

Jeremy Harvey (14 years) trip to France – August 2024

This summer i made the journey from Ely to Northern France to find the grave of my great uncle who died in the Somme area in the First World War (pictures below).

**In Memory of
Private J HARVEY**

**27594, 20th Bn., Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)
who died age 23
on 01 April 1918**

**Son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Harvey, of 211, James Reckitts Avenue,
Garden Village, Hull.**

Remembered with honour

HANGARD COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

27594. Pte. John James Harvey, Machine Gun Corps, 20th Battalion, attached to the 3rd East Yorks., was employed at the canister works and had been at Reckitts since September 19th 1910. He was killed on April 1st 1918 at the age of 23 years. He lived at 211 James Reckitt Avenue, Hull, and was the son of Mr and Mrs F Harvey of Hull. He is listed in he Hull Daily Mail Roll of Honour for 3rd May 1918 and is buried in Hangard Communal Cemetery Extension. Somme. France.



Day one -

We left Ely around 6:30 am. After driving 2 ½ hours down to Dover, we took the DFDS ferry across to Calais. From Calais we drove directly to Hangard communal cemetery extension which took around 3 hours.

This Hangard memorial is a memorial of the WW1 battle of the Somme in France. 273 soldiers are buried there and most of them have 'unknown soldier' headstones.

We did find the cemetery which was just outside a small village but when we got there it was raining very heavily so we had to quickly look at all the graves to see if we could find his grave, sadly we couldn't find his grave, so we went to dry off in the hotel and try again the next day. That evening we got dry and had dinner in a nearby restaurant and talked about our plans for tomorrow. My feelings during day one were a mix of boredom during the car ride to the hotel and the memorial. They changed when we arrived at the memorial because I was happy that we found the place.





Day two -

After a good night's sleep, we had breakfast then set off again, this time we found it, it was one of the first ones! It was an emotional moment to find his grave, I had a lot more feelings during day two because we found the headstone while on call to my grandparents which made the moment special.

After showing respects we looked around to see who else is buried there, we found British graves, Australian graves, Canadian graves, Irish graves and one singular German grave. Thinking about war and what they had to go through made me feel that I have a lot of stuff I just don't take time to appreciate it.

Soon after we had a wonder around the graves, we went to the largest British World War 1 memorial in France known as Thiepval Memorial. The roads from Hangard to Thiepval had lots of war cemeteries from the First World War from all different countries (Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada)

Thiepval memorial is the largest British War memorial in the world, the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme is a war memorial to 72,337 missing British and South African servicemen who died in the Battles of the Somme 1915 and 1918, with no known grave. It is a huge memorial with lovely trees and gardens, it was very peaceful.

There was a museum which showed equipment they found left behind. Just after we went to the museum, we went to look at the memorial we saw the graves and the large building with names of soldiers that died during the battles nearby and even the missing soldiers.



After Thiepval we headed to Dunkirk to see the memorial there of the dead that didn't make it back home. Dunkirk was a beach used by the allies to flee France during the early stages of WW2. At this memorial there are 4,505 soldiers buried.

That evening we took the ferry back home from Calais to Dover and arrived home late in the evening.





The project has been amazing as I have had to plan the whole thing and travel to another country but also helped me discover a part of my family history which I will always remember. It has also helped me with my knowledge of history and made me think about all the lives lost during the wars.

Jeremy Harvey