

PRIVATE ERNEST GEORGE ANDREWS

CH/2199(S), 1st R.M. Battalion, R.N. Division, Royal Marine Light Infantry

Died aged 28 on 29 October 1917

Buried with honour in *Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium*; IX B 19

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinghe



Royal Marine Light Infantry

ERNEST GEORGE ANDREWS was born in 1889 to Frederick Andrews, a General Labourer, and Elizabeth (formerly Gurney). Ernest was one of eight children, five of whom were still alive at the time of the 1911 Census. The family were living at 3 Eagles Alley in 1891 and at 10 Spring Gardens in 1901. In 1909 Ernest married Bertha Mary Taylor in Tewkesbury and they had two children, Hilda Maud (born 1909) and Dorothy M. (born 1913). On the 1911 Census they were recorded as living at Greens Building, Gravel Walk, with his occupation a 'Coal Haulier'. Before joining the Royal Marines, Ernest had been employed by Mr. A. Edwards, a Coal Merchant, of Oldbury Road.

According to his service record, Ernest originally enlisted in the Royal Marine Light Infantry in Tewkesbury on 10 December 1915. Nothing further is known about him until reference is made to his being sent to France on 28 June 1917 as part of a draft sent to the British Expeditionary Force. On arriving in France he was posted to the 1st Marine Battalion which was part of the 188th Infantry Brigade within the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. This division, which fought on land as infantry alongside the Army, was originally formed from Royal Navy and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers who were not needed for service at sea. In 1916, following heavy losses among the original naval volunteers, it was transferred to the British Army as the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

The *Tewkesbury Register* reported the news of Ernest's death, and differs in some facts from his service record. 'Mrs. E. Andrews, of Oldbury

Road, has received the sorrowful news that her husband, Pte. E. Andrews, RMLI, died in hospital, in France, from wounds received in action. It is scarcely eight months since Pte. Andrews joined HM Forces, being then 26 years of age'. The Register also observed that 'He is the second son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Andrews who live nearby in Oldbury Road and who have also a son-in-law home wounded' and went on to reproduce a letter from the Matron of the hospital at which Ernest died: 'BEF, 29/10/17. Dear Mrs Andrews, I am grieved to have to tell you that your husband, Pte Andrews, 2199, RMLI, was badly wounded by shrapnel in the chest, and although everything possible was done for him, he passed peacefully away at 7.15 this morning.With much sympathy, yours truly, J. Greaves'. [Author's emphasis]

Private Andrews was wounded on 26 October 1917, the opening day of the *Second Battle of Passchendaele*. This was the final battle in the overall campaign known as the *Third Battle of Ypres* which started nearly three months earlier on 31 July and ended on 10 November when the Canadian Corps captured the remains of the village of Passchendaele. The role of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division in the attack, specifically the 188th Brigade, had been to provide flank support for the central thrust by the Canadians; the brigade suffered around 2000 casualties.

Private Ernest George Andrews was evacuated to the 4th Casualty Clearing Station at Poperinghe where he died of his wounds three days later; he is buried nearby in *Dozinghem Military Cemetery*.