

## In Memory of

**Private FRANK EDWARDS**

**18214, 2nd Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment  
who died age 28 on 8 July 1916**

**Son of Henry and Emily Edwards of Bradenstoke, Chippenham;  
Husband of Sylvia Jane Edwards (later Bath)  
of 89 Friday Street, Christian Malford, Wiltshire**

**Remembered with honour  
THIEPVAL MEMORIAL, FRANCE**



On 1 July 1916 the Battle of the Somme commenced. Supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave.

**Battalion War Diary - 8 July 1916:** In the early morning we move ... to Bernafay Wood ... and Bricqueterie and assemble for the attack, our part being to follow the Yorks, ... attack Maltz Horn Trench ... and gain connection with the French who are attacking on our right. ... however 'B' & 'C' Coys find the Yorks checked and driven back into the wood. 'A' Coy at once advanced across the open ... for a point S of Maltz Horn Farm, and succeeded in taking trenches between this farm and the left flank of the French. ... Meanwhile a re-bombardment of Trones Wood followed at 1pm by the assault by 'C' & 'D' Coys ... succeeded in taking the southern half of the wood .... During the evening many counter attacks by small parties of Germans are made from the north. These are all beaten off by our very thin line of men. ... About midnight the Germans make a strong counter attack from the north, their only success being to capture a Lewis gun and throw two grenades into our line.

Frank's wife, Sylvia, was to suffer another loss in March 1917 when their daughter, Frances, also died. Frank's father was a thatcher and shepherd.

