

Charles Edward Eden.

Private, No. 17973, the 2nd Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment.

Joseph, the father of **Charles Edward Eden** was born in the year 1860, in Wellesbourne. He married Annie Eliza Locke, born in Temple Grafton, Warwickshire and their wedding took place at St. Leonard's Church, Charlecote on the 11th May 1879. He was 19 and she, 18. Annie gave birth to a total of 12 children and Joseph worked as a Farm Labourer. The family lived in Church St. Wellesbourne .

On the 19th November 1889, their son Charles was born in the village and on the 13th April 1890 baptised in the Parish Church of St. Peters. The school records indicate that after attending the infants section, in the November of 1896 he transferred to the Juniors before leaving, on the 20th November 1900, when the family left the neighbourhood¹. The Census of 1901 records that they were then in residence at 53, Mill St. Barwell in Leicestershire where Joseph worked as a Kennel man.

Charles became a Porter at the Baysfordsbury Mansion of Henry William Clinton Baker, (Esquire), the Lord of the Manor of Bayford, Hertfordshire.

Unfortunately, the Army Service record of Charles Eden no longer exists. His name appears on the Wellesbourne School Roll of Honour which can be dated to around November 1915ⁱⁱ. This would signify that he had already offered himself and been accepted for military service by that date. His medal entitlement did not include the 1914-15 Star which would furthermore indicate that he did not serve in France until January 1916 at the earliest.

Charles enlisted in Boston, Lincolnshire, possibly the nearest recruiting office to Wyberton, the village, south west of the town, where his parents were living at the time. He joined the 2nd Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment (8th Division, 25th. Brigade) and was allocated the service number 17973.

In 1916 the Battalion took part in the Battle of Albert - the first phase of the Battle of the Somme. Ordered to attack Ovillers(-la Boisselle) on the first day, July 1st, they failed to take their objective. Two hundred yards of the enemy line were quickly taken but for 2 or 3 hours they held on, not able to progress further. Because of the high level of enemy rifle and machine gun fire, poor cover and ultimately their own shortage of ammunition were forced to retreat. The casualty list for the day numbered 30 officers out of 32 killed and 443 other ranks dead, wounded or missing. The following 2 months were spent as Brigade Support.

On the 9th November the 2nd.Lincs. received orders to relieve the 1st. Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters in the right subsection of trenches near Lesboeufs . The following day, Friday the 10th, the day that Charles Eden died, the war diary records: *In the trenches: Artillery very active on both sides. (The enemy shelled us with gas shells during the relief. (4 other ranks killed, 6 wounded, 6 missing.)*



The Thiepval Memorial.

Charles has no known grave but is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial; the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme (Pier and face 1C), situated approximately 8 miles from where he died. He is also commemorated on the Wellesbourne School Roll of Honour, the Roll of Honour for the Dead in St. Peter's Church, Wellesbourne and on the Wellesbourne War Memorial. He was awarded the Victory and British Medals.

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ⁱ CR371/2 (WRO) Wellesbourne School Records.

ⁱⁱ In the 28/11/1915 edition of the Stratford Upon Avon Herald there appeared the names of those listed on the Wellesbourne School Roll of Honour, plus two additional names. This also includes those who were rejected because of poor fitness etc. Although others from the school including some of those previously rejected subsequently served after Nov. 1915, no revised list, that includes these names, has yet been found.

Sources: WO95/1730/1 (NA) War Diaries of the 2nd Bn. Lincolnshire Regiment.

The History of the Lincolnshire Regiment 1914-1918 edited by Maj. Gen. C.R. Simpson (Col. of the Regiment).

The Long Long Trail(WWW.1914-1918net