

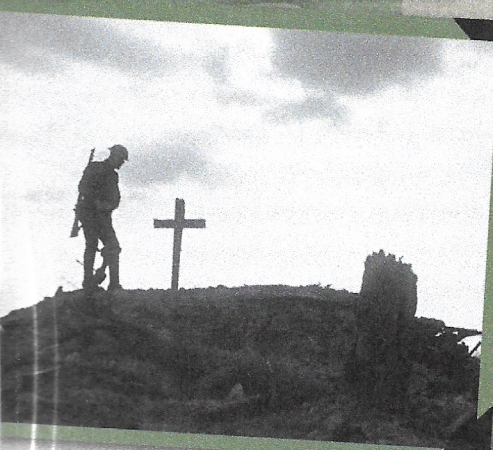
# Passchendaele Belgium

## 1917-1918



June 1917.

We've had a hard time capturing some high ground called the Messines Ridge. Our lads planted a huge bomb under enemy lines. We won the high ground and captured 80 prisoners, but half the battalion's men were killed or wounded.



July 1917.

Again we are trying to capture some high ground, this time around Pilkem - also known as Passchendaele. Me and my troop of lads did everything we were asked to and I suppose we won, but we lost a lot of men. So many killed! I can say this here, but I wouldn't tell anyone at home. The numbers killed are too terrible.

*Handwritten signature or initials.*

September 1917

Now we are attacking another hill held by the enemy. It's called the Menin Ridge. My men do wonderfully well and we capture the trenches as ordered. I am very proud of my soldiers, but even when we are winning, we lose men. Today - 15 killed, 121 wounded and 23 missing just from my battalion.





I've been volunteering for dangerous missions into enemy trenches with a few hand-picked men. I don't write home about this. Edward would be worried if he knew.

I've heard a rumour from an officer who knows someone who works for the War Office in London. They say thousands and thousands of soldiers have been killed – many more than they say in the newspapers. They say we lost nearly 60,000 men by lunchtime when we attacked on the Somme. All those men dead in the mud. And after that, 420,000 British troops were killed in fighting over four months at the same place. Battles that the newspapers claim have been victories don't seem like victories to us.

What the War Office person says matches what we have all seen at the front – we lose men every day, and win a few feet of mud.

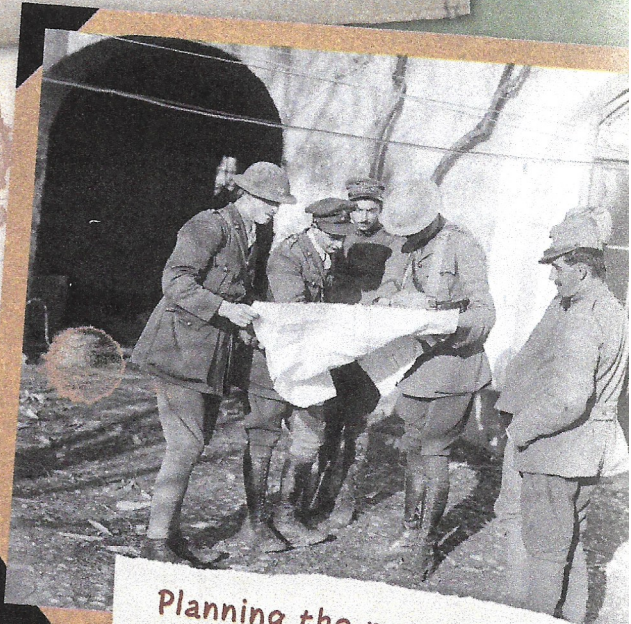
### Giavera, Italy,

October

I've been sent to Italy. When I think that I started out as an orphan in London and now I've travelled to Argentina, France and Italy. We are in northern Italy, near a place called Giavera. We are on a hill overlooking the River Piave. Italy is not how I imagined it.

It is quieter than the war in France,

but a muddy trench is a muddy trench no matter which country you're in. And still the shots ring out and the shells fall. It's cold here and very, very wet.



Planning the next move



← GIAVERA