

Arthur Pursell



In the first quarter of 1883, Arthur Pursell's birth was registered. He was born into a large family, living in Buckland near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. He had four older brothers and one younger, plus three younger sisters. In all, his mother, Annie (nee White, married 1876, 1850-1943) gave birth to nine children, seven of whom survived into adulthood. His father John Pursell (1855-1907) worked as a gamekeeper.

By 1901 John was unable to continue working as a gamekeeper. He moved his family back to his birthplace, Weston Turville. The four youngest children moved with their parents while the four oldest children left home to make their own way in the world. Frederick, one of his older brothers, was living at 64 Talbot Road in Isleworth, as a dairyman's horsekeeper, married to Emily Phyllis Simmonds (1879-1968), with a young child, Frederick. Arthur went to lodge with the Aslett family nearby in 11, Steele Road, Isleworth and worked as a wheelwright's hammerman. In 1905, he signed up in Hounslow for the 'Corps of the Lancers of the Line'. He gave his trade as a Smithsmate, and stated that he was in lodgings at 32 Eve Road Isleworth; he had a scar over his left cheek and was 5'7 1/2" in height. In 1901, John Richard, Arthur's oldest brother, was working as a railway labourer and living in Hendon.

Arthur's father John died in 1907 and Arthur moved in with his mother in Weston Turnville, working as a farm labourer, as recorded on the 1911 census. His siblings had all moved away. By 1911, Frederick (1879-1958), now a coal porter, had moved to 75, St John's Road, Isleworth, with his wife and two children: Frederick (10) and Florence (5) and his younger brother Roger, a seaman, who continued in naval service until 1926. By the time war broke out, Arthur had returned to live in Isleworth and it was in the Hounslow Recruiting Office that he signed up to join the Duke of Cambridge's Own Middlesex Regiment, later transferring to the East Surrey Regiment (G28508). Arthur fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium. He was killed in action on October 5th 1917, probably in the Battle of Broodseinde, as the army moved towards capturing the Passchendaele ridge, some 10 kilometers from Ypres.



Arthur never married so his mother Annie received his war gratuity and his Victory and British medals. His memory is honoured with his name in the Tyne Cot memorial in Zonnebeke, West Flanders, Belgium. 11,908 graves are registered in Tyne Cot, making it the largest war memorial in the world. He is also remembered on the memorial in Weston Turville (see above)