

Herbert William Cobbold.

Private, No 33172. 6th Bn. Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry & No.19630. 1st. Royal Warwickshire Rgt.

It was not until around 1912ⁱ that Herbert William Cobbold and his wife Emily arrived in the village of Wellesbourne Hastings. He was the youngest child of ten born to James, a gamekeeper, and his wife Emily. The whole family were all born in the village of Rougham close to the market town of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. Shortly after his birth Herbert was baptised on the 31st July 1881 in the local parish church of St. Mary's.

During the 1880s the family relocated to the nearby village of Beyton where Herbert worked as a gardener. On the 12th October 1904, in the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Suffolk village of Ampton, he married Ethel Maud Burch. The couple left their native county to live in Warwickshire and the village of Ettington where Violet Caroline, the first of their three daughters was born in April 1906. Vera Emily followed a year later and Adelaide in 1911. Herbert continued to work as a domestic gardener and in 1912 moved the family to No. 2 Kineton Rd. in Wellesbourne Hastings. In the autumn of 1918 as the Great War was drawing to its close his wife gave birth to their only son, also named



Church of St. Peter & St. Paul, Ampton, Suffolk.

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In 1915, with the war in its second year and with diminishing numbers of men volunteering for military service, Lord Derby was appointed, on the 11th October, as Director-General of recruiting. Within the terms of what was to become an unsuccessful scheme introduced by him five days later, men between the ages of 18 and 40 could continue to either volunteer or otherwise attest on the condition that they would have to report for service when later called upon. Herbert chose the second of the options and accordingly attested at the recruiting office in Sheep Street, Stratford upon Avon on the 20th November 1915. His classification within the scheme would be 'Class A', indicating that he would be allowed to return home and carry on with his chosen occupation. He was also classed as a member of Section 'B' of the army reserve. By virtue of a man's year of birth and marital status a recruit would be entered into one of a series of groups. Herbert was in Group 40 indicating that he could expect to be mobilised by the 29th May 1916. Voluntary enlistment under the scheme ceased on the 25th December 1915 and conscription was introduced early the following year.

Herbert's military recordⁱⁱ indicates that he was eventually called up in the early days of June 1916. He first set foot on French soil on the third of October and officially posted, on the 4th, to the 1st. Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Service No. 19630). Eight days later he transferred to the 6th Battalion of the Oxford & Bucks. Light Infantry (No. 33172) part of the 60th Brigade, 20th Light Division involved, during the first eighteen



*Ox. & Bucks L.I.
 Cap Badge.*

days of October, in the Battle of Le Transloy, one of the last of the 1916 Somme offensive.

The following year the battalion transferred to the Western Front and the Battles of the Ypres Salient. Herbert arrived back in England on 22nd August 1917. Although not specifically mentioned in his service records as to the reason for his return, notes of his discharge from Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool on the 30th October and again from the Clopton War Hospital, Stratford-on-Avon on the 19th November to the 3rd Bn. Command Depot, Ballyvonare, Buttevant, County Cork, Northern Ireland for recuperation, suggests that he had been wounded on the battlefield.

He does not appear to have returned to operational active service thereafter being posted to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, Ox & Bucks L.I. on his release from hospitalisation. He volunteered to extend his service by a year and was promoted firstly to acting Corporal and then temporary Corporal before attaining the rank of full Corporal on his transfer to the 2nd Battalion on the 1st August 1919. On the 5th September he was put under close arrest, charged with drunkenness whilst on active service, found guilty and reduced to the ranks. He left the army in February 1920.

Herbert was awarded the British War and Victory medals.

He returned to the family home in Kineton Road where he lived for the remaining years of his life. He continued to work as a gardener for the larger houses in the village: Manor House, Wellesbourne House, Walton Wood House and in his later years for the Air Ministry, presumably at the airfield built during World War II. His obituary refers to an accident he suffered five years before his death from which he never recovered. He died in July 1951 and is buried in St. Peter's churchyard in the village. A local man, Victor Chedham represented the Air Ministry at his funeral.

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¹ Obituary (*Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser* 27/7/1951)

ⁱⁱ Herbert William Cobbold Service Record ('Ancestry.com' & 'Find My Past')
The Long, Long Trail(www.1914-1918.net)