

JOHN ARCHER

1885–4.11.1914 aged 29 years

Private 8195 2nd Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment



John is not recorded on the Gotham Roll. He is recorded by the CWGC as ‘Son of Samuel Archer of East St, Gotham, and the late Sarah Archer. Native of Kegworth, Leicestershire.’ I have included him in the Roll as his father lived in Gotham, which seems to be the qualifying factor for many on the Roll.

John was a professional soldier of the York and Lancaster Regiment and went to France at the outbreak of WW1 with the British Expeditionary Force. His battalion landed at St Nazaire on the 9th of September 1914 and was transported by rail and route march to assist the French. They took over a section of the front line at Maison Rouge at Vailly on the 20th of September. On the 21st they came under fire and the battalion war diary records ‘3 killed, 11 wounded’. They were relieved on the 12th of October without further loss. On the 18th of October they were again in the front line on the Radinghen to Frammelles road where they immediately came under fire and lost 13 killed, 93 wounded and 27 missing. On the 20th of October the enemy broke through at Bas Champ and the battalion was forced to withdraw. On the 23rd October the enemy attacked again and were counter attacked by repeated bayonet charges. The total loss for the battalion for October 1914 was 40 killed, 198 wounded 34 missing, 8 died of wounds. John would have been one of those ‘died of wounds’ as he is recorded by Soldiers Died as died of wounds 4th of November 1914. War diaries rarely refer to “other ranks” by name, merely as ORs. John would have been one of the ORs listed during this fluid opening phase of WW1 before things became trench bound.

John is buried in the Boulogne Easter cemetery Pas de Calais. This is consistent with him having been evacuated from the front and transferred to a base hospital at Boulogne where he died of his wounds. He is buried in row III B 26. The cemetery is a CWGC part of the municipal cemetery and is unusual in that the head stones are laid flat, which is usually a sign of unstable ground. John is also recorded on the Kegworth Memorial.