



## Albert Coleman

Albert Coleman was born in Gretton in 1895. His father was John Henry Coleman, originally from Seaton, his mother was Louisa Ann Coleman (nee Barwell) from Gretton.

### The Family

In the 1901 Census, John Henry Coleman's occupation is listed as agricultural labourer.

Albert Coleman had a number of siblings including three brothers, Arthur, Eligah & Henry. All of the brothers were to serve in the war, with both Albert & Arthur being killed in action.

### Military Service

Albert Coleman served as a Private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment (16511).

He enlisted in October 1914 and undertook training at Weymouth. It is stated he travelled to France on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1915.

It is recorded that Private Albert Coleman was killed on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1915, whilst serving with "D" Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. He was 19 years old. It is likely he was killed following the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 1915) whilst on duty in the trenches.

The Grantham Journal of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1915 records that Albert was killed 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> March; his body was never recovered. He had only been in France 8 days.

*One of four brothers among the slain*

*The roll-call for the village of Gretton contains over thirty names, amongst them four brothers named Coleman, all of whom joined Lord Kitchener's Army. Unhappily, bereavement has befallen this patriotic family, which is the first to suffer loss. Mr J Coleman has received an intimation that his son, Albert had been killed in action between March 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Pte. Albert Coleman enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment, last October, and underwent training at Weymouth. He was a good shot, and it is believed he had only been at the front a few days. Deceased was the youngest of he brothers; the others with the Forces are Elijah,*



*Arthur and Henry Coleman. There are three brothers named Tee Boon, of Gretton, with the colours who are cousins of the deceased. The news of his death cast sadness over the village.*

He is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial.

The Le Touret Memorial commemorates over 13,400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. The Memorial takes the form of a loggia surrounding an open rectangular court. The names of those commemorated are listed on panels set into the walls of the court and the gallery, arranged by regiment, rank and alphabetically by surname within the rank. The memorial was designed by John Reginald Truelove, who had served as an officer with the London Regiment during the war, and unveiled by the British ambassador to France, Lord Tyrrell, on 22 March 1930.

Almost all of the men commemorated on the Memorial served with regular or territorial regiments from across the United Kingdom and were killed in actions that took place along a section of the front line that stretched from Estaires in the north to Grenay in the south. This part of the Western Front was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the first year of the war, including the battles of La Bassée (10 October – 2 November 1914), Neuve Chapelle (10 – 12 March 1915), Aubers Ridge (9 – 10 May 1915), and Festubert (15 – 25 May 1915). Soldiers serving with Indian and Canadian units who were killed in this sector in 1914 and '15 whose remains were never identified are commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle and Vimy memorials, while those who fell during the northern pincer attack at the Battle of Aubers Ridge are commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

In October 1914, II Corps of the British Expeditionary Force moved north from Picardy and took up positions in French Flanders where they were immediately engaged in the series of attacks and counter attacks that would become known as the 'race to the sea'. Over the course of the next year most of the British activity in this sector focused on attempting to dislodge the German forces from their advantageous position on the Aubers Ridge and capture the city of Lille, a major industrial and transport centre which the Germans had occupied early in the war. The ridge is a slight incline in an otherwise extremely flat landscape from which the Germans were able to observe and bombard the British lines. Following the British capture of the village of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, the Germans greatly strengthened their defences along the ridge, reinforcing their positions with thick



barbed wire entanglements, concrete blockhouses and machine gun emplacements. These extra defences frustrated British attempts to break through enemy lines and led to very heavy casualties at the battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert in May 1915.

### Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Grantham Journal

Gretton Local History Society

***Lest We Forget***

**Albert Coleman**  
of the Northamptonshire Regiment

d. 14<sup>th</sup> March 1915