

Bruce Berthold Butler

Bruce's father was born in Gloucestershire and was a lace merchant. Together with his wife Anne, they had nine children all of which survived to adulthood. In 1881 this young family lived at Carisbrooke Villa in 'Ealing with Old Brentford', then at 5 North Common Road Ealing, and finally at 'The Calcutts' North Hyde Lane, Heston (Calcutt was the maiden name of wife and mother, Anne). It is clear from the census returns that the Butler family lived a comfortable life, employing servants, maids and cooks and had room for visitors to stay. Two of Bruce's older brothers John and Alfred, followed their father and became 'Fancy Goods' Merchants and younger brother Kenneth, worked as a Stockbroker's Clerk. **The youngest brother, Eric, was an Auctioneer's Clerk who sadly lost his life at the Battle of Ypres in May 1915 aged 24.**



In 1901, Bruce, whose birth was registered in the 1st Quarter of 1883, was a Draper Apprentice in Richmond. Clearly, he was not happy in this line of work and by 1911 he was working as a horticultural grower and market gardener in Egham. Maybe it was this line of work that inspired him to travel to Canada before the war broke out. A 'Bruce Butler' sailed to Halifax from Liverpool in March 1914 on the steamship Alsatian and the passenger list noted his occupation as 'farmer'. We can only guess at Bruce's thoughts before he left his family, and his thoughts when he eventually arrived at the small farming town of Tyvan Saskatchewan, in the middle of the Canadian prairies! Soon after his arrival, Bruce may well have received a letter informing him of the death of his father James in April 1914 and then, a year later, another letter telling him about the death of Eric.

Bruce enlisted on the 3rd December 1915 in the city of Regina. He was 32, his occupation was listed as 'farmer' and he gave the name of his brother John Maurice as his next-of-kin. He joined the 5th/68th Battalion Canadian Infantry and was quickly promoted to provisional Lance Corporal, Corporal and then Sergeant. He embarked for Britain on 28 April 1916. His Battalion provided reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in the field until 6 July 1916, when its personnel were absorbed by the 32nd Reserve Battalion, CEF. The Canadians did not move to the front lines of the Somme until mid-August 1916. They then started to take over positions in the trenches in early September. The 'heights' at Thiepval gave the Germans a huge tactical advantage. It was vital to remove them from this vantage point. **The Battle of Thiepval Ridge (26th-30th September '16) was exceedingly ferocious. Bruce sustained gunshot wounds to his thigh and arm.** He was taken to Casualty Clearing Station No.49 but died 'from his wounds' on September 28th 1916. He is buried at Contay British Cemetery. He was also remembered at All Saints Church in Isleworth. **Bruce's battalion (68th)**

was awarded the battle honour THE GREAT WAR 1916.



Grave stone in St Leonards Church, Heston. Memorial to Bruce and four of his relatives.

