

68: John Peters

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: John Peters

Rank: Corporal

Battalion / Regiment: 19th Bn. The King's (Liverpool Regiment)*

Service Number: 22808

Date of Death: 31 July 1917

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres (Ieper), West Flanders, Belgium

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of John and Ellen Peters of Parkgate, Cheshire

* This is believed to be incorrect – John Peters was serving with the 20th Battalion when he was killed

John Peters jnr was the 6th child, and 3rd son, of Parkgate fisherman John (born 3 April 1859 [although shown as 1858 in the 1939 Register], often called 'Jack') and Ellen Peters and he was baptised at Neston 27 December 1889.

John Peters married Ellen Murray at St Mary's Church, Birkenhead, in the 2nd quarter of 1879 - John was 19 and Ellen would have been just 18.

Ellen was a daughter of Neston labourer Richard and Mary Murray; she was born on 12 February 1861 and baptised, at St Winefride's RC church, on 3 March. John and Ellen produced a large family of 7 sons and 6 daughters and all were baptised at Neston Parish Church. It is believed that the five eldest sons served in WW1.

In 1881 the family lived on Chester Road, Neston, with their daughter, Sarah Ann, 13 months, but by the time of the 1891 they had moved to Leighton:

John Peters	Jack	30	fisherman	born Neston
Ellen	Ellen	29		born Neston
Sarah A.	Sarah	11		born Neston
Richard	Richard	9		born Neston
Margaret	Margaret	7		born Neston
Mary J.	Mary	5		born Neston
Henry	Henry	3		born Neston
John	John	1		born Neston

1891 census (extract) – Leighton

John Peters	30	fisherman	born Neston
Ellen	29		born Neston
Sarah A.	11		born Neston
Richard	9		born Neston
Margaret	7		born Neston
Mary J.	5		born Neston
Henry	3		born Neston
John	1		born Neston

By the time of the 1901 census the family, living in Parkgate, had further expanded although neither Sarah Ann nor Margaret, both domestic servants, were at home. Sarah was a domestic servant in the home of soap manufacturer James and Margaret Lunt in Mostyn Avenue, West Kirby and Margaret was a kitchenmaid for retired East India merchant and magistrate Thomas and Annie Combes in Parkgate.

69	Do	1	✓	John Peters	Head	42	✓	Fisherman	on account	Parkgate Ches
				Ellen Do	Wife	40	✓			Do
				Richard Do	Son	19	✓	2		Do
				Mary J. Do	Daughter	15	✓			Do
				Henry Do	Son	13	✓			Do
				John Do	Son	11	✓			Do
				Betsy Do	Daughter	9	✓			Do
				Ellen Do	Daughter	7	✓			Do
				Job Do	Son	5	✓			Do
				Albert Do	Son	3	✓			Do
				James Do	Son	1	✓			Do

1901 census (extract), Parkgate

John Peters	42	fisherman, living on own account	born Parkgate
Ellen	40		born Parkgate
Richard	19		born Parkgate
Mary J.	15		born Parkgate
Henry	13		born Parkgate
John	11		born Parkgate
Betsy	9		born Parkgate
Ellen	7		born Parkgate
Job	5		born Parkgate
Albert	3		born Parkgate
James	1		born Parkgate

At the time of the 1911 census four immediate members of the family, together with a nephew, were engaged in the fishing trade - and it is probable that two of the daughters also played a role in the business. By this date all thirteen children of the family had been born:

Sarah Ann	baptised 14 March 1880
Richard Harrington	baptised 4 November 1881 Named after his grandfather, the birth registration mis-recorded him as Richard <i>Errington</i> although he was recorded correctly in the baptismal register
Margaret	baptised 25 May 1883
Mary Jane	baptised 17 September 1885
Henry	baptised 11 December 1887
John	baptised 27 December 1889
Betsy	baptised 22 January 1892
Ellen	baptised 16 February 1894
Job Littlemore	baptised 10 April 1896 but probably born in 1895 His name was recorded, on his military service documents, as Job <i>Litimore</i>
Albert	baptised 1 April 1898
James	baptised 3 November 1899
Ethel	baptised 13 April 1902
Christopher	born late 1904

Henry Peters had married Mary Jones at St Mary's Church, Birkenhead, in early 1910) by the time of the 1911 census and they were living with their 2-month old son, John William Peters, in Parkgate. Henry, like many of his family, was a fisherman and it is believed that he served on a minesweeper in WW1.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

Number of Schedule 121.
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection)

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	INFIRMITY
John Peters	Head	51	Married	Fisherman	Neston, Cheshire	British	
Ellen Peters	Wife	50	Married		Little Neston	British	
Richard H. Peters	Son	28	Single	Fisherman	Neston	British	
John Peters (junior)	Son	21	Single	Fisherman	Parkgate	British	
Betsy Peters	Daughter	19	Single	Worker at home	Parkgate	British	
Ellen Peters	Daughter	17	Single	Worker at home	Parkgate	British	
Job Peters	Son	15	Single	Assistant fisherman	Parkgate	British	
Albert Peters	Son	13	Single	School	Parkgate	British	
Jim Peters	Son	11	Single	School	Parkgate	British	
Ethel Peters	Daughter	9	Single	School	Parkgate	British	
Christopher Peters	Son	6	Single	School	Parkgate	British	
William Peters	Nephew	25	Single	Fisherman	Parkgate	British	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons.
(3) After checking the accuracy of the entries I have compared all entries on the Schedule with the original returns, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Total:
Males 8 Females 4 Persons 12

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlours, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room, but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: John Peters
Postal Address: Parkgate

1911 census – Crosby House, Parkgate (adjacent to Dover Cottage, near the Old Quay public house)

John Peters	51	fisherman, hawking fish	born Neston
Ellen	50		born Little Neston
Richard H.	28	fisherman (assisting in the business)	born Neston
John (junior)	21	fisherman (assisting in the business)	born Parkgate
Betsy	19	worker at home	born Parkgate
Ellen	17	worker at home	born Parkgate
Job	15	assistant fisherman (to father)	born Parkgate
Albert	13		born Parkgate
Jim	11		born Parkgate
Ethel	9		born Parkgate
Christopher	6		born Parkgate
William Peters	25	nephew, fisherman (assisting in the business)	born Parkgate

John and Ellen Peters had been married for 31 years and all of their 13 children had survived.

On 16 May 1910 Mary Jane Peters, 24, married Flint fisherman Thomas Bithell, 27, at Neston Parish Church. Mary gave her address as Crosby House, Parkgate, and a witness was her older sister, Margaret Peters. In 1911, still unmarried, Margaret was a domestic cook in the household of Albert Woodcock, a stocks and shares broker, in Oxtown.

Richard Peters, (29, fisherman) married Elizabeth Williams (26) of Parkgate at Neston Parish Church on 7 August 1911. A witness was Betsy Peters.

John Peters enlisted for the 20th (Service) Battalion The King's (Liverpool Regiment) [also known as the 4th City Battalion] in Liverpool on 10 November 1914. This battalion had been formed in Liverpool on 16 October 1914 by Lord Derby, in the

old watch factory at Prescott, as part of Kitchener's New Army. The 17th Earl of Derby proposed forming a battalion of "Pals" for the King's Regiment, to be recruited from men of the same workplace. His proposal proved successful; within a week, thousands of local men had volunteered for service, to eventually be formed into the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th Battalions. Collectively, the battalions became known as the City of Liverpool battalions or "Liverpool Pals".

Lord Derby addressed recruits on 28 August 1914: *"This should be a battalion of Pals, a battalion in which friends from the same office will fight shoulder to shoulder for the honour of Britain and the credit of Liverpool"*.

John Peters' record indicates that, previously, he had served with a Volunteer Regiment but had been discharged in 1908. His medical record in 1914 notes that he was 5ft 5½ins tall, weighed 132lb (9 stone 6lb / 60kg), was of fresh complexion, had green/blue eyes, brown hair, a 36-inch expanded chest and was of 'good physical development'. He was then aged 24 years 11 months and his occupation was given as fisherman.

After the 18th, 19th and 20th Battalions had been raised in August 1914 they moved to a training camp which had been created on Lord Derby's land at Knowsley Park before, on 30 April 1915, moving to Belton Park Camp at Grantham where they joined the 89th Brigade of the 30th Division.

The 30th Division was made up almost entirely of battalions from Manchester and Liverpool. Whilst there are few details of John Peters' activities in Britain following his enlistment it is known that the 30th Division was taken over by the War Office in August 1915 and the troops moved to the Larkhill (Lark Hill) Camp on Salisbury Plain before, in November 1915, being mobilised for war and embarking for Boulogne on 6 November. By that date John had served for 362 days in Britain.

Having arrived in France on 7 November 1915 little is known of John's activities until May 1916 when it is recorded that he was appointed as an unpaid Lance Corporal (5 May) before, on 25 May, being taken ill when he appears to have been removed to the 97th Field Artillery Hospital where he remained (with no indication of why) until being discharged back to his unit on 13 June 1916.

On 23 June 1916 John was appointed as a paid Lance Corporal but, on 30 July, was wounded in action and taken to the 13th Casualty Clearing Station [CCS], and then to the 36th CCS, with a gunshot wound to his right thigh. It is probable that this injury was a result of a local action following his unit's involvement at The Battle of Albert (1 - 13 July 1916), the first two weeks of Anglo-French offensive operations in The Battle of the Somme. The 36th CCS appears to have been at Heilly, about 11 miles north-west of Amiens.

John appears to have been out of action for some time as his record shows that he wasn't returned to the 20th Battalion until 22 September, formally rejoining the unit

The Battle of Pilckem Ridge, 31 July - 2 August 1917

Tasked with securing the Passchendaele-Staden Ridge, Gough's Fifth Army was given the responsibility for assaulting the German occupied uplands to the north-east and east of Ypres.

The opening battle of 'Third Ypres' was preceded by weeks of tremendous and barely concealed preparations. The artillery bombardment, of unprecedented scale, culminated in a stunning crescendo at the moment of assault, 3.50am, 31 July. In mist and semi-darkness, British infantry advanced behind a precise and deafening 'creeping barrage', across a battlefield dramatically illuminated by bursting shells and flares. Widespread early progress was made across the shattered German outpost lines. Notably, in the north, XIV Corps got across the Pilckem Ridge and, in the centre, XVIII and XIX Corps troops rapidly closed on the Steenbeek; by 8am St Julien was occupied by the 39th Division. Further south II Corps, pressing up the Gheluvelt Plateau through the shell-thrashed woods either side the Menin Road, were slowed (and later halted) by difficult ground, unbroken wire, unsuppressed pillboxes and heavy German shelling. In the early afternoon, after the onset of persistent drizzle, the advanced troops at the centre of the attack met increased German resistance and progress halted. In increasingly heavy rain determined German counter-attacks forced a British withdrawal; but these counter-thrusts were held and the line of advance consolidated.

Despite being ordered that evening to continue the attack, the relentlessly wet conditions brought Gough's first assault to an end. During the following two days the newly advanced positions were held in appalling conditions by desperate fighting in the face of ferocious German counter-attacks and shelling. The battle saw considerable gains but no glimpse of breakthrough and Gough was compelled to renew the attack as soon as the weather conditions allowed.



Commonwealth War Graves
Commission
[<http://www.cwgc.org/>]

Wounded British soldiers at the
Battle of Pilckem Ridge
[<https://commons.wikimedia.org>]

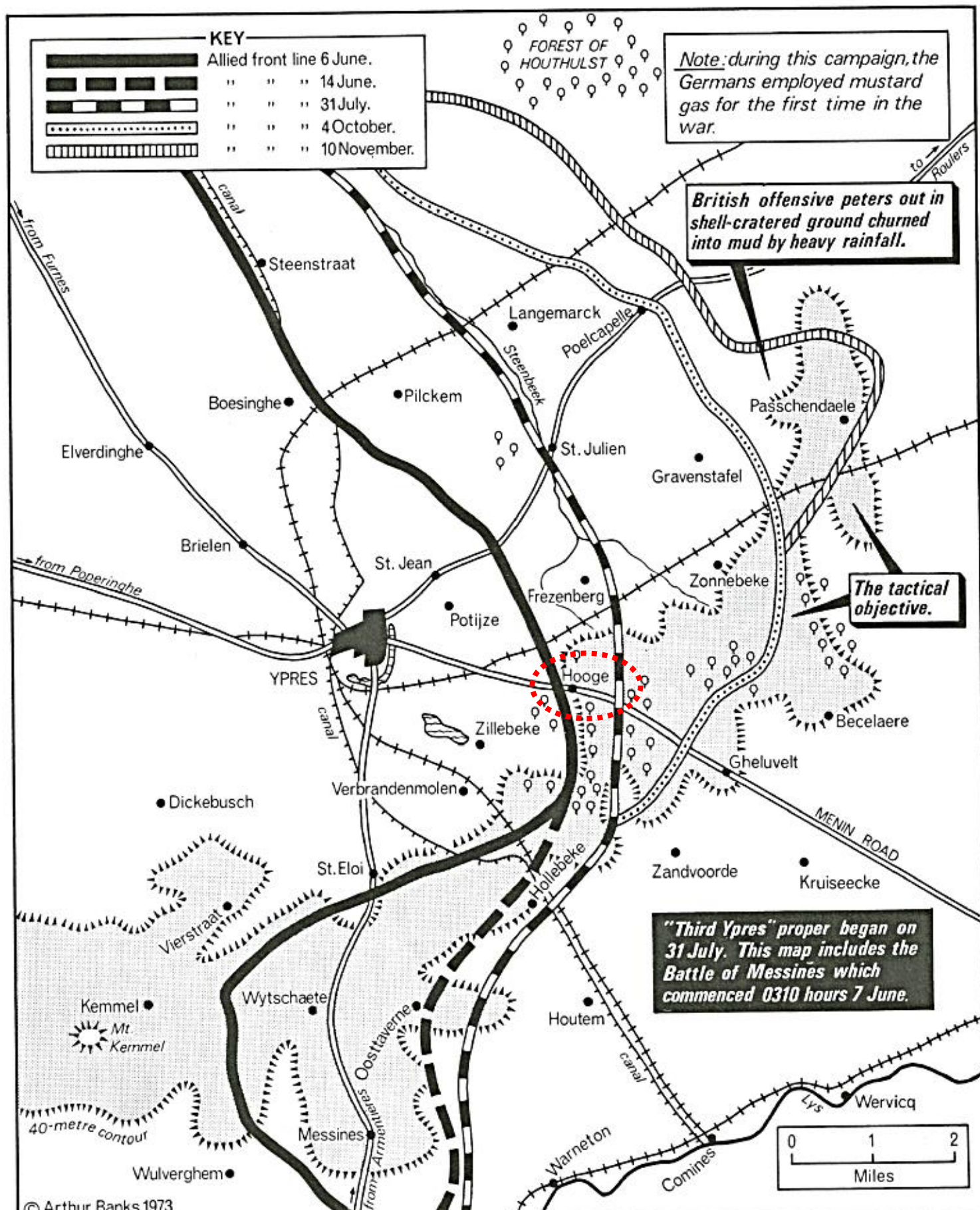


31st July 1917 during The Battle of Pilckem
Ridge: Crossing the Yser Canal at Boesinghe.
This was the day on which John Peters died.
[http://51hd.co.uk/photos/pilckem_ridge]

Campaign:—		1914-15.		(A) Where decoration was earned.												
Name		Corps	Rank	Reg. No.												
(A) PETERS.		Lt. Col. R.	Plt.	22808												
(B) Joan		—	* Gt	—												
Action taken		Roll on which included (if any)														
		H/3/2 B/2/8														
		Deceased.														
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>MEDAL</td> <td>ROLL</td> <td>PAGE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VICTORY</td> <td>4/2/102 B/2</td> <td>1216</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BRITISH</td> <td>do</td> <td>do</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STAR</td> <td>do</td> <td>do</td> </tr> </table>			MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE	VICTORY	4/2/102 B/2	1216	BRITISH	do	do	STAR	do	do
MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE														
VICTORY	4/2/102 B/2	1216														
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THEATRE OF WAR.		(1) France.														
QUALIFYING DATE.		4/11/15														
(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608																

British Army WWI Medal Rolls
Index Cards, 1914-1920

"THIRD YPRES"(PASSCHENDAELE):JULY - NOVEMBER 1917



Hooze, the village where it is believed that John Peters died, is encircled in red

[Source: *A Military Atlas of the First World War* Arthur Banks Leo Cooper (an imprint of Pen & Sword Books) 2001]

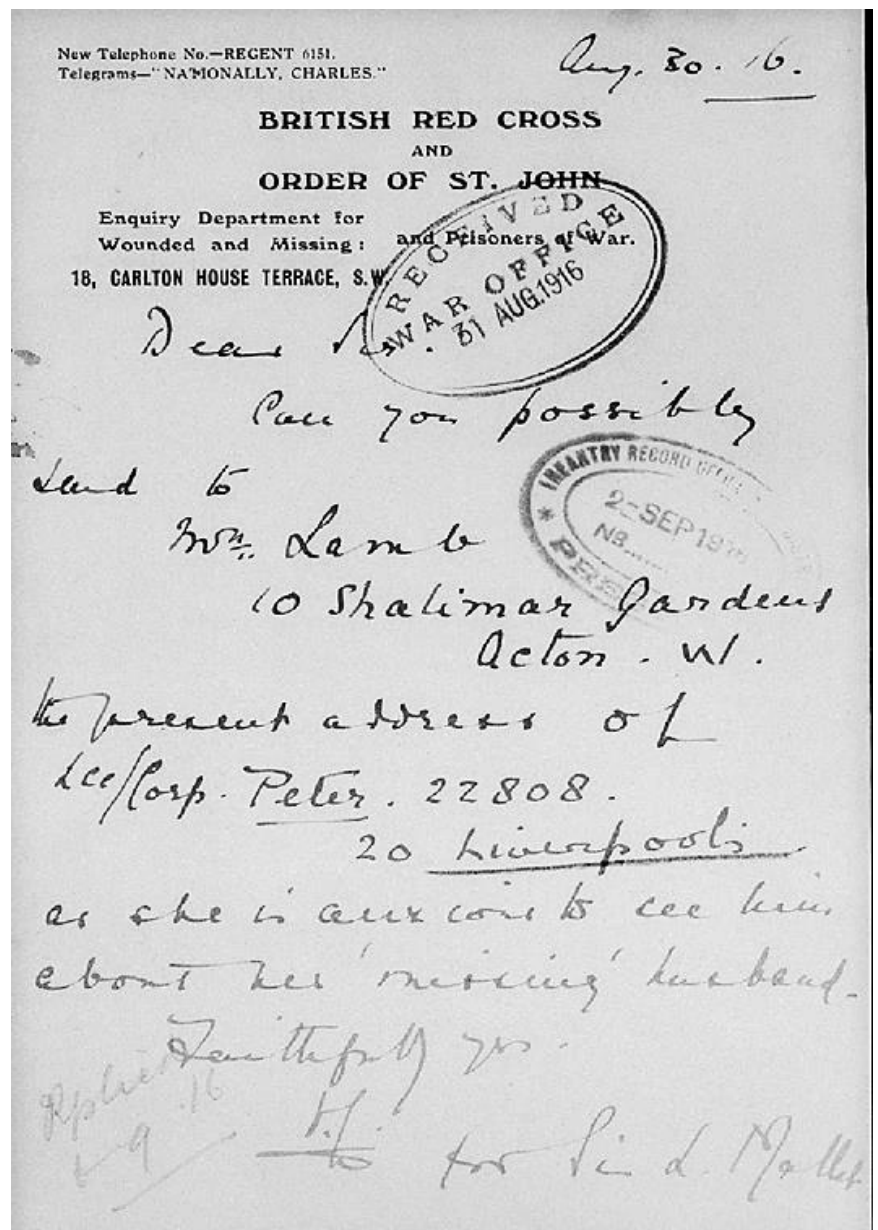
John Peters' story does not, however, conclude on the date given as his death.

In August 1916, at about the time that John was recovering from a gunshot wound to the thigh, a Mrs Lamb wrote to the Red Cross concerning the whereabouts of her husband who had been recorded as missing in action.

Mrs Lamb clearly believed that John Peters may have some knowledge of her missing husband and so wished to contact him; the Red Cross therefore wrote to the War Office to obtain John's address. Unfortunately, the outcome of this is unknown although no definite casualty of this name has been identified through the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Many families, both during the war and for some years after the Armistice, attempted to locate 'missing' relatives even when it was certain that they must have died in the field.

Sometime in early 1920 the *News of the World* published an article entitled *Last of the Unknown : Only one Soldier who is Unidentified* which highlighted the last soldier from the war whom, although he had survived, had almost completely lost his memory and remained unidentified. This article promoted considerable speculation from many relatives of 'missing' soldiers that this unidentified man could be their relation - and John Peters' parents responded, as did many other families, by writing to the War Office and military authorities. Some of this correspondence, in chronological order, is reproduced on the pages below.





John Peters

En. 9651/20

To: Mrs. Peters,
Crosby House,
Parkgate,
Cheshire.

Madam,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst. soliciting further information respecting your Son the late Number 22808 Cpl. John Peters, of the King's Liverpool Regiment, and in reply thereto regret to inform you that no later information since presumption of death has been received in this Office.

If you will send me the cutting out of the "News of the World" indicating that an unknown Soldier suffering from "Loss of Memory" in the British Hospital may be your Son, I shall be pleased to institute enquiries for you immediately.

I am, Madam,
Yours obediently,

Lieut., for
19-4-1920. Officer i/o No. 2 Infantry Records, Preston.

Crosby House
- Parkgate
Ches.
By B. head - 22-4-1920.

Sir / Enclosed is the slip referring to one soldier who is unidentified - which may by some chance be our long lost Son + Brother. I'm sure we will be most grateful if you would kindly make inquiries. Thanking you in anticipation I am
Yours Res.,
Mrs. John Peters.

No 22808 Cpl J Peters
20th K L R.

Crosby House
Parkgate
Cheshire
By B. head - 22 - 4 - 1920

Sir /
Enclosed is the slip referring to one soldier who is unidentified which may by some chance be our long lost son & brother.
I'm sure we will be most grateful if you would kindly make inquiries.
Thanking you in anticipation
I am
Yours Res.
Mrs John Peters

John Peters,
Crosby House, Parkgate,
Cheshire By Birkenhead/

Madam,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst; and the newspaper cutting headed "LAST OF THE UNKNOWN" which you think might be your Son & Brother, as you do not state the Regimental Number or the name of the Regiment in which your Son served I am unable to assist you in the matter, I am however, willing to do so if you will furnish these particulars by return of post.

Yours faithfully,

Prother
Major for
Preston.
24-4-20. Officer i/o No: 2 Infantry Record Office.

Dear Sir
His Rank & name
was Corporal J. Peters
Nº 22808 20th Service Battalion:
Kings Liverpool Reg
Thanking you for being so
kind to help us in this
Yours faithfully
Mr J Peters
Crosby House
Parkgate
Cheshire

NO. 2 INFANTRY
 RECORDS OFFICE
 PRESTON
 LANCASHIRE

Dear Sir

His Rank & name was Corporal J. Peters
 Nº 22808 20th Service Battalion: King's Liverpool
 Reg.

Thanking you for being so kind to help us in this.
 Yours faithfully,

Mrs J. Peters
 Crosby House
 Parkgate
 Cheshire

L.C. 11842/20.

The Secretary,
 War Office,
 Finsbury Court,
 Finsbury Pavement,
 London.

22808 Cpl. J. Peters, 20th Bn. King's Liverpool Regt.

With reference the above soldier whose
 death was assumed by Army Council for Official purposes
 on 31-7-17, (Authority Form D.P. E/518251/1 dated
 14-5-18).

I beg to forward the attached letter and
 newspaper cutting received from the Mother of the late
 soldier for your perusal.

I await your instructions regarding this
 case and please return letter and newspaper cutting
 when no longer required to enable me to return same to
 the next-of-kin.

Lieut., for
 Officer i/c No.2 Infantry Records, Preston.
 PRESTON.
 19-5-1920.

L.C. 11842/20.

To:-Mrs. Peters,
 Crosby House,
 Park Gate,
 Cheshire.

Madam,

I am in receipt of your communication dated
 12-5-20, Re. 22808 Cpl. J. Peters, 20th Battalion King's
 Liverpool Regiment., and in reply thereto beg to inform
 you that I have no further information concerning him
 than that of which you were notified on 13-5-18, viz:-
 death assumed by Army Council on 31-7-17.

Your enquiry together with a Copy of the news-
 paper cutting have been forwarded to the War Office for
 further enquiry, and I will acquaint you with the result
 immediately it is received in this Office, please.

I am, Madam,
 Yours Faithfully,

Lieut., for
 Officer i/c No.2 Infantry Records, Preston.
 Preston.
 19-5-1920.



John Peters' parents, John and
 Ellen, possibly around 1930 when
 Ellen would have been about 70.

Of John Peters' siblings:

Richard Harrington Peters¹, the eldest son of the family, served on a Royal Navy minesweeper during WW1. In mid-1911 Richard married Elizabeth Williams at Neston Parish Church and it is believed that they had five children.

At the time of the 1939 Register (29 September) Richard, recorded as an inshore fisherman, was living at 'Seaward House Annex' on The Parade, Parkgate with Elizabeth (born 12 September 1885) and two unmarried children: Margaret (born 25 April 1913, domestic servant) and Albert (born 12 January 1919, builder's joiner and carpenter).

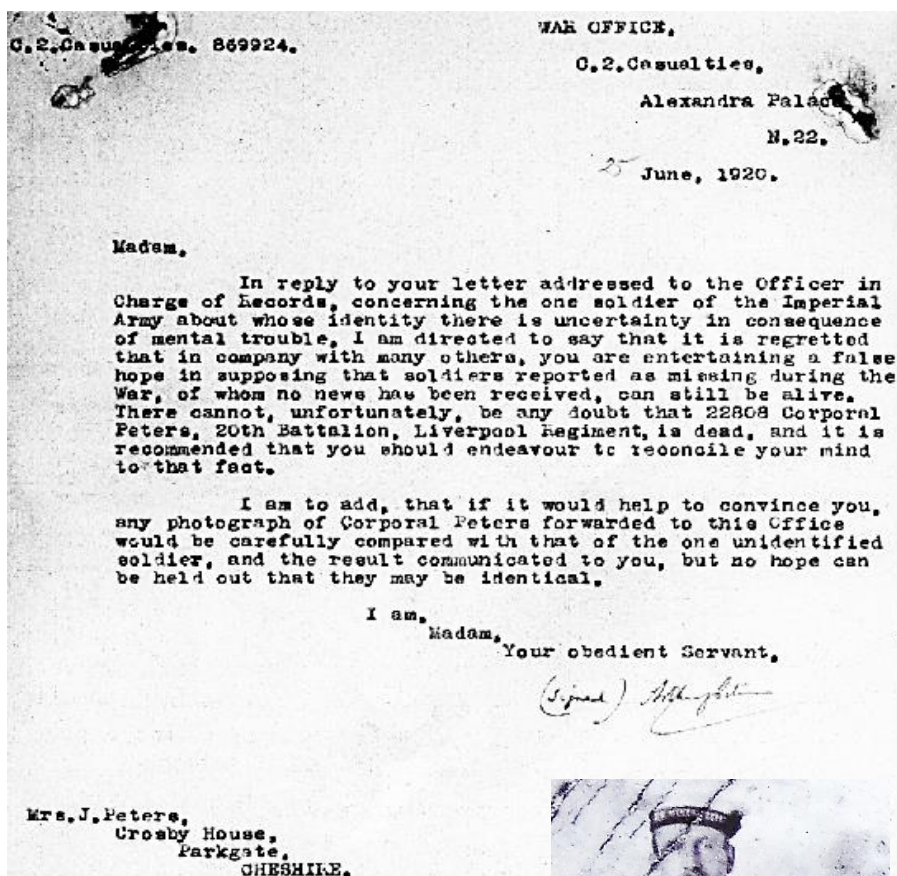
Nothing conclusive is known of John's sisters, Sarah Ann and Margaret Peters.

As noted previously, Mary Jane Peters (born 1 September 1885) married Thomas Bithell (born 16 December 1881) of Flintshire at Neston Parish Church in 1910.

In the 1939 Register Thomas, a fisherman, and Mary were living at 26 Castle Dyke Street. Mary died, in the Holywell district, in mid-1963 aged 77.

Henry Peters (born 25 November 1887) married Mary Jones (born 16 April 1887) at St Mary's Church, Birkenhead, in early 1910 and in 1911 he was a Parkgate fisherman. It is believed that he, like his brothers Richard and Albert, served on a minesweeper in WW1. In the 1939 Register Henry was recorded as an inshore fisherman and he and Mary were living at 4 Station Road, Parkgate, with unmarried son John (born 26 January 1911, a builder's joiner and carpenter).

¹ There is some confusion about Richard's date of birth. The birth of Richard Errington Peters was registered on Wirral in July / September 1882, yet the baptism of Richard Harrington Peters took place at Neston Parish Church on 4 November 1881, several months before the registration – the baptismal entry is very clear and unambiguous. The 1939 Register, where he is shown as Richard A Peters, records his birth as 10 October 1882! There does not seem to be any confusion with any other person named Richard Peters.



Richard Harrington Peters in his naval uniform

Another of their children may have been in the household - one line of the entry has been redacted (as of March 2018). Henry died aged 83 in mid-1971 and Mary may have died in early 1956 aged 67.



Henry Peters (left) and his father John ('Jack') with their fishing vessel 'Trust in Providence' on the sands off Parkgate. It is interesting to note that 'Parkgate' on the stern of the boat has been misspelled as 'Pargate'. It is probable that this photograph was taken in the early 1930s.

Betsy Peters married shipwright George Newell Oake at Neston Parish Church on 27 January 1917. Betsy, 25, gave her abode as Crosby House, Parkgate, and George, 29, lived at 33 Wycliffe Street, Rock Ferry. A witness was Betsy's sister, Ellen. Nothing further is known of Betsy and the family has not been located in the 1939 Register.

Nothing is known of Ellen Peters beyond January 1917 when she was still unmarried.

Job Littlemore Peters joined the Royal Engineers in Liverpool on 25 October 1915 when he gave his age as 21 and it was recorded that he was an unmarried seaman. In his records his name is, consistently, given as Job *Litimore* Peters and his height was just 5ft 2½ins with an expanded chest measurement of 36½ inches.

Over Christmas 1915 Job was found to be absent without leave and he forfeited 6 days' pay for this indiscretion. On 23 January 1916 Job embarked for France and, with the Service Number 135644, was attached to the Inland Water Transport Corps.



Job Littlemore Peters

The Inland Water Transport was a branch of the Corps of Royal Engineers, and was recruited from the waterways and harbours of Great Britain. It operated the French and Belgian canals and rivers of the area held by the British Forces. At first, only the northern waterways connecting Calais, Dunkirk, Armentieres and Bethune were utilized, but the value of the service became so apparent that in the summer of 1915, it was extended to the River Somme, and in September 1916, to the Seine. In July 1917, it was extended to the River Scarpe and eventually to a coastal service between Dunkirk and Le Havre, and a cross-channel service between Calais and Richborough. The tonnage moved by IWT increased from just under 200,000 tons in 1915 to over 2,800,000 tons in 1918. There were many

different types of craft in use, ranging from tugs, to standard barges, both dumb and self-propelled, to many specialised barges, including Ambulance Barges. In addition to actually handling their craft, the IWT also did pumping, filtering and salvage work, and had a Constructional Section which repaired and improved the waterways. [<http://www.iwm.org.uk/>]

On 1 November 1917 Job was appointed as a Lance Corporal (paid) and on 1 July 1918 he became an Acting 2nd Corporal (paid), a rank peculiar to the Royal Engineers, with a promotion on the same day to 2nd Corporal.

At some stage Job's Service Number changed to WB/501578 and he was discharged on 5 May 1919. Job suffered no recorded injury or illness during his service with the Royal Engineers and he served in France from 23 January 1916 until 16 April 1919. It has not proved possible to find whether Job Peters married or when he died and he has not been located in the 1939 Register.



Albert Peters

Albert Peters (born 14 March 1897) married Dorothy Jane Robinson (born 10 October 1902) in April / June 1923 at Neston Parish Church and it is believed that they had at least three children: James, born late 1923 ; Christopher, born early 1926 (died 1 May 1979 aged 53) ; John Albert, born mid-1937 (died 27 May 1939 aged 1 year 11 months).

It is believed that Albert Peters, together with brothers Richard and Henry, served on minesweepers in WW1 although no details of his service are known.

After WW1 Albert returned to fishing in the Dee. In the 1939 Register he was recorded as an inshore fisherman living at 14 Mostyn Gardens, Parkgate, with Dorothy and son Christopher (born 14 December 1925) who was still at school. There may have been one other unmarried child in the household - one line of the Register has been redacted (as of March 2018).

It was probably Albert who, in August 1941, bought a motorised Fleetwood trawler, the *Advance*, although this was resold less than a year later.

Albert Peters died on 11 March 1969 aged 70 and Dorothy died 2 March 1987 aged 83 [family grave, Neston Cemetery].

James (Jim) Peters and his brother, Christopher, did not serve in WW1 but

I.V. *Advance* FD158



spent their lives working together as fishermen on the Dee. One of their boats was named *Ethel*, possibly after their sister. James married Marie Leatham of Birkenhead, at St Paul's Church, Tranmere, in late 1931 and Chris married Annie Elizabeth Hancock at Neston Parish Church in mid-1940.

In the 1939 Register James (born 10 October 1899, master fisherman) was living at 3 Mostyn Terrace, Parkgate (by Mostyn Square); Marie was not recorded in the household and one line of the Register has been redacted (as of March 2018).

In the 1939 Register Christopher Peters (born 13 September 1903, fisherman, master) was living at 4 Mostyn Terrace with his widowed father John (born 3 April, retired fisherman) and unmarried sister Ethel (born 25 March 1902). Ethel married Hugh Jones Birks at Neston Parish Church in mid-1940. Hugh died in late-1967, aged 64, and Ethel died in mid-1980 aged 78.

Also in the household were shipwright John Cottrell (born 10 June 1884) and his wife Margaret (born 9 May 1883). It is very probable that Margaret was John Peters' daughter although no marriage for Margaret and John Cottrell has been found. Jim and Chris Peters always seem to have lived close to each other. Christopher (died May 1991) and Annie (died February 1993) are buried at Neston Parish Church.

[Note: The life of fishermen Jim and Christopher Peters has been written by Geoff Andrews and serialised in the bi-monthly Heswall Magazine (Memories of a Lifetime Past) from February 2014 onwards. This magazine is freely available on the internet]



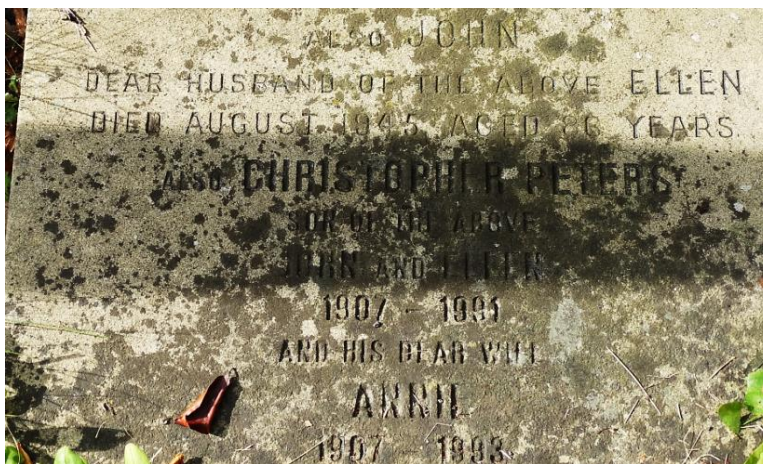
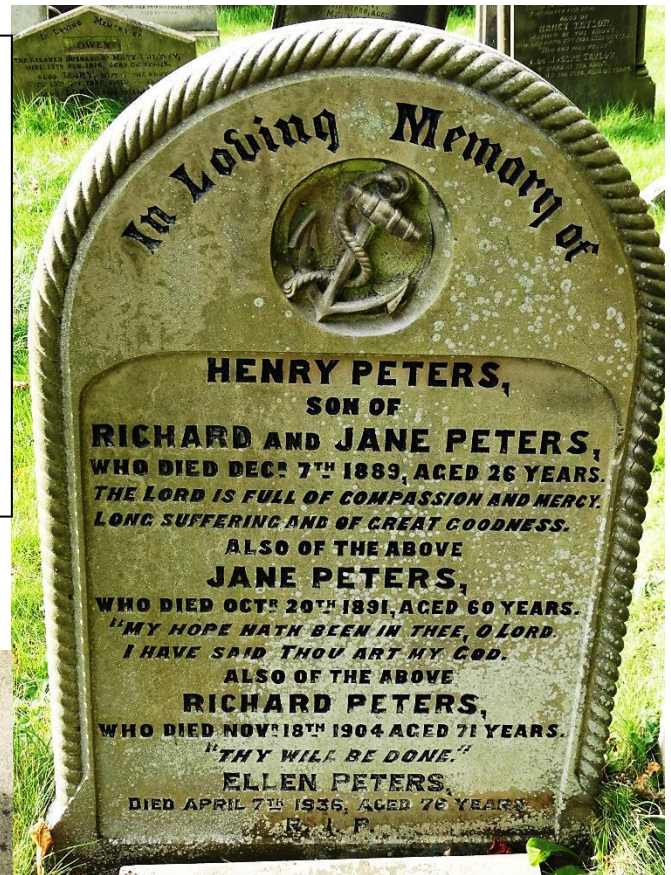
Christopher (left) and Jim Peters on their small fishing vessel on the Dee [photo: *Heswall Magazine*, February 2014]

The Peters' family grave at Neston Parish Church

The headstone is engraved with an anchor to signify the marine association of the family

Richard and Jane Peters were the parents of John Peters snr and the grandparents of John Peters jnr who died in WW1.

Ellen Peters (died 7 April 1936 aged 76) and John Peters snr (died August 1945 aged 86) are buried here as are their youngest child, Christopher (died May 1991) and his wife Annie (died February 1993).



The stone tablet below the headstone commemorates John Peters, son Christopher and his wife Annie. Christopher's year of birth is inaccurately shown as 1907 – he was born in 1904.

This is believed to be Crosby House, the home of the Peters' family in Parkgate. The site is now occupied by the Old Quay public house



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REPORT ON OPERATIONS AT YPRES

31st. JULY to 3/4th. August, 1917.

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1. ASSEMBLY

The 20th. Battalion K. L. R. left CHATEAU SENGARD at 10 p.m. on night of 30th. July, 1917, and moved to the WESTERN portion of the PROMENADE, South of ZILLEBEEK LAKE. This movement was completed by 12 midnight, with very little hostile shelling, and without casualties.

Zero was at 3-50 a.m.

At 5 a.m. officers were sent forward to reconnoitre the forward assembly positions East of Maple Copse.

At Zero plus 1hr. 40 mins. (5-30 a.m.) the Battalion, moved in the rear of the 17th. Battalion K. L. R. to forward assembly positions, and were formed up in shell holes by Zero plus 3 hrs. (6-50 a.m.). No hostile shelling interfered with assembly until about 7 a.m. when shelling commenced rather heavily, causing about 15 to 20 casualties. These undoubtedly would have been much heavier if troops had not obtained (and improved by digging) cover in shell holes.

From this time onwards enemy commenced a regular barrage which gradually increased in intensity on all ground between MAPLE COPSE and ridge in front of it. This barrage was met with and continued until the Battalion had got through the enemy's front and support lines. Hostile machine gun fire was also experienced whilst in the assembly position from a South Easterly direction resulting in a few casualties.

2. MOVE FORWARD.

At Zero plus 4 hrs. (7-50 a.m.) the advance was made by platoons in single file, with

The account, in the War Diary of the 20th Battalion King's (Liverpool Regiment), for the action undertaken between 31 July - 4 August 1917. John Peters, recorded as missing, was officially determined to have died on 31 July.

B. C. and D Companies in front, and A Company in support, followed by Battalion Headquarters. B Company was on the left of the Battalion, in touch with the 17th. Battalion K. L. R. and responsible for direction. In spite of the close proximity of the enemy's shells, casualties were comparatively small during the advance.

The following is the experience of each company during the advance:-

O. C., B Company states:-

"On leaving the Assembly position at MAPLE COPSE I kept in touch with the right of the 17th. Battalion K.L.R. who were on my left. With the exception of a few stragglers I met no organised formation of troops, saw no flags being waved, nor anyone digging, consequently I was unable to get any information as to the situation. On approaching STIRLING CASTLE I came under heavy machine gun fire causing me to immediately deploy. I then got into touch with C Company on my right, and after recommitting the position, and receiving direct information from a tank officer that they were unable to deal with the machine guns in front realised that the BLACK LINE was not taken and considered it was impossible to get on further without suffering heavy casualties, so proceeded to dig in and consolidate. I found it was impossible to take accurate bearings with the compass".

O. C., C Company states:-

"I left the forward assembly positions keeping in touch with B Company on my left. I repeatedly tried to take compass bearings but found that my compass would not work accurately. I came across no organised body of troops, or flags being waved with the exception of six men of the 18th. K. L. R. On getting to the vicinity of STIRLING CASTLE I came under heavy machine gun fire and deployed. I then went over to three tanks which I saw on my right, informing them that we were held up by machine gun fire, giving them the direction from whence the fire came; but they were evidently unable to get any further. I then proceeded to dig in and consolidate the position in touch with B Company on my left. I found the following elements of different Battalions without any officers or N. C. O's and took them under my command:- 20 men 18th. K.L.R. 44 men 2nd. R.S.F., 2 men 19th. Manchr. Regt. 2 men 18th. Manchr. Regt. I did not see any of the enemy dead or alive during the advance, and very few of ours. There were no troops to be seen in front of the position which I consolidated."

O. C., D Company states:-

"I moved off from forward assembly position keeping in touch with C Company on my left. On reaching the rise above SANCTUARY WOOD I came under heavy machine gun fire from the right,

"and deployed. On reaching the vicinity of BODMIN
 "COPSE I came across some 2nd. YORKSHIRES who were
 "dug in and consolidating on the Eastern edge of
 "BODMIN COPSE. At about J. 19 b 70/05. I met Col.
 "Macdonald Commanding the 19th. Battalion Manchester
 "Regiment who informed me they were held up in front,
 "and that I had better dig in where I was, or go
 "towards the left. Having previously received orders
 "from my Commanding Officer that in the event of the
 "BLACK LINE not being taken the Battalion was to
 "concentrate and attack from the left of our position,
 "I joined up with B and C Companies at STERLING
 "CASTLE. Part of my company, and a few men of A
 "Company (about 36 men) under 2nd. Lieut. Simpson
 "were afterwards stopped by Col Macdonald, and ordered
 "to dig in at about J 19 b 70/05. facing South, as
 "he expected a counter attack from that direction. I
 "got in touch with the 3rd. Rifle Brigade for the
 "first time when reaching BODMIN COPSE but did not
 "see them again. "

O. C., A Company states:-

"I moved off from the forward assembly
 "position about 150 yards in rear of B, C. and D
 "Companies. I suffered a few casualties before
 "advancing from both hostile artillery and machine
 "guns. I encountered a heavy artillery barrage until
 "I reached the German Front Line, but machine gun
 "fire from the right continued during the whole
 "advance. I came across no organised bodies of our
 "own troops, or flags being waved and saw very few
 "dead lying about. On reaching the high ground
 "about J. 19 central I realised that the attack had
 "not been successful. By this time hostile machine
 "gun fire had increased in volume, and I could only
 "get forward by crawling from shell hole to shell
 "hole. My casualties were heavy (40 to 45 men). In
 "accordance with instructions received for action
 "in case the BLACK LINE was not taken, I worked
 "towards the left and got in touch with B and C
 "Company. One of my platoons, the officer being
 "wounded, consisting of a sergeant and 14 men got too
 "far to the left and ultimately came under command of
 "the 8th. Norfolks. A very good report on the work
 "done by this platoon in assisting to repel a counter
 "attack has been received by this Battalion. On
 "reconnoitring the position I found two officers of
 "the 2nd. Wilts who informed me that it was impossible
 "to advance owing to fire from machine gun emplacement
 "from wood in front and that there were not in touch
 "with anyone on their right. There were also about
 "25 to 30 details from the 18th. K. L. R. 19th. Manchr
 "and 2nd. Wilts. About two hours afterwards Capt.
 "Keith of the 19th. Manchestrers arrived and took
 "charge of this party and co-operated with me in the
 "consolidation of the Strong Point at J 19 b 75/65
 "which I ultimately held. I was at that time in touch
 "with no troops on my right, and considered it of the
 "utmost importance to form a defensive flank. I also
 "got in touch with tank number B 27, whose commander
 "told me it was impossible to proceed, as the enemy
 "were in concrete machine ^{gun} emplacements in the edge
 "of the wood."

 The attack appears to have been held up
 in consequence of heavy hostile machine ^{gun} fire from
 the right.

On reaching our Front Line, having seen all companies moving forward, and being satisfied their direction was correct, I proceeded with my Headquarters towards STIRLING CASTLE, which was to have been my first Headquarters. I found a considerable number of ^{our own} troops of different units without any apparent organisation in the vicinity of JAM SUPPORT. Ultimately I found the Headquarters of the Officer Commanding the 18th. Manchester Regt. who informed ^{me} that the BLUE LINE was taken, and that his Battalion was consolidating. He also gave me his own position, and the direction of STIRLING CASTLE. This was the first news I had received as to the situation. Shortly afterwards I received a message by lamp that my companies were deploying in front of STIRLING CASTLE having been held up by machine gun and rifle fire. Realising that the BLACK LINE had not been taken, I established my Headquarters in the crater at J 13 c 8/0 from which I had excellent observation of the country in front. At 11 a.m., not being able to advance further, I reported to Brigade that my companies were digging in and consolidating in a line running South from STIRLING CASTLE, which they continued to hold until relieved by the 7th. Battalion Royal West Kent Regt. on night of 3/4th inst. The position was a strong one, more particularly the Strong Point at J 19 b 75/65 in which I had seven Lewis Guns, and which had an excellent field of fire of a least 1000 yards to the South. At about 11 a.m. I had a visit from a tank officer of B 27 tank, who informed me he had been unable to get beyond the edge of INVERNESS COPSE where there were a large number of concrete cupola machine gun emplacements against which he was unable to make any impression, and that his

tank had been set on fire. This officer I sent down to Brigade Headquarters with my runner together with a report on the situation. Soon after, and Artillery Officer reported at my Headquarters and asked me whether I required the barrage to go on in front of the GREEN LINE. I told him that as far as my own front was concerned my companies had not crossed the BLUE LINE, and that it was no use to me on the GREEN LINE.

Patrols were sent out everynight, but in no case did they come in contact with the enemy, who seemed very nervous (from the number of very lights he sent up) . In no case did the enemy attempt to counter attack our position.

POSITION.

The position of our front line I considered to be a satisfactory one, and nothing could be gained by pushing forward - except to the BLACK LINE - which would have been impossible without preliminary bombardment of the machine gun emplacement in INVERNESS COBBE, and a barrage programme.

RELIEF.

The Battalion was relieved by the 7th. Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment at 1-20 a.m. on the 4th. instant. In spite of heavy rain which fell during the action and the consequent heavy going, this passed off satisfactorily with fortunately only four casualties. The night was the quietest since the commencement of operations.

LIASON.

Throughout the operations this Battalion ^{was} ~~was~~ in constant touch with the 17th. Battalion K. L. R. at STIRLING CASTLE on its left. We were also in touch with Headquarters 18th. Manchester Regt. and after the first day intouch with a company of the 2nd. Wilts on our

right.

COMMUNICATION.

Communication was extremely difficult throughout the operations. I was able to lay wires connecting Battalion Headquarters with companies almost immediately, but had very great difficulty in maintaining them, owing to continual heavy hostile shelling. Over 50 % signallers were lost repairing these lines during the action.

I was also in communication by wire with the 17th. Battalion K. L. R. and 18th. Manchester Regiment through the latter I was able to send messages both to Brigade and to the Artillery. It was not until the night of the 1/2nd. that I had and direct communication with Brigade. I also established communication between my right company and the left company of the Wilts on the night 1/2nd. The ground between Battalion Headquarters and the front line was continuously shelled night and day; consequently the losses in runners and signallers were very large.

GROUND.

On Zero day the going was quite passable, and none of my Battalion met with Marshy or impassable ground, except in shell craters found in the low lying ground in SANCTURAY WOOD. The going was however difficult owing to the vast number of shell holes.

Practically no wire obstacles were encountered.

Very few dead were seen either ours or the enemy's.

RATIONS.

On the whole the arrangements

for getting up rations ~~were~~ good; but I would strongly suggest that Battalions make their own arrangements for guiding up rations in future operations.

TANKS.

As far as we were concerned tanks were of no material assistance. Unfortunately one tank with which we got in touch and directed towards the position from which enemy's machine ^{were} guns ~~were~~ firing went forward about 50 yards turned at right angles and fired at our own men killing and wounding several.

COMPASSES.

These were found to be unsatisfactory owing to the amount of metal lying about, and the fact that everyone carried rifle and spade.

MORALE.

The spirit ~~of~~ and cheerfulness of both officers and men left nothing to be desired, and although, not unnaturally, they ~~were~~ glad to be relieved, all ranks were ready to hold on as long as they were required to do so.

ARTILLERY.

On the afternoon of the 31st. July, I got into communication with the Australian Field Artillery, which was kept up throughout the operations. on several occasions our field guns and heavies fired short. This was reported at once through A. F. A. and range lengthened.

No F. O. O. was sent to my Headquarters although I consider he would have been useful. I several times asked A. F. A. for an officer to visit my Headquarters without result.

CASUALTIES.

The casualties sustained during these operations were as follows

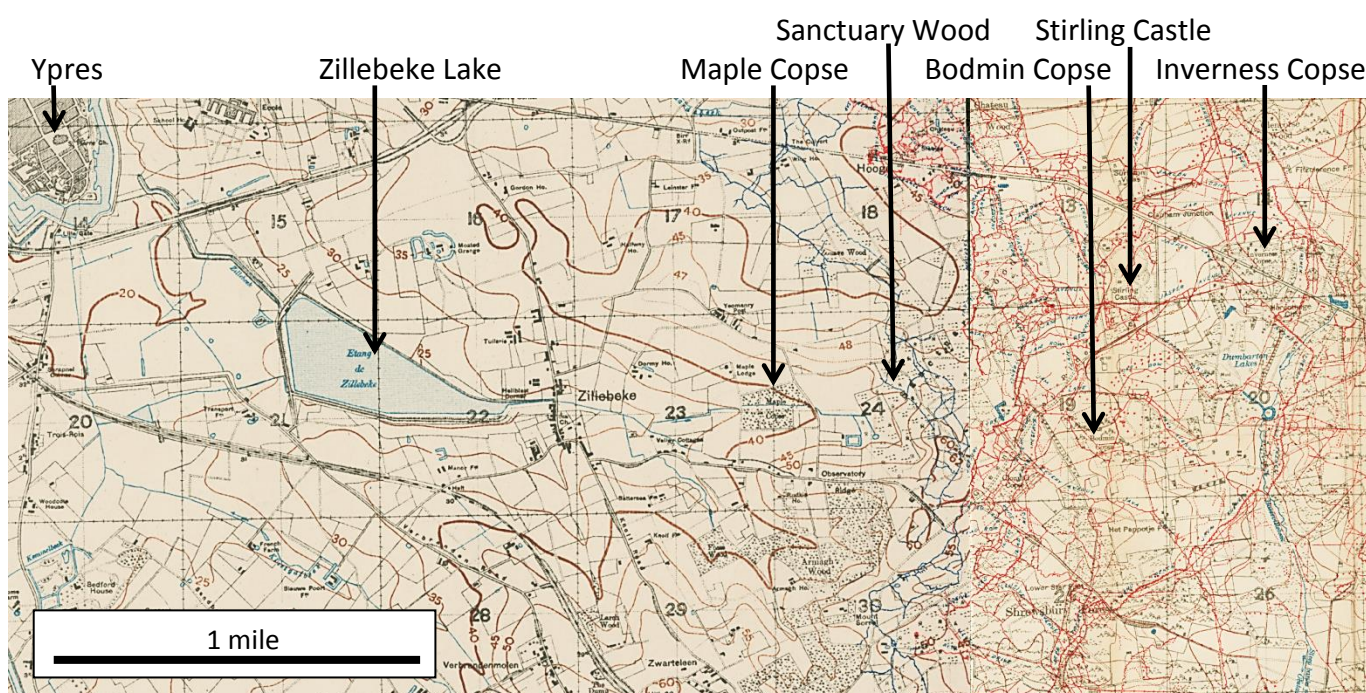
8.

	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Killed.	2	31.
Wounded	6	149.
Missing.		9.
Wounded at Duty.	3.	6.
Total.	11.	195.

I have the Honour to be
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

Major.
20th. Battalion King's L'pool Regt.

8th. August, 1917.



Trench map of 30 June 1917 showing some of the locations recorded in the *Report on Operations* (the troops were moving eastwards) for the time around when John Peters died. John was lost in this area, most probably in the region between Maple Copse and Stirling Castle, and his body was never recovered or identified. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres, one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. The memorial now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known.