

The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment



The Great War 1914 - 1919



The 8th Battalion

The 8th Battalion was raised in October 1914 from volunteers who had responded to Lord Kitchener's appeal for 100,000 men. The new battalion underwent training in the south of England before it left for France. The battalion arrived in France in September 1915. They joined the 76th Brigade of the 25th Division; subsequently they transferred to the 3rd Division. The battalion served on the Western Front in France and Belgium throughout the

war. After the Armistice the 8th Battalion occupied Cologne until May 1919 when it returned home to Britain.

A total of 39 officers and 1,159 other ranks of the 8th Battalion were killed on the Western Front.

In addition to regular spells in the trenches, the 8th Battalion was involved in the following actions:

The 8th Battalion on the Western Front (1)

The Bluff (2nd March 1916)

The battalion successfully overran its objectives after a surprise attack supported by

British heavy guns.

St. Eloi (3rd April 1916)

The men attacked 'across a waste of sticky mud' to recapture a series of mine craters.

During the Battle of the Somme (1st July-16th November 1916)

1. **Delville Wood** 18th July - The battalion helped to fight off three German attacks.
2. **Guillemont** 18th August - The battalion attacked German trenches without success.
3. **Serre** 13th November - The attack failed as men tried to advance in waist deep mud.

Arras (9th April-4th May 1917)

The battalion was to attack on the first day of the battle. However, its orders arrived late and its attack was not a success.

Zonnebeke (26th September 1917)

The battalion played a part in the storming of Zonnebeke village. Three counter attacks were defeated.



The 8th Battalion on the Western Front (2)

During the German Offensive (21st March-4th April 1918)

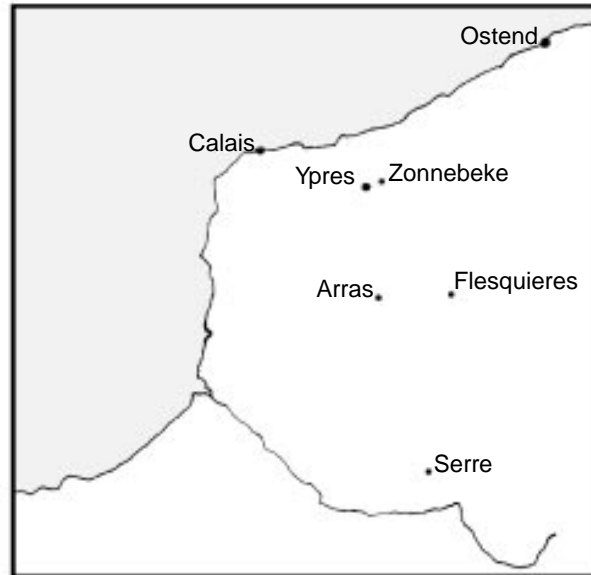
As a part of the Third Army, the 8th battalion helped to halt the German offensive in front of Arras.

During the 'Hundred Days' (8th August-11th November 1918)

A series of battles were fought which led to Germany suing for peace. These battles were hard fought but large numbers of prisoners were taken as the German Army began to crumble.

The 8th Battalion took part in the following attacks:

- Courcelles & Railway (21st August)
- Gomicourt (23rd August)
- Noreuil (1st September)
- Flesquieres & Ribecourt (28th September) This attack saw the battalion break into the 'Hindenburg Line'. 800 prisoners & 200 machine guns were captured.
- Rumilly (2nd October)



Private Billy Poole (right) from Little Urswick, Ulverston, and comrade of the 8th (Service) Battalion. The photograph, probably taken in September 1914, shows them wearing the 'Blue' uniforms prior to the issue of khaki. Billy Poole was killed aged 23 on 20th October 1915 at Sanctuary Wood, Hooge, near Ypres.



Lance-Sergeant Tom Neely VC MM (posthumous), 8th (Service) Battalion. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for attacking several enemy strong-points and machine-gun positions in the Hindenburg Line near Flesquieres on 27th September 1918. Neely was killed in action four days later.