



Fred Selby Townsend

Fred Selby Townsend was born in Corby in 1891. He was baptised on 8th February 1891. His father, Frederick T Townsend was from Bedfordshire, his mother, Mary (nee Selby) from Cambridgeshire. Frederick and Mary were married in 1888.

The Family

In the 1891 Census Frederick and Mary were living in Station Road, Corby.

Frederick was employed as a Prudential Insurance Agent. They have one son Harry born 1890. Frederick was born in 1891.

In 1901 the family was living in Main Street, Corby. Frederick was a coal agent. A boarder, Herbert Lygo from Gretton (railway porter) was also at the property.

By 1911 Frederick was a foreman at a coal yard, his son Harry was a clerk at the ironstone mines. Fred Selby was employed as a grocer's assistant with the Co-operative.

In 1915 Fred Selby Townsend marries Nellie Grey.

Military Service

Fred Selby Townsend was a Private (G/34440) in The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment). He was initially in the 2nd Battalion before being transferred to the 4th Battalion.

At the outbreak of war, the 2nd Battalion was stationed in Malta. In September 1914 it returned to the United Kingdom and was in the 23rd Brigade of the 8th Division. It was mobilised and landed in France on 7th November 1914.

The 4th Battalion was in the United Kingdom when war was declared. The battalion was part of the 8th Brigade of the 3rd Division. It mobilised and landed in Boulogne on 14th August 1914. It was to serve on the Western Front for the duration of the War. By July 1916 the battalion was in the 63rd Brigade of the 37th Division.

Private Frederick Selby Townsend was killed in action on 10th October 1917.

According to the battalion's war diary on 10th October 1917 the battalion was to relieve the 8th E. Lancashires around Mont Sorrel near Ypres. On its way the battalion was subjected to heavy shelling. Six Ordinary Ranks were killed. One of these was Fred Townsend.



Private Townsend is buried in Larch Wood Cemetery and commemorated on Corby War Memorial. In *De Ruvigny's Roll Of Honour 1914-1919* the following is recorded:-

"Townsend, Fred Selby, Private, No.G.3440, 4th Battalion, The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment) s. of Frederick Townsend, of Corby, by his wife, Mary, dau. of Robert Selby; b. Corby, co. Northampton, 13 Feb. 1891; educ. There; was employed at the Co-operative Stores, Corby; enlisted in the Middlesex Regiment. 8 April 1916; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from 2 Nov. following; was wounded on the Somme, and invalided home; on recovery rejoined his regiment and was killed in action 10 Oct 1917. Buried at Larchwood Railway Cutting south of Zillebeke, south-east of Ypres. He m. at Corby, 23 Aug 1915, Neille, dau. of John Grey."

Larch Wood Cemetery

The cemetery was begun in April 1915 at the North-end of a small plantation of larches. It was used by troops holding this sector, particularly the 46th (North Midland) Division and the 1st Dorsets, until April 1918.

It was enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields of Ypres and from the following smaller cemeteries:-

America Cross Roads German Cemetery, Wervicq, (named from a cabaret between Wervicq and Kruiseecke) contained the graves of five soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in October, 1914.

Bruges General Cemetery, St. Michel, contained the graves of 32 soldiers and airmen from the United Kingdom and one Canadian merchant seaman.

Cortemarck German Cemetery, No.1, a little North-West of the village, contained the grave of two R.F.C. officers. Eerneghem German Cemetery, a little East of Eerneghem, that of one R.A.F. officer.

Ghistelles Churchyard contained the graves of two British soldiers who fell in July, 1917. There was a German aerodrome at Ghistelles, and the Germans used a plot in the Churchyard for war burials.

Groenberg German Cemetery, Zantvoorde (on the South side of "Shrewsbury Forest"), contained the graves of four soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in February, 1915, Handzaeme German Cemetery (on the North side of the village)



those of two Canadian soldiers who fell in May, 1915, and Ichteghem German Cemetery (a little West of Ichteghem) those of two unknown R.A.F. officers.

Leffinghe German Cemetery (on the north side of the village) contained the graves of one R.F.C. officer who fell in July, 1917, and three unknown soldiers from the United Kingdom; and Marckhove German Cemetery, Cortemarck, those of ten soldiers and airmen from the United Kingdom who fell in 1918.

Oudenberg Churchyard contained the graves of two soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in 1917, and Tenbrielen Communal Cemetery Extension those of six who fell in 1914.

Thourout German Cemetery No.2 (on the road to Jabbeke, beyond the railway line), contained the graves of seven soldiers and airmen from the United Kingdom and one from Canada; Vlagsloo German Cemetery (near the Church) those of two R.F.C. officers who fell in 1917; and Warneton Sud-et-Bas German Cemetery those of two unknown British soldiers who fell in 1918.

Wervicq Communal Cemetery and its extensions (on the Belgian side of the Lys) contained the graves of 62 soldiers from the United Kingdom and six from Canada.

Wijnendaele German Cemetery, Thourout, contained the graves of two flying officers from the United Kingdom and one from Canada; and Zantvoorde German Cemetery (called also De Voorstraat No.49) those of eleven soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in 1914.

The cemetery contains 856 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 321 of the burials are unidentified and there are special memorials to 82 casualties known or believed to be buried in the cemetery. Other special memorials record the names of five casualties buried in German cemeteries whose graves could not be found on concentration.

The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
De Ruvigny's Roll Of Honour 1914-1919



Lest We Forget

Fred Selby Townsend
of the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment).
d. 10th October 1917

Fred's brother Harry Townsend served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the War.

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