



THE LOCHNAGAR CRATER MEMORIAL

Pte. 1216 Charles R. Frankish 10th Lincolns (Grimsby Chums)

Each year, during the annual Lochnagar Remembrance Ceremony Roger Frankish, a stalwart Friend of Lochnagar has placed a wreath to his father who was wounded at the Crater on 1st July. Roger has written a superb book on the experiences of the men of his village, called *'The Barnetby Boys'*. Here is part of his father's account.

"It seemed a long wait until 7.28am when the mine went up. I remember the ground shaking like a jelly. We had been told that the advance would be a walk-over, as the trenches had been destroyed and most of the troops killed but we knew this was not true, as several times before the attack we had shown our dummy troops over the parapet, (tunics filled with straw and wearing gas masks and tin hats). The reply was a terrific hail of machine-gun and rifle fire.

After two minutes we went over the top into the churned mud of no-man's-land. The small arms and shell-fire was very heavy. I had not gone far when a bullet struck my equipment and spun me round like a top, but I was none the worse. It was very hard going as I was also carrying two trench mortar bombs in a sand-bag.

About half way to the German trenches I received a terrific blow on my left forearm. I collapsed into the nearest shell hole, my arm quite useless, apparently broken.

Eventually I made it to No. 102 Field Ambulance Station to enjoy the best sleep I had had for months."

In those 500 yards (approx. 450 metres) of the attack, from a fighting strength of 840 men the Grimsby Chums suffered over 500 casualties, with 180 men killed.



Top: Pte. 1216 Charles R. Frankish 10th Lincolns (Grimsby Chums), Below: A group of Grimsby Chums. © Roger Frankish.

Soldat 1216 Charles R. Frankish 10^{ème} Lincolns (Grimsby Chums)

Lors de chaque Cérémonie Annuelle du Souvenir, Roger Frankish, l'un des piliers des *Friends of Lochnagar*, dépose une gerbe en souvenir de son père qui fut blessé au Cratère le 1^{er} juillet. Roger est l'auteur d'un livre magnifique, *The Barnetby Boys*, qui relate les expériences des hommes de son village. Voici une partie du récit de son père :

« L'attente nous a semblé longue jusqu'à 07h28 quand la mine a sauté. Je me souviens que la terre tremblait comme du jelly. On nous avait dit que ce serait du gâteau d'avancer, car les tranchées seraient détruites et la plupart des troupes tuées, mais nous savions que ce n'était pas vrai, puisqu'à plusieurs reprises avant l'assaut nous avons montré nos soldats factices (des tuniques rembourrées de paille, portant des masques à gaz et des casques). La réponse avait été une grêle terrible de tirs de mitrailleuses et de fusils.

Au bout de deux minutes, nous avons quitté les tranchées pour le borborygme du no man's land. Le feu des armes légères et des obus était nourri. Je n'étais pas encore allé bien loin lorsqu'une balle a frappé mon équipement, me faisant tourner comme une toupie, mais je n'étais pas blessé. Pour moi, avancer était d'autant plus pénible que je portais deux mortiers de tranchée dans un sac de sable.

A environ mi-chemin des tranchées allemandes, j'ai ressenti un grand coup à l'avant-bras gauche. Je me suis effondré dans le trou d'obus le plus proche, mon bras totalement inutile, vraisemblablement cassé.

Enfin j'ai pu atteindre le Poste de Secours d'Ambulance de Campagne n°102, où j'ai profité de mon meilleur sommeil depuis des mois. »

En une distance d'attaque de 450m, les Grimsby Chums, partis à 840 hommes, déplorent 500 victimes, dont 180 morts.



The Lochnagar Crater is privately owned by Richard Dunning MBE and is dedicated to Remembrance, Respect and Reconciliation.
www.lochnagarcrater.org



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thanks the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) for its support with this visitor information project.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission commemorates members of the Grimsby Chums at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, Ovillers Military Cemetery and Gordon Dump Cemetery. The CWGC commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died in the two world wars. For more information visit www.cwgc.org or download the free CWGC War Graves App.



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