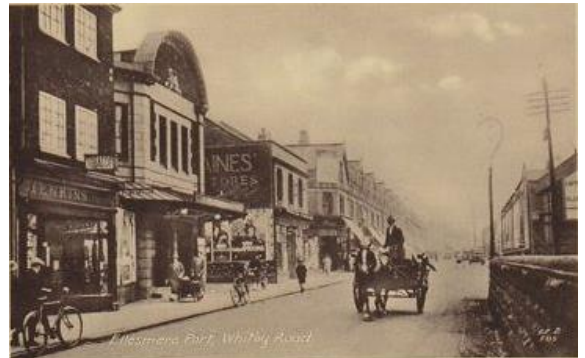


## 22910 Corporal William York Amer

### 1st Battalion, The King's (Liverpool) Regiment

Corporal William Y. Amer of the 1st Battalion, The King's (Liverpool Regiment) was the son of Margaret Ann & William Amer of Whitby Road, Ellesmere Port, and the brother of Samuel Amer. William's father, William senior, was from Birkenhead and moved to Ellesmere Port, the birth place of his wife, to work as an engine driver. In 1901 they were living in Queen's Street, young William being recorded as 5 years old. Ten years later they had moved to 57 Whitby Road, and William was a sixteen year old apprentice joiner working in the Port. A few years later the family moved a few doors down to 65 Whitby Road.

When war broke out, William travelled over to Liverpool to sign on for the King's Liverpool Regiment and was posted in one of the Old Pals battalions. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> (City) Battalion (later the 17<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion) and had the distinction of being the first of the 'pals' battalions to be formed. This took place in the old watch factory at Prescott where they were undergoing training. They landed at Boulogne on 7 November 1915.



Unfortunately, William's war record no longer exists, but he was killed in action near Souchez/Vimy on 29 April 1918 and was buried in Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, France, Plot VIII, Row R, Grave 31. He was twenty-three years old.



Queen Street







*See Amer. W. T. X.*

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
AMER.	Liverpool R.	Pte.	22910
William. York.			

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks
VICTORY	4/2/102 B.C.	1224	
BRITISH	- 90 -	- 90 -	
15. STAR *	4/2/2 B.	408.	
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K 1580.

Medal Card





### **Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais**

Souchez is a village 3.5 kilometres north of Arras on the main road to Bethune. The cemetery is about 1.5 kilometres south of the village on the west side of the D937 Arras-Bethune Road. On 26 September 1915, Souchez was taken from the Germans by French troops, who handed the sector over to Commonwealth forces the following March. The village was completely destroyed. The "Cabaret Rouge" was a house on the main road about 1 kilometre south of the village, at a place called Le Corroy, near the cemetery. On the east side, opposite the cemetery, were dugouts used as battalion headquarters in 1916. The communication trenches ended here, including a very long one named from the Cabaret.

The cemetery was begun by Commonwealth troops in March 1916, used until August 1917 (largely by the 47th (London) Division and the Canadian Corps) and - at intervals - until September 1918; these original burials are in Plots I to V inclusive. It was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when more than 7,000 graves were brought in from the battlefields of Arras and from 103 other burial grounds in the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais. The cemetery now contains 7,655 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, more than half of them unidentified. There is also one Second World War burial. On 25 May 2000, the remains of an unidentified Canadian soldier were entrusted to Canada at a ceremony held at the Vimy Memorial, France. The remains had been exhumed by staff of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, Plot 8, Row E, Grave 7. The remains were laid to rest within the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in a sarcophagus placed at the foot of the National War Memorial, Confederation Square, Ottawa, Canada.









## CABARET ROUGE

*An unusual Name for a Cemetery?*

'Cabaret Rouge', was a small café with red bricks and a red-tiled roof. It gave its name to this sector of the front line and a communication trench. The café was destroyed by shelling in May 1915. This cemetery is close to where it once stood.

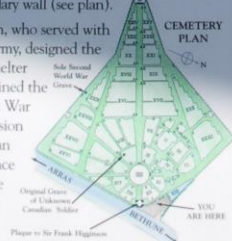
The cemetery was started in March 1916. It was enlarged to its present size after the First World War when over 7,000 dead were brought in from 103 small cemeteries and individual graves on the battlefields. Original burials were made by the 47th (London) Division and the Canadian Corps and can be



Men of the 47th (London) Division in a trench during the Battle of Vimy Ridge, April 1917. The soldiers are wearing gas masks and carrying equipment.

seen in Plots 1 to 5. The cemetery now contains 7,655 First World War Commonwealth burials - more than half unidentified. The sole Second World War burial is located near the Southern boundary wall (see plan).

Frank Higginson, who served with the Canadian army, designed the cemetery and shelter buildings. He joined the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in the 1920s as an architect in France and later became Secretary to the Commission.



German forces seized this area in August and September 1914, controlling the sector from two ridges which flanked the village of Souchez - Vimy Ridge, to the East, and Lorette Ridge, to the West.

The French secured the Lorette Ridge in 1915 after 12 months of costly fighting. Souchez village was destroyed. The Canadians captured Vimy Ridge in April 1917. They broke through the most formidable part of the German lines, but at a cost. Many of the 3,500 Canadians who died in that battle are buried here.



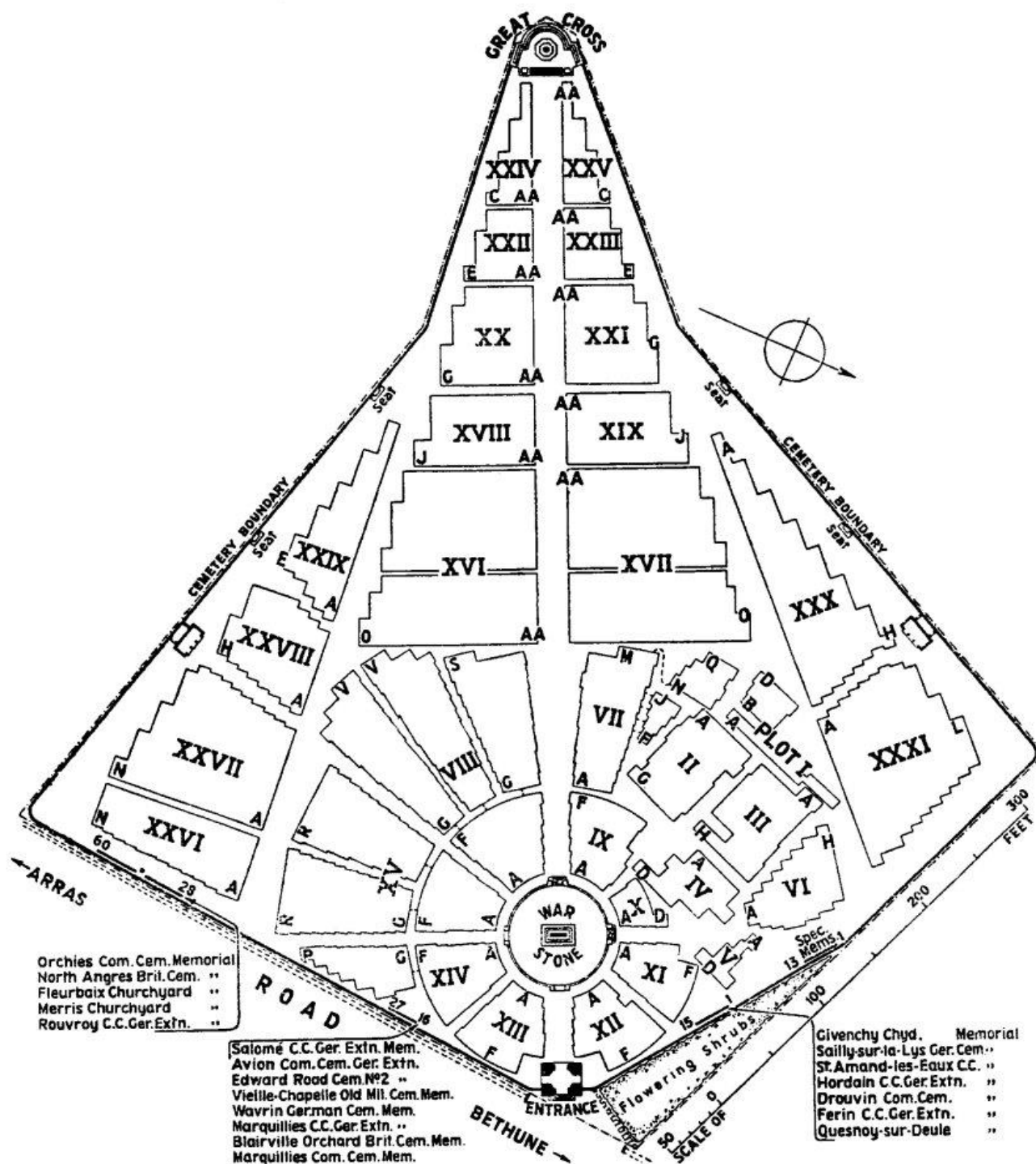
The taking of Vimy Ridge, April 1917, with troops advancing behind a tank. Credit: National Archives of Canada / PPA-4300

### The Importance of Vimy Ridge

Vimy Ridge was the key to the German defensive system in this sector. It provided an area of occupied France in which food stores and factories were in full production for Germany. The fortified strategic points dominated the surrounding battlefields and from here the Allied held towns of Arras, 12 kilometres to the north, were systematically destroyed. After the French handed the sector to Commonwealth forces, in March 1916, detailed plans were made to recapture Vimy Ridge as part of a wider Allied offensive in the Artois sector for 1917. Lieutenant-General Byng planned an assault on a front of seven kilometres by all four of his divisions abreast. The operation would be conducted in four stages, dictated by the German lines of defence. As planned intervals, both troops from each division would take over the advance. The capture of Vimy Ridge was a turning point in the war. The Canadians seized ground of great military importance, and suffered heavy casualties in the process. They had perhaps more, importantly, Canada had emerged from under the shadow of Great Britain. For many Canadians, Vimy is seen as the birth of their nation.

### The Unknown Canadian Soldier

In May 2000 the remains of an unknown Canadian soldier were taken from this cemetery and buried in a special tomb at the foot of the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Canada. A focal point for remembrance; he represents more than 116,000 Canadians who sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace and freedom. A headstone in Plot 8, Row E, Grave 7 marks his original grave (see plan).



**Researched and written, and photographs in France  
by  
Mike Royden**