



Sidney John Shirley (Q2 1888 – 26 April 1918)

Sidney was the son of John William and Grace Shirley (nee Wiggans) who married in Brentford towards the end of 1880. John was born in Chesham, Buckinghamshire and his wife Grace in Isleworth.

Sidney was the third child born to John and Grace. In all they had 8 children, five girls and three boys. The eldest was Alice born in 1884, then Lilian (1886), Sidney (1888), Daisy (1889), Edward (1890), Agnes (1892), Percy (1893) and the youngest, Ellen, was born in 1895. All the children were born in Isleworth. Alice died as an infant so Sidney grew up with his remaining four sisters and two brothers. In 1901 the family were living at 4 Woodbine Cottages, Worton Road, Isleworth and Sidney's father, John, was earning a living as a Carter on his own account. Sadly in 1908 Sidney's mother died at the age of 52 leaving John a widower.

In 1909 Sidney, aged 21, married Nora Port in Brentford. By 1911 Sidney and Nora were living at 3 Myrtle Villas, Worton Road, Isleworth with their first child, Phyllis Irene who was just a few months old. Sidney was working as a Market Garden Carman. In 1916 Nora and Sidney had a second daughter, Vera Grace. Around that time Sidney also became the licensee of "The Rifleman" public house in Hanworth Road, Hounslow.



Royal Artillery Memorial, Hyde Park Corner, London

Sidney was called up to serve in the army on 9 August 1917 and in less than three months he was at



A Siege Battery on the Somme

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the front in France. He was a Gunner in the 202nd Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. His younger brother Percy also enlisted and served as a Driver in the Army Service Corp.

The Germans launched a major Spring Offensive against the allied forces in March 1918. To deal with the wounded, the 61st Casualty Clearing Station was set up at the village of Vignacourt, in the Somme area of northern France from April until August 1918. Sidney died of wounds on 26 April 1918, aged 32, at the 61st Casualty Clearing Station. He is commemorated at the Vignacourt British Cemetery. He was also remembered on the

original Holy Trinity Church War Memorial in the High Street, Hounslow which was destroyed by a fire that was started deliberately in 1943. In addition his name is recorded on the memorial at St Bridget's Church in Isleworth.