

**BIRD, SIDNEY**  
**Lance Corporal**  
**1st Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment**  
**Service No: 8170**  
**Died: 28/09/1915, Killed in Action, aged 26**

Sidney Bird was the son of Edward and Elizabeth Bird who lived at 8 Mount Pleasant, Beenham. Sidney's birth was registered in Bradfield in the second quarter of 1889. At the time of the 1891 census Sidney was living with his parents in Bourne Cottage, near Hall's Farm and at the age of just under 2 he was the youngest of five children: Emily Snell, 12, step sister, James 8, William 6, and Elizabeth 4. All of his siblings were born in Beenham. His father, aged 32, was described as a groom from Fyfield, Wiltshire whereas his mother, 39, hailed from Bucklebury and her maiden name was Snell. They had been married since 1881. In 1901 the family were living in Clay Hill Lane, Beenham and Sidney now had a younger sister, Kate. His father is described as a race horse groom. By 1911 Sidney was still living at home, this time in Webbs Lane, now aged 21, unmarried and described as a carter on a farm.

Sidney enlisted in Reading as Private 8170. Where he served and how he was killed is not known but on the day he died his Battalion were engaged in what became known as The Battle of Loos (25 September - 18 October 1915). Compared with the small-scale British efforts of spring 1915, this attack of six Divisions was referred to at the time as 'The Big Push'. Taking place on ground not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient, the opening of the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy casualties, there was considerable success on the first day in breaking into the deep enemy positions near Loos and Hulluch. However the reserves had been held too far from the battle front to be able to exploit the successes and succeeding days followed the familiar war of attrition with minor gains.



Sidney's military record reports him "presumed dead" on the 28 September 1915. On the day he died, the Regimental Diary reads "Vermelles, France. 12.30 am. Battalion collected from fatigues and working parties in order to attack FOSSE No 8 at 2.30am. The battalion formed up in Company Column and advanced towards the objective 800 yards away. Owing to the bright moonlight the enemy saw us advancing when we were 400 yards from our objective. They put up "very" lights and kept up a continuous rifle fire on us from our right front - this grew heavier as we got nearer. Casualties (other ranks) killed 17, missing 143, wounded 115".

At the time Sidney was killed he was a Lance Corporal, aged 26 in the 1st Battalion, Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire) Regiment. He is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, France, panel 93 to 95.

Sydney's brother James Bird (1882-1970) married Agnes Knapp (1889-1918) and had four children; he later married Maud Victoria Ford (1885-1952). Sidney's younger sister Kate Bird (1892-1997) married William Greatham (1888-1939).