

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Surname             | Cook  |
| Forename(s)         | Percy Mellows   |
| Initials            | P M   |
| Age                 | 29  |
| Honours/Awards      |   |
| Date died           | 04/10/1916  |
| Rank                | Second Lieutenant   |
| Regiment            | King's Royal Rifle Corps  |
| Unit/Squadron       | 18 <sup>th</sup> Bn.  |
| Service Number      |   |
| Cemetery/Memorial   | Thiepval Memorial   |
| Grave Reference     | Pier and Face 13 A and 13 B.  |
| Further Information | Son of Grace Cook, of The Coppice, Seabank Rd., Wallasey, Cheshire, and the late Harry William Cook. Educated at Wallasey Grammar School and son of Wallasey Town Clerk |



#### News Report

##### Killed After Many Narrow Escapes

We regret to announce the death in action of Acting-Captain Percy Mellows Cook, the Town Clerk's eldest son, which took place in France on Thursday, the 5<sup>th</sup> instant, whilst he was leading his company into action. It is only about three weeks since Lieutenant Cook had been given the command of his company of which he was very proud. His last letter to his parents, which came to hand on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant (the day after they received the telegram from, the War Office as to his death). Reads as follows:-

"Just going up – will write you every day I can. I am in charge of my company, so it is a great honour. It is very cold here, especially at night without a roof. If you don't hear for a day or two, don't worry, as it will be difficult to send off letters/ I will let you know all I can and when and as often as possible. Thanks

so much for your parcel, received yesterday. It is good of you to send us these nice things and we appreciate them you know. You letters are welcome, and I look forward to the post. You should see us surround the postmen each morning, it is a sight. If only they would allow us to have cameras out here we would get some interesting things. It is a wonderful sight to see a camp for one thousand men and transport put up and remove. Every man sleeps under two waterproof sheets about two feet off the ground and that is all. No blankets yet, as it is supposed to be summer time."

Mr Percy Cook was educated at the Wallasey Grammar School in the time of Mr A.J. Mead, B.A. He was cup holder of the sports cup during his last term at school. He was a good athlete. For some years he played for the Liscard Central Football Club and was a rapid forward. He was articled to his father and became a solicitor in 1908, when he was twenty-one years of age. He was appointed on the staff of the Town Clerk's Department, and eventually was made first assistant solicitor (third man) in the Town Clerk's Office, Wallasey. He plied for and obtained in open competition the post of assistant solicitor to the County Borough of Bournemouth, there he went in the year 1912. It is believed that he gave every satisfaction to the Corporation of Bournemouth, and in fact his father has been informed by the ex-Mayor of Bournemouth and the Town Clerk, that this was so. He joined the Artists' Rifles as a private in August, 1915, and in December, 1915, was made second Lieutenant in the K.R.R.C. He was stationed for some time at Aldershot and Whitley and went to the front in May of this year. He had many narrow escapes during this period. In a letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> June he writes:-

"You will be pleased to hear that I have been favoured by fortune on three occasions. I was just behind cover when a shell struck the ground in front of me and made a big hole. The same shell blew my servant off his feet. The second, I had to cross the open for something or other and was accompanied by a sergeant. A shell burst quite ten yards away. We heard it coming. The sergeant jumped into a hole and I went flat on the ground. The third, I was helping to make a dug-out with my captain and several men. A shell whizzed within a yard of our heads and buried itself in a ditch five yards away. Luckily the earth was soft for it went deep into the earth where the explosion took place. We were smothered with earth and not hit. A sergeant was hit very badly, and when I pulled him out of the 'ditch' his arm was hanging on by a thread and he was horribly mauled about. Two others were badly hit also. Your humble and captain are fine, and spirits very high."

On the 30<sup>th</sup> September he writes:-

"Everything is going on all right, and I am still looking after the company. Next time you hear from me I shall again be in the trenches. The din of the guns the past 24 hours have been terrific, and I shall be glad to get away from them."  
(He was hoping for leave in about a month or six weeks time).

In a letter to his brother, also at the front, on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, he said:-

"Our chaps were in the big affair when I was away on my company commander's course, and in future am to have "C" Company as captain. Am to

lead the company in the next 'do'. So you may or may not hear from me again. If I come out all right, I will write you at once – if not, cheer-oh.”

He was a great friend of the late Captain J.H. Mahon, who lived next door but one to Mr Cook. In Sea Bank Road.

The Town Clerk's other son, Private T.R. Cook, is in the Cyclists' Division, and has been out in France twelve months, and when last heard from was in good health.

#### References and Acknowledgments

Commonwealth War Grave Commission  
Wallasey Central Library – Reference Library

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