

## **Private William Way Pye**

William Way Pye was born on 26 August 1885, the son of James, a husbandman, and Jane Pye.

The 1901 census return finds William living at Chapelhayes Farm, Bradninch where he is employed as a stock boy.

He enlisted in the Devonshire Regiment at Exeter during 1904, at the age of 18/19, at which time the Battalion was in India, but moved to Burma in October 1905. It is not possible to establish when he may have joined the Battalion, which didn't return to England until January 1909, when it went straight to Lucknow Barracks. The 1911 census recorded William with the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment at Lucknow Barracks, North Tidworth, Pewsey, Wiltshire.

On 21 August 1914 William's Regiment sailed to Le Havre, then travelled across Northern France to Flanders. The Regiment War Diary records that on 15 November the battalion moved to Meteren, taking over trenches north of Neuve Eglise on the Messines Ridge that had been occupied by the enemy.

Private 7662 William Way Pye was killed by sniper fire on Christmas Eve 1914, rather than in direct action with the enemy. He was in his thirtieth year, and his name is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial, as well as in his Silverton home.

The Western Times Newspaper dated 8th January 1915 reported that "William Pye, of the Devons, has been killed while saving a comrade at the Front." Unfortunately, no other evidence of this has been located.

**Contributor Graham Parnell**