

**The Final Hours of T/Capt Harold Faulder,
3rd battalion, York & Lancaster Regiment
(attached to 1/4th battalion, York & Lancaster
Regiment)**

Vierstraat 26th April 1918



Figure 1 - Family Photograph of H Faulder

1. Background

In the Ypres Salient, the Germans (as part of Operation Georgette) had just captured Mount Kemmel on 25th April 1918.

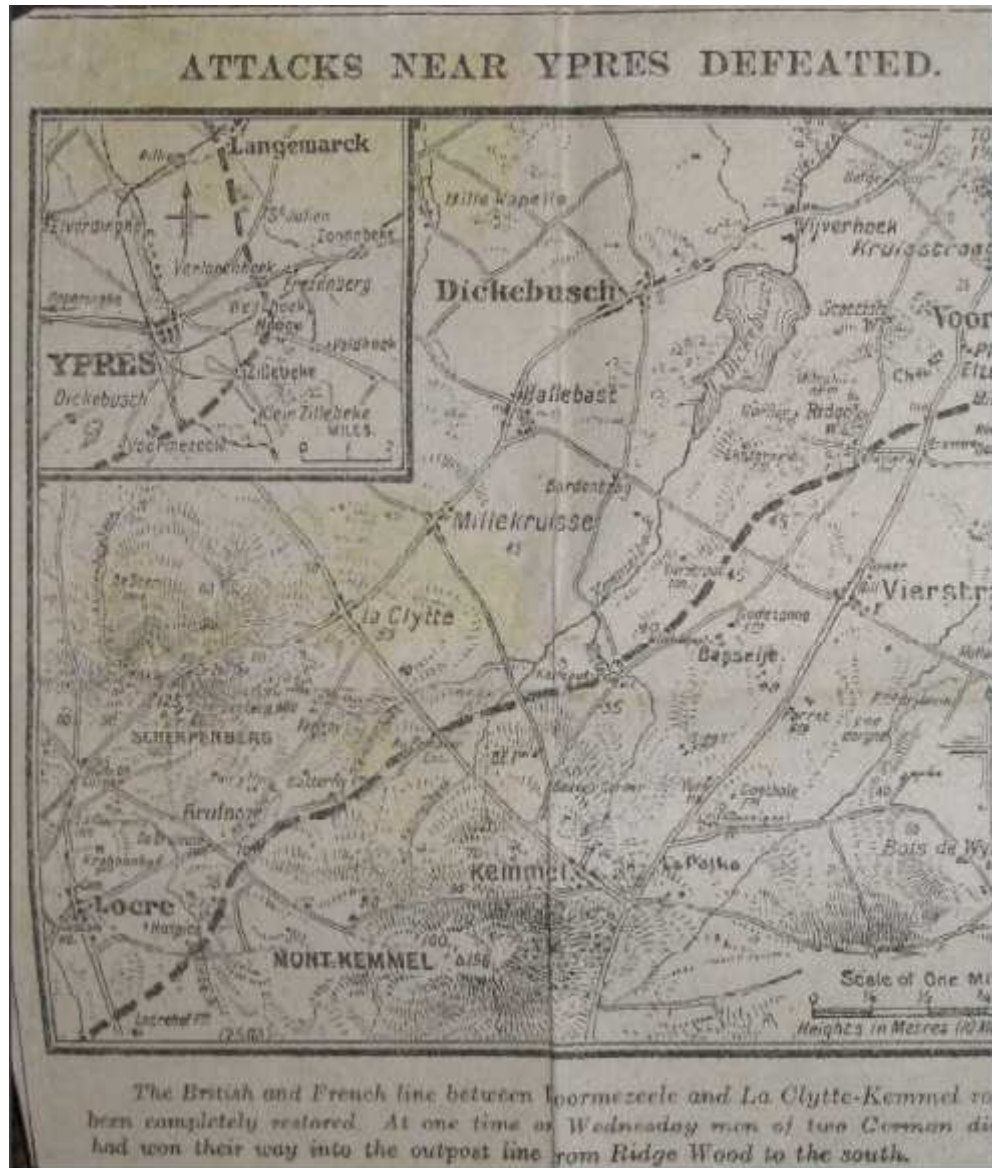


Figure 2 - Unknown Source. Press cutting found (loose) in the Scrapbook of Marjorie Fell Faulder (Mrs H Faulder)

This was the final German advance; the limit of the advance being marked by a demarcation stone on the Vierstraat to Hallebast road close to the front line in the afternoon of 25th April.

2. 148th Brigade

The War Diary of this brigade records:

2pm 25th April Brigade moved by route march to the vicinity of OUDERDOM and assembled in trenches. ... The Brigade were to be prepared either to strengthen the line or to take part in counter attack.

11:45pm The Brigade will take over a portion of front line (CHEAPSIDELINE) between left flank 9th K.O.Y.L.I., 64th Brigade, about N15 b99 and the HALLEBAST-VIERSTRAAT RD to-night. The line will be held with 1/5th York and & Lancs. on right and 1/4th York and & Lancs. on left - both units in the line with 1/4th K.O.Y.L.I. taking up a position 500 yards in the rear of the CHEAPSIDE LINE

A counter attack will be carried out at 3:00 a.m. to-morrow, 26th inst. by 39th French Division on right and 25th Division on left ... a barrage will come down 250 yards in front of the CHEAPSIDE LINE and will move forward at the rate of 100 yards per four minutes. 1/4th York and Lancs. and 1/5th York and Lancs. holding this line will push forward under this barrage to the LA POLKA - VIERSTRAAT line

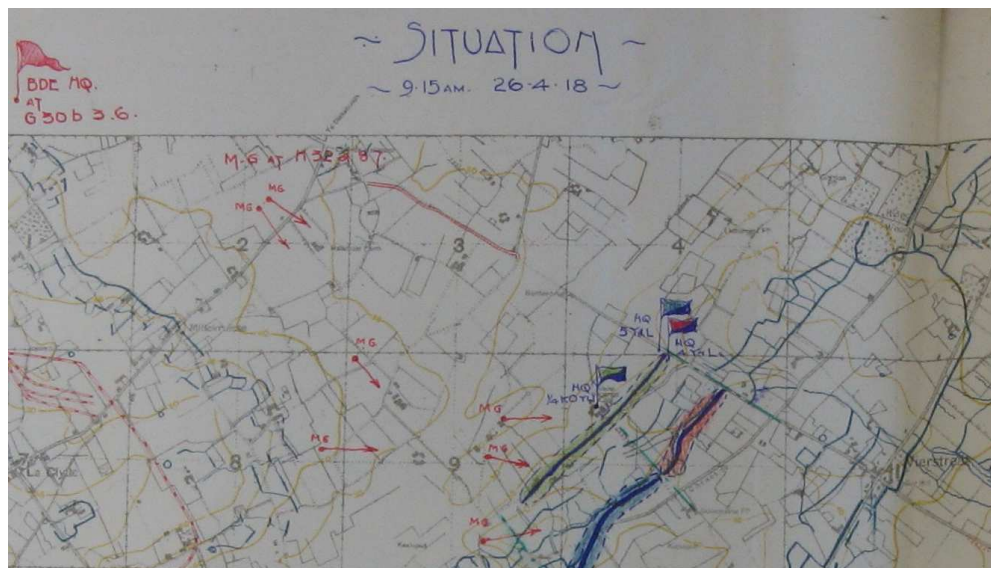


Figure 3 - part of Trench Map from the War Diary of 148th Brigade (held at the National Archives ref WO 95/2804) The La Polka - Vierstraat line is the main road running NNE to SSW from Vierstraat. The major grid squares represent a square mile.

3. 1/4th Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment

The war diary of this battalion records:

12:30am 26th April Orders received for Bdg to move forward and take over a portion of the FRONT LINE (CHEEPSIDE LINE) between left flank of 9th KOYLI (64th I.B.) about N15 b 9.9 and the HALLE BASS - VIERSTRAAT Rd. The Battn took over the "BLUE LINE" from the VIERSTRAAT Rd N10 b 4.7 to N10 a 9.1 . HQ was established in a

dugout at N10 a 9.9 . 5th Y&L Rgmt were on our right and XXII Corps Mounted Troops on our left. The move was completed about 3.30am.

At 13.30am orders had also been received to the effect that a counter-attack would be carried out by 39th French Division on the right of our new position and by the 25th British Division on our left. The Bde would at the same time push forward under a barrage to the LA POLKA-VIERSTRAAT LINE and occupy it.

*4.25am The attack took place. The barrage which was to fall 250 yds in front of the BLUE LINE was absolutely inadequate and 5 or 6 German machine guns which had been pushed forward onto the CHEEPSIDE Rd (running from N10 b 8.5 to N10 b 0.2 **) were quite untouched. There was fortunately a heavy mist which covered the beginning of our advance but as soon as the movement was noticed the machine guns on the CHEEPSIDE Rd opened fire and rendered further advance impossible. The Battn as forced to withdraw to the BLUE LINE having lost several officers, including three Company Commanders, and about a third of its strength in casualties.*

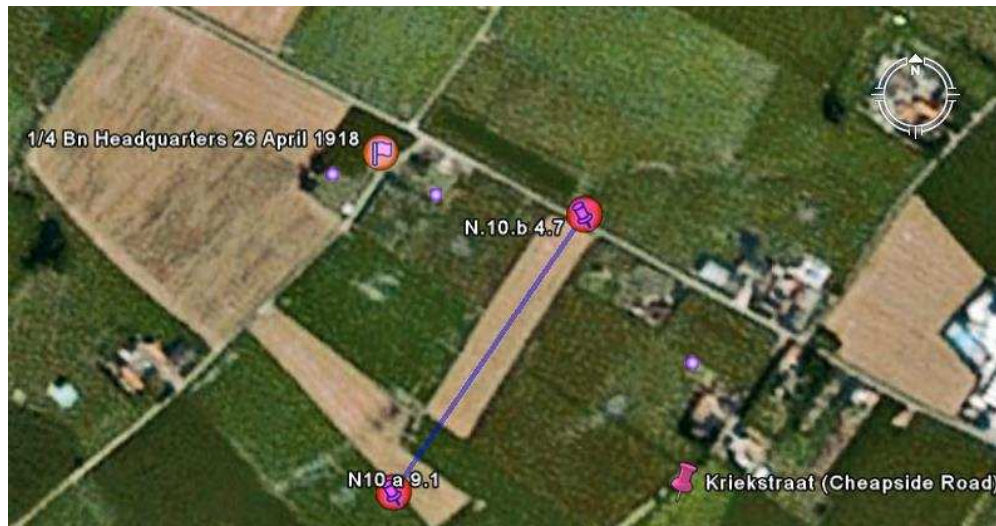


Figure 4 - Positions referred to in the 1/4th Bn Y&L War Diary, superimposed on Google Earth Satellite view of area. The Blue line is about 500m long and the Suffolk cemetery is the pinpoint of light a little north of the pushpin marking the Cheapside Road (now KriekStraat)

From 8-10am, and again from 3-3.45pm the whole Brigade area was very heavily bombarded but the rest of the day was comparatively quiet.

At dusk the Battn took over a further 130 yards of front from the 5th Y&L Rgt to enable that Battn to fill a gap between their right and the left of the 9th KOYLI on their right

Casualties - Officers killed - Capt H. FAULDER, Lt T.P. BRADBURY, 2ndLts R.J.R. PENROSE, P.P. McARDLE

Officers wounded - Lt W.D.G. GIFFORD M.C. and 2Lt H. PAYNE

Officers missing - 2Lt W. BECK D.C.M.

OR 17 Killed 65 Wounded and 9 missing

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records the following as killed on that day:

ALLAN 242686 Private THOMAS DIXON
ATKINSON 204461 Private RALPH
BENN 9514 Lance Corporal WILLIAM
BROOKFIELD 203381 Lance Corporal A
BROOKS 14/633 Private JOE
BROWN 33382 Private DONALD ERNEST
DEAN 23077 Private JAMES
DYSON 200665 Lance Corporal TOM
FOSTER 33344 Lance Corporal ARTHUR
GAMWELLS 200780 Private AUSTIN
GREEN 235808 Private ALFRED
HAWORTH 41637 Private FRANK
HINCHCLIFFE 201743 Private CHARLES EDWARD
HUDSON 201704 Corporal GEORGE
HUTCHINSON 18516 Private P C F
KENNEDY 203496 Lance Corporal EDWARD
MELL 19691 Private HERBERT
PARKER 242690 Private ROBERT WILLIAM
PARKINS 241705 Private G W
RICHARDSON 201762 Private W
STABLES 21982 Private F
STRAFFORD 200857 Corporal DAVID
THICKETT 28153 Private GEORGE WILLIAM
TWITE 23189 Private S
WAGSTAFF 21522 Private FRANK
WALTERS 31539 Private B
WIGGLESWORTH 202059 Corporal W
WILES 201090 Private WILLIE
WOFFENDEN 241942 Private JOE
WRIGHT 33417 Private SIDNEY VICTOR

This totals 30 compared to the 17 in the War Diary. Presumably some of these died of wounds received in previous actions and some are in the number listed as wounded at the time the diary was written up. I believe that ***Soldiers who Died in the Great War*** (SDGW) indicates that one of the above (Pt Stables) "Died", two (L/C Dyson and Pt Hutchinson) are not listed, whilst the others (27) are listed as "KIA". In addition SDGW lists Pt Symonds 203145 as dying this day - but he is not listed by CWGC.

Lt Bradbury and 2nd Lt McArdle listed in the War Diary were actually with 7th Bn Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) and 1st/2nd Cheshire attd 1st/4th Y&L and My Grandfather was 3rd Y&L attd 1st/4th Y&L. 2nd Lt Beck (listed above as missing) is listed as killed in SDGW.

Imperial War Museum (IWM) staff have expressed surprise that someone (such as Capt Faulder) whose body was not recovered could be listed as killed on the day, stating that it would be normal to initially post such people as missing. I do not know if this was common practice or a modern day deduction.

4. The Telegram

The War Office would usually sent telegrams to next of kin of officers; next of kin of other ranks would usually receive a letter.

Figure 5 - War Office Telegram to Mrs H Faulder, 4th May 1918

Above is the Telegram received by my grandfather's widow. The address is not the address given in my grandfather's service record as the address for his next of kin. However, when he supplied this he was unmarried and his next of kin was his mother. His service record shows that two telegrams were sent:

1. To 2 Wellfield Road, Huddersfield (home of his mother) addressed to "Mrs Faulder"
2. To 97 Valley Drive, Harrogate addressed to "Mrs Faulder"

I know my grandmother had relatives in Harrogate so it is possible that she was staying with them either long-term or having just moved up to stay with them having heard rumour¹ that her husband had died. I can find no record of a marital home (I believe my grandfather returned to his unit (then 3rd Y&L at Hylton Camp, Sunderland) almost immediately after his marriage). Later my grandmother gave her address as Wellfield Road, so it would seem that by then she was living with her mother-in-law.

¹ My Great Aunt, Miss Evelyn Faulder MM, (sister of Harold Faulder) was serving in the FANY at the time and it is understood that she was first to hear the news of her brother's death from a soldier that she was transporting. (One hopes it was not the result of the unnamed soldier attempting to chat her up). (Her Military Medal Citation is referenced on the [family website](#) and was [Gazetted in July 1918](#))

I do not know if the War Office normally would have sent two telegrams (one to the mother and one to the widow), or whether my great grandmother on receiving the first telegram would have responded to the War Office that they had the wrong address?

5. The Letter

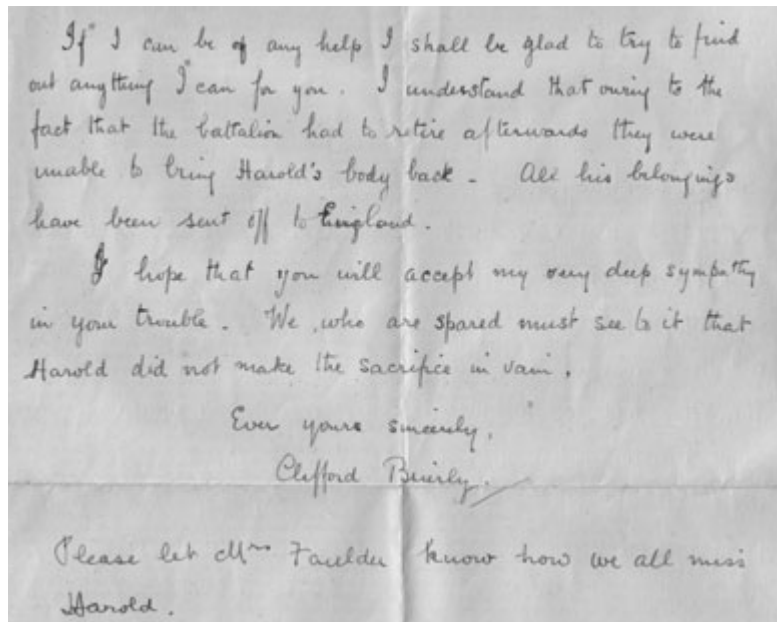
Following a death, it was convention that an officer in the deceased's unit would write to the next of kin. No such letter has been found from the 1/4th Y&L; however the following letter was found at the bottom of a "family trunk" shortly after my father died. It is probable that the writer volunteered to take on the task.

Monday, May 6th

My dear Marjorie,

I was very shocked this morning to hear of Harold's death, & hardly know how to write to you to express my sympathy. His battalion had come near to us last night & I had walked over hoping to see him this morning when they told me the news of his death. It would have made you very proud, Marjorie, to hear the splendid way both the officers & men who I saw talked about him. Though he'd only been a few days with them, they'd found out what a fine officer he was, & his CO. said what a great loss it was to lose him. I also met a L/Cpl Horne, who was formerly with him in the 1/4 Y&L, & was near him when he was hit on the 26th. He was going forward with his Company in an attack, & had just told this man to watch a German M.G., when he was hit by a bullet, & killed immediately.

I think I hope you may know that I met Harold on the 21st & we'd arranged to meet as he was anxious to talk over Huddersfield. He was in great spirits then, & had been on Gen Armitage's staff for about 10 days.



If I can be of any help I shall be glad to try to find out anything I can for you. I understand that owing to the fact that the battalion had to retire afterwards they were unable to bring Harold's body back - All his belongings have been sent off to England.

I hope that you will accept my very deep sympathy in your trouble. We who are spared must see to it that Harold did not make the sacrifice in vain.

Ever yours sincerely,
Clifford Brierly.

Please let Mr Faulder know how we all miss Harold.

Figure 6 - Letter from Sidney Clifford Brierly to Marjorie Fell Faulder, 6th May 1918

This letter is probably the nearest we will get to knowing what actually happened. Lt Col Sidney Clifford Brierly DSO was with the 1/4th KOYLI late on in the war and this battalion formed the second line in the formation of the morning of 26th April. Letters of condolence are known to "pull their punches" and therefore I am wary of the "killed immediately". The tone of the letter (beginning "My Dear Marjorie") indicates that Clifford Brierly clearly knew Marjorie Faulder well (from Census records it would appear that as children they were almost neighbours²) so he may well have softened the blow. We may wonder therefore if Captain Faulder took some time to die having been left as the rest of his company moved on.

As mention previously, staff at the Imperial War Museum had expressed surprise that he was not initially posted as "Missing" given that a body was not recovered. I have not found any reference to him being posted as missing, so I would conclude that when a roll call was done after the action, there were enough people who gave sufficient evidence to conclude that he had been killed. Perhaps L/Cpl Horne's testimony was thought conclusive; in which case, the death may have been as Lt Col Brierly reported.

The exact [General Armitage](#) and what my grandfather had been doing whilst on his staff is still unknown. I have recently noted that the Huddersfield JP who provided the character reference for H Faulder when he applied for his commission was I think (if I read the signature well) a W H Armitage who said that he had known my grandfather all his life (except for the years 1913-1915 when he was in the United States).

² One of his grandsons - also a member of the Great War Forum - has confirmed CB's identity and indicated that he is happy for me to publish this letter. In addition other artefacts (such as 1900's dance cards) have confirmed the links between the families.

6. Subsequent Occupation of the Area

The area west of Vierstraat [was fought over extensively](#) between April and September 1918, by a variety of units including:

- May 1918: German Reserve Infanterie Regiment 238 (I [understand](#) from the Great Grandson of a member of this regiment that the British (blue line) Trench from which my Grandfather climbed on the day he died, became a German Trench burial (including the Great Grandfather).
- Various French units.
- August 1918: 6th German Division
- Between August 23rd and 30th 1918: [US 27th division](#) ("O'Ryan's Roughnecks")
- 1st September 1918 - 15th [Hampshires](#)



Figure 7 - Ariel view of the battleground July 1918 (Obtained via [Great War Forum](#))

The CWGC, in their notes on the [Suffolk Cemetery](#), state:

This cemetery was begun in March and April 1915 by the 2nd Suffolks. Apart from one burial made in November 1917, the cemetery was not used again until October 1918 when the 38th Labour Group buried men killed during the German advance the previous April, all but two of whom belonged to the 1st/4th and 1st/5th York and Lancasters.

The notes on the other three cemeteries nearby do not contain such explicit references to the specific action and to the 1/4th Y&L. It is therefore possible that if the body was not destroyed by subsequent shellfire (the most probable fate), it may be in one of the eight "known unto God" graves at the Suffolk Cemetery.

Figure 8 - D.S. Faulder at The Suffolk Cemetery, Vierstraat, May 2009 (I did not note the photographer at the time - sorry)



7. The Family Aftermath

HUDDERSFIELD SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION.
Captain HAROLD FAULDER (33), York and Lancaster Regiment, has been killed in action. He was the eldest son of the late Mr. Joseph T. Faulder (of the firm of Messrs. Stothart and Faulder, formerly merchants in Huddersfield) and of Mrs. Faulder, of 2, Wellfield Road, Marsh. He was with Mr. John Edward Crowther at Bank Bottom Mills, Marsden, for about six years as manager of the weaving department. Subsequently he was in business as a woollen manufacturer in Colne Road, Huddersfield, for about two years, and later he held a position at the Peacedale Woollen Mills, U.S.A. He left there to join the forces in April 1915, had been at the front since June, 1916, and was mentioned in despatches in January last. He leaves a widow, who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. Lendrum, of Huddersfield.

Figure 9 - Unknown Source (Possibly Yorkshire Post) May 1918, Death Announcement

FAULDER.—On the 6th July, at 92, Finchley-road, Hampstead, to Maudie, wife of the late Captain and Adjutant H. FAULDER (York and Lancaster Regt.)—a son.

Figure 10 - Times 8th July 1918, Birth Announcement of H.D.S. Faulder



Figure 11 & 12- Photographs of H.D.S. Faulder, son of H. Faulder, taken by his Mother, at Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing in the late 1920's



Figure 13 - Photograph of D.S. Faulder, grandson of H. Faulder, taken by Tim Tennant, at Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing in May 2009