

Arthur Sturman

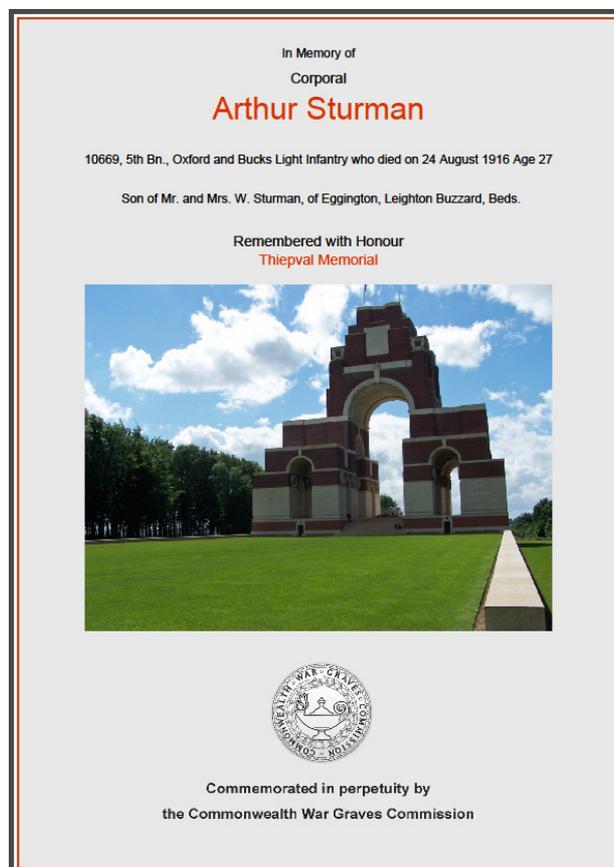
Arthur was born in 1889 in Eggington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. He was the son of William and Annie Sturman. William was a farm labourer.ⁱ

By 1911, age 21, he was working as a footman at the Bletchley Park home of Herbert Samuel Leon, the Liberal politician and city financier.ⁱⁱ It has not been possible to ascertain his connection with Moreton Morrell but it is possible he was working at one of the large houses again as a footman.

However he enlisted in Rugby, joining the 5th (Service) Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 42nd Brigade, 14th (light) Division. He arrived in France on 20th May 1915 and was by the time of his death he was a corporal, army number 10669.

At age 27, he was killed in action on 24th August 1916 during the Battle of Delville Wood.ⁱⁱⁱ

He is remembered Thiepval Memorial and as well as being named on the Moreton Morrell Memorial he is also named and remembered on the Eggington War Memorial where his father and mother lived.



Although no account of the action in which he died has been discovered, the following extracts describes the Battle and concludes that 14th Light Division of which Arthur's regiment was a part, took the Wood on 25th August. Arthur was killed on the 24th August on the eve of the victory.

Extract

"The Battle of Delville Wood, 1916

A subsidiary attack of the Somme Offensive, and fought from July 15 until 3 September 1916, the Battle of Delville Wood saw the capture of the wood that had been skirted during the Battle of Bazentin Ridge when Longueval fell to the British on 9 July.

It was essential to the British that the wood be cleared of Germans before any attack could be launched on the formidable, and notorious, German Switch Line. The task of capturing the wood was handed to the South African Brigade of some 3,150 men, attached to the 9th Scottish Division.

On July 15 at dawn the South African regiment went in following a heavy artillery battle: they managed to clear the southern edge of German forces. The remainder of the wood remained in German hands. Hand to hand fighting ensued until the South Africans were relieved on the night of July 19, having lost 766 dead among the four battalions alone; the dead outnumbered the wounded by four to one.

Throughout poor weather (it rained often) and enemy artillery fire which reached a crescendo of 400 shells a minute, the surrounding landscape was transformed into a mess of broken, stumpy tree roots and massive shell holes. Mud and rainwater covered bodies of South African and German forces alike - many bodies remain in the wood today (which is now in private hands). The Germans lost 9,500 men by August alone.

The wood was never entirely taken by the South African forces, despite huge efforts to do so. [It wasn't until after another month of fierce fighting had taken place, on August 25th that 14th \(Light\) Division finally took the wood and overcame German resistance.^{iv}](#)

ⁱ 1901 Census

ⁱⁱ 1911 Census

ⁱⁱⁱ Warwickshire Roll of Honour 1914 to 2006

^{iv} <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/delvillewood.htm>