

My Family's Story

Name of contributor: Councillor Ian Gilchrist, Council Chairman

Family member and relationship to contributor: Philip James Hudson, Grandfather

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My grandfather, Philip James Hudson (b. 1898), joined the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) straight from school and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in November 1916.

His first letter that we have back to his mother in March 1917, records, "We are living in cellars in a village about 2000 yds back of the line – the men are doing the same. We have got a couple of beds a couple of benches a table and a stove down here and in a bit shall be quite comfortable..."

Many further letters to various members of the family have been kept, mainly recording domestic details but almost nothing (letters were censored) about the location of where they were.

He was injured twice (July 1917, and June 1918) both times requiring a return to hospital in England. The first of these earned him a Military Cross, for which the citation read, "He personally led parties with supplies of ammunition & bombs into the Front Line through heavy hostile barrage, on one occasion assisting the troops in the Front Line to repel a combined attack at a critical moment. The example he set to his men was splendid, it was entirely due to his exertions that the ammunition supply was maintained."

After the war he took up a previously awarded place at Cambridge University to read Greats but left after a year, saying (according to family legend) that it was all irrelevant compared with what he had been through in the war.

Image: 2nd Lt Philip James Hudson (copyright: Ian Gilchrist)

