

## WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION, LANCASHIRE NORTH BRANCH

DESPATCH: May 2015 – Supplementary Information

### RE-BURIAL AT PROWSE POINT CEMETERY

#### History

In October 1914 1 Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment (1KORL) and 2 Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (2LF) were in 12 Brigade of 4 Division. The Division moved north from the Aisne in early October. On 13<sup>th</sup> October the advance eastwards from Hazebrouck commenced and 12 Brigade moved to capture Meteren with 1KORL being one of the leading battalions. They came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire from German positions suffering 46 killed, 34 wounded with 15 men posted missing.

At night on 17<sup>th</sup> October 4 Division occupied Armentieres and Houplines south of the Lys with 10 Brigade, 12 Brigade were on the left bank whilst 11 Brigade were further north. Next day the Division's objective was to capture Frelinghien but the 10 Brigade's attack to the south of the Lys did not go well. 1KORL who were attacking on the line of the road from le Bizet to Le Touquet with 2LF on their left reached the railway without opposition but beyond the railway 1KORL came under heavy fire from Germans south of the Lys. On 19<sup>th</sup> October 10 Brigade attacked again and made some headway and the dotted red line shows the position reached.

On 20<sup>th</sup> October the Germans attacked all along the line and the ensuing fighting is known as the *Battle of Armentieres* (19<sup>th</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1914). On 6 Division frontage, south of Armentieres, the British line was pushed back from Premesques to Rue du Bois. North of 1KORL and 2LF the Germans captured trenches held by the Inniskilling Fusiliers and caused the British line to be withdrawn behind the railway. Counter attacks were made by 1 Somerset Light Infantry and 1 East Lancashire battalions which recovered the trenches lost by the Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1KORL and 2LF were then able to counter attack and re-establish the line almost in its original position.

For the period 18<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1914 the CWGC records indicate 1KORL and 2LF killed were 54 and 46 respectively of whom 45 and 30 respectively have no known grave location.

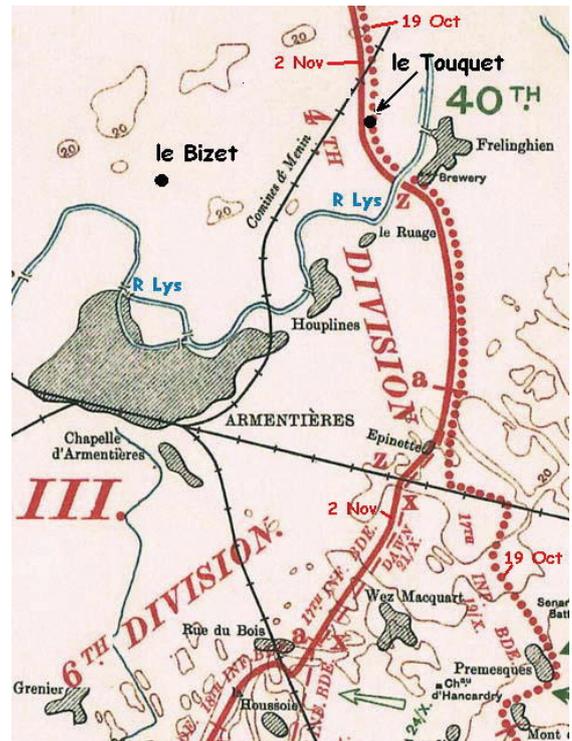
#### Finding of Remains and Ceremony

In 2008 a team of archaeologists comprising Emmanuel Bril, Patrick Roelens, Philippe Roelens and Jean-Michel Van Elslande from the Comines-Warneton Historical Society discovered the remains of a British soldier. In 2010 further excavations were undertaken which established there were in total six aligned bodies in a row.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) took charge of the excavations and undertook DNA testing but it was not possible to trace family members in order to identify any of the soldiers. However shoulder badges indicated two served with The Kings Own Royal Lancaster (KORL) Regiment and two served with The Lancashire Fusiliers (LF). It is thought that the casualties had been given field burials after the action(s) in which they died.

The ceremony to re-inter the remains of the soldiers took place at Prowse Point cemetery on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers accorded them all full military honours.

More of Gerard Lemaire's photos from the ceremony follow:





"Carry" to Cemetery

Entrance



"Gathering"

Standards





**Service**

**Preparation for  
Committal**



**Salute**

**Wreaths**

