WE WILL *Remember* THEM

Maggie Coleman researches the unsung heroes of WW1

I was surprised to discover that not all Commonwealth servicemen who died as a result of service in World War I are commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

I found out about this when I was working on the Isleworth 390 Project. Run by the Isleworth Society, it involved researching the 390 names of the servicemen on the War Memorial on Twickenham Road in Isleworth and led to a book: The Isleworth 390 detailing our findings, published in November 2019.

One of the soldiers I researched was Harold Frank Upton. In 1911 he was aged 24, living in Worton Road, Isleworth and was working as a market gardener. Soon after war broke out in 1914 Harold enlisted and became a Private in the 11th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. He embarked for France on 26 July 1915.

In July 1916 he was promoted to Lance Corporal but shortly after, in September that year, he was wounded and taken to a casualty clearing station. He was then shipped home from Boulogne for hospital care.

Following his treatment Harold was transferred to the 427th Agricultural Company of the Army Labour Corps in February 1918. He died on 16 October 1919 from laryngitis as a result of tuberculosis (TB). TB was common in the population at large at the time as well as among servicemen. It was a condition that was often aggravated by war service.

Harold's death was registered in Brentford. He was aged just 32. He was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 14-15 Star.

With Harold's history of service throughout the war, I was puzzled that his name was not commemorated by the CWGC.

I contacted them and after a preliminary check they asked me to submit documentary evidence to enable their Commemorations department to consider his case in more detail.

Having raised Harold's case, I have since submitted evidence of four other servicemen listed on the Isleworth War Memorial who are not currently recognised by the CWGC. I hope that they will accept all five as worthy of commemoration. Although these five represent less than 2% of the servicemen on the Memorial, it is worthwhile considering that if this situation was replicated across the country, there would be 100s, if not 1000s, who could be added to the CWGC list.

I would like to be confident that when we say "we will remember them" that, as far as possible, all who served and died as a result of World War I are included.

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