

Major Robert Emmet DSO



Robert Emmet and his eldest son Bobby at the outbreak of the war. Tragically Bobby was to die of typhoid in England

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Robert Emmet immediately war was declared offered to raise and equip a troop of Yeomanry at his own cost which would have meant using his own mounts. He enrolled fifty five men. In fact apparently for technical reasons, the War Office did not accept the offer but the men were encouraged to join the cavalry or yeomanry. Mr Emmet also said he would not keep in employment at Moreton Paddox any single young men who were eligible for service. He also is reported as offering to make up the army pay of volunteers working for him to the level he had been paying them as employees.

Despite his American citizenry, Robert Emmet was anxious to serve and the Courier reports that for the *“past ten year he has been a student of war and is familiar with the methods of the British Army ...Mr Emmet had seen service in the Spanish-American War”* (in Puerto Rico as a Second Lieutenant).

Emmet himself joined the Warwickshire Yeomanry. He was commissioned Major on 10 September 1914 and was ordered to Egypt on 24th August 15. Whilst in Egypt he suffered badly from heat apoplexy and was hospitalised. His condition was such that the medical authorities concluded he should be evacuated back to England. He returned to England in May 1916 and transferred to the Royal Field Artillery on the 20 November 1916 and went to France on that day being assigned to Battery A, 168th Brigade, 32nd Division of the British Expeditionary Force. In June 1918 he was detailed for special work at Artillery Headquarters, 32nd Division. He joined Battery B, 161st Brigade on 12 August 1918. He was with the Army of Occupation in Germany from 11 November 1918 until 7 March 1919. He is recorded as having served throughout the war. He was mentioned in despatches and received the D.S.O in 1917.ⁱ

During his time in France and Belgium he played a role in the following engagements, Somme offensive 1916/17, (Beaumont-Hamel, Serre, Saint-Quentin battle, Messines Ridge, Flanders offensive 1917, (Nieuport, Passchendaele), Somme defensive 1918, Somme Offensive 1918, (Hindenburg Line).

The Warwickshire Roll of Honour lists one of his employees Gunner Herbert Percival Hancox who had been a servant to Major Emmet for seven years before the War. He was a married man. He died of wounds in September 1918 in Emmet's unit in France age 32. He had survived most of the war having commenced his war service in the Balkans. According to Robert Emmet's memoir Percy Hancox served with him as a batman in Egypt and then with him in the Royal Artillery in France. ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Harvards Military Record in the First World War

ⁱⁱ Extract from the Warwickshire County Roll of Honour 1914 to 2005