

# Remembering the Great War

## Ernest Orange

Ernest's parents were Samuel Orange baptised 4 January 1863 at St Swithun's Church, Woodborough, and Eliza Plumb, of Basford, born 1864. They were married at St Swithun's on 18 August 1884. Ernest was their first child born on 29 April 1887. His siblings were Geraldine (b.1889), Florence (b.1891), Clara May (b.1893), Harold (b.1897), Leonard (b.1900), and Arthur Cyril (b.1902). There was an eighth child, possibly named Henry and a twin brother to Geraldine, who died shortly after birth.

The family lived in Woodborough, starting out in 1891 in Dark Lane near the New Inn, and then moving to Main Street. At the age of 13, Ernest was employed by his maternal grand-mother, Martha Plumb, as a market gardener, in Netherfield Road, Woodborough, later returning to his parent's house before 1911 when his occupation was described as a general labourer.

Sometime in the next two years, Ernest emigrated to Canada, returning to the UK on the Grampion in January 1913, with the intention of staying in England. However, by March he was again departing for Halifax, New Brunswick, Canada on the Hesperian along with an H. Orange, aged 16, and like his companion a farm labourer. This might have been his brother Harold. A year later, Ernest sailed back to England on the Hesperian arriving at Liverpool on 22 March 1914. The passenger list indicates he did not intend staying in England permanently. There is no H. Orange listed with him. On 8 May 1914, after a short stay in England, Ernest again set sail on the Calgarian bound for Quebec.

On 7 February 1916, Ernest enlisted with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, 169th Battalion, as private 678087, in Toronto, Ontario, for the duration of the war with Germany. He gave his address as 241 Seaton Street, Toronto, and his next of kin as his mother, Eliza Orange, living at 132 Jordan Road, Nottingham, though in later records this is changed to 132 Gordon Road, off Wells Road, Nottingham. He was 5ft 8in, of fair complexion with blue eyes and brown hair.

After enlisting, he sailed for England on the Metagama on 17 October 1916, arriving on 28 October. He was transferred to the 116th Battalion on 25 January 1917 and sailed for Boulogne, France on 11 February. He was granted 14 days leave to return to the UK in December 1917.

On 16 March 1918 he was awarded a Good Conduct Badge and subsequently was promoted to the rank of Corporal on 28 August 1918.

He was badly injured in action and died of extensive shrapnel wounds at the 12th Canadian Field Ambulance Depot on 30 Sept 1918. He is interred at the Queant Communal Cemetery British Extension 7.1/2 miles north east of Bapaume, in grave C 33.

The inscription on his headstone reads "UNTIL THE DAY BREAK AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY".

On the first and second anniversaries of his death, in memoriam notices appeared in the Nottingham Evening Post:

“ORANGE. – In loving memory of our dear son and brother,  
Corpl. Ernest Orange, Canadians, died of wounds Sept. 30th,  
1918. Fond memory ever clings.”

The events surrounding his death were detailed in the War Diary of the 116th (Ontario County) Canadian Infantry Battalion's Sojourn in France for Sept 1918 as follows.

29th. Weather fine. In accordance with Brigade operations order, the Battalion moved up, following closely behind the 7th Brigade, through Bourlon and assembled in the Railway Embankment in F.2.1. at 6.30 p.m. Orders were received that the 58th Battalion would attack the Marcoing Line in front of St. Olle, and that the 116th Battalion passing through would attack and capture St. Olle. Zero hour 7.00 p.m. At Zero hour the Battalion moved off from the railway embankment and made their way over in artillery formation to F.11.a. The 58th Battalion was found to be established in the Marcoing Line. And we moved through them. “A”, “B”, “C” Companies making up positions in F.12.a and A.7.b. Sending patrols from here to go in touch with the enemy. The village seemed to be very strongly held by machine guns. No reconnaissance of ground having been made, we decided that our attack on the village would be delayed while the following morning. Weather fine. Zero Hour 6.00 a.m. “B” and “A” Companies attacked and were caught under heavy machine gun fire coming from the enemy trenches in front of St. Olle and Petit Fontain. These two Companies were practically wiped out. News to this effect being brought by Lieut. Smith to Battalion H.Q. established at F.11.b.90.90. Artillery fire was then brought to bear on these positions and superiority of fire gained by our Lewis Guns situated along the road at F.11.b. As soon as this was accomplished, two Platoons of “C” and “D” Companies were dispatched to make a flanking movement to the northwest of the village, the remainder of “C” Company being sent over to help out the 58th Battalion who were having heavy fighting in the Marcoing Line near its junction with the Bapaune-Guibrai Road. Lieut. Bonner who was in charge of the flanking operations northwest of St. Olle, succeeded in entering the trench, and by great leadership, overcame all resistance, capturing the entire system. About 100 prisoners and 15 machine guns were captured. The rest of the day was spent in organizing our new positions. “D” Company holding posts around Petit Fontain, two Platoons of “C” Company in St. Olle, two Platoons of “C” Company on the right of the 58th, and the remnants of “B” and “A” Companies back at headquarters. Our casualties for the day were about 260 killed and wounded. Capt. Preston was taken prisoner, Capt. Williams, Lieut. Robson and Lieut. Brandon, wounded. Lieut. Norton killed, and Lieut. Palmer, missing, believed prisoner. Still holding positions in and about St. Olle.

Stephen L. Smith  
28 April 2018