

Sidney James Day

Early life

Sidney James Day was born to William and Elizabeth Day in Norwich on 3rd July 1891. He attended St Mark's School as well as Sunday School in Lakenham and was a sergeant in the Church Lads' Brigade. His father worked at Morgan's brewery before running a lodging house on Ber Street. Before the First World War, Day was an apprentice butcher.

Military Career

When Day was 23 he enlisted in the 9th Suffolk Regiment upon the outbreak of war. During the Battle of the Somme, Day received a wound to his left thigh and was sent back to England,

spending several months recovering at Lakenham hospital. He returned to action in France as a Corporal in the 11th Battalion of The Suffolk Regiment. It was during fighting around Ypres and Passchendaele, when Day was 26

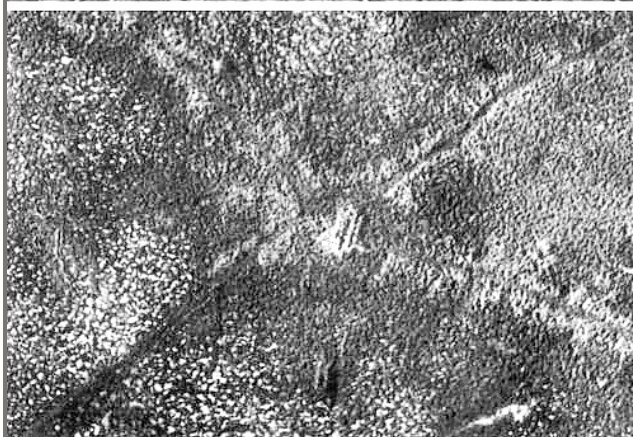


First day of the Battle of the Somme



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years old, that his courageous actions led to him being awarded the Victoria Cross. After these actions he returned home once again to recover in hospital. Upon returning to the continent he was captured as a prisoner of war but repatriated in 1918. In April 1919 he was transferred to the Army Reserves.



Aerial view of Passchendaele before and after battle, Imperial War Museum Collections

Victoria Cross

On the 26th August 1917 east of Hargicourt, France, Corporal Sidney James Day was in command of a bombing section ordered to clear a maze of enemy trenches. He successfully completed this mission, killing two machine gunners and taking four prisoners. When Day returned to his section a stick bomb fell into the trench which was occupied by five men including a badly wounded Officer. Corporal Day saved the lives of those men by seizing the bomb and throwing it out of the trench where it immediately exploded. He then completed the clearing of the trench and established an advanced position. He remained at his post under intense enemy fire for 66 hours. His citation in the London Gazette,

11th October 1917, said 'Through the whole operation his conduct was an inspiration to all'.

Post War Career and Death

After the war he worked for the Electric Light Company in Norwich before moving to Portsmouth and opening his own tea rooms, the 'Sidney James VC Tea Rooms'. In 1939 he married his wife Doris in Portsmouth. The tearooms were destroyed by bombing in January 1941. After this loss Day became a messenger in Portsmouth Dockyard but he retired in 1948 after developing TB. He was awarded the King George VI Coronation Medal in 1937 and the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal in 1953. He died aged 66 in Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth, on 17th July 1959 and was buried in Milton Cemetery. He was survived by his wife Doris.



Sidney James Day (right)

Please visit the website for more information on the First World War and Suffolk
www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk