



LIEUTENANT JOHN NORRIS MORLEY

7th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment

Service number unknown

25th September 1915 – wounded and missing at Arras

Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Born at Great Brington, 28th April 1894

Son of Alexander and Rosalind Frances

Great Brington / Althorp Estate (father was Earl Spencer's agent)

Brothers – Alexander and Cecil. Sisters – Rosalind, Dorothy and Evelyn

Little Brington Berkampstead School, Reading University (Agriculture)

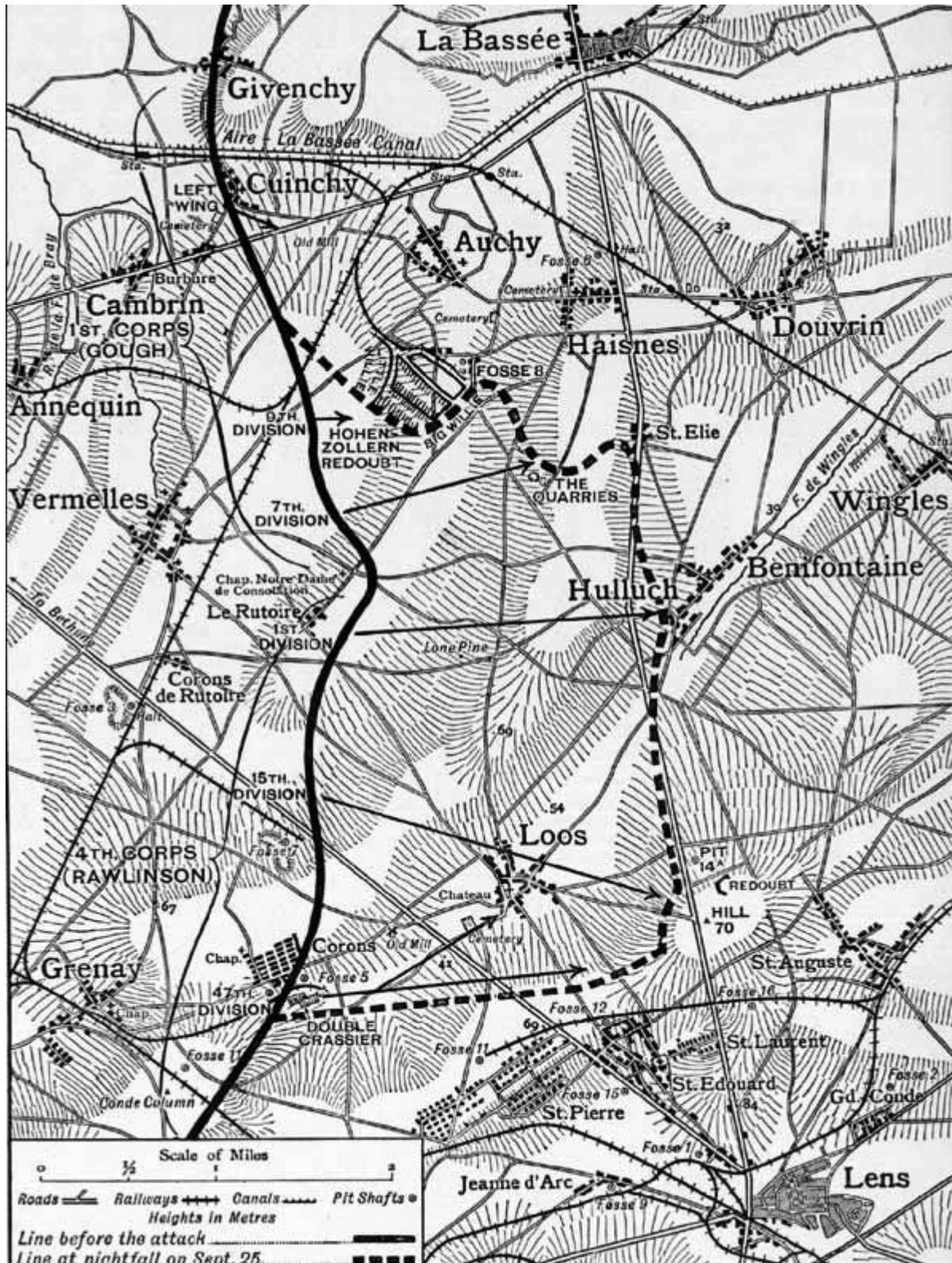
Member of O.T.C – commission in the 7th Northamptons

1914/15 Star, Victory Medal and British War Medal

September 1915 – wounded and missing at Battle of Arras (presumed captured)

(note – the diaries of Alexander Morley (brother) record “*a stretcher bearer gave me the revelation of how he had been with my brother Jack (John) at the Battle of Loos and how he was shot dead through the back of the neck while climbing out of a trench in order to retreat, he and his men.*” John was an officer and commander of a platoon in B company.

In many places British artillery had failed to cut the German wire in advance of the attack. Advancing over open fields, within range of German machine guns and artillery, British losses were devastating. The British were able to break through the weaker German defences and capture the town of Loos-en-Gohelle, mainly due to numerical superiority. Supply and communications problems, combined with the late arrival of reserves, meant that the breakthrough could not be exploited.



The 7th Battalion were part of 24th Division and had only just arrived in France when they were allocated as Reserve for the offensive at Loos on 25th September.

Already tired from the forced march, though only five men fell out, they were held back too far from the Front line (a decision that was instrumental in Sir John French losing his job) and did not arrive in the line until late on the 25th. Being relatively "unscathed" by the forced marches of the previous days, the 7th Northamptonshires were sent up to the battle before the rest of the division on the evening of the 25th rather than on the 26th like much of the rest of the division.

They were given no instructions at all on reaching the front line and instead they were just told to follow an officer of the 9th Division up to relieve one of the assaulting battalions. Led by "C" Company the battalion crossed the battlefield in full kit negotiating seven trenches before they reached the battalion they were to relieve. They formed a defensive flank between the Hohenzollern Redoubt and Foss 8 which they held overnight. On the 26th they were then hit by a German counter-attack against "B" Company trenches which were bombed, but the attack was repulsed. **Lt. Morley** of B Company would have been recommended for the VC that day, but both he and his senior officer, Colonel Parkin, who had intended to recommend him were killed.

The battalion held their positions for the rest of the day before being relieved on the evening of the 27th. The battalion had suffered very heavy losses with over 400 casualties.

