

Warren Ivor Boucher

Private

2026

1st Battalion, Herefordshire Regiment



Ivor's story and that of his enigmatic father Walter, makes for fascinating reading. Our story begins, not with Ivor but with the birth of Walter Joseph Boucher in 1870 in Orcop, South Herefordshire. The reason is unknown but as soon as he was born he went to live and was brought up by his Aunt, Eliza Griffiths, in Llanwarne, just a mile or so from Orcop. For at least the first ten years of his life Walter lived with his aunt and her family but by the 1891 census Walter had left his home and found work as a Farm Servant in Longtown some ten miles east of his family home at Llanwarne. He is now 21, still single and interestingly enough calls himself Griffiths, his aunt's surname. This is significant to what happens in the future.

Walter's story now takes an unbelievable turn for the worse. He is implicated in the death of a William Prosser of Clodock, the village adjacent to Longtown. Walter and four friends had attended the funeral of the young child of a local farmer in January 1893. Following the funeral the wake was held at the Cornwall Arms Inn, a small cottage pub in the village. Contemporary reports at the time suggested a funeral wake was often treated as an opportunity for a party and as the evening wore on so

the five lads became more and more inebriated. A local called William Prosser had provided the music for the revellers, playing his accordion, but had left early about 9:30pm, for his bed. By midnight the five men were well oiled and thought it would be good fun to wake some of their friends in the village and play pranks on them. Two such friends were on the receiving end of the revellers pranks. The first, a Mr Chappell, was dragged from his bed and rolled around in the snow outside his house and was finally dumped into the river Monnow which ran alongside the house. Leaving Mr Chappell to fend for himself the five men then focused their attentions on William Prosser who lived some three quarters of a mile outside the village. Windows were smashed at the house and fearful of his safety William leapt out of a window and disappeared, barefoot and barely clothed, into the freezing countryside. After blindly running around trying to escape the pursuing posse he eventually made it back to Clodock, exhausted. What happened next is unknown but in the morning William Prosser's frozen body was found hanging from the gate of a friend's house opposite the church in Clodock. It appeared he had slipped at the gate and his clothing had got tangled on the top of the gate. He had tried to extricate himself but had failed and died at the scene. Five men were eventually charged with William Prosser's manslaughter, Walter Griffiths (Boucher) being one of them. All accused pleaded guilty to manslaughter. Walter was well represented by his brief who suggested the episode was a case of high spirits which had gone disastrously wrong. Character witness evidence suggested the men were of good character and the Judge listened carefully to what was said. Initially the Judge admitted he was appalled at what had happened and had considered sentencing the perpetrators heavily with three years penal servitude suggested. But after hearing the pleas for leniency from legal representatives and the good character references he resolved to sentence Walter plus one other to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour. Two others received four month sentences and the last, who turned Queen's evidence, was given three days incarceration. The Judge accepted that none of the defendants had any intention of causing such horror to Mr Prosser.

Walter completed his period in gaol and the hard labour meted out to him. Family anecdotes record that Walter did his hard labour in the quarries around New Radnor. Where he was incarcerated is unclear. The next we hear of him is in 1895 when he appears to have married Annie Jenkins, a lass from Monmouth. In 1896 they had their first child, Annie with their second, Warren Ivor Boucher being born on the 25th June 1897. Interestingly, on his birth certificate Warren is recorded as Warren Ivor Griffiths and in fact the first four of Walter and Annie's children were named Griffiths. The happy couple were to go on to have a further ten children, all with the surname Boucher. Living relatives believe this anomaly was due to Walter being brought up by his aunt's family and him believing he was a Griffiths. Many years later the error was corrected and all Walter and Annie's children went by the name of Boucher.

By 1911, Warren, now fifteen and preferring to be called Ivor, had left home and was working as a farm servant for a Mr Henry Millichamp at Courtlands Farm, Allensmore just south of Hereford. However, by 1913 the whole Boucher family had moved to Woodside Cottage, Downton, New Radnor and Ivor is working as a farm labourer in

Gladestry. We know this because a report in the Kington Times dated 9th May 1914 records that Ivor and four other young men were brought before the New Radnor, Petty Sessions Bench in the May of 1914 for 'unlawfully loitering at the entrance of Gladestry Church during divine service'. They were laughing and shouting and generally causing a disturbance and for their sins were arrested by the local police sergeant. They were found guilty by the bench and each fined 5s and 5s 6d costs and bound over to keep the peace for six months. It may well have been Ivor's unfortunate run in with the law which prompted him to enlist shortly after war broke out in the August 1914. Shortly after, in February 1915, Walter, now employed as a Wagoner, had once again moved his family this time to Toll Shop, a small cottage in the centre of Huntington.

The minimum age for recruitment into his majesty's army was eighteen and a recruit had to be nineteen before he was allowed to serve overseas, but we know from family oral history that Ivor tried on two occasions to enlist before his eighteenth birthday. The first almost certainly in Kington and a second attempt in Hereford, both times he was turned away. On a third occasion he must have figured out how to massage his true age because we know he joined the Herefordshire Regiment, 1st/1st Battalion as Private 2026 Boucher and was soon undertaking regimental training. None of Ivor's military records survive so we must now turn to the Regimental War Diaries to discover what happened to Ivor.

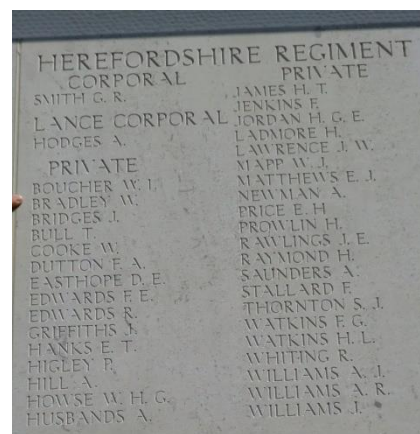
Throughout 1914 the regiment were training around Britain serving as home defence in Pembroke Dock, Oswestry, Northampton, Colchester and Rusden. Considered fully trained, on 16th July 1915 the Regiment embarked aboard the SS Euripides at Devonport and sailed to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. The ultimate destination of the Battalion was kept a secret but the men on Euripides had no doubt where they were headed, Gallipoli. The Gallipoli campaign of 1915 was fought in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and into The Black Sea. The Allies initially landed on the peninsula on 25th and 26th April but the advance up the peninsular was soon bogged down with bitter trench warfare ensuing. To relieve the stalemate a plan was devised to land troops at Suvla Bay on the north side of the peninsula and to isolate the Turkish Army on the peninsula thus enabling the Allied Army to proceed further into Turkey. At 7:20am on the 9th August 1915 the 1/1st Herefordshire Regiment landed on a beach just below Nibrunesi Point in Suvla Bay. Communications between invading forces was poor, the distribution of Turkish forces was unknown, and the terrain was appalling and heat oppressive. The regiment soon became disorientated but fought on gallantly. Sir Ian Hamilton, the Commander in Chief of the landings later wrote. "Some of the units which took part in this engagement acquitted themselves very bravely". The Divisional Commander speaks with appreciation of one freshly-landed battalion of the 53rd Division, a Hereford battalion, presumably the 1/1st Herefordshire, "which attacked with impetuosity and courage between Hetman Chair and Kaslar Chair, about Asmak Dere, on the extreme right of the line". For their part in the landings at Suvla Bay on the 9th August 1915 the regiment was mentioned in dispatches and forever immortalised in a painting by Charles Dixon which for many

years hung on the wall of the stairway in the Shire Hall, Hereford. This painting is now in the safe hands of the Regimental Museum in Hereford.



Herefordshire Regiment Landing at Suvla Bay, 9th August 1915

Ivor Boucher was 'killed in action' on the 9th August 1915, the day of the initial landing. Remember, Ivor was born in June 1897, when he died he had just turned eighteen. In truth he was too young to be fighting overseas but his early demise saved him the horrors and agonies of what followed. By the 9th January 1916 the allies had evacuated the Dardanelles Peninsula. The campaign was considered a failure, not because of a lack of bravery and resolve on the part of the soldiers, but because of terrain, the resistance of the Turks and perhaps because of the lack of direction and planning from the leadership at the time. Ivor is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 198, which serves as a focal point for Commonwealth commemoration particularly to those with no known grave. Ivor's final resting place is unknown and the memorial contains over 21000 names who suffered the same fate. For his under aged bravery Ivor was awarded the Victory and British War medals as well as the 1915 Star.



Photograph of the Herefordshire's Plaque on Helles Memorial



Helles War Memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula

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The untimely death of Ivor left deep scars on the family. His sister Daisy was particularly affected by his death. Family history tells that

Ivor had confided in her that he knew the Regiment were going to Gallipoli but asked

her not to tell his mother. Ivor did not return and Daisy kept her promise to Ivor, never telling her mother, she regretted that decision for the rest of her life. Ivor was her favourite brother and she missed him terribly. We can only imagine the heartache the families went through.

At the time of his death Ivor's parents and family had again moved and by now were living at 8 Powell Street, Penwyllt in South Wales. Penwyllt was a limestone quarrying village and it appears Walter had moved into the quarrying industry. Family anecdotes tell of him being a quarryman. It could be said that the hard labour he served in the quarries of Radnorshire served him well in the future. Annie is remembered by living family as being the midwife in Penwyllt, a job she was ably qualified to undertake. As we know Ivor is commemorated on Kington war memorial but he is also remembered on the Ystradgynlais War Memorial, Penwyllt being a hamlet just outside Ystradgynlais in the Welsh valleys.



Walter and Annie Boucher

It is now that our story takes another unexpected twist. You will recall that in 1895 I suggested Walter and Annie had married. However no marriage between the two can be found at that time. What we do find is that at the end of 1922 a Walter Boucher and Annie Jenkins are married at Hay-on-Wye. It seems highly likely this is our enigmatic but happy couple and the photograph above shows Walter and Annie, on what appears to be their wedding day.

Finally, my thanks and gratitude must go to Ivor's nephew, John Boucher and his family who have provided many of the fascinating family details and photographs included in this commemorative record. Input from living relatives always helps and provides a personal insight into their ancestors. I believe such input brings the stories of these brave men to life and ultimately adds that human touch.

