

Private Richard Edward Francis of 3, The Row, All Stretton

Died 12 October 1918 in England aged 22



3 The Row from Google Earth 2018

Richard was born 1896 in All Stretton to Edwin Francis and his wife Agnes Francis (nee Smith). Richard was the eighth child of twelve children in the family.

Richards father Edwin was from Pontesford and his mother Agnes originated from Shrewsbury, they were married in 1879.

Edwin was initially employed as a Prudential Assurance Agent when he was first married and they were living in Hollyhurst near Cardington. Later in All Stretton he was a Railway Carman (somebody who would collect and deliver packages from the railway). In 1911 Agnes is working as a nurse and their 15-year-old son Richard is working as a labourer.

The family had lived in 3, The Row, All Stretton from about the year 1886.

Unfortunately as with many other records Richards Army service records were lost in 1940 when the War Office was bombed.

We do know his regiment number was No. 12399 and he joined the 8th Battalion of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry in Shrewsbury. The 8th Battalion consisted of all volunteers and was the last to be raised at home for active service for Kitchener's Army. They assembled in Shrewsbury on 14th September 1914, then 1100 men left for initial training in Sussex.

Richard went to France on the 6th September 1915. After only a few weeks on the Western Front, the Battalion was sent to Macedonia, arriving on November 6th 1915. The Battalion

spent the remainder of the war on the Salonika front around Dojran, suffering severely from its encounters with the enemy.

The Salonika front was an attempt of the Allied countries to support Serbia against the armies of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

During fighting Richard was attached to the 66th Trench Mortar Battery.

Periods of routine trench work, along the Struma River or in the defences of Salonika were interspersed with some severe fighting, as at "Pip Ridge", near Lake Dojran, in February 1917.

The 8th Battalion of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry were part of the 22nd Division until Bulgaria surrendered in September 1918. The division had suffered 7,728 killed, wounded and missing but large numbers were sick with malaria, dysentery and other diseases rife in the Salonika theatre.

After a number of hospital admissions, Richard was diagnosed as suffering with Malaria in May 1918. In July 1918 he was suffering from bronchitis and he was probably brought back to England around this time.

Richard died in the military hospital the First London General Hospital in Camberwell, London. He had been suffering with Malaria but died from Tuberculosis.

A register of effects compiled after Richard died was the sum of £ 22 8s 6d and a war gratuity of £ 19 which was given to his mother Agnes.



Richard's grave

He was awarded the 15 Star Medal, the Victory Medal and the British Medal.

Richard was brought back to Shropshire and is buried in the Cunnery Road Cemetery, Church Stretton

Richard's father Edwin died in 1924 and his mother died in 1937, they are both buried in the same cemetery as Richard.