

ARTHUR ALFRED SIMS

Private

2nd Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment

Service No: 37257

Died: 16 August 1918. Killed in Action, Aged 34

Arthur Alfred Sims was born in Letcome Regis on 16 November 1883 and baptised there on 16 December the same year, his birth being registered in Wantage. Letcombe Regis is a village in the Vale of White Horse close to Wantage that was part of Berkshire until the 1974 boundary changes. Arthur was the son of Alfred (1848–1922), a blacksmith and Elizabeth Sims (nee Pimm, 1851–1927) also of Letcombe Regis. Arthur is commemorated on the Beenham war memorial.

The 1891 census shows Arthur, aged 8 and a scholar living at home with his parents and 7 siblings. Ten years later he's still living at home but now recorded as being a gardener. By 1907 Arthur, 23 is living in Beenham, still employed as a gardener but marries Kate Giddings 27, of Mill Street, Wantage on 3 June in Wantage.

The 1911 census shows Arthur and Kate living at Beenham House, Arthur is a gardener and Kate is a temporary domestic caretaker. The owner of Beenham House at this time was Lt. Col. William Wheat Waring, who had inherited the property two years previously upon the death of his father, Henry Waring.

At some point, Arthur enlisted at Reading into the 2nd Btn. Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire) Regiment as Private 37257. At the time of his death, the 2nd Btn. were engaged in the breakout of the confines of the salient of trenches around Ypres. Often known as the *Third Battle of Ypres* or *Passchendaele*, the offensive began on 31 July with encouraging gains but terrible summer weather soon bogged it down. By August the offensive was clearly failing in its objectives and had descended into attritional fighting.

On the day Arthur was killed, the Regimental diary reads "On morning 16th Battalion attacked Enemy's Trenches" Two officers were killed, eight were wounded and four reported missing. It went on to say "O.R. Killed 13. Wounded 231. Missing 120. On night of 16th Battalion was relieved by Northants Regiment and took up position in reserve in Bellewaarde Ridge."

One of those killed and missing was Arthur Alfred Sims. His body was never found and his wife received £2 4s 10d on 19 September 1918 and £4 10s on 4 November 1919, he being "presumed dead." Arthur is commemorated on Panel 106 at the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

Kate Sims remarried in 1920 and moved to Holly Lodge, Long Cross, Chertsey. Arthur was survived by three brothers.