

Frank Walton HUTCHINGS



- Born:** 1st June 1893, Padstow, Cornwall
- Occupation:** Draper's shop assistant
- Enlisted:** London: December 1915 (Volunteer)
- Unit:** 14th London Regt. (London Scottish)
- Rank/number:** Private: No.6223
- Death:** Killed in action, 6th September 1916
- Detail:** Frank died in Leuze Wood on the Somme as he helped to beat off a German counter attack. Widow Florence knew little about her husband's death and in July 1919 she put a plaintive plea for more information in the regimental magazine saying that Frank was "supposed to be buried on the edge of Leuze Wood..."
- Age at death:** 23
- Military info:** Frank was working in a draper's shop in London when war started. He joined up in December 1915, a month before conscription came in. He enlisted in the 1st London Scottish, later redesignated the 14th Londons, a Territorial battalion. With no known links north of the border, it may have been that Frank just fancied wearing a kilt. He was posted to the battalion in France on 6th June 1916. They were at Hebuterne on the Somme preparing for the big offensive. Frank's draft arrived at Le Harve on 13th June and headed up the line. On 1st July the battalion, part of 168th Brigade, 56th Division, stormed the fortified village of Gommecourt, a few miles beyond the northernmost point of the Somme attack. The 10-hour battle, a diversion to the main assault, was a disaster. The battalion suffered 80 per cent casualties. In total nearly 20,000 Tommies died on the Somme on 1st July, the British Army's bloodiest day. That night the unit moved to Sailly-au-Bois. The British now switched their attack to the south where there had been some success, and on 20th August the 56th Division moved to Drucat for training with tanks. On 3rd September the Scottish marched to Sailly le Sec and next day they slogged to the frontline across the body-strewn battlefield. To the north the enemy line was intact, but south of Thiepval the Germans had lost ground. They held Combles and nearby Leuze and Bouleaux woods. This was the next British objective. On 5th September the Scottish took over newly-won trenches in Leuze Wood and at 9pm on the 6th the enemy attacked with grenades. It was repelled, but Frank was among the fallen.
- Grave/memorial:** Frank's body was never found. He is commemorated on Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: Capt. William Hutchings, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1850. Mariner. Mother: Frances Thompson, born Poole, Dorset in 1853. Wife: Florence Rawlins, born Hoxton, London in 1888. They married on 22nd January 1916.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

+Lest we forget+