

Leonard Knowles Howden

Leonard Knowles Howden was born in Windsor, the son of Andrew Howden, from Midlothian, and his wife Mary Ann. Andrew was a colour sergeant, based at Canterbury Barracks in 1891. By 1901 they were at Blackdown barracks in Frimley, with Andrew as barrack warden and Leonard as a boy clerk. In 1911, Leonard was a corporal, serving in South Africa.

S/QMS Howden was the husband of Alice Howden of 7, Mordaunt Road, The Avenue, Southampton. She was born Alice Bugden and they were married in 1917. She was the daughter of James and Georgina Bugden; James was a gardener in domestic service in Rownhams. In 1901 they were living at Lordswood cottage. There's an intriguing item in the London Gazette of 6th June 1933, relating to James's will. "NOTICE is hereby given that all creditors and other persons having any debts, claims or demands against the estate of James Bugden, late of 7, Mordaunt Road, Southampton, formerly of Lordswood, Shirley, Southampton aforesaid, Gardener, deceased (who died on the 29th day of March, 1933, and whose Will was proved in the Principal Registry of the Probate Division of His Majesty's High Court of Justice on the 31st day of May, 1933, by Alice Georgina Prince (Wife of Edward Charles Prince), the executrix therein named)." I assume that Alice had remarried at this point.

Leonard reached the rank of Squadron Quartermaster Serjeant in the Army Service Corps. He died of wounds, aged 32, on 21st March, 1918. That spring saw a renewed German offensive, with much ground regained and massive attacks in a bid to win the war before the arrival of American forces. Although the Army was driven back over many miles with heavy losses, the line was eventually held. On 21st March alone the British lost 7000 killed and 21,000 taken prisoner. Like so many, Leonard Howden has no known grave: his name, together with those of a further 20,000 men missing after the battles of this period is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial near the town of Albert, France.

Ann Laird - Rownhams January 2014