

## Arthur Edward Vaughan

Arthur was born in the fourth quarter of 1888, the son of Thomas and Sarah Ann Vaughan. The 1901 census gives Arthur's birthplace as Bache Mill which is a small collection of scattered dwellings a short distance to the north of Diddlebury and it was at Diddlebury that Arthur was christened on 30 December 1888. He was the couple's second child as Ernest had been born two years earlier.

The 1891 census records the family as living at Corfton which is a hamlet a kilometre south west of Diddlebury. However, in 1901 the family were living in Twitchen, which is another very small community three kilometres to the west of Clungunford, and the family had grown. Ernest was not recorded but he was 14 by then and presumably was working and living elsewhere. Arthur aged 12 was now the oldest child at home along with three sisters and a brother.

No further records have been located until the census of 1911 which records Thomas and Sarah as living at Chelmick where Thomas was a farm labourer but Arthur was not recorded and presumably had obtained employment elsewhere. The two youngest children on the 1901 census return, Thomas Edwin and Edith Ellen, have been joined by another sister, Florence Annie and so the total at Chelmick was five.

From 1901 until when Arthur enlisted the available records do not provide information that is beyond dispute. When he left school, which was probably shortly after the 1901 census, there is a strong possibility that he became a farm worker given the paucity of opportunities open to someone of limited education living in a rural locality at that time. Without factors such as parents or an attached wife and children appearing on records as a means of cross referencing it is far more challenging to trace individuals using the standard and available data.

The 1911 census records include an Arthur Edward Vaughan working in Tredegar, Monmouthshire as a 'carter for contracter'. Arthur was living as a boarder at the home of Penry Francis, the foreman contractor, at 4, Queen Square, Tredegar. All of this is sound data as South Wales was a boom area in the first decade of the twentieth century in the same way as Telford, Skelmersdale, Corby and Milton Keynes were sixty years later. Many coal mines were being sunk and steel and copper works were created that attracted workers from Ireland, Scotland and Yorkshire. The opportunities to earn much higher wages than those of an agricultural worker in Shropshire would have been very attractive to Arthur and would explain his appearance in the records in Tredegar. As an experienced agricultural worker he would have had the skills necessary to work with horses as a carter.

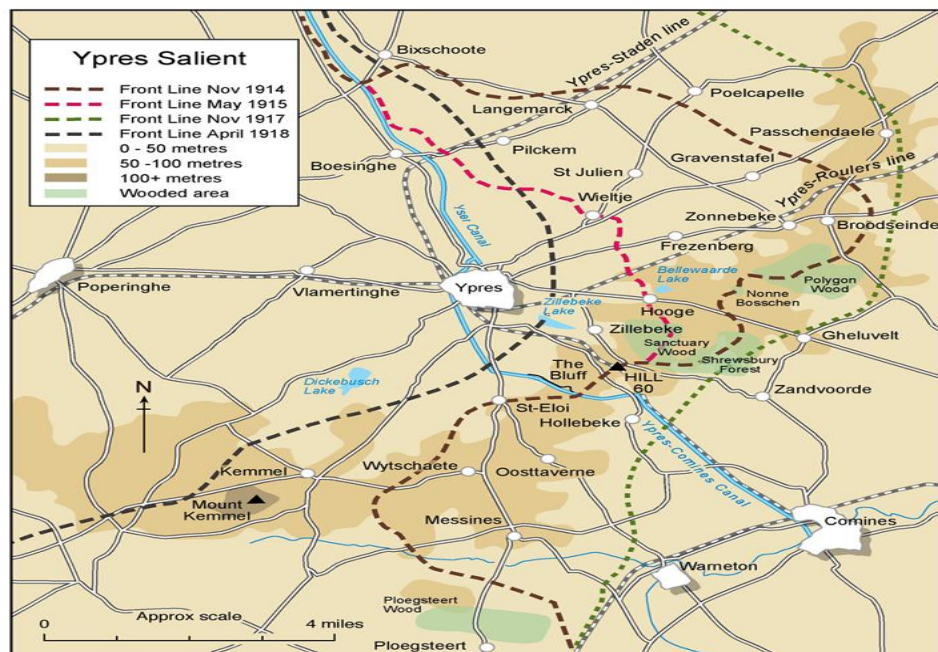
The counter factors are that the census record states that Arthur was 21 when he was actually 22 at the time the census was taken and his birthplace was given as Bromfield when it was Munslow on previous censuses. However the consistency of the handwriting on the original regarding the information given and the signature indicates that Penry Francis completed the form and Arthur may not have had a direct input. In this way the information may not have been totally accurate and therefore, on balance, it is reasonable to assume this is the correct Arthur and his presence in Tredegar would explain how he enlisted at Newport and was allocated to the South Wales Borderers.

At the exhibition held at the Church Stretton Library in November 2018 to commemorate the armistice of 1918 a descendant of Arthur's brother Thomas confirmed that Arthur had indeed moved from Shropshire to Tredegar according to family folklore and some family history research that had been completed.

The next record of Arthur is his enlistment at the age of 26 at Newport, Monmouthshire into the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of The South Wales Borderers. There can be certainty that this is the correct Arthur as the service number of 22207 he was given at the time tallies with the number on the Little Stretton memorial. Further confirmation is provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave register which records that the Arthur Vaughan 22207, who served in the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of SWB, was the son of Thomas and Sarah Ann Vaughan of Bridge Cottage, Little Stretton. This information also indicates that his parents had moved to Little Stretton from Chelmick and explains why Arthur is recorded on the Little Stretton memorial.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion was formed at Brecon in October 1914 by the Welsh National Executive Committee and by the end of December 1914 had moved to Colwyn Bay. It then came under orders of 130th Brigade, 43rd Division. On 29 April 1915 the formation was renamed 115th Brigade, 38th (Welsh) Division and was moved to Hursley Park (Winchester) in July 1915 before landing at Le Havre on 4 December 1915. The National Army Museum Soldiers' Effects Records indicate that Arthur was a member of the Battalion on arrival at Le Havre. This suggests that he enlisted in the very early stage of the war.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion was engaged in the Battle of Pilckem Ridge which was the opening battle of The Third Battle of Ypres otherwise known as Passchendaele.



Map courtesy of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Third Battle of Ypres was made up of four battles the first of which was The Battle of Pilckem Ridge. This battle started on 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1917 and lasted for three days until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August.

During this short period British casualties and dead numbered 31,850 and German losses were about the same.

Arthur was one of the many who died that day although initially his name was placed on the 'missing' list. Many soldiers who were listed as missing had been placed in temporary graves on or near the battlefield until they could be retrieved. This was Arthur's fate and it was nearly two months before his death was confirmed. His parents received the following letter from one of Arthur's officers and reported in the Ludlow Advertiser of 29 September 1917:

*I deeply regret that your son has been killed in action on 31<sup>st</sup> July. He was counted as missing and I delayed writing in the hope that we should discover his whereabouts and that he may have been wounded and passed down, unknown to us. It was only yesterday we heard that he had been buried in a cemetery nearby.*

The picture below shows Arthur's permanent burial place in Cement House Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium Block X1 Row E number 14.



Image courtesy of: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cement\\_House\\_Cem.19.JPG#filelinks](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cement_House_Cem.19.JPG#filelinks)

On 23 February 1918 Arthur's father was paid £10-17-1 War Gratuity and a further £10-0-0 on 30 October 1919.