

WILLIAM ALBERT ALGAR.

William Albert, born 1892 (registered as Elgar) was the son of Abraham and Elizabeth Algar (nee Richens and married in St John's, Isleworth in 1871). The couple began their married life in a cottage in Wood Lane. Abraham worked as a gardener/nursery labourer in the surrounding market gardens. By 1891, Elizabeth, not listed as having any paid employment, would have been kept busy with their five children. By 1901, two more children had been born, William and Bertha, and Abraham had been promoted to Nursery Foreman. The family found larger accommodation at Cophorne Cottage on the London Road, in Isleworth. The older children were now working. Elizabeth (23) and Herbert (20) were working in the Soap Works, and Arthur (17) was a plumber.



William was 19 when the 1911 Census was taken. He had developed a career echoing that of his father; he found employment as a nursery labourer. His army records of 1914 later tell us he became a florist. Sister Sarah is now a domestic servant and Bertha is working at the soap factory. The family had also adopted a baby girl, Hilda Childs. The Algars were certainly an industrious family.

William too, was not slow to enlist when war started; his attestation date being 15th October 1914 (Hampton). He enlisted with the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment, and was placed with the 1/8th Territorial Force Battalion.



William's service records show that he was in Gibraltar from 1st Feb 1915 until 24th July 1915 when his Battalion was transferred to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. William was engaged in a number of actions over the next two years including the Battle of Ginchy, the Battle of Flers-Courcelette and the Battle of Transloy Ridges to name just three. He was a very experienced soldier.

William was about 25 when he was 'killed in action' at the Battle of Langemarck (Passchendaele 31st July – 6th Nov 1917). **As his body was never found, it was officially accepted on 9th May 1918 that he had died on, or since 16th August 1917.**



Back in 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission made a decision to erect memorials at notable points along the Western Front to honour the fallen soldiers. The Menin Gate pays tribute to the 55,000 soldiers that died at Ypres. An extension was then needed for a further 35,000 names! This was eventually constructed at Tyne Cot. The cut-off date between the memorials was 15th August 1917. Thus William is commemorated at Tyne Cot. He is also honoured on the St John's Church War Memorial in Isleworth.



Passchendaele: stretcher bearers resting 1917.
Courtesy National Army Museum