

PRIVATE ERNEST ROSS 265959

6th Battalion Black Watch



Ernest Ross was born about 1891. The exact details are unclear, however he was probably born in London, although some records state Aberdeen. His parents, Ernest Ross and Margaret Young, were married in 1892 in Aberdeen. Ernest Senior was a photographer's assistant to his father and Margaret was a dressmaker. Ernest Senior's father, Edmund Ross, was an early landscape photographer of some note. He was listed in the Post Office Aberdeen Directory 1889-1890 as a photographer of 35 Claremont Place Aberdeen. His work took him all over the country and many of his photographs have survived and are held in the National Archives in London. They include photographs of Bishop Lloyd's Palace Chester, Clamshell Cave Staffa (1894), and Loch Lomond from Inversnaid (1900). He was the copyright owner of the works and was based at 53 Victoria Street Aberdeen. He died in Aberdeen in 1909.

In 1901 Margaret Ross, Ernest's mother, was a patient in Morningfield Hospital, King's Gate, Aberdeen and Ernest was an inmate and scholar at The Orphanage, Aberlour, Banffshire. He was about ten years old. Margaret Ross died in Morningfield Hospital in 1903 from pulmonary tuberculosis, which she had been suffering from for seven years. She was aged just 35 and already a widow.

Ernest can next be found in the 1911 census boarding with the Campbell family at Home Farm, Doll, Kinloch Rannoch, where he was employed as a gardener. A few years later he was working on the Scone Palace Estate and it was from there he enlisted in the army in 1915.

Ernest enlisted as a private in the 6 Battalion of the Black Watch and by July 1916 was in France. In April 1917 the Highland Division had been involved in the Battle of Arras and in June they left the area, bound for the Ypres salient. The 6 Battalion moved with the remainder of the 153 Brigade by road, billeting in Marquay, Pressy, Beaumetz, Wizernes and finally arrived at Serques on the 8 June 1917, where it remained for a fortnight preparing and rehearsing for a pending attack. On the 21 June 1917, the battalion moved to Poperinghe by train and on 28 June 1917 they moved into line at Lancashire Farm., north of Ypres. This tour was a quiet one, and on the 5 July 1917, the battalion travelled by train to St. Omer and then marched to St. Momelon where it carried out further training for the coming attack.



6 Battalion The Black Watch and The Battle of Pilckem Ridge 31 July – 2 August 1917.

The objective of the attack was the Steenbeck River, about two thousand yards behind the German Front Line. The attack was divided into four stages, the first objective the 'blue'

line being the enemy trenches, the second the `black` line was his support system, the third the `green` line the river Steenbeck itself and the fourth line about two hundred yards north east of the river. Two Brigades were to attack, the 152ⁿ on the right and the 153 on the left.

Zero hour was 3:05am on 31 July 1917 and the attack began with an artillery bombardment. Ten minutes later A Company (to which Ernest belonged) of the 6 Battalion Black Watch went forward, followed by B and C Companies. D Company were left to hold the original British front line. By 6:00am the Battalion HQ moved forward to Hindenburg Farm, a few hundred yards behind the original German front line and soon after, a report was received that B Company had occupied the `Black` line. At 7:15am it was reported that B, C and D companies were established in the `Black` line, although the advance had been held up by machine gun fire. At 7:30am, in a joint effort of the 6 Black Watch and the 5 Gordon Highlanders, an enemy stronghold was captured and about a hundred prisoners taken. A quarter of an hour later, B Company took Cane Wood and captured Rudolph Farm, midway between the `Black` and `Green` lines. By 9:00am B Company had been reduced to only 50 rifles but had still managed to capture Kliest Farm. At 9:20am The Black Watch HQ was moved even further forward to Gournier Farm, halfway between the `Blue` and `Black` lines and from there every available man was sent forward to assist in consolidating the `Black` line. This was where A Company was established; in front of Cane trench, in touch with the 6 Seaforth Highlanders on the right and the 5 Gordon Highlanders on the left. From this point a reconnaissance was made of the `Green` line and 40 men of D company were found to be holding some gun pits on the road between Ferdinand and Chien Farms. They were sent over the Steenbeck river where they were able to establish four posts.

During the afternoon the fighting in this advanced position grew very severe. Three determined counter attacks between 3:45pm and 5:00pm were driven off, the enemy losing nearly a hundred men killed or wounded. At the same time, C Company established itself on the right, between Ferdinand and Chien Farms, B Company dug in at Francois Farm and A Company, with the 7 Gordon Highlanders on its right, occupied the `Black` line. At 6:00pm the enemy put down a very heavy barrage on the `Black` line and landed another counter attack on D company on the far side of the Steenbeck river. Owing to the severe losses inflicted on the men by this and the three other attacks, the troops were forced to withdraw to the gun pit line south of the Steenbeck, although standing patrols were put in position to prevent the Germans crossing the river.

The fifteen hours of continuous fighting had exhausted British and German alike and the night passed without further incident. The following day, 1 August 1917, was spent consolidating the position won, bad weather and continuous rain making the task far from easy. At 8:30am the enemy made one more counter attack but it was driven off without difficulty. The losses



British stretcher bearers battle through mud during the The Battle of Pilckem Ridge

suffered by the 6 Battalion Black Watch in the battle were 1 officer killed and 8 wounded, 50 other ranks killed with 234 wounded and 9 missing.

Ernest died during the fighting on 31 July 1971 but his body was never recovered. He is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. He was awarded the Victory and British Medals, however by 1921 they had yet to be claimed as his father and mother had died many years previously.

Name:	Ernest Ross	
Age:	30	
Estimated birth year:	abt 1871	
Relationship:	Head	
Spouse's name :	Maggie Ross	
Gender:	Male	
Where born:	Paisley, Renfrewshire	
Registration Number:	573/1	
Registration district:	Paisley	
Civil Parish:	Paisley	
County:	Renfrewshire	
Address:	9 Greenlaw Avenue	
Occupation:	Cloth Finisher	
ED:	71	
Household schedule number:	36	
LINE:	3	
Roll:	CSSCT1901_208	
Household Members:		
	Name	Age
	Ernest Ross	30
	Maggie Ross	28
	Ernest S Ross	5
	Margaret B Ross	4
	Winifred D Ross	1
	Janet Nisbet	19

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1903. DEATHS in the District of St. Machar in the Burgh of Aberdeen

No.	Name and Surname, Rank or Profession, and whether	When and Where Diel.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	Signature & Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
515	Margaret Ross Widow of Ernest Ross, Photographer	Aberdeen. 1903. May Twenty fourth St. Aust. Bell Morningfield Hospital, Aberdeen.	F.	35 years	James Young, Butcher, Domestic servant, Jane Young M.A. Sandikanda (deceased)	Pulmonary Tubercle. 7 years. Lancetous disease— Ascert. by M.H. Lister, M.B.	William Young of Brother. 22 Boulevard Terr. = acc, Aberdeen.	1903. May 26 th At Aberdeen M.H. Lister Registrar.

Ernest's mother died in 1903 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis
Her death was registered by her brother, William Young

In Memory of
Private

Ernest Ross

265959, "A" Coy. 6th Bn., Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) who died on 31 July 1917 Age 27

Son of Ernest and Margaret Young Ross.

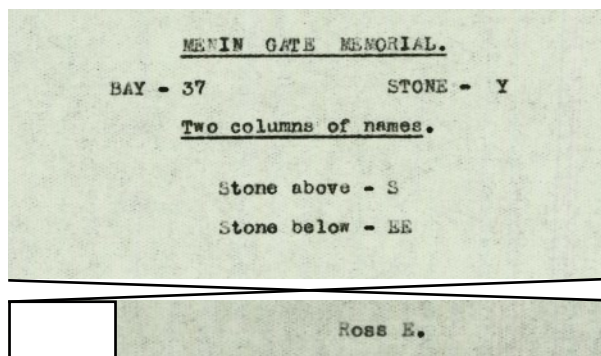
Remembered with Honour
Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

ROSS, Pte. Ernest, 265959. "A" Coy. 6th Bn. Black Watch. 31st July, 1917. Age 27. Son of Ernest and Margaret Young Ross.

Extract from INDEX No M.R. 29
Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial
Part XXXI (UK)



Ernest's name is recorded on Bay 37 Stone Y
on Menin Gate Memorial

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
ROSS	1/6 R Highlanders do	Pte	2961 265959
ERNEST			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	6357-G/102 B23	1966	22/9/21
BRITISH	do	do	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

NW/3/9) 34 of W/19/2005 E 1380

W/C Beak Beak requests instructions re disposal of Medals 4. 11. 21.
Correspondence

Ernest was awarded The Victory and British War Medals
They had not been claimed by 1921