

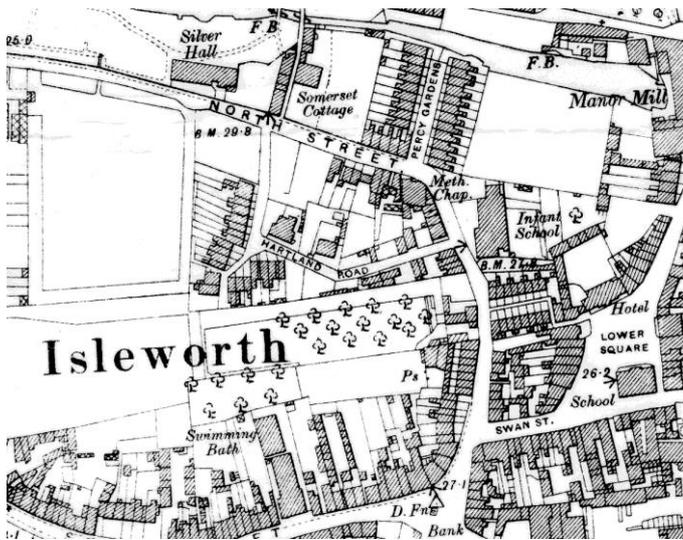
Lance Corporal Herbert Butt 1886 - 1917



Herbert Butt was born in July 1886, the tenth of twelve children born to William and Mary Ann Butt (nee Allam) in the village of March in Cambridgeshire. Like his older brothers, Herbert followed their father into the bricklaying trade.

He decided to move to London, where he fell in love with Florence Louise Tompkins, daughter of an Isleworth waterman. They married on 12th October 1908 in the parish church of St Luke in Shepherds Bush.

The newly married couple moved to 21 North Street Isleworth where their first son Alfred William was born in 1909. A second son, Herbert Harry, was born in 1910, followed by a daughter Ethel Florence in 1912.



Left: Isleworth including North Street in 1894. Ordnance Survey

It seems that Herbert was a successful bricklayer as he was registered to vote in 1912, indicating that he owned his own property. The right to vote for all men aged over 21 was not granted until 1918.

On 4th August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and Lord Kitchener called for 100,000 volunteers between the ages of 19 and 30 to form a "new army". By the end of

August this was achieved. Herbert's service record cannot be found but it is very likely that 28 year old Herbert was one of the early volunteers, recruited in Hounslow to join the 1st battalion of the Middlesex Regiment: Home Counties Division. The volunteer soldiers were immediately sent to Sheerness and then to Sittingbourne for training and on 22nd August 1914 they joined the 19th Infantry Brigade in Valenciennes under the command of Major General L G Drummond. They were billeted in Armentieres for Christmas and for the next three years were engaged on active service in France.

Herbert was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal and survived uninjured until the disastrous offensive at Arras in April - June 1917. He was presumed to have died on 23rd April but his body was never found so there is no grave. His name was not included on the Arras Memorial but has since been added by hand to the index of names. His widow Florence received £6 war gratuity and continued to raise their children on her own. She died in Brentford in 1935.

