

**Pte. E.W. Huggett – The Duke of Cambridge’s Own (Middlesex Regiment)**

**Edwin Robert Walter Huggett was born in Sutton in 1886, the son of Edwin and Alice Huggett. Edwin Huggett snr. was a carpenter and joiner by trade and the family later moved to Westcott. At the time of the 1891 census the family was living in Victoria Road, Westcott, but later moved to Alley Fields and then to Mill Cottage. Edwin jnr. became a carpenter and cabinet maker. In 1910 he married Nellie Sylvia Cooke. The 1911 census shows them living in Church Street, Leatherhead.**

**Edwin enlisted initially in The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment) and was later transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Middlesex Regiment. Formed in August 1914, the Battalion moved to India and arrived in Bombay on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. After three years garrison duties and training, the Battalion sailed to Basra in November 1917 and became part of the new 18<sup>th</sup> Indian Division formed from units of the British Army for service in the Mesopotamia campaign.**

**The capture of Baghdad was the main British objective from the start of the campaign. An advance north towards Baghdad in 1916 had failed disastrously when the British force was surrounded, besieged and eventually surrendered at Kut on the River Tigris 150 miles south of the city. A further advance was deferred until port and supply facilities were improved. Baghdad was eventually captured in April 1917 but supply problems and a lack of reinforcements made it difficult to advance further and the line was held at that point.**

**In September 1917 the British began an offensive against the Turks on the western side of the region, in Palestine. This ended with the capture of Jerusalem in December 1917. Deprived of resources by the demands of the Western Front, the British advance was then held up until September 1918 when victory at Megiddo, followed by the fall of Damascus and Aleppo in October forced the Turks to seek an armistice. The talks took place at Mudros and were concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

**While the armistice negotiations were under way the British Commander at Baghdad was ordered to remove any residual Turkish presence from the area and to capture the oilfields at Mosul. The British troops, including the 18<sup>th</sup> Indian Division, advanced north. After an engagement at the Little Zab River, the Turks withdrew to Sharquat where the Turkish**

**Commander, who was aware of the peace talks, surrendered in order to spare his men. The 18<sup>th</sup> Division continued towards Mosul and were 12 miles short of the town when the armistice was declared. They went on to occupy the town and in the subsequent peace negotiations it was agreed that Mosul should form part of the new Iraq.**

**Edwin Huggett died on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1918, eighteen days after the war ended against the Turks. We do not know the circumstances of his death. He is buried in the Baghdad (North Gate) war cemetery which was begun in April 1917 and greatly enlarged after the First World War by graves brought in from other burial grounds in Baghdad and Northern Iraq. The cemetery contains the graves of 6,900 servicemen, 2,700 of whom have not been identified.**