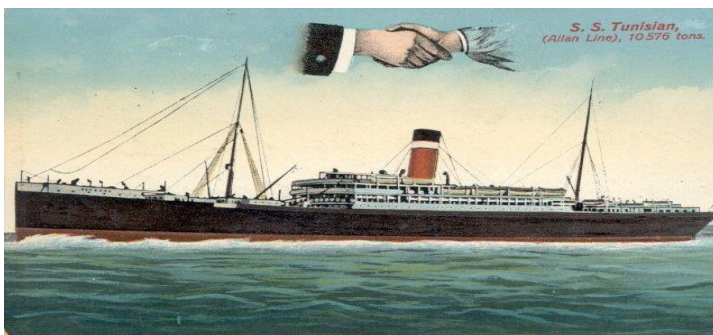


## Samuel James Dowse



Samuel was born on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1894 in Isleworth. His parents James Dowse (1863-1937) and Mary Ann Johnson (1865-1902) had married in St Mary's Church, Osterley on October 7th 1888 and at the time of their marriage they were living in Kingsley Road, Hounslow. Their fathers were: Robert Dowse and George Johnson, both labourers. In 1901, the family lived at Smiths Cottages, 1 North Street, James was a bricklayer and Samuel is recorded as having five siblings: Eliza (13) George (10), William John (4), Richard (2) and Annie (a few months old). Sadly, Samuel's mother died in 1902 and the family obviously fell on very hard times and split up. By 1911, Samuel's father, a widower, was living in South Ealing with his sister Annie Woodman and his son, Richard, who was 12 and at school, and the census record shows that he had 9 children in total, seven of whom survived.

In 1906, Samuel, aged 11, sailed on the SS Tunisian (*see below left*), to Canada from Liverpool for a new life arranged by the Catholic Emigration Association. By 1911, he was living as a lodger in in South Algona, Renfrew North, Ontario, Canada. By September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1914, aged 20 and with the occupation of a driver, he had enlisted with the Governor General Foot Guards in Valcartier, when Canada responded to support Britain being at war. Samuel was 5'7", had a fair complexion, sandy hair and blue eyes, He had four vaccination marks on his left arm, and several scars on his left hip. By October 1914, Private Dowse (7848) was with the Second Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force en route to France, via Plymouth and Salisbury Plain. By April 1915, the Canadians were heavily involved in the Second Battle of Ypres and specifically the Battle of St Julien. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> the Germans had released 5700 cylinders of poison gas in an attempt to break the deadlock of the trench warfare, many of the French troops choked to death and exposed the left flank of the Canadian army. Despite their small numbers and lack of training, the Canadians held fast to protect the British forces being encircled and the Germans potentially reaching the Channel ports, but experienced further significant bombardment and gas attacks until they were relieved a few days later, suffering very heavy losses in terms of their men. Samuel was one of these men, who was reported initially as missing, presumed dead, with his death confirmed as occurring 'on or since April 26<sup>th</sup> 1915' on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1916. Samuel's father was informed of his son's death. At the time he was living in 165, Douglas Road, St Margarets, and was in 21 Mill Platt Avenue, Isleworth previously (*see below right for a 2018 photograph of the property*).



Samuel is commemorated on the Menin Gate Ypres, where hundreds of thousands of servicemen of the British Empire marched through the town on their way to the battlefields. The memorial now stands as a reminder of those who died who have no known grave. Samuel is also remembered on the memorial in St Bridget's Church in Isleworth.

