



## **PRIVATE ROBERT ANDERSON**

1st Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment

Service number 23794

Killed in action, Somme 9 September 1916

Thiepval Memorial Pier & Face 11A and 11B

Born Althorp 10 April 1878

Parents John & Mary Anderson

50 Main Street Great Brington

Victory Medal, British War Medal

Robert Anderson was born into a large family, with at least five brothers and a sister. In the 1881 Census the family home was 50 Great Brington. His father was a farm worker, then shepherd, and he too became an agricultural labourer. By 1891 he was boarding at Rectory Farm on the Flore Road, in 1901 back with his parents in No 50 with brother Albert, and in 1911, still single, he was boarding at Murcott, Long Buckby with his brother Ernest, who was a groom and gardener, possibly for Murcott House. A short obituary in the Northampton *Herald* of 6 October 1916 refers to him being “a brother of Mr Anderson of Murcott who had himself served in the South African war, and won a medal for his services.”

He enlisted at Rugby, though we do not know when. Aged 36 in 1914, he was much older than the average, indeed he was probably older still when he joined.

Robert died during the 1<sup>st</sup> Division’s attack on High Wood in the Somme 8-9 September 1916. High Wood was the last of the major woods in the Somme Offensive to be captured. The fighting in Mametz Wood was grim, and in Delville Wood it was hellish, but they eventually fell, as did Trones Wood. Despite a whole series of attacks spanning two months, High Wood held out until 15 September. It was never fully cleared after the war, and it is estimated that the remains of around 8000 soldiers, British and German, still lie there today.

Perhaps Robert was one of them. His only monument is the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

3/ September 1916

WAR DIARY  
or  
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~  
(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

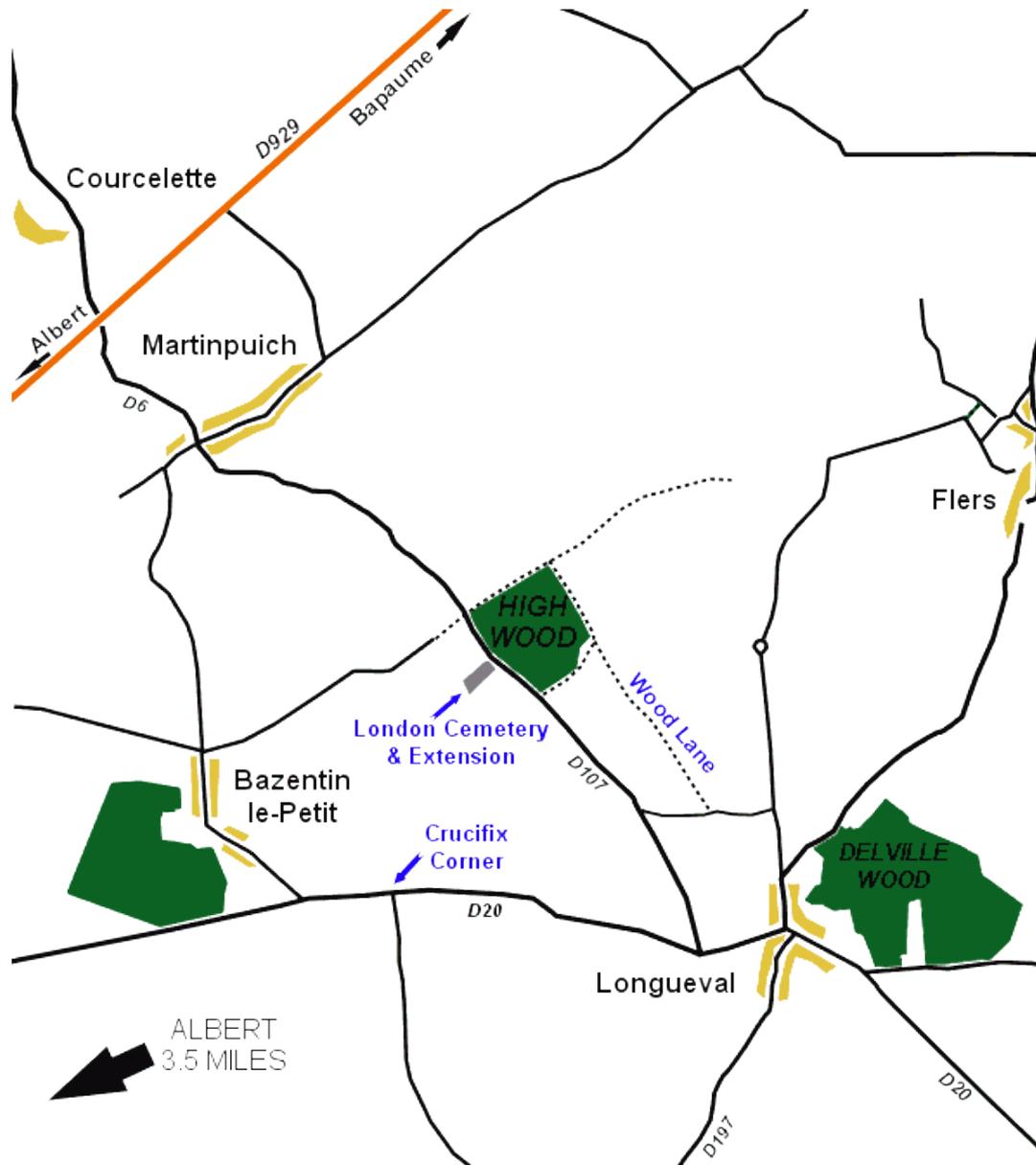
1<sup>st</sup> Northamptonshire Reg<sup>t</sup>

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
HIGH WOOD	9 <sup>th</sup>	12.30 PM	C <sup>oys</sup> begin to move up ELGIV Trench - D <sup>oys</sup> leading and taking over left of Bath front, making right of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mensters at Sap 4. B <sup>oys</sup> C <sup>oys</sup> following D <sup>oys</sup> took over the right of the line in the wood. Front line C <sup>oys</sup> only got into position about 3 P.M. while C <sup>oys</sup> the support C <sup>oys</sup> was utterly blocked in the trenches and was unable to get into position until after 6 P.M. when the attack was over. A <sup>oys</sup> C <sup>oys</sup> in reserve managed to force its way thro the crowd into BLACK WATCH Trench during the evening. 4.15 P.M. B. and D. C <sup>oys</sup> attacked from the right edge of the wood to Sap 4. A crater being blown on the right, on the side of the crater blown for the 1 <sup>st</sup> B <sup>oys</sup> attack on 3 <sup>rd</sup> and first taken by Black Watch - the last. No artillery preparation within the wood, but a short Stokes mortar bombardment, which was	

Extract of war diary of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment for 9 Sep 1916

“4.15pm. B and D Coys attacked from the right edge of the wood to Sap 4, a crater being blown on the right ... No artillery preparation ... but a short Stokes Mortar bombardment which was ineffective, for the instant our movement over the parapet the Germans opened a very heavy fire. Our attack was unable to reach the objective except on the right, where the crater was occupied by 2/Lt CLARKE and his platoon, supported by 2/Lt COOPER’s and a Lewis gun. The Germans counter-attacked strongly with bombs, put the Lewis gun out of action and drove out our men ... the majority of these 2 platoons were killed, wounded or missing. D Coy on the left met with no better success, but more men got back. Total casualties 4 officers, 135 ORs.”

# HIGH WOOD



High Wood today



Thiepval Memorial  
Pier & Face 11A & 11D