

GREEN, GEORGE
Lance Corporal
5th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment
Service No: 15654
Died 03/07/1916. Killed in Action

and

GREEN, ERNEST PERNELL
Private
1st Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment
Service No: 17042
Died 27/07/1916. Killed in Action, aged 21

Ernest Pernel Green and George Green were sons of James and Emily Green; both were born in Beenham. In the 1891 census, James 32, a Painter & Glazier from Padworth and Emily 32 from Bradfield, are living on The Green, Beenham together with their children Emily 9, Sydney 7, Francis 6, Ernest 4, Charlie 2 and an infant son of 1 month. The 1901 census shows James and Emily now with nine children: Emily E. 19, born Ufton, a domestic servant, Sydney J. 17, a Painter, born Padworth. The remaining children Francis 15, farm labourer, Ernest P. 14, farm labourer, Charles 12, Edith M. 8, Florence 6, Mable 4 and finally George aged 1 year, were all born in Beenham. Ten years later in 1911, James and Emily are still living in the village with Florence 16, Mable 14 and George 11 and have been joined by a grandson, Joseph James Hayell aged 3

It is believed George enlisted into the 5th Battalion of the Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regiment on 1 December 1915 at Reading meaning that he was probably under age, possibly just 15 years old. The 5th (Service) Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment was a Kitchener Battalion, raised at Reading on 25 August 1914 and known affectionately as "The Biscuit Boys". On the 30 June 1916 the Btn. was at Baizieux and by mid morning on the 1 July were in the reserve at Hencourt and Millencourt. They relieved the 8th Division at Ovillers la Boisselle that night and attacked at 03:15 hours the following morning (2 July) with mixed success, fighting over ground strewn with the bodies of men from the 2nd Battalion. This engagement won them 6 MCs, 6 DCMs, and 17 MMs but the Battalion was reduced to 340 men. On the day George was killed, 3 July, two days after the start of the Battle of the Somme, the 5th Btn. were still at Ovillers la Boisselle. The Regimental diary reads "4pm. The Battalion which consisted of about 70 men, and the C.O., was ordered to go to the ALBERT Defences for the night. Here the men made bivouac shelters, and the officers and N.C.O's who had been left at the Transport lines rejoined, and cooks were brought up. In the evening 2nd Lieutenants BREACH and MAY, and about 60 men who had been dug in, in "No Man's Land" rejoined. We were all very glad to see them." One can only assume that George was one of the men that didn't make it back that evening but his death was not confirmed immediately for in the 19 August 1916 copy of the Reading Mercury, George was reported as "missing". Interestingly, one of the military records consulted suggests that George was killed on the 8 July but given the appalling conditions the men suffered, it is not surprising there was confusion. His grave is IX. K. 7 in the Ovillers Military Cemetery.

Ernest Pernel Green was born in 1886 his birth being registered at Bradfield in the last quarter of that year. Apart from his mention in the 1897 and 1901 census returns, little is known of his early years but he joined the 1st Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment at Reading. At the outbreak of the war he would have been 28.

On the day Ernest died the Btn. were in action on the Somme attacking Delville Wood having been in the trenches since the 24 July. The Btn. diary states that by 02:00 hours they

had moved to Delville Wood and took up position on southern edge of wood, and lay down in "jumping off" formation immediately in front of SOUTH STREET. The men were arranged in four companies Left A, Left Centre B, Right Centre C and Right D. At 05:00 hours the bombardment of Longueval Village commenced and at 06:10 hours the bombardment of Delville Wood started. At 07:12 hours the Btn less A Company advanced in two waves. After advancing 270 yards the leading battalions halted and dug in. The bombardment had lengthened by this time to the northern portion of the wood and at 08:00 the Advance continued. The Battalion finally halted and dug in on the PRINCESS STREET line. During the advance from SOUTH STREET enemy's rifle fire was considerable but extremely inaccurate. By 09:00 the Battalion was dug in and consolidation of the line continued throughout the remainder of the day under High Explosive shelling. The weather throughout the day was very warm, and no water supply was available other than that carried in the bottles. The attack saw the loss of 8 officers and 256 other ranks, Ernest being one of them.

Ernest has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 11 D. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.