

FORGET ME NOT

FREDERICK ELLIOT KNIGHT DIANE HORSFIELD'S GRANDAD

My grandad Frederick was born on the 15th January 1891 in Nottingham. He was a regular soldier when the First World War broke out having joined the 1st battalion The Grenadier Guards on 31st December 1907. His seven year term of service was due to expire on 31st December 1914; he didn't leave the Grenadier Guards until 31st December 1919 and at this point he was transferred to the Army Reserve Class B.

Frederick was part of the British Expeditionary Force, allegedly referred to by the Kaiser as that "contemptible little army" and arrived in France on 4th October 1914. He was wounded for the first time on 9th November 1914 during the first battle of Ypres. At First Ypres all but four officers and two hundred men of the 1st Battalion fell in action, so you could say that he was fortunate to have been wounded. Frederick was shipped back to England to recover from his wounds and did not return to France until January 1917. He was wounded again in April 1918 and again on 19th October 1918. Like many men who fought in the war, Frederick never spoke about his experiences but I was told by my father that the scars from the shrapnel wounds he sustained were clearly visible on his back and legs. Grandad served in the Home Guard during the Second World War and died in 1961.

I was four when my grandad died so I don't really remember him. When my sister and I were clearing out my dad's house I was thrilled to find the little brass tin issued to soldiers by Princess Mary at Christmas 1914 that must have belonged to grandad. It is very battered and tarnished and the chocolate and cigarettes are gone but inside I found the dog tag that my dad wore during the Second World War. This little box is now one of my most treasured possessions.



My Dad Edward is on the far right



ARTHUR HENRY RILEY ENID BOESSER'S SECOND COUSIN

Arthur was born in 1893, the sixth of the eleven children of Arthur and Mary Riley of Twyford. Arthur Senior was an agricultural labourer and grazier. Arthur and his older brother Herbert worked as agricultural labourers. In 1911 they emigrated together to Australia in search of a better life. They sailed from London to Adelaide on 13th October 1911 on the Orient Line's Otranto. They lived and worked in the State of Victoria, Arthur working as a timberman and Herbert as a timber orderman.

In July 1915 Arthur aged 22 and Herbert aged 30 enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. They were both appointed to C Company 29th/Battalion 8th Infantry Brigade, Arthur was a Gunner.

In December 1915 they embarked on HMAT Ascanius to disembark at Port Suez, Egypt, where the Battalion undertook defensive duties, to protect the Suez Canal from Ottoman forces. In June 1916 they embarked the troopship HMAT Tunisia in Alexandria, bound for France. In the meantime Arthur had been transferred to the 49th Battalion so on disembarkation in Marseilles their paths separated.

Herbert was seriously wounded in action in November 1916. He died from his injuries in Rouen Hospital in December, he was 31 years of age. He is buried in St Sever Cemetery Extension Rouen.

Arthur was wounded in action on three occasions; in December 1916 he suffered gunshot wounds to his arm followed, in November 1917 and October 1918, by poisoning as the result of gas shelling. He was returned to hospital in England twice, before returning to his unit in France. There is record of Arthur being absent without leave in England in March 1918 for four weeks, it can only be surmised that this was the result of the trauma he had suffered, having been returned to his unit and action within days of each incident of being wounded in action.

Arthur was granted furlough (leave) on 25 December 1918 to return to England. Tragedy had struck at home, due to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918. An article in the Melton Mowbray Times reports that five members of Arthur's family had died in the flu epidemic during December; four of his brothers and a sister-in-law. The family gravestone in Twyford churchyard commemorates their deaths and also that of Herbert who died in Rouen.

Arthur returned to France to be formally discharged from the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force on 12 February 1919 having completed 3 years 215 days of service. He never returned to Australia.

Arthur married Eveline Herriman in 1924; he farmed in Saxelbye until his death in 1957 aged 64. He was survived by one daughter Jean, having lost a daughter in infancy. Jean and her family continue the family tradition of farming to this day.

Like countless others who returned from the front in World War I, Arthur never talked about his war time experiences, so this information has been gleaned from public records.



Transcript of the article that appeared in the Melton Mowbray Times in December 1918

TWYFORD
FIVE DEATHS IN A FAMILY - During the present month Mr Arthur Riley, grazier, has had the sad misfortune to lose four sons and a daughter-in-law, all being victims of influenza. The first to die was Mr Charles Riley, aged 22, on Dec 2nd, and two days later the youngest son, Mr Harold Edward Riley expired at the age of 17. The following Saturday, Mr Stanley Riley, aged 24 succumbed to an attack, and Mr George William Riley aged 27 died on Thursday Dec. 12th, the last named's wife having expired at Melton Mowbray Isolation Hospital the previous day at the age of 24. Mr and Mrs Riley were buried together last Saturday afternoon.



Inscription on the Riley Gravestone, Twyford Churchyard

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
CHARLES ERNEST RILEY
DIED DEC 2ND 1918
AGED 22 YEARS
ALSO 4 BROTHERS OF THE ABOVE
HAROLD EDWARD
DIED DEC 4TH 1918
AGED 18 YEARS
ALFRED STANLEY
DIED DEC 7TH 1918
AGED 21 YEARS
GEORGE WILLIAM
DIED DEC 12TH 1918
AGED 27 YEARS
PTE HERBERT DIED OF WOUNDS AT ROUEN
DIED DEC 5TH 1916
AGED 31 YEARS
AND RUTH THE BELOVED WIFE OF
GEORGE WILLIAM RILEY
DIED DEC 11TH 1918 AGED 24 YEARS
STILL IN OUR HEARTS THEY LIVE