

Ernest Watts

5746, 1st/9th Battn., London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles) KIA 9th September 1916

Ernest was born in Warboys on 2 June 1896 to George and Martha Jane (nee Dring) Watts. The family lived in Mill End and Ernest was one of 11 children.



From 3 April 1903, when he was 7, he began attending Warboys Board School. Three other boys who began school with him on that day are also on the War Memorial - **Harold Brown, John Mills** and **Arthur Behagg**.

Mill End

Ernest's father George worked as a labourer both on a farm and in the brickyard where Ernest also worked.



Warboys brickyard

Ernest moved to Harrow on the Hill and whilst living there enlisted into the Queen Victoria's Rifles as a Rifleman sometime between November 1915 and March 1916.



Battle of Ginchy Imperial War Museum

On 9 September 1916 Ernest's Battalion was involved in the Battle of Ginchy – one of the battles of the Somme. They had spent the previous 48 hours constantly moving through difficult terrain with no time for sleeping and little for eating. Consequently all the men were extremely tired when the fighting began at 4.45pm. Even so they quickly achieved their objectives but at the cost of many casualties.

Ernest was initially listed as missing in the Times Casualty list in October 1916 but was later presumed to have been killed in the battle on 9 September 1916.

He has no known grave and is listed on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme as are **John Dockerill, Arthur Newman, Alfred Redgrave, John Bateman** and **Arthur Bester**.

His parents continued to live in the village. George died in 1953 aged 93 and Martha on 8 March 1963.

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