

John Henry Leonard

Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, 1/1
Bucks Battalion

1898 - 1918



John Leonard was the younger brother of George Thomas Leonard who also lost his life during the war. He was born in Mursley in the Spring of 1898, the son of Thomas Leonard, a shepherd, and his wife Emily (nee Boughton). They had four other children, Sarah Emma (1888), Rose Annie (1891), Jim (1894) and George Thomas (1896).

At the time of the 1901 census, he was aged three and living with his parents and siblings Rose and Jim in Mursley. By 1911, the family had moved to Swanbourne and were living in Nearton End, probably number 10 at the bottom of the New Walk. He was aged 13 and still at school.

He enlisted for the army in Aylesbury, joining the local regiment, but we don't know exactly when. On 4th August, 1914, the 1/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion Territorial Force were stationed at Aylesbury as part of the South Midland brigade of the South Midland Division, and then moved to Writtle near Chelmsford. They mobilised for war and landed at Boulogne on 30th March, 1915. In May 1915, the formation became the 145th Brigade of the 48th Division which engaged in various actions on the Western Front.

In 1916, the Division was engaged in various actions as part of the Battle for the Somme. In 1917, as the Germans retreated to the Hindenburg Line, the Division continued to join in Battles in the area around Ypres. Then in November 1917, it was deployed to Italy to stiffen Italian resistance to enemy attack after a recent disaster at Caporetto. In 1918, the Division held the front line sector at the Montello and then moved west, to the Asiago sector and then engaged in fighting on the Asiago Plateau and The Battle of the Vittoria Veneto in Val d'Assa. It seems likely that it was during this latter battle, fought between 24 October and 3 November, 1918 that John lost his life on 1st November, 1918. The battle marked the end of the First World War on the Italian front and secured the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire.



*John Leonard was buried at
Granezza British Cemetery, Italy.*

*He is also commemorated on a
gravestone in Swanbourne
cemetery, together with his brother
George and cousin Nimrod
Boughton.*

