

### Horace Milton Waite (1896-1977)

My great uncle Horace Waite joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Herts Territorial Regiment in 1914 and they were sent to 'France' in November around his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

His sister, my grandmother, Lilian kept an album with newspaper cuttings relating to the regiment. The family lived in Bishop's Stortford and his father was cashier for the original Holland & Barrett's store in the town.

A local newspaper dated 12 Dec 1914 includes an excerpt from one of Horace's letters to his parents. I think the regiment joined the first battle of Ypres(19 Oct-22 Nov 1914).



“There are four of us in our billet and things are excellent. We are still in our rest camp but likely to move any minute now. Last Wednesday all the troops were reviewed by His Majesty. We have had very heavy rainstorms the last day or two and it doesn't forget to come down.”

Major H. Page-Croft was in charge of the 'C' (Bishop's Stortford) Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Hertfordshire Territorials at this time and as it turns out Horace's third cousin once removed, though he is unlikely to have been aware of the connection.

Further newspaper cuttings record that the Battalion was thanked by the Prince of Wales following their 'baptism of fire' in which they kept their line intact and “On Christmas Day they had to face a determined German assault in the very neighbourhood of Ypres. This was continued on Boxing Day.”

This photo was taken when he was home on leave in Dec 1915.

“...home on seven day's leave after being in the thick of it for fourteen months.”

Farewell Orders by Brigadier-General Henry Page Croft on relinquishing the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Hertfordshire Regiment, 10 Feb 1916, after 12 months of active service. “...From the time when you were plunged into the concluding stages of the first great defence of Ypres to your first open fighting when you supported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coldstream and 1<sup>st</sup> Irish Guards at the capture of the Brickstacks you were put to a test as young troops which proved your mettle. Since then you attacked with gallantry and won ground

at Festubert, holding your new line, which you dug in one night, against the violent shell-fire the next day, and for 12 months have held one of the most trying parts of the whole Allied front, and experienced very numerous intense bombardments, including the occasion when you assisted the K.R.R. to repel the attack on the Quarries, and the trying experiences of co-operation on the left of the battle of Loos..."

An undated newspaper cutting is headed "The Territorials' Sacrifice. Men of Herts who took St Julien. Remnant gets back. The highest sacrifice in the third battle of Ypres was perhaps paid by the Hertfordshire Regiment, who with other Territorials as gallant as themselves took St Julien and pushed forward deep into the enemy's country beyond..." "The achievement of some of the same troops in the final capture of Thiepval, St Pierre-Divion and the Schwaben redoubt a year ago went almost unrecorded."

Another undated newspaper cutting is headed "Hertfordshire's Gallantry at Festubert. 17 Killed. 115 Wounded...it appears that the 1<sup>st</sup> Hertfordshire Regiment has been in the hottest engagement which has fallen to their lot since they went to the Front, and that they gallantly fought and drove the enemy from their trenches. It was after this that they lost a lot of men, the Germans having their range to a nicety and blowing the trench to atoms."

See HMWaite's WW1 photos.

Apart from a spell in hospital in Rouen with 'rheumatism and neuralgia' Horace came through the war in one piece.

I am sure you are aware of Brig.-General H. Page Croft's book 'Twenty two months under fire', an account of the time he was in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Hertfordshire Regiment, written in the style and with the sentiments of the time.