

## PRIVATE BERT DEVEREUX

30927, 2nd Battalion, Devonshire Regiment

Died aged 19 on 15 February 1918

Remembered with honour at *Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium*; Panel 38 to 40

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium*



*Pte. Bert Devereux [Graphic]*



*Devonshire Regiment*

**BERT DEVEREUX** was born in 1898 to Thomas Devereux and Emily (formerly Baldwin). Emily was born in Tewkesbury whilst Thomas came from Bredon. They married in 1884 and, according to the 1911 Census, had a total of 10 children of whom nine were still alive. Thomas worked for the Midland Railway in its Provender Store at Ashchurch. In 1911 the family were living at 10 Clay's Buildings, then between East Street and Barton Street.

Bert was a pupil of the Abbey Boys School, and in 1911 he was stated to be both at school and a 'Clothiers Errand Boy'. Before joining the Army, he was in the employ of the Vicar of Tewkesbury. According to his obituary, *'for many years he was a member of the Church Lads' Brigade, in which he held the rank of Sergeant, and the distinction of the long service medal. Anxious to do his bit for his country, he served with comrades of the CLB, soon after the outbreak of war, in guarding the water track near Birmingham. He was one of the band of the local Company, and played the big drum with no little skill.'*

On 19 February 1917 Bert enlisted at the age of 18. He was initially allocated to the 206th Infantry Battalion, a unit of the Training Reserve. Prior to the introduction of conscription in 1916, most infantry regiments contained one or more reserve battalions to which new recruits would be posted for basic training, before being allocated to an active service unit. After conscription, the regimental system simply could not cope with the numbers and the local nature of recruitment for infantry regiments was abandoned; the entire system was centralised, based

on the creation of a Training Reserve. Once his service in the Training Reserve was completed, Bert was posted to the 2nd Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment, a regular battalion which had been one of the original battalions sent to France in November 1914 as part of the 23rd Infantry Brigade in the 8th Division.

**Private Bert Devereux** died almost exactly a year after joining up, on 15 February 1918; he was killed instantaneously by a shell which entered the *'forward post killing three'*. The battalion had been occupying the front line north west of Passchendaele since 11 February until it was relieved late on 15 February by the 2nd Battalion, The Rifle Brigade. Bert was one of the unlucky victims of the hazards of trench life, being killed at a time when no major attack was taking place. The chaplain wrote to his parents that *'I thought it would be a comfort to you to know that your son never suffered for a moment. The same night his comrades buried him beside the other two who were killed with him, close to where he died'*. The Register reported that *'Mr. and Mrs. Devereux have also received the official notice of the death and the message of sympathy from the King and Queen, signed by the Secretary of State for War'*.

Although the chaplain reported that the three casualties had been buried in battlefield graves, none of the bodies were recovered or identified after the war. It may be that the temporary graves were destroyed by subsequent shellfire, so Private Bert Devereux and his two comrades are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at *Tyne Cot Cemetery*, Zonnebeke, near Ypres in Belgium.