



Laban BEZANT

Private (Drummer) 1st/24th London Regiment

At KES: Born in Southwark, his father died so he came to KES in 1885. His occupation was to be in the band in which he was described as good, if sometimes impertinent. Obviously a lively character he left school in 1889 and joined Roby's Midget Minstrels, a travelling entertainment troupe, in which he played the piccolo. He continued to be a musician (flautist) in theatres and musicals until the outbreak of war. He married and had two daughters. Despite his age he was prepared to serve his country and joined up early in the War.

Date of Death: 6th June 1915

Place: France

Buried: Le Treport Military Cemetery

Le Treport was an important hospital centre and Laban Bezant died there, aged 40. He was involved, in some way, in the battle of Festubert.

The battle was preceded by a 60 hour bombardment that fired about 100,000 shells. This bombardment failed to significantly damage the front line defences of the German forces but the initial advance made some progress in good weather conditions. The attack was renewed on 16 May and by 19 May the British 2nd and 7th Divisions had to be withdrawn due to heavy losses.

Renewed attacks by the Allied forces, between 20-24 May, resulted in the capture of Festubert village itself, a position held until the German advance of spring 1918. Despite having captured Festubert however, the Allied forces had advanced less than a kilometre; consequently the attack was ended on 27 May, with the British having suffered some 16,000 casualties during the action.

Obituary

Obituary KES Magazine

He joined the 24th London Regiment (The Queen's); died in June 1915 in France and was buried at the new military cemetery at Treport. He was recovering from the gassing he had been through, when meningitis set in. We tender his widow and family our sympathy with them in their bereavement.