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment sometime during August or September 1914 soon after the outbreak of war. The Battalion left for France in August 1914 and therefore Private William Butt G/1694 trained in England before joining his Battalion overseas on May 18th 1915.

Some days before the Battalion had suffered heavy losses in the Battal of Aubers Ridge and William, along with 270 other men and NCO's, provided much needed reinforcements, reaching the Battalion at Cambrin on May 22nd. Between May and September the Battalion had a relatively quiet time, spending only short periods at the front. This all changed on Saturday, September 25th when the devastating Battle of Loos began. This was the largest offensive mounted in 1915 and the first time the British used poison gas. Although some minor gains were made in this battle, including the town of Loos, it was at the cost of some 50,000 Allied casualties.



The mining town of Loos, c 1915, dominated by pit winding gear, nicknamed by the British

The 2nd Battalion War Diary for September 25th:

Near Hulluch...At 6.30 am the assaulting Battns advanced and the Royal Sussex immediately pushed on to our front line trench.... the wind had veered round and had carried some of the gas back over our Front Trench causing a good deal of confusion amongst the troops....My Company Commanders then on their own initiative at once advanced and pushed on to the Assault Battalion thus becoming part of the Assaulting Line at a very early stage of the attack. This advance was pushed right up to the German wire which was not cut and at this stage all our officers and men who had reached or got close to the wire were either killed or wounded.



On this fateful Saturday in September 1915 the 2nd Battalion suffered 481 casualties, including 181 killed, two-thirds of whom have no known graves. Private William Butt G/1694 was part of this courageous assault and tragically lost his life at the age of 32 years fighting for his King and Country. His body was not found but he is remembered, along with many others from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Lance Corporal Charles Judge (see 'They also Fell') was also killed in this battle on the same day, but his body was recovered and he is buried in Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos.

