

## Private **JACK JANES**, MM

Born **28 March 1894** Died **5 April 1918**

**Jack Hawley Janes** was born in Simpson in March 1894. He lived with his parents, Charles and Lizzie, and older sisters, Nora and Doris, at *The Mount*. Charles, a farmer, owned land in Simpson and Ashland. At the time of the 1911 census 17-year-old Jack was assisting his father as a cattle dealer.

Following the outbreak of war in 1914 Jack enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry. He later transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry where he served as a stretcher bearer.



At the start of 1918 the Battalion was stationed in the Somme country, south of St Quentin. It was a period of relative inaction on the front line. Time was divided between training, manning the trenches and rest periods.

The morning of Thursday 21 March saw the start of a massive German offensive, resulting in a day-by-day retreat south-westwards. On 29 March the Battalion was bussed north to help defend the strategic city of Amiens.

Early on 4 April German troops attacked the British line at Le Hamel, forcing a retreat. About 160 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion were killed, wounded or missing that day. Jack Janes died while 'carrying on his work as a stretcher bearer'.

He received the Military Medal, awarded 'for bravery in the field'. His



name is inscribed on the Pozières Memorial, one of 12,741 men of the Fifth Army who died between 21 March and 5 April and have no known grave. He is also remembered here and on the plaque his parents placed in the church.

