



WW1 CENTENARY

#localandproud

was saved by his Bible

danger was from enemy snipers, and as an officer, Lt Worthington – soon to be promoted in the field to Acting Captain – was a prime target.

At the end of July, 1915, the battalion was at Hooge, where they faced the first German attack using liquid flame – a terrifying new weapon.

Then, ahead of the fateful charge on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, Capt Worthington was among a party of officers, including the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hall Knight, who went to Vermelles to reconnoitre the position.

They found the Guards holding the trenches in front of the Hohenzollern Redoubt and spent a few hours studying the positions their own companies would soon move into, and viewing the objectives – not an easy task as the trenches had been badly damaged and there was continuous bombing in the disputed portions of Big Willie Trench.

During the trip one of the officers in the party, Colonel Waterhouse, commanding the 1st/6th South Staffords was severely wounded by a fragment of one of the British shells.

Then on the return journey down Hulluch Alley, the British name for one of the connecting trenches, they had to take cover from a bombardment. This time there were no casualties and the officers returned to their men.

Capt Worthington winced at the pain in his chest. He was stunned to find a bullet hole in the left breast of his tunic

Three days later they returned to the position in the trenches ready to lead the attack on the enemy. Of the four officers of the 1st/5th North Staffords who had reconnoitred the position earlier, only Capt Worthington and Major Charles Barke survived. The other two officers, Lt-Col Knight and Capt Henry Ackroyd Ridgway, both died in the charge.

Capt Worthington – he was made a full captain immediately after the charge on October 13, 1915 – would remain with the 1st/5th North Staffords throughout the war. Again he led from the front at the Somme, in 1916, when the battalion took part in a diversionary attack at Gommecourt.

For his bravery in that attack over the top – which must have brought back chilling memories of the charge at the Hohenzollern Redoubt – he was mentioned in dispatches.

Capt Worthington survived the war, but it appears he remained in the Army and later became a major with the Royal Field Artillery, according to Alan McDonald's book, *A Lack of Offensive Spirit? The 46th (North Midland) Division at Gommecourt, 1st July 1916*.

He died in 1978.



Captain Worthington.
Picture courtesy of Staffordshire Regiment Research Team

11

How many officers of the 1st/5th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment were killed during the attack on October 13, 1915.

250,000

The number of shells dropped on German positions over four days before the start of the Battle of Loos. But the barrage had little effect.