

World War 1

Birmingham City Police

PC E 256 Walter Gordon COATES

Guardsman 14909

2nd battalion Grenadier Guards

Died on active service France 16th September 1914

Walter was born in 1889 in Crumpsall, Lancaster son of Walter Samuel (1852-1917) and Emma (1855-1919) nee Evans. In January 1880 Emma Evans married John Boughall, they had two children, John and William. Her husband sadly died 27th September 1882 in America

In 1884 Emma Boughall married Walter Samuel Coates and they had their son Walter Gordon and a daughter Marguerite (1885-1944), and Emma's two sons John (1880-1888) and William Boughall (1882-1951)

In 1888 her first child she had with John Boughall, also named John died aged 8

William Boughall was later referred to on legal documents as William *Coates*

In 1891 Walter aged 2 and his parents and his sister Marguerite (6) and his step-brother William (8) were residing in a Manchester workhouse

In 1901 Walter aged 12 and his family were visitors at The Lawn, Burton Road with the Middleton family, the head of which was a retired farmer

In 1911, Walter now 22 was residing at Blenheim Barracks, Aldershot as a Private with the 2nd bttn Grenadier Guards

Walter initially enlisted in the army in Nottingham and on leaving, he joined Birmingham City Police on 6th October 1913 and gave his occupation as army chef. He served on the E division with warrant number 8377 and collar number PC E256

On 4th August 1914, Walter was recalled to his regiment and arrived at Le Havre, France on 13th August 1914.

He was serving alongside another Birmingham City police constable, PC B219 Horace Weedon, Private 14903 also serving in 2nd battalion of the Grenadier Guards

On 14th September 1914, their battalion was engaged in heavy German shell fire at a farm in the Soupir region of France

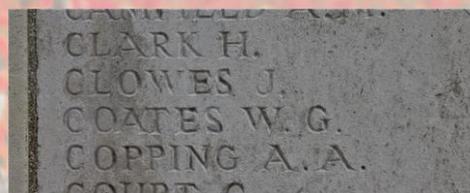
16.09.1914 Walter was reported as missing and declared 'died on active service' the same date

Horace Weedon was also killed, he died two days after Walter

Horace's brother Jack Weedon was killed in France on October 27th by a gunshot wound to the head, his other brother Frank also died, of diphtheria at home aged 12 years of age, *all three brothers died within the first three months of the outbreak of war*

Horace's brother George was serving with the Royal Navy at the time of the death of his three brothers

Neither Walter nor Horace have a known grave and both are commemorated, together on the same panel, on La Ferteous-Jouarre memorial, Seine-et-Marne, France



Photographs of the memorial are courtesy of Su and Paul Handford taken April 2104