

## **Names on Steep War Memorial: Lewis and Albert Cranstone**

### **3555 Corporal Lewis Cranstone, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Rifle Brigade**

Died of illness 20<sup>th</sup> January 1915

### **12894 Private Albert Cranstone, 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment**

Killed in action 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916

#### **The Cranstone family**

Lewis and Albert Cranstone appear to have been brothers. Their father, Joseph Cranstone, a bricklayer, had originated from Pirbright in Surrey. In 1872 he married a twenty two year old East Meon girl named Harriett Underwood, the wedding taking place in Steep church. The couple went on to have eleven children, three of whom died in infancy; Albert and Lewis were the youngest of the family. Albert was born in Langrish in 1888 and Lewis was born 1890 in Steep. The church registers, record that in October 1892, Lewis was baptised at Steep church. In 1891, the family was living 'near Aldersnap'; by 1901 they were at 6 Reservoir Cottages and then later at School Lane, Sheet. Both boys had been members of Steep church choir and both attended Steep School. Albert left school in 1902 to become a newspaper boy, but by the age of twenty one he had become a domestic gardener. Lewis, the younger brother, left school in 1904 to do farm work. Yet both responded to Kitchener's call to arms and joined up to serve in the army.

#### Lewis Cranstone

Lewis served with 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Rifle Brigade. He had become a corporal by January 1915 when he died of an illness, aged 22 years, in hospital at Bois Guillume, France. He is buried in the Communal Cemetery there. He was entitled to the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory medal 1914-19.

#### Albert Cranstone

Albert fought bravely as a private with 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment in the battle of the Somme, north-east of Hamel. Losses were devastating - 570 men from the Hampshires went into action that day. Casualties were 17 officers and 440 other ranks. Albert died aged 27 years on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916 - just over a year after the death of his brother. He was entitled to the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-19. He is buried in Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France.

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Fran Box 7/2014  
[franboxsteep@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:franboxsteep@yahoo.co.uk)