



Private 36145 George Turner

1st Battalion  
The Welsh Regiment

1886 - 1915



### **Life in the Community**

George's family lived in a cottage in Langstone. At the time of the Census in April 1881, His father William (30) and his mother Sarah (29) lived with their daughters Alice (5) and Delicia (3) and son Thomas Edward aged less than 1 year. William was an Agricultural Labourer.

George was born in Langstone in June 1886 and his birth was registered in Newport. At the time of the Census in April 1891 he was a scholar, 5 years of age and the family had moved to live at "Cockshoot" in the Parish of Christchurch. His father William Turner (41) was still employed as an Agricultural Labourer and lived with his mother Sarah (40), Alice (15), Delicia (13) and Thomas Edward (10).

At the time of the Census in April 1901 he was a scholar, 15 years of age, and lived at "Cockshoot" in the Parish of Christchurch with his father, William Turner (51) now a Roadman General Labourer and his mother Sarah (50), his sisters Alice (24) and Annie (7), his nephew Frances Ivor Turner (1).

At the time of the Census in April 1911 he was 24 years of age and employed as a woodcutter. He still lived in the Parish of Christchurch with his father William (60), a Roadman with the County Council, and his mother Sarah (59) and his sister Annie (17).

## Military Service

Initially George joined The South Wales Borderers 3rd (Reserve) Battalion and had the service Number 18673. The Battalion was formed in Brecon as a training unit on 4th August 1914 and then moved to Pembroke Dock. This Battalion remained in the UK throughout the war. The photograph of George (right) shows him wearing the cap badge of the South Wales Borderers. When the reserves were called to active service overseas, George transferred to The Welsh Regiment and his service number was changed to 36145.

The 1st Battalion The Welsh Regiment returned to England from India, landing at Plymouth on the 22nd of December 1914. They proceeded to France from Southampton, landing at le Havre on the 18th of January 1915, where they concentrated in the area between Bailleul and Hazebrouck, being joined later by additional Territorial units.



This is a photograph of George and his sister, Annie

On 5th May 1915, at the age of 28, George arrived in France to join his Battalion and was immediately engaged in the Second Battle of Ypres. This battle for control of the strategic Flemish town of Ypres in western Belgium had begun on 22nd April 1915 and continued until 25th May 1915. The battle had commenced with a surprise German attack using poison gas against French North African forces holding defences near Ypres. It was the first mass use by Germany of poison gas on the Western Front. Both sides rushed reserves in and the battle developed into the second epic in that area. Reports state that 87,223 men from the British Army and Commonwealth Forces were either killed, wounded or missing as were 35,000 from the German Forces.

George was reported "Missing Presumed Dead" on 25th May 1915. He had been on the Western Front for 20 days.

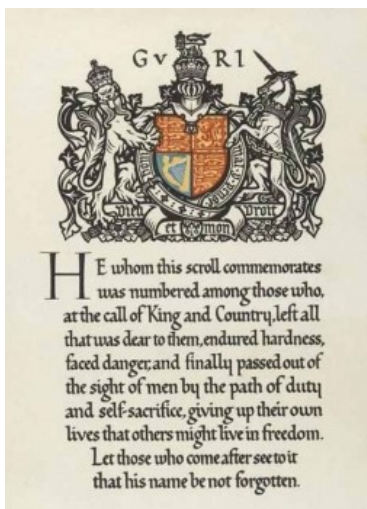
At the time of his death George was reported as the son of Mrs Sarah Turner, of Catsash Newport Monmouthshire. His father William had predeceased him as he had died in the winter of 1914.

The Army record of soldiers effects show that his mother Sarah, who was his legatee, received £5 10s 7d on the 5th September 1916 and a War Gratuity of £3 0s 0d on 8th September 1919. This would have the equivalent purchasing power of £335 in 2017.

## Medal Entitlement

Private 36145 George Turner's medal entitlement was the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

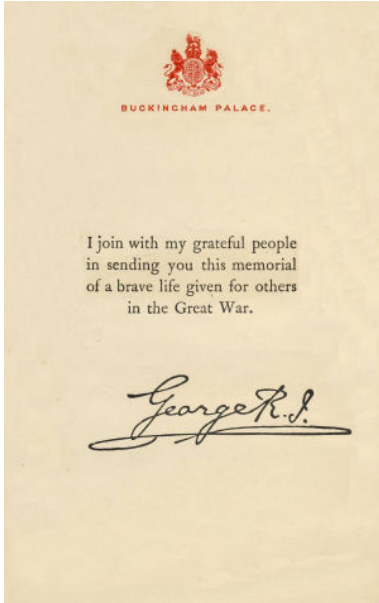
Name	Corps	Rank	Ser't. No.
TURNER George	Welsh R.	Pte	36145
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/1/104 B.2	4569	M. P. D. 25-5-15
BRITISH 15 STAR	J/1/1786	676	
Theatre of War first served in	(1) France		
Date of entry therein	5-5-15		



In the 1920's when the First World War medals were issued they were commonly referred to as "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred".

It coincided with a popular comic strip published by the Daily Mirror newspaper which first appeared on 12th May 1919. Pip was the dog, Squeak the penguin and Wilfred the young rabbit. For some reason the three names of the characters became associated with the three campaign medals being issued at that time to many thousands of returning servicemen, and they stuck.

The medals were issued to the fallen serviceman or woman's legatees if a Will existed. If no Will existed, they were issued to the next-of-kin in the order of precedence laid down in Army Order 256 of 1917. This Scroll accompanied the medals of servicemen and women who fell in the War and carried the full Name, Rank and Number beneath the last line of the script.



The Bronze Memorial Plaque was issued to the next of kin of servicemen or women who had fallen in the Great War. It just had the recipient's name cast in the box above the lion's head no rank was given as it was intended to show equality in their sacrifice.



1,355,000 plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze, 600 of these plaques were issued to women. Distribution started in November 1919 and they continued to be issued into the 1930s to commemorate people who died as a consequence of the war. The circular shape and coin-like appearance soon contributed to the nickname of this memorial plaque becoming widely known as the "Dead Man's Penny", the "Death Penny", "Death Plaque"

or "Widow's Penny".

### Commemoration of the Fallen



Thousands of soldiers in the British Army and Commonwealth Forces lost their lives fighting in the Ypres Salient. The remains of over 89,000 of them have never been found or identified. They are, therefore, buried somewhere in the Ypres Salient with no known grave. The site of the Menin Gate Memorial was considered to be a fitting location to place a memorial to commemorate the missing soldiers.

Carved into the panels of the Menin Gate are the names of 54,896 officers and men

who died in the area between the outbreak of war in 1914 and 15th August 1917 and who have no known graves.

In his speech at the unveiling of the Menin Gate memorial in 1927, Lord Plumer of Messines said:

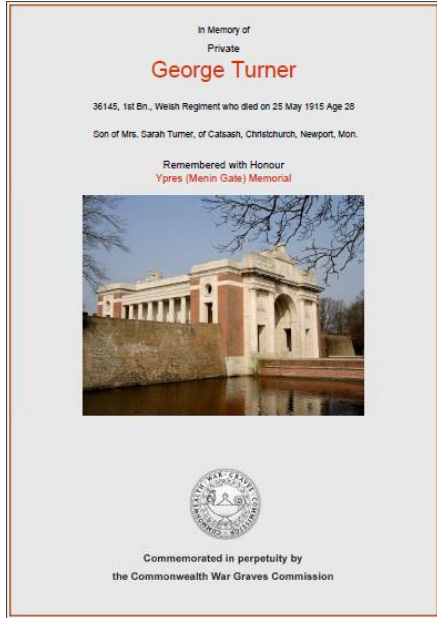
*"One of the most tragic features of the Great War was the number of casualties reported as, 'missing, believed killed'.*

*When peace came, and the last ray of hope had been extinguished, the void seemed deeper and the outlook more forlorn for those who had no grave to visit, no place where they could lay tokens of loving remembrance.*

*It was resolved that here at Ypres, where so many of the missing are known to have*



*fallen, there should be erected a memorial worthy of them which should give expression to the nation's gratitude for their sacrifice and their sympathy with those who mourned them. A memorial has been erected which, in its simple grandeur, fulfils this object, and now it can be said of each one in whose honour we are assembled here today: He is not missing; he is here!"*



George is commemorated at the Menin Gate Memorial, Bay 37 Stone R.



Understandably, as the family had lived in the neighbouring village of Christchurch and undoubtedly worshipped at the Holy Trinity Church, George is also commemorated at the Christchurch War Memorial.

George is also remembered in the Book of Remembrance held on the People's Collection Wales website.



The Newport Cenotaph was unveiled by Lord Tredegar in June 1923 to commemorate the local people who died in active service in the First World War. It now also commemorates people who died in subsequent wars. There are no names on the memorial, but Private 36145 George Turner's name appears on the listing.