



Co.-Serj.-Maj. S. F.
HANDYSIDE

Sidney Francis Handisyde



Sidney Francis Handisyde was born in Isleworth in 1886. He was the son of James Handisyde, a journeyman baker from Holborn, and his wife Clare, nee Skinner, born in Sussex. James and Clara married in Steyning, Sussex, but moved to London almost at once. Their first child was born in Hillingdon, and the second and third in Hatton. By 1881, they had moved to 4 Mary Ann Cottages in the St Stephen's area of Hounslow. Sidney had seven siblings: Ernest (born 1872), Mary Ash (born 1875), Jemima Agnes (1877-1910), Arthur James (1881-1881), Percy Charles (1883-1902), Albert Thomas, known as Bertie (born 1888) and Phoebe Fanny Clara, known as Clara (born 1891).

In 1901, Sidney, aged 15, was working as a grocer's errand boy. The family was then living at 32 Chapel Road, Hounslow. In 1908, Sidney's mother, Clara died. His father James remained at 32 Chapel Road until his own death in 1922

By 1911 Sidney had progressed to working as a tinsmith for Pears Soap Company. The following year on 21st August, he married Alice Olive Soper at St Stephens Church, Hounslow. They had one child, Irene, born in 1913.

Sidney had enlisted in the Territorial Army in 1911, but was not sent abroad until 1915. When he sailed for Alexandria. In 1916, he was promoted to Company Sergeant Major. His name appears in the Pears Roll of Honour celebrating the 44 men from the company who volunteered in 1914. He was wounded during the Battle of Arras and died on 29th April 1917. He is buried in the Faubourg-Amiens Cemetery near Arras.

Co.-Sergt.-Major Handisyde, 31 (*Died of Wounds*), 8th Middlesex Regt. On joining up in August 1914 he was drafted to Gibraltar and afterwards to Egypt. He came home on leave early last year, and saw us all before leaving for France. He went to Arras, where he received his wounds on the 29th April 1917. His Commanding Officer wrote to his wife the following letter :—

“DEAR MADAM,

“You will already have received the sad news of the death of your husband, C.-S.-M. Handisyde, of B Company, 8th Middlesex Regt. I take this the first opportunity of writing to offer you my heartfelt sympathy in your great loss. As his Company Commander for some considerable

time, I knew your husband intimately, and always found him to be a conscientious, clean-living, and God fearing man. His duty was always done thoroughly and efficiently. . . . When your husband received his wound, he and I were lying asleep in the bottom of a trench, after a hard night's work. . . . I did my best to cheer your husband up, but . . . he seemed to feel his wound was mortal, for he took a ring from his finger and handed it to me, saying, 'If the worst should come to the worst with me—Sir, will you please see that my wife receives this ring safely.' I promised to do so, and he then clasped his hands, closed his eyes, and prayed to God that he might be spared for your sake and the child's. We sent your husband off as quickly as possible . . . He appears to have died in hospital soon after arriving there. Your husband was held in the highest esteem by all ranks in the Regiment, from the Colonel downwards.

“Yours faithfully, (Signed) J. D. WHITE,

“Company Commander.”