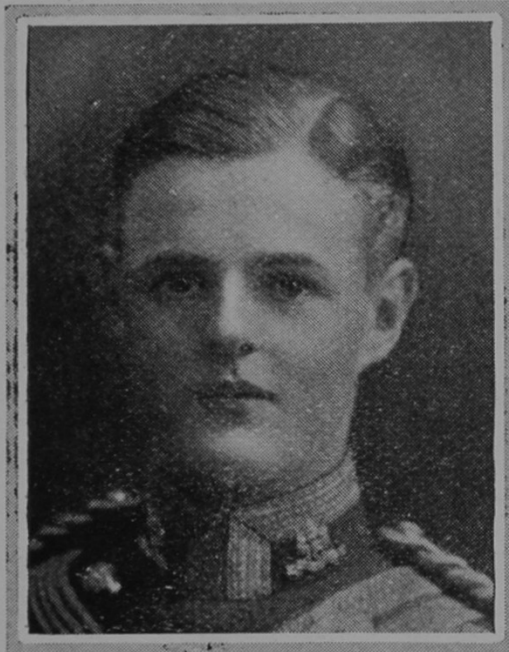


**LIEUTENANT ROWLAND AURIOL  
JAMES BEECH, 16th (THE QUEEN'S)  
LANCERS,**



who was killed in action near Ypres on the 21st February, 1915, was the elder son of Lieutenant-Colonel and Mrs. Beech, of Brandon Hall, Warwickshire, and The Shawe Cheadle, Staffordshire. His younger brother, Captain

D. C. M. Beech, is serving with the 20th Hussars. His brother-in-law, Captain A. W. Macarthur Onslow, 16th Lancers, was killed in action in France on the 5th November, 1914.

Born on the 22nd August, 1888, Lieutenant Beech was educated at Eton and the R.M.C., Sandhurst, from which he was gazetted to the 16th Lancers in October, 1908, being promoted Lieutenant in January, 1911. At the time of his death he was the Senior Subaltern in his regiment. For his services in the war he was mentioned in Sir John French's Despatch of the 8th October, 1914.

"We all loved his cheery, honest, gallant spirit," writes a General Officer, "as it was worth so very much to his regiment. His loss is a tremendous one to us all. But if you will let me comfort you, who can understand something of what that loss is, let me say that his gallant, undaunted spirit and influence still survive, and that this must lead us to face this blow straight, and that I am sure his spirit is there, helping us each in our sphere

to carry on the great struggle with courage to the end he died to attain. You know Jim was hit rushing forward gallantly at the head of his troop, and that his action, together with that of three other officers, saved the situation and prevented the Germans gaining anything of consequence."

A Brigadier-General, previously Commandant at the Cavalry School, Netheravon, wrote: "There was no better officer than Jim Beech in this or any other brigade. He was quite everything that a modern cavalry Subaltern should be. I knew him so well, as he was at Netheravon when I was Commandant there; and, although out here from the beginning, there was never a cheerier or better fellow, and I am sure that is the opinion of everyone who knew him, and I feel that he is one more of my many friends that I have lost."

A Private, since killed, gave the following account of the fighting: "I cannot tell you where the engagement took place; we have been in the vicinity before, and to get to it the troops are subject to three fires—from front, from left and right flanks, so curiously does the firing line bend in this district. Before actually arriving at the above place, we were held in reserve in a once beautiful State schoolroom, at the present time practically in

ruins. Several times the Germans shelled it, and we had to get into the cellars. Whilst here eighteen of us had to go out to make a second attempt to get a military motor out of a Jack Johnson hole in the road. The Germans shelled the first party away; however, we had better luck, and managed the job. Next morning we were called upon to support the French, and when returning day-break had come, with the result that Major Neeve (Officer Commanding, 'A' Squad, since killed) split us in small parties, and sent us back to our destination; but German Field Artillery spotted us, and sent shrapnel over. We only had one killed and five wounded, whereas had we marched back in one body God only knows what would have happened. After this we proceeded to the trenches, and nothing very exciting happened until Monday morning. I should tell you that some of our trenches were as near as twelve to fifteen yards from the Germans. I was just finishing my three hours' sentry, looking over the top of the trench, excepting of course, when flare lights come, and then one has to duck, and rapidly, too. (I was with a Stratford fellow.) I suppose the time must have been about six in the morning, for it was almost dark, when an explosion took place. My chum and I, of course, with other chaps in reserve.

immediately manned our loopholes, and I think were mostly under the impression that we were being shelled. But we were soon to know. They had mined the trenches of 'D' Squadron, and were making an attack. Fellows were dropping everywhere and, being dark, it was d—— hard to sift things out until our officers saw what was required. Lieutenant Beech, of 'A' Squadron, claimed all the men near him, and he himself gave each a push-up out of knee-deep mud, and we scrambled out into another trench, closer up to where the Germans were pouring through. Here we let them have it, and, incidentally, covered the fire of our Maxim gun behind us, which played the devil with the Square-heads. Mr. Beech did not get into the trench with us, but crouched behind, observing our fire, etc., and I happened to turn round and noticed him drop on his face."

A Captain of his regiment wrote : " I need not tell you what a gap Jim has left behind him in the regiment : it seems still almost impossible to believe that he, the brightest and most cheerful of all, has gone. He was so full of life and the joy of living. The only consolation is that he died splendidly, helping to save what looked like a very critical situation for some minutes. . . . Poor Jim was shot rushing forward with a few men to throw bombs into the crater of the explosion which was full of Germans."

Another Officer stated : " Jim was always so full of life and so cheery. He did not know what fear was, and was such an absolute gentleman. It would be impossible to find a more ideal cavalry officer. I always picture him now to myself riding, as I always thought he rode, so beautifully. I never felt so miserable all the war as when I heard that Jim had been shot. I came up the

trenches, after it had happened, and asked what had happened to him. I was told, as you, of course, now know, that Jim was bringing up some men, telling them to follow him up one of the communication trenches, with his usual contempt for the Germans. He had not jumped down into the communication trench, and just as he was going to he was shot in the head. He died immediately, without any pain, and none of his men who were with him then were hit."

A brother Officer wrote : " I assure you Jim was the life and soul of the whole squadron, and his cheeriness under any circumstances was simply wonderful, and I cannot describe to you how much the squadron appreciated him, especially his own troop. I was censoring the men's letters to-day, and I wish you could have seen some of the things they said about him. They said they could never possibly have such a good troop officer, and they would have done anything to save him."

One more extract may perhaps be given, that from a letter of a Sergeant : " A finer officer and leader we could never wish for, as he was always very cheerful, even in the greatest danger. He always had a smile and a joke, encouraging his men, who loved him very much, as he always studied the comfort of his men. The saying amongst his troop now is, whenever they go into action, ' Oh ! if only we had Mr. Beech with us now, we should

feel far happier.' But a good cavalry officer and leader, like your son was, cannot be trained in a few months." He was one of the best horsemen in a regiment noted for its fine riders, and, as a polo player in the International Tournament in 1914, he helped his team to get into the semi-final round. He loved fox-hunting, and there were few finer riders to hounds. He was a successful competitor in the summer of 1914 at the International Horse Show at Olympia, where he took part in several jumping contests. Of a frank and engaging disposition, Lieutenant Beech's early death aroused the keenest sorrow and sympathy among all who had known him.

Source : The Bond Of Sacrifice Vol 2