

Extract from de Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914–1918

Volume 1, Part 2, page 72

COATES, BASIL MONTGOMERY, 2nd Lieut., 10th (Service Battn.) The Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own), only s. of the late W. Montgomery Coates, Graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and Fellow Bursar and Assistant Tutor of Queens' College, Cambridge; b. Cambridge, 10 Sept. 1893; educ. Perse School, Cambridge; Oundle School, and Queens' College, Cambridge (where he was in the athletic team that won the International Cup); volunteered shortly after the outbreak of war, and was gazette 2nd Lieut. To the 10th Rifle Brigade 22 Sept. 1914: served with the Expeditionary Force in France and was killed in action while on patrol duty 7 Sept. 1915. Lieut.-Col. S. J. Loftus, Commanding 10th Battalion, wrote to Mrs. Montgomery Coates: "Your son was killed yesterday (7 Sept.) while on patrol duty, and unfortunately we were unable to recover his body, which the Germans have taken into their lines, and which they will no doubt give an honourable burial. He was out patrolling with a Corpl. Fenton, crawling about in the crops, was seen by the enemy, fired on and killed, and the corporal crawled home about 300 yards with three bullet wounds. ... A young officer called Everard went out with a man, and at very great personal risk got up to your son, but was fired at so persistently that he was unable to do anything towards moving him. As soon as it was dark another party, under Lieut. Sanstone, went out to the place to try to bring the poor boy in, but only found tracks through the corn, showing the way the enemy had taken him into their lines." Lieut. C. Warren also wrote: "Coates was one of the bravest men I've known. ... He had become very keen about day patrolling, which is risky work and had done several good patrols. One day he was very keen to go out, and although Capt. Lascelles was very unwilling to let him go, he got his permission and started with one other man. The next that was heard were cries for help coming from outside the trenches; his platoon sergeant, who was devoted to him, an old man of 53, dashed out as he was, in a white Guernsey, which, of course, was a most conspicuous thing in the bright light, and he found Corpl. Fenton struggling through our wire. The corporal was wounded in five places, but had managed to get back to get assis-

tance, as Coates had been hit. He described the place, and Everard, one of his best friends, started off with two men to find him; this was a most heroic deed, as he was only 80 yards from the German wire and the Germans were firing machine guns over the place. Our Machine Gun Officer managed with great skill to silence these guns, and Everard got to the spot, but found poor Coates dead. It was a terrible shock to us all, as we were all immensely fond of him. He was so good-natured and had such a charming manners, and was always cheerful and considerate." Unm.