

THE FALLEN 1914 - 1918



part two
shenington

THE FALLEN 1914-1918

About “The Fallen” – Part Two

The author of *The Fallen*, a tribute to the men from Alkerton and Shenington who fell in the two world wars, is Alistair Cook of Tysoe Hill Cottage in Shenington.

When former Shenington Green editor Carole Young appealed for information on the six men named on the Alkerton war memorial, Alistair, a confirmed ‘non-historian,’ decided to pursue a fascination cultivated over long dog walks: namely, the lost stories behind the many names engraved on the large chunks of stone that take pride of place in our local villages.

The Fallen, Part Two follows the publishing of Part One in the December 2015 issue of the *Shenington Green*. Part one covered the stories of the men remembered on the Alkerton war memorial; part two honours the men whose names are listed on a plaque in Shenington church and Richard Coles, a young Shenington soldier whose name is honoured on a small wooden plaque hanging just below it.

The Fallen was inspired by the stories of Epwell’s soldiers killed in the wars, compiled by local historian Eric Kaye, who also wrote the story of the Edgehill airfield.

Alistair spent weeks finding the soldiers’ respective regimental details, where they are buried, what they had done, where they lived and the actions that took place on or around the dates they fell. This was all achieved with the help of the internet and a visit to the National Archives in Kew where Alistair was allowed access to all records, free of charge.

After going on his own personal journey, tracing the conclusions to the short lives of Alkerton’s fallen soldiers, Alistair reflects: “I feel that the article is still not finished. Each man’s story could fill the pages of a book and I haven’t done them justice. But I hope this reminds the younger amongst us of the futility of war; that the terrible, incomprehensible things that took place 100 years ago happened again a few years later; and are still happening.”

*That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.*

from *The Soldier* by Rupert Brooke

JUNE 1916



Gunner Richard Bryan

128th (Oxford), Heavy Battery Royal Garrison Artillery
Service No. 51

Richard 'Dick' Bryan was a labourer on a farm in Shenington. He was married to Sarah who was born in the village and in 1911 they had two sons, Dudley and Lesley. Dick joined the Oxford section of the Royal Garrison Artillery, no doubt his physical stature and working knowledge of horses and wagons made Dick ideally suited to the rigours of moving heavy artillery across the mud laden fields of Flanders.

Artillery units in World War I played a vital role in counteracting the stalemate that was trench warfare. Noted WWI historian, John Terraine, stated in his book *White Heat* 'the war 1914-1918 was an artillery war: artillery was a battle winner; artillery was what caused the greatest loss of life, the most dreadful wounds and the deepest fear.'

The 128th Heavy Battery was equipped with heavy 60 lbs 5 inch guns (the weight of the high explosive shell and the barrel size). The 128th was tasked with firing on enemy trenches and disrupting the enemy's supply lines and troop build-ups. Deploying to France in March 1916, they moved to the NW sector of the front near the town of Arras. Artillery units were generally behind the 'lines,' out of sight, sometimes several miles behind the front line however this did not make the job any less onerous as it was the German artillery's job to 'neutralise' the threat posed by the British artillery.

A war diary entry by Sergeant Fred Hope of 212 Siege Battery, which was 'dug in' in and around the same sector as Dick, gives us idea of what daily life was like for Dick and his gun crew in France. It is interesting to note the mention of gas. Chemical weapons were first used in WWI but their use constituted a war crime violating the 1899 and 1907 Hague declarations. Unfortunately, this did not stop the extensive use of poison gas on the field of battle. By the war's end, all sides were using Phosgene, Chlorine and mustard gas agents to dreadful effect.

March 23rd left for new position, stayed in barn all night, arrived new position (Aix Noullette)

March 27th Heavy firing, took Vimy on Easter Monday – snowing all the time.

April 24th Left for Lievin.

April 25th RNAS wounded and died in hospital. Marshall wounded.

April 26th Gas attack.

April 27th Shelled out, moved guns to new positions.

May 4th Lieutenant Fauch killed.

May 7th Gas attack all night.

May 8th Pemberth and Robertson wounded.

May 13th Heavily shelled. Andrews, Chandler, Rymer and Mc Illworth killed.

May 16th & 17th Very quiet.

May 19th Very severely shelled. Bombardier Wiltshire killed also Hobby and four others wounded. Myself blown through passage but unhurt. Same day put barbed wire around guns. Limber (a two wheeled field carriage) blew up, no. 3 and 4 gun out of action.

May 21st went to Aix Noulette for 7 days' rest.

June 7th (birthday) Heavily shelled. Bombardier Downey, Gunner Charge, Entwistle, Whittaker, Hopkins and Johnson killed. Cook, Parr and Pallyman wounded. Several others shook up and slightly shell-shocked.

Gunner Dick Bryan was killed in action on the 6th June 1917. He was 29 years old. Presumably his battery was hit by enemy shell fire as he fell alongside his gun crew colleagues Gunners E. Cox, T.H Cripps and Weyman. They today lie in the Brandhoek Military Cemetery. Dick's Grave reference is Plot I I. Row C. No. 10.



Dick is buried in the same military cemetery as Second Lieutenant Guy Crawford-Wood from Alkerton (Grave ref. 11.J.2. - killed in action on the 1st July 1916).

SEPTEMBER 1916



Private George Henry Coles

2nd Battalion,

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Service No. 19416

George's father, who was also named George Henry, was a market garden manager in the village of Mickleton Campden, Gloucestershire. His mother was Annie Elizabeth and he had a sister called Alice and a brother born after 1911.

"Schlacht an der Somme"

1st July – 18th November 1916. The Battle of the Somme was one of the largest battles of the first world war in which more than one million men were wounded or killed, making it arguably the bloodiest battle in human history. The battle sadly claimed the lives of three Alkerton and Shenington men, Guy Crawford-Wood, Percy Perkins and George Coles.



Chantilly Chateau near Paris

The general strategic position for the Somme offensive was decided at the Chantilly conference earlier in the year where the allied generals agreed a combined simultaneous offensive on the eastern front, by the Russian army, on the Italian front, by the Italians, and on the western front by the Franco-British armies. Sir Douglas Haig, who replaced Sir John French as commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, favoured a British offensive in Flanders to drive the Germans from the Belgian coast thus ending the U-boat threat

from channel ports and waters. However, the French commander, General Joseph Joffre, overruled and ordered a combined offensive where the two armies met, astride the Somme River in Picardy.

On the 21st of February the detailed battle plans were thrown in to chaos when the German army launched a bitter offensive to the south at Verdun. The defence of Verdun was vitally important to the French as the town epitomised the French fight for survival and nationhood. For centuries Verdun has played an important part in the defence of the country due to its strategic location on the river Meuse. 'Attila the Hun' failed to seize the town in the 5th century and the French were in no mind to allow it to fall to the Kaiser in February 1916! The French were therefore forced to redeploy many divisions away from the Somme build-up. This changed significantly the Somme battle plan from an expected decisive victory to a smaller diversionary battle used only to relieve pressure on the French army at Verdun.

The first day of the Somme offensive, 1st July 1916, began 141 days of fierce battle that would lead to an unimaginable 420,000 British casualties, 57,470 on the first day alone, 200,000 French casualties and approximately 500,000 German (German losses during this period are estimates due to the loss of many records during allied bombings in the second world war). The Battle, planned as a decisive breakthrough, is looked at by modern historians as a futile slaughter of young men. The lost generation. By November, the battle had ended in stalemate, with the Anglo French armies only able to advance five miles into German held territory.

The Ox & Bucks Light infantry saw extensive service during the battle of the Somme, suffering heavily during the offensive. The regiment formed part of the 20th Light Division 60th Service Battalion. On the 28th July, the 2nd Battalion, with George in the ranks, moved to front line trenches near Waterlot Farm, which lies a few 100 metres to the north of the village of Guillemont. The area was of significant strategic importance as attacks in this area were intended to advance the right flank of the 4th British army and eliminate the salient further to the north around Deville wood. (A salient is a 'bulge' in the front line that allows the enemy to fire on you from three sides.)

We know the fighting in this area was very fierce. Observed by historian Wilfred Miles in the British Official history, the defence of Guillemont was judged to be the best performance of the war by the German forces on the western front. Likely to be in the mix of fighting, George was severely wounded during the day. It appears that he was evacuated west to the XIV Corps dressing station at Sailly-le-Sec near Albert on the river Somme. Sadly, on the 3rd September, George died of the injuries he received during the battle. He was 20 years old.



Today George lies in the Dive Copse British Cemetery Grave ref. plot 2 row H no.5



The inscription reads "Gone but not Forgotten" From his Loving Mother Sister & Brother.

MAY 1917



Private Fred Harris

2nd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Service number 29987

Fred was a labourer on a farm in Shenington. He lived with his mother, Sarah Ann Harris, who was a widower. Sarah was born in Shenington but Fred was born in Aston-le-Walls so it appears that the family moved around in the early years, finally settling in Shenington before Fred signed up for active service.

Fred initially joined the local Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire light Infantry, Service No. 22940, the "Oblie Gobbles" before being transferred to the Royal Warwickshire. The 22nd Brigade landed in Zeebrugge as part of the 7th Division in October 1914 for service on the western front. It is interesting to note that Bernard Law Montgomery was a junior officer in the Royal Warwickshire and whilst serving at the front was shot through the right lung. After convalescing he returned to the front as a staff officer and served at the Battle of Arras alongside Private Fred Harris.

The Battle of Arras was another costly British offensive lasting from the 9th April until 16th May 1917. For much of the war, the opposing armies were at stalemate with a continuous line of trenches stretching from the Belgian coast to Switzerland. In essence, the allied objective from early 1915 was to break through the German defences and engage the numerically inferior German army in a fast moving and fluid war in the west. The Arras offensive was conceived to bring this plan about and it was thought by the general staff that if successful it would end the war in 48 hours!

The British effort at Arras was to be a broad front from Vimy in the North West to Bullecourt in the south east. The battle, planned thoroughly, drew significantly on the lessons learned from the Somme and Verdun offensives the previous year. This time the plan involved concentrating artillery fire on a narrow 11 mile stretch of the line from Vimy Ridge down to Neuville Vitasse in the south. Preparation for the assault was extensive and innovative and included significant tunnelling and mining under enemy trenches, the development of aerial reconnaissance and ranging, introducing the artillery 'creeping barrage' and 'counter battery' fire. Preliminary bombardment for the assault started on the 20th March and by 4th April, the British artillery units had fired 2,689,000 high explosive shells on to the enemy positions. This is over a million more shells than had been fired in the whole of the Somme offensive a year earlier.

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment was involved in the action from the outset. When at 05:30 the whistle blew to signify time to clamber out of the trenches, it was snowing heavily hampering movement of the troops and equipment. However, by the standards

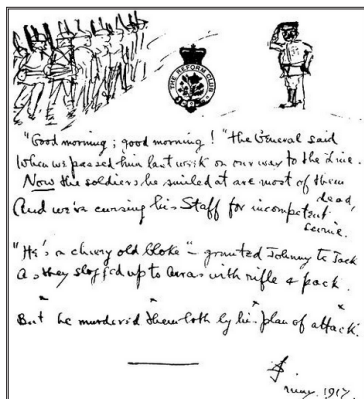
of the western front the territorial gains on the first two days were nothing short of spectacular. A great deal of ground was gained for relatively few casualties and a number of strategic points were captured. But by the end of the offensive in May, the British had suffered over 150,000 soldiers killed or wounded and had gained little ground since the first day in April.

Fred and his unit were likely to have been involved in the second phase of the assault on the town of Bullecourt. After the first attempt to capture the town in early April was repelled, another attack was planned for April 20th but the date kept being put back until the morning of the 3rd May. At 03:45, units of the Royal Warwickshire attacked the town for the second time. Sadly, during this action Fred was killed instantly whilst attacking the enemy positions.

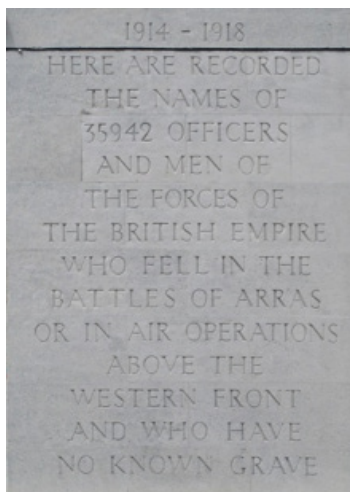
Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'The General' captures the mood of the soldiers as they prepared for the battle of Arras.

*Good morning; good morning! The General said
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.*

But he did for them both by this plan of attack.



Private Fred Harris
has no known grave
and is remembered to
this day on Panel 3 of
the Arras Memorial.
He was 39 years old.



AUGUST 1917



Private Geoffrey William Whitmore Marshall

4th Battalion

Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Service No.200633, Previous service No. 2638

Geoffrey was born on the 24th July 1894 to William Edward Marshall and Annie Caroline. They lived in the Manor House in Barcheston Warwickshire. Geoffrey's father William was a farmer and miller, possibly also a major land owner and employer, as in 1911 there were 19 people living in the Manor house with the family. In 1911, at the age of 16, Geoffrey had moved away from the family home and was living with, Joseph and Mary Lawson at 70 Manor Road in Rugby. Joseph Lawson was an ironstone merchant's clerk. Whilst living in Rugby, young Geoffrey worked as a bookseller's apprentice.

Geoffrey joined the 4th Battalion of the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry on 1st September 1914 at the start of the Great War. Rather astonishingly, Geoffrey managed to survive the horrors of the many battles and offensives of the war until he was invalided out of the service on the 16th June 1917 due to 'sickness.'

Following his discharge, Geoffrey lived for only two months as his death was registered in Banbury in September of 1917. Although Geoffrey's death, at the age of 23, was not related to enemy action, it was no doubt exacerbated by his two years and nine months' active service in one of the most horrendous theatres of war in history.

Geoffrey's discharge papers state that he was released from the army under Kings Regulations Paragraph 392 section XVI. The regulation lists a number of discharge criteria, the most appropriate in Geoffrey's case would be 'unfit for further active service.' It is important to note the term 'sickness' used in his discharge rules out wounding from shrapnel or gunfire. Geoffrey's medical discharge was initially thought to be due to poison gas, disease or shell shock, which caused so many men to be invalided out of the army under the 'sickness' category. However, on reviewing the death certificate, it is revealed that Geoffrey's death was sadly caused by an equally determined enemy, and one we are still actively fighting today, cancer.

The fact that Geoffrey only lived for two months following discharge indicates that he was in the final stages of the disease and likely to have been in pain for many months and unlikely to, whilst serving at the front, have been properly diagnosed or treated. The army would categorise cases for medical discharge in a rather cold and brutal way and in keeping with the times. Suspicious of troops displaying a lack of moral fibre, cases for medical discharge were thoroughly reviewed and checked. It would have taken time to convince the medical orderlies that he was no longer fit for further service.

As an example of the bureaucracy involved in discharge cases, the category 'shell concussion,' if caused by reported enemy action, would have a letter 'W' prefixed to the casualty report. In this case the patient would be classed as wounded and be entitled to wear, on the arm of his uniform, a 'wounded stripe'. If however the 'shell concussion' did not follow an enemy shell explosion then he was to be labelled 'S' for sickness and was therefore, not entitled to wear the wounded stripe nor to receive a war pension. However, it is clear that 'S' on Geoffrey's discharge papers indicated clearly that in June he was very ill and no longer fit for duty.

Following his discharge from the army, Geoffrey was awarded the 'Silver War Badge', in conjunction with the normal campaign medals. It is interesting to note that the 'Silver War Badge' was given to personnel who had been honourably discharged from the forces due to wounds or sickness. The badge was to be worn on the right breast of civilian clothes. At the time there was a practice by some women of presenting white feathers, to signify cowardice, to men who were seen in the street not wearing the king's uniform. Displaying the badge clearly would indicate previous active service and deflect criticism from ladies toting the feathers. Each badge was carefully regulated and individually numbered; Geoffrey's badge was number 200,198.

On the 2nd August 1917 Geoffrey, who lived in Senendone House, the house just behind the chestnut tree on Shenington Green, died from his illness.



Private Geoffrey William Whitmore Marshall,
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry,
died at the age of 23 and today lies amongst us
in the church yard of the Holy Trinity Shenington.

OCTOBER 1917



Private Sidney Joseph Upton

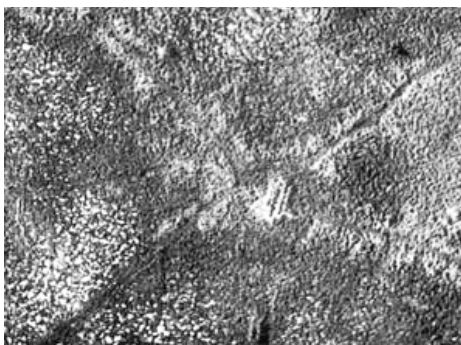
7th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

Service No. G/68098

Born in 1888, Sidney was the only son of Joseph Upton and Annie Eliza Upton nee Cox from Ledwell. Sidney's father was a farm labourer and at the age of 22, in 1911, Sidney was working as a shepherd on the farm. Sidney was born in Shenington and the family resided in a house near the Bell.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 Sidney would have been 26. It is likely that he signed up in the early stages but it is also possible that he delayed joining up until the passing of the military service act in January 1916. The act specified that men from 18 to 41 years old were liable called up for service unless they were married, widowed with children, in the navy, a minister of religion or working in a reserve occupation. Rather interestingly, Sidney married Annie Elizabeth Pratt in the spring of 1916 and they set up home in Woodbine cottage Great Bourton. In May, the government, presumably because recruiting levels were still down or casualties so great, passed a second act extending liability for military service to all married men up to the age of 41. If it was Sid's intention to 'dodge the draft' by marrying Annie earlier in the year then sadly, the authorities had now closed that door to him. Sidney initially joined the 2nd/5th the Queens Royal West Surrey regiment, eventually transferring to the London Regiment Royal Fusiliers.

In late June 1917, the 47th Division, which included the Royal Fusiliers, transferred north from Arras to join the British 5th Army near Ypres. At the time, this was a quiet sector; however, the talk amongst the officers was that there was soon to be push towards a small village called Passchendaele. The 3rd Battle of Ypres also known as the battle of Passchendaele was fought from July to November for control of the small ridges to the south and east of the town of Ypres.



The village of Passchendaele before and after the battle July - Nov 1917.

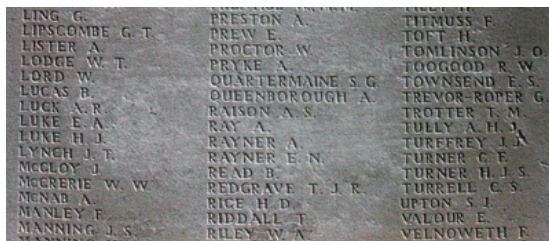
The 1917 Passchendaele campaign, proposed by Field Marshal Douglas Haig, in Flanders was controversial. The prime minister, Lloyd George, opposed the plan as did General Foch the Allied supreme commander. Haig only received approval from the war cabinet for the venture in late July. The area of concern for the PM and the war cabinet, was the justification for perusing an offensive in Flanders rather than awaiting the arrival of the American Expeditionary Force. America had declared war on Germany on the 6th May 1917 and by early July was in the process of mobilising and deploying its vast armies.

During the first phase of the battle, the allies again attempted to gain ground but heavy rain and mud made rapid movement difficult and prevented forward artillery units from supporting the front line troops. The initial phase did not go well. Following heavy fighting on one day, over 13,000 men lay dead or wounded in 'no mans land.' Due to the conditions and lack of progress, General Haig finally agreed to halt the attacks until both the weather improved and the support units were better prepared. The second phase of the battle began on the 30th October and aimed to gain a base for the final assault on Passchendaele.

The Royal Fusiliers and Sid Upton were tasked with attacking the southern flank which they did effectively, quickly capturing Crest Farm. The Northern flank attacks met with exceptional German resistance however. The Canadian 3rd Division eventually captured Vapour Farm but remained short of its final planned objective. During this day of brutal fighting, Sid was killed instantly whilst attacking enemy positions. He has no known grave. He was 29 years old.

A German staff publication following the war stated that "Germany has been brought to near certain destruction by the Flanders battle of 1917." By the end of October, America was deploying around 300,000 troops per month into the western theatre. Lloyd George wrote "Passchendaele was indeed one of the greatest disasters of the war... No soldier of any intelligence defends this senseless campaign." Allied losses were 244,897 for the four months the battle raged, the German losses were estimated to be over 400,000.

Private Sidney Upton, 7th Battalion, London Regiment Royal Fusiliers, is remembered to this day on the Tyne Cot Memorial.



On the 28th March 1918, a sum of £3 pounds 13 shillings and tuppence was paid to Sid's new wife Annie in respect to his wartime service.

DECEMBER 1918



Private Frederick Bennett

Royal Army Service Corps

Service No. S4/184629

Frederick was the son of Richard and Fanny Bennett. The family – which, in 1911, included Frederick's two sisters Emma and Dorothy and a brother, born after 1911 – lived and worked in Shenington. They ran the village bakery and Frederick, in 1911, was an assistant baker in the business. It is therefore no surprise and possibly a source of great pride and relief, that Frederick was directed into the bakery division of the Army Service Corps.

Joining up in November 1915 at the age of 22, he did well in his initial training with the commanding offices of 'K' (supply) Coy ACS commenting that in field bakery tests "Frederick proved himself first hand." Frederick was mobilised for war on the 16th May 1916 but remained in England until the 3rd November 1917 when he was posted to the ACS Bakery Base Depot in Le Havre France.

The Royal Army Service Corps was the unit responsible for keeping the British army supplied with all its provisions barring weaponry, military equipment and ammunition, which fell under the remit of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. The Army Service corps received its 'Royal' prefix in 1918, in recognition for its outstanding work during the conflict. It was an unsung hero for most of the war and called, rather disparagingly 'Ally Slopers Cavalry'. The Army could not function without food, it could not move without horses or vehicles; it was the ASC's job to provide them.

During the war the vast majority of supplies came from Britain. Using horses, motor vehicles, railways and canals, the ASC performed prodigious feats of logistics and was one of the great strengths of the war. Incredibly, at its height, the corps numbered over 315,000 men and 10,000 officers. Towards the end of the war Frederick's bakery unit was producing over 90,000 lbs or approximately 45,000 loaves of bread per month.

Frederick remained with the 1st Base Depot ACS in Le Havre until 4th July 1917 when he was posted to the 2nd Battalion to join ACS units 'in the field' around Rouen. Here he worked with many units returning from the front, even at one point acting as a 'batman' for officers of the Indian Cavalry. On the 30th August 1918, Frederick was once again transferred, this time to the labour corps for a short period before eventually being sent back on 10th October 1918, to his original ACS unit. Frederick's transfer out of the labour corps was due to a very bad cough and fatigue making him unfit for heavy labouring duties.

October 10th 1918 was one month and one day from the end of hostilities on the western front. The Armistice, which importantly was not an official surrender, would end the fighting at 11am on the 11th November. The historic document would be signed in a railway carriage in a forest in Compiègne near Paris and would eventually lead to the Paris Peace conference and the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. Interestingly, on the 22nd June 1940, a few years later, a swastika bedecked staff car containing a certain Adolf Hitler would sweep into the same forest and park alongside the same railway carriage in which the Armistice was signed. Hitler had demanded it and he would receive France's official surrender in the carriage of General Foch's private train.

On 11th November 1918, the 'Great War' ended. The whole of the country and the empire joined in a period of great celebration and relief. In the villages of Shenington and Alkerton, no doubt, the sense of thanksgiving would have been great. Villagers would reflect on the war's impact on them, feeling sadness at the losses, joy at the return of loved ones and uncertainty at what the future held.

It is possible that in the village bakery, the relief must have been tangible, relief for Frederick's survival and great joy at the prospect of his return. Unfortunately, in France the news was not good. Frederick's health was deteriorating. He was suffering with chest pain, fever and coughing to the extent that on the 27th November he was admitted to No. 40 Stationary Hospital royal army medical corps in Harfleur. Sadly, with failing health, on the 4th December at 12:40 p.m., Private Frederick Bennett died of Bronchial-Pneumonia. His death was explained in an official telegram sent to the bakery in Shenington as (actual spelling) "dye to exposure experienced on ordinary military duty." He was 25 years old. The Great War, 23 days after the cessation of hostilities, had claimed its final Shenington and Alkerton victim.



Private Frederick Bennett Royal Army Service Corps Horse Transport & Supplies lies in Sainte Marie Cemetery Le Havre. Ref. Div 62. Plot 4. Row G. No.5.

DECEMBER 1940



Private Richard Alan (Dick) Coles

4th Battalion,

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Service No. 5388062

Dick was the son of George and Millicent Coles of Shenington. The family owned and served in the village shop on the green. Born in 1919 Richard was 20 years old when on the 1st of September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. In a series of events, that closely mirrors the story of 1914 and James (Ben) Bolton from Alkerton, Richard joins the 4th Battalion of the O.B.L.I., and is soon in France as a member of the British Expeditionary Force.

The 4th Battalion was sent to France in September 1939 and mainly assembled along the Belgian-France border during the 'Phoney War' before the outbreak of hostilities in May of 1940. During the Battle of France the BEF were quickly pushed back through Belgium and north western France, forcing its evacuation from several ports along the North French coastline in an operation called 'Operation Dynamo' simply known to us all as Dunkirk. The BEF were unable to repel the German advance and it became clear that the channel ports were threatened. British forces were sent to defend Calais and Boulogne but after fighting both ports were captured. The BEF were then ordered to withdraw to Dunkirk. Having sustained heavy losses during the German advance the remainder of the BEF some 198,000 British, including Private Dick Coles along with 140,000 French and Belgian troops were evacuated off the beaches of Dunkirk between the 26th May and 4th June 1940. Prime Minister Winston Churchill in his "we will fight them on the beaches" speech hailed their rescue as a miracle of deliverance whilst the German commanders recognised it as one of the major mistakes of the Second World War.

Safely aboard a Royal Navy ship bound for Plymouth Dick was diagnosed with Abdominal Tuberculosis and entered hospital in Devon on his return to England. TB is a bacterial infection and it is likely that Dick picked up the disease from a wound or the insanitary conditions during the days before his evacuation from France. Although receiving visits in hospital from his parents and on one occasion returning home to Shenington to convalesce for a few days his condition did not improve and sadly Dick died from the illness on Christmas day 1940, he was 21 years of age.



**Today Dick lies amongst us
in the church yard of the
Holy Trinity in Shenington.**

It is interesting to note that the American commander, General Pershing, and the Allied Supreme commander, General Foch, were very unhappy with the Armistice and the subsequent Versailles peace treaty. They both believed that as Germany had not been beaten they would one day be fighting them again. General Foch was even more prescient exclaiming after reading the Versailles treaty in June 1919, "This isn't peace, it is a cease-fire for 20 years!" In September 1939, 20 years and two months later, Britain and France declared war on Germany. The men and women of Alkerton and Shenington would, once again, be prepared to bravely defend Europe and the free world from evil and tyranny.



Richard Coles, photographed 8 June 1940.

The Fallen - "*Gone but not forgotten*" - lovingly remembered by the villagers of Alkerton and Shenington 2016.

Special thanks to Wikipedia, The Long Long Trail, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The National Archives, and The War Graves Photographic Project.

Alistair Cook, Tysoe Hill cottage 22nd April 2016.