

# CHARLES BEAN

Rank/Number: Private G/2789  
Regiment: 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Charles Bean was born in Folkestone in 1895, the second son of George and Elizabeth Bean. Soon after Charles' birth the family moved to Whitfield and his father became licensee of the Royal Oak.

Charles volunteered for the Army and joined the 8th Battalion, The Buffs, which was formed in Canterbury and attached to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 24<sup>th</sup> Division. The early days were chaotic but in March 1915 the men moved to Aldershot for final training. On 19<sup>th</sup> August the Division was inspected by Lord Kitchener and the next day by King George V before orders were received to move to France.



At 0130hrs on 1<sup>st</sup> September the 8<sup>th</sup> Buffs arrived in Boulogne and travelled by train and on foot to Maninghem, near Etaples where they were occupied with exercises, practice attacks and trench digging. On 20<sup>th</sup> September Charles wrote a letter to his brother and sister-in-law, thanking them for cigarettes and saying

*We are having some grand weather out here, but the place is not up to much. I am living up in a barn roof on the straw, we can't have a light so it makes it awkward. Are still a good way off from the Germans, but can hear the big guns.*

The following day orders were received to advance towards the battle front for the British Army assault at Loos. Following a series of night-time forced marches they arrived in Bethune early on 25<sup>th</sup> September.



By noon, Loos had been captured. During the evening the 8<sup>th</sup> Buffs attacked Vendin-Le-Vieil but were forced to withdraw, spending a cold night in the trenches. The following day they launched an attack on a nearby German position but could find no gaps in the wire and came under heavy machine gun fire. They were ordered to withdraw, having incurred 554 casualties.

Charles Bean was shot through the lung and died on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1915, aged 20. He is buried in the Carvin Communal Cemetery, next to the German National Military Cemetery. The town of Carvin was under German occupation until the end of the war so it is likely that Charles reached the German wire, as it is known that German medics attended to those wounded men.