

110: George Angus

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: George Angus

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 5th Bn. Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Service Number: 23841

Date of Death: 03 May 1917

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Arras Memorial, Arras, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: None

George was the fifth child of sawyer Michael and Catherine (née Kelly) Angus. No record of the marriage has been found but the family was much-travelled with the seven children (in 1901) having been born in six different locations. Michael Angus was a son of coal miner John and Mary Angus of Morpeth, Northumberland.

George Angus was born in Neston on 19 August 1894, the twin brother of Elizabeth. Both were baptised at St Winefride's Roman Catholic Church on 4 September 1896. There is no record of there being earlier baptisms to the family at St Winefride's although another son, Michael Thomas Angus, was born on 5 October 1896 and baptised on 23 October. The family must have moved from Neston shortly after this time because Michael Thomas died in the Dewsbury area in mid-1897.

It appears that Elizabeth, George's twin, died in Alnwick aged 8 in the second quarter of 1903. It is clear that George (and Elizabeth), although born in Neston, lived here only from mid-1894 until late 1896. In 1901 the family was living at Heptonstall, Yorkshire:

Michael Angus	Head	M	41	Sawyer	Worker	Northumberland Scotland Gate
Catherine	Wife	M	37			do Alnwick
John W.	Son	S	16	Labourer (Sawyer)	Worker	do do
Mary	Son	S	15	Winder (Cotton Mill)	Worker	do Glanton
Catherine	Son	S	13			do Bridge of Allan
Robert	Son		11			Yorkshire Lee Gap
George	Son		6			Cheshire Neston
Elizabeth	Son		6			do do
Ann	Son		8m			Yorkshire Heckmondwike

1901 census (extract) – Wadsworth View, Heptonstall (near Hebden Bridge), Todmorden, Yorkshire

Michael Angus	41	sawyer	born Scotland Gate, Northumberland
Catherine	37		born Alnwick, Northumberland
John W.	16	labourer (sawyer)	born Alnwick, Northumberland
Mary	15	winder (cotton mill)	born Glanton, Northumberland
Catherine	13		born Bridge of Allan, Stirling, Scotland
Robert	11		born Lee Gap, Yorkshire
George	6		born Neston
Elizabeth	6		born Neston
Ann	8 months		born Heckmondwike, Yorkshire

and landed at Boulogne. They engaged in various actions on the Western Front including:

1915: The Action of Hooge, part of the first flamethrower attack by the Germans, and The Second Attack on Bellewaarde.

1916: The Battle of Delville Wood and The Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

1917: The German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line, The First Battle of the Scarpe, The Third Battle of the Scarpe, The Battle of Langemark, The First Battle of Passchendaele and The Second Battle of Passchendaele.

It would seem that George Angus was killed in the offensive at Vis-en-Artois, part of the British offensive which commenced on 3 May 1917 on a 12-mile front to the east of Arras. The Medal Rolls Index Card for George records that he served initially with the Army Cyclist Corps. and so he would have had the role of delivering messages within the battle zone, a vulnerable position.

Preliminary instructions and maps were issued secretly to certain officers at the end of April, and on 2 May (9.15am) the final orders were received from H.Q. 42nd Infantry Brigade showing that the attack was to be made by the 21st Division on the right, the 18th in the centre, and the 14th Division on the left, the 14th Division having the 41st Brigade on the right, the 42nd on the left, and the 43rd in reserve, while the 42nd Brigade was to attack with the 5th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry on the right, the 9th Rifle Brigade on the left, and the remaining two battalions in reserve. Special maps showed, in distinctive colours, the front held by the 14th Division and the Divisional boundaries, the position of the leading troops at zero, the boundaries between the brigades of the Division and between the assaulting battalions of the 42nd Brigade, the First Objective and the Second Objective.

The War Diaries for the 5th Battalion reported the following for 2-3 May 1917:

The 5th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry from N.14.b via Brigade H.Q.(N.15.d.4.4), N.22 central, N.23.d.8.4, along the bank and via the railway. The Battalion will move by platoons in file at 3 minutes' interval. The leading platoon to arrive at Brigade H.Q. at 8 p.m. Water will be issued to men requiring it, under Brigade arrangements at Brigade H.Q. The Battalion will be clear of Cross Roads N.22.a by 9.15 p.m., and will proceed in file to their Assembly Trenches. All trenches have been labelled. All units (less 9th K.R.R.C.) will report by runner to Advance Brigade H.Q. in the Stag as soon as they are in their positions of assembly. As soon as Battalions are in their Assembly Trenches an issue of hot tea and rum will be made under Brigade arrangements. The Assembly Trenches were named "zoologically," and the Battalion assembled for the assault in portions of the Ape, the Boar, the Buck, the Lion, and the Bison. 'Z' day was 3rd May and zero hour 3.45 a.m.

The following is Lieut.-Colonel H.L. Wood's Official Report of the action of the Battalion:

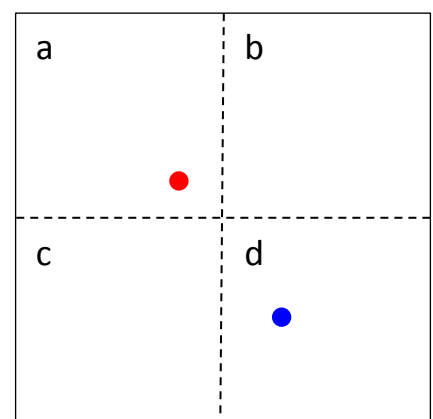
At zero the Battalion was formed up as follows : A and C Companies in the front line, A on the right, C on the left; B and D Companies in the second line, B on the right, D on the left; each company in two lines of two platoons. The front line was on the taped line, the second line in

Ape Trench. The German artillery and machine-guns opened fire within 3 minutes of our barrage commencing; most of the artillery fire was between Ape and Bison. Until the advance commenced at zero plus 18 there were only a few casualties from artillery fire in Ape, and none in the companies in front. On the other hand, the machine-gun fire was very heavy and accurate, and came from the left flank (either from St. Rohart Factory or from the Quarry in O.15.c) and front (from the Quarry at O.21.b.8.0 or from Triangle Wood).

At zero plus 18 the advance commenced and reached a line about 50 yards west of New Trench, beyond which it was found impossible to advance farther on the left. On the right of the line 2nd Lieut. Peel (A Company) found it possible to avoid the machine-gun fire by crawling, and he got a few men forward and occupied part of New Trench. As touch had been lost with the 8th K.R.R.C., 2nd Lieut. Peel brought up the reserve platoon of A Company on his right flank, and gained touch with them. This was about 4.30 a.m. About this time the remainder of A Company and part of D Company managed to get into New Trench on the left of A Company. The Germans who had been holding New Trench retired to a line about 40 yards in rear, from which they heavily bombed and opened fire with two machine-guns on New Trench. These were, however, soon silenced by rifle and Lewis-gun fire. It was, however, found impossible to advance owing to the very accurate and unceasing machine-gun fire from the left, and also to a certain extent from the front. The artillery fire also became fairly heavy about this time. The situation now was as follows : about 50 men of all companies in New Trench, and parties of B and D Companies (about two platoons in all) in a line of shell-holes about 40 yards behind. This party tried to consolidate, but found it impossible to work owing to the incessant machine-gun fire, snipers, and heavy Vane-bomb fire, which came from the left flank, probably from Hillside Work. The situation remained unchanged until about 10.45a.m., New Trench being shelled continuously, while a very heavy barrage was maintained on the Assembly Trenches. At about 10.45 a.m. the troops on our right were observed retiring, and a strong enemy counter-attack in 6 or 7 waves (each estimated by those in the front line at about 150 to 200 men) was launched against New Trench. Fire was immediately opened on them with all available rifles, Lewis-guns, and two Vickers which had come up, and many casualties were inflicted, but without stopping the counter-attack. When the enemy had got within 50 yards of New Trench, and our ammunition was practically all expended, the remnants withdrew to the Assembly Trenches, bringing back as many Lewis-guns as possible. The two Vickers had to be abandoned.

The map references in these reports, and in the Regimental War Diary accounts of the days surrounding 3 May 1917 on the following page, can be identified exactly on the contemporary Trench Map Guide extract reproduced on the page following the War Diary extract. The system of referencing used by the army in WW1, initially confusing, uses a combination of numerals and both upper- and lower-case letters which permits precise location of points.

The map used here is the 1 : 40 000 Sheet 51B [Arras-Cantin] (an imperial scale of 1.584 inches to 1 mile). The map is progressively subdivided by gridlines: initial squares, each with a side-length of 6000 yards are labelled A – X, each of these squares than being subdivided into 36 squares each with a side of 1000 yards and designated 1 - 36. These squares are labelled on the map. Each 1000 yard square is, on the map, separated into 500 yard quadrants by fine pecklines, each small square being designated a, b, c, d. Each 500 yard quadrant is then subdivided numerically both northwards and eastwards to create 100 internal squares so that a point in the quadrant can be given a numerical location – for example, the point marked by the red dot on this exemplar square would be approximately a.8.2 and the blue dot would be designated d.3.5.



INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

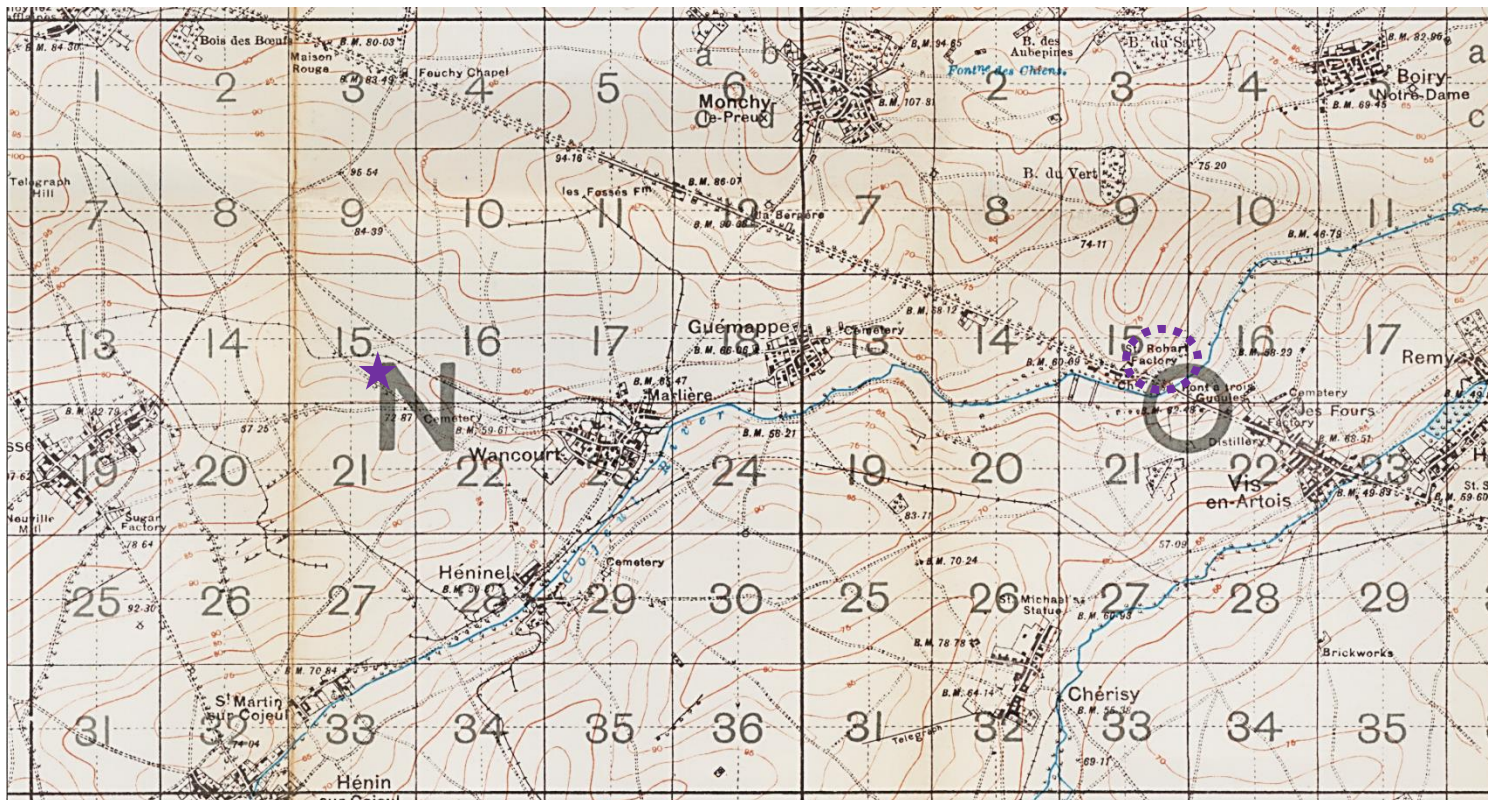
(Erase heading not required.)

CBC

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	1.5.17		Rest. 1 O.R. killed by 4.2" shell. Shelled spasmodically at dusk	CBC
	2.5.17		Coys. equipped with 'battle orders' in morning. Proceeded to assembly trenches in O19a and b (51b SW.2) at 8 pm <u>Order</u> C-A-B-D-HQ. No casualties. Rum & hot tea on arrival in assembly trenches. Quiet night.	CBC
	3.5.17		14 th Division attacked enemy positions in O21a & c - 41 st B ^{de} on right - 42 nd B ^{de} on left - 43 rd B ^{de} in reserve at 3.45 am. The Battalion attacked at 3.45 am on right and of the Brigade - 9 th R.B. on left & 8 th K.R.R.C. on right. Strength of the Battalion before attack 550 of all ranks. The attack was carried out with A-C Coys in first wave, 'A' being on the right - Battn. bombers under 2/Lt C.C. HARPER in second wave - B & D Coys in 3 rd wave - with 'B' on right. At ZERO the enemy opened a very heavy M.G. and rifle fire on our troops from St ROHART FACTORY (O15c 51b SW.2) and HILLSIDE WORK (O21b) and an undiscovered trench in O21a. This trench was found to be wired and held in moderate strength; and held up the attack temporarily. B & D Coys then reinforced the leading wave and the Battalion managed to force its way into this trench. Here - owing to very heavy casualties - it was obliged to remain. At 11 am the Germans launched a very heavy counter attack on our front driving back the Division on our right - eventually thus driving the B ^{de} back to original front line. At 8 pm remnants of the Battalion went back to NIGER TRENCH. Casualties were as follows. <u>KILLED</u> Lt S. ASHMAN 2/Lt W.C. HAYNES & 17 O.R. <u>Missing</u> 2/Lt C.C. HARPER - BULMER - RICHARDS & 112 O.R. <u>Wounded</u> Capt GOODWYN 2/Lt JACKSON Lt HUTCHINSON & 150 O.R. Total 8 Off & 279 O.R.	CBC
	4.5.17		Shelled with gas shells during day. Relieved by 10 th D.L.I. at 7 pm and went to HARP	CBC
	5.5.17		Rest. The details left at BASSEUX rejoined. 2/Lt TAYLOR-ROSE rejoined from R.F.C	CBC
	6.5.17		Rest. G. O. C. Division visited the Battalion.	CBC
	7.5.17		Inspections & training of specialists. 2/Lt PARKER rejoined from hospital	CBC
	8.5.17		No work possible owing to it being a very wet day.	CBC

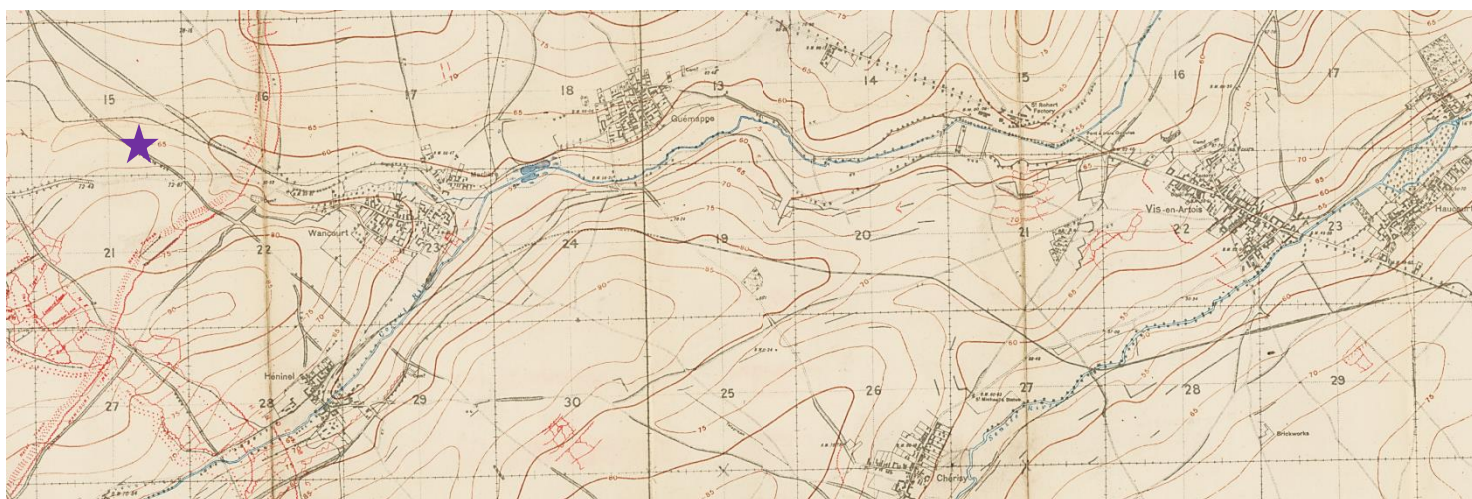
- 1.5.17 Rest 1 O.R. killed by 4.2" shell. Shelled spasmodically at dusk.
- 2.5.17 Coys. equipped with 'battle orders' in morning. Proceeded to assembly trenches in O19a and b (51b SW2) at 8 pm Order C-A-B-D-HQ No casualties. Rum & hot tea on arrival in assembly trenches. Quiet night.
- 3.5.17 14th Division attacked enemy positions in O21a & c - 41st B^{de} on left - 43rd B^{de} in reserve at 3.45 am. The Battalion attacked at 3.45 am on right of the Brigade - 9th R.B. on left & 8th K.R.R.C. on right. Strength of the Battalion before attack 550 of all ranks. The attack was carried out with A - C Coys in first wave, 'A' being on the right - Battn. bombers under 2/Lt C. C. HARPER in second wave - B & D Coys in 3rd wave - with 'B' on right. At zero the enemy opened a very heavy MG and rifle fire on our troops from St ROHART FACTORY (O15c 51b.SW.2) HILLSIDE WORK (O21b) and an undiscovered trench in O21a. This trench was found to be wired and held in moderate strength, and held up the attack temporarily. B & D Coys then reinforced the leading wave and the Battalion managed to force its way into this trench. Here - owing to very heavy casualties - it was obliged to remain. At 11 am the Germans launched a very heavy counter attack on our front driving back the Division on our right - eventually thus driving the B^{de} back to original front line. At 8 pm remnants of the Battalion went back to NIGER TRENCH. Casualties were as follows. KILLED Lt ASHMAN, 2/Lt W. C. HAYNES & 17 O.R. Missing 2/Lts C. C. HARPER - BULMER - RICHARDS & 112 O.R. Wounded Capt GOODWYN, 2/Lt JACKSON, Lt HUTCHINSON & 150 O.R. Total 8 Off & 279 O.R.
- 4.5.17 Shelled with gas shells during day. Relieved by 10th D.L.I. at 7 pm and went to HARP.
- 5.5.17 Rest. The details left at BASSEUX rejoined. 2/Lt TAYLOR-ROSE rejoined from R.F.C.
- 6.5.17 Rest. G. O. C. Division visited the Battalion.
- 7.5.17 Inspections & training of specialists. 2/Lt PARKER rejoined from hospital.
- 8.5.17 No work possible owing to it being a very wet day.



Trench Map, Sheet 51B (extract), This base map, dated April 1917, shows the grid divisions in the area around Wancourt but does not indicate military positions. The extract shows the whole of grid square N (the letter is printed in the exact centre of the square), with a side-length of 6000 yards and part of grid square O.

This extract can be used in conjunction with the map references shown in the War Diary extracts reproduced earlier in this account to identify precisely the positions of the troops in early May 1917. For example, Brigade Headquarters on 2 May had been established at grid point N.15.d.4.4. – although the HQ is not shown on this map its future position can be found and has been inserted as a purple star. Rohart Factory, mentioned in the extracts, is indicated by the purple circle in O.15.

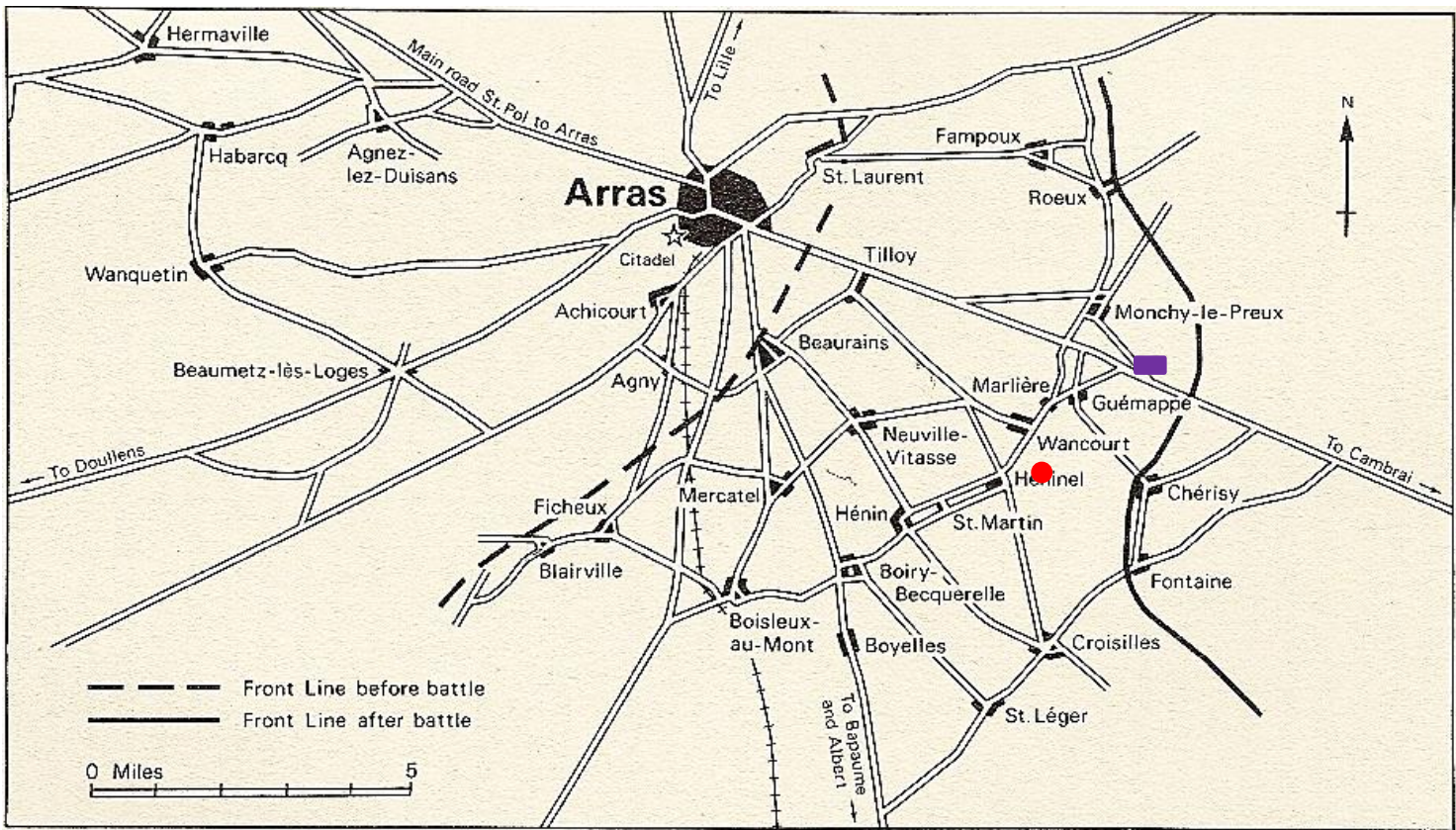
[Source: <http://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A4272>]



Part of the same area shown on the previous map extract, this map of 4 March 1917 (two months before George Angus died) shows some of the German trenches in red. The same grid referencing is used on this map although the original scale is 1 : 20 000, twice the scale of the previous map. As on the previous map, the location of the British HQ in early May 1917 has been inserted as a purple star.

[Source :

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/index.cfm#zoom=15&lat=50.2466&lon=2.9333&layers=101465080&b=1>]



Map 18 The Battle of Arras

The location of Niger Trench, recorded in the War Diary, is shown by the red dot and St Rohart Factory by the purple rectangle. On 10 May the Diary notes that *Half Battalion had baths at Neuville Vitasse*, the small village to the west. [Base map source: <http://www.shiny7.uk/7CoyJul-Dec1917.html>]

23841	Pte	ANGUS, George.	14th A. Cyclist. Cps.
			2846 Pte
			5th Oxf & Bks L. I.
			23841

WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920 British War Medal and Victory Medal

This card notes George's service with the 14th A. Cyclist. Cps. And his subsequent service with the 5th Oxf & Bks Light Infantry

British troops resting on the road between Neuville and Wancourt, 29 April 1917.

[photo: Imperial War Museums (Q 5275)]



644790 £500887 Angus George. 5-12-3.5.17 War k 1/3 1 1 13 1 1 Pn. 0.5.18. 5.18 Mo. Sol. ds 13 1 1 Catherine.

23841

WAR GRATUITY.
Transfer 19/10 16/11/19
Regd. Paper 6645
Serial No. 247872a/12

A. F. W. 8070 SENT
DATE 1 27. 19

12 10 -

11/11/19
170 227
Catherine

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. In July 1919 George’s mother Catherine, as sole legatee, received a payment of outstanding wages of £13 1s 1d from the army and, in September, an unusually large War Gratuity of £12 10s. This, a total value of £25 11s 1d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £3950 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

The record notes ‘3.5.17 Death presumed on, or since’

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

The card records that George served with the Army Cyclist Corps.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
ANGUS George	* A Cyclist Corps	Pte	2846
	Coys 4 Bucks L.I	Pte	23841
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	* 2/106 B	72	Died 3. 5 17
BRITISH	--	--	
15 STAR	448	2	
Theatre of War first served in	11 France		
Date of entry therein	10. 9. 15		

K. 1380.

The Arras Memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and who have no known grave. It is clear, therefore, that George Angus was lost in action and his body never recovered.

Michael Redhead Angus, George’s father, died in the Ripon district in mid-1927 aged 67. It is not clear when Catherine, George’s mother, died.

It is believed that John W Angus, George’s brother, died in the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne district in late 1919 aged 33.

Other than that George Angus was born, and baptised in Neston, and lived here for the first two years of his life, no further connection to the town is known and no one with the surname Angus was recorded in Neston in the 1939 Register of 29 September.