



GORDON REUBEN ALEXANDER

Source : Harrow Roll Of Honour



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SECOND LIEUT. GORDON REUBEN ALEXANDER,
Royal Sussex Regiment, attached 13th East Surreys, was born in 1885 and educated at Harrow. He became a member of the Stock Exchange, and of his father's firm, J. M. Alexander and Co. in 1908. A keen all-round sportsman, he was a member of the Corinthian Yacht Club, the Felixstowe and Coombe Golf Clubs, and the Sword Club. He won several trophies on the links, was Amateur Foils Champion of Great Britain, and took part in the Olympic Games.

Immediately on the outbreak of war he enlisted in the 10th (Stock Exchange) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, refused the commission that was offered to him in that regiment, and went to France with them in 1915 as a N.C.O. In the following year he accepted a commission in the 10th East Surreys, was transferred to the Royal Sussex and afterwards attached to the 13th East Surreys.

He was killed on 24 April, 1917, in an attack on Villers Plouich, north of Peronne. His death is thus described by a sergeant in his Company: "Everything went very well in the attack, and we captured the first machine gun and many prisoners. After the objective was gained and the men were digging in under his supervision, one was badly hit and Lieutenant Alexander told a man to go to his assistance, but went himself instead as there was a lot of shelling, and while bandaging the man they were both killed by a heavy shell."

The same sergeant relates how on one occasion when he went round the Company for volunteers for a risky enterprise, the men volunteered "too freely" on learning that Alexander was in charge. "He happened to overhear some of it and told me afterwards that it was the greatest satisfaction he got out of the war—it paid him for everything."

"He died the death of a hero," wrote a brother-officer, "and deserved the V.C. He was a man absolutely without fear and commanded the respect and affections of his Company to such an extent that I think every man would have cheerfully died for him."

The Padre of his battalion wrote to his father: "We all loved him, and the camaraderie that existed between him and the other officers was really extraordinary. It was just like him to give his life in looking after one of his men."

"He was a very gallant officer and liked by all," wrote his Commanding Officer.

Second Lieutenant Alexander was mentioned in Dispatches "for gallant and distinguished service in the Field."