



## Arthur BALCHIN

**Private. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment**

### **At KES:**

Arthur was a member of the Domestic Staff, he worked as a gardener.

Born in 1891 he lived all his life in Hambledon. He attested at Guildford on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1915.

**Date of Death: 15<sup>th</sup> July 1916**

**Place: France**

**Buried: Thieval Memorial, Somme**

Arthur embarked for France on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1916, was in the field by 30<sup>th</sup> and was killed within 2 weeks during an attack on High Wood. Like so many killed during the Somme offensive, he has no known grave.

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.