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# Lieutenant Colonel George Eustace Ripley

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**Northamptonshire Regiment, 6th Battalion**

**Died on 16 October 1916 of wounds sustained in Thiepval, France (age 52)**

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George Ripley moved with his wife to Bury House in 1902.

He was a professional soldier and, although he had reluctantly retired just a few months previously, at the outbreak of the First World War (aged 50), he applied to be reinstated and was given command of the Northamptonshire Regiment's newly created 6th Battalion in October 1914.

While leading the battalion in the assault on Thiepval on 26 September 1916, a German shell exploded next to him, shattering his right arm which had to amputated at a base hospital. His wife Violet went out to France to bring her husband back to England but, tragically, tetanus set in and he died of heart failure in London just three weeks later.

He is buried in Cottingham churchyard and there is also a window in his memory in St Sepulchre's Church, Northampton.

Twice mentioned in despatches, the many testimonials made by officers and men of the 6th Battalion showed that he was held in great esteem and affection.

Mrs Ripley outlived her children, dying in 1973 at the age of 96.



**Lt Col Ripley's grandson, George Burr**, whose late mother was born at Bury House on 29 September 1911, tells us:

*"When my grandmother died, I visited my grandfather's grave as I had always been charged by her to scatter her ashes on his grave. It took me ages to find it on a desperately wet day blowing a gale. Being a trifle upset, and not thinking too brightly, I tried scattering her ashes into the gale - a considerable amount went onto and into me but she probably wouldn't have been unhappy at that!"*

Sources: [www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk](http://www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk); George Burr

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## Private Samuel Booth

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**Northamptonshire Regiment,  
7th Battalion**

**Killed in action, France  
on 11 October 1918 (age 21)**

Samuel William Booth was born in Middleton in 1897, the only son of Thomas Edward Booth and his wife Priscilla, nee Beadsworth (Beesworth).

Having fought on the Western Front for three long years, he died in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Cambrai aged 21, less than five weeks before the war ended.

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## Sergeant William Coles

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**Northamptonshire Regiment,  
1st Battalion**

**Killed in action on the Western  
Front on 15 May 1916 (age 35)**

William Coles was born in 1881 and lived with his parents on Corby Road, Cottingham for much of his childhood.

William first joined the army in November 1899, following in both his great grandfathers' footsteps. He was killed on the front line south of Loos, where troops had largely been engaged in mining and bombing encounters, and raids across No Man's Land.

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## Gunner William Chambers

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**Royal Horse Artillery / Royal  
Field Artillery**

**Died of wounds sustained in  
Ypres on 12 July 1917 (age 30)**

By April 1911, (Thomas) William Chambers had enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery as a gunner and, in autumn 1914, married his bride Nellie Tozeland.

In 1917, his Brigade moved to Ouderdom camp, south east of the town of Poperinge in West Flanders, Belgium. Poperinge, commonly referred to as 'Pops' by British soldiers was the centre of a large concentration of troops and, because of its military importance close to the front line, the town was frequently targeted by long range German artillery.

William died from wounds on 12 July, between the end of the Battle of Messines and the start of the Third Battle of Ypres.

The brigade war diary gives no clues as to when or in what action he was injured.

He is buried at Dickebusch New Military Cemetery and it seems likely he died in the trenches at Poperinge, as the cemetery was commonly used by ambulance units on the front line.

Sources: [www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk](http://www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk);  
Annie Johnson



# Private William Claypole

**Northamptonshire Regiment,  
6th Battalion**

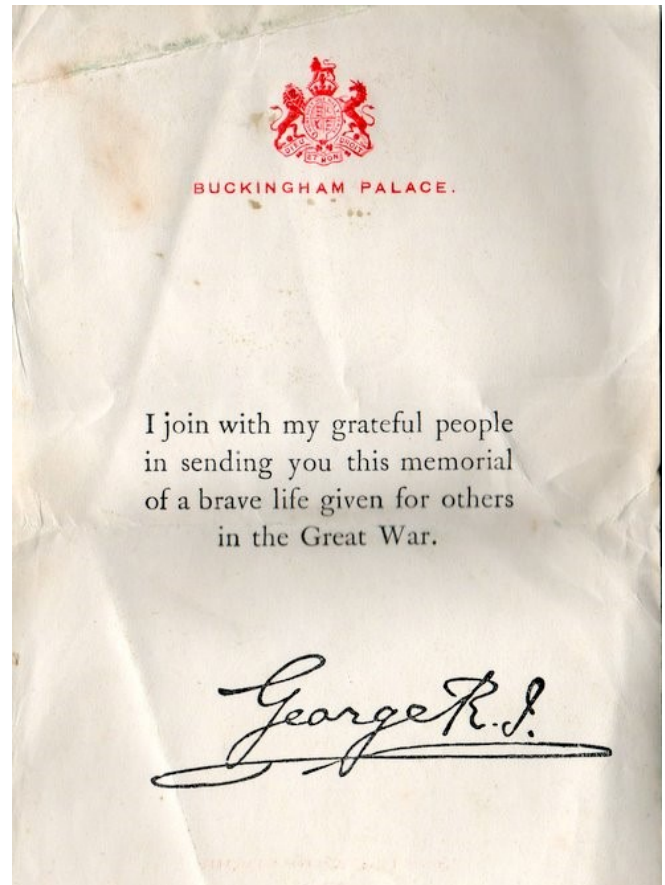
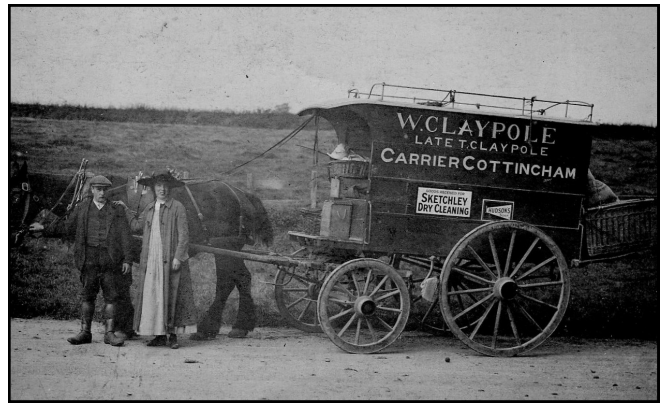
**Died of wounds, Ypres, Belgium  
on 15 November 1917 (age 29)**

William Claypole was born in 1888, the third son of John Claypole and his wife Mary Ann (nee Tansley) who lived in Blind Lane, close to Pinfold Bank.

William, who was a carrier, left for France in January 1916. where his battalion was involved in three of the encounters during the Battle of the Somme.

While attacking a series of trenches and a sunken road known as '*Boom Ravine*' near the village of Miraumont, William was injured and his name was listed in the Roll of Honour printed in The Times on 21 March 1917. Having returned to active duty, his battalion was later transferred to Ypres, Belgium where he was mortally wounded in battle.

William was posthumously awarded two medals (the British War medal and the Victory medal). His wife Mary also received a bronze Next of Kin War Memorial plaque inscribed with his name, along with a note from King George V.



Sources: Alan Craxford, [www.craxford-family.co.uk](http://www.craxford-family.co.uk);  
[www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk](http://www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk); Janice Binley



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## Private George Crane

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Leicestershire Regiment,  
9th Battalion

Killed in action, the Somme,  
France on 30 July 1916 (age 20)

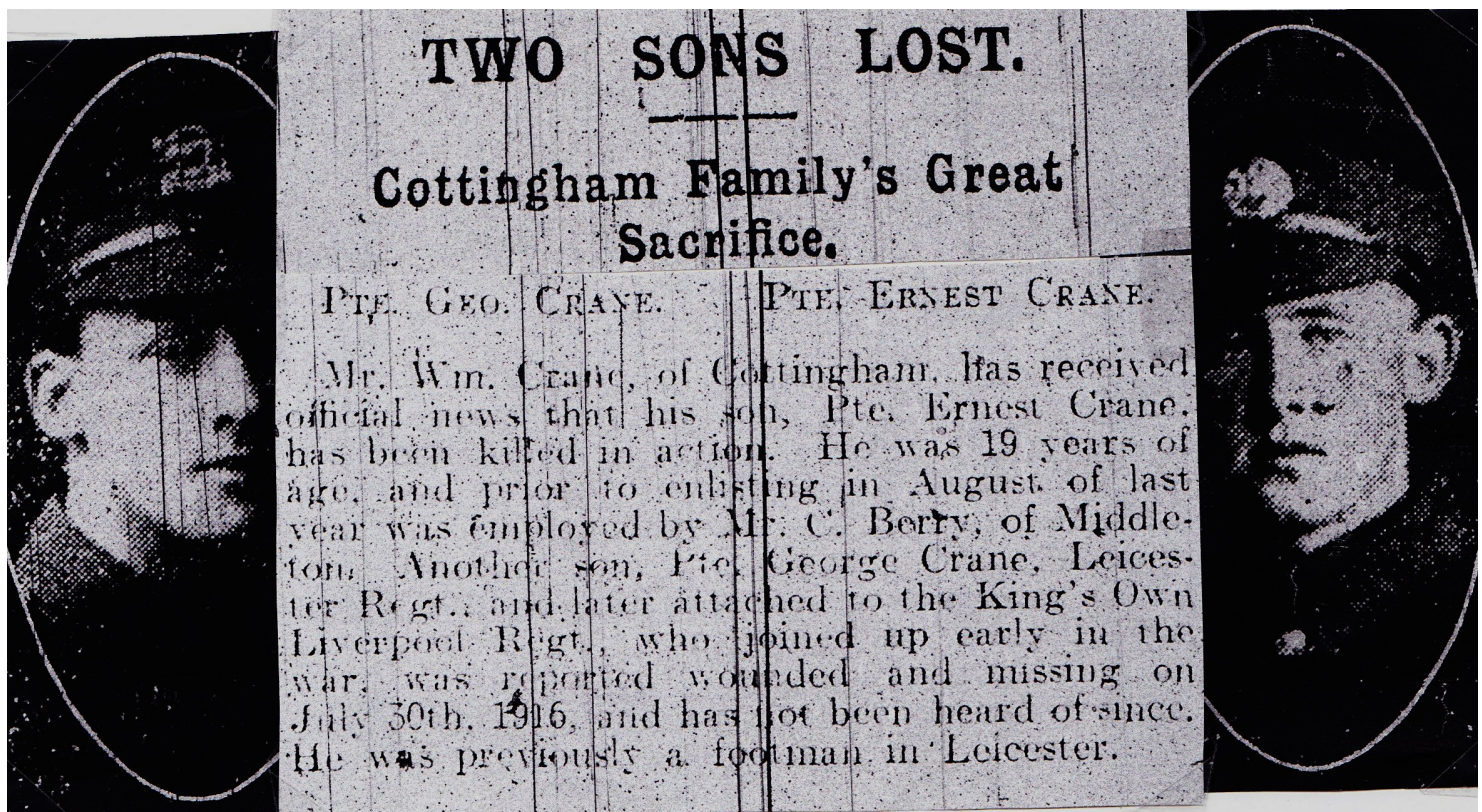
## Private Ernest Crane

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Northamptonshire Regiment,  
2nd Battalion

Killed in action, the Somme,  
France on 4 March 1917 (age 19)

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## TWO SONS LOST.

### COTTINGHAM FAMILY'S GREAT SACRIFICE

Mr William Crane, of Cottingham, has received official news that his son, Private Ernest Crane has been killed in action. He was 19 years of age and prior to enlisting in August of last year was employed by Mr C Berry of Middleton. Another son, Private George Crane, Leicester Regiment and later attached to the King's Own Liverpool Regiment, who joined up early in the War, was reported wounded and missing on July 30th 1916, and has not been heard of since. He was previously a footman in Leicester.



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# Private Harry Dunkley

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**Gloucestershire Regiment,  
14th Battalion**

**Killed in action, Western Front,  
France on 11 April 1916 (age 25)**

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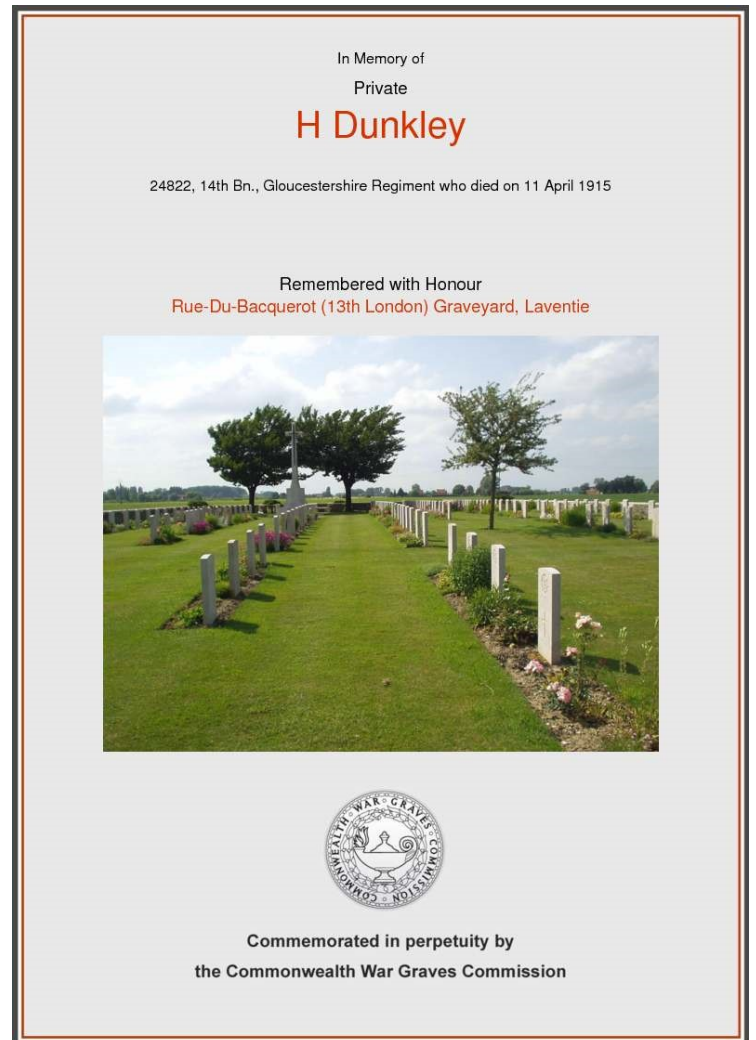
Harry Dunkley was born around 1890 to John Thomas, an estate carpenter, and his wife Mary (nee Tilley). In 1901, John and Mary were living on Middleton Hill having previously lived in Church Street, Cottingham.

Mary was widowed in 1904 and lived in the alms houses in East Carlton for a while before moving to Alum Rock, Birmingham.

It was here that Harry and his elder brother John both enlisted with the Royal Engineers, whose duties included maintaining railways, roads, water supplies, bridges and transport, telephones, signalling equipment, guns and other weaponry.

Harry's battalion landed in Le Havre on 30 January 1916 and, by early February, was concentrated east of St Omer.

It remained on the Western Front for the rest of the War. Harry was recorded killed in action on 11 April 1916.



The battalion was not engaged in a major battle until July, so Harry must have been one of those unfortunates who lost their life in minor skirmishes along the Somme or were picked off by snipers. He is buried in the Rue-du-Bacquerot cemetery.



Harry's eldest brother John died three months later while serving in Mesopotamia.

# Sapper John Dunkley

## Royal Engineers Reinforcements Killed in Mesopotamia, Iraq on 3 July 1916 (age 30)

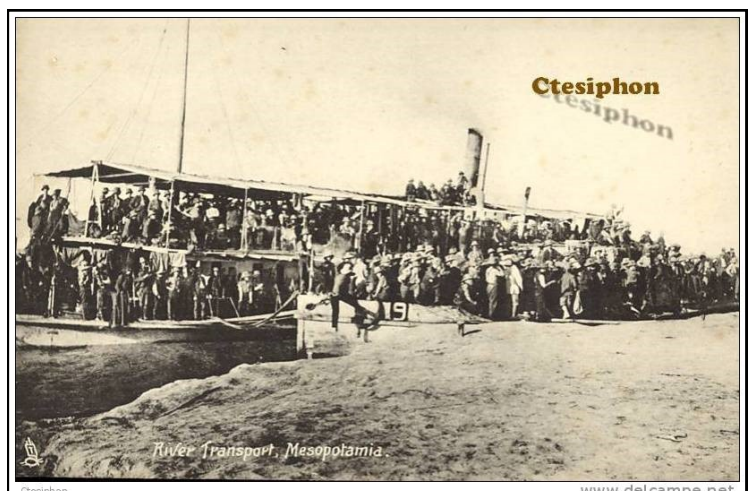
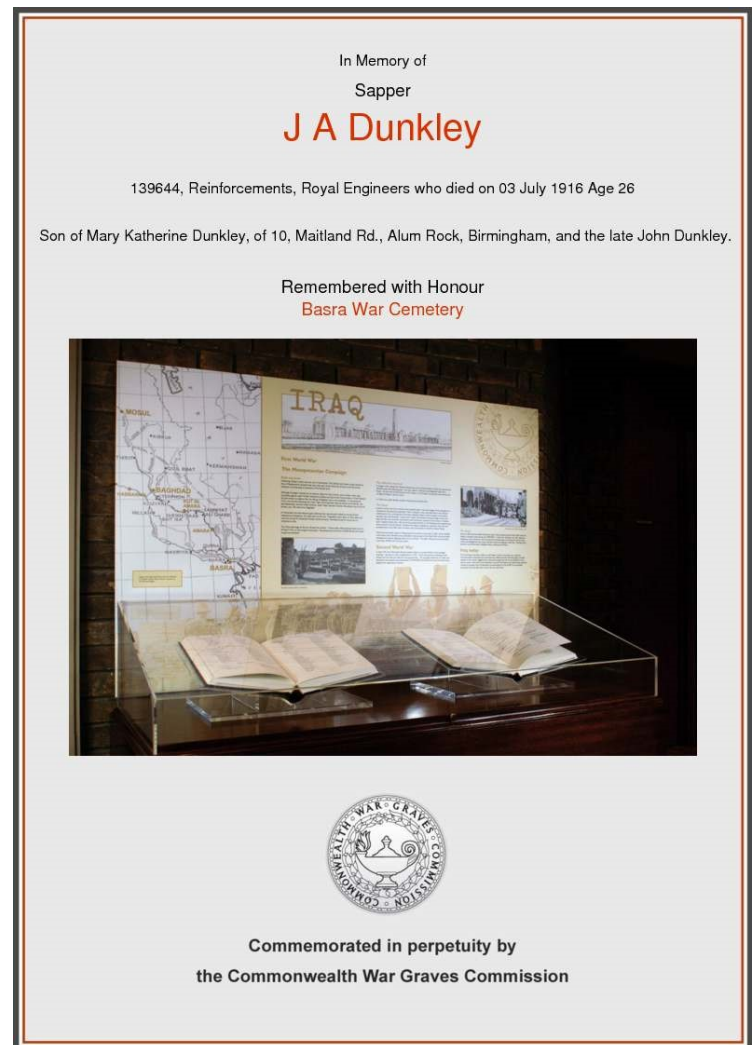
John Alfred Dunkley was born c1886.

In February 1916, his battalion moved to Mesopotamia (Iraq), then part of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire. The British had occupied the oilfields of Mesopotamia in 1914, taking control of the pipeline near Basra. They had then made a push to seize the strategically important river junction at Qurna.

Conditions for soldiers, especially those like John who were reinforcement troops, were brutal. In summer the temperature in the shade averaged 46°C and heatstroke was commonplace. The soldiers were ill-equipped. There were few tents and no mosquito nets to provide shelter from flies, mosquitos and vermin – and poor army rations resulted in widespread dysentery and scurvy.

In May 1916 there was an outbreak of cholera. The number of deaths caused by disease was huge. Medical help was negligible, with wounded and sick men forced to spend up to two weeks at sea to get to a hospital.

John died on 3 July 1916 and is buried in Basra War Cemetery, one of 2,551 casualties.





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## Private George Goode

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Lancashire Fusilliers,  
15th Battalion

Killed on the Somme, France  
on 16 May 1918 (age 19)

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George Thomas Goode was born in 1898 and grew up in Middleton. He was initially in the Bedfordshire Regiment but transferred to the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion (1st Salford Pals) Lancashire Fusiliers.

On 5 April 1918, George fought as part of the Third Army at the Battle of the Ancre on the Somme. Morning mist and heavy rain meant poor visibility, shellfire went on all day, gas was used extensively, but by the end of day an initial German breakthrough had been beaten back.

The Lancashire battalions were particularly severely hit and the British Official History quotes a total of 177,739 allied troops killed, wounded and missing in this battle. George died of wounds six weeks later on 16 May.



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## Private Alfred Inchley

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Northamptonshire Regiment,  
2nd Battalion

Killed on the Western Front,  
France on 28 Oct 1915 (age 24)

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Alfred William Inchley was born in Main Street, Middleton in 1891. Having enlisted in late December 1914, he landed in France on 25 August 1915 and went to the Western Front where, on 25 September, the Battle of Loos began.

The regimental war diary for 28 September 1915 remarked that the enemy was quiet, adding that only six men had been killed that morning. One of those six men was Alfred William Inchley. He was 24 years old and had served on the Western Front for just nine weeks and a day.

The following is an extract from a letter, written some weeks later, by Annie Johnson's grandfather Alfred Bradshaw of Cottingham, to relatives in London:

*"The war does not get on so well as we should like, Inchley had a son killed a few weeks ago. Soon after he listed he caught cold and was very ill..... did not think he would live. Dr Duke said he was not fit to go but they don't take any notice of local Doctors. It must be a sight now with so many new recruits."*

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## Private Frederick Oliver

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Royal Warwickshire Regiment,  
1st Battalion

Killed in Ypres, Belgium on  
25 April 1915 (age 33)

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Frederick Oliver was born in Cottingham in 1882, one of six children of Solomon Oliver and his wife Sarah Elisabeth (nee Beesworth). The family lived in Blind Lane / Barrack Yard.

Having previously been a regular soldier, Frederick re-enlisted in January 1915.

He was killed during the Battle of St Julien, part of the Second Battle of Ypres and one of the first where the German Army used poison gas.

He is commemorated at the Menin Gate in Ypres, the most famous of the four Belgian Flanders memorials in the Ypres Salient to soldiers whose graves are unknown. It bears the names of more than 54,000 soldiers.



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## Private Frederick Vye

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Queen's (Royal West Surrey)  
Regiment, 1st /24th Battalion

Killed in the Somme, France on  
22 August 1918 (age 19)

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Frederick James Vye was born in Middleton in 1899, the fourth child of farmworker John Thomas Vye and his second wife Emma Alice (nee Morley).

Frederick was killed in action during the 2<sup>nd</sup> battle of the Somme. He is commemorated on the Vis-en Artois Memorial which lists more than 9,000 soldiers who have no known grave.



*Two of our brave  
soldiers with  
no known grave*



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## Private John Sanders

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**Prince of Wales Leinster  
Regiment (Royal Canadians),  
2nd Battalion**

**Killed on the Western Front,  
France on 22 Nov 1916 (age 27)**

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John Sanders, an ironstone labourer, moved to Cottingham from Wilbarston when, we believe, he married Edith West. John served on the Western Front for the entire war and was killed on action on 22 November 1916.

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## Private James Simpson

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**Northamptonshire Regiment,  
6th Battalion**

**Killed in Arras, France  
on 4 June 1917 (age 32)**

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James Simpson was one of seven children born to Francis William Simpson and his wife Annie of Mill Road, Cottingham.

He enlisted as a volunteer in July 1915 and, in May/June 1917, fought in the 3rd Battle of the Scarpe, part of the Arras Offensive. James was



reported as killed in action and is buried in the small Rookery British Cemetery, Heninel.

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## Private Leonard Stokes

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**East Surrey Regiment,  
2nd Battalion**

**Killed in Ypres, Belgium  
on 29 March 1915 (age 17)**

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Middleton's Leonard Joseph Stokes is the youngest soldier commemorated on the village War memorial. He was only 17 when he was killed by sniper fire in the

trenches near Etaines.

The East Surrey Regiment had sailed for France on 19 January 1915 and was quickly moved up the line to the south of Ypres. In the following five days' heavy fighting, the regiment lost more than 800 of its 1,000 soldiers, some dying from the effects of poison gas.

Reinforcements had to be swiftly brought in and, given his youth, it's likely that Leonard was one of these. Conscription had not yet begun so he must have volunteered.

On 18 March 1916, the battalion marched to new billets in Etaines where, 11 days later, Leonard was one of four soldiers killed in the trenches.

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## Private George Timson

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**Northamptonshire Regiment /  
Durham Light Infantry**

**Killed in action on the Somme,  
France on 1 Nov 1916 (age 28)**

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A few months after his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, George William Timson enlisted into the 4<sup>th</sup> (Territorial) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. He gave his age as 17 years and one month.

On 31 August 1916, he was transferred to the 1/5 Battalion 'A' Company of the Durham Light Infantry. In September, the battalion was on the Somme fighting in the Battle of Le Transloy Ridges, which was the final offensive of the Battle of Morval. This indecisive engagement lasted from 1 October to 5 November and resulted in the Allies advancing a mere five miles.

The land they fought over had become a quagmire after months of bombardment and torrential rain and was so appalling that the Australian official historian Charles Bean described it as the worst ever known.

Following Le Transloy, British casualties numbered 420,000 and among them was George Timson, killed in action after just 62 days active service.

His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial (pictured right).

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## Lance Corporal Edward Towndrow

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**Leicestershire Regiment  
2nd Battalion**

**Killed in action in France on  
13 March 1915 (age 34)**

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Edwin (also known as Edward or Ted) Towndrow was born at Wilbarston in 1881 and, in October 1914, married Frances Bamford of Cottingham.

He re-enlisted the following month and, having previously served in the Army, was given the rank of Lance Corporal.

He was killed in action in France on the last day of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, where the Allies sustained very heavy losses. Of the 1,000 men who attacked at Aubers Ridge, none survived.



Source: [www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk](http://www.cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk)



# Lance Corporal William Tansley

Leicestershire Regiment,  
2nd Battalion

Killed in action in France on  
13 March 1915 (age 24)

William was born in 1888 in  
Cottingham to Amos Tansley and Lucy  
West.

He enlisted at 18 and, on 3 October  
1914, was appointed Lance Corporal  
while at sea going to France.

On 9 November 1914 he was wounded  
in action in the field and admitted to  
hospital in Rouen with deafness,  
rejoining his Battalion in January 1915.

On 13 March 1915 he was killed in  
action during operations in the field.

He is buried at Le Touret Military  
Cemetery.

NEW 186,000 6-25 1914  
(Rev. 18)  
9 28 27

ARMY FORM B 212

**SHORT SERVICE.**

10 years with the Colours, and 5 years in the Reserve. If the man completes his 6 years' service with the Colours while abroad the sea, he will be sent home, with all convenient speed, for transfer to the Army Reserve.

**ATTESTATION OF**

No. 1866 Name William James Tansley  
Corps Leicestershire  
Regiment selected

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name? William James Tansley  
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? in the Parish of Cottingham, in the County of Lincoln  
3. Are you a British Subject? Yes  
4. What is your Age? 26  
5. What is your Trade or Calling? None  
6. Have you resided out of your Father's house for three years continuously in the same place, or occupied a house or land of the yearly value of £10 for one year, and paid rates for the same, and, in either case, if so, state where? None  
7. Are you married? No  
8. Have you ever been sentenced to Imprisonment by the Civil Power? No  
9. Do you now belong to the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Imperial Yeomanry, the Royal Navy, the Volunteer Force, or the Naval Reserve Force? No  
10. Have you ever served in the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Imperial Yeomanry, or the Royal Navy? No  
11. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your past military service? Yes  
12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military or Naval Service? No  
13. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes  
14. For what Corps are you willing to be enlisted, or are you willing to be enlisted for the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Imperial Yeomanry, or the Royal Navy? Leicestershire  
15. Do you understand that although every enlistment will be made to put you to the region, you have accepted, you will be liable, if necessary, to serve with any Regiment of the Corps for which you enlist? Yes  
16. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its contents, and are you willing to accept of it? Yes  
17. Do you understand that, notwithstanding you enlist for a particular Corps, you are liable to be trained and employed in such armed duties as may be required of an Infantry Soldier, including the duties of Mounted Infantry? Yes  
18. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so direct your service:  
(a) For the term of 12 years, for the first three years in Army Service and for the remaining nine years in the First Class of the Army Reserve. At the termination of each period of Army Service, you are willing to be employed, with all convenient speed, for transfer to the Army Reserve.  
(b) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service a state of War exists, then, if so directed by the Commanding Officer, to serve in Army Service for a further period not exceeding 12 months.  
(c) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service, you are so required by a Proclamation from His Majesty in case of business, national danger, or great emergency, then to serve in Army Service as so to complete your term of 12 years, and for a further period not exceeding 12 months.  
(d) If the above-mentioned term of 12 years expires while you are on service with the Regular Forces (A) beyond the sea, or (B) while a state of war exists with a Foreign Power, or in, while Soldiers in the Reserve are required by proclamation to continue in, or re-enter upon Army Service, and you, in accordance with such proclamation, have re-entered upon Army Service, then to serve for a further year not exceeding 12 months.

I, William James Tansley, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

William James Tansley SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT  
William James Tansley Signature of Witness

**OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.**

I, William James Tansley, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, and of the lawful Officers set over me. So help me God.

**CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.**

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me

at Cottingham on this 10 day of October 1914

2nd Bn  
No 10. G. H.  
ouen

adm. Hosp. Deafness. 10-11-14.

Wounded. in action.

So Convalescent Base

Rejoined Battalion

Killed in action

during operations

At Sea

Rouen

In the field

Rouen

in the field