The Baxters were a Tansor family of several generations standing. Harry was the eldest son of John and Sarah Ann Baxter, and was born in 1880. His younger brother Herbert John was born six years later. The brothers lived in Tansor with their parents, their six sisters, and a younger brother, George. By 1881, the boys' father John worked on the railway line that ran

The Baxter Brothers

through the village – the railway provided employment for a number of Tansor men at the time. Both boys attended Tansor village school, each of them leaving at the age of thirteen. The 1901 census shows

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The 1901 census, featuring the Baxter family

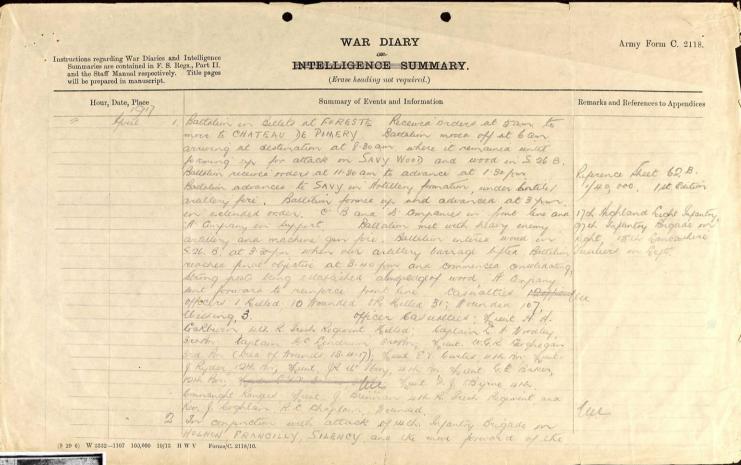
that they were both working after they left school — Harry as a bricklayer, and Herbert as a groom, working with horses. By 1911, like his father, Herbert was working on the railway as a platelayer. It seems likely that Harry's work took him beyond Northamptonshire as he was married in Bedfordshire in 1904. The next census shows him living in Dunstable with his wife Ada and their four-year-old son John. The Muster Roll shows that Harry signed up as a Private with the 3rd Northants, whilst his brother joined the Royal Engineers as a Sapper. Nothing more is known of Herbert's military career

other than the fact that he was fortunate enough to survive and return to Tansor after the war. The 1939 Register shows that he was still living here then, alongside his widowed mother and his sister Mary. Due to the vagaries of the survival of the war records, we can piece together more about Harry. As was often the case, Harry was transferred from his initial regiment. First, he moved to the Middlesex Regiment, and was later transferred to the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In April 1917, Harry's battalion was billeted near Foreste, in the Somme area of France. The war diary for April 1st outlines an operation

focused on Savy Wood. The men marched from Foreste to Savy, about five miles distant,

1.4.17 "Battalion met with heavy enemy artillery and machine gun fire."

facing a hostile response en route. At 3.00 p.m. the men advanced, flanked by units from the 17th Highland Light Infantry, the 97th Infantry Brigade and the 15th Lancashire Fusiliers. The diary records a successful



Pie. Fredk. R. Allen,
Regimental Stretcherbearser,
Killed in France.

E. G. Mead. Pie. Roland Geo. Darby,
Albinor-ed., Dunstable.
Candian Lutonian.
Wounded.
Before going to Canada.
Before going to Canada.
Pie. Darby sparents were well known as butchers.

Gur. S. Pearson,
E. Q. Victoria street,
Dunstable.
Killed in action.

E. Before going to Canada.
Pie. Darby sparents were well known as butchers.

War Diary, 1st April 1917, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

operation, despite losses: 32 were killed, 117 wounded and 3 missing. Sadly, Harry Baxter was amongst those killed. His death was reported in the *Luton News & Bedfordshire Advertiser* on April 26th 1917 (left), alongside his picture (second from right). Harry was one of four Tansor men killed in April 1917, which must have been a very black month for the village as the news filtered through.