



WILFRED FEENEY


24th September 1917
(aged 20)



SOLDIER INFORMATION SHEET:

WILFRED FEENEY

A hard working young man from a normal Northern family

BORN: 1897 at Farnworth, Bolton	
DIED: 24th September 1917, Ypres, Belgium	
HOW HE DIED: Wilfred was shot and died of his wounds at a Field Ambulance.	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Wilfred is Mr Birchall's (also known as Mr B, who does the WW1 workshops) Great, Great Uncle and was born in Farnworth, Nr Bolton in Greater Manchester. All the other men in his family were miners in the local mine, but Wilfred was a clothes dyer, adding colour to cotton cloth in a local factory. He enlisted in the army at the same time as his two brothers, who both survived the war.

He served for over two years in France and was wounded twice. Both times he was sent back to fight and he was promoted to Lance Corporal, in charge of other men, at the age of just 19.

He was shot whilst his unit was attacking in the third battle of Ypres (also called 'Passchendaele') which was well known for the soldiers fighting in deep mud that was so deep that at times it was almost impossible to walk in it. He died in something called a 'field ambulance' which was really just a very small set of hospital tents in a field near the fighting. He was 20 years old.

Shortly after he died his family received a letter from the war office inside a box of his possessions. Included in the list was a lock of hair from his girlfriend back home in England.

OTHER INFORMATION

This is the list of possessions included in the actual package that was sent home when he died

the form opposite:—

2 Bags, Lock of hair, 3 copper coins
souvenir note, whistle, rosary,
match box cover, leather strap
cup badge, 2 pocket cases,



WILFRED OWEN

4th November 1918

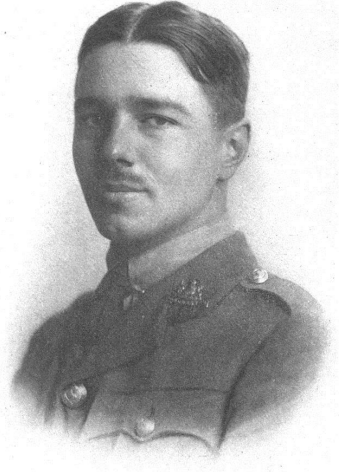
(aged 25)

Gas! Gas! Quick,
boys! – An
ecstasy of
fumbling,
Fitting the
clumsy helmets
just in time;

SOLDIER INFORMATION SHEET:

WILFRED OWEN

One of the greatest poets of the First World War

BORN: 18 th March 1893, Oswestry	
DIED: 4th November 1918 Sambre–Oise Canal, France	
HOW HE DIED: Wilfred Owen was shot and killed while crossing the Sambre–Oise canal with the men he commanded.	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Wilfred Owen is one of the most famous poets of the First World War. His poetry can be quite difficult to understand but it is something that you will encounter more of as you go to high school later on in life, as he is considered to be one of the greatest poets in the English language.

After being wounded and suffering from something called 'shell-shock', he was sent to Craiglockhart hospital in Scotland to recover. While he was there, he met another famous poet called Siegfried Sassoon who told him to write about the war in his poems, which he started to do with great success.

He was killed just a week before the end of the war and his family received the telegram about his death as the church bells rang on the last day of the war, the 11th November 1918.

OTHER INFORMATION

One of Wilfred Owen's most famous poems called 'Anthem for doomed youth' uses techniques called 'alliteration' (starting each word with the same sound) and 'onomatopoeia' (making a word sound like the thing it is describing) as follows:

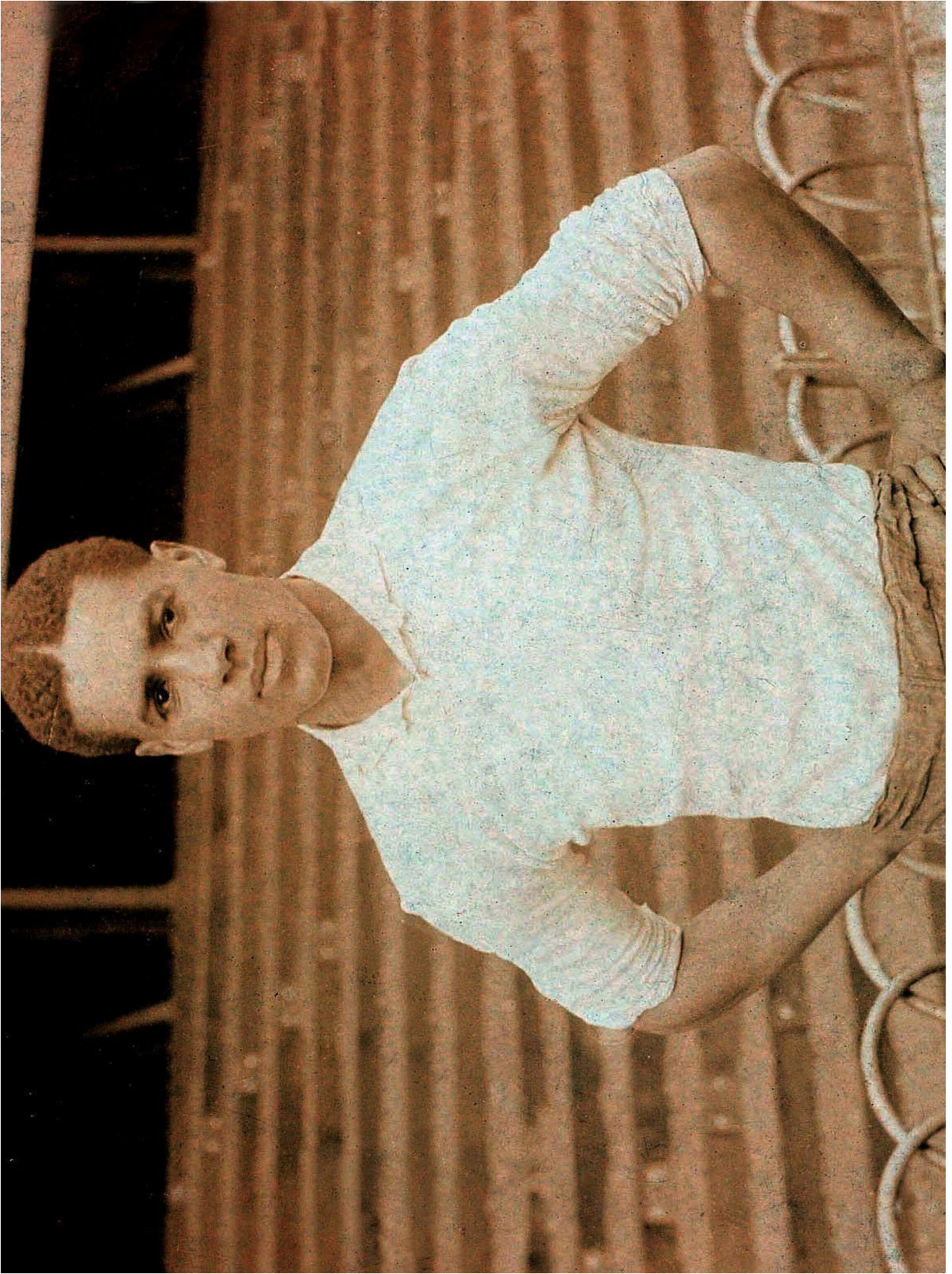
'The stuttering rifle's
rapid rattle'




WALTER TULL

25th March 1918

(aged 29)



WALTER TULL

BORN: 28 th April 1888, Folkestone, Kent, England	
DIED: 25th March 1918, Pas-de-Calais, France	
HOW HE DIED: Walter was leading an attack when he was cut down by enemy machine gun fire.	

Walter Tull came from an Afro-Caribbean family and although he was born in England the colour of his skin made his life difficult from a very early age due to the racist attitudes of some other people at the time.

He became an orphan at a young age when both his parents died. He was then adopted and trained as a dentist when he grew up. However, he had always been good at football and soon became a professional footballer for Tottenham Hotspur. Unfortunately the racist attitude of some people at football grounds meant he didn't play a lot of games.

Eventually the war came along and after serving in France with great distinction he was put forward to train as an officer. Once more, Walter faced racist attitudes as it actually said in the rule book that 'non-European' people with different coloured skin (including those from Afro-Caribbean families like himself) could not be officers!

Again he fought against this attitude and soon gained the respect of his men, which was proved when they tried many times to recover his body when he fell down dead in no-man's land.

Walter's story has inspired many people to fight against racism. There is a memorial to him at the Sixfields Stadium, Northampton





JACK CORNWELL


2nd June 1916 (aged 16)



SOLDIER INFORMATION SHEET:

JACK CORNWELL

A brave young man who wouldn't leave his friends

BORN: 8 th January 1900, Leyton, Essex, England	
DIED: 2 nd June 1916, Grimsby, England	
HOW HE DIED: Jack died after receiving wounds on the deck of the battleship HMS Chester during the Battle of Jutland	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Jack Cornwell was one of the youngest soldiers in the First World War. He joined at the age of 16 as a 'Boy Seaman First Class' in the Royal Navy and started to serve on board HMS Chester.

During his time there he was trained as a gun layer (a person who helps to work and aim the guns) and on the 31st May 1916 the ship was involved in a famous sea battle called 'the Battle of Jutland'.

The ship soon came under attack and Jack's gun was one of the first to be hit, showering hot, sharp pieces of metal called 'shrapnel' all around the deck and into the bodies of his shipmates, many of whom were killed instantly. Jack was also severely wounded and was bleeding very badly.

At this point Jack managed to stand back up and remained standing at his gun for more than 15 minutes until the ship retired from the action with only one main gun still working.

After the action, ship medics arrived on deck to find Jack the sole survivor at his gun, shards of steel penetrating his chest, looking at the gun sights and still waiting for orders. Jack died several days later before his mother could arrive at the hospital and was later awarded the Victoria Cross.

OTHER INFORMATION

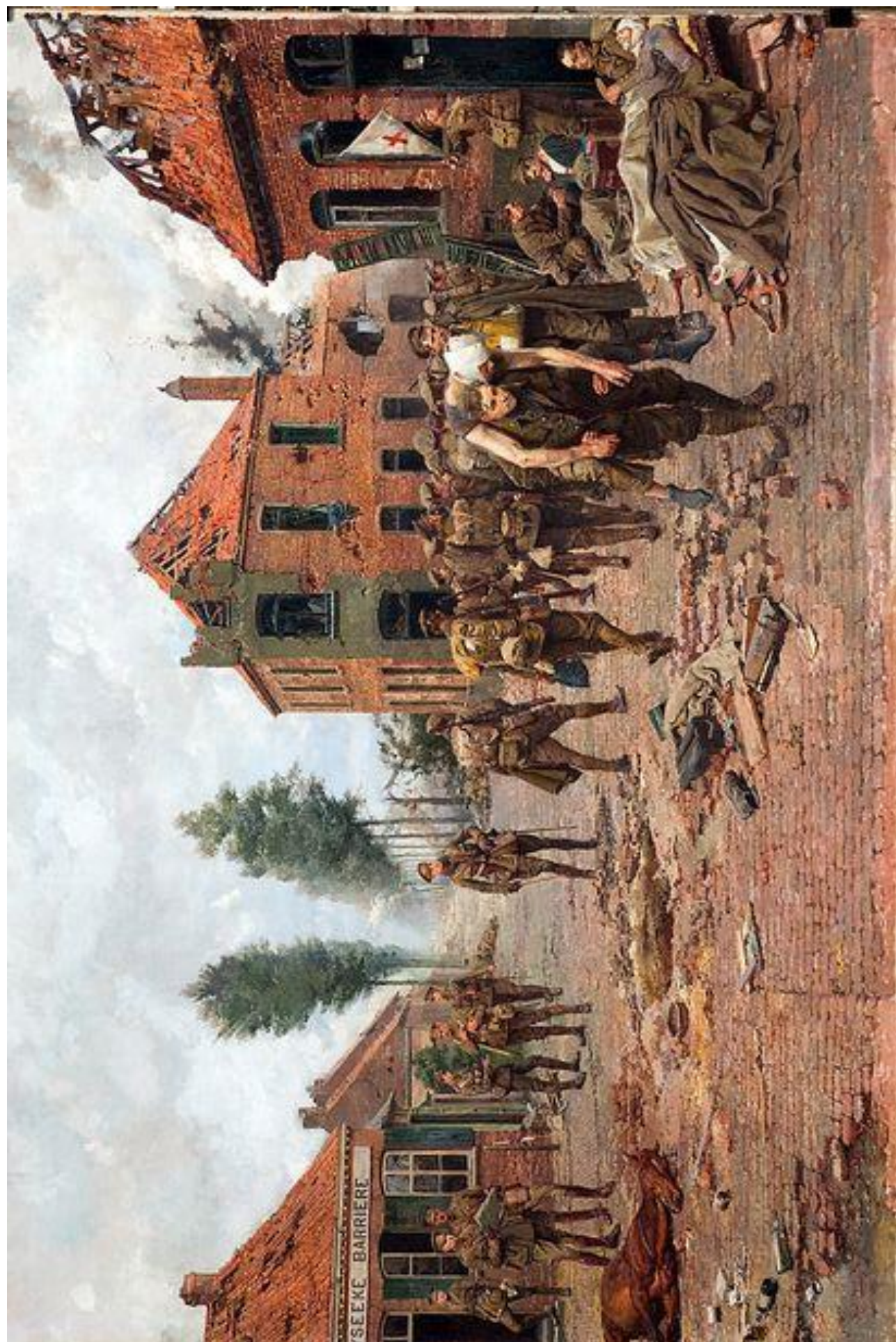
Jack is the third youngest person ever to receive the Victoria Cross, which fittingly (given he was part of a gun crew) are made from Russian cannons that were captured in the Crimean war.



HENRY TANDEY

20th December 1977


(aged 86)



SOLDIER INFORMATION SHEET:

HENRY TANDEY

The man who might have saved Adolph Hitler's life

BORN: 30 th August 1891, Leamington, Warwickshire	
DIED: 20th December 1977, Coventry, West Midlands	
HOW HE DIED: Henry died peacefully, many years after the war with his family	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Henry Tandey fought in many battles during the First World War and became its most decorated British soldier (in other words the one with the most medals) after receiving the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal. However, he is perhaps more famous for a story that is connected with him that may or may not be true.

The story goes that in 1937 Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, spotted a painting of a British soldier on the wall of Adolph Hitler's house in Germany (this was before WW2 and nobody was fighting at that point). Chamberlain asked Hitler why he had the painting and Hitler told him that he had bought it because he had recognised the main soldier in it, which was Henry Tandey.

Hitler claimed that Tandey was the soldier who he had met face to face as an unarmed soldier back in 1918, and that Tandey had let Hitler go without killing him!

The story has never been proved to be about Tandey but Hitler was certain about the fact that at least one British soldier decided not to kill him! It is worth thinking about what might have happened if the soldier had took that shot and killed Hitler!

OTHER INFORMATION

Researchers have been unable to prove that it was actually Henry Tandey who could have shot Hitler, but they do know that his regiment did actually face Hitler's at the same time that Hitler said it happened during the war. What do you think?





HARRY PATCH

25th July 2009


(aged 111 years, 1 month, 1
week and 1 day)

“You lived in fear
and counted the
hours. You saw
the sun rise,
hopefully you'd
see it set. Some
men would, some
wouldn't.”

SOLDIER INFORMATION SHEET:

HARRY PATCH

The last fighting British soldier from the First World War

BORN: 17 th June 1898, Combe Down, Bath, Somerset	
DIED: 25th July 2009, Wells, Somerset	
HOW HE DIED: Harry died peacefully, many years after the war with his family	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Harry Patch was a young apprentice plumber in 1916 when he was conscripted into the British army as a soldier, where he became part of a three man machine gun team.

He fought at several different battles including the Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres) and was injured when a shell exploded overhead at 22:30 on 22nd September 1917, killing three of his comrades.

He lived to the grand age of 111, one of the oldest people ever to have lived, and later said: "When the war ended, I don't know if I was more relieved that we'd won or that I didn't have to go back. Passchendaele was a disastrous battle – thousands and thousands of young lives were lost. All those lives lost for a war finished over a table. Now what is the sense in that?"

After the war, Harry returned to his life as a plumber, but his experiences in the war were so painful to talk about that he never spoke about them until 1998. For the last few years of his life, he spent time telling people all about his experiences and how war was a terrible, terrible thing that should be stopped.

OTHER INFORMATION

Many years later, Harry went to France and met the last surviving German soldier, Charles Kuentz, who was 107 years old. Harry said "I was a bit doubtful before meeting a German soldier. Herr Kuentz is a very nice gentleman however. He is all for a united Europe and peace – and so am I!" They then swapped presents of German biscuits and Somerset cider.