

## BRIEF NOTES ON THE INGALL FAMILY

Amos Ingall was born in 1890 at the pretty fenside village of Timberland, the eldest son of John and Elizabeth Ingall, and he had two younger brothers, Herbert, born at Timberland in 1893, and Fred who was also born in the village in 1895. During the Great War all three brothers served for their King and Country and the following is a brief resume of their experiences.

Amos Ingall left Timberland village school in around 1903 to work on the local farms, most probably with his father. Between 1906 and 1912 the British Army went through a major transformation and expansion period under Richard Haldane's reforms and it was in 1908 that Amos enlisted into the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. At this time Britain still had her Empire and Amos was drafted with his unit to India. At the outbreak of war on 4th August 1914 his Battalion was stationed in Bermuda, but embarked for England in September and landed at Devonport, joining the 25th Infantry Brigade 8th Division along with 2nd Bn Royal Berkshire Regiment, the 1st Bn Royal Irish Rifles and the 2nd Bn Rifle Brigade. The 2nd Lincolns landed in France in early November 1914 and held a portion of the line opposite Aubers Ridge. In March 1915 the Battalion took part in the battle of Neuve Chapelle losing 13 officers and 300 other ranks killed and wounded. Their next major actions were Fromelles in May 1915 and Bois Grenier in October 1915, again suffering many casualties. During this period Amos was taken sick and spent time in hospital at Rouen in France before being transferred to a hospital at Croydon. In September 1915 Lance Sergeant Amos Ingall married, but shortly afterwards returned to his unit on the Western Front.

During the first half of 1916 the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment took no active part in any of the larger operations and by the end of May and beginning of June were stationed around Henencourt as part of the massive British Somme offensive planned initially to take place at the end of June. During the attack on 1st July 1916 by the 8th Division towards Ovillers-la-Boisselle, where the Lincolns suffered very heavy casualties, Amos was wounded twice in the leg but managed to crawl into a shell hole which already contained five men, two of whom were dead. Apparently, Amos was not a welcome visitor in this sanctuary in No Man's Land and the other occupants refused to make room for him so he spent the rest of the day between the two corpses. The unhelpful men were signallers from his own battalion and Amos told them off for neglecting their duty. They had not been hurt and Amos informed them he would have shot them if only he had a rifle. Later in the day the three men left for the British trenches, but never offered any assistance to Amos. He was eventually rescued but never soldiered again and he was discharged from the army as a cripple in 1917. At the end of the first day of the Battle of the Somme British casualties alone were 57,470 of which nearly 20,000 were killed. Almost all these casualties occurred in the first half hour of the offensive, the blackest day ever in the British Army's history.

Herbert Ingall was born at Timberland in 1893 and also attended the village school. He left in around 1906 to eventually work on the farm for Alderman John Hague Copping, who resided at Thorpe Tilney Hall. Following the outbreak of war Herbert enlisted into the 9th Battalion (Reserve) Lincolnshire Regiment in November 1914 at Lincoln, transferring to the Machine Gun Section of the 2nd Lincolns after the

Somme offensive in July 1916. His first few months with the battalion were spent in and out of the trenches until March 1917 when they were engaged in the Third Battle of Ypres, known everafter as Passchendaele. By the third week of July the 2nd Lincolns, part of the 8th Division, moved to Bellewaarde Ridge to take part in an attack on seven and half miles of the German front lines in the Battle of Langemarck. The countryside in this sector of fighting was a total quagmire made worse by incessant rain, and defended by strong concrete defences among ruined buildings. During the action which followed the 2nd Lincolns suffered very heavy casualties before being taken out of the line. They were again sent in with the attack but once again experienced very many casualties before being withdrawn to Borre to rest. During this engagement Sergeant Herbert Ingall was killed in action on Thursday 16th August 1917, aged 25. His body was never identified and his name is listed on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, Zonnebeke, Belgium, which bears the names of almost 35,000 British soldiers who were lost in Flanders from 15th August 1917 to the end of the war and have no known grave. Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world in terms of burials, with 11,952 graves of which 8,365 are unidentified.

Fred Ingall MM was born at Timberland on 8th May 1895 and after leaving school worked on the local farms. In 1912 he was working at Ash House Farm in Metheringham Fen, living with Mr and Mrs Hawkes who were to lose two sons in the Great War. Fred volunteered for the army at the beginning of the Great War, joining the 6th (Service) Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. He served on the Somme and at Passchendaele and was awarded the Military Medal for saving a comrade's life. On his return home from the war Fred was presented with a inscribed gold watch by the villagers of Timberland, but decided to stay in the army for a few more years, serving at Poona in India. Following his army service Fred returned to Timberland and for the rest of his working life was employed on the local farms. Fred met and married his wife Norah and for sixty eight years they lived in Rose Cottage Thorpe Tilney Fen, a charming little cottage on the edge of the River Witham. Fred would often recall his experiences on the Western Front and compared the fenland around his home to being similar to the battlefields of Northern France and Flanders. In 1994 Fred and Norah moved out of their home and spent the remainder of their days in a residential home at Woodhall Spa. Fred sadly passed away on 6th January 1996, aged 100, and his dear wife died a few weeks later. Corporal Fred Ingall MM was buried with full military honours at St Andrew's Churchyard Timberland on 12th January 1996. His wife lays next to him. Fred was a wonderful old soldier who touched the hearts of everyone honoured to be in his company. He was one of the last of a generation that we will sadly never see again.

Michael Credland

11th November 2002

Amos Ingall lived for many years in a cottage on the corner of Silver Street and Chapel Lane. He was born in 1890 in Timberland, one of 3 brothers, all to serve in the 14-18 war. Amos enlisted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment in 1908 and with his Battalion was drafted to India, he also served in Gibraltar and Bermuda. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 the first day of the Battle of the Somme he was wounded twice in the leg but managed to crawl into a shell hole which already contained five men, two of whom were dead. Apparently, Amos was not a welcome visitor in this sanctuary in No Man's Land and the other occupants refused to make room for him so he spent the rest of the day between the two corpses. The unhelpful men were signallers from his own battalion and Amos told them off for neglecting their duty. They had not been hurt and Amos informed them he would have shot them if only he had a rifle. Later in the day the three men left for the British trenches, but never offered him any assistance. He was eventually rescued and taken to hospital. The doctors wanted to amputate his leg but he would not let them, so having no kneecap they locked his leg together making it impossible to bend. He spent the next two years in hospital, it was whilst in hospital he took up knitting and needlework, copying & enlarging military badges. He left the army with an honourable discharge in 1917 with the rank of Sergeant.

He moved with his wife and family to Branston in 1938 and worked for Mr Scholey at Bracebridge Heath as a gardener/handyman. Getting to work posed no problem for him as he went by bicycle. Being unable to bend his leg he fixed a strong stick to one pedal and rode with one foot and one hand.

During the Second World War he joined the Home Guard, and ran the pig club. He also taught his three daughters to knit and in the evenings they all had to knit for the war effort.

He was a keen bowler all his life and due to him Branston's bowling green was extended to allow County matches to be played. In his time he swept Branston's chimneys, and also grew flowers and set the grass around the war memorial. He was the first lollypop man, and was a great favourite with the children.

One of his great loves was bell ringing, and when he died in 1983 he was paid the great honour of having the bells played half muffled at his funeral.