

# The Battle of the Boar's Head Memorial

2016 sees the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

As part of the national commemorations, Three students from Chatsmore Catholic High School had a unique opportunity to travel to the Somme and Ypres.

On the tour, the students had the opportunity to visit a variety of different historic sites including battlefields, memorials, cemeteries and museums.

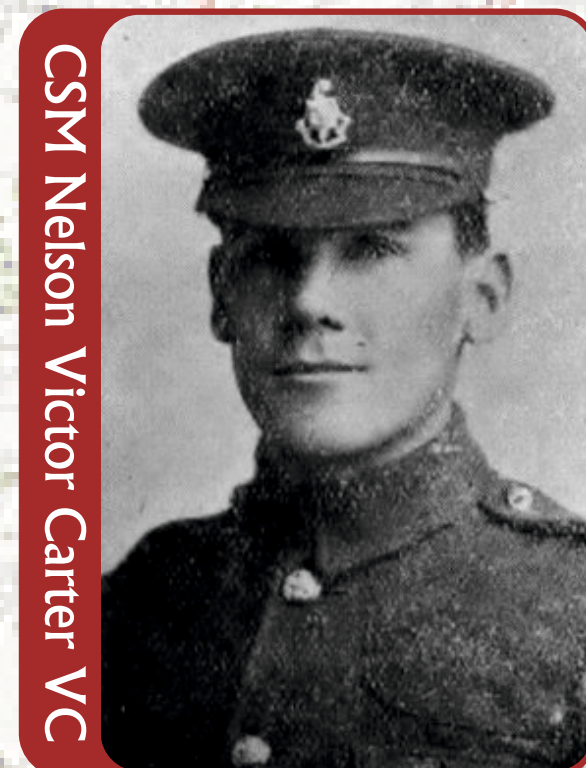
The students participated in remembrance ceremonies and recorded, reflected upon and shared their own experiences.

This battlefield tour was run by the UCL Institute of Education, which is responsible along with Equity School travel for leading the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme at



[www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org](http://www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org).

Each tour is accompanied by an experienced battlefield guide accredited by the Guild of Battlefield Guides.



CSM Nelson Victor Carter VC

Nelson Carter was born on 6 April 1887, in Eastbourne

London Gazette, 9 September 1916, Boar's Head, Richebourg l'Avoué, France, 30 June 1916,

Company Sergeant-Major Nelson Victor Carter, 4th Company, 12th Bn., Royal Sussex Regiment.

"For most conspicuous bravery. During an attack he was in command of the fourth wave of the assault. Under intense shell and machine gun fire he penetrated, with a few men, into the enemy's second line and inflicted heavy casualties with bombs. When forced to retire to the enemy's first line, he captured a machine gun and shot the gunner with his revolver. Finally, after carrying several wounded men into safety, he was himself mortally wounded and died in a few minutes. His conduct throughout the day was magnificent."

Company Sergeant Nelson Carter was buried in the Royal Irish Rifles Churchyard, Laventie, France in Plot VI. Row C. Grave 17.

The Royal Sussex Regiment Association are the custodians of Nelson Victor Carter's VC.

A blue plaque can be seen on the wall of his home at 33 Greys Road in Eastbourne.

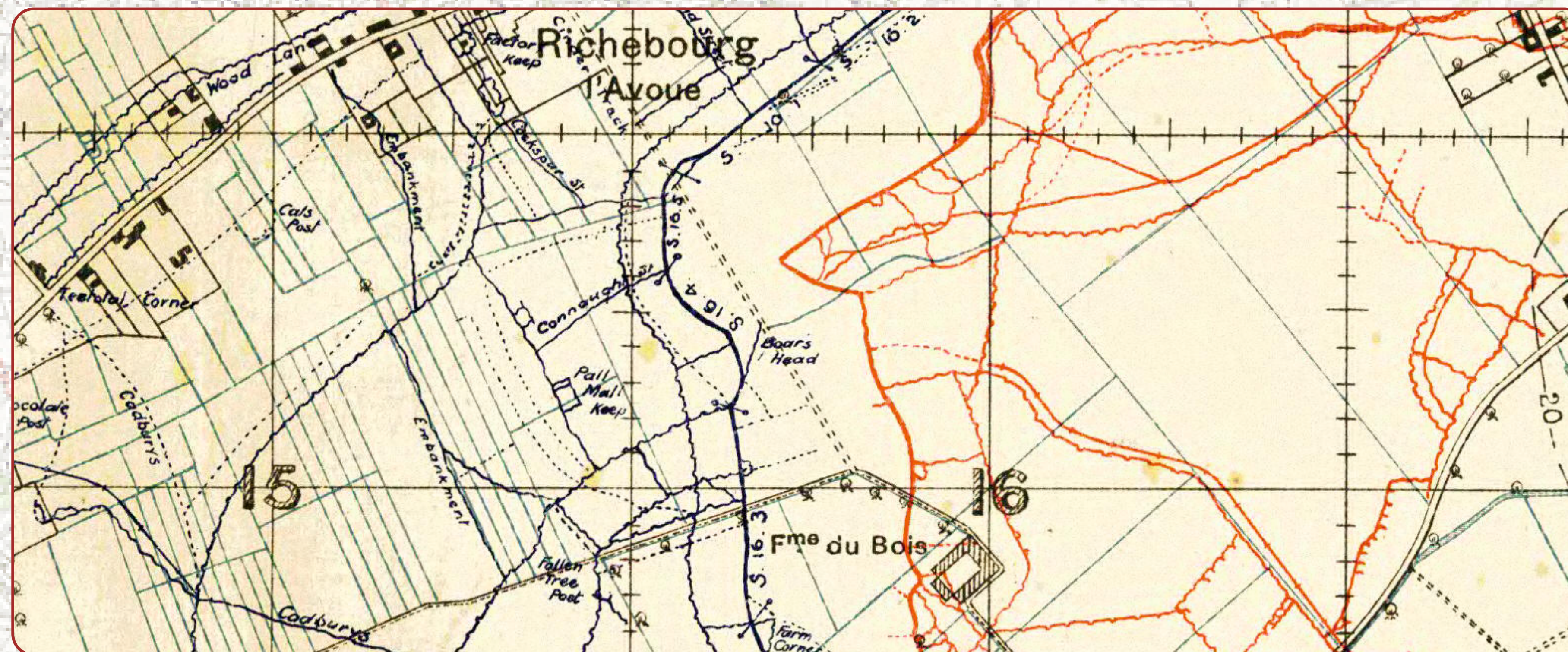
The Battle of the Boar's Head, Richebourg l'Avoué, on 30th June 1916, was planned as a diversionary action to make the German Command believe that this area of the Pas de Calais was the one chosen for the major offensive of 1916.

The intention was to "bite off the German position known as the Boar's Head", and prevent the Germans from moving troops to the Somme area, some fifty kilometres to the south. Initial plans had been that the Royal Sussex Regiment, 11th Battalion should lead the attack, with the 12th on their right, and the 13th in reserve.

At the time that these orders were received, Lieutenant Colonel Harman Grisewood, was the Commanding Officer of the 11th (1st Southdowns).

Colonel Grisewood, on seeing the plans, was concerned that if his untried troops attacked over unfamiliar ground a disaster might result, he is said to have informed his brigade commander "I am not sacrificing my men as cannon-fodder!"

The attack had to go in, but the Divisional Commander, Major General R. Dawson, aware of Grisewood's comments, was concerned that this might be passed down to the men of the 11th Battalion, and so the roles of the 11th and 13th Battalions were reversed.



'The Boar's Head', Richebourg l'Avoué, France 1916

The War Diary of the 13th Battalion gives a more detailed account of the attack:

"FERME DU BOIS. The battalion assembled at 1.30 am on the morning of the 30th June in readiness for the assault, with all four platoons of each coy in the front line. The preliminary bombardment on the morning of the attack opened at 2.50 am, and at 3.05 the leading wave of the battalion scaled the parapet, the remainder following at 50 yards interval. At the same time the flank attack under Lts. Whitley and Ellis gained a footing in the enemy trench. The passage across NO MAN'S LAND was accomplished with few casualties except in the left companies, which came under very heavy machine gun fire. The two right companies succeeded in reaching their objective, but the two left companies only succeeded in penetrating the enemy's wire in one or two places.

Just at this moment a smoke cloud, which was originally designed to mask our advance, drifted right across the front and made it impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. This resulted in all direction being lost and the attack devolving into small bodies of men not knowing which way to go. Some groups succeeded in entering the support line, engaging the enemy with bombs and bayonet, and organizing the initial stages of a defence. Other parties swung off to the right and entered the trench where the flank party was operating, causing a great deal of congestion. On the left, the smoke and darkness made the job of penetrating the enemy wire so difficult that few, if any, succeeded in reaching the enemy support line, where they were subjected to an intense bombardment of HE. and whizz-bangs.

Capt. Hughes, who was wounded, seeing that his company was in danger of being cut off, gave the order for the evacuation of the enemy trenches, and the remainder of the attacking force returned to our trenches. The enemy, who was evidently thoroughly prepared, now concentrated his energies on the front line, and, for the space of about 2½ hours, our front and support lines were subjected to an intense bombardment with heavy and light shells, causing a large number of casualties . . . The enemy casualties are also considered to have been considerable, large numbers of dead being seen in the enemy trenches."

During the attack, the majority of officers were killed or wounded, leaving platoons, if not whole companies being led by NCOs. The Battle of the Boar's Head lasted less than five hours. The South Downs Brigade lost 17 officers and 349 men were killed. Over 1000 were wounded or taken prisoner. The 13th Battalion was all but wiped out. Due to these losses, this day became known locally as 'The Day Sussex Died'.

This memorial is not only to remember the men from the Royal Sussex regiment, but all those involved with the Battle of the Boar's Head.



The aim of 'Legacy 110' is for every participating student to create an enduring legacy by impacting upon at least 110 people within their local community.

If we achieve this, then the total number of people reached by 2019 will equal 888,246, which is equivalent to the number of British and Commonwealth soldiers who fell during the First World War.



'Legacy 110' reinforces the remembrance of these soldiers who were also so vividly commemorated in 2014 through the art installation of poppies at the Tower of London.

<http://www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org/legacy-110>



The Royal Sussex Regiment Cap Badge

Pte John Searle

"B" Company's, 12th Battalion Private SD/2389 John Searle of Durrington, Worthing.

The youngest of five brothers, Pte Searle was just 14½ years of age when he enlisted in April 1915,

and had just turned sixteen, when he took part in the Battle of the Boar's Head.

Private Searle is remembered on the Loos Memorial to the missing.

He was amongst those whose bodies were never recovered after the battle.



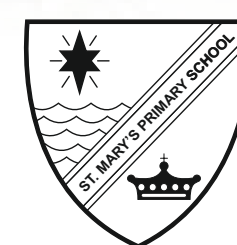
Private SD/2389 John Searle



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