

## Learning Resources for Teachers:

Learning Resource: **William Rainsford**

### **William Frederick Rainsford- Synopsis**

William appears to have been born in the St Giles area of London in 1880, the son of a stable hand. His military records show that he was 21 years and five months old when he joined the army in 1901. The military records also show that before joining up he worked as a labourer. We also know that he was married in Northern Ireland.

Before war was declared in 1914 Rainsford was already working in the second battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment as a soldier, based in Woking. However, when war broke out in August 1914 he notes that the battalion at Woking formed a part of the "second brigade of the first division" where they received commands to mobilize for war on the 5 August 1914, leaving on the 11 August for France.

William's regiment played a part in two very important early battles of WWI- namely, the First Battle of the Aisne and First Ypres.

The First Battle of the Aisne (September 1914) arose due to the German's stopping their retreat into France after the First Battle of the Marne. Allied armies found the German's north of the river Aisne on a high plateau (called the Chemin des Dames). The allies discovered that the German defences were far greater, prompting both sides to begin digging; thence starting the trench warfare on the Western Front.

Ypres was important in the First World War because the Germans and the British Allies clashed on the Menin road (which goes through Ypres), during the 'race to the sea' (control of the Channel coast) in October 1914; thus sparking the First Battle of Ypres.