

ALBERT TROUGHTON - SHOT AT DAWN WW1

Albert was born in Foleshill, Coventry in 1893. He lived with his parents (dad NATHANIEL) mum and 3 brothers and 2 sisters. He worked as a turner, a maker of metal components for machinery and tools. Albert joined the 1st Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, as a private, war service no. 10853. He went to the western front on the 6th October 1914.

In 1915 he was charged with deserting his post, court martialled and shot by firing squad on the 22nd April, he was only 22 years old .

Along with his comrade Private Major Penn, he was charged of going AWOL (absent without leave) and they were shot in a double execution. They are both buried in the same grave, plot 3, D, 6.

Both men were involved in fighting and endured intense attacks from the Germans. (almost 300 of his comrades were killed all around him) .Troughton's Commanding Officer told him his brother had been one of those killed in the attack .

He alleged his CO shouted "everyone for himself "and he and Penn wandered off. They were later caught, found guilty of desertion and shot!

Albert and Major are buried at the Estaires Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. The roll of the fallen claims he was "killed in action "at Merris and is buried there. (roll of Honour pg. 329)

The night before he was shot, he wrote a letter home to his family, which a jailor smuggled out of the military prison. He told them he was in good health and hoped they were too. Then went on to say that he was to be shot at 07.00 the following morning! He hoped they would take his news in good part and not get upset, he would die like a soldier so said his final goodbyes. Stating that he had fought in hail sleet and snow like a common soldier and all his regiment had been slaughtered, he wanted everyone to know he had done his duty. He asked for pity for all his comrades both living and dead and said his final goodbye.

From this it would appear that he had accepted his lot and resigned himself to his punishment. It would seem also that he had done his duty but endured the most horrendous of situations and seen so many men killed around him.

From all the research that I have done into the First World War, it is hard to comprehend the conditions that some of the soldiers must have endured. Most of these soldiers were fairly young men and boys who probably had not even ventured outside their village or town before. And to be thrust into the theatre of war in a foreign land and its unimaginable horrors and stresses must have affected them immensely. It is hard to imagine what they endured, no doubt they had "happy times "but I would imagine they were few and far between. Also to be trained to kill another human being and to actually do it has to be the

worst thing to endure. No wonder most soldiers when they came home did not want to talk about it!!

It was supposedly “The war to end all wars “ , was that true ? Have we learned anything from it? History tells us no, it was and still is a futile exercise WAR (evidently) DOES NOT SOLVE ANYTHING

Alan Aldrich, March 2018