

## CHRISTOPHER LEONARD FREEMAN

14.6.1877–21.3.1918 aged 41 years

Private G/19500 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment



Christopher was the husband of Sarah and father of four children. Shortly after marriage in East Leake the family moved to Monks Lane, Gotham and Christopher was an engine driver at the gypsum works. He enlisted in 1917 at the age of 41 into the Sherwood Foresters, but was later rebadged to the Royal West Kent Regiment. He was killed in action on the first day of operation Michael, the Germans last attempt at breakthrough following the collapse of Russia and before the Americans arrived in force. The initial attack took place at the junction of BEF and French forces on the Somme, in dense fog. The battalion war diary reads; 20<sup>th</sup> Bttn holding line near Moy. At stand to information received enemy massing in large numbers. 21<sup>st</sup>. Under cover of dense mist enemy advanced, surrounded Bttn HQ at about 11.00am A,B,C Coys also surrounded. Capt A V McDonald was sent to Brigade HQ at about 9.00am from there he gathered the remnants of the battalion and all available reinforcements which he had been sent from details at Friars Camp, and took command. Battalion gradually withdrew to Faillovel, just west of the canal. Casualties 20 officers, 577 ORs. As late as 1.00pm a breathless runner brought a final message from Col Crossthwaite with cut off West Kents to the 10<sup>th</sup> Essex. It read 'Holding out at 12.30pm. Boches all around within 50 yards except rear. Can only see 40 yards, so is difficult to kill the blighters.' Like many men lost that day, Christopher has no known grave. He is recorded on the Poziers memorial panel 58 and 59. See also *Charles Jessop* and *Daniel Smith* killed on the same day.

