

The 2nd Bucks Battalion and the Battle of Fromelles

The war memorial in All Saints Church records the names of more than 30 men from Marlow killed during the Battle of the Somme. The worst loss of life occurred when soldiers from the 2nd Bucks Battalion fought German forces at Fromelles on 19 July.

2nd Bucks Battalion

The 2nd Bucks Battalion was raised shortly after war broke out in summer 1914 and included many men from Marlow. On completion of recruiting and training it was deployed on Home Defence in early April 1915. In late May 1916 the Battalion deployed to France. On 19 July it took part in the Battle of Fromelles

The Battle of Fromelles

The Battle of Fromelles was launched by the British Army to prevent German forces reinforcing their lines at the Somme, 50 miles to the south. Amongst the Allied forces were soldiers from the Australian Imperial Force, fighting for the first time on the Western Front.

The attack took place on 19 July. Preparations for it were rushed, many of the troops lacked experience in trench warfare and the power of the German defence was significantly underestimated. While some losses were inflicted on the German forces, no ground was gained and it did not prevent German troops being redeployed for the Somme.

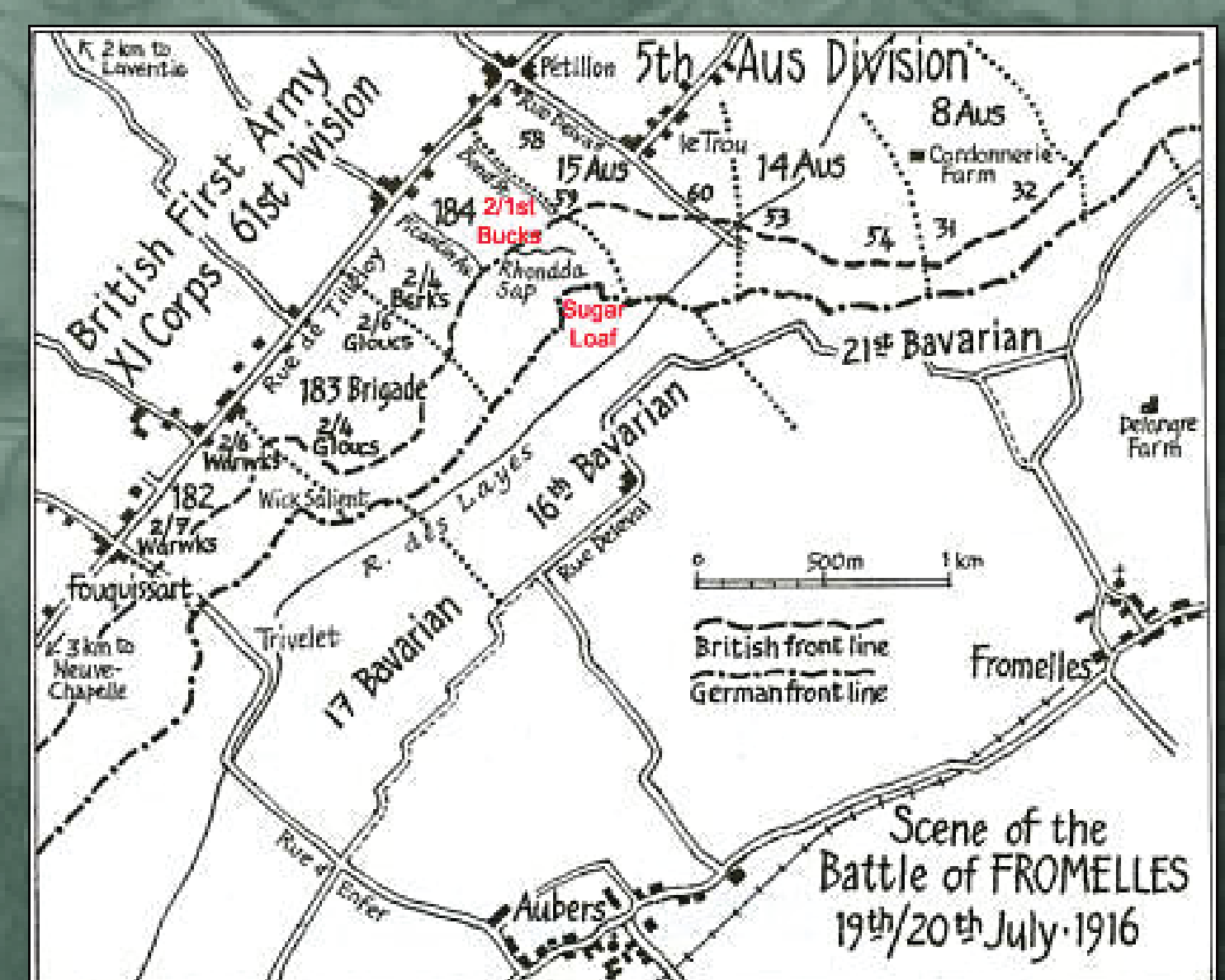
Of almost 7,100 Allied casualties, 5,632 were incurred by the 5th Australian Division.

The 2nd Bucks Battalion at Fromelles

The 2nd Bucks Battalion launched their assault at 6pm on 19 July to try and capture Sugar Loaf Hill. It was reported that 'not a man was seen to waver, but the fire brought to bear was annihilating...the enemy machine guns literally mowed down the advancing waves; only a few men actually reached the German parapet...but none got back'. Of the 642 men from the Battalion who joined the assault, 133 were killed or missing believed killed and 189 wounded. Seven men from Marlow were amongst those killed and are remembered on the war memorial in All Saints' Church. Another man from Marlow was killed in the same battle serving with the Royal Berkshire Regiment.



Officers of the 2nd Bucks Battalion in England, 1915



Map showing the Battle of Fromelles and the position of the 2nd Bucks Battalion



The "Cobbers Statue" at the Australian Memorial Park at Fromelles